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Volume 25 No. 7 • October 2007

Wind speaker



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Established 1983



Daniele Behn is a young First Nations doctor practicing medicine in Dawson City, Yukon. She is also host of Medicine Woman, a 13-part series airing on VisionTV. Her involvement in the series took Behn to the farthest corners of the globe in search of traditional healers and ancient medicinal knowledge that has been passed down through the ages. Her travels took her to Australia, where she met Samantha Martin, a Red Earth Woman who is working to raise awareness of Aboriginal healing.

For more about Behn and her quest, turn to page 16.

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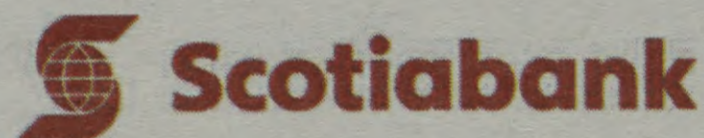
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Entries may be colour slides or prints (no Polaroids, please), not larger than 8" x 10". Subject of photos must be Aboriginal. A maximum of four (4) photo entries per person. Photographs that have been previously published or won a photographic award are NOT eligible. By submitting the photo(s) you confirm that you are the exclusive rights holder of the photo(s). Each entry must be labeled with the entrant's name. This information should be printed on the back of the photograph or on the slide frame (a grease pencil works best), or on an attached label. Hint: To prevent damage, do not stamp or write heavily on the back of your prints. Package your entries carefully in a protective cardboard sleeve. Entries must be accompanied by a list of the pictures enclosed. The list should include your full name, address and daytime phone number. Entrants under 18 must enclose permission of a parent/guardian. Sorry, submitted entries and photos cannot be returned. Windspeaker and Scotiabank are not responsible for lost or delayed entries. The selected winning photos shall become the property of Windspeaker. Professionals and amateurs may enter. Photographs will be judged on creativity and technical excellence and how they best capture the contest theme. A panel of judges will select the prize winners. Their decisions are final. Winner will be notified by phone. Photo contest rules are also available online at <http://www.ammsa.com/snap>

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Canada

Features

Declaration passes despite Canada's dissenting vote 8

It was a moment more than two decades in the making and when it was over, the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples was passed in the UN General Assembly with only four countries voting against formal adoption of the document—the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

Report calls for government action on poverty 10

A report released by the National Council of Welfare (NCW) on Sept. 18 paints a bleak picture of the challenges faced by Aboriginal children in Canada, and calls on all levels of government and society as a whole to do something about it.

Festival now 10 days long 14

The second annual Manito Ahbee Festival is set to begin Oct. 26. This time around the program has been extended from a four-day event to a 10-day event, and is packed with performances and audiovisual displays from all over the world

New tobacco control strategy falls short 15

On Aug. 20, the federal government announced new goals for reducing smoking rates, but according to prominent experts in Saskatchewan, those goals are unrealistic, especially considering the lack of a tobacco control strategy for First Nations people.

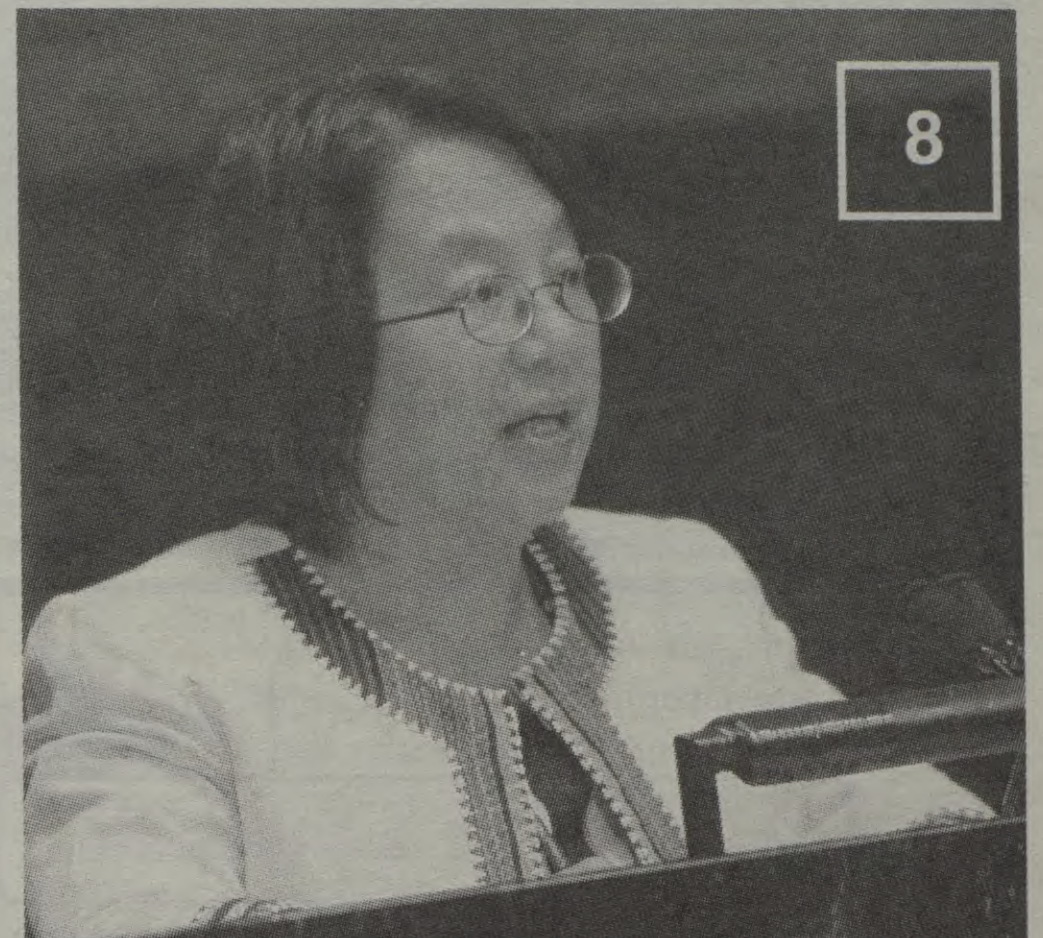
Physician travels world to meet healers 16

The landscape flames with fall colours of yellow and red as Dr. Daniele Behn drives along a Yukon highway, tears streaming from her eyes.

Departments

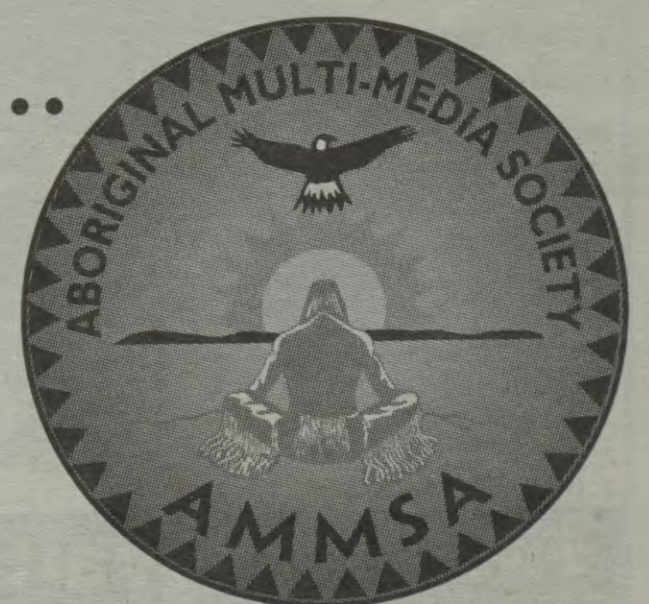
- [rants and raves] 5
- [what's happening] 7
- [provincial news] 18 to 22
- [radio's most active] 23
- [windspeaker confidential] 24
- [sports] 25
- [education] 26 & 27
- [careers & training] 28 & 29
- [footprints] 30

Mary Thomas, a member of the Secwepmec (Shuswap) Nation, was born in Salmon Arm, B.C. Thomas passed away on July 30 of this year at the age of 90 but, while she is gone, the knowledge she shared, the people she inspired and the work she completed in the time she was here will ensure she will not soon be forgotten.



.....
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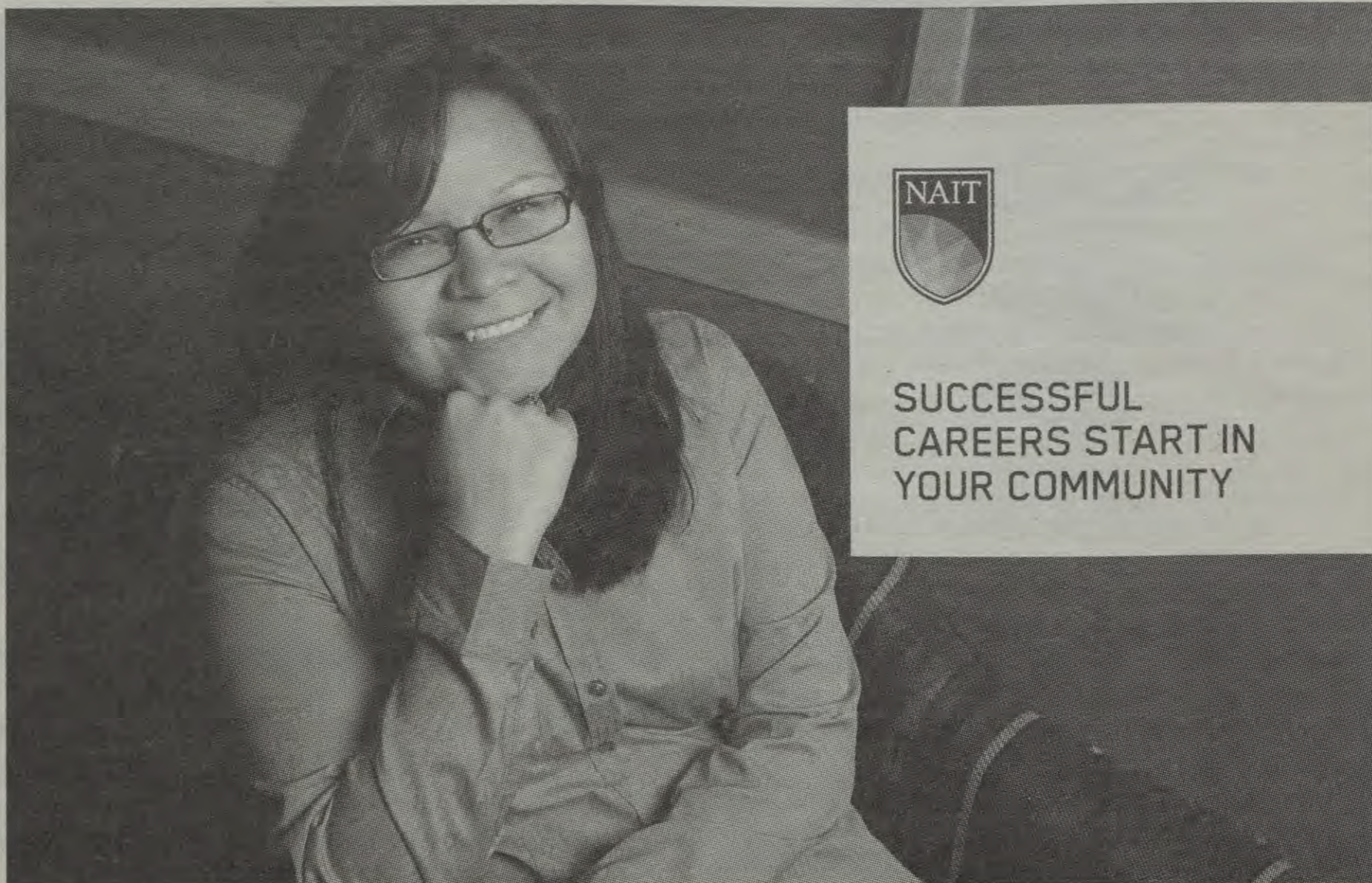
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Road development has community upset

Dear Editor:

It was disturbing to find out the province of Manitoba had constructed a road 2.7 kilometres long up the eastern shore of Lake Winnipeg on the Hollow Water First Nation's traditional area. The road was constructed out of view of the community and its main access road. It wasn't until weeks prior to the lot selection that access was granted to see the developed area. Residents of Hollow Water First Nation were shocked to say the least. An area that had once been home to many species of animals, plant life and various sacred medicines has now been leveled with gravel and sand. Because we choose to leave our traditional lands dormant by means gives consent for development. Our people are protectors of this land. Creator teaches respect, courage, humility, wisdom, kindness, truth and love for all that is bestowed on mother earth. Protecting sacred medicines, animals, various species of plant life is but one way to spread the teachings. When we speak for future generations it is not to speak for money, but to speak for health, food and resources needed to survive as humans. Who is to say that a new disease may come about that will call for a certain simple little plant to provide the cure. What if it were YOUR child who needed this cure and the plant that once existed was now gone and replaced by someone's second home, a home that is not even necessary.

A proverb of our people reads: Only when the last tree is cut; only when the last river is polluted; only when the last fish is caught; only then will they realize that you can not eat money.

Chief Ian Bushie
Hollow Water First Nation, Man.

Indigenous rights still not being recognized

Dear Editor:

With our historical lands being continuously stolen and our ancestors' remains being disturbed and unearched, as our sacred village sites and artifacts are being ripped from the earth, when will our history finally be protected?

In 2003, The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Toxic Waste and products made special note of Canadian corporate behavior and lack of accountability. The report also noted that illicit movement and dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes by Canadian corporations had adversely impacted on human rights.

The rapporteur recommended that attention is paid to allegations relating to threats to the traditional lifestyles and rights of Indigenous groups and called on the Canadian and other governments to explore ways of establishing extraterritorial jurisdiction over human rights violations, committed by companies operating abroad.

The year 2006 saw first National Roundtables on Corporate Social Responsibility and the Canadian Extractive Industry in Developing Countries, A forum that was organized in reaction to a 2005 report from Canada's Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs. The standing committee report admitted that Canada does not have any laws that ensure that Canadian companies observe human rights standards in other countries or their own. Public comment was received from people all over the world who travelled to Canada to tell their stories of horrific abuse at the hands of Canadian mining companies.

In March 2007, The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) issued a formal recommendation to Canada. It called on Canada to better regulate and monitor its mining corporations abroad when they are operating on Indigenous lands and to complete a report within the next 12 months on corporate activities.

We are also extremely concerned that our country, Canada, is one of the few countries that have totally blocked the agreement on the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Canada's position seriously undermines Indigenous peoples' human rights.

We are now calling on the Canadian Government to:

- stop obstructionist and exploitive efforts to block discussion on the issue of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- establish standards and reporting obligations for Canadian companies;
- reference international human rights standards and

provide for the creation of human rights and guidelines for the application of these standards'

- incorporate these standards into binding legislation so that compliance is mandatory;
- include provisions for withholding government services and companies in case of serious non-compliance;
- create an ombudsperson's office of independent international experts to receive complaints regarding the operations of Canadian companies worldwide and to assess corporate compliance with these standards.

We also call on the Canadian government to investigate and make recommendations on the international activities of Canadian companies that continue to exploit Indigenous and local communities for their own greedy profits at Indigenous peoples expense. Water and food are much more precious than GOLD. Let's send them a message that their destruction of Indigenous peoples' lands and our cultures is coming to an end. Our Mother Earth is crying out to us for protection and we must now listen to her cries for help. They might think that they own her on paper but the real living breathing truth is that we are the land.

On Sept. 13, 2007 the United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples worldwide, and our country was one of four that voted against its passing as Canada has such a high population of Indigenous peoples.

Has the time not come for Indigenous peoples to stand united and put an end to the continued exploitation of our rights, our lands and our cultures? Our ancestors are watching us and the future generations are counting on us ALL to finally make that difference. It surely makes me wonder what has really changed in our history and there is this long past voice that I would like to leave you with that seems to resonate just what I am saying.

In 1879, Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce was invited to speak before cabinet members, congressmen, and diplomats, themselves curious about this Indian "Napoleon." His moving appeal was published in the North American Review.

I cannot understand how the government sends a man out to fight us, as it did General Miles, and then breaks his word. I do not understand why nothing is done for my people. I have heard talk and talk, but nothing is done. Words do not pay for my dead people. They do not pay for my country, now overrun by white men. They do not protect my father's grave.

Good words will not give me back my children. Good words will not give my people good health and stop them from dying. Good words will not get my people a home where they can live in peace and take care of themselves. I am tired of talk that comes to nothing. It makes my heart sick when I remember all the good words and all the broken promises.

If the white man wants to live in peace with the Indians he can live in peace. Treat all men alike. Give them all the same law. Give them all an even chance to live and grow. The earth is the mother of all people, and all people should have equal rights upon it. You might as well expect the rivers to run backwards as that any man who was born free should be contented penned up and denied liberty to go where he pleases.

We ask to be recognized as men. We ask that the same law shall work alike on all men. Let me be a free man -free to travel, free to stop, free to work, free to trade, free to choose my own teachers, free to follow the religion of my fathers, free to think and talk and act for myself-and I will obey every law.

This appeal and many others were to no avail. Chief Joseph fought for his people until the very end of his life. He died in 1908 and his voice echoes the despair that mysteriously and very sadly still exists today in the 21st century.

Maybe in our time we will see an end to the exploitation of Indigenous peoples and their ongoing struggle to finally reclaim their unified human rights.

*In Great Peace and understanding,
David Grey Eagle Sanford*

Métis adopt harvesting plan

Dear Editor:

At the 79th Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) annual general assembly in St. Paul, Alta, the Métis citizens of Alberta unanimously stood together in rejecting the government of Alberta's unilateral, regressive and unconstitutional policy with regards to the Métis inherent right to hunt, fish and trap, and also adopted its own Métis harvesting policy and harvesting action plan. The MNA assembly also unanimously adopted the action plan, which focuses on four areas: (1) exercising Métis rights; (2) defending Métis rights; (3) Political action on Métis rights; and (4) public education on Métis rights.

In April, Aboriginal Affairs Minister Guy Boutilier invoked a 90-day termination clause to be followed by three months of good-faith negotiation to try and devise a permanent solution. Those negotiations failed; and in July, the province then came up with new rules to govern where the Métis can hunt and who can qualify for subsistence licenses. Now, the government is saying only Métis from 17 northern communities can qualify for subsistence hunting licenses and they can only hunt in a 160-kilometre radius. So is the government saying that our Métis people in southern Alberta are less Métis than those in the north? I think not!

This is truly an unfortunate situation. We were not consulted in terms of how this policy will impact our people, and secondly, the government believes that it has the right to tell us who we are as a people, and that, my friends, is wrong. We as the Métis Nation know who we are. We have worked hard over the years determining a national definition of Métis. We do not just give out our membership cards to anyone; we have a very stringent process in place, in which our people are required to provide proof of ancestral connection to the Métis community.

I must also point out, the government of Alberta did not give us our rights, we are born with them. Under Section 35 of the Constitution of Canada, we are recognized as one of three Aboriginal peoples. Further, the Supreme Court of Canada recognized and affirmed our rights to hunt fish and trap in September 2003 in the Powley case. This restrictive policy does not respect or honour our collective rights we have as a nation. The MNA remains committed to working with the Alberta government in order to put into place a mutually agreeable accommodation on Métis harvesting, however, as a Métis Nation, we will continue to exercise our rights to hunt, fish and trap, just as we have for generations, and we will defend our rights.

*Sincerely,
Trevor Gladue
Provincial Vice President
Métis Nation of Alberta*

Assimilation efforts continue

Dear Editor:

As you already know, we have come to the end of the residential school legacy in which the government of Canada believes they have compensated survivors for tragedies that occurred as a result of physical abuse and sexual abuse while attending these schools. Thousands of men and women were affected by the system, and those effects were passed down to their descendants in turn, inflicting a chain reaction and leading to yet another lost generation caught in the foster care system. Through the Sixties Scoop and later the Child Protection Act, thousands and thousands of Aboriginal boys and girls were taken from their loves ones and communities by the ministry of Children and Family Services. They said this was supposed to benefit and protect the child but instead they took a child away from the environment of their culture and placed that child into a discriminating and racist environment such as foster homes, group homes, reform schools and adoption agencies. Instead of protecting the child's best interests the ministry created future career criminals, which I believe has had a significant historical impact and is why so many of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters are incarcerated in federal institutions across Canada today. Yet another injustice involving a new de-culturing plan to strip and assimilate another lost generation of their identity as authority figures over the already torn and beaten spirit of our Native relatives throughout our Native nations across Turtle Island.

*From a brother in tears,
Gerald D. Kematch
Kelowna, B.C.*

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PUBLIC HEARING ANNOUNCEMENT

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) has issued an official Notice of Public Hearing, available at www.nuclearsafety.gc.ca, that it will hold a two-day public hearing on the application by Ontario Power Generation (OPG) for the renewal of the operating licence for the Pickering Waste Management Facility (PWMF) located in Pickering, Ontario. The hearing will be held in the CNSC Public Hearing Room, 14th floor, 280 Slater Street, Ottawa, Ontario, on December 5, 2007 and February 20, 2008.

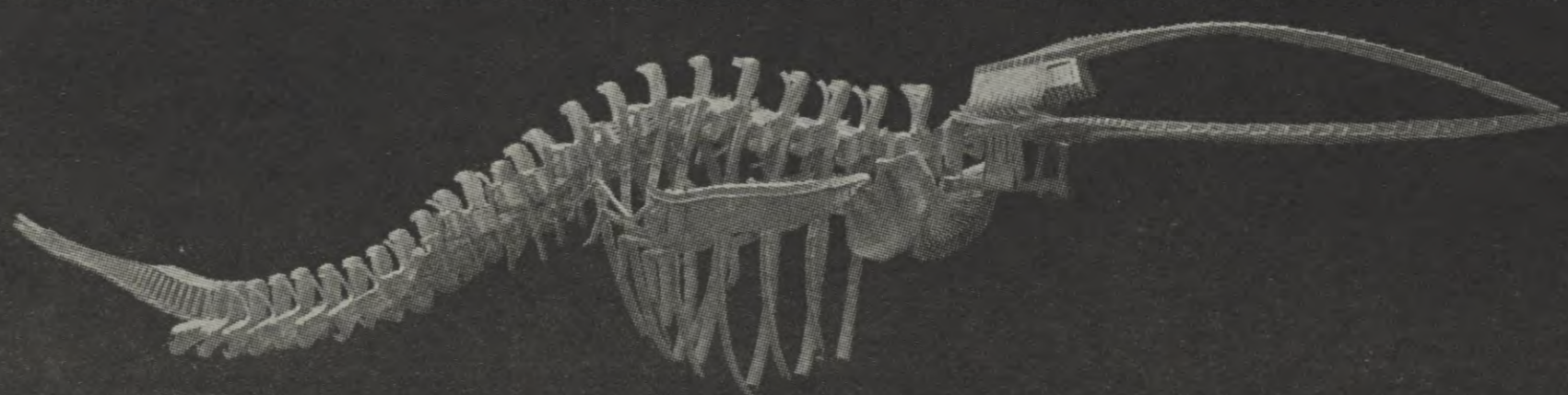
The public is invited to comment on OPG's application on Hearing Day Two. Requests to intervene must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission by January 21, 2008 at the address below and include a written submission; a statement setting out whether the requester wishes to intervene by way of written submission only or by way of written submission and oral presentation; and the name, address and telephone number of the requester.

Hearing documents (submissions) are not available on-line and must be requested through the Secretariat at the address below. For more information, instructions on how to participate in this public hearing process or the complete text of the official Notice of Public Hearing, see www.nuclearsafety.gc.ca, and refer to Notice of Public Hearing 2007-H-17, or contact:

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UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Efforts to draft a declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples first began in 1985 as a project of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations. The first draft of the document was completed in 1993 and was adopted by the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. Then, in 1995, the document went on to the Commission on Human Rights, which established a working group to review the draft. Since 1995, the working group has met annually, working with governments and Indigenous organizations from around the world to come up with a final draft that could be adopted by UN General Assembly. Initially, it was hoped the declaration would be adopted by the end of 2004, when the first International Decade of the World's Indigenous People came to a close, but that adoption would have to wait a few years longer, until Sept. 13, 2007.

The newly ratified declaration serves as a sign of the international community's commitment to protection of the rights of Indigenous peoples. While not legally binding, the hope is member states would feel a moral obligation to fall in line with the provisions contained in the document. The declaration outlines the rights of Indigenous people, both individually and collectively, to self-determination, participation in society and freedom from discrimination. It also outlines Indigenous rights to maintain their spiritual, linguistic and cultural identity, rights to lands and resources, and the right to continued survival as Indigenous people.

What Aboriginal leaders are saying

"While the declaration is not perfect, it is a step toward setting minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of Indigenous people everywhere. It's a day to celebrate ... the declaration recognizes our collective histories, traditions, cultures, languages and spirituality. It is an important international instrument that supports the activities and efforts of Indigenous peoples to have their rights fully recognized, respected and implemented by state governments," said Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine. "Canada prides itself as a protector of human rights. It is a member of the UN Human Rights Council, yet it is disappointing today to see this government vote against recognizing the basic rights of Canada's First Peoples."

"This is a proud day for Inuit and Indigenous peoples around the world. It is also an important day in the progressive evolution of human rights standards for all peoples of the world, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike. Today marks the culmination of years of persistent work in achieving this. We celebrate this as a very significant victory for all of humanity," said Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami President Mary Simon. "Inuit are disappointed with the government of Canada's decision to vote against this historic declaration. This negative vote is also a black mark on the governments of the four countries that voted against the declaration, and puts them out of step with the strengthening of human rights around the world."

"CAP is disappointed that Canada decided to vote against the declaration at the general assembly. The Congress believes this is not 'the Canadian way,' especially in respect of issues dealing with human rights. However, we understand Canada's concerns. These include issues with rights to land and resources; the notion of free, prior and informed consent, in particular, on military activities; third party interests such as private ownership rights; and the fact that the declaration can and will be used in courts by Aboriginal groups from Canada," Congress of Aboriginal Peoples National Chief Patrick Brazeau said. "We believe, however, that Canada had other options. By taking such a radical position, Canada voted against the whole declaration ... Canada could have supported the declaration with an explanation of its vote, with reservations, just as other member countries did. Alternatively, Canada could have abstained, with an explanation of its vote."

"[The declaration is] truly a remarkable milestone in the history of the struggle of Indigenous peoples for the recognition of their rights by the global community of nation states," said Métis Nation of Ontario President Tony Belcourt, who represented the Métis National Council at the UN General Assembly. "Now that we have achieved this great moment in history, it is incumbent on all states, including Canada, to work in a spirit of co-operation with Indigenous peoples within their borders toward the implementation of the provisions of this historic declaration."

"While the adoption of the declaration brings me great joy, Canada's unprincipled decision to vote against the declaration demonstrates a lack of commitment not only to Indigenous peoples but to human rights more generally," said Native Women's Association of Canada President Beverley Jacobs. "This is not over-we will be calling on Canada to join us to implement this declaration immediately."



UN PHOTO BY PAULO FILGUEIRAS

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, chair of the United Nations (UN) Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, addresses the UN general assembly following adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at UN headquarters in New York on Sept. 13.

Declaration passes despite Canada's dissenting vote

By Jorge Barrera
Windspeaker Writer

NEW YORK

It was a moment more than two decades in the making and when it was over, the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples was passed in the UN General Assembly with only four countries voting against formal adoption of the document—the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

The vote took place on Sept. 13 during the 61st UN general assembly. Adoption of the declaration passed with the support of 143 member countries. Eleven countries abstained from the vote.

"This marks a historic moment when United Nations member states and Indigenous peoples have reconciled with their painful histories and are resolved to move forward together on the path of human rights, justice and development for all," said UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, when the declaration passed.

Now that the declaration has been adopted, Canadian diplomats are allegedly working backroom channels to exempt the country from the protections the document grants to Indigenous people by pushing to dilute the mandate of the world body's point man on Indigenous issues.

Canadian representatives are trying to ensure the declaration casts no shadow over Canada by pushing to change an addition the mandate of the UN's special rapporteur on Indigenous peoples that would include promoting and implementing the declaration. Canada wants the mandate to exempt countries that did not support the text.

"Canada's position is that the declaration is not a legally binding instrument and it has no legal affect in Canada," said Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) spokesperson Patricia Valladao. "So we cannot support the change of the senior rapporteur's mandate."

The move has added salt to a wound left by Canada's decision to vote against the declaration.

"Many states feel that you don't generally get exempt from a non-binding declaration that is passed by the general assembly, but Canada is continuing to push to be exempt," Kenneth Deer, secretary for the Mohawk Nation in Kahnawake, said in a phone interview from Geneva where he was attending the UN Human Rights Council.

"Canada has dug itself into a hole and they don't want to be held accountable to anything in the declaration. They want the status-quo. They don't want to see things improve. They think Canada is perfect the way it is."

Canada's international reputation is no longer perfect, according to Indigenous leaders and human rights groups who leveled serious criticisms against the Stephen Harper government for changing Ottawa's position on the declaration.

"This is a stain on the country's international reputation," said Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine.

"We remain shocked and angered at Canada's refusal to support this important international human rights instrument," said Union of B.C. Chiefs Grand Chief Stewart Phillip. "It is truly ironic that four first world countries that have become prosperous through the exploitation of the lands and resources of the Indigenous

peoples, including Canada, chose to oppose the adoption of the declaration."

Charges have also been leveled that Canada went beyond the efforts of other countries in its attempts to derail the declaration.

During a press conference a week before the final vote, the African Indigenous Caucus co-ordinator accused Canada of trying to turn African countries against the declaration in exchange for aid dollars.

"By approaching Africa, which had so many problems, and trying to use aid as a tool, Canada was committing a crime. Many poor countries did not have the ability to negotiate, because they were dependent on aid from developed countries," said Joseph Ole Simel, according to notes on the press conference posted on the UN Web site.

"Canada had tried to use any kind of 'sweet language' for the declaration to be blocked. However, the African countries ... refused to 'go the Canada way' and (took) independent position on the matter," he said.

"Indigenous people in Canada must be going through hell," said Ole Simel, during a press conference held after the declaration passed.

Foreign Affairs refused to respond to repeated requests for comment on the backroom bribery allegations and referred queries again to INAC.

Valladao said the allegations were "completely untrue."

According to internal government documents obtained by Amnesty International, Canada went against the advice of officials in Foreign Affairs, INAC and National Defence in its opposition to the declaration. But Foreign Affairs Minister (See Canada page 25)

Report highlights Ontario's violations of Indigenous rights

By Kate Harries
Windspeaker Writer

GRASSY NARROWS FIRST NATION, Ont.

Despite a history of displacement and cultural upheaval, the people of Asubpeeschoseewagong (Grassy Narrows), near the Ontario-Manitoba border have demonstrated their determination to rebuild their community and their relationship with the land.

But a leading international human rights organization says the failure by the Ontario provincial government to respect the Indigenous rights of the community has hampered its recovery from catastrophic disruptions in the 1960s and 1970s—including a forced relocation to a site selected by the federal government and the mercury poisoning of the river system that provided food and jobs.

In a hard-hitting report released Sept. 20, Amnesty International Canada calls on Ontario to respect a moratorium on logging declared by Grassy Narrows in January. It also urges the province to work with Indigenous peoples to bring its laws, regulations and policies in line with its duties of consultation and accommodation, and to establish an independent agency to oversee resolution of land and treaty disputes, as recommended by the Ipperwash commission.

Amnesty International Canada sent a mission to Grassy Narrows in April to investigate the rights violations, the second such investigation in Canada's history (the first was of a 1982 Quebec prison riot). While Grassy Narrows was chosen because the situation there is particularly urgent, the report says it's not unique. Rather, "it's a powerful illustration of the great harm that can be caused by the exercise of arbitrary and unchecked state power over the lands and lives of Indigenous peoples."

In the case of Grassy Narrows, "the Province of Ontario has long failed to uphold its responsibility to respect Indigenous rights," the report states. "The province did not carry out meaningful consultation before licensing large-scale logging activities. And it has ignored clear calls from the community to stop the logging and other industrial development until consent is given."

In an interview, David Ramsay, Ontario's Aboriginal affairs and natural resources minister, who is now in the midst of a provincial election campaign, noted that in September (in the last month of his four-year mandate) he appointed retired Supreme Court Chief Justice Frank Iacobucci to lead discussions with Grassy Narrows on forestry issues. Talks are to start in November.

Ramsay defended the province's forestry regulation as one of the

"If Indigenous peoples are not recognized to have the right of consent, at the end of the day that means all power is in the hands of the ministry bureaucracy. Government in effect has a veto."

—Craig Benjamin

most sustainable in the world. "We have good relationships, especially in the north where we have forestry," he insisted, ignoring a groundswell of discontent from across the north over resource extraction without revenue sharing. "It's been in this one area (Grassy Narrows) where we've had difficulty."

"We welcome that appointment," said Amnesty International Canada's Craig Benjamin, author of the report, of Iacobucci's new role. "It's a positive step. At the same time there's no guarantee the talks will proceed quickly. Where is the protection of their rights in the interim?"

In a 2004 ruling involving the Haida First Nation, the Supreme Court of Canada found that government must respect potential interests, because continued exploitation could deprive Aboriginal claimants of some or all of the benefits of the resource. Ramsay said Iacobucci has the power to order interim protection measures.

Benjamin noted that the effects of past violations are still being felt. Some Grassy Narrows people still have mercury poisoning symptoms, and fish, their staple food source, remains suspect.

Meanwhile, populations of animals trapped or hunted for fur and food are reduced by clearcuts and wild foods like blueberries are contaminated by pesticides. "How much more can this one community endure?" he asked.

Abitibi is current holder of the licence to log the Whiskey Jack Forest, the area around Grassy Narrows that roughly coincides with the First Nation's traditional territory. When the company prepared to clearcut up to the boundary of the reserve in 2002 the community rose up in protest. They blockaded a logging road by Slant Lake, some 10 kilometres from the reserve. The blockade still stands, the longest political action of its kind in Canadian history. Nevertheless, processes continue that profoundly impact the land and the people's relationship with it; a relationship that for Indigenous people defines culture, identity and survival. "Everything about being Anishinaabe is the land," Roberta Keesick, a Grassy Narrows trapper and grandmother says in the report. "Without the land that's pretty

well cultural genocide."

The Amnesty International Canada report faults Ontario's forestry management regime for failing to meet standards set by Canadian courts, which view meaningful consultation as a minimal legal duty. There has been no distinct consultation process for Aboriginal people, despite their distinct treaty and constitutional rights. The Ontario government recently, for the first time, offered a specific process in its development of a five-year plan to take effect in 2009, but so far Grassy Narrows has not been interested in participating.

The report stresses that, depending on the impact, governments may have an additional legal obligation "to proceed only with the free, prior and informed consent of the affected people."

Free, prior and informed consent is the language of international law, as in the United Nations' recently adopted Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was opposed by the federal Conservative government. But, the report points out, the declaration doesn't create any new rights, it merely clarifies existing obligation.

Canadian law sets a similar standard. In the 1997 Delgamuukw decision, the Supreme Court stated that situations requiring only the minimum duty of meaningful consultation are "rare" and the legal duty of the Crown may require the full consent of an Aboriginal nation, particularly when provinces enact hunting and fishing regulations in relation to Aboriginal lands.

Canadian governments generally resist the notion that they should obtain Aboriginal consent before proceeding with plans that could affect Aboriginal rights. The Haida decision is often quoted for stating that the process does not give Aboriginal groups a veto over what can be done with land pending final proof of a claim. But, Benjamin points out, the decision implies that once Aboriginal rights are established and proven, then, potentially, there could be a veto.

"If Indigenous peoples are not recognized to have the right of consent, at the end of the day that means all power is in the hands of the ministry bureaucracy," he said. "Government in effect has a veto."

Windspeaker news briefs

Date set for MNC election

The controversy over just who should be running the Métis National Council (MNC) should be resolved by mid-October. That's when the organization's annual general assembly and election for the position of MNC president are scheduled to take place.

The MNC issued a press release on Sept. 19 indicating the assembly and election would be held in Ottawa on Oct. 13 and 14. The election dates were set on Sept. 17 by Ontario Superior Court Justice P. Cosgrove after he heard submissions regarding the dispute over who currently has the right to call himself MNC president.

Clem Chartier was elected as president when the last assembly and election was held in October 2003. His three-year term as president was set to expire last October, but given the unsettled situation that existed at that time with the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, where problems with that organization's previous election were still unresolved, a decision was made to extend Chartier's mandate for up to another year. Then, during a two-day meeting of the MNC board of governors held in August, four of the five regional leaders that make up the board voted to remove Chartier from the presidency, and install Dumont in his stead.

Chartier and Manitoba Métis Federation President David Chartrand—the only member of the MNC board of governors who didn't vote to strip Chartier of his presidency—responded by seeking a court injunction to stop the action by the board of governors, which led to the issue being dealt with by Justice Cosgrove.

In addition to setting the date for the assembly and election, the court order also indicated that, since the members of the board of governors aren't in agreement about who is the current MNC president, no one will act in that capacity until after the election. Until a president is elected, the MNC board of governors and cabinet are prohibited from conducting any MNC business. The day-to-day operation of the MNC is to be handled by Dale LeClair, the MNC's chief administrative officer.

Hollow Water protests

Hollow Water members set up blockade to protest subdivision development

Members of Hollow Water First Nation in Manitoba have set up a series of blockades to protest development of a cottage subdivision on land they claim as part of their traditional territory.

The blockades started going up on Sept. 14. The protesters claim they should have been consulted before any work began on the development, and are calling on the province to negotiate a settlement. The province has indicated there will be no discussions until the blockades are removed.

Attack stalls negotiations

Negotiators from the Ontario provincial government were scheduled to meet with representatives from Six Nations at the end of September in an attempt to resolve land claims issues surrounding a housing development being built in Caledonia. The provincial announcement was made in response to an incident that occurred on the land in question in which a builder was allegedly attacked and beaten by a group of Six Nations protesters. Ontario Regional Chief Angus Toulouse called the attack regrettable and unfortunate, and stressed that the Six Nations Confederacy Council does not condone violence as a way to deal with the outstanding land claims issues. All parties are working to set up new dates for negotiations early in October, at which time the province is expected to return to the table.

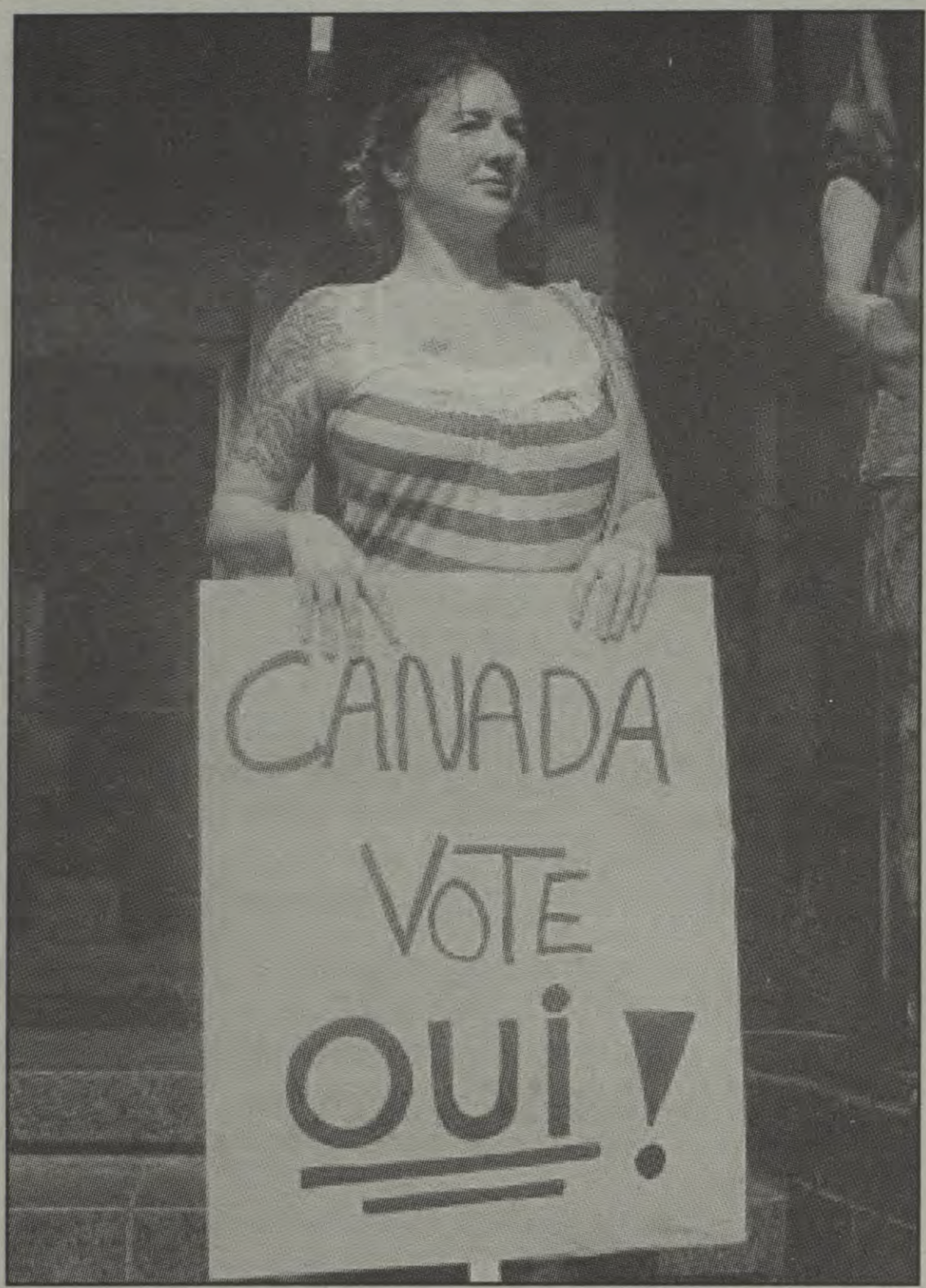
Lawsuits launched

Two Ontario First Nations are continuing their efforts to try to keep a mining exploration company from drilling on land they claim as part of their traditional territory.

Members of Ardoch Algonquin First Nation and Shabot Obaadjiwan First Nation have been blocking the entrance to the site where Frontenac Ventures Corporation plans to drill for uranium samples. They've been there since June 28, and don't plan on going anywhere until a moratorium is put in place banning uranium mining on their land.

The battle between the communities and the exploration company is also being played out in the courtroom. Frontenac launched a \$77 million lawsuit against the two communities over their interference in the planned exploration, and the communities have countered with a \$1 billion suit against the province, charging that the Ontario government failed to consult them before granting the mining rights to Frontenac, and a \$10 million countersuit against Frontenac.

Ownership of the land Frontenac wants to explore is currently the subject of land claim talks between the federal and provincial governments and the two communities.



QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.

A participant holds up a placard calling for Canada to support the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples during a gathering organized by Quebec Native Women on Sept. 7. The provincial Aboriginal organization was just one of many urging the government to vote to adopt the declaration, but Canada cast a no vote at the United Nations general assembly meeting held in New York on Sept. 13.



Women from all walks of life came together on the streets of Winnipeg on Sept. 20 to take part in the annual Take Back the Night March. The focus of this year's march was violence against Aboriginal women and violence against girls and women involved in the sex trade.

(Top) Bernice Getty (centre), one of the event organizers, drums along with other participants in front of the Manitoba legislature building at the start of the march.

(Right) Beverley Jacobs, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, was one of the participants in the Winnipeg march.

PHOTOS BY AARON PIERRE





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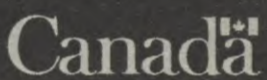
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Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission

Commission canadienne de sûreté nucléaire



PUBLIC HEARING ANNOUNCEMENT

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) has issued an official Notice of Public Hearing, available at www.nuclearsafety.gc.ca, that it will hold a one-day public hearing on the application by TRIUMF Accelerators Inc. for acceptance of the proposed financial guarantee for the TRIUMF particle accelerator facility. The hearing will be held in the CNSC Public Hearing Room, 14th floor, 280 Slater Street, Ottawa, Ontario, on December 5, 2007.

The public is invited to comment on the financial guarantee by providing a written submission. There is no opportunity to make an oral presentation at the hearing; however, the public is invited to observe the proceeding. Requests to intervene must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission by November 5, 2007 at the address below and must include a written submission of the comments to be presented to the Commission as well as the name, address and telephone number of the requester.

Hearing documents (submissions) are not available on-line and must be requested through the Secretariat at the address below. For more information, instructions on how to participate in this public hearing process or the complete text of the official Notice of Public Hearing, see www.nuclearsafety.gc.ca, and refer to Notice of Public Hearing 2007-H-16, or contact:

L. Levert, Secretariat
Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission
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Report calls for government action on poverty

By Cheryl Petten
Windspeaker Staff Writer

OTTAWA

A report released by the National Council of Welfare (NCW) on Sept. 18 paints a bleak picture of the challenges faced by Aboriginal children in Canada, and calls on all levels of government and society as a whole to do something about it.

According to Dr. John Rook, chairperson of the NCW, the council decided to examine the socio-economic status of Aboriginal children and youth in order to try to find solutions to the problem of chronic poverty among Aboriginal people. The result of the council's research is *First Nations, Métis and Inuit Children and Youth: Time to Act*, which highlights a number of factors that impact on the lives of Aboriginal families, including higher unemployment rates, lower wages, lack of education opportunities, loss of culture, substandard housing, a higher prevalence of health problems, higher rates of addictions, higher rates of abuse, higher numbers of children in care and higher incarceration rates among Aboriginal people.

According to the report, the number of First Nation youth with disabilities is twice that of the general population and the mortality rate for First Nation infants is 1.5 times the average. An Aboriginal person is nine times as likely to be incarcerated as a non-Aboriginal person, and three times as likely to be a victim

of violent crime. And Inuit youth are 11 times likely to commit suicide than non-Aboriginal youth.

The statistics quoted in the report are alarming. But what's even more alarming is that these types of figures aren't new. But Rook hopes this time, the picture painted by the report will help spur the government into action.

"Well, we're hopeful. And what we're trying to do on both ends is not only to do this work, to share statistics and to paint the bleak picture ... but we're working really hard to build relationships with government people. So the minister that we report to, he's very interested in this. And he sits in the cabinet, so we do believe that pieces of this report will go forward," Rook said.

"We're also finding ways to make presentations to parliamentarians. And we want to raise the whole profile of this problem so that it does get on agendas ... It's kind of like housing. I work in the housing field and in Calgary, we have a big housing problem. And it's not on the agendas of the aldermen and the candidates for mayor. So why? Like this is a major problem. But it's because it's the poorest of the poor and everybody else goes home and lives in their nice home. And it's just like with the Aboriginal problem, people who are not Aboriginal go to nice schools and have enough to eat and don't have trouble finding jobs and aren't up in a northern community with no work and so on. So it's sort of out of sight, out of mind. And what we want to

do is put it more in the consciousness of Canadians so that people are enlightened to know that those bold and holistic changes are needed and can happen. So what we try to do is add our voice to the groundswell of Aboriginal folk who are saying, 'Enough is enough.' We need government action. We have to together fight poverty."

Despite the dire situation facing Aboriginal children and youth, the report does contain some good news—the success stories of individuals, groups or initiatives that are helping to improve the lives of Aboriginal people.

"We were quite excited with some of the success stories," Rook said. "Like the Aboriginal Head Start ... The Aboriginal Head Start is an awesome program. And the stats from that program show considerable success in school for children who've gone through that program. So I know the failure rate for Aboriginal children who are forced into English school is pretty high. And people who have gone through Aboriginal Head Start, the failure rate is reduced considerably. So that was one program that came to mind."

Another success story highlighted in the report is *BladeRunners*, a British Columbia-based program that provides on-the-job construction training and apprenticeships to at risk youth.

"Their stats are pretty amazing. So they take people into a work placement program, and 80 per cent of youth who go through

that program are still employed after two years. And I loved one of their goals. They believe that children need to see their dad come home from work. So even though that wasn't a stated goal, that was one of the things that caught my attention because I know that's a big issue for kids who live in the north and their dads can't find work. And so they get to see a different model. And I thought it was a great program. So there's a few programs like that here and there. We saw those as really important success stories."

Another surprising thing that came out of the report process was a deeper appreciation for the resiliency of Aboriginal people.

"We were kind of blown away because there's so many promises that have been broken by governments, and there's so much despair. But yet we were struck by the hopefulness of so many people. That just blew us away. And here we were, getting more angry by the minute and yet a lot of Aboriginal people, they weren't resigned to it, but they were saying, 'Well, we still believe, even though we're angry too and we have protests and poverty and all of this. We're still hopeful.' So that really struck us. And I think this is an opportunity for all of us to work together to make a big difference here."

The council's report contained a number of recommendations, including development of a national anti-poverty strategy. That recommendation, Rook said, is what the council plans to focus its efforts on next.

"We're meeting in Ottawa the

end of November and that will be the major item on our agenda, is to move towards writing a national anti-poverty strategy that can impact all Canadians. So we don't want to set targets or anything like that yet, until we've talked and looked at what the implications of this are. But just like we did with this report, we want to do our work carefully, have the voice of people, have complementary statistics, and then present it to government with recommendations."

Other recommendations contained in the report included a call for Canadians to build understanding and support for Aboriginal people, take a stand against racism and let all levels of government know Canadian citizens support efforts to improve the lives of Aboriginal people. Other recommendations to government included adopting a long term, measurable strategy for improving the lives of Aboriginal people, ensuring Aboriginal people—men, women and children—play a part in creation of the national anti-poverty strategy, immediately investing the resources needed to meet the basic needs of all Aboriginal children and youth, providing more support to programs that are working, having various levels of government put aside jurisdictional issues to work together to improve the lives of Aboriginal people, and fast tracking efforts to provide Aboriginal communities with governance frameworks and to settle outstanding land claims.

Aboriginal directors named to mental health body

"I've devoted all my professional life to understanding as well as I can the living conditions, life experiences and the perspectives of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people," Madeleine Dion Stout explained.

She was born and raised on reserve and has maintained close ties to her home community, as well as to other Aboriginal communities across Canada. She's a residential school survivor, a trained nurse, an Aboriginal health development consultant, and a researcher and writer. And she has family members and friends who are struggling to deal with mental illness.

Dion Stout will be drawing on all these life experiences in her newest role, that of vice-chair of the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

The commission was created by the federal government earlier this year and, on Aug. 31, the names of the commission's inaugural board of directors were announced. Dion Stout is one of two Aboriginal directors named to the 11 person board.

Dion Stout is encouraged by the inclusion of two Aboriginal people on the board of the new mental health commission.

"It's a very important step

forward, as far as I'm concerned. I think it's always wonderful to have our presence on such cutting edge initiatives in Canada," she said.

"It is important to have strong Aboriginal perspectives on the board, but I think we're also very privileged to have three people who are living with mental illness serving on it as well. So that really keeps us, I think, grounded. And it'll help us to keep front and centre the main reason why we've been established, and that is quite succinctly to find ways to make life better for people living with mental illness."

The commission will focus on three key initiatives—facilitating development of a national mental health strategy, conducting a decade-long anti-stigma campaign, and created a centre for exchange of knowledge relating to mental health issues.

Dion Stout is hopeful that the anti-stigmatization will have a positive impact on Aboriginal people dealing with mental health issues.

"By virtue of the fact that mental illness is stigmatized, so are the sufferers stigmatized. And with that kind of stigmatization comes a real reluctance to seek help, sometimes for very long

periods of time. There's a lot of secrecy associated with this kind of stigma ... and so often this kind of stigmatization affects the sufferers to the extent that they can't continue to work, and it will sometimes drive them to real tragic ends.

"So it's extremely important for the work we do on the commission to pay very close attention to the stigma and discrimination against people who are suffering from mental illness, and how it manifests itself in our communities."

Aboriginal communities will also benefit from the planned knowledge exchange centre, she said.

"I think it'll be a great source of information for Aboriginal people, Aboriginal stakeholders, anybody who feels like they want to keep current on developments in the mental health field," she said.

"And I think it'll be very, very important to bring good research to bear on Aboriginal people, on our mental health needs and the often co-existing problems of mental illness and addictions, for instance."

She'd also like to see research done into subjects like historic trauma, health inequalities,

mental illness among homeless people and the types of barriers faced by Aboriginal people dealing with mental health issues.

"I think those are important concepts and issues I'd like us to examine in the process of our work," she said.

As for the national mental health strategy, Dion Stout is hopeful it will incorporate Aboriginal perspectives.

"I'm really looking forward to a pan-Canadian mental health strategy that really considers very strongly our needs, our aspirations. Possibly even some of our key definitions and language. For instance, in Cree, we have a word, *kitimakisowin*. And it means ... poverties of all kinds. It's not just being economically deprived that's important. It's being politically marginalized, for instance. It's the poverty of participation. It's the poverty of subsistence," she said.

"So I'm hoping that, through the work of the commission, we incorporate that kind of Aboriginal perspective, those kind of key definitions and that kind of language, so it really deepens the understanding of our struggles with mental health."

While the Mental Health Commission of Canada is a

relatively new development in the world of mental health, Dion Stout acknowledged that numerous non-governmental organizations have been working for years at a grassroots level, dealing with mental health issues and working to improve the well being of Canadian people, and that those organizations will have an important role to play in the work being undertaken by the commission.

"It's their work that will inform our work. And it's their achievements, their success stories, their best practices we'd like to build on. It's not as if we're coming in and building something that's brand new. We're building on best practices and success stories ... we'll bring those into sharper relief and get the lessons from them."

Joining Dion Stout on the commission board is Mary Simon, president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

In addition to her role as head of the Inuit organization, Simon chairs the Alianait Committee, which is working to develop a strategy for improving mental health among Inuit people, and is founding chair of the Arctic Children and Youth Foundation.

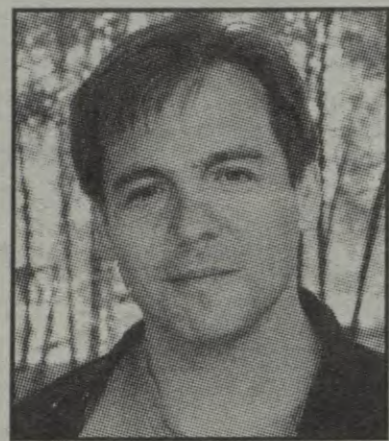
(See Mental Health page 25)

[strictly speaking]

Reserve expansion making neighbours nervous

With Native people, it's always about land, isn't it? If it isn't a land claim, it's a blockade. If it's not a blockade, it's a road access problem. We can be so cranky about these things. For a culture who never believed you could or should own land since the Earth is a living, breathing creation, we First Nations people always seem to find ourselves forced to wrestle with demons associated with land ownership. I suppose it comes with colonization. But up in the Kawarthas, the tables have been turned, oddly enough. Instead of Native people being upset with what the white people are doing with the land, it's the other way around.

My case in point: It seems the quiet community of Curve Lake is not so quiet these days. The surrounding forests and shorelines are alive with the sound of grumbling. The issue at hand: the purchase of over 350 acres of land adjacent to the reserve. The plan: turn it into reserve land so the expanding population of the community will have a place to build their houses, barbecue, have



THE URBANE INDIAN

Drew Hayden
Taylor

Tupperware parties and fry their fish in peace.

Alas, already there is discontent coming from nearby enclaves. Evidently the thought of this First Nations village expanding the boundaries of the reserve beyond what was set way back in 1836 seems to upset a lot of non-Native people. This is understandable after their ancestors went to so much trouble to steal it.

In all fairness, some locals don't mind who owns the land. They are more concerned about it being turned into the demon designation known as "reserve land," which will no doubt lower their property values. Look at it this way—it will just mean lots more room for all the smoke shacks patronized by many of these local people.

Meetings between Curve Lake and local residents have met with

limited success. Local residents are worried at what effect an expanded reserve might have on their cottages and the ability to party on the May 24 weekend. One woman, at a recent meeting, said something akin to: "If I knew I was going to be surrounded by Native people when I bought my land, I wouldn't have." Maybe they're afraid of becoming a white reserve. Ironically, several centuries ago, our ancestors said something similar. "If we knew we were going to be surrounded by all these white people, we shouldn't have let them set up camp. There goes the community." What was that term that was used in the American south when segregating the education system ... equal but separate? In theory, anyways.

Local residents are also worried about lost tax revenue and the

reserve's plans to build a water filtration plant, which many believe will have a dangerous impact on the water available for the nearby trailer park and neighbouring residents. Though oddly enough, nobody consulted the reserve about the impact the trailer park's expansion would have on it. Equal but separate, in theory, again.

So there are two sets of rules when it comes to land ownership in this country. White people (don't get me wrong, many of us in Curve Lake have best friends who are white. I personally have a white person come in twice a month to clean my house) can buy all the land they want, but Native people shouldn't.

Centuries ago, before advanced civilization blessed us with jet skis and house boats that currently rule the Kawartha lakes, we were forced to surrender most of this country in treaties. So be it. Part of those treaties was promises of education to try to assimilate us into the larger Canadian society. Part of that society includes the wanting to buy land to live on, raise our kids on, recreate on, wear tank tops extolling the virtues of golf on, and so on.

Perhaps they were too successful in their plans because now we want some of that original land back.

Here's the ironic part—we purchase it at better than market value, using the same methods they did, and now we're the bad guys again. I guess they think that makes us Indian givers. How odd.

But, as many of us believe, it all works out in the end. Some will call it cosmic justice. Others Karma. For instance, one year after the Curve Lake reserve was established, hundreds of acres of our meager reserve were flooded out for the building of the Trent Severn Waterway. Hardly seems fair.

One could argue we are just trying to get back, bit by bit, what we were originally promised. In fact, while everybody has been arguing about those 350 acres and the potential water project, the reserve quietly bought another 100 acres recently that nobody seems to know about.

I think that in the future if Native people feel the urge to sell any more land, to avoid any more entanglements like this, we should just sell it the way they sell things to us—by the kilogram.

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KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

Overview of the Integrated Power System Plan (IPSP) and Its Implications for the Future of Ontario

Ronald L. Jamieson
Member of the Board of Ontario Power Authority

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Festival for all nations now 10 days long

By Gauri Chopra
Windspeaker Staff Writer

WINNIPEG

The second annual Manito Ahbee Festival is set to begin Oct. 26. This time around the program has been extended from a four-day event to a 10-day event, and is packed with performances and audiovisual displays from all over the world.

Along with an international powwow, education day, trade show, music festival and Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Awards, this year's festival will also include a Métis celebration and a visual arts component.

The festival has once again received \$390,000 under the Winnipeg Partnership Agreement, which provides funding for initiatives that affect economic development, training and employment of Aboriginal people in the city.

Co-ordinated by the Manitoba Aboriginal Music Host Committee (MAMHC), the festival is expected to attract thousands of people over the 10-day period.

"Manito Ahbee is actually an Aboriginal word meaning 'where the creator sits.' It's a sacred site here in Manitoba, at the Whiteshell Provincial Park. So it's a significant sacred site and was a gathering place in the old days for the medicine people. It was like

a conference site where people would come together and share their ideas, their new breakthroughs in medicine. And so we borrowed the name for our festival, which is a cultural festival of music and dance. And we also invented and developed the Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Awards," said Erroll Ranville, Manito Ahbee's executive producer.

Organizers of the festival and the music awards see their events as being different from other festivals, Ranville explained.

"We like to be different from any of the music awards, like the Junos and the Canadian Country Music Awards ... the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards, the Western Canadian Music Awards. They are all industry-driven and they are chosen by a panel of judges, the winners are, and the nominees. So what we wanted to do is make something completely transparent, something that people could see. Like all of the submissions, we post them all online," said Ranville.

There were 152 submissions for the music awards this year. Nominees are selected through popular vote, in three rounds. Fans, friends and family vote for those that make it to the final nominations and it's those votes that decide the eventual winners.

Among the most significant new addition to this year's festival, Ranville said, is the Métis

celebration.

"I think the Métis component is the biggest new part. We have included the French Métis from across the river, and then we also have the Winnipeg Métis presenting the Saturday and Sunday Métis cultural events. And then, the other big part is, we added an Aboriginal arts component this year, with all of the five Aboriginal art galleries in the city," said Ranville.

The festival will also be hosting the third national Assembly of First Nations Youth Summit, with about 600 youth from across the country expected to attend. The summit will take place at the Winnipeg Convention Centre from Oct. 30 to Nov. 1.

The economic effect of the festival on the city of Winnipeg is large, and Manito Ahbee has received funding from several large corporations, as well as the provincial and federal government. Among the 26 corporate sponsors of the festival are names like Manitoba Hydro, APTN and IBM.

"I would never be able to do the awards without IBM. They actually provided about \$200,000 worth of actual hardware that lives at an Aboriginal Manitoba company here called Fortune Four. And that is how we are able to do the awards. We have the capacity to take up to 50,000 hits at one time if it becomes necessary, if everyone votes on the



Organizers of the Manito Ahbee Festival are hoping to build on the success of last year's inaugural festival when they host 10-days of music and cultural celebrations in Winnipeg from Oct. 26 to Nov. 4.

same day," said Ranville.

Final voting for the Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Awards ends on Oct. 15, and Manito Ahbee begins Oct. 26. The festival kicks off with a two-day music fest, which will feature music from both local and international artists.

The music awards gala is set to take place Nov. 2, hosted by Gabrielle Miller and Lorne Cardinal from the popular television show *Corner Gas*.

More information about the festival can be found online at www.manitoahbee.com/

Toronto festival gearing up for 14th running

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are encouraged to participate in this year's Canadian Aboriginal Festival, North America's largest multi-disciplined Aboriginal arts event, being held in Toronto from Nov. 30 to Dec. 2.

This year marks the 14th annual anniversary of the festival, which will be held at the Rogers Centre.

Participants will enjoy the spectacular sights and sounds of the annual powwow, the main highlight of the festival. Three grand entries will enter Roger's Centre during the last two days of the festival.

The first two grand entries will enter Dec. 1 at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. The last grand entry will be Dec. 2 at 12 p.m. Close to 1,000 young and old dancers from across North America will enter the dance circle together displaying a beautiful and traditional ceremony.

The ninth annual Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards (CAMAs) are also part of the Toronto festival. The awards gala will be held the evening of Nov. 30 at Rogers Centre.

Each year, the CAMAs honour and celebrate the rich diversity of Canada's top Aboriginal artists. Last year, the Kahurangi Maori Dancers of New Zealand gave a memorable performance that closed out the CAMAs. They

have been invited back again this year.

In an effort to educate the younger generations—both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal—about Canada's First Peoples, Education Day was created in consultation with the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario and with support of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

More than 30 teaching stations will be set up around Rogers Centre for Education Day, which runs from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Nov. 30.

The stations will be repeated every half hour to give students a chance to participate in as many activities as possible.

The interactive stations will include hands-on crafts, games, discussion of languages and storytelling.

The students will have the opportunity to participate in traditional dancing and will also have a chance to practice some lacrosse skills.

Students will also have a chance to visit the ever-popular market area before it opens to the public.

The market will run from Nov. 30 to Dec. 2 and will feature arts, crafts, clothing and jewelry. To take part in Education Day, classes must register by Nov. 19.

More information about the Canadian Aboriginal Festival can be found online at www.canab.com.



LAURA SUTHERS

The powwow is one of the highlights of the annual Canadian Aboriginal Festival held in Toronto. This year's festival runs from Nov. 30 to Dec. 2 at Rogers Centre.

New tobacco control strategy falls short

By Joe Couture
Windspeaker Writer

REGINA

On Aug. 20, the federal government announced new goals for reducing smoking rates, but according to prominent experts in Saskatchewan, those goals are unrealistic, especially considering the lack of a tobacco control strategy for First Nations people.

Tony Clement, the federal health minister, said the new Federal Tobacco Control Strategy will aim to reduce Canada's overall smoking prevalence from the 2006 figure of 19 per cent to 12 per cent by 2011, mainly through programs designed to get smokers to butt out.

Rhae Ann Bromley is the spokesperson for Saskatchewan's Heart and Stroke Foundation, which works closely on tobacco control issues with the Canadian Cancer Society. The 12 per cent goal is overly aggressive, she said, especially in light of the fact that smoking rates in Saskatchewan are higher than the Canadian average along all demographics.

Considering that last fall the federal government cut funding to the Aboriginal tobacco control strategy, Bromley said the government will have a hard time reaching its goal in Aboriginal communities.

"I'm not sure this can be effective unless it's in conjunction with renewed funding for the First Nations and Inuit Tobacco Control Strategy," she said.

"We know that smoking rates in many First Nations communities are even triple that of non-Aboriginal populations, so we really have to commit resources to helping bring those rates down."

Regina-based expert Shaine Peters agrees. He's worked for

more than a decade on tobacco control issues around the country, and as a public speaker on the issue, he has spent time working in numerous Aboriginal communities.

"For me, (the federal government's plan) just doesn't even make sense," he said. "It's just words ... I try my best not to be pessimistic, but for 10 years now of following federal government and even provincial government announcements, I can recall at least eight or nine federal government announcements saying they're going to deal with the issue and yet we're still at square one, where we were 10 years ago."

The lack of an Aboriginal tobacco strategy is of particular concern for Peters as well.

"Saskatchewan currently sits around 11 or 12 per cent of the population being First Nations, with around 25 per cent of young people, I believe, under the age of seven being of First Nations descent," he said.

"We know the smoking rates among some Aboriginal communities are significantly higher," he said. "We're looking at around 60 per cent (of people who smoke.) That being said, what's also interesting is that a year ago, the federal government cut the Aboriginal tobacco control strategy, so any progress that was being made was completely eliminated. If they do ever institute another one, it will be starting from ground zero again, because you have to start from scratch."

Peters believes that to be effective, tobacco control strategies need to happen from the community level and be grassroots-based, so the elimination of the strategy was especially problematic. Promises were made to introduce another strategy, but the government has

not yet followed through.

"Cutting the Aboriginal tobacco strategy, whether they felt it was working or not, was absolutely inexcusable," Peters said. "I think what the Conservative government failed to realize is that in any issue that you're tackling, it takes time."

Peters has a list of a number of issues that are top priorities for reducing tobacco use among First Nations people. No. 1 is making changes to the tobacco tax structures.

"Status First Nations do not have to pay some of the taxes on cigarette products, which basically reduces the cost nearly in half," he said. "With cigarette products, it's a fact that with increased price levels, you do see the numbers (of smokers) decrease. As smoking becomes more expensive, people do quit or reduce significantly."

Peters suggests the federal government should allow First Nations to impose a tobacco tax at the band level. That would serve two purposes—the cost of smoking would become more prohibitive, and the band could use the money raised through the tax to fund community-based anti-smoking programs.

In the past six years, tax-exempt shipments of cigarettes to Saskatchewan First Nations have risen from 37 million to 245 million cigarettes per year, he added. There isn't a limit on the number of cigarettes a person can purchase, so many people are buying more cigarettes than they'll smoke and selling them to non-Aboriginal people for a profit, but still at a lower cost.

"We are finding non-Aboriginal people basically taking advantage of this loophole either through people they know, or phony treaty cards, or many locations may not even ID you or ask for a status card," he said.

Shaine Peters poses with two of the cigarette brands that use Aboriginal cultural icons on their product packaging.



In addition, certain cigarette brands are now being designed to be more appealing to Aboriginal smokers.

"What we're seeing is new tobacco products that are popping up," he said.

"They're using cultural icons or symbols as a means to promote the product. On one of the two brands in Saskatchewan, there's a tipi. On the other, there is a cartoon picture of a feather. What they're doing is basically popularizing or glamorizing the icons that are well-respected in the First Nations community and attaching them to a manufactured product that kills one in two people that use it.

"It definitely encourages sales," he continued. "Every time I go to the (First Nations) gas stations, I always ask, 'What is the top selling brand?' And it is those two brands, hands down ... They just

say, 'Hey look, they're First Nations cigarettes.' Somebody's getting rich making these. They're not any more healthy or less healthy than regular brands. Some people would argue with me and say, 'It's cultural.' Tobacco is cultural.' But smoking a package of cigarettes a day is not."

Issues of brands aside, the government needs to do more in terms of funding anti-smoking programs in general, and needs to involve Aboriginal people more, especially when it comes to things like mass media campaigns, Peters explained.

"We absolutely need to get Elders on board," he said. "We need them to unite and say, 'We are going to address this issue.' But I think in the Aboriginal community, there's a feeling there are more important issues to deal with. Smoking unfortunately isn't a top priority right now."

University works to train more health care workers

By Heather Andrews Miller
Windspeaker Writer

LETHBRIDGE, Alta.

An initiative to increase the long-term supply of First Nations, Inuit and Métis health care providers has provided new funding for a nursing program at the University of Lethbridge.

Over the next three years, one million dollars will support students who are interested in entering nursing or other programs in the health care field at the university.

According to Dr. Chris Hosgood, dean of health sciences, the news was welcomed at the university as well as in the Aboriginal community.

"We worked extensively with the Blood Tribe Health Centre at Standoff, some 45 minutes away, to establish the project. And we have created a partnership with them so students can take some

of their clinical practicum there. We're all very excited about the program," he said.

The Health Canada funding is for an initial three-year period, and the university feels confident that the success of the program will ensure the fourth year's monetary support will be forthcoming. Health Canada works with First Nations, the provinces and territories to identify the best options and approaches for improving the health outcomes of all Aboriginal peoples, and the University of Lethbridge program fits nicely into that goal. The funding is provided under the Aboriginal Health Human Resources Initiative, which aims to increase the long-term supply of First Nations, Inuit and Métis health care providers.

As a support program, the students will have access to a unique buddy system, a social network, and a bridge between

academic curriculum and the student's traditional culture. Mature students who have been out of the classroom for a number of years, or those lacking the required academic prerequisites, will attend a pre-nursing program for one year before beginning the four year bachelor of nursing.

"The idea is to graduate Aboriginal nurses with the standards of any registered nurse. There are many who would make excellent candidates but don't have the educational background, such as those who didn't take the pure math and chemistry at high school," said Hosgood.

Everything was in place before the funding was announced, so classes were able to begin in early September, immediately after the funding announcement was made, for both the pre-nursing and first-year programs.

"There are more than 20 eager students going full steam ahead. They are a nice mix of students

just out of high school as well as those who are returning after an absence from formal studies while working in other professions or raising families," he said.

The buddy system that has been developed will match students coming into the program with those more advanced in their studies.

"This will come into existence after the first year, when we have some seasoned students to share experiences with newcomers," said Hosgood.

"Nursing, like many professional degrees, is a demanding program and there are lots of stresses that students go through. Getting ready for midterms is an example."

One of the goals of the program is to educate nurses who will accept on-reserve employment opportunities, in addition to those who accept positions in the larger cities and towns.

"Graduates with a nursing

degree can literally go anywhere to work as they're in high demand. But a sense of community is central to the program, with Aboriginal values at the core of their studies," he stated.

"It's integral to offer and explore a combination of western and traditional sciences and medicinal practices."

A further goal for all nursing students, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, is to have them exposed to, and familiar with, First Nations values and traditions, so all are comfortable in both communities, he concluded.

"Aboriginal traditions play a role in the healing process, and cultural sensitivity is included for every student. We believe this is a winning formula that will result in a wonderful group of capable and willing graduates of the nursing program enjoying their profession in the community."

[health]

Physician travels the world to meet healers

By Dianne Meili
Windspeaker Staff Writer

DAWSON CITY, Yukon

The landscape flames with fall colours of yellow and red as Dr. Daniele Behn drives along a Yukon highway, tears streaming from her eyes.

"It's just so beautiful I have to cry. It's really stunning how the world tries to show us beauty every day if we will just slow down and open our eyes to see it," she exclaimed.

Her new awareness of the natural world is only one of a myriad of ways her life has changed since meeting Indigenous healers, shamans and medicine people for a 13-part documentary for VisionTV called *Medicine Woman*.

During filming, the Eh-Cho Dene woman, born in Fort Nelson, B.C., was introduced to the power of herbs, songs, dreams, ceremonies and medicine wheels for healing—alternatives that can work alongside conventional medicine.

Repeatedly awestruck by the effectiveness of some of these traditional methods, she experienced her own 'healing miracle' with an African medicine man of the San people. Sick with

a touch of the flu during filming, cramps and diarrhea threatened to interrupt her attendance at a community healing ceremony until the medicine man sang and danced around her.

"He placed his hand on my chest and from that moment on I felt fine!" she exclaimed.

"Dr. Lewis Mehl-Madrona, a Cherokee-Lakota, says we should prepare ourselves for miracles so we can be ready when they happen. I saw and heard all kinds of miracles when I travelled," Behn, 28, said in a telephone interview from her home in Dawson City where she is a family physician.

In Peru she met a woman from the highlands introduced to her as Julia, who rejected conventional Lima doctors' prescription of surgery to heal her son's liver cancer.

"Julia knew that wasn't it. She healed him herself. She prayed and asked to be shown the plants that would help him. Her faith was so strong that there was another way, and she was right. Now she works with about 230 different types of plants."

Standing in Julia's garden, away from Spanish and English translators and crew during filming, the two communicated in their own way.

"We just took in the beauty of the plants and finally Julia breathed the words 'magnifico, divino'. She didn't have to say a word. I knew exactly what she meant. Her shining eyes and her expression said 'these are such wonderful gifts from the Creator that we need to honour them,' Behn said.

"Now I walk to work here in Dawson City and I always notice the plants around me. I may not know what they do or what they hold, but I look forward to the time when I will get to know about them. Maybe I won't learn today, but I know that time will come."

Shirley Cheechoo of M'Chigeeng First Nation in Ontario is the award-winning director of the series. She experienced similar wonder in the healers she met, especially Peru's Ruben Orellano Neuro.

He looked at me and told me I should get my liver checked out," said Cheechoo. "I did when I got back to Canada and found I had a liver infection. How did he know about my problem just by looking at me?"

Cheechoo was overwhelmed to travel to places with *Medicine Woman* that she normally wouldn't have visited.

"Here I was in Africa teaching

songs in my Cree language to little kids and women. The African San chief and his wife adopted me. I still keep in touch with a lot of the people. In some ways we were only scratching the surface when we were first getting to know some of them. I can always go back and get to know them more deeply. Maybe I'll do future projects with them."

Behn's career also bristles with possibility opened up by *Medicine Woman*. She's attending workshops with other healers who are blending western and traditional medicine, and though her patients may not know it, she is praying for them and applying methods she's learned about to help them get well.

"I'm telling them to look at disease differently. Western medicine is a band-aid. It only treats symptoms. Illness is sometimes a gift, telling us to change our lives. If someone comes to me with diabetes, yes, they have to learn to control blood sugar levels. But I also ask them to explore why it is they think this disease has chosen to stay in their bodies. Some Elders say Aboriginal people have so much diabetes because the sweetness has been taken out of our lives. Our bodies, minds and

spirits are connected, so look at the cues your body is giving you and also look at all areas of your life that might be causing this.

"Maybe that illness is actually a blessing, Creator telling you to make changes in your life. And put out prayers into the world for the teachers and guides who can help you in your path to wellness. They are out there and you only need to ask for them."

This last point - that the universe provides - consistently surfaces in Behn's new philosophy.

"So many people are wondering what their purpose is here on earth. Well, the healers taught me we are all related. Anything can happen, beyond the physical, when we connect with each other, and spirit is working. If you are mindful and grateful for the gifts you've been given, and you are moving forward with an open heart and the understanding you're connected with the air, the earth, and the water—that spirit is all around you—well then anything is possible. There is always something larger than ourselves rooting for our best life."

Medicine Woman premiered on VisionTV on Sept. 3. It airs Mondays at 10 p.m. ET and repeats on Saturdays at 8 p.m. ET.

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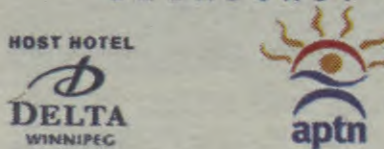
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Minerva Foundation helps career oriented women

By **SHAUNA LEWIS**
Raven's Eye Writer

VANCOUVER

In a time when more and more women are climbing the rungs of the career ladder, one Vancouver organization is at the forefront in helping BC's Aboriginal women ascend into the professional world a little easier with more support.

"We want to provide Aboriginal women with the tools to create sustainable change," said Denise Coutts, executive director of the Minerva Foundation for BC Women. "We've just taken an existing model and we've now applied it to building capacity within the Aboriginal community," she added.

The new program, which

focuses on providing career-oriented support to BC's Aboriginal women, is called Combining Our Strength Initiative. While this unique initiative mirrors existing Minerva programs, the culturally-inspired component is unique to the needs of First Nations Women. Since its inception in 1999, the Minerva Foundation has been committed to helping women obtain careers through providing workshops on leadership, distributing grants to non-profit organizations, providing education bursaries to single mothers, new immigrants and disabled women and connecting career-minded women with professionals in the community for the purpose of

networking and mentorship.

While the Foundation's mandate has always been centered on the inclusion of women from varied fields of study, age, sexual orientation and cultural and ethnic backgrounds; it wasn't until 2005 when the foundations directors acknowledged a need to incorporate programs specifically for Aboriginal women.

While the Combining Our Strength initiative is only in its pilot year, two new programs have already emerged, with another set to launch in mid October. The Aboriginal Learning to Lead Program, which took place at St. John's College on the University of British Columbia campus in May, had 45 Aboriginal women of varied age groups and

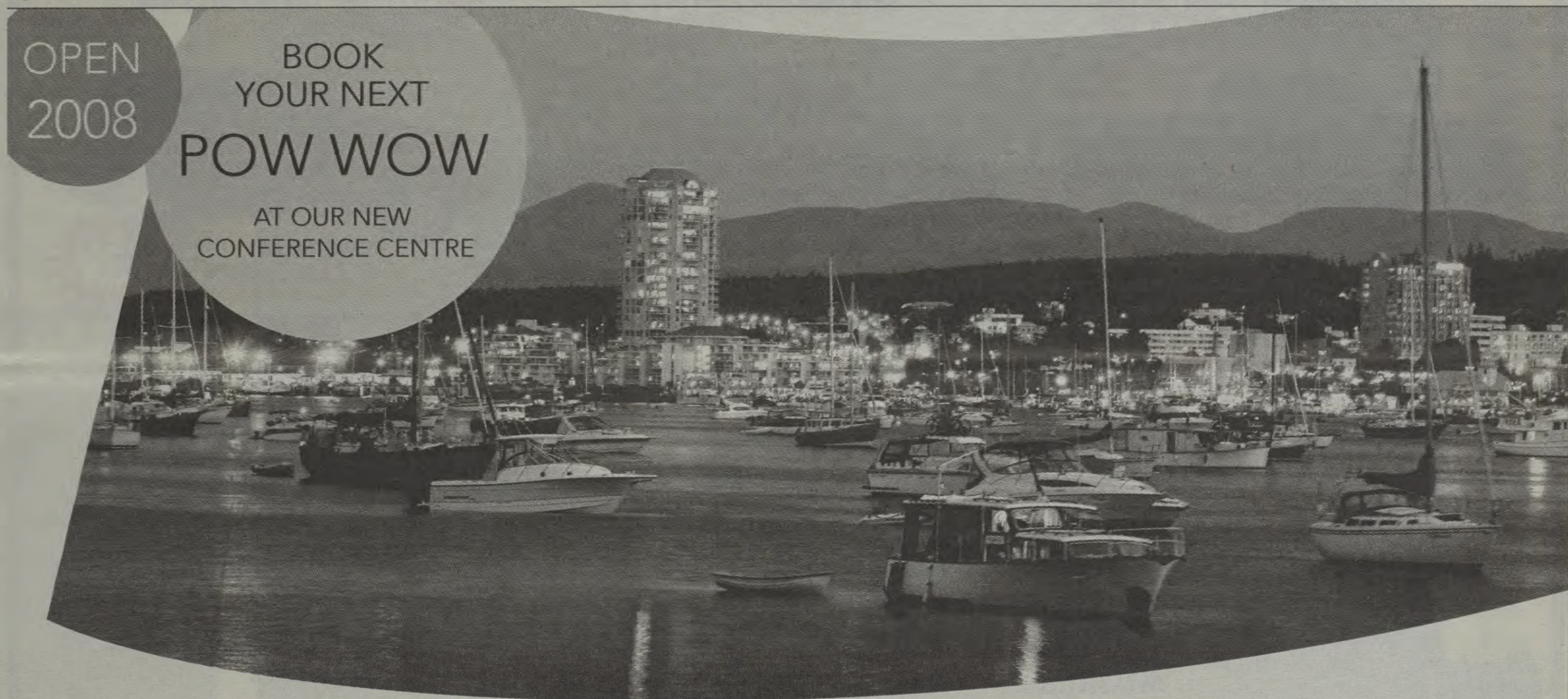
communities come together for a weekend of sharing their experiences, while working toward a unified goal of strengthening their leadership skills. Another new program geared toward providing education opportunities for First Nations women was centered on education bursaries. Coutts said since 2001, her organization has allocated over \$1 million in funds to help B.C. women with their educational pursuits. The purpose of these bursaries was to assist single-mothers with their education, re-train mature women re-entering the workforce and to assist in the advancement of women moving into non-traditional fields of study.

Earlier this year, Bell Canada

donated \$500,000 to the Aboriginal programs and the Province of B.C. provided over \$300,000 for the cause. Recently, bursaries specifically for Aboriginal women have been provided from the foundation and an additional \$55,000 has gone into assuring First Nations women get the financial support needed to achieve academic success.

Beginning Oct 16, the five month long Helping Women Find Work program will see twenty young First Nations women ages 21 to 35 brainstorming with career-trainers and professional women in areas of law, education, health care, social work and the arts.

(See Career page 25.)



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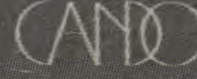
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Alberta Sweetgrass: Special Section providing news from Alberta

Youth programs receive much needed funding

BY GAURI CHOPRA
Sweetgrass Staff Writer

EDMONTON

Five Edmonton based Aboriginal youth initiatives received some much needed grants from the Canadian Heritage department in late July. The overall sum of \$851,020 was provided for specific programs that focus on helping Aboriginal youth make positive life choices.

Each organization was allotted different amounts of money depending on the programs they provide. The five organizations to receive money were, Native Counselling Services of Alberta, John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights, Métis Child and Family Services Society, Edmonton Native Healing Centre and the Edmonton Native Basketball Association.

Funding for the groups came from different facets of the Canadian Heritage department. The majority of the money came from the Urban Multi-purpose Aboriginal Youth Centre Initiative. The program provides support to initiatives that work

with Aboriginal inner-city youth between the ages of 15 and 24.

The other facet of the Canadian Heritage department that did put forth money was the Exchanges Canada Initiative's Youth Forums component.

Native Counselling Services of Alberta received the most money—\$379,000. It was put towards four programs: Negan Tapeh (Looking towards the future), the Aboriginal Multi-Media Arts program, a gang prevention/intervention program, and the Nikanihew Future Leaders Program.

"This year we were lucky we had the four programs that were funded. I think that particularly with the gang prevention program and intervention program, I think it's very timely at this point, because gangs are becoming an issue of concern in the city of Edmonton and have been identified by many organizations as being an emerging issue. So if we can get out and talk to service providers and parents and children at risk, then we are starting to do part of our part," said director of



Students from the Striving for Excellence program take a break from the busy and hectic city life and spend a day in the great outdoors.

operations Robyn Scott.

The John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights was founded in 2000 as a non-profit organization. It was given \$111,000, for its annual Global Youth Assembly. The assembly took place August 1 to 4, in

Edmonton. Métis Child and Family Services, also based in Edmonton, received \$131,020 for its CHOICES program. The program strives to encourage Métis youth to stay in school, using cultural methods. Students are referred to the program by their schools, and get involved in various activities such as Métis outfit making, educational field trips and cultural teaching sessions taught by Elders. The Edmonton Native Healing Society put in an application to the department of Canadian Heritage and received \$140,000 for its Striving for Excellence program.

The program is youth driven and focuses on teaching participants useful and culturally sensitive life skills. The three 12-week sessions are open to Aboriginal youth ages 15 to 24. Over the 12 weeks, youth have access to language courses, young

mothers courses, one-on-one counselling and suicide prevention and intervention.

"We offer youth programming throughout the year, so all of the money we received helps us keep our programs running. We are a community based agency, and we work with urban Aboriginal people," said Michelle Nieviadomy, youth program coordinator.

The final youth initiative to receive funding this year was the Edmonton Native Basketball Association. The association received \$90,000.

The two-year-old program provides a place for Aboriginal youth to remain active while gaining self-esteem and life-skills, as well as an appreciation for teamwork. The group also encourages participants to stay drug and alcohol free through substance abuse education and gang awareness training.



Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc.

BOARD OF DIRECTOR POSITION

Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc. (AMDI), an affiliate of the Métis Nation of Alberta Association, is a for profit Aboriginal Capital Corporation delivering a range of Financial and Business Advisory Services to Alberta resident Métis and Non-Status Indians through its office in Edmonton. AMDI is currently inviting applications for a Board of Director position. Principally, the Board of Directors provides quality direction to the total affairs of the business that will ensure the development and growth of the company in products, services, markets, and financial results. Accordingly, this is a volunteer position of considerable responsibility and substance, requiring a significant time commitment.

Qualifications for AMDI's Board of Directors include:

- 1) Should be an Alberta resident Métis or Non-Status Indian;
- 2) Must have a successful business and/or related professional background;
- 3) Must possess exemplary character, integrity and background; and
- 4) Must be willing to sign an oath of confidentiality and undergo external checks as may be appropriate;
- 5) Cannot apply if previous bankrupt or under bankruptcy protection;
- 6) Possess experience serving on Policy Governance Boards and provide contacts for reference purposes;
- 7) Willing to commit the time to attend four face-to-face meetings per year as well as a minimum of four teleconference meetings per year averaging three hours per meeting.

Interested parties should submit their résumé marked "*Personal & Confidential*" together with a minimum of two references and a brief note clarifying their interest, to:

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c/o Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc.
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Edmonton AB T5M 2N4
Fax (780) 454-5997

CLOSING DATE:
NOVEMBER 15, 2007



Private Dwight Wolf Tail (middle) from Lethbridge was just one of 53 youth who graduated from military training at the Canadian Forces Base in Wainwright Aug. 16. Wolf Tail was awarded the dancing stick for being the second ranked candidate for the Bold Eagle program. The 18-year-old program is set to run again next year from July to August.

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Ontario Birchbark: Special Section providing news from Ontario

Flag raising demonstrates strong partnership

BY GAURI CHOPRA
Birchbark Staff Writer

SUDBURY

A flag was raised Sept. 13, to symbolize a 20-year relationship between Cambrian College and the Wabnode Institute, a college department that is solely focused on supporting Aboriginal students.

The flag hoisting took place on Cambrian's Barrydowne campus. It represents their longstanding relationship with the Anishnaabe community.

"It is a partnership that goes beyond providing opportunities for academic and professional development. It recognizes that education must also promote social and cultural growth and respect the distinct heritage of the individual," said Cambrian President Sylvia Barnard in a related press release.

The ceremony included a smudging and drum circle along with speeches from Cambrian President, and Wabnode Institute Chairperson, Joyce Helmer.

The symbols of a sweat lodge an eagle and the school colors of the flag was raised and are

believed to be very significant to the Anishnaabe community.

"The Sweat lodge is the first school where our first teaching or real learning happens, the eagle is the messenger that carried the intent to the Creator, the gold and maroon are the school colors but also signify the sunrise," said Helmer.

The Cambrian College and Wabnode partnership has created several initiatives, which include the establishment of the Cambrian Native Students' Association, access to specialized programs services and facilities, Anishnaabe peer mentoring, and employment and training support.

Overall, the Wabnode Institute provides services to close to 400 Aboriginal students on campus students and 150 Aboriginal students through distance learning.

The institute recently celebrated their 20th anniversary, on March 10, with an anniversary Pow Wow.

Over the past 20 years, the institute has worked on partnerships with other colleges and universities that provide

programs specifically for Aboriginal students.

"We are launching a new cultural program in November. It is already in session with Elders, drum circles, meditation for all of the students, staff and administration at Cambrian College, not just Aboriginal students. We are having a naming ceremony for the student lounge, hosting an Aboriginal housing forum in the spring, and we are hosting a joint Pow Wow with Laurentian University and the Greater City of Sudbury in April," said Helmer.

The institute also partners with First Nations organizations. Their current partners are the Anishinabek Educational Institute, and the Oshki-Pimache-O-Win Educational and Training Institute. Through these partnerships, students have access to General Educational Development (GED) upgrading programs that will help them with gaining grade 12 equivalency.

With the help of such partners, Wabnode is able to provide Anishinabek programs including, Anishinabek Governance and Management, First Nations



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAMBRIAN COLLEGE'S MARKETING AND INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

The Wabnode Kwe singers perform during the flag raising on Sept. 13 at Cambrian College. From left to right: Debbie Robertson, Loretta Assinewai, Nina Naumenko, Marilyn Rasi, Ann Frampton

Business Administration, and Native Early Childhood Development, among others.

The institute also holds on campus Job Fairs that bring First Nations employers to campus, making it easier for students to find employment within Aboriginal sectors.

Wabnode has had a significant

influence on educating Aboriginal students, and they hope to provide additional services to their students.

"It provides us with a sense of pride and belonging," said Nakina Stevens, a second year Early Childhood Education student at Cambrian.

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New identification rules

- To register to vote, you must show election staff proof of identity and proof of where you reside.
- You will be asked to prove your identity when you go to vote.

For more information on identification, visit www.elections.on.ca

Voting for an electoral system in the referendum

When you go to vote, you will receive two ballots. One ballot is for choosing a candidate in the election. The other ballot is for choosing an electoral system in the referendum. The referendum ballot looks like this:

Which electoral system should Ontario use to elect members to the provincial legislature? / Quel système électoral l'Ontario devrait-il utiliser pour élire les députés provinciaux à l'Assemblée législative?

The existing electoral system (First-Past-the-Post) / L'actuel système électoral (système de la majorité relative)

The alternative electoral system proposed by the Citizens' Assembly (Mixed Member Proportional) / L'autre système électoral proposé par l'Assemblée des citoyens (système de représentation proportionnelle mixte)

Look for more information in September and October about the referendum. In the meantime, visit the web site for details, www.yourbigdecision.ca

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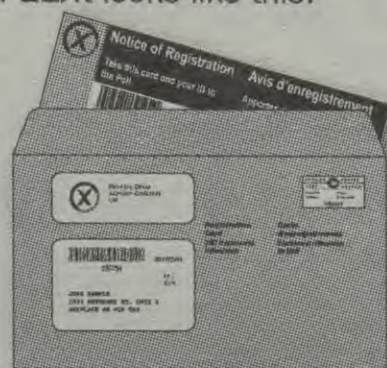
To be able to vote, you must:

- be 18 years of age or older by October 10 **and**
- be a Canadian citizen **and**
- reside in Ontario **and**
- be on the Voters List or be added to the Voters List when you go to vote.

If you have not lived in Ontario for the last two years, you may still be able to vote. Call us for more information.

AM I ON THE VOTERS LIST?

If you are on the Voters List, you should receive your Notice of Registration card (voter card) by September 21. It looks like this:



Take your ID and card with you when you go to vote. Please note that your Notice of Registration card may not serve as a form of identification. If the information on your card is not up-to-date, please contact us to find out how to have it corrected.

WHAT IF I DO NOT GET A VOTER CARD BY SEPTEMBER 21?

You can check now to see if your name is on the Voters List. Go to our web site and click on *Am I on the List?* If you don't get your card, your information may not be up-to-date or you may not be on the Voters List. You can get on the List or update your information in the following ways:

- At your local Elections Ontario returning office. Contact us for the address of your local Elections Ontario returning office.
- At your advance poll voting location between September 22 and October 4, or
- At your voting location on Election and Referendum Day, October 10.

You must have proof of identity and residence to register and proof of identity to vote.

CAN I STILL VOTE IF I AM NOT ON THE VOTERS LIST?

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Yes, at an advance poll.

When: At your local Elections Ontario returning office – Saturday, September 22 to Thursday,

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Where: Check the daily newspaper in your area for advance poll addresses near you or the back of your voter card.

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More promises for Aboriginal people

Progressive Conservative Leader John Tory said he would establish a one law for all legal system if he's elected premier of Ontario on Oct. 10. He said he would create a zero-tolerance policy on Aboriginal land occupations. Tory is referring to blockade's near Sharbot Lake and the standoff in Caledonia.

"For over a year and a half Dalton McGuinty has permitted an illegal occupation to paralyze the entire community," said Tory in a news release. "He has failed the people of Ontario."

Tory told Osprey Media Group during a conference call that he would have "firm but friendly" conversations with Aboriginal leaders to tell them his government would not stand for

such tactics. He didn't elaborate on what he meant in reference to the Sharbot Lake blockade.

In his vow to "uphold one law for all," Tory said he would address many of the longstanding issues of First Nations communities. He said he would commit to making it a priority to resolve Aboriginal land claims, working in a spirit of partnership with Aboriginal peoples and the federal government. He also says that he will work with Aboriginal peoples to address the deplorable conditions in many Aboriginal communities.

For more on the list of "promises" for Aboriginal communities go to www.ontariopc.com/meet_john.asp.

Funding secured for new child care spaces

The County of Lambton has received \$1.2 million from the provincial government to develop 48 new off-reserve child care services for Aboriginal children.

The spaces will be available to Aboriginal children from birth to six years old. Although these spaces will be located in Sarnia, they will be accessible to Aboriginal families across Lambton County. The spaces provide an opportunity for off-reserve families to maintain and preserve their Aboriginal culture and tradition.

The County has outlined that it will partner with the Sarnia Native Friendship Centre Committee (SNFCC), the YMCA and London Bridge Child Care Services to develop the culturally appropriate child care spaces.

"Culturally sensitive settings will provide children with greater confidence, will ground them in their traditions and provide a sense that they can thrive in any environment," said Stacey Nahdee, a member of the SNFCC.



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Saskatchewan Sage: Special Section providing news from Saskatchewan

Camp connects youth to their community

BY CHERYL PETTEN
Sage Staff Writer

WHITE BEAR, FIRST NATION

For three days at the end of August, a group of young people from White Bear First Nation got a chance to learn more about the history of their community and the role they can play in its future.

The youth were participants in a cultural science camp, organized by the community's Youth Wellness Centre and held at Camp Wabimasquah at the White Bear Lake Resort from Aug. 20 to 22.

While a number of cultural camps have been held in the community in the past, this event was the first cultural science camp, explained Susan Jolly-Maxie, youth director for the Youth Wellness Centre. With the science aspect added in, the event had more of an environmental focus, looking at the link between traditions and teachings and the environment, she said.

The idea for the camp grew out of something that happened in the community in the spring when some of the young people were helping to deliver 5,000 trees to people on the reserve.

"And when they were delivering them, I couldn't believe the kids were saying, 'Wow, I've never been on this part of the reserve. Who lives here?' or 'Is this our reserve?' And we were just really struck with the fact that the kids didn't know their community," Jolly-Maxie said.

As part of the camp, participants took in a science fair organized by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN). They also took part in a scavenger hunt, using maps and

compasses to navigate their way throughout their community. In the process, they spent a lot of time hiking around the reserve and listening as Elders and other community members told stories and shared information.

The participants were divided into two teams for the scavenger hunt the Eagles and the Seagulls. They competed against each other in the hunt but at the end of the camp the teams tied for first place.

One of the highlights of the three-day camp was when J.R. MacArthur hiked with the youth to the top of Heart Hill, one of the most sacred sites in the community, and talked about the spirits that protect the hill and why it is so sacred, Jolly-Maxie said. Another highlight was when White Bear Chief Brian Standingready went out on the prairie with the participants and told them about the treaty and about the community's attempts to have the reserve boundary amended to take in a portion of traditional land not currently within the reserve limits.

"They were really interested, asking lots of questions," she said. "You could tell that they really enjoyed it from the questions that they asked."

The youth also took in a presentation about the oil and gas industry and paid a visit to an old, isolated hunting cabin and a site that, a few decades back, was home to a community garden.

The Mother's on the Move garden was established about 40 years ago, Jolly-Maxie said. The site is marked by a sign that bears the names of all the people who helped get the garden going.

"And we went there and they listened to all the stories of how that garden got started and how



A group of youth from White Bear First Nation take part in a youth cultural science camp held at Camp Wabimasquah at the White Bear Lake Resort from Aug. 20 to 22. As part of the camp, participants hiked up Heart Hill, where JR McArthur spoke to them about the spirits that project the hill and why the site is sacred.

much fun it was and everybody worked together to grow their own vegetables. That was another really high point, too, because it was all their grandmothers that were listed on the plaque."

Members of the community joined in to wrap up the camp with a wiener roast, gift giving and hand drum songs performed by Josh Kakakeway Sr., Josh Kakakeway Jr., Brendan Kakakeway and Troy Shepherd. At the end of it all, the campers were worn out by all the hiking they'd done, but they truly enjoyed the experience, Jolly-Maxie said.

"They had great fun. The parents have come to me and said just how much they enjoyed it ...

they never really walked that far before, or saw their community from so many different angles and places. And yes, they were pretty wiped out at the end of the day."

Lessons about recycling and composting were also part of the cultural science camp experience, and Jolly-Maxie expects future camps will offer even more of that type of activity.

"Some of the ideas people talked to me about is we need to be talking to them about how we can protect this land base, like what are the issues, the environmental issues around water, around disease with the cattle right now, the environmental concerns around oil and gas, and what can we be

doing as a community to protect the land base," she said.

A number of individuals helped to make the camp a success, Jolly-Maxie said. Special thanks go out to Elders Maria Joyea, Nora Kakakeway, Victor Sammy and George Sparvier, who shared their knowledge with the youth; to Chief Standingready, Allan Maxie and family, JR McArthur and Grant McArthur for helping to teach the young people, to Sara Littlechief and Kim Meyers for their work as team leaders; to the FSIN science team for coming out and putting on the science fair; and to Diane Pasap, Michael Obey and Edwina Kennedy, the cooks who kept the participants fed throughout their adventure.

New Dakota Dunes Casino off to a strong start

BY GAURI CHOPRA
Sage Staff Writer

WHITECAP DAKOTA, FIRST NATION

The \$61 million Dakota Dunes Casino, the latest First Nation owned and operated casino in Saskatchewan, officially opened its doors on Aug. 10.

The casino, located on Whitecap Dakota First Nation, is a joint venture between Whitecap Dakota, the Saskatoon Tribal Council and the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (SIGA).

Dakota Dunes general manager Gary Daniels described the new

facility as "a typical Las Vegas casino in the middle of Saskatchewan with a First Nation theme to it."

The much-anticipated Dakota Dunes Casino opened a month earlier than planned and, at 80,000 square feet, is SIGA's largest casino to date.

"As the operator of the Dakota Dunes Casino, SIGA is proud of the fact that the project has been completed within the \$61 million dollar budget," said SIGA president and CEO Zane Hansen in a press release.

The casino is a multi-functional building that houses 12 table games, food and drink services and about 600 slot

machines, as well as an entertainment venue for concerts and plays. The new facility also boasts a banquet area that seats up to 650 people.

Since its opening the casino has experienced success, and has become an important part of the Whitecap Dakota community, Daniels said. The Dakota Dunes Casino has 400 full and part-time employees from the surrounding area, with the majority of them coming from First Nation communities.

"The casino is important as it provides jobs to the people of Whitecap and also the other Saskatchewan Tribal Council bands, seven in total. Also the gas

bar (owned by Whitecap) has been very busy since we have opened our doors," said Daniels.

Original plans for the casino didn't call for it to be built on Whitecap Dakota, Daniels explained.

"SIGA was granted a license to operate a casino in the Saskatoon region with city approval. Originally Dakota Dunes Casino was to be built in downtown Saskatoon, but after a city plebiscite, the city voted against the casino by a small margin. Then next alternative was to build the casino on Whitecap First Nation which is located 28 kilometres south of the city of Saskatoon," he said.

This is the fifth First Nation-owned casino to be run by SIGA. The others are the Northern Lights Casino in Prince Albert, the Painted Hand Casino in Yorkton, the Gold Eagle Casino in North Battleford and the Bear Claw Casino on White Bear First Nation.

SIGA plans to continue building more casinos around the province, a decision that is primarily fueled by the continued success of the existing SIGA casino, as well as the need to advance First Nations economies. Work is currently underway on a bigger and better facility to house the Painted Hand Casino, and on a new casino in Swift Current.

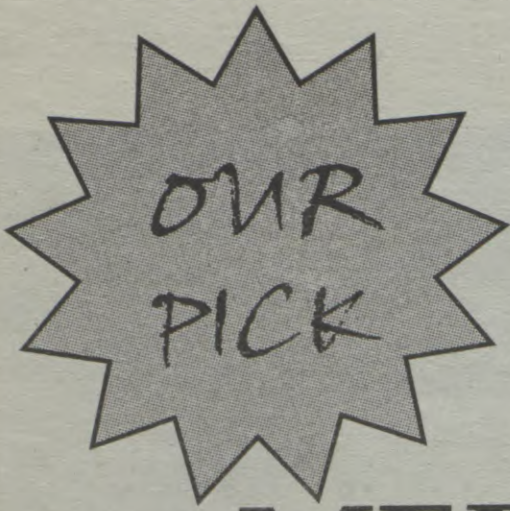
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[radio's most active]



Artist—MEB
 Album—In Our Hearts
 Song—In Our Hearts
 Label—Independent
 Producer—Bill Anderson

MEB shares personal stories on new CD

It's been only five short years since brothers Mathew and Eli Cardinal joined forces with Brent Alook to form MEB, an alternative rock band that takes its name from the first initials of its three founding members. Last year, a fourth member, Ramsay Alook, came on board, and the current incarnation of the band was born.

MEB has recently released its second CD, *In Our Hearts*, an eight song compilation of original tunes that reflect the lives of the four band members.

Two songs where the autobiographical element is particularly evident are *In Our Hearts* and *No Refuge*, which Mathew and Eli have dedicated to the memory of their grandmother.

In the song *In Our Hearts*, MEB delicately harmonizes feelings of loss with hopes of one day reuniting with loved ones, through words like "Goodbye doesn't mean goodbye, you're in our hearts all the time."

Other songs deal with the challenges faced by Aboriginal youth, subject matter the young band members -Brent is 16, Mathew is 17 and both Eli and Ramsey are 20- can easily relate to.

All four members of MEB hail from Wabasca, Alta. and are members of the Bigstone Cree Nation, but their music has already taken them far beyond the boundaries of their home community and will soon take them into the national spotlight-MEB has been nominated for two Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Awards, in the best new artist and best rock CD categories. The winners will be announced on Nov. 2 in Winnipeg during the Manito Ahbee Festival.

ABORIGINAL RADIO MOST ACTIVE LIST

| ARTIST | TITLE | ALBUM |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Violet Naytowhow | Old Love | Wind of the North |
| Rick McKay | My Awakening | Star Catcher 2007 CD |
| Edmund Bull | Follow Your Dreams | Follow Your Dreams |
| Conrad Bigknife & The Frame | Dark Haired Girl | Single Release |
| Andrea Menard | Dance Old Friends | Simple Steps |
| Teagan Littlechief | Once An Eagle | Single Release |
| Donny Parenteau | Father Time | What it Takes |
| Desiree Dorion | More Like Elsie | Single Release |
| J.J. Lavallee | Metis Boy | Carry On |
| Keith Secola | Drum in the Car | Single Release |
| Hank Horton | If They Only Knew | A World of Many Heartaches |
| Shakti Hayes | Touchwood Hills | Touchwood Hills |
| Los Lobos | The Valley | The Town and the City |
| Fred Mitchell | Don't Wanna Be Lonely | Single Release |
| Northern Eagles | Run | Send Me Home |
| Steve Rain | Holdin' Out | Only for a Moment |
| Eagle & Hawk | The Way | Life is ... |
| Ray St. Germain | We All Make Mistakes Sometimes | Single Release |
| Holly McNarland | Every Single Time | Chin Up Buttercup |
| Shane Yellowbird | I Remember the Music | Life is Calling My Name |

CONTRIBUTING STATIONS:



CANADIAN ABORIGINAL FESTIVAL

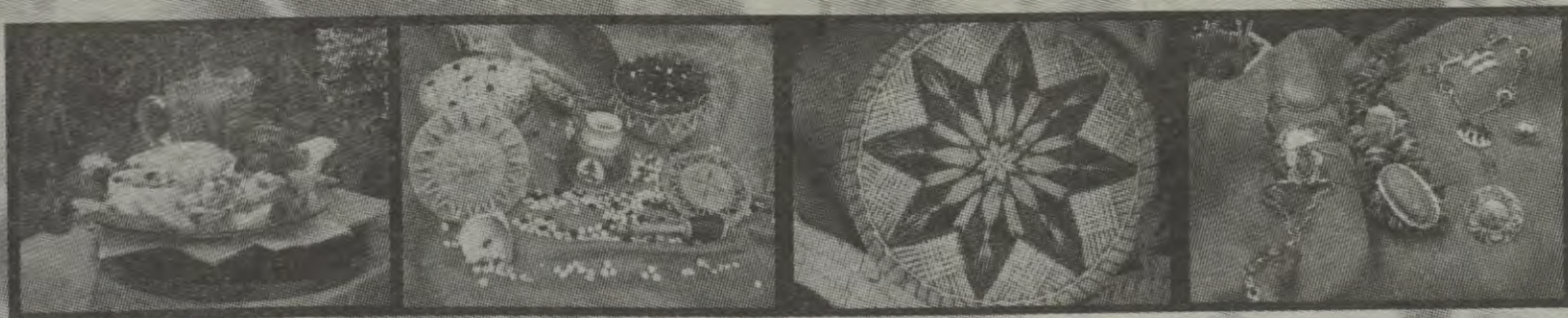


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CANADIAN ABORIGINAL MUSIC AWARDS

[windspeaker confidential] — Alanis King

With more than 20 years of theatre experience as a playwright and director, Alanis King should have no problem fitting in as the newest member of the artistic team at the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company (SNTC). King was brought in as the Saskatoon-based company's new artistic director on Sept. 10. As part of her new role, King will help the SNTC in its ongoing efforts to encourage the development of youth, artists and communities through the arts.

Originally from Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve in Ontario, King is a graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada.

In addition to her work as a playwright and director, she's also been involved in theatre development, and recently oversaw construction of an outdoor amphitheatre on Garden River First Nation in Ontario.

King traces her love of the theatre to some of the first plays she saw performed.

"My first play I ever saw was about this bag lady under the 25th Street bridge played by Tantoo Cardinal at the Oskayak school in this community," she said. "Later I saw Jessica, based on Maria Campbell's book, Halfbreed. They both impress me to this day and are active here at SNTC. Those performances made a deep impact on my love of magic realism on stage."

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

W: What is it that really makes you mad?
A.K.: Patronization. I'm sick of it too.

W: When are you at your happiest?
A.K.: Seeing my son's face light up.

W: What one word best describes you when you are at your worst?
A.K.: Nervous

W: What one person do you most admire and why?
A.K.: My dad and his knowledge of the old language and its origin just fills me up as a human.

W: What is the most difficult thing you've ever had to do?
A.K.: Understand my language.

W: What is your greatest accomplishment?
A.K.: Being a mother.

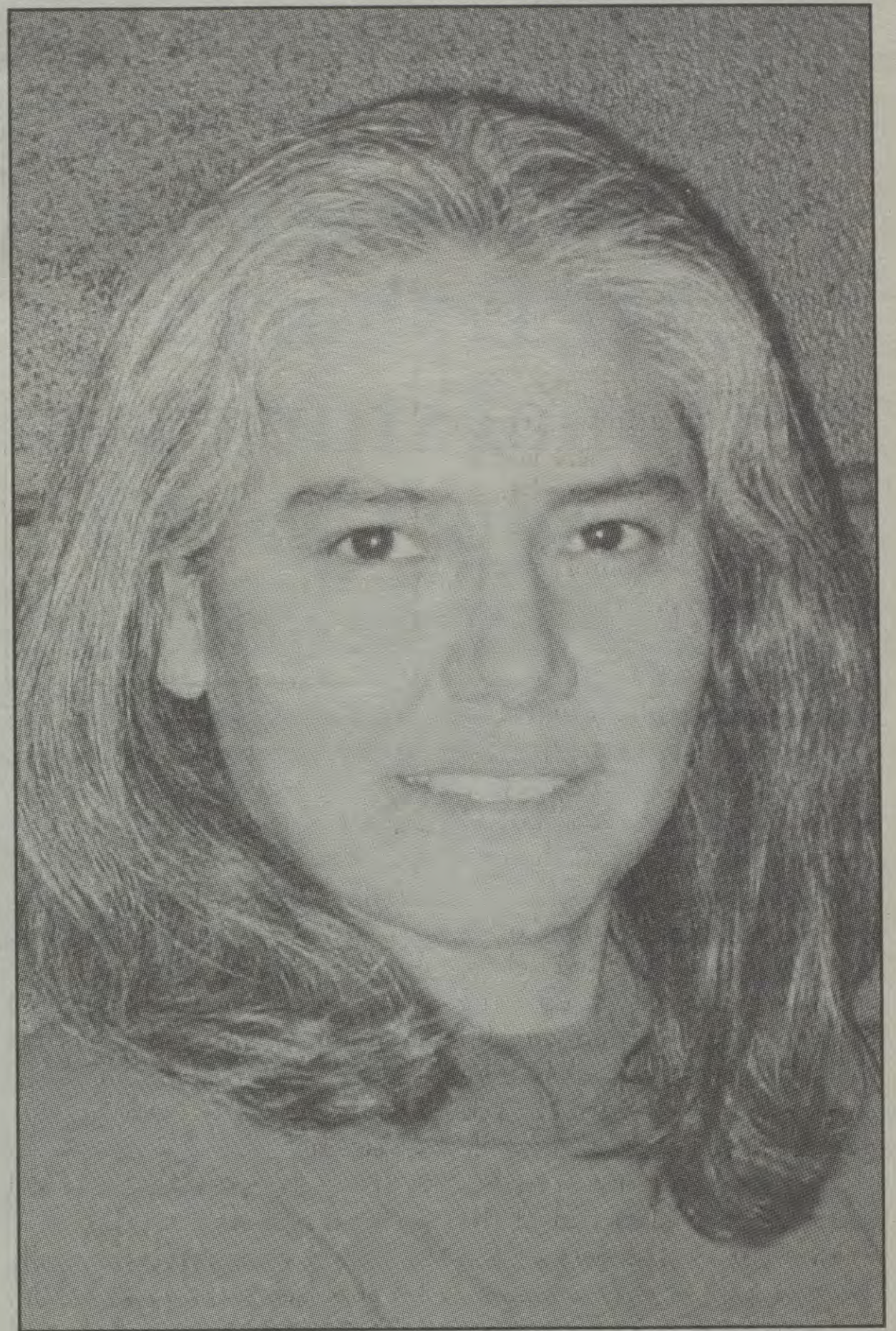
W: What one goal remains out of reach?
A.K.: Helping SNTC realize their dream of a new theatre.

W: If you couldn't do what you're doing today, what would you be doing?
A.K.: Being a sous chef and working as a Great Indian Bus tour guide.

W: What is the best piece of advice you've every received?
A.K.: Be yourself.

W: Did you take it?
A.K.: Yes.

W: How do you hope to be remembered?
A.K.: As an artistic genius—just kidding. As a creator of original Anishnaabe theatre.



Wendake prepares to host the world in 2008

By Marie White
Windspeaker Writer

QUEBEC CITY

Quebec City will be celebrating its 400th anniversary in 2008. When Samuel de Champlain named the city in 1608, he interacted with several First Nations including Huron-Wendats. Today the Huron-Wendat village is situated minutes away from the old city. In honour of this nation's role in New France, Wendake was selected to be the host nation for the city's upcoming anniversary celebrations. As such it will receive dignitaries and visitors from around the world who will come to mark this significant moment in history. Special activities are being planned and will be announced in the coming months. Visitors are expected starting in January and continuing throughout the year.

The Huron-Wendat Nation of Wendake is also a 2007 Cultural Capital of Canada as designated by Canadian Heritage last December. As a recipient of this title, Wendake will host "theatrical productions, exhibitions, literary readings, musical performances and a traditional powwow which will include exchanges with First Nations from around the world," declared the ministry.

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada has also recognized other contributions of this Wendat



MARIE WHITE

The village of Wendake will help Quebec City mark its 400th anniversary next year by hosting birthday celebrations.

community to the country's history. In 1999, it designated Old Wendake a historic district and in 2000, it designated Grand Chief Nicolas Vincent Tsawenhohi, 1769-1844, a person of national historic importance. Serving as grand chief from 1811 to 1844, Tsawenhohi-meaning "he who sees clearly"—was a respected politician and a renowned diplomat who asserted the territorial rights of his nation. He was appreciated for his deeds as well as his knowledge of Aboriginal law, customs and tradition. His legacy to his community was a strong sense of pride.

Today's Huron-Wendat community is rich in tourist attractions, including its church, which has been classified as a historical monument, the Tsawenhohi House, its French regime style houses, and its reconstructed traditional village. In February 2008, the latest project is expected to be

inaugurated—a museum-hotel complex presently under construction that promises great things for this community. The hotel-museum will include 55 rooms, a restaurant featuring Amerindian cuisine, a museum and an outdoor amphitheatre. The architectural design will draw its inspiration from Huron-Wendat culture and the relationship between the Huron-Wendats and the world through nature, spirituality and mythology.

This sole surviving Huron-Wendat community in the country settled permanently in the region in 1697, having fled disease and difficult times in the original Georgian Bay territory. Only a few hundred survived and after several short stays in Sillery and on Orleans Island, eventually settled by the banks of the Kabir-Kouba River. Upon establishing a new village in the Jeune-Lorette area, they named this small piece of land Wendake after their original site in Ontario.

The Third Quarter
(Fall 2007)
BQ issue of Business Quarterly
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this issue of Windspeaker.

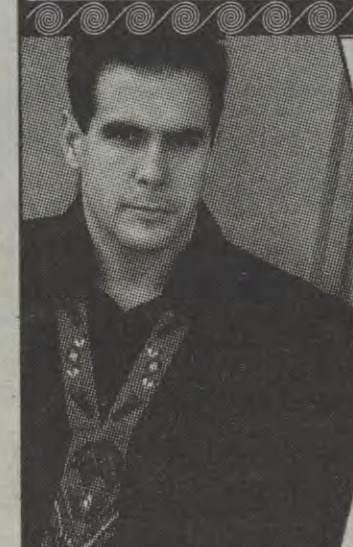
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Six Nations teams a force to be reckoned with

By Sam Laskaris
Windspeaker Writer

OHSWEKEN, Ont.

Six Nations lacrosse fans have had plenty to cheer about lately.

And if Lewis Staats, president of the Six Nations Arrows Express, is correct, there will be plenty more reasons to celebrate in the coming years.

Consider the accomplishments of Six Nations clubs just this year alone.

Staats' team finally captured the Minto Cup, the national Junior A championship. The Arrows Express were making their fourth consecutive appearance in the Canadian tournament.

Meanwhile, Six Nations' other junior franchise, the Red Rebels, won the Founders Cup, the Canadian Junior B crown, this year. And the Six Nations bantam boys' (14- and 15-year-olds) side captured a national title as well.

"We get asked that question quite often," Staats said of the reason for the success of Six Nations' various lacrosse squads.

And he believes it's not just one particular reason why teams from the southern Ontario First



Six Nations Arrows Express President Lewis Staats

Nation excel.

For starters, lacrosse is a sport invented by Aboriginal people.

"A lot of people know the history and the roots of the game," Staats said, adding those local players who do play the sport are keen to excel at it. "That's one of the reasons why we're successful."

Staats believes geographical location is another reason.

"Where we are has traditionally been the lacrosse hotbed," he said.

"We have minor baseball and softball here. But lacrosse has always been the Number 1

summer sport here."

And people often don't wait too long to introduce youngsters to the sport.

The Six Nations Minor Lacrosse Association accepts registrations for children as young as four and five, who compete in the paperweight category.

"That's always the fun age to watch," Staats said.

Staats added he believes one of the main reasons for recent successes of Six Nations teams is the fact the community now has a year-round lacrosse facility.

The Iroquois Lacrosse Arena was built in 2003. The Arrows Express have played out of the facility, which locals simply dub as the ILA, since the '04 season.

The Red Rebels, however, continue to play their home games out of the Gaylord Powless Memorial Arena.

The ILA has a turf floor, which is unlike other arenas in the Ontario Lacrosse Association, which have concrete flooring.

"It's built specifically for lacrosse," Staats said. "And it's lacrosse there year-round."

Since its inception, the ILA has been operating winter leagues. And that means those from Six Nations no longer play lacrosse

just during warm weather months.

"Before, 90 to 95 per cent of lacrosse players from Six Nations would play hockey in the winter," Staats said. "But now they have a choice. And we're reaping the benefits of having a year-round facility. But I think this is just the beginning."

By having its youth play lacrosse throughout the year, Staats is confident Six Nations will have more than its share of success at the provincial and national levels in the coming years as well.

And with various teams enjoying glory at the minor levels, that can only pay dividends for Six Nations' junior squads down the road.

As proof, Staats mentioned the Six Nations midget boys' (16- and 17-year-olds) side, which captured the Ontario title in 2006. Several members of that team were on the Red Rebels' national championship squad this year.

And no doubt some of these players, who now have at least a couple of national titles on their resumes, will make the jump up to the Arrows Express as early as next season.

The Arrows Express have their

share of supporters. The ILA has a seating capacity of about 2,500. About an additional 1,000 fans can squeeze into the rink as standees.

"We average about 700 fans during the regular season," Staats said, adding attendance per game increases to more than 1,000 in the playoffs.

"That is the best attendance in the (Ontario) Junior A league by far."

Though the Arrows Express are tough to beat, Staats said the team's opponents do enjoy it when the Six Nations team comes to their rinks for a game.

"Everybody likes playing us because we have a big fan following," he said.

During the regular season the Arrows Express have about 75 to 100 loyal fans that attend the majority of their road contests. Those supporters find their own way to the away matches.

Then, when the playoffs arrive, the team often has several fan buses that make the journey to road games.

As their records in recent years would indicate, quite frequently those Six Nations fans end up celebrating another victory from their hometown team.

Canada votes no to UN declaration

(Continued from page 8)

Maxime Bernier and INAC Minister Chuck Strahl defended their government's vote against the declaration, claiming in a joint statement that the document, which sets out global human rights standards for the more than 370 million Indigenous people around the world, contravened Canada's Constitution and tipped the rights balance in favour of the Indigenous over the non-Indigenous.

"The current text ... is fundamentally flawed," said the ministers.

"We have stated publicly that we have significant concerns with the wording of provisions of the

declaration such as those on: lands, territories and resources ... self-government without recognition of the importance of negotiations; intellectual property; military issues; and the need to achieve an appropriate balance between the rights and obligations of Indigenous peoples, member states and third parties."

As one of only four countries to vote against the UN declaration, Canada is in the minority, and it appears the group may soon grow even smaller. Australia's Labor Party, which is leading the polls in the run-up to an upcoming national election, has said they would sign on if they form the government.

Career options for women expanded through program

(Continued from page 18)

Women will spend two days a week for three months in a classroom setting at the Simon Fraser University campus in downtown Vancouver. After the formal training ends, the participants will be in their field of interest.

"We help people find out what they want and then build up a network," said Karen LeClair program manager for the Helping Women Find Work program.

The downtown Vancouver-based Helping Women Work program is currently, only available to women under age 35 and only those living in urban city limits. But 2007 is the pilot

year for these innovative programs and, depending on its success, initiatives targeting a wider age group will undoubtedly occur in the future.

Coutts is clear when she said that the Minerva program is not a social service agency and says other organizations have the capacity to help in the ways Minerva does not. However, it is not considered a "job-placement facility" or social service organization, the foundation has provided bursaries to various charitable organizations that work to help Vancouver's addicted, homeless and victims of violence. Last year the foundation gave \$1,000 bursary to the Downtown Eastside Woman's Centre for their

safety initiative. Prince George and Vancouver Island regions also have branches set up to assist women in career preparedness.

Participants in the program are "woman that have indicated that they have natural leadership skills," said Coutts.

For 29-year old Lisa Tallio, working at the program is putting her expensive and time-consuming undergraduate degree to use.

An Aboriginal woman and University of B.C. grad in the field of education, Tallio is now the program co-ordinator for Helping Women Work.

Tallio said she found her job at Minerva through her child's caregiver.

Mental health issues to receive more attention

(Continued from page 11)

Mary Simon feels having Aboriginal representation on the commission is a significant step, and hopes it will lead to solutions to some of the challenges faced by Aboriginal people in the north, where inadequate mental health services serve to exacerbate mental health issues.

She pointed to the high rate of suicides among northern Aboriginal youth as a symptom of a mental health service system in crisis.

"We have a serious issue with young people committing suicide, because obviously when somebody commits suicide there

are some serious issues that they're addressing on a personal and individual basis and they're not getting the support and the help that they need," Simon said.

She said one of the reasons she was interested in getting involved with the commission is to ensure Aboriginal perspectives were incorporated into the work being done.

"If we're going to work for change across the country, across Canada, then we have to work for change for the north and for Aboriginal peoples generally," she said.

"I think you need to make Aboriginal issues a prominent

part of fixing something in Canada ... If the system is broken down south, it must be more broken in Aboriginal communities, because the services haven't been very good for Aboriginal people when you look at health services, education, and part of the social structure of the country."

Simon is hoping each of the commission's eight advisory committees will mirror the board of directors in its inclusiveness. For instance, she'd like to see both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members sitting on the Aboriginal advisory committee, which is being chaired by Bill

Mussell, president and chairperson of the Native Mental Health Association. She's also hoping to see Aboriginal representation of other advisory committees, such as the seniors committee and the children and youth committee.

"We want to make sure that there's Aboriginal voices in those committees also, because they're going to be dealing with issues that affect Aboriginal kids and that affect seniors," she said.

While Simon has no illusions that the work of the commission will be a panacea for health care issues in Canada, she is optimistic it will be able to make a difference.

"I can only be optimistic, because once you identify a problem and you start to talk about it and you start to see what some of the solutions might be, to me that's a step in the right direction. Until you do that, then people ignore it and that's what we've been doing," she said.

"I don't think the commission is the answer to all the ills of mental health services or mental health issues, but I think if it's used as a catalyst, and ... the practitioners and the health care providers and the doctors and the government take our recommendations seriously, we could do something."

FNUC to host E-Spirit competition in 2008

By Cheryl Petten
Windspeaker Staff Writer

REGINA

Aboriginal high school students from across the country have until Oct. 19 to register to take part in the next running of E-Spirit, a national Aboriginal youth business plan competition organized by the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC).

E-Spirit was created to expose Aboriginal high school students to the entrepreneurial possibilities that exist for them within the business world. The program has been operating for the past seven years, during which time close to 3,000 Aboriginal students from across Canada have taken part in the program.

"E-Spirit was developed by BDC in response to the growth in self-employment among Aboriginals, which is more than nine times that of the Canadian average," explained Andre St.-Pierre, BDC's vice president of

corporate finance.

Participating students spend 16 weeks working on their E-Spirit projects. The program isn't part of their school curriculum, so they must find free time at lunch hours, after school and on weekends to dedicate to completing their business plans.

At the beginning of the preparation process, each participating team is provided with a new computer and is paired with an Aboriginal mentor who they can contact via e-mail.

The entire business plan preparation process is Web-based, with almost everything the students need found on the E-Spirit Web site, from the modules that must be completed, to access to advice from business professionals to information about how the final business plans will be judged.

The 16 week preparation process is divided into segments. With completion of each segment, the team reaches a milestone and receives a reward for their success.

Once the 16 weeks is over, participating teams then head off to the national competition, a three-day event that has the student team manning trade show booths and presenting their business plan to their fellow competitors and the E-Spirit judges.

The competition culminates in an awards gala, where the top three teams are named and presented with their gold, silver and bronze awards.

Awards are also given out in nine additional categories—Most Original Product/Service, Best Team Spirit, Most Innovative Marketing Concept, Most Original Name, Best Utilization of Technology, Best Trade Show Display, Best Logo, Best Video and Best Oral Presentation—with a first place team and a runner-up team selected in each.

The next E-Spirit competition will be hosted by the First Nations University of Canada in Regina from May 12 to 14, 2008.

"First Nations University of Canada is pleased to host this

year's national Aboriginal youth business plan competition," said Charles Pratt, president of the university.

"This competition will provide Aboriginal youth with a forum to showcase their innovative ideas, which will in turn enhance community development."

Taking part in the annual competition is quite an experience for the participating students, explained Cheryl Watson, one of the co-project managers for E-Spirit. For starters, the team members get an all-expense paid trip to the community hosting the competition.

"And because we promote stay in school with E-Spirit, we set it up in a main university across Canada, so they get a taste of campus life," she said. "And then when they're there, they stay in the residence, they eat in the cafeteria with peers from across Canada."

The competition also includes cultural components, Watson said. Elders are involved in the

program, including an ambassador E-Spirit Elder, and an Elder from the community that hosts the competition.

"And our modules have incorporated the seven sacred teachings in terms of how you can find a balance with business, but also respecting the culture of, the history of it," she said.

In the seven years that the BDC has run the E-Spirit competition, Watson has seen the impact the program has had on the young people taking part.

"E-Spirit is definitely life-changing," she said.

"I believe in it so much. I've seen how it's changed lives within our youth .. this is actually touching the youth at a grassroots level and teaching them about business and knowing no boundaries, within Canada or globally, so that's something we're very proud of."

For more information about E-Spirit or to register online to take part in the business plan competition, visit www.bdc.ca/espirit.

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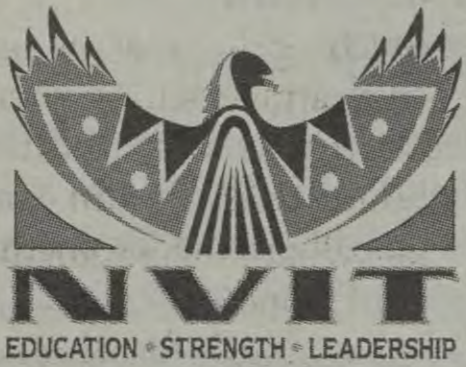
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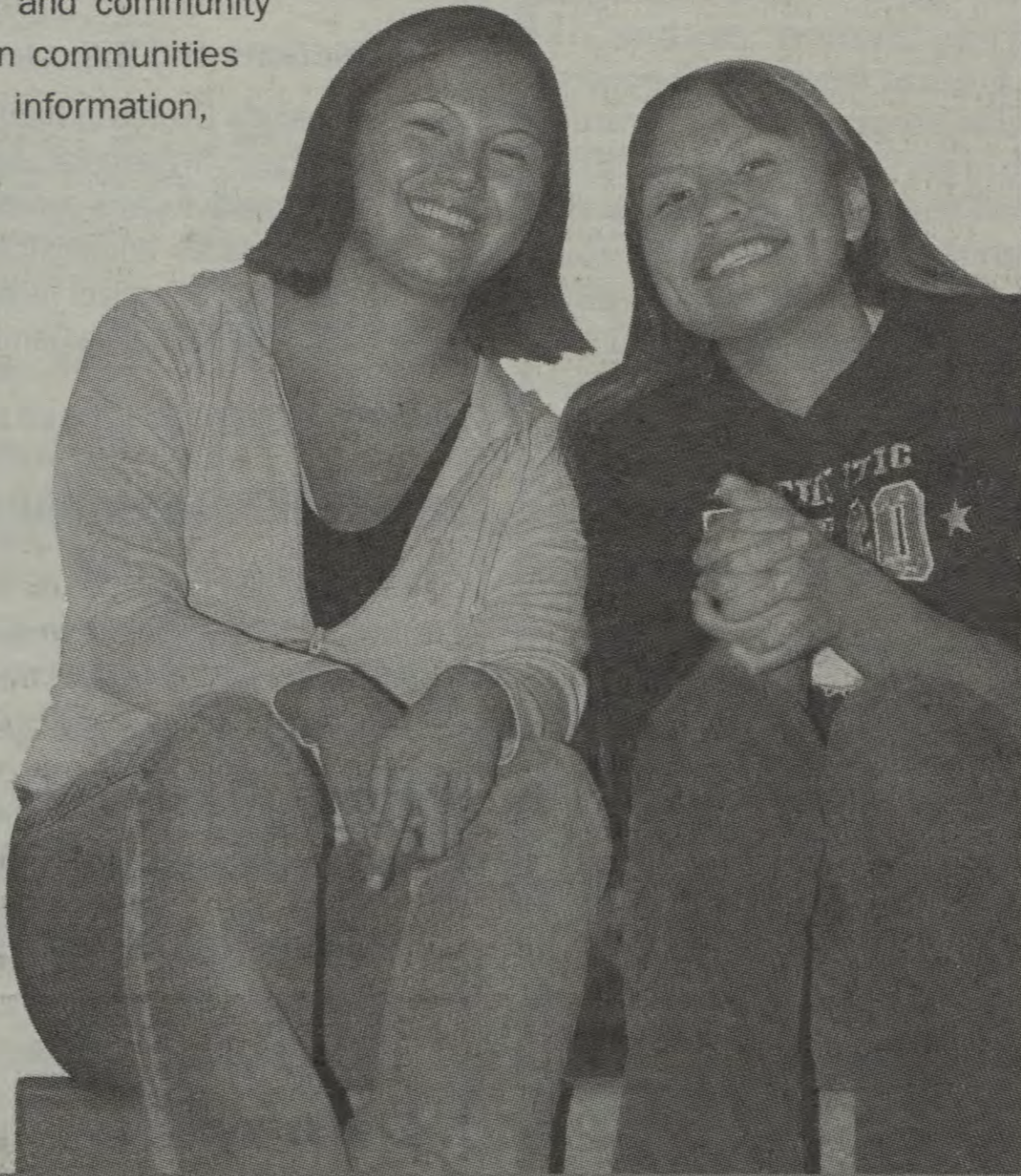
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Aboriginal Counselor (Part-Time)

Academic Foundations

Competition #07FA-66

The Bow Valley College counseling unit provides a broad range of counseling services including: personal counseling, conflict and crisis intervention, financial advising and assessment, and career counseling. Our students are very diverse, in terms of age, education, cultural background and first language spoken. We are currently seeking a part-time Counselor to join our team, with a particular focus on the needs of our Aboriginal students.

Drawing on your experience in an educational setting, you will counsel potential, on-going and returning students. While your focus and background will be related to the needs of our Aboriginal learners, you will also interact with other learners as time permits. You will work as a part of a cohesive counseling team and will consult with members of the College community to meet the needs of our learners. The successful candidate will exhibit superior interpersonal skills in a collaborative and collegial setting.

Qualifications:

- Master's degree in Counseling, Social Work or Clinical Psychology
- A minimum of two years of experience working in an educational counseling environment
- Previous experience working in the Aboriginal community

Note: This is a part-time position, working 18 hours per week.

To apply for this competition, please submit your application on-line by visiting the **Employment Opportunities** section of our website at: www.bowvalleycollege.ca

Your future is closer than you think. At Bow Valley College you can make a difference in the lives of our learners. We are as committed to our employees' success as to our students and offer a competitive pay and benefits package, professional development opportunities and a dynamic team environment in which to work.

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At the University of Manitoba we take pride in providing world-class education to many of Canada's best and brightest students. By recognizing the potential in all who have a desire to learn, and by offering students an exceptional education in a supportive environment, the University of Manitoba opens doors to a future of possibilities.

Currently there are over 1,600 Aboriginal students attending the University of Manitoba. In 2006, seven out of the 14 recipients of the prestigious Manitoba Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards were University of Manitoba students, and half of them also won a Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation Scholarship. At convocation, about five per cent of the graduates are of Aboriginal ancestry, compared to about two per cent of other Canadian universities.

For many Aboriginal students, attending university means leaving home and the familiar support network of family and community. At the University of Manitoba, we strive to create an encouraging environment where students can turn to

faculty, staff and fellow students for support and guidance. The new Aboriginal Students' Centre, scheduled to open in early 2008, will be a cultural, spiritual and academic centre for Aboriginal students. It will include meeting spaces, computer labs, study areas and a dedicated space for Elders-in-Residence. The Aboriginal Student Association gives students the opportunity to socialize and share experiences and students can also participate in the Annual Traditional Graduation Pow Wow.

The University of Manitoba is committed to Aboriginal student success, both inside and outside the classroom. Many of our graduates have gone back to their communities as teachers, service workers, technical personnel, and business people, while others have gone on to become prominent politicians, doctors, lawyers, and engineers across Manitoba and beyond. By coming together to share our stories and build our dreams, the University of Manitoba grows in knowledge with Aboriginal students, and together we create a bright future.



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[careers & training] Raven youth employment program goes national

By Leanne Flett Kruger
Windspeaker Writer

PENTICTON, B.C.

While some youth spent this past summer sleeping in and watching TV, others were up at the crack of dawn, refining their self-discipline while learning first hand what life is like as a member of the Canadian Forces.

Sixty-two Aboriginal youth graduated from this year's running of the Canadian Navy's Raven Aboriginal Youth Employment program. The seven-week long program was held on Vancouver Island over the summer months, during which time participants were exposed to a range of military and cultural activities.

The program began with a four-day cultural camp, followed by six weeks of basic military recruit training. The military activities include experiencing time on board a navy ship, challenging obstacle courses, and living in the field for a week learning about navigation, camouflage and concealment, stalking and ambushing and building improvised shelters. Training in safe weapons handling, military drill, first aid and CPR were also included, as was class curriculum covering topics like harassment, stress management and suicide

prevention.

What makes this program unique is its cultural component. Cultural activities included paddling war canoes, longhouse experiences, and participation in a sweat lodge ceremony—all of which are led by local First Nation Elders. The culture camp is oriented to teachings of respect and holistic perspectives of mind, body, spirit and emotions.

The overall focus of the Raven program is on building self-confidence, and encouraging physical fitness and teamwork.

This year's program kicked off on July 8 and wrapped up on Aug. 24, when graduation ceremonies—attended by participants, their families, community leaders and dignitaries—were held at CFB Esquimalt.

This was the fifth year the Raven program has been offered, and the first year it was run as a national program. When it was first launched it served youth from Vancouver Island only, then eventually expanded to serve youth from across B.C. This year, participants in the program included youth from B.C., Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

The Raven program was originally established as a diversity

initiative to bring Aboriginal membership in the Canadian Forces in line with national workforce demographics. Approximately 3.3 per cent of the Canadian population is Aboriginal, while Aboriginal representation within the Canadian Forces is 1.8 per cent. The program hopes to build bridges into Aboriginal communities and increase that number to meet the national average. But Raven is not a recruiting program. The students are enrolled in the Naval Reserve and are released from the military six months after the course is finished. Participants are provided with transportation to and from the program, clothing and equipment, meals and accommodation and are paid a wage equal to a Class B reservist of the private rank. Participants who successfully complete the program receive four high school credits. And those who do choose to enroll in the Canadian Forces will be awarded credit for the training they received.

To be eligible for the program participants must be between the ages 16 and 29, must have completed Grade 10 and must pass a security screening test.

Information about the Raven program can be found online at www.navy.forces.gc.ca or at any Canadian Forces recruiting centre.

NORTHWEST COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Vice-President of Education

Northwest Community College invites applicants for the position of Vice-President, Education. This is a senior management position and is the chief educational advisor to the President.

NWCC is a student-centred college with a passion for educational leadership. With eleven campuses or learning sites across Northwestern British Columbia, we celebrate the diversity of our northern and Aboriginal populations. Innovation, energy, and a progressive outlook make us an employer of choice in the region. Our unique and spectacular location is perfect for a vital and healthy lifestyle.

This position is well suited to a seasoned education administrator with a genuine sense of their own identity, who takes a decolonizing approach to education, and is ready to apply their skills and experience to new challenges. In accordance with the College's Strategic Plan and pursuant to Section 42 of the BC Human Rights Code, preference will be given to Aboriginal candidates. Applicants from these groups are encouraged to self-identify.

We are committed to employment equity and diversity in the workplace, and we encourage applications from all qualified applicants.

Based in Terrace, BC this position is responsible for:

- Leading the education purpose and vision of the College;
- The learner-centred leadership and administration of post-secondary education and training programs; and
- The proactive identification and development of new and innovative program opportunities.

The successful candidate will have:

- A graduate degree;
- Five or more years of administrative experience in post-secondary education;
- Education leadership, planning and budget management.
- A proven track record in education;
- Able to articulate and implement the educational vision for the College.
- A deep understanding of Aboriginal cultural values;
- Broad experience in issues relating to Aboriginal education;
- Success working with Aboriginal communities and organizations.

We are looking for a candidate with the desire to:

- Enhance program excellence;
- Create new areas of programming and applied research; and
- Foster new levels of student engagement and achievement.

Contact Northwest Community College Human Resources
5331 McConnell Avenue, Terrace, BC V8G 4X2
250.635.6511 | soates@nwcc.bc.ca
1.877.277.2288 | www.nwcc.bc.ca

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Job Opportunity

Northern Isga Foundation (on behalf of Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation)

■ CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER/ REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE MANAGER

Northern Isga Foundation is looking for a **Chief Executive Officer** to heads its Eagle River Casino Host Charity Operations. The Chief Executive Officer's primary role is to manage and direct Northern Isga's Charity-Casino Operations and its Human Resources Department.

Qualifications and Experience:

- ◆ Bachelor's Degree in Human Resource Management
- ◆ Experience in financial accounting practice and procedures
- ◆ Minimum five years experience in management, including fiscal services, administration and human resources
- ◆ Knowledge of project management principles and practices
- ◆ Knowledge of Native Gaming in Alberta an asset

Salary: Negotiable based on experience

■ CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Northern Isga Foundation is looking for a **Chief Financial Officer** whose primary role is to implement the board's financial policies. The Chief Financial Officer will also be responsible for developing accounting procedures and management of accounting staff.

Qualifications and Experience:

- ◆ CFO must have professional certification in financial accounting: CMA; CGA or CA
- ◆ Minimum 5 years experience in management, including fiscal services, administration and human resources
- ◆ Knowledge of Native Gaming in Alberta is an asset

Salary: Negotiable based on experience

Please submit your cover letter and résumé to:

Loretta Mustus-Duncan or Gayle Aginas at
gayle.aginas@alexisnakotasioux.com or
call 780-967-2591 during office hours

Deadline for submissions: November 2, 2007

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Please visit our website to view detailed job information, including qualifications, salary and instructions on how to apply. Alternatively, you may send your resume, quoting **Job ID 3858**, by **Oct. 15, 2007**, to: **Fran Burgess, Administrative Coordinator, Negotiations Branch, Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, 720 Bay St., 4th Fl., Toronto, ON M5G 2K1. Fax: 416-326-4017. E-mail: fran.burgess@osaa.gov.on.ca. Only those applicants selected for an interview will be contacted.**

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OPPORTUNITIES

News Reporter/Photographer

The Aboriginal Multi-Media Society (AMMSA), publishers of Windspeaker, Canada's National Aboriginal News Source, Alberta Sweetgrass and Saskatchewan Sage, is seeking a full-time news reporter/photographer to join its busy and well-respected news team.

The ideal candidate will have a degree or diploma in journalism or have equivalent work experience in a community news publishing environment. A valid driver's licence, clean driving abstract and willingness to travel (sometimes out of province) a must. Computer literacy and knowledge of word processing, internet and email applications is a must. Candidates with a demonstrable knowledge of, or keen interest in, Aboriginal issues and culture will be given priority.

Photography experience a great asset.

For more information on AMMSA and Windspeaker please visit our web site: www.ammsa.com.

Please send cover letter, resume and writing samples to:
Cheryl Petten, Editor
AMMSA-Windspeaker
13245 - 146 Street • Edmonton, Alberta T5L 4S8
Email: edwind@ammsa.com • Fax: (780) 455-7639

Sales Associates

The Aboriginal Multi-Media Society (AMMSA) is seeking a two full-time advertising sales associates to join our marketing team.

Are you an eager, articulate, customer focused and confident salesperson? If so, then we would like to speak with you.

Required skills:

- Previous selling experience and a proven track record;
- Strong organizational skills;
- Self-motivated and creative;
- Phone sales experience (we do most of our sales over the phone and email);

We build strong long-term relationships with our customers and the successful candidate must be able to maintain these relationships. Our customers are located throughout Canada so some travel may be involved.

Please send resume and cover letter to:
Paul Macedo
AMMSA-Windspeaker
13245 - 146 Street • Edmonton, Alberta T5L 4S8
Email: market@ammsa.com • Fax: 780-455-7639



Canadian Council for
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PRESIDENT & CEO

The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) is a national non-profit organization that provides tools and resources to aid the corporate community in accessing Aboriginal people as partners, employees, suppliers and customers. Funded entirely by corporate members and patrons, its mission is to promote the full participation of Aboriginal people, businesses and communities in Canada's economy.

CCAB delivers measurable value to corporate Canada and Aboriginal business through programs such as the Circle for 2015 networking events; Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR), helping companies benchmark their work with the Aboriginal community; the Business Development Institute (BDI), a program for Patrons only which brings leaders from corporate Canada and Aboriginal communities together to develop strategic partnerships and create business opportunities; the Foundation for the Advancement of Aboriginal Youth (FAAY), a scholarship and bursary program dedicated to developing the next generation of Aboriginal leaders; and the Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame (ABHF), honoring the pioneers of business.

Based in Toronto and reporting to a Board of Directors, the President and CEO is not only responsible for the day-to-day operation and administration of CCAB, but will provide leadership to the board in creating and implementing its vision, mission and strategic direction.

The President and CEO will oversee the ongoing programs, continually re-evaluating and enhancing existing programs as well as creating new ways to ensure CCAB's mission and goals are realized. The new leader will represent CCAB in all dealings with outside groups such as business leaders, Aboriginal communities, the media and general public.

As a candidate, you will be University educated and ideally fluent in English, French and a native language. You have held a senior management role in business and/or the non-profit sector, and have established credibility with your breadth and depth of knowledge of both Aboriginal communities and corporate Canada. A strategic thinker who can turn a vision into concrete action plans and achieve measurable results, you possess an entrepreneurial spirit, and well-honed marketing, communication and presentation skills. Your high energy and integrity combined with your inherent passion for CCAB's mission will provide the quality of leadership required to meet its long-term goals.

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[footprints] Mary Thomas

Elder worked to protect lands and promote culture

By Gauri Chopra

Mary Thomas, a member of the Secwepmec (Shuswap) Nation, was born in Salmon Arm, B.C. Her parents had to work hard to eke out a living, and so Thomas got to spend much time with her grandparents, who helped care for her, and who shared with her and her siblings the traditional knowledge their parents and grandparents had passed on to them.

Some of her fondest memories of her early childhood involved listening as her grandmother regaled her with stories and legends. But the happiness of her childhood changed abruptly when she was forced to leave her home in order to attend residential school.

Thomas' years in residential school were filled with terrible experiences. She was forbidden from speaking her language or practicing her culture, she was beaten, and she lost one of her sisters, who died while attending the same school. Years later she would recall how the experience severed her from her culture and her spirituality and shattered her self-esteem. When, at the age of 16, she left the school, she no longer had any connection with her Aboriginal identity, and that was just fine with her.

At the age of 19 she married, and she and her new husband moved to the United States. But soon the Second World War began, and the couple moved back to Canada so Thomas' husband could enlist, just as many other young Aboriginal men chose to do at the time.

Her husband went off to war and, when he returned, he was a changed man. He drank heavily and became abusive. One day, when she felt she couldn't take another beating, she ran off and hid. That very same day he was killed. He'd been off drinking in town and on the way home had walked onto the railway tracks

and was struck by a train. Thomas blamed herself, thinking that if she'd just stayed and taken the beating, he might not have died.

In addition to dealing with the guilt she inflicted upon herself, Thomas also had to deal with the dire financial straights she now found herself in. She was suddenly a single mother, with 15 children and no income coming in.

She struggled along as best she could, eventually moving to Kelowna where she was offered a job. The curator of a local museum was working to put together education kits to be used to teach Aboriginal culture as part of the school curriculum, and enlisted Thomas to assist. Her residential school experiences had stripped Thomas of any knowledge of—and interest in—her culture, but she took the job. It would serve to be a defining moment that would change the course of her life.

With very little knowledge of her own culture, Thomas turned to the Elders to gather the information she needed to do the job. The Elders shared the knowledge that they had, and Thomas absorbed it like a sponge. She didn't realize it at the time, but her healing journey—her road back to her own Aboriginal identity—had begun. In time, after fully embracing her Aboriginal heritage, Thomas would become not the learner, but the teacher—the Elder others would turn to in their quest for knowledge.

Drawing on knowledge gained through her talks with Elders, and on remembrances from her childhood, when she and her siblings would accompany her parents and grandparents on trips into the woods to harvest traditional plants, she became known as an expert on traditional plants and their uses. She shared this information with others eager

to learn, and even worked to help researchers document the environmental changes that occurred in her lifetime and the effect those changes have had on plant life.

Thomas' work as an environmentalist was coloured by her respect for mother nature and her understanding that no more should be taken from the earth than is truly needed—a philosophy she tried to pass on to future generations.

She was concerned about preserving and protecting traditional plants so they would be there for future generation, but she was also concerned about broader environmental issues as well—protection of the air, the earth, the water and the animals. And she recognized that all people, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, must work together to deal with conservation and environmental issues because everyone, regardless of their cultural background, is equally affected by threats to mother earth.

Thomas was one of the founders of the Salmon River Watershed Restoration Project, a community-based initiative that is working to stem the environmental damage that has been done to the Salmon River as a result of such things as clear cutting and overgrazing by livestock, and attempting to return it to its former glory. And she worked to establish an ecocultural centre in Salmon Arm, where science, art and Native culture are combined, and special emphasis is placed on reaching out to children.

Thomas' efforts on the environmental front gained her attention and honours, both nationally and internationally. In 1997, she became the first Aboriginal person in North America to receive the Indigenous Conservationalist of the Year



Mary Thomas

Award from the Seacology Foundation, an organization that works to preserve the environments and cultures of islands the world over. And in 2001, the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation presented her with a National Aboriginal Achievement Award in the environment category.

While preserving the natural environment was important to Thomas, so too was working to preserve another precious resource—Aboriginal youth. Through her own residential school experiences, she recognized how important it was for Aboriginal youth to develop and maintain a connection to their languages and culture in order for them to grow up to be healthy adults.

Thomas was involved in the First Nations/Inuit Child Care

Initiative, which helped create new child care spaces where the cultural and traditional values of the children's communities would be incorporated in the care they received. She also dedicated her time and efforts to a variety of teaching programs designed to promote Aboriginal language and culture. In 2004, her efforts earned her the Medal for Exceptional Contributions to Early Childhood Development from the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development.

Thomas passed away on July 30 of this year at the age of 90 but, while she is gone, the knowledge she shared, the people she inspired and the work she completed in the time she was here will ensure she will not soon be forgotten.

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Third Quarter – Fall 2007



Windspeaker Business Quarterly

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Illustration: Jason Parenteau/ www.niigaanmedia.com

Youth Entrepreneurs

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ENTRY INSTRUCTIONS

Entries may be colour slides or prints (no Polaroids, please), not larger than 8" x 10". Subject of photos must be Aboriginal. A maximum of four (4) photo entries per person. Photographs that have been previously published or won a photographic award are NOT eligible. By submitting the photo(s) you confirm that you are the exclusive rights holder of the photo(s). Each entry must be labeled with the entrant's name. This information should be printed on the back of the photograph or on the slide frame (a grease pencil works best), or on an attached label. Hint: To prevent damage, do not stamp or write heavily on the back of your prints. Package your entries carefully in a protective cardboard sleeve. Entries must be accompanied by a list of the pictures enclosed. The list should include your full name, address and daytime phone number. Entrants under 18 must enclose permission of a parent/guardian. Sorry, submitted entries and photos cannot be returned. Windspeaker and Scotiabank are not responsible for lost or delayed entries. The selected winning photos shall become the property of Windspeaker. Professionals and amateurs may enter. Photographs will be judged on creativity and technical excellence and how they best capture the contest theme. A panel of judges will select the prize winners. Their decisions are final. Winner will be notified by phone. Photo contest rules are also available online at <http://www.ammsa.com/snap>

Pick out your best photos and send them to Windspeaker. Two photos will be selected and awarded \$1500 each. In addition, the two selected photos will grace the 2008 Aboriginal History Wall Poster sponsored by Scotiabank and to be distributed in Windspeaker's December 2007 issue all across Canada!

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On The Agenda

Oct. 3-5

National Aboriginal Science and Technology Conference (Calgary)

The Canadian Aboriginal Science and Technology Society will host its eighth annual gathering in an effort to bring Aboriginal participants of all ages together to learn about the many career opportunities in the science and technology field. The gathering will be held at the Coast Plaza Hotel and Conference Centre.

Call (403) 281-4188 for details or go to www.castsconference2007.ca

Oct. 10-12

Doing Justice: Dispute Resolution in the Courts and Beyond (Halifax)

This conference will examine public and private dispute-resolution ranging from the courts to mediation and arbitration.

Call (514) 343-6157 for details.

Oct. 11-13

Eighth annual National Aboriginal Women in Leadership Training Conference (Vancouver)

The theme of this year's conference is Building Leadership From Within. The Conference will focus on five leadership training streams, including administration, leadership, health, personal growth and development, and economic development.

Call (250) 652-7097 for more information.

Oct. 18-19

Métis Rights Conference (Vancouver)

This conference will bring together Aboriginal leaders and business people to talk about the latest developments in Métis rights, as well as other developing issues. The event will be held at the Renaissance Harbourside Hotel 1.

For more information call (604) 730-2500.

Oct. 22-25

CANDO National Conference and Annual General Meeting (Kamloops, B.C.)

Participants of this 14th annual event will network as they play a game of golf. There will also be workshops that focus on housing, investing, governance and economic development.

Contact 1-800-463-9300. Go to www.edo.ca for details.

Oct. 24

Celebrating Business Success: Business Awards and Tradeshow (Ohsweken, Ont.)

This celebration will recognize the achievements of members from the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. This event, hosted by Two Rivers Community Development Centre, will also prove to be a networking opportunity that will showcase many Aboriginal businesses.

Contact Rachel or Ginger at (705) 445-4567 to register.

Nov. 4-6

Canadian Aboriginal Minerals Association 15th annual conference: Growing Communities in Changing Economics (Vancouver, B.C.)

Aboriginal leaders, investors, government officials and many other business consultants and executives will network with each other and learn about mine reclamation, revenue sharing, developing businesses for supplier services, treaties and much more.

Call toll free 1-866-404-0036 for more information. Go to www.aboriginalminerals.com for details.

Nov. 7-9

Fostering Indigenous Business & Entrepreneurship in the Americas conference (Acoma, New Mexico)

The two-day conference will include workshops, an Indigenous business expo and academic workshops. Policy-makers and business people in public and private sectors will network and discuss issues, trends and directions for a more business opportunities.

Go to <http://fibe.mgt.unm.edu> for more information.

Nov. 27

Fourth annual CCAB gala dinner (Winnipeg, Man.)

This networking reception will be held at the Fairmont.

To order tickets call Cassandra Bowers at (416) 961-8663 ext. 222 or email her at cbowers@ccab.com.

Business Quarterly

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Third Quarter – Fall 2007

Union leader backs day of action, promises help

Joseph Mancinelli brought down the house at the Assembly of First Nations' 28th annual general assembly (AGA) in Halifax.

The international vice president of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) signed an agreement with National Chief Phil Fontaine on July 12, the final day of the AGA, but only after he delivered a rousing, hard-nosed speech that had the chiefs in attendance at cheering.

Mancinelli, of Hamilton, Ont., told the chiefs that any government that broke an agreement with his union the way the Conservative Party of Canada government broke the Kelowna agreement with Aboriginal groups would get an immediate and forceful response.

"We would shut this country down," he said, prompting loud cheers and applause from the chiefs.

Earlier in the three-day meeting, several chiefs expressed resentment at editorials and public comments from politicians questioning First Nations' right to protest on the national day of action June 29. In that context, the chiefs really appreciated the non-Native union leader's remarks.

Reached by telephone on Aug. 9, Mancinelli said his union's decision to work with First Nations was creating a lot of excitement.

"What I'm running into is just absolute positive reaction to our relationship. And we're kind of overwhelmed with it because I didn't expect such a strong reaction," he said. "And from non-Natives as well. I'll give you an example: the Chamber of Commerce sent us an e-mail saying this was visionary. Where would you expect that? And all sorts of folks calling and saying 'This is brilliant. This is a great thing to do.' And then we've had our own contractors, who've bombarded our training centres across the country saying, 'Wow. When does it start? When can we expect to see some young Native kids coming into these training programs? We'll be glad to take a few of them on.' I am absolutely ecstatic over the initial reaction. Now we've got a ton of work ahead of us in order to ensure that we really get positive results from this because we don't want this to be an experiment. We want this to work."

He said the goal is to help create employment for First Nations people as soon as possible.

"On the ground, what has to happen is all of our training centres across the country have to start getting young Aboriginal kids into these training programs. That's got to be the first big, big positive thing that happens," he said.

Windspeaker Business Quarterly

"We're realistic. We know that out of 10 kids that come in, we're lucky to get three or four that are going to stay and actually work. Some of them are going to hate it. They're going to say 'This is not for me' and go somewhere else. So we're realistic about it but we're fine with that realistic scenario. For every 100 we get in, we'll probably keep 40 that will be working and have full-time jobs."

The members of LIUNA make solid wages and enjoy very good job security, he said.

"The construction industry pays well. They can have a career; they can be foremen; they can be superintendents. And maybe at the end of the day, 10 or 15 years down the road, maybe some of these kids are going to have their own company doing work on the reserve because they've got the experience all of a sudden now to do it. I think there's a career path here," he said. "You're going to have a group of young people who are going to be able to work at something as a career for the rest of their lives as opposed to feeling fairly hopeless, saying 'I don't know where I'm going. I don't know what I'm doing.'"

The national chief got Mancinelli's attention when he spoke about the hopelessness of too many young Native people in too many communities.

"I know there's a lot of that because I've spent time with Chief Fontaine talking about this and he talks about the hopelessness that exists with young people. They feel like they're going nowhere. Well, maybe, in a very small way, we can help give some hope to some people. We're realistic enough to know that we're not going to be the answer for everybody. But at least if we can help some, I think that goes a long way in resolving some of

the issues," he said.

Mancinelli said LIUNA has offices all across Canada and can get involved with First Nations people in all regions of the country.

"We've got an infrastructure that can work closely with the First Nations and maybe we can lobby together," he said. "There's an on-the-ground thing that we can do almost immediately and join forces with them and go to Queen's Park in Ontario, go to Ottawa and sit down with Indian Affairs and say, 'You're not doing the right thing here and we represent 840,000 people that feel the same way. And you deserve a good kick in the ass the way you're treating First Nations people and quite frankly we're not impressed with the fact that you have abrogated an agreement.' — the Kelowna agreement for example — 'and well, we're pretty pissed off.' I think that kind of pressure can help. We've got political action; we're putting people to work; we've got youth programs that we can plug people into. This is a pretty good start of a great relationship."

He encouraged *Windspeaker Business Quarterly* to publish his phone number and address as a way of allowing First Nations people to get involved right away.

"The best way for them to get hold of us is call the regional office, which happens to be in Hamilton. We moved it from Toronto to Hamilton. They can call my office and my office will direct them to the right people in their jurisdiction," he said.

The office is at 44 Hughson St. South in Hamilton. The phone number is (905) 522-7177. Mancinelli said Lucy Faiella would be able to help any First Nation person get started with the union.

By Paul Barnsley



Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Phil Fontaine and Joseph Mancinelli, international vice president of the Laborer's International Union of North America, sign an agreement outlining the union's commitment to work with First Nations. The signing ceremony took place during the AFN's annual general assembly held in Halifax from July 10 to 12.

Photo: Paul Barnsley

Businessman wants to share the wealth

A successful entrepreneur from India is shocked that the country that has provided so much opportunity and wealth to him has failed to provide the same opportunities to the original inhabitants of the land.

Aditya Jha came to Canada 12 years ago.

"I have found this country so great that people like me can do so well. What amazes me is how come those people, who have been here for thousands of years, they are worse off."

Jha has set out to help level the playing field for Aboriginal people by providing dollars for education, and to those who have a bent for entrepreneurship.

Endowments have come through an organization called POA Educational Foundation. POA is made up of the initials of the first names of the foundation's founders: Payman Hodaie, Omid Hodaie and Aditya Jha.

POA provided a \$421,000 endowment to Ryerson University and another \$100,000 endowment for Indigenous Studies at Trent University in Peterborough. A new endowment of \$250,000 will provide for Aboriginal students enrolled in the Chef School at George Brown College. The endowment will support two annual awards to Aboriginal students in culinary programs. A third award will target one Aboriginal student who expresses entrepreneurial interest in the culinary arts.

"I thought because I have benefited, people like me should take this kind of task and be able to do something. I thought, 'Why not do things to support education and entrepreneurship?' It was these two things that have made a difference in my life and most of the people I know in their lives."

Jha and Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy have been running Project Beyshick, a unique program geared to nurture Aboriginal students with entrepreneurial interests. It's now in its third year of operation.

In close partnership with NAN, POA

Educational Foundation designed this opportunity in the hopes of encouraging First Nations to take advantage of the many resources available to them to increase their participation in the economy.

Participating organizations in Project Beyshick include the Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund, Ryerson University, Trent University and George Brown College.

Through POA and Chief Beardy, another opportunity has been presented to young people between the ages of 21 to 35: Twenty-one First Nations youth have been selected from Aboriginal communities across Canada to job-shadow and experience business careers in Toronto.

This year, Project Beyshick ran from July 13 to 19. Participants started the week off at Trent University, where they spent three days learning about business and entrepreneurship through workshops taught by professors from Canada's leading business schools. The next three days were spent shadowing CEOs and senior-level business executives as they went about operating their businesses, an opportunity that allowed participants to gain a better understanding of the work done by business people in senior management positions.

The youth also had a chance to participate in a variety of activities, including those designed to encourage interaction with successful entrepreneurs from ethnic minorities.

The cherry on top of the ice cream: At the end of the project, the participant who presented the best business or career plan report was given an entrepreneurship award of \$15,000.

This is just the beginning, said Jha.

"I have much bigger plans," he said. "I want to set up something called the Social Venture Capital Fund. I will find people like me who will be willing to give \$50,000 or more and this will become a charitable contribution, but the fund will be organized like a venture capital fund, purely business way. Disbursement will happen on a business basis only for

Aboriginal people who will do business in the mainstream world. And that's another thing, which I strongly believe in. [Aboriginal people] should become successful entrepreneurs in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver and not in Thunder Bay and their own reserves, but rather be part of this jungle and live here, and it is possible."

Jha states only one motivation behind his initiative and that's to help people become wealthy.

"My goal is how to find more and more people who want to become rich. That's my pure motive," he said. "We want more Aboriginals to become rich in the mainstream world and, if a few of them become multi-millionaires, that will send a strong message. They will become a role model to other people who would want to be like that."

The one drawback is that, so far, Project Beyshick is geared to include only Aboriginal people in Ontario, but Jha said it's a start.

"I would like to do it nationally, but I have a small foundation and it limits me to what I want to do. I want to do much bigger things. I am becoming more and more motivated to work with Aboriginal people here (in Toronto)."

Jha is currently in discussions with Ryerson University about starting an Incubation Centre for Entrepreneurship for First Nations with a proposed endowment of \$500,000.

One point Jha wanted to stress is that all of the endowments and financial support he has provided to First Nations is done for personal motivation and should not be considered handouts.

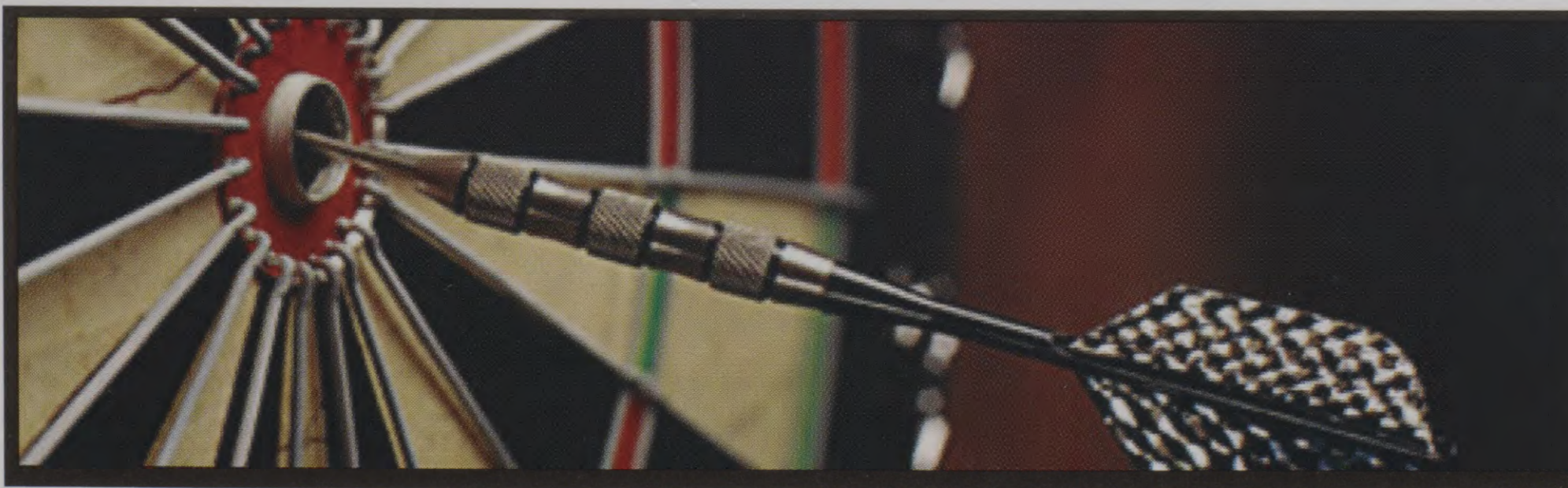
"If I make more money, I would like to give more. It's a joy," said Jha. "It's not that I'm doing a favour to anybody. I'm not doing any favours to First Nation people; no I'm not. This is what I think is the right cause to do work for and if I accomplish anything, it's a personal accomplishment. It's for me."

In order to help increase First Nations involvement in education and the economy, Jha suggests that a different approach needs to be taken.

"We need to bring in a third factor to solve this problem and that should be involvement of private philanthropy and an entrepreneurial approach to solve this problem. The government alone and the leadership alone is not sufficient."

For more information visit the web site www.projectbeyshick.com.

By Laura Suthers



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Taking the long view of success



Giselle Martin (left), accompanied by her partner/husband Douglas Wright, receiving the award for the Best Youth-Owned Business from the Nuuchahnulth Economic Development Corporation (NEDC).

Giselle Martin is as shiny as a new dime. Her dark hair is glossy and smooth. Her smile is wide and bright. She laughs easily and often.

Martin seems comfortable, contented and poised, even when talking to the press; even when receiving her recent recognition: The Best Youth-Owned Business Award from the Nuuchahnulth Economic Development Corporation (NEDC).

"I would have no idea what I would be doing with my life right now if we weren't paddling all the time," she said at the awards luncheon on Aug. 25.

Martin, along with partner/husband Douglas Wright, own Tla-ook Cultural Adventures, a company that offers cultural tours in traditional dugout canoes on the West Coast of Vancouver Island.

Martin (Tla-ook) is a member of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation and is of the house of Nuukmis. On the tours she talks about the First Nations people of the area, the Nuuchahnulth, who are her family and friends, their culture and their history.

The tour is not limited to the ancient history of the people, however. More recent events that have had their impact are discussed: Treaty negotiations and the affect of the residential school system provide her clients the opportunity to appreciate First Nations as a constant in the territory rather than a relic of a distant past.

It was, in fact, one of the more recent events in the territory around Tofino that drove her desire to start up her business.

"I started working on my dad's whale-watching boat when I was 14. So that's when I started working as a guide in the guiding industry, and at the time the Clayoquot [logging] blockades were happening. This was around 1993, so there was a lot of environmental issues going on.

"And I really, I don't know, the smell of the diesel really bothered me, and I kept thinking, 'Man, it would be so cool if we could use canoes, and we wouldn't need any fuel,' and so I kept bugging my dad, like 'Dad, why don't you do canoe tours,' you know? 'And it would be so much quieter,'" she told Windspeaker Business Quarterly.

she told Windspeaker Business Quarterly.

Well, her dad didn't start the canoe tours, but Martin did, in 2002 with the assistance of the NEDC, which helped her secure loans and grants and which offered up much needed business advice and programs.

"I mean, I personally had no credit rating or history or anything like that," she said. If it weren't for NEDC, Martin said, her dream would have taken longer to realize.

Dad, Joe Martin (Kwa-kea-ees), isn't out of the picture by any means, however. He now helps his daughter guide her guests on their two- and four-hour or day-long tours, and is the one, along with Giselle's uncles, that carves the canoes. There are three in the fleet with the largest able to accommodate 10 paddlers and a guide.

"It's an art that has been in my family for a long time. It's another kind of reason that it was just kind of a natural idea while I was growing up. I don't even think it really started with me. It started with my great-great-grandfathers that used to carve the canoes, and grandpa who taught it to my dad and my uncles."

Continued on page 9.

Continued from page 8.

Martin often takes the long reflective view in her thinking. She is grateful to her Nuu-chah-nulth ancestors for the decisions they made to protect the area so that she can prosper there today.

"None of this would exist if it wasn't for the way our ancestors have treated the forest here for thousands of years. It's because of that forest is still there, and because of that we have the art of canoe carving and because of that, today, I can go there in a traditional dugout canoe and show people culturally-modified trees and we can have a traditional salmon barbecue with wild salmon. None of that would have existed without the laws and respect that our people had."

The canoes will come out of the water in October. After that, until March, the water is just too rough, but the business, which attracts customers from all walks of life and from around the globe, continues with culturally-guided hikes and walks.

Tla-ook Cultural Adventures also offers a bear-watching tour, led by Kwa-kea-ees, and a walk in the forest called the wild grocery walk, said Martin.

"We talk about First Nations' use of different plants and foods, and just kind of plants in general and berries. Some people come and they visit and you just kind of assume that everything that's growing wild in the forest is a weed and is poisonous and they don't realize that every single plant has uses."

Martin said she likes to keep the tours small, though she has had as many as 40 guests at once. But Tla-ook doesn't lump groups together. She adjusts the tours to the capabili-



ties and wishes of her guests.

"We get all kinds of different skill levels and interests. Some people come and they just want to go outdoors and paddle and hike. And so that's really great, that's what we'll do. There are some people that come that might be older and haven't ever paddled and they might be terrified to even go in a boat on the ocean, but they are coming because they really, really want to learn about First Nations cultures, so we will totally tailor the tour to that every trip is different." Her sister Tsimka Martin is also a guide.

When asked if she considers herself a success, Giselle laughs, curious of the question.

"I feel successful," she responds after some thought. "I think also the circumstances of everything around me and, I don't know, I think when I was younger too, I got to spend a lot of time outdoors and that really helped to develop my own, I guess, my relationship with myself and everything that's around us."

She said it was these circumstances and the people that provided her much needed support that has led to her success.

And how do her guests relate to the stories and the history and the culture of the Nuu-chah-nulth people?

"Oh, people love it. We've had really, really great feedback. We've had great e-mails, people send things, presents in the mail a month later, and e-mails saying how much they loved it. And we've had lots of recommendations, which I think has really been the key to our success—word of mouth. People have gone 'Wow, that was a really great trip' and they've come back again and they bring friends and then those people bring more friends."

Word of mouth, the Internet and brochures make up the lion's share of the marketing. She also has some European tour companies booking from overseas, and signage in Tofino to catch the eye. Missing, and still a dream, is her own booking office in the tiny, but expensive, resort community. The price of real estate in Tofino is high, and available space at a premium.

"We did have an office a few times, but we moved around and that just tended to create confusion for our customers who were coming back year after year." Martin's husband, who also handles some other business ventures, answers the phone and takes her bookings while she is out on the water.

When asked about the advantages of owning her own business, Martin is at first thoughtful and then full of humour.

"Well, for myself, I get to do something that I really love to do, and I get to work outdoors and, well, after you slave away for years in the beginning you can start to decide your own working hours," she laughs. "But first you've got to work 24/7 for a few years to get it going.

Yeah, it's a really good investment of time and energy, I think."

She said owning a business is a trade-off—the hard work is returned 10-fold if an entrepreneur has a good work ethic and takes responsibility for his or her own actions.

She said having a business plan is "immensely important" to success.

"Years before we actually approached NEDC, I had it in my mind that I wanted to do canoe tours, and my plan then was 'Oh, it's easy. You just put a canoe on the dock and the people jump in and away you go paddling.' But you do have to have a business plan so you can get approved for different loans and stuff. The business plan is really essential to working out the costs and the liabilities and everything and all the other things behind the scenes that you might not think about that I didn't really think about when I was really young."

Her advice to young people with a dream to become their own bosses by owning their own businesses:

1. "Get some experience in the work field that you're thinking of, because you really should make sure that you like what you are going to do, because you are going to be stuck doing it for a long time."

2. "Make sure you plan ahead. Really think realistically, like cash-flows." and

3. "Get a mentor. There was a really great program through NEDC that was a mentorship program and we were able to meet with people who owned a kayaking tour company and go out with them once a month and get advice from them and it was really, really beneficial to our business, especially in the first year. You know, we'd maybe be thinking about different details and forgetting to look at the big picture. Or they'd say 'Have you thought about doing this thing', or 'have you thought about doing that' or 'have you thought about trying to get media out on your trips.' You know, things that were a really big deal, but when you are first starting out your own business you might not think about."

Looking farther down the road, Martin doesn't just think of her own success, but of the success of others.

"I probably won't be guiding canoe trips when I'm 80 years old," she said, "but I would like somehow for First Nations cultural tourism to be available. I think it's a really important key, not only for providing tourists with enjoyment of this area, but also education about our people here. And I think it's a really great job and, I mean, it's helped me to learn more about my own culture, because it's always in the forefront of my mind when I'm out there. So it would be really great to have more young people get involved in this kind of industry from our communities."

By Debora Steel

Young entrepreneurs encouraged and guided



Eugene Desjarlais of E R Small Business Solutions is just one of the young Aboriginal entrepreneurs that has been profiled on the Aboriginal Youth Mean Business Web site.

It's probably not news to anybody by now that the Aboriginal youth population is the fastest growing demographic group in Canada. But what may be news to some is that the number of young Aboriginal people who are choosing to go into business for themselves is also on the rise.

Earlier this year, the government of Saskatchewan teamed up with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the Clarence Campeau Development Fund to host Excellence in Action, a symposium on Aboriginal economic development. The final report from that symposium includes a statistical snapshot of entrepreneurship among Aboriginal people. The information presented, gleaned from the Statistic Canada's analysis of the 2001 Census, shows that the number of Aboriginal entrepreneurs in Canada is increasing—more than 27,000 First Nation, Métis and Inuit people were self-employed in 2001, an increase of 31 per cent when compared to numbers from the previous census in 1996.

The numbers also show that the average age of Aboriginal entrepreneurs is lower than the average for non-Aboriginal entrepreneurs, and that more than one-quarter of the Aboriginal people that are operating their own business are under the age of 35.

While the process of setting up and running your own business may seem like a daunting task, would-be entrepreneurs don't have to go it alone. There are any number of programs and projects in place that can offer assistance with such things as developing a business plan, arranging financing, and even helping young people determine if their business ideas are feasible. These supports are all the more

valuable given the reality of another statistic; according to results of a study released by Statistics Canada in February 2000, at least half of all new companies go out of business within the first three years of operation.

The first step for many young Aboriginal people dreaming of self-employment is Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC). The program, operating under the department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, offers support to Aboriginal businesses in the form of financial assistance.

ABC has a specific program stream dedicated to assisting young Aboriginal entrepreneurs. In fact, about half of the clients currently enrolled in the program are young entrepreneurs.

In addition to dealing directly with clients, ABC also works with a number of Aboriginal financial institutions across the country that help clients access funding from ABC and other sources, and provide additional supports to help them start and run successful businesses.

One such organization is Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc., an Edmonton-based financial institution that provides financing and support to Métis entrepreneurs in Alberta. About two-thirds of the clients Apeetogosan currently serves are young entrepreneurs.

Apeetogosan can help its clients access government funds for business start ups from both the federal and provincial governments, but the services the organization offers don't end there, explained George Vass, Apeetogosan general manager.

The first thing Apeetogosan staff do when a new client comes to them is something they call pre-care.

"Pre-care is sitting down with the client and trying to figure out exactly what kind of knowledge they have they're going to take into this business. If they don't have the management skills or the people skills that are required to run a business, we will point that out to them," Vass said. "We also review the project to see if it's viable."

If a potential client has what it takes to be an entrepreneur, and if their business idea is sound, then Apeetogosan staff assist with other aspects of the business start-up, including helping in the development of a business plan, helping them to set up their books and offering other business coaching as needed. These types of supports go a long way towards helping fledgling entrepreneurs find success, Vass said, and lessening the risks involved in starting up a new business.

While building relationships with clients is part and parcel of the way Apeetogosan does business, one of the ways the organization can measure its success is by the number of clients it loses. Once a client has successfully established his or her business, they can begin to qualify for financing through mainstream banks, and no longer need the business incubator environment that Apeetogosan provides.

"It's a sad thing to see a good client move off to the bank in one way, but it also makes us proud that we've been able to help someone grow their business," Vass said.

A relative newcomer to the list of available supports for young Aboriginal entrepreneurs is Aboriginal Youth Mean Business (AYMB), an online resource serving Manitoba's Aboriginal community.

Continued on page 11

Continued from page 10.

Roberta Hewson is executive director of Partners for Careers, a program out of the Manitoba department of Education, Citizenship and Youth that provides a variety of services to Aboriginal people in Manitoba. The AYMB Web site is one of the program's initiatives, designed to be a one-stop-shopping resource for Aboriginal youth interested in becoming self-employed.

The AYMB Web site was needed, Hewson said, because, while there was no shortage of resources available to Aboriginal youth wanting to start up businesses in Manitoba, information about those resources didn't seem to be getting out. Now, all the information is on the site, just a mouse-click away.

Hewson said the AYMB was first launched about three years ago, but has only existed in its current incarnation for about 10 months. Whereas the previous site provided only links to available resources, the new site offers up information about planning a business and finding training and financing, an e-newsletter and profiles of young Aboriginal entrepreneurs. It also includes a directory of Aboriginal businesses in Manitoba, and Hewson hopes to eventually add a mentorship feature so entrepreneurs who are just starting out can benefit from the wisdom and experience of more established business people.

"Like real life people telling you what their real life experience was," Hewson said.

Another feature Hewson hopes to have online soon is a self-assessment tool that will help would-be entrepreneurs get a better idea of whether self-employment is the life for them.

Hewson believes the scope of AYMB will continue to grow, with annual Aboriginal youth entrepreneur awards and a national focus for the Web site among the long-term possibilities.

"Because, I mean, Aboriginal youth entrepreneurship, there's a groundswell," she said. "You can feel it. You can feel the earth rumbling about starting businesses for young people now. It's a movement. So we don't want to drop the ball."

More information about ABC can be found online at www.strategis.ic.gc.ca/abc. Information about Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc. can be found at www.apeetogosan.ab.ca. The AYMB Web site can be found at www.aymb.ca. You can also access information about resources available to young Aboriginal entrepreneurs on the Web site of the Aboriginal Business Service Network (www.canadabusiness.ca). Additional resources for young entrepreneurs can be found on the Web site of the Canadian Youth Business Foundation (www.cybf.ca), a national charity that provides entrepreneurs between the ages of 18 and 34 with mentoring, financial assistance and access to interactive online business resources.

By Cheryl Petten

Windspeaker Business Quarterly

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Giving back 'a thrill' for accomplished northerner



If anyone could be said to defy the stereotype of the “fat cat” banker, it would be the Bank of Montreal’s Clint Davis.

Davis is a lean man in his mid-30s, with a keenly intelligent mind and a glint of humour in his eyes. He slips easily between references to “we” as the BMO, for whom he serves as national director for Aboriginal banking services, and “we” as Aboriginal people. He is from Goose Bay, Labrador, a member of the Nunatsiak Inuk nation.

He is the grandson of trapper Percy Davis, who was known for both his leadership skills and his public recitations of the poems of Robert Service. Clint is the son of a teenaged mother. He is a lawyer, a land claims specialist, a former personal advisor to two ministers of Indian Affairs, a graduate of Acadia, Dalhousie and Harvard universities, and is currently juggling his work duties with training to become a chartered financial analyst. He gives credit where it is due, and gives back where he can. Davis refers to the occasional phone call from a youth seeking career advice as “a huge thrill.”

“I get so excited by talking to young people and hopefully providing some words of advice that can help them,” he says.

Davis attributes his own decision as a “nerdy” teenager to apply to Acadia University in 1988 to the mentorship of an older cousin—the first in the family to attend university. His success there is attributed to the “tons of love and tons of support” Davis got from the extended family who raised him.

“For some of these kids, all it takes is a few words of guidance and I certainly got that, from my mom (Pauline White), and certainly from my grandparents (Margaret and Percy Davis). I really lucked out. I could have been put up for adoption. I could have not have been born. So I’m most grateful for my family.”

He is also grateful for the Nunatsiak Nation, formerly the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA). The LIA not only inspired in Labradorians a deep sense of cultural pride, but also paid Clint’s way through both his business management degree at Acadia and his law degree at Dalhousie. It provided additional assistance for him to attend the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard.

Continued on page 13.

Continued from page 12.

“(That) was absolutely invaluable,” said Davis, who describes the LIA’s efforts as one of the most effective First Nations post-secondary programs in the country.

The group’s work to settle its outstanding land claim with the federal government also caught Davis’ imagination, as he explored Aboriginal legal issues at Dalhousie, and, after two years of general law practice in Newfoundland, joined the federal Treaty Negotiation Office as an analyst. There, he was responsible for delving into the background of the claims, and preparing briefs for the negotiators.

“For me, being fresh out of law school and somewhat altruistic, it was just fascinating to know that my small efforts were actually contributing to a land agreement which, at the end of the day, would receive constitutional protection,” he said.

Davis was also able to offer the federal negotiators some insight into the perspective of those sitting on the other side of the table—a skill that also came in handy when he shifted roles to become a political advisor to Indian Affairs ministers Jane Stewart and Bob Nault. He came to more fully appreciate both the tensions between Aboriginal leaders and the federal government, and the limitations Indian Affairs, as a cog in the machine of government, faces in its efforts to change policies.

Several years into his career in Ottawa, a friend suggested Davis consider yet another shift in direction—Harvard. Despite initial hesitation, Davis decided to apply, and was not only accepted in the Kennedy School of Government, but also received two scholarships from the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, plus a Canada-U.S. Fulbright Scholarship. The latter is based on a combination of his past academic performance, experience and his planned research topic: an analysis of successful models of self-government amongst Indigenous peoples.

Davis found his experience at the Kennedy School to be intensely rewarding, dubbing it “Disneyland for adults, because it’s complete and absolute access to some of the most intriguing, interesting and brilliant people in the world,” he said. At Harvard, running into Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu eating ice cream in the cafeteria, or walking past an open-air lecture by the chair of the United States Department of Defence’s joint chiefs of staff—a.k.a. the most powerful military person in the world—can be everyday occurrences.

While at Harvard, Davis learned that the Ivy League school’s charter states as its

mandate “the education of English and Indian youth.” He also found himself feeling a touch guilty about his presence there.

“I felt really privileged and I really wanted—particularly because I was given so much support—to share a little of the experience,” he said. From that desire emerged a two-day intensive course—the Canadian Inuit Executive Leadership Program—which Davis organized in 2002 with the help of Joseph Kalt, a professor of International Political Economy and academic dean at the Kennedy School.

Approximately two dozen Inuit leaders attended the course, where they explored topics such as governance, economic policy, leadership, and conflict management, both as students and as guest lecturers speaking to Harvard students about their own experiences. “I was nervous,” he said. “Here we are bringing in individuals who were recognized leaders in the Aboriginal community to teach them about leadership. It almost would sound a little insulting but I’ve got to tell you, they loved that course.”

Davis now calls the program his proudest accomplishment, noting that not only did he have the opportunity to introduce the institution to people whom he greatly respected, he was able to send the message that a school like Harvard is an option for Inuit people. To his delight, another Inuk student has since graduated from the Kennedy School.

After a stretch with the federal Treasury Board post-graduation, Davis joined the Bank of Montreal in 2003. He sees a great need, not only for more Aboriginal people to become financial professionals, but in general to become better educated about the management of their financial and land resources, acquired both through the settlement of land claims and through procurement and development deals.

“The world is moving so quickly through globalization that if we don’t seize on these opportunities to develop our human capacity, the results are going to be dire,” Davis said.

“We [the Aboriginal community] have done a tremendous job in producing Aboriginal lawyers, and I think that actually had an impact on the landmark decisions that we’ve received from the Supreme Court of Canada in the area of Aboriginal rights, Aboriginal title, duty to consult, etc.,” Davis said. With that legal framework in place, “Aboriginal communities will need to have the skills to know how you develop the resources, and how you develop viable businesses. That’s one of the things that got me very excited about working in a bank.”

By Carmen Pauls Orthner

Advice from Clint Davis for Aboriginal entrepreneurs:

For Aboriginal governments:

- Keep business away from politics.
- Create a predictable investment environment for investors.
- Invest in your people. Offer opportunities for training and employment.

For business owners:

- Don’t grow too fast.
- Ensure that you can pick out the market where you are the strongest.
- Maintain a solid and productive relationship with your bank.

In general:

- Opportunities for Aboriginal entrepreneurs are limited only by your willingness to work.
 - Possibilities of particular interest include procurement arrangements with other governments (federal, provincial and, to an increasing extent, regional/municipal), partnerships with multinational and regional corporations for resource development (forestry, mining, etc.), and remote employment (providing services far away from the head office).
- Stay focused, and anything you decide to do, do it well.

Helping the world retain its languages

Jason Parenteau is 27 years old and the owner of Niigaan Media, a multi-media group based in Winnipeg. Through his work he strives to educate Aboriginal youth in their traditional languages.

"I started Niigaan Media as a result of my son. I realized that when it came to watching TV there were not that many resources for him, so I said 'Well, I have to make some then,'" said the young father.

Inspired in this way, Parenteau has been making cartoons and DVDs in Anishnabe for

three years. The first cartoon taught young ones how to count to 10 in Ojibway, but working through the different dialects has been difficult, he said. His main concern is preserving traditional languages.

"The language is actually what contains the culture, the thought, the meaning of things ... For example, a Zhiishiigwan is a sacred instrument that we use in our ceremonies, but we translate that to a rattle, and when you call it a rattle it loses its value. What do we give babies to keep them busy? So, I mean, that is why language is impor-

tant, so you can truly understand these things that are part of our culture, that are important in our culture. There is a lot of deeper meaning in our language. I mean, it's not just 'bro' when you greet someone nindawendaagan; that is with great understanding, compassion, kindness, and a great respect for each other. By saying 'my relative' you know how to treat them, because they are your family," explained Parenteau.

The success of his DVDs has allowed Parenteau to work towards his goal in (many new ways. He is now developing a 13-part TV series called Misko to be broadcast in Canada. The show follows the life of Misko, a five-year-old Anishnabe boy, as he learns from his family about his culture and his language.

Parenteau is also developing an online chat forum for his web site, www.niigaanmedia.com.

"It will basically be an online tutorial," he said. The current online lessons Parenteau provides though pod casts are valuable learning tools for Ojibwe children and adults alike. Expanding its reach even further, Niigaan Media provides templates of its animated cartoons, so that other nations can dub them using their own languages.

"We did a Cree version and we are doing a Sauk version for the Sauk tribe in Oklahoma, and also we are waiting to work with another tribe in California. A few tribes are recognizing this and, pretty much, what we do is develop resources. We want to help people to retain their language, their tribes and their own dialect," Parenteau said.


Niigaan Media is entirely self-funded and self-sufficient. Although he has faced many trials, Parenteau said the journey was well worth it.

"The most important thing is that when everything gets done it gets versioned [translated] to our other traditional Aboriginal languages. Whether it's Mohawk, Cree, Blackfoot, Navaho, whatever, I want them to be able to contact me. That is why I created this. It's not just for our kids of the Anishnabe Nation, it's for everyone. That is my goal with all of this; that all our tribes can embrace their traditional languages," said Parenteau.

Parenteau hopes to have Misko on the air in the coming year. He envisions Treehouse and APTN taking on the series.

By Gauri Chopra





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