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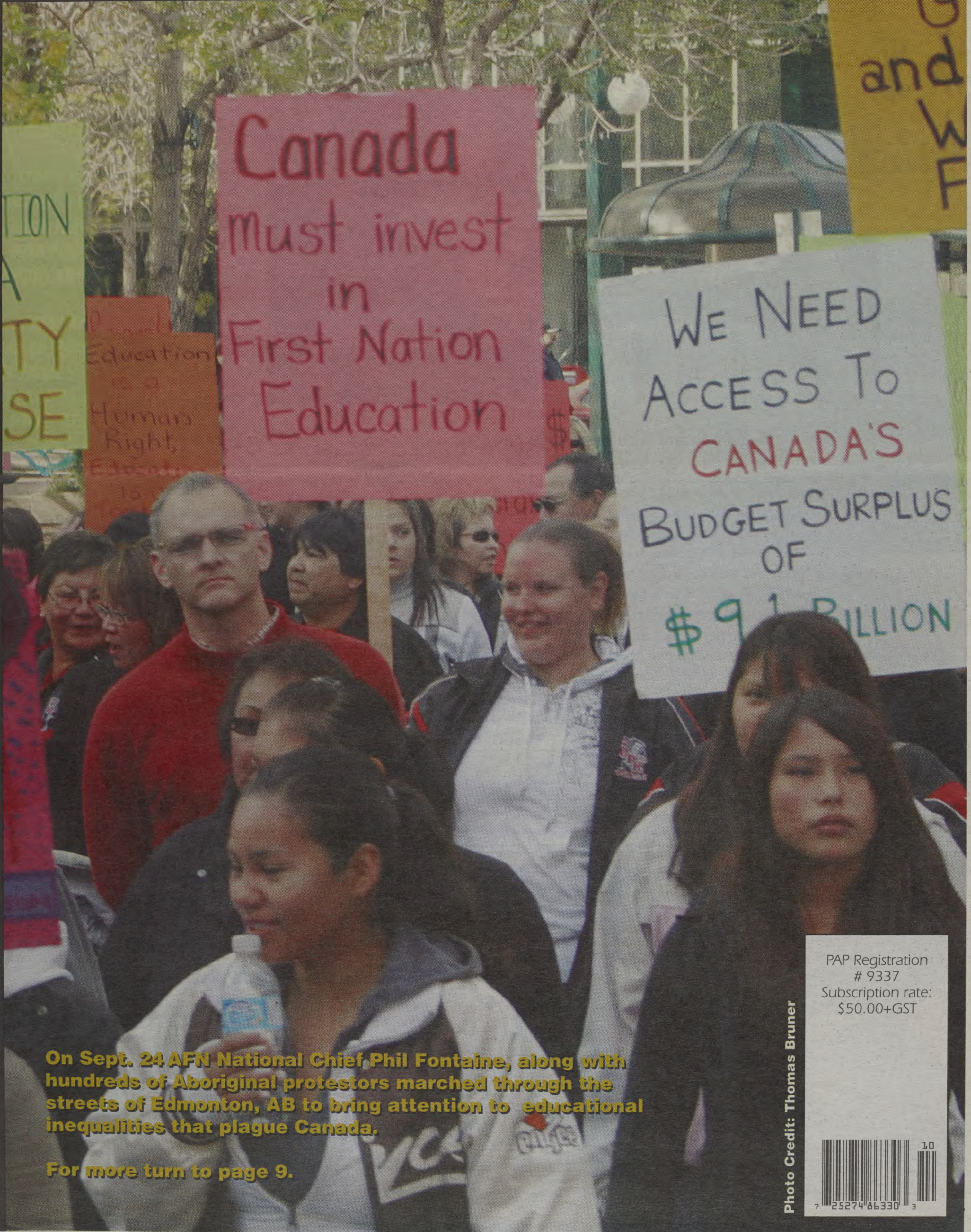


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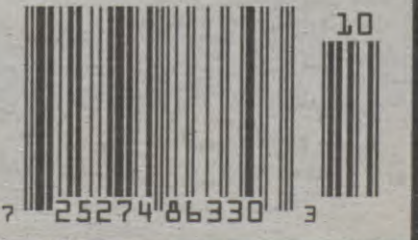


On Sept. 24 AFN National Chief Phil Fontaine, along with hundreds of Aboriginal protestors marched through the streets of Edmonton, AB to bring attention to educational inequalities that plague Canada.

For more turn to page 9.

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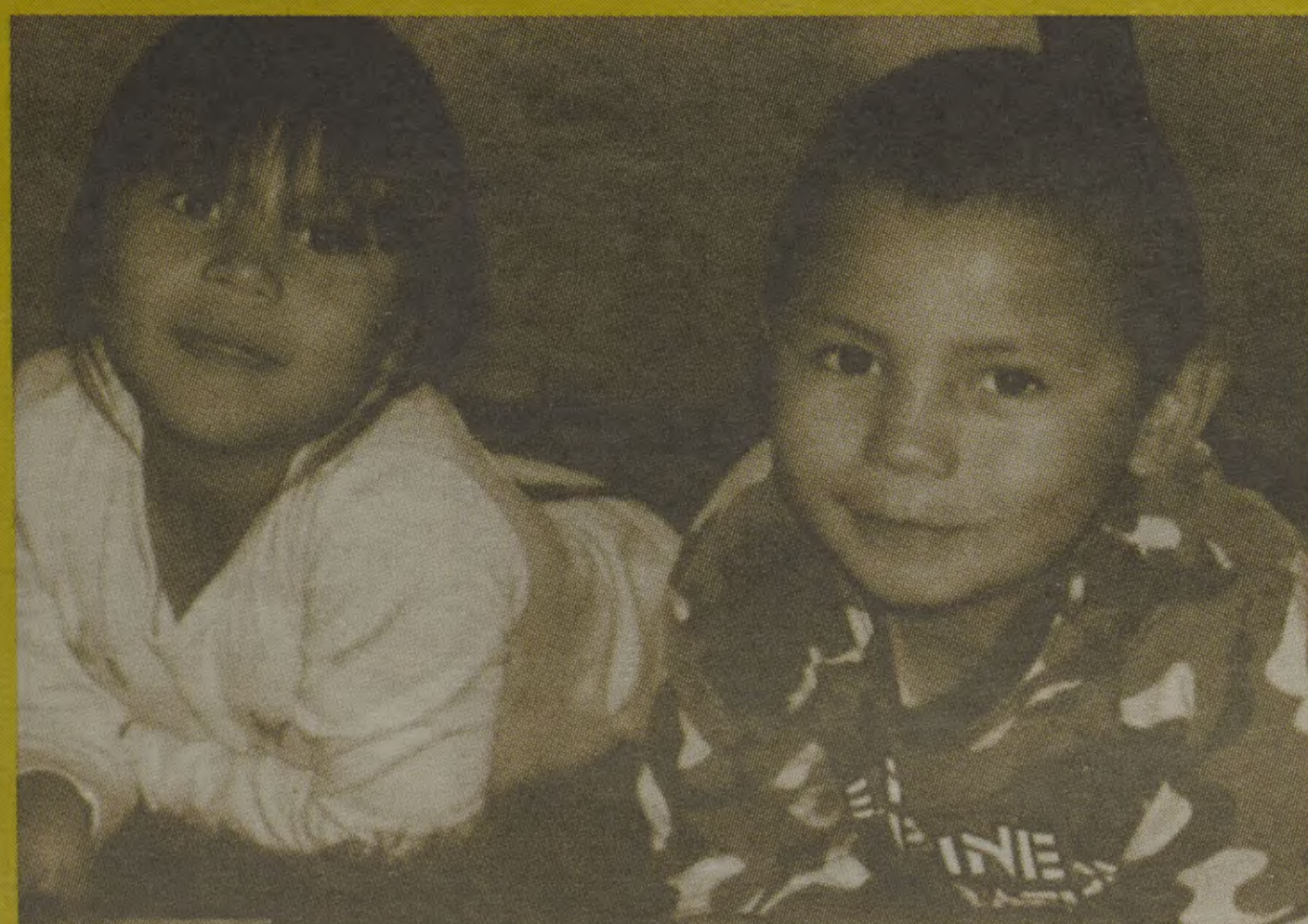
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Publisher
Bert Crowfoot

Editorial
1-780-455-2700
E-mail: windspeaker@ammsa.com

Senior Editor
Laura Suthers

Staff Writers
Dianne Meili
Thomas Bruner
Chereise Morris

Production
Judy Anonson

Advertising Sales
1-800-661-5469
E-mail: market@ammsa.com

Director of Marketing
Paul Macedo

Alberta, N.W.T.
Shirley Olsen

Toronto, Ottawa-Hull, Montreal,
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BC, Yukon, Saskatchewan
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Canada

Features

The FPNP want support to fulfill longstanding issues 8

The First Peoples National Party of Canada (FPNP) is a party that is determined to take the road less traveled. They operate with a Web site that is not completely updated. They persevere with bare minimum funding. And they are determined to never waver with their beliefs and principles to the exclusion of all other big business, and party platforms.

Jury is out for Aboriginal inclusion to jury duty 9

It is a well-known and well-documented fact that Aboriginals have been mistreated within the confines of the Canadian system. Canadian history can present a plethora of unfortunate tales regarding the plight of Canada's First Nations. Even within the justice system, dark facts of exclusion are now making their way to the forefront.

BCIC host gala to raise awareness surrounding Bill-C31 10

It was an outcry of indignation that helped change the Indian Act to reinstate First Nations women who had lost their status after marrying a non-status person, but now an uproar over the unfair classification system that was incorporated into the modification is threatening to erupt into a constitutional challenge.

Exhibit captures the truth about residential schools 10

Imagine this, your mother has just packed your lunch and taken you to meet your new teacher, she gives you a tender hug, confidently says you are going to have fun and then she quietly retreats. Now imagine a cattle round up as a herd is corralled then driven through the doors of a transport train.

Departments

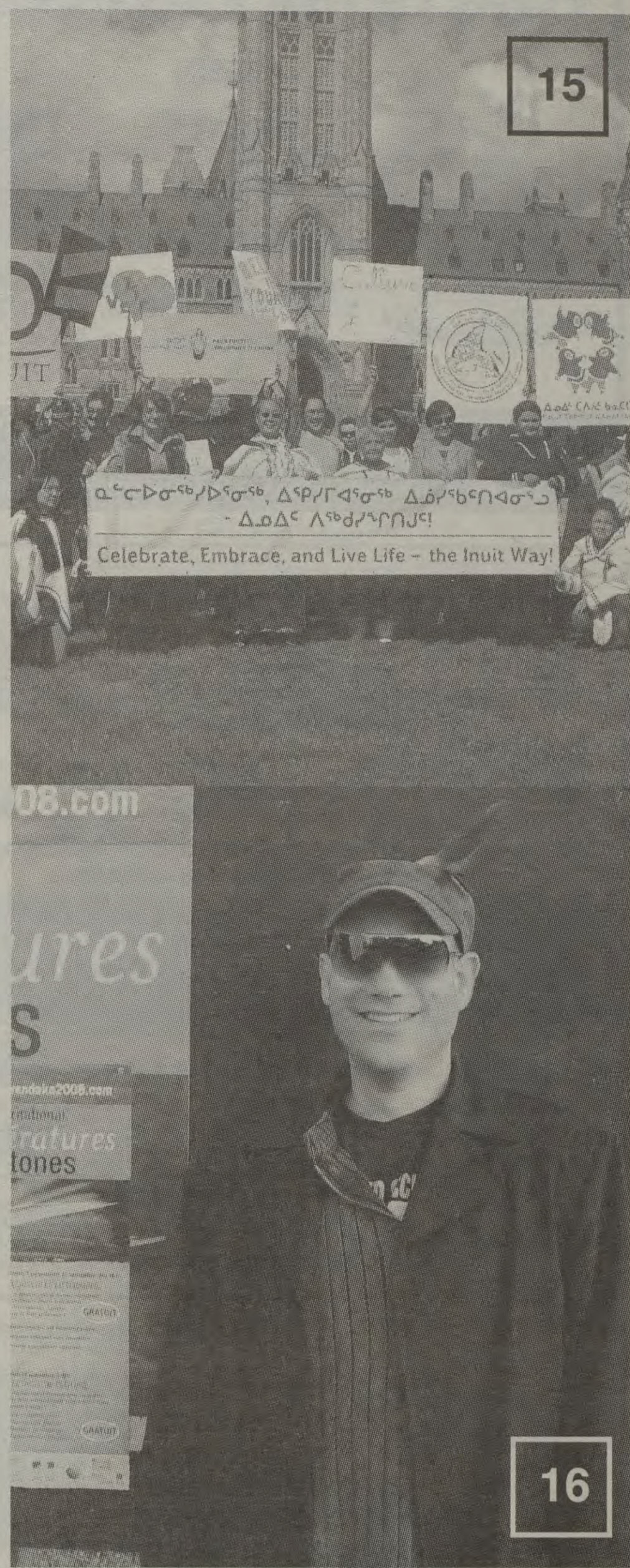
- [what's happening] 7
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- [education] 26 & 27
- [careers & training] 28 & 29
- [footprints] Louis Riel 30

Next month marks the 123rd anniversary of the death of Louis Riel, the martyr who gave identity to Métis people. Born on Oct. 22, 1844, Riel's role as the undisputed spiritual and political head of the Métis was set by religious parents and authorities who recognized his brilliance at an early age.

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

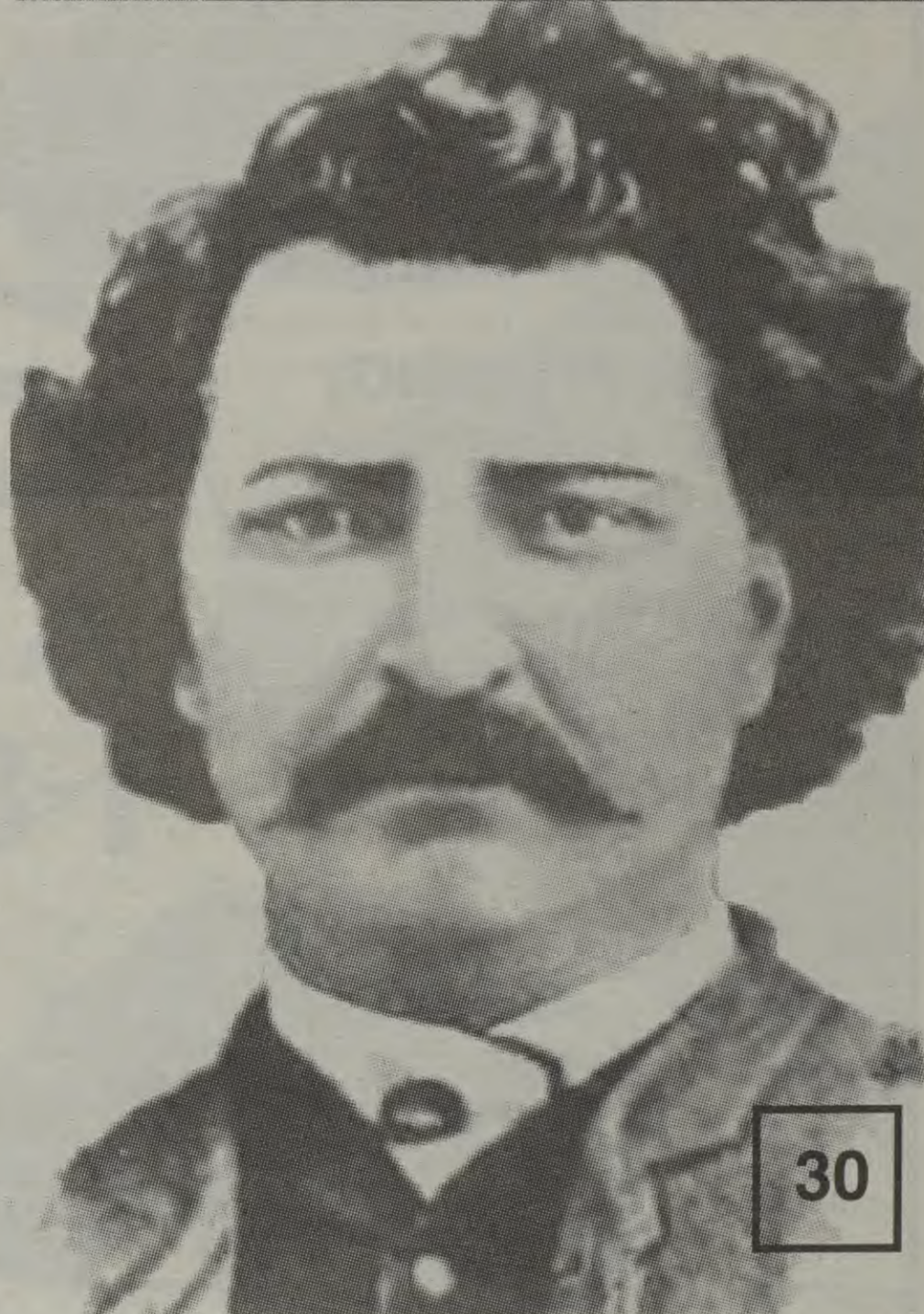
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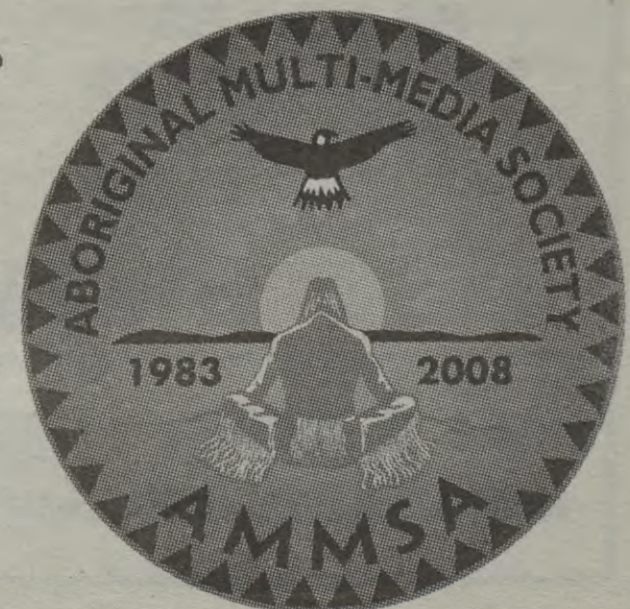


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"Challenges in owning a business!"
- Aboriginal Women in Business

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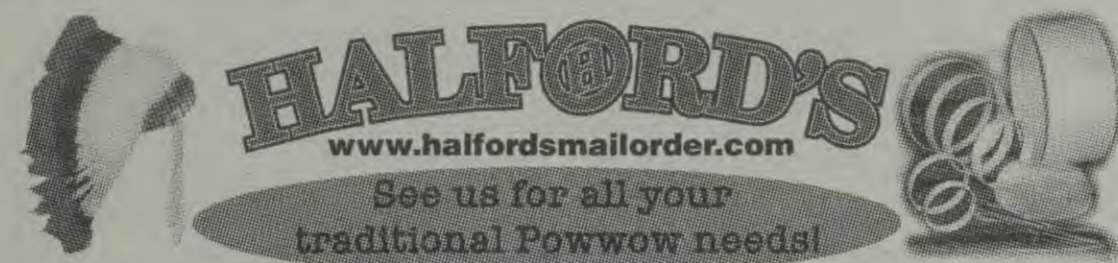
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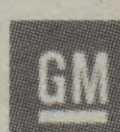
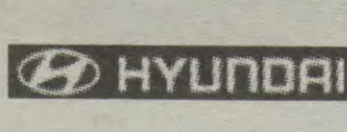
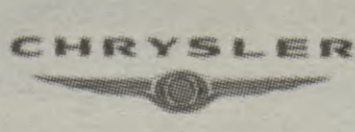
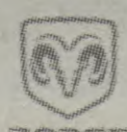
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ALL MAKES AND MODELS



First Nations up in arms over mercury related health conditions among kids

By Kate Harries
Windspeaker Writer

GRASSY NARROWS

In the following article, Kate Harries documents her search for information about mercury poisoning in two Ontario First Nation communities.

How many stillbirths are there in a year at Grassy Narrows and Wabaseemoong First Nations?

How many children have symptoms - seizures, developmental delays, failure to thrive, poor coordination, lack of memory - that could be mercury-related in the two Northwestern Ontario communities that were devastated by mercury dumped into the English Wabigoon River system a half century ago.

Sherry Fobister's 9-year-old daughter Catherine has those symptoms and many more. "They always say there's one in 10,000 births where it happens to kids, it's like a lottery, which kid gets it. And they don't know what causes it."

What causes it is important to Fobister. The lack of clarity means that the Mercury Disability Board (which provides a monthly payment to the child that goes to Indian Affairs Canada to be held in trust until she turns 18) doesn't cover many of the costs associated with taking Catherine to Winnipeg, where the specialists are.

The questions arise because people in the communities fear they continue to see the effects of mercury in their children, two generations later.

Health Canada is funding a study of environmental contaminants by biologist Leanne Simpson, who adds that a study of health effects has been discussed but doesn't fit into Health Canada's funding parameters.

Of course there are no simple answers.

In fact, when it comes to the aftermath of one of the worst industrial poisonings in Canada's history, Health Canada doesn't so much give answers as clues.

What statistical evidence is there of mercury related symptoms in Grassy Narrows? In one of a series of written answers, media relations official Paul Spendlove referred to a study Health Canada funded in 2004. "The

report is the property of the First Nation and further questions about the report should be addressed to the community," Spendlove wrote.

The study, by Laurie Chan of McGill University, is an examination of mercury contamination in the fish eaten by residents of Grassy Narrows and Wabaseemoong, so it's not designed to answer questions about still births and symptoms. But Chan tested the hair of 142 residents of the two communities. Two from Grassy Narrows and four from Wabaseemoong had mercury concentrations exceeding Health Canada's "acceptable" level of 6 mg/kg, but all were under the "at risk" level of 30 ppm.

"These results show that there should be minimal concern for Hg (mercury) in these two communities," the report stated.

In 2002, Dr. Masazumi Harada, a Japanese neuro-psychiatrist and internationally recognized expert on the effects of mercury poisoning, tested hair samples from 47 Grassy Narrows residents and did medical examination of 57.

Harada diagnosed 45 cases of Minimata disease (mercury poisoning), using standard criteria that require, at minimum, sensory impairment of the extremities or around the mouth, plus one or more symptoms such as disturbed gait, tremors and impaired hearing or speech.

In a paper published in 2005 in the Bulletin of Environmental Contamination and Toxicology, Harada noted that the symptoms were conclusive though mercury in hair levels were low.

Canada has never admitted that Minimata disease occurred in Grassy Narrows and Wabaseemoong.

Harada said his findings show that "chronic Minimata disease can occur due to long-term mercury poisoning even though the level (in hair) is not above the recommended safe level." He recommended further study and more resources for residents struggling with the effects.

Spendlove's comment does not deal with the new theory about the value of hair testing. The Chan report, he wrote, "was based on a much larger sampling than Dr. Harada's study. No evidence of Minamata disease was reported; however, diagnosis was made difficult for

several reasons: factors such as poor nutritional status, alcoholism, old age, diabetes, and other neurologic disorders may produce similar findings."

On the issue of statistics for stillbirths and miscarriage at Grassy Narrows, Spendlove wrote: "Data about stillbirths are available from the provincial vital statistic registry. Data about hospitalized miscarriages are available from the Canadian Institutes of Health Information's Hospital Morbidity Data Base."

A few calls directed *Windspeaker* to Canada's Public Health Agency, and media relations spokesperson Philipe Brideau advised suggested the Ontario health minister might have more information.

Another question: How many people are receiving compensation from the Mercury Disability Board, how old are they and what level of mercury-related disability have they been assessed for?

Turns out Health Canada doesn't have that statistic either. Spendlove refers me to the board.

Many people on the reserve talk about difficulty in getting in touch with the board, which has a phone number that is staffed between 7:30-8:30 a.m. Monday - Thursday, and 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. on Fridays.

I make contact once, with an assistant who told me that board chair Margaret Cameron would call me back. And that's the last I heard, despite two weeks of leaving messages.

Fobister has had the same experience. She wants to appeal the level of compensation her daughter gets because the initial payment was based on the situation at age 3. Six years later, there's a lot more information on the child's condition. But getting a form and information about how to appeal has stymied her. And now she has another worry. Her son, one year old, started having seizures a few months ago and shows signs of the same condition as her daughter.

She was shocked when it happened. She thought he might be alright because, after all, the doctors in Winnipeg told her how rare her daughter's condition is. "Like they said, it's only one in 10,000."

So the questions remain. How many children like Catherine are there on those reserves? Does anyone in government want to know?

Agreement reached but where's implementation?

By Andréa Ledding
Windspeaker Writer

MANITOBA

The Manitoba government announced they have reached an agreement with Ottawa to solve funding disputes over Native kids with disabilities on a case-by-case basis, calling it Jordan's Principle after Jordan River Anderson from Norway House Cree Nation.

But Cindy Blackstock of First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada (FNCFC) explains the principle does not extend across government services and was done unilaterally without consultation, and is far from satisfactory in even the limited health care aspect it touches.

"Equality is something we should be 'running towards, not inching towards,'" she notes, adding that despite announcements, it does not make a difference in children's lives yet.

"The case-by-case approach existed when Jordan was alive, and it didn't work," Blackstock said in a phone interview. "We need to meet the needs of the child first, and have the case conferences after."

Jordan was one of many First Nations children born with complex medical needs - and who ultimately died in hospital while two levels of government fought over who should pay for his needs. His family had been forced to give up their parental rights, having been told that care would be easier to access if he were in the foster system, but his mother had left the reserve to stay with him in Winnipeg for the duration of his hospitalization.

When he was stabilized around age two, they were told he could leave the hospital but the ensuing disagreements over who would bear costs resulted in him never leaving the medical facility until his death. This is the case conference model, a tragic failure.

Blackstock notes the case conference model is the "child comes second" approach - "not the way it works for other kids, and it shouldn't be the way it works for First Nation

kids."

The government has also not worked with any of the First Nation governments, representatives, agencies, individuals, or communities - especially Jordan's home community of Norway House.

Mike Muswagon, a councilor and band member of Norway House, said this situation is not unusual - at least 37 young children on his reserve were in need of funding and caught between at least two levels of government, or sometimes different federal departments. He is in the process of trying to get meetings with some of the Manitoba ministers to discuss the very narrow scope of what they are trying to pass off as Jordan's principle - both he and Blackstock note that the provincial opposition in Manitoba has twice tried to pass a motion putting Jordan's Principle in as provincial law, and it has been voted down by the present government - even right after this most recent media announcement.

"This is a national problem - we knew the advocacies we were doing for the children in our community had implications for children across the country - we want people to understand it's a national problem," said Muswagon. "Canada proclaims to have one of the best universal health care systems in the world - but the biggest gap right now exists [for First Nations children and families]. The government is in total violation of its own Canada health act."

Norway House began to pay medical costs out of band money but eventually ran out. CTV broadcast a documentary on Norway House, and as a result interim government funding was provided - which will end in a few days, September 30. No news or extensions have been provided so far, says Muswagon, and he is incredulous to the lengths they have had to go to even obtain interim funding, exposing the personal lives of families and their ill children to documentaries.

"This is not a child protection issue - these children were born with medical handicaps to good parents - but if we would put them in care, [the government] wouldn't question

expenditures," notes Muswagon, adding that in Jordan's case the family had to give up parental rights so Jordan could access services.

"He could have gone home at age 2 and spent his last years in a quality family setting," agreed Blackstock. "After he passed, his family wanted to make sure this never happened to any other child or family."

Which is why her agency has made sure they always consult with the family first - unlike the governments. In 2007, Parliament did unanimously accept Jordan's Principle while Muswagon and members of Jordan's family watched the vote - but the motion was non-binding, and there were no mechanisms to put it in place afterwards. Currently a specialist has been hired to travel from province to province working on definitions - with other governments, not First Nations members or the family and community of origin.

"Jordan's principle is already defined - this special little boy who brought equality and fairness to everyone," said Blackstock, adding that his dad Ernest hopes this will not be merely a moral victory but something which is enacted and implemented at all levels of government - not just medically but child care, education, and welfare - to ensure First Nations children have the same access as other Canadians. "We're talking about the welfare of 9000 kids especially after the apology, any injustice should be addressed swiftly."

Blackstock along with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) have filed a human rights complaint for inequitable child welfare funding on the reserve, which the federal government keeps putting off on technical delays. Jordan's case is definitely an example of this. She described the human rights route as a last resort, after joint efforts create two solutions which were never implemented.

"The Commission has the authority to suggest a remedy - and if the federal government fails to implement that, it can be taken to federal court in contempt - and we're willing to do that," said Blackstock. "Our hope is they will be the first government to treat First Nations with equality and dignity - but so far it's not looking good."



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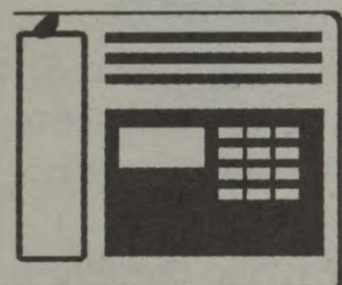
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October 25, 2008, Edmonton, Alta. - 780-413-7806

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December 6, 2008, Edmonton, Alta. - 780-758-1300

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December 9-10, 2008, Toronto, Ont.
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January 14, 2009, Winnipeg, Man. - 416-926-0775; 416-987-0246

AFOA CANADA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

February 12-14, 2009, Montreal, Que. - 866-722-2362

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Canadian Nuclear
Safety Commission

Commission canadienne
de sûreté nucléaire

Canada

PUBLIC HEARING ANNOUNCEMENT

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) has issued an official Notice of Public Hearing, available at nuclearsafety.gc.ca, announcing that it will hold a one day public hearing to consider an application by Atomic Energy of Canada limited (AECL) to renew the Nuclear Research and Test Establishment Decommissioning Licence for the Whiteshell Laboratories which is located northeast of Winnipeg, Manitoba. The public hearing will be held on November 5, 2008 in the CNSC Public Hearing Room, 14th floor, 280 Slater Street, Ottawa, Ontario and will be webcast live on the Internet via the CNSC Web site.

The public is invited to comment on AECL's application. Requests to intervene must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission by October 6, 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 nuclearsafety.gc.ca, and refer to Notice of Public Hearing 2008-H-15, or contact:

L. Levert, Secretariat
Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission
280 Slater St., P.O. Box 1046
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5S9

Tel.: (613) 996-9063 or 1-800-668-5284

Fax: (613) 995-5086

E-mail: interventions@cnsccsn.gc.ca



Canadian Nuclear
Safety Commission

Commission canadienne
de sûreté nucléaire

Canada

PUBLIC HEARING ANNOUNCEMENT

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) has issued an official Notice of Public Hearing, available at nuclearsafety.gc.ca, announcing that it will hold a two-day public hearing on the application by Cameco Corporation to renew its licence for five years to possess, manage and store nuclear substances associated with the past operations of the decommissioned Beaverlodge mining and milling facility located near Uranium City, Saskatchewan. In addition, Cameco is also requesting that Appendix A of its nuclear substance possessing licence be amended to exempt minor satellite properties. Cameco will make an application to the Province of Saskatchewan to have these minor satellite properties accepted into the institutional control program governed by the *Reclaimed Industrial Sites Act*.

The public hearing will be held on November 5, 2008 and January 14, 2009 in the CNSC Public Hearing Room, 14th floor, 280 Slater Street, Ottawa, Ontario and will be webcast live on the Internet via the CNSC Web site.

The public is invited to comment on the application on Hearing Day Two. Requests to intervene must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission by December 15, 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 nuclearsafety.gc.ca, and refer to Notice of Public Hearing 2008-H-16, or contact:

L. Levert, Secretariat
Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission
280 Slater St., P.O. Box 1046
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5S9

Tel.: (613) 996-9063 or 1-800-668-5284

Fax: (613) 995-5086

E-mail: interventions@cnsccsn.gc.ca

Windspeaker news briefs

Dion dumps candidate for racist remark

Simon Bédard's racist comments, made 18 years ago as a radio host, have come back to haunt him.

In 1990, in a highly publicized event, the Mohawk community of Kanesatake went head to head with the town of Oka as a dispute over the land led to a two-month long standoff and the death of a police officer. The battle was resolved and, along with other standoffs, culminated with the creation of Aboriginal police forces.

Due to the standoff, there were huge traffic delays as highways were barricaded. Canada was torn, and comments were made in regards to the lengths that First Nations went to state their case; most notably, comments made by radio hosts Gilles Proulx, and Simon Bédard.

Proulx repeatedly reminded listeners that the Mohawks could not speak French, and that they should be shipped off to Labrador. Bédard suggested that the army should have gone in there and "cleaned up the place." He went on to say that after an indiscriminate amount of deaths, the country would just "carry on."

With Bédard running for the Liberals in the Quebec riding, the comments he made in the past have cost him dearly. Liberal leader, Stéphane Dion fired Bédard in order to end the controversy and the embarrassment the Liberals have faced since the comments resurfaced.

"Today, I announce that I have asked for and received the resignation of Simon Bédard as the Liberal Party of Canada's candidate in the riding of Québec. Clearly, Mr. Bédard agrees that the statements he has made regarding First Nations people are not compatible with the beliefs and values of the Liberal Party of Canada," stated Dion in a press release. "While Mr. Bédard has clearly indicated that he no longer holds those views, the Liberal Party of Canada's proud tradition of support for our Aboriginal communities must not be overshadowed by these comments."

Initially the campaign organizer accepted Bédard's apology. Upon further review, Dion overturned the decision and ordered Bédard to resign. Following that incident, the Conservatives came under fire for comments made by their campaign staff. Transport Minister Lawrence Cannon's aide, Darlene Lannigan, made a disparaging comment to Norman Matchewan, a protester. When Matchewan inquired about conditions for future meetings with the Minister, Lannigan replied, "If you behave and you're sober and there's no problems and if you don't do a sit down and whatever, I don't care," and added that "one of them" showed up the other day and was drinking.

The Conservative party made an official apology stating that her comments do not reflect the Government of Canada. Lannigan was not being removed from her position.

Nak'azdli determined more than ever

The Latin American Water Tribunal found Montana's Marlin Mine guilty of causing harm to the environment and to the people of Sipacapa and Miguel Ixtahuac'an, San Marcos according to a press release. The company being charged is the Montana Explored Company a subsidiary of Goldcorp Inc.

Goldcorp is the same company that is behind Teranne Metals Corp in the proposed Shus Nadloh mine at the head of the Arctic and Rainbow watersheds on Nak'azdli traditional territory in B.C.

For more than 18 months, a First Nations environmental review process has been in development by the Nak'azdli, but the current review process by the province, for Shus Nadloh, was started without adequate consultation with Nak'azdli, according to a press release.

Therefore, the worry over the proposed mine by the traditional landholders is growing.

"We are more determined than ever not to allow a flawed environmental review process, of which we are not a party, to repeat in BC what has happened in Central America," said Nak'azdli Chief Fred Sam.

The Nak'azdli plan on raising this issue at the upcoming First Nations Mining Summit scheduled in Prince George from Oct. 7-9. A First Nations mining action plan will develop from the summit in order to help all First Nations engage with mining companies and the government in their roles as cultural stewards of the land.

The FPNP want support to fulfill longstanding issues

By Thomas J Bruner
Windspeaker Staff Writer

SAULT STE. MARIE

"Bad officials are elected by good citizens who do not vote."
—George Jean Nathan

The First Peoples National Party of Canada (FPNP) is a party that is determined to take the road less traveled. They operate with a Web site that is not completely updated. They persevere with bare minimum funding. And they are determined to never waver with their beliefs and principles to the exclusion of all other big business, and party platforms. In fact, one of the only parallels they have with other parties is that they are relying on votes, and plenty of them.

It was not until 1961 that First Nations received the right to vote. After many years contemplating reasons to remain bystanders in the electoral process such as, being newcomers to the electoral system, and the firm belief that a difference could not be made, a consortium of young Chiefs mused that non-participation ultimately worked against First Nations in Canada. The FPNP established themselves as a federal party in 2005.

The FPNP have stated that their Web site is slowly but surely coming along and will be updated. The moccasin telegraph has served them well and will continue to do so. However the funding for the party is another issue altogether.

"Certainly we're financially challenged. We're a poor, fledging party, that's OK. Money is the root of all evil. If we had lots of it, we'd look like any other party," said FPNP Leader Barb Wardlaw, adding that her party intends to prove that you don't need big money to run a successful campaign.

Will Morin, the candidate for Sudbury is also feeling the pinch of the skeleton budget. In lieu of normal political tactics, like billboards and brochures, he invites everyone to give him a call to discuss the issues.

In an interview with the Sudbury Star he stated, "I am going to invite people to call me, invite me, participate in this election. In the Aboriginal world, if we compete, we don't survive. If we work together, we survive." Morin also added that he hopes to get some Aboriginal voters to vote for perhaps the very first time in their lives.

That's a thought shared by John Malcolm, the candidate for Athabasca/Fort McMurray whose fight for Aboriginal rights has stretched to a decade now. Malcolm has identified that getting Aboriginal people to participate in the democratic process is one of his biggest challenges.

"I'm here to help practice democracy, help Aboriginal people get their rights and try to help all Canadian citizens while

"I'm here to help practice democracy, help Aboriginal people get their rights and try to help all Canadian citizens while I'm doing it."

—John Malcolm

I'm doing it," explained Malcolm.

Malcolm ran in the last election and had the best showing of all the FPNP candidates. Unfortunately that best showing still left him in last place in a pool of four. Malcolm is also concerned with "convincing them that we're a party worth voting for. That we're out there—fighting for them and their rights."

Noeline Villebrun, the candidate for the NWT explained, "We don't have corporations sending us thousands of dollars in donations because we may not fit their criteria for who they want to push their agendas forward."

Villebrun, who is considered a frontrunner candidate for the FPNP, is no stranger to politics. She was voted the Dene National Chief in 2003, among other political accolades. Furthermore, she is also a powerful ambassador for women, a quest that began in 1979 when she founded the NWT Women's Coalition.

Some of the issues that the FPNP is fighting for are longstanding issues, such as the Kelowna Accord, treaty rights, education, and the right to have clean water on reserves. Other issues, such as the Conservatives party's recent rejection of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples, is certainly an issue that the Aboriginals would like to see resolved more quickly than others.

Another interesting fact is that in 1996, the federal government capped funding increases for First Nations at two percent a year. This cap continues despite continued reports illustrating that the Aboriginal population is growing 3.5 times faster than the rest of Canada. The result is eroding reserve conditions, and many First Nations that continue to trail the rest of society.

Many reports have stated that Native issues are not on the forefront of the other parties agendas.

Wardlaw and FPNP believe that they will have to throw their hats into the ring in order to make sure that First Nations do not get lost in the wave of campaign promises.

"We're running to fight poverty. We're running to make a difference, and we're vying for change. These are the venues you have to take if you're trying to do that. What platform are we taking? We're not another party, we're not the other party," stated Wardlaw, who also implied that the candidates are not on a short

leash. "They know full well what the issues are in their areas and they're going to fight for the people in those areas."

There is quiet but powerful rumbling in media reports that suggest that Natives have the potential to flex their proverbial political muscle in the 2008 election. In as many as 60 ridings in Canada, First Nations account for at least five percent of the vote.

"Our people are growing in population. We're becoming stronger as people, and we're better able to work in the environment that we're forced to work in," Wardlaw expressed, adding that the long-term goal is to have equal say, and equal power.

Equality is certainly a feasible notion, according to the AFN, if the over 800,000 First Nation citizens across Canada choose to participate in the election. Large groups interested in "rocking the boat" have engaged in strategic voting. Also vote pairing or vote swapping has become another intriguing way to impose change. Basically, it is now believed that 800,000 votes is a substantial piece of a political pie.

Unfortunately, there is a portion of First Nations that believe that to participate in the vote is to be a turncoat to your own people.

Rob Ballantyne, who is running for the Desnetha-Missinipi-Churchill Riding, in northern Saskatchewan, remains a positive voice for unity. He believes that it is possible to work with non-Aboriginals, and it is possible to redefine what self-determination means. He is also worried that since the Conservative party has not experienced a majority government, that we have not seen their true colours yet.

Although the FPNP will not be the majority government this time around, and they will not be a part of the debates, it is believed they will be heard loud and clear.

"We are not a threat to anybody, and I'm certain that's why there's little attention paid to us. But I'm certain we're going to have an MP in the House after this election," expressed Wardlaw, who also noted that she finds the debates entertaining.

The FPNP's two most prevalent concerns are that they are considered as a candidate, and that First Nations make their voices heard.

The opportunity to vote will be on Oct. 14. For more information on the First Peoples National Party of Canada, log on to www.fpnpc.ca or check out their Facebook page.

Jury is out for Aboriginal inclusion to jury duty

Thomas J Bruner
Windspeaker Staff Writer

JAMES BAY

It is a well-known and well-documented fact that Aboriginals have been mistreated within the confines of the Canadian system. Canadian history can present a plethora of unfortunate tales regarding the plight of Canada's First Nations. Even within the justice system, dark facts of exclusion are now making their way to the forefront.

On Sept. 10th, an affidavit was filed in connection with a coroner's inquest that stated only 44 natives were being considered for jury duty, in an area that is population heavy with First Nations.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) is an Aboriginal political organization representing 49 First Nation communities within James Bay Treaty 9 territory and the Ontario portions of Treaty 5. NAN territory covers two-thirds of the province of Ontario.

"This is about a failure of our system to take First Nations into account," stated Julian Falconer, of Falconer Charney LLP. "They were either working with no list, or lists dated some five to ten years," Falconer explained, noting that it occurred in areas where there had been significant population changes, and the legal system was aware that there was a problem with the numbers.

NAN, and the Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto (ALST) have formed a coalition, and have retained the legal services of Falconer. Falconer, who is considered in many circles a human rights champion, believes that this infringes upon those very rights.

"The sad irony is that while First Nations are represented before the courts and in jails, they are terribly underrepresented when it comes to participating in the justice system, and the result is a very significant population wide human rights violation," Falconer expressed, adding that the right to a trial by a jury of one's peers is a constitutional right. "This is clearly being denied to First Nations."

"I think it just conforms everything we've been saying all along," said Alvin Fiddler, deputy

"The sad irony is that while First Nations are represented before the courts and in jails, they are terribly underrepresented when it comes to participating in the justice system, and the result is a very significant population wide human rights violation."

—Julian Falconer

Grand Chief of the NAN. "I've said that before, that the justice system is failing our communities, it's failing our people. We see this by the representation of our people in the corrections system, the jails, and the court system. And now, with the exclusion of the jury role, it just adds to our point."

"We know that there has been a consistent alienation of First Nations from the justice system, and this represents simply one more example. The sad reality is it's one more example of a longstanding problem that they haven't taken effective steps to fix," explained Falconer, who also believes that this leads to the growing coalition.

"Initially it started off with Nishnawbe Aki First Nation in northern Ontario, but since then, Treaty 3 has joined the coalition," said Fiddler, who added that there are more groups in Ontario who are being made aware and considering joining the coalition.

Falconer believes it is important to look back on Canada's history to reveal how the justice system has been unkind to Aboriginals; noting the Aboriginal Justice Report in Manitoba and the Marshall Report in Nova Scotia.

The Marshall Report is a reference to a Royal Commission of Inquiry of the 1971 wrongful murder conviction of Donald Marshall Jr. It shed light on preconceived prejudices on behalf of the police, the jury, and the judge. It culminated with an acquittal and an official apology from the Nova Scotia government.

The Aboriginal Justice Report is a reference to an inquiry ordered by the Manitoba government to investigate, report and make

recommendations to the Minister of Justice on the relationship between the administration of justice and Aboriginal peoples of Manitoba. (www.ajic.mb.ca/index.html)

"This isn't some isolated incident, this has historical context. It's been a problem that the authorities have simply failed to move on," said Falconer.

Based on the findings of the inquiry, the ramifications could be very serious as lawyers are already looking at past cases.

"What we're noticing now, over the past few days, is defense lawyers pointing to the fact that there's a history to this, and that this has been a concern of some longstanding," explained Falconer. "They have noticed that the juries in this area very rarely have First Nations representation on them, and that for the most part ended up being First Nations accused of being tried by white juries."

Fiddler also noticed the new trend in the courtroom.

"That's what we're hearing now. This issue not only affects the juries for inquest, it will also impact civil cases, as well as criminal cases," Fiddler said, adding that the AFN executive council has discussed that this may be an issue in other parts of Canada, as well.

"Since this came into light, it's growing and creating pressure on the province, on the government to have an official inquiry, and to work with First Nations on fixing the problem," said Fiddler.

With the looming inquiry, the growing coalition, the involvement of the AFN, and the potential that this could be a national problem, Fiddler suggested that those interested should stay tuned the NAN Web site. "Who knows how far this will go?"

March For Change In Edmonton

Drum music resonated through Churchill Square, and Aboriginals from Treaty 6, 7, and 8 united in one single powerful voice; a voice that demanded change in Canada's educational funding, as Aboriginal children are falling behind.

Aboriginals claim there are substantial inequalities in the allocation of funds, when the amounts given to Aboriginals are compared to the rest of Canada. There are also allegations of sifting funds before the money ever reaches Aboriginal hands.

Following a performance from the drum group, an Elder gave a prayer in his Blackfoot language. Then speeches from all of the Chiefs in attendance illustrated the wrongdoings, and rallied up the crowd to "move forward."

Among cheers and chants, the march through Edmonton's downtown streets led the crowd to Canada Place. It was there that the Chiefs, including AFN Chief Phil Fontaine, and the crowd made their point heard, loud and clear.

"Education for all First Nations," and "Education is a treaty right," were a couple of the notions they tried get across.

One Elder expressed that he hoped this was neither the beginning nor the end. He wants to see all the bands unite in their common goal, and he hoped that it wouldn't stop at one rally.

It should be noted that the Edmonton Police Service did a commendable job diverting traffic for the march, and keeping the crowd safe.

Windspeaker news briefs

Three years later and Paul Band receive settlement

It was three years ago when a CN train derailed, due to a faulty track, and inadvertently dumped an appalling amount of oil into Lake Wabamun. However it is only now that one Native band is being compensated for one of Alberta's most serious tragedies.

CN and the Paul First Nation came to a \$10-million settlement in order to divert a lawsuit that the band launched for retribution. 800,000 litres of oil was spilled into Lake Wabamun and the immediate and long-term effects were extensive.

Many were forced from their homes, and local wildlife perished in tragic numbers. Beaches and shorelines were polluted, and water had to be trucked in for the next eighteen months. The band was no longer able to hunt or fish around the lake.

Nearly one year after the event, the water had been deemed safe for swimming and boating, however not for washing dishes and showering. And in the summer of 2007, after local residents reporting seeing oil in the water, a watch was put in place. A report made by environment officials claimed that the lake would not suffer long-term damage.

CN initially offered \$7.5-million in compensation, but in order to appease Wabamun residents, it was improved to \$10-million, which was approved by a Court of Queen's Bench justice.

"This money will play a major part in implementing the band's business development plan, which we are confident will result in a much stronger economic situation for our people," said Chief Daniel Paul of the Paul Band in a news release.

"We are satisfied with the manner in which the Paul Band negotiated a fair and equitable settlement that will allow them to move forward on projects for the collective benefit of the entire Paul Band First Nation," explained Jim Vena, senior vice-president for CN's western region.

CN still has to face charges from the Environment and Ocean and Fisheries Department.

NITA to participate in historic event

A unique collaboration between the Native Investment and Trade Association (NITA) and RCI Capital Group Inc. (RCI) will result in what is referred to as a "high-level" trade mission to China. The event is entitled "RCI China-Canada Aboriginal Business Opportunity 2008" and is designed for Aboriginal businesses to take part in an historic combination of events in several Chinese cities from Nov. 2 to 14, 2008.

The first event is the Canada China Business Council (CCBC)/ Council of the Federation's three-city delegation tour to China that will coincide with CCBC's 30th anniversary and China's 30th year of an open door policy. The three cities that are on the tour are Beijing, Shanghai, and Chongqing and it will take place from Nov. 3 to 7.

Secondly, from Nov. 11 to 13, and taking place exclusively in Beijing, is the China Mining Congress and Expo 2008. This event will mark the 5th anniversary of what is known as one of the world's premier mining events.

Along with these events, the organizers have arranged special meetings to take place between participating delegates and business and government contacts.

In order to capitalize on the fact that Aboriginal-Canadians own or control a formidable portion of Canada, the hope is that many new partnerships will be created. Potential partnerships with a booming Chinese economy, in theory, should be profitable for both parties. For Aboriginal-Canadians, more profit would translate into better living conditions and increased self-sufficiency.

For China, it represents an opportunity for them expand on what is already a strong economic foundation. It is believed that China is assertively seeking out new long-term partners and has a vast reserve of cash.

Founded in 1989, NITA is a non-profit organization designed to promote economic self-reliance amongst Native groups in Canada. They are known for having one of the most extensive and comprehensive Aboriginal databases. Furthermore, they are well noted for being Canada's premier Aboriginal conference and event organizer.

RCI has been in existence since 1996, and is noted as Canada's leader with their Immigrant Investor program. Their singular mission is to dedicate themselves to helping immigrants invest securely in their future.

BCIC host gala to raise awareness surrounding Bill-C31

By Maria Cootauco
Windspeaker Writer

VANCOUVER

It was an outcry of indignation that helped change the Indian Act to reinstate First Nations women who had lost their status after marrying a non-status person, but now an uproar over the unfair classification system that was incorporated into the modification is threatening to erupt into a constitutional challenge.

The legislation introduced in 1985, called Bill-C31, is being slammed for being a veiled attempt at extinguishing status Aboriginal people within generations.

Under the categorization, if a status man and a status woman got married and had children, their children would have full status, referred to as a 6(1) status. But if a status woman or man married a non-status person, their children would be designated a 6(2) status. And if those children married non-status people, their

children will have no status.

"In 100 years time, according to the statistical studies we've done, there will not be one status Indian left in Canada," said Chief Ron Ignace of Skeetchestn Indian Band.

"So it's really a policy of genocide or assimilation. It's designed to do away with status people to resolve the land question because your land rights, your Aboriginal rights and title are tied to you as a status person."

According to the Ministry of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, "Within 75 years, individuals who lack entitlement to Indian registration are expected to account for one in every three people eligible for First Nations membership."

Chief Lynda Price of the Ulkatcho First Nations knows well the ramifications of Bill C-31.

When her mother got her status back with the introduction of Bill C-31, she was classified as a 6(1), but her children whom she had with her non-status husband, were assigned a 6(2) designation.

"She was discriminated against," Pryce said.

"All the years after my father died, she raised us for 20 years. She provided for our family and raised our family and didn't have any support through the programs Indian Affairs is supposed to provide for her because she lost her status."

On Sept. 17, the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (BCIC) held a fundraising gala to create awareness of the issues surrounding Bill-C31.

"[The Bill] is a way of divesting you of your fundamental human rights and your rights as an Indigenous person according to the Constitution of Canada and international laws and declarations," Ignace said following the event.

"Once you lose your status, you lose all your rights as a treaty person. You lose all of that. We ought not to stand for it and should stand up and fight it."

There is a strategy in the works through the BCIC to organize a campaign with expansive reach. The evening's festivities that

included a silent auction will aid in the effort.

"We are fundraising ultimately, to make a constitutional challenge against Section 6 of the Indian Act which is very bad legislation," Ignace said.

"It goes to the foundation of everything we stand for and who we are."

Three women sitting in the back of the Renaissance Hotel Vancouver ballroom understood that indignant conviction.

For them, it was worth about \$1,000 – the amount they paid for a signed Carey Price Montreal Canadiens jersey.

"It's a steal!" said Tania Moore of Vancouver.

Merriment aside, Moore and her friends Leslie Varley and Mary Knox-Guimont said they supported Bill-C31 because it has affected their personal lives.

When Varley's mother married her father, a non-status person, the classification system made it so that their children lost their status.

"It's very discriminatory – I just don't agree with the extent that

the legislation went. It needs to go further," Varley said of the Bill.

"I'm a Nisg'a from Northern British Columbia. Our line follows our matrilineal ancestry, [But] according to the government, I'm actually not Nisg'a and yet, according to our culture, you are who your mother is, so I'm definitely Nisg'a."

Moore, from Gitksan Nation, echoed Varley's sentiments, pointing to Canadian policy.

"If a child is born in Canada, they're Canadian no matter if their parents have citizenship or not," Moore said.

"But if you look at this policy, if they follow that logic, if a child is born to a First Nations woman, that child should be First Nations regardless. So it's kind of a double standard between the general Canadian population and the First Nations population."

As for their winnings, the three women said they'll share the rights to the jersey.

"I get it in December," Mary Knox-Guimont from Kwakiutl Nation said.

Exhibit captures the truth about residential schools

By Elizabeth Huber
Windspeaker Writer

KENORA

Imagine this, your mother has just packed your lunch and taken you to meet your new teacher, she gives you a tender hug, confidently says you are going to have fun and then she quietly retreats. Now imagine a cattle round up as a herd is corralled then driven through the doors of a transport train.

The contrast between the above images is captured in the title of the new exhibit at the Lake of the Woods Museum in Kenora, Ontario. Bakaan nake'ii ngii-izhi-gakinoo'amaagoomin: We Were Taught Differently is the name of a seven-week exhibit at the museum.

Few children today would conjure up images of a cattle drive to describe their first day of

school. However, for an Elder from Shoal Lake, Ontario, it is the image she invoked.

"It was heart breaking because I remember when we were taken away from our homes we were herded into a train like cattle and then when we got to Prince Albert we were herded into a truck like cattle," said Kathleen Greene.

Greene is a survivor of three residential schools, two in Prince Albert and the Cecilia Jeffery Residential School near Kenora, Ontario.

In a community where a large per cent of the community described themselves as Aboriginal for the 2006 federal census, the exhibit will continue to uncover old wounds and suppressed images for many survivors.

However, the greater goal of the exhibit is to educate the visitors while creating a greater understanding between

neighbors by highlighting a devastating portion of Canadian History.

For more than a century, Indian residential schools removed over 150,000 Aboriginal children from their families and communities in an attempt to, "kill the Indian in the child".

Over the years, the nation has suddenly begun to listen to the injustices suffered by the children of residential schools. Stories of sexual, physical, and mental abuse are heartbreakingly documented in the Canadian History books.

We Were Taught Differently, captures the essence of why so many cannot understand the often-overwhelming truth about residential schools.

The images presented are in such stark contrast to the quintessential Canadian image it is often beyond the reaches of the imagination to comprehend.

"We talk to our kids and

grandchildren about what it was like in residential school, some things we tell them they don't believe," said Greene.

"They kind of look at me (and think) what planet are you from? They can't really put themselves in my place," she explained.

Many non-Aboriginal peoples are now realizing that they want to and need to understand the stories of the survivors.

"The stance (for assembling the exhibit); the time was right in our community for it and also it was about time that we did it," said Lori Nelson, Lake of the Woods Museum director.

Working with the NeChee Friendship Centre, Lake of the Woods Ojibway Cultural Centre and many Elders and survivors, Nelson and the rest of the museum committee gained a deeper insight through stories and pictures about the six residential schools from Treaty 3 that they

now have on display.

"Our committee was great, there were some emotional times when people shared things," said Nelson, adding that it was "very eye-opening." Overall, I think it was a really positive thing for everyone on the committee in terms of working on this project together and just sort of getting deeper appreciation for each other as well," she added.

One of the speakers described how he would play hockey with the boys from one of the residential schools but did not understand the accounts of pain, dislocation, and confusion they often revealed. Other survivors spoke about the impact it had on their entire family.

"As a former student of a residential school, I've come to understand how much residential school has affected our whole family.

(See Bakaan on page 11.)

2nd Annual Aboriginal Energy Forum

Presented by Insight Information

December 9 - 10, 2008
St. Andrew's Club and Conference Centre
Toronto, Ontario

This two-day conference will provide timely information on recent developments in the renewable resource sectors that are engaging Aboriginal participation in energy and economic development projects. Including these sample topics.

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- Financing energy projects
- Best case practices for successful partnerships
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- The Green Energy Act and First Nations

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- CEOs, Exe. Directors of Aboriginal Business
- First Nation, Métis and Inuit Community Members
- Federal & Provincial reps/ Aboriginal Affairs, Business & Sustainable Development
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AWCS host conference to create an awareness

By Chereise Morris
Windspeaker Staff Writer

EDMONTON

The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS) hosted the first World Conference of Women's Shelters from Sept. 8 to 11 at Edmonton's Shaw Conference Centre. The conference room was filled with approximately 800 delegates from women's shelters across the globe. The unique opinions heard from all over the world were shared.

"Overall, people are just thrilled with the opportunity to have their voices heard and of course, women coming together, from all over the world, all speaking out globally, about domestic violence is a much stronger voice than just one shelter here or one shelter there. So, the men and women that work in shelters have found this group to stand beside them to speak the same language, to speak the same words, that we need to make changes in the way that women and children are treated and that domestic violence is wrong," said Patti McClocklin of communications and partnerships for ACWS.

Ann Kasook, the executive director of the Inuvik Transitional House Society and a delegate to the conference from the North West Territories shares in McClocklin's sentiments.

"The thing that strikes me the most is that we are all facing similar situations, similar gaps

and seeing that, helps me to realize, especially being from way up north, it helps me to realize that I'm not alone in the walk," said Kasook. "The most important thing I think is to be able to continue the work even though it feels like it is never ending. I guess the biggest thing that I have learned is that we have to continue to move on in order for voices to be heard."

The strong desire to see the needs of deprived women and children met, brought these delegates together and amongst their many differences, they all share something in common, and Gladys Richards agrees. "It is an important issue that they have in common." Richards is a resident family councillor of Discovery House, a violence prevention society located in Calgary.

"I came to this conference because family violence is such a big issue. It's a global issue and it happens to every country, every status, it doesn't matter and I think it's time that we do something about it and learn new techniques and ways to address the issues," said Richards. "The different countries and each shelter have different models, although it's the same issue of family violence and children are affected and we can help the children, they are our future."

Many important issues were discussed including, how to work with the male sex as allies to end violence against women, the needs of children exposed to family violence, trafficking of

women and children, workshops on how to help abused women with addictions or disabilities, the situations of Indigenous women around the world and Elder abuse.

"Seniors are often considered a burden, I guess by their families and sometimes they are abused financially, where (their kids) will take control of their money and use it to their own advantage rather than providing for the senior and sometimes the Elders are beaten or abused physically, sometimes emotionally. They are made to feel like they are worthless now, because they have nothing to contribute," said McClocklin. "You know there are seniors that are just not treated well."

One of the other issues always strongly felt here in Canada today and perhaps far into the future, is the overwhelming number of Aboriginal women that are abused or homeless.

"I'm hoping that our government will realize the importance of trying to work together. There are women out there who are experiencing violence, and its our children that are going to be the next generation, they are the ones that are learning what they live. Children learn what they live. There is a positive side but there is also a negative side with social problems and issues. I really believe many of the Aboriginal people are faced with so many difficulties because of the residential school situation that



CHEREISE MORRIS

Ann Kasook, the executive director of the Inuvik Transitional House Society from the North West Territories attended the World Conference of Women's Shelters from Sept. 8 to 11 in Edmonton.

many of them have. There is still a lot of pain, a lot of hurt, a lot of anger and a lot of it is taken out to the women and the children which makes it very difficult," said Kasook. "So I'm hoping that out of this conference we will be

able to get the government to understand that the social problems that are happening everywhere need to be viewed seriously as well as social economics, they go hand in hand with the social issues."

Bakaan nake'ii ngii-izhi-gakinoo'amaagoomin on display

(Continued from page 10.)

"Both my parents and all my siblings attended residential school and that experience has had a real impact on our lives, both good and bad. We've carried that experience into our own lives and our own families," said Donald Copenace, executive director of the NeChee Friendship Centre and member of the exhibit planning committee.

Now that the abuses are exposed, it is time for the harrowing struggle of healing to begin and continue for many.

"I don't think we will ever get over those issues that we went through at residential school," said Greene who now travels around North America with her husband helping others on their healing journey.

"I had to go through a lot of healing before I started doing this

work. I knew I had to take care of a lot of my issues, even the past issues I have had with my parents," she added.

She even had to learn parenting skills and re-learn the traditions of her grandmother.

"I had to practice what I preach, and that is the hardest part. I don't think I will ever get over the abuse that I went through at the residential schools, personally that is how I feel,"

added Greene. "I went to an Elder and gave her tobacco and said, 'Help me I am hurting inside, help me,' and I think that was a big step that I took on my part to start my healing path."

Even as a young child, Greene said she was a fighter.

"I was one of the fighters, I knew the system, and I used to get in trouble all the time because I used to tell them that they had no right to treat me like this."

"We were deprived of our culture, our language—everything—they were trying to strip us of everything, but the one thing I would always say, the couldn't take my spirit away," she said with a note of determination still in her voice.

Bakaan nake'ii ngii-izhi-gakinoo'amaagoomin: We Were Taught Differently will be on display from September 16 to November 1.

10th Annual Aboriginal Land And Resource Management

Presented by Insight Information

November 27 - 28, 2008
Four Season Hotel
Vancouver, BC

This conference, provides an excellent venue for Aboriginal leaders, project proponents, consultants, lawyers, representatives of regulatory agencies and others involved in the resource industry to network and learn about recent developments in the field.

Among the areas of focus for this year's event will be energy, land, mining and forestry developments. Guest speakers and representatives from across the spectrum of stakeholders will be in attendance at this two day Insight Conference. Aboriginal community leaders will also address how their communities are being affected, how Aboriginal rights are being protected and how resource management on First Nations lands is progressing while ensuring long term resource integrity and sustainability.

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- Chiefs, Community Leaders and Band Council Members
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- First Nation, Métis and Inuit Community Members
- Federal & Provincial reps
- Legal Counsel: Aboriginal Law, Energy & Natural Resources, Environment
- EDOs, Natural Resource offices
- Chief Negotiators, Treaty Negotiators & Mediators

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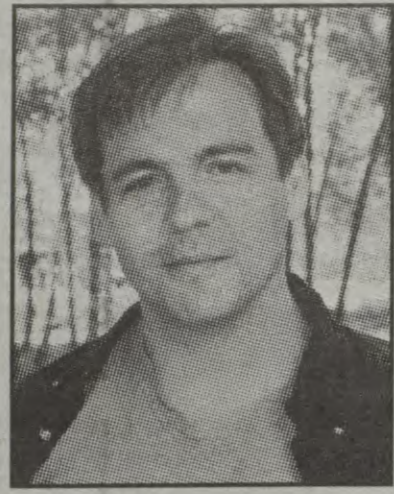
[strictly speaking]

Porn not best way to establish autonomy

ears ago, I had a friend who's fe ambition – well, one of rem anyways – was to write a ook detailing the hundred most beautiful places in the world to make love. Needless o say, I was very eager to co-rite that book with her but las both it and the woman isappeared into the mists of hat might have happened. till, I thought it was a very ool idea. And, upon reflection, still sounds like an interesting oncept and I still wonder if ich a book would be possible.

For obvious reasons, I would ttempt to approach the book om an Aboriginal perspective, he 100 most Beautiful First ations on which to make love. can't really say how popular it ould be but it would still be a n book to put together. I could rite about the austere beauty of askatchewan's Gordon's Reserve. ould wax poetically on the lchan scented breeze of Hartley ay or sharing a passionate oment bathed in the lights of asino Rama—the additional onus being I could write the hole thing off as business xpenses. My accountant would ke that.

We all know the topic is there, aiting to be explored. But alas, or reasons unknown, Native



THE URBANE INDIAN

Drew Hayden
Taylor

people don't have a particularly strong reputation for things erotic, which is not only unfortunate, but wrong. I believe this is a gross oversight and something should definitely be done about it. For instance, we have the highest birth rate in the country, so we obviously know a few things about this topic. And its time to lift that blanket.

Historically many of our legends, those particularly involving Nanabush or other Trickster representations, were extremely erotic and graphic. Many were downright bawdy and would put most porn stars to shame. Unfortunately though, during what I refer to as the age of the C.C.E. (Canadian Christian Era), many were outlawed, discouraged, and abandoned as being obscene, leaving many with the impression traditional Native legends were

just cute stories for children. Some were. But many weren't.

These inaccurate perceptions about the Indigenous hot and heavy need to be addressed, and in this day and age of instant media and communication, the sooner the better. I have a few suggestions on how to better celebrate and procreate (if that's the proper word) a better appreciation of First Nations sexuality.

First of all, almost everybody is familiar with the bikini wax known as a "Brazilian," because of those high cut bikini bottoms they like to wear down there. Let's Indigenize it and give it a cultural resonance. Instead, get an "Ojibway," which would be in the shape of a dreamcatcher (it's intricate and detailed work but Aboriginally well worth it). Or maybe an "Inuit," in the shape of an inukshuk (which traditionally

stood as a guidepost for travellers. The metaphor works). Or how about a "Haida," shaped like a salmon (swimming upstream to spawn. Once more, the metaphor fits).

What's got me thinking about all this is that just a few weeks ago, the national media reported that there may soon be a Canadian Adult cable network coming to a television set near you, with at least 50 per cent Canadian content. Pretty soon, "paddling your canoe" and "he shoots, he scores" will have a whole new meaning. The Canadianizing of Porn, it kind of boggles the mind, doesn't it? Will a 24 replace the popularity of a 69? Maple syrup will supercede whipped cream. And our national symbol of the beaver—enough said. Anything is possible.

Why should Native people be left behind in this digital revolution? Granted, it's a sticky subject.

Many in our community, no doubt believe that porn may not be the best way to establish our independence and autonomy. Is the illegal sale of cigarettes a better solution? Nudity vs cancer – I wonder if the Assembly of First Nations needs to have a referendum on this? Or how about the profitable operation of

casinos? None of them actually reek of cultural significance. Simply put, vice pays. We all know that. Native people know that as well as any other culture.

This new broadcast tendency also could be a potentially lucrative side business for APTN (the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network). They could start running shows like The Bushcombers or North of 69. Don't get me started on the "Poundmaker" and "Big Bear" mini-series. Once more, anything is possible.

I know this is a controversial issue. Anything to do with sex is, especially from such a conservative population as Native people. And Canadians. But I once compiled a book about Native sexuality, called ME SEXY, where I say that often the only impression the dominant culture has about anything to do with Aboriginal sexuality is usually dead hookers, high rates of STD's in First Nations communities, and Residential School sexual abuse.

Unfortunately, some of that is true, but its also like saying all White people are Latvian. And believe it or not, we tend to have a little more fun with the topic then the media will have you know.

To our valued readers,

Due to proposed increases in *Windspeaker's* mailing costs - *Windspeaker* has no alternative but to announce subscription rate increases commencing January 1, 2009.

Canada Post – *Windspeaker's* principle means of distribution - has announced a plan to change its postage pricing to a distance based rate model. What this means is that the more remote your location, the more that Canada Post will charge to deliver *Windspeaker* to your home, school or office.

One of the principle reasons why *Windspeaker* expanded to Canada-wide coverage and distribution was specifically to serve Aboriginal communities with limited access to communications – particularly communications with a distinctly Aboriginal perspective. *Windspeaker's* ability to continue to provide this service will be severely impacted by the proposed distance based rate model.

Windspeaker along with most of Canada's publishers have requested that Canada Post reconsider their plans for distance based rates. These requests have had little result, however. Unfortunately, because the impact of this rate increase will be felt mainly by those publications who serve a rural or isolated readership it will mean that Canada's remote Aboriginal communities will be required to carry a heavier share of the proposed cost increases.

We thought our readers would be interested in knowing the circumstances behind *Windspeaker's* rate increase.

In the meantime, you can take this time to renew your subscription or increase the term of your existing subscription at current subscription rates to help avoid the coming rate increase.



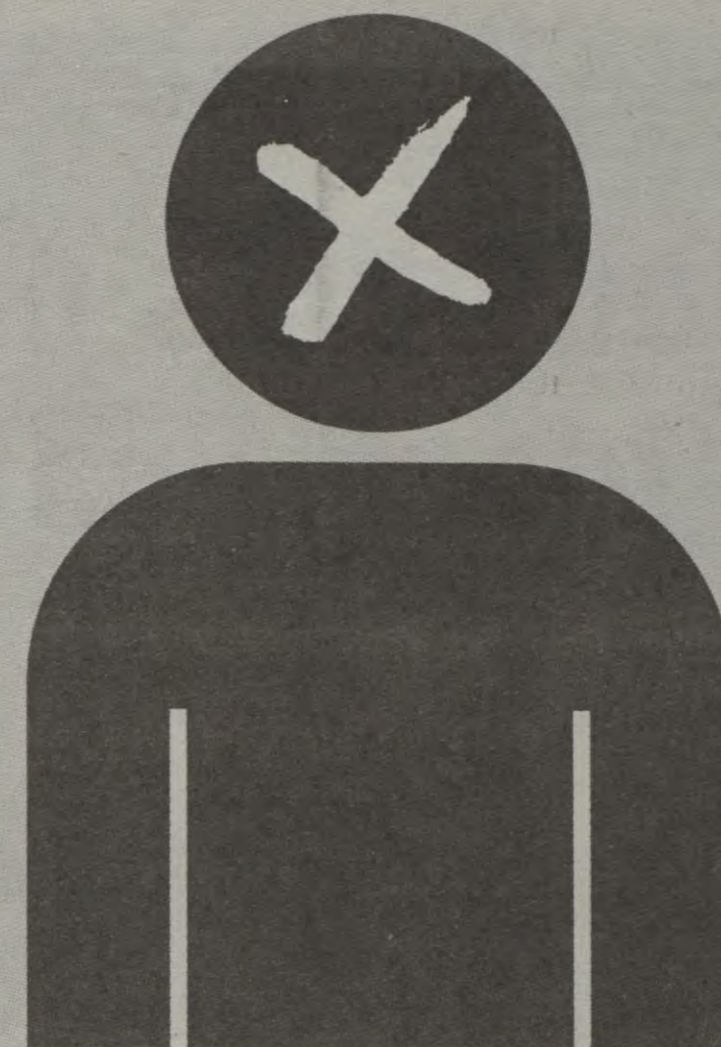
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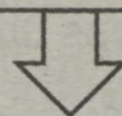
Provide one original piece of identification issued by a government or government agency containing your photo, name and address.
e.g.: driver's licence

OR

Provide two original pieces of identification authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada. Both pieces must contain your name and one must also contain your address.
e.g.: health card and hydro bill

OR

Swear an oath and be vouched for by an elector who is on the list of electors in the same polling division and who has an acceptable piece or pieces of identification.
e.g.: a neighbour, your roommate



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- Hospital Card
- Social Insurance Number Card
- Birth Certificate
- Driver's Licence
- Provincial/Territorial Identification Card
- Canadian Passport
- Certificate of Indian Status
- Certificate of Canadian Citizenship or Citizenship Card
- Credit/Debit Card with elector name
- Canadian Forces Identity Card
- Veterans Affairs Canada Health Card
- Employee Card issued by employer
- Old Age Security Identification Card
- Public Transportation Card
- Student ID Card
- Library Card
- Liquor Identification Card
- Canadian Blood Services/Héma-Québec Card
- Fishing Licence
- Wildlife Identification Card
- Hunting Licence
- Firearm Acquisition Card/Firearm Possession Card
- Outdoors Card and Licences
- Local Community Service Centre Card (CLSC)

ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS (containing name and address)

- Credit Card Statement
- Bank Statement
- Utility Bill (residential telephone, cable TV, public utilities commission, hydro, gas or water)
- Attestation of Residence issued by the responsible authority of an Indian band or reserve
- Local Property Tax Assessment
- School, College or University Report Card or Transcript
- Residential Lease, Residential Mortgage Statement or Agreement
- Canada Child Tax Benefit Statement
- Income Tax Assessment Notice
- Insurance Policy
- Government Cheque or Government Cheque Stub with elector name
- Statement of Employment Insurance Benefits Paid (T4E)
- Canada Pension Plan Statement of Contributions/Quebec Pension Plan Statement of Participation
- Statement of Old Age Security (T4A) or Statement of Canada Pension Plan Benefits (T4AP)
- Statement of Benefits from provincial workplace safety or insurance board
- Statement of Direct Deposit for provincial works or provincial disability support program
- Vehicle Ownership
- Vehicle Insurance
- Attestation of Residence issued by the responsible authorities (shelters, soup kitchens, student/senior residences, long-term care facilities)
- Letter from public curator

Note: The pieces of identification required under the *Canada Elections Act* are not the same as those for provincial or municipal elections.

The above information is also available in a number of heritage and Aboriginal languages on the Elections Canada Web site at www.elections.ca.

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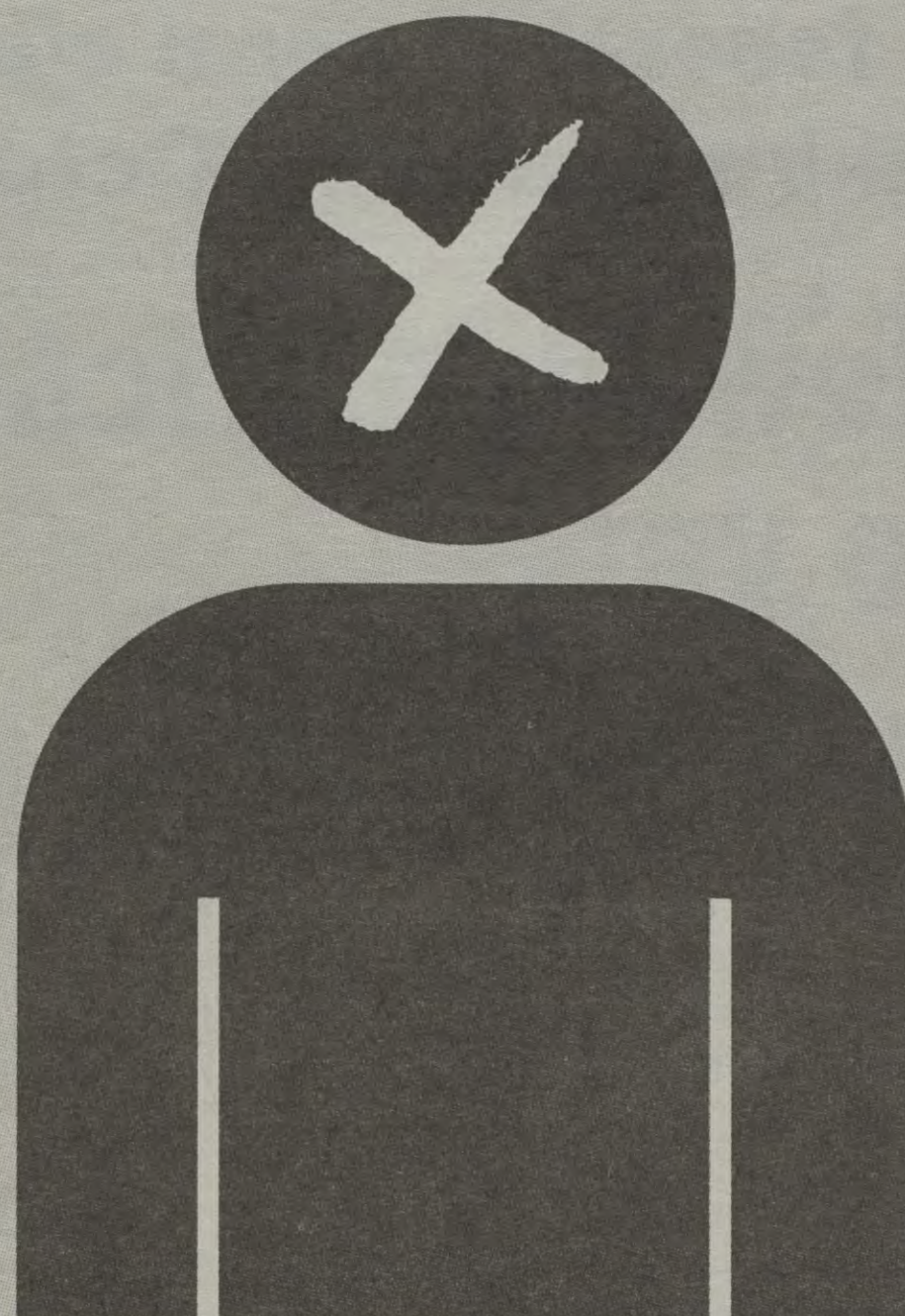
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- Carte de bibliothèque
- Carte d'identité d'une société des alcools
- Carte de la Société canadienne du sang/Héma-Québec
- Permis de pêche
- Carte d'identification de la faune
- Permis de chasse
- Carte d'acquisition/Permis de possession d'armes à feu
- Carte Plein air et permis
- Carte d'un centre local de services communautaires (CLSC)

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- Relevé de dépôt direct d'un régime provincial d'accidents du travail ou d'un programme de soutien aux personnes handicapées
- Document de propriété d'un véhicule
- Document d'assurance d'un véhicule
- Attestation de résidence délivrée par des autorités responsables (refuges, soupes populaires, résidences pour étudiants ou personnes âgées, établissements de soins de longue durée)
- Lettre du curateur public

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Les renseignements ci-dessus sont également disponibles en plusieurs langues d'origine et autochtones sur le site Web d'Élections Canada à www.elections.ca.

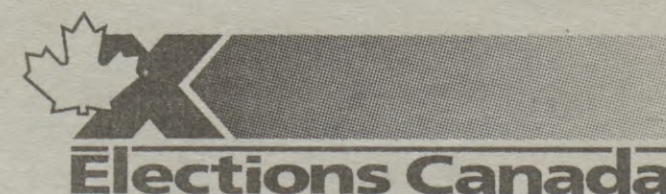
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Youth celebrate life on Parliament Hill

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Writer

OTTAWA

It's not about dwelling on what's been lost; it's about celebrating what you have.

That's the message National Inuit Youth Council youth intervenor, Tommy Akulukjuk delivered on Parliament Hill when World Suicide Prevention Day was marked Sept. 10.

"What we wanted to do on this day," said Akulukjuk, "is say that this is the day we celebrate life. This is the day we embrace life, the day we enjoy life."

The message was raised by 50 to 60 Inuit students living in Ottawa who carried picket signs reading "culture heals," "live life," and "celebrate life." The march was a coordinated effort on the part of Inuit organizations in Ottawa.

The message of celebrating life is an important one and most important in Inuit communities. In Canada, the Inuit have the highest suicide rate.

Health Canada statistics reveal that the Inuit suicide rate is more than 11 times higher than the Canadian rate, and that 83 per cent of those taking their lives are people under 30 years of age.

Having a positive message was one way to address the issue.

"We don't want to bring in all the negativity of suicide into our communities although we experience it a lot throughout the year," said Akulukjuk, adding that suicide first touched his life when he was 14 years old and his best friend committed suicide. "When I was 14 and just about every year since, there was at least a close friend, a friend, a friend's family member or even my own family members that committed suicide."

But dealing with the issue is not a single day event. Akulukjuk who is now 26 years old is working with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami on national Inuit youth suicide prevention strategies.

"Suicide in Canada is unacceptable and for communities to suffer that kind of agony I think it's a national issue. We have to try and influence and motivate the government into wanting to do something about the societal issues of our Aboriginal Inuit northern communities," said Akulukjuk.

To that end, ITK has sent a questionnaire to the federal party leaders asking them to address 12 issues during the election campaign. One of those issues



Approximately 60 Inuit students marched to Parliament Hill to bring awareness to the serious Inuit suicide rate. Some of the students had signs that read "culture heals" and "celebrate life."

deals with suicide.

Stephen Hendrie, ITK communications director, notes that his organization has been lobbying the government for the past three years to implement a national suicide strategy and in particular a national Inuit mental wellness strategy.

The talks are ongoing between ITK's health and environment department and Health Canada. Hendrie points out that in Arctic communities there are rarely physicians to deal with physical

ailments much less mental health workers to deal with suicide.

The question to the federal leaders states: "Does your party support additional federal funding to allow for the construction and operation of Mental Health Centres for the treatment of alcohol and drug abuse and other mental health issues for Inuit in the Arctic?"

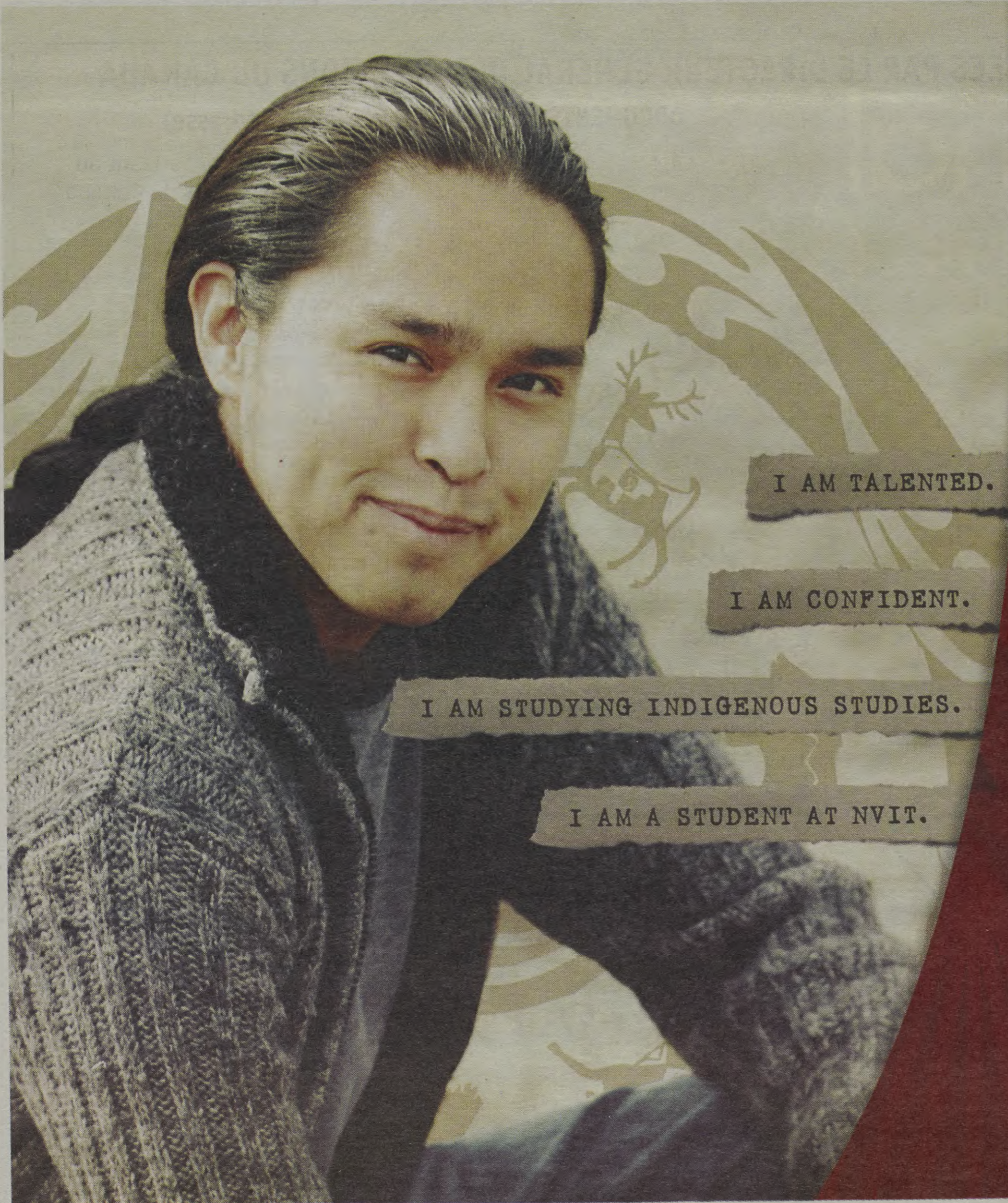
This question, notes Mary Simon, president of ITK, is "important to the Inuit and (is) current in our nation's political

dialogue," Simon is a director on the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

Suicide is a modern issue for Inuit. Changes in society have been "overwhelming," said Hendrie, with 100 years of development pushed into 30 or 40 years.

"Society has gone from adults born in igloos to living among youths who are on the internet every day. It's really quite remarkable."

(See Inuit on page 17.)



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Wendake creates first ever Native literature gathering

By Marie White
Windspeaker Writer

WENDAKE

The Huron-Wendat village of Wendake near Quebec City created a world premiere with its creation of the *Carrefour des littératures autochtones de la Francophonie (CILAF)*. This gathering of Native writers from the Francophone world was a resounding success; such a success in fact that it far exceeded all expectations. There was standing room only at the closing performance. Thirty-one authors participated in this literary event never seen before. From New Caledonia, to Casablanca, Tahiti, Polynesia, Algeria and Canada, the writers came, bringing with them their talents, their cultures and their common passion for writing. From lands and nations which had previously carried their stories and histories in oral narration, they gathered here to celebrate the written form of their stories and perspectives, forever preserved in print.

Leading up to and in preparation for the *Carrefour*, was the *Words from Early Times* activity, a series of legend-telling gatherings that highlighted First Nations' oral traditions. So

popular was each session that *Tourisme Wendake* organizers had to open larger rooms and Inuit guide Mona Belleau had to repeatedly offer more bannock to those waiting eagerly to get in. Then with the opening of the CILAF, public focus went to the written word of Native literature.

How were the authors chosen? "They had to be published authors from a French-speaking country and of course, speak and write in their native language," explained Louis-Karl Sioui-Picard whose dream produced the CILAF.

Picard-Siouï, a Huron-Wendat author and artist who works for the *Centre de développement de la formation et de la main d'oeuvre in Wendake (CDFM)* had dreamed of gathering French-writing Native authors together.

"It took three years to prepare but it is now a reality. Not only is it a first in Quebec City, in Quebec, in North America but in the world," declared a pleased Picard-Siouï, who then joked, "Who knows? It's probably a first in the galaxy!"

His humour was not lost on the crowd full of creative Native people to whom words are a delight and humour is a unifying element. All week, the authors gathered in daily workshops,

exchanging and learning from each other. Evening readings were open to the public and recorded on the *First Nations Education Council (FNEC)* Web site so the greater public could enjoy the authors in communities around the world.

One evening of public readings showcased the results of a special long-distance intercultural writing project. Each Native Francophone author had been paired up with a non-Native French-speaking peer and encouraged to correspond. For several months, the authors wrote to each other and the interactive writing was published in a separate anthology from which the pairs of colleagues presented together on stage. For many, it was the first time they had met in person.

The CILAF proudly launched an anthology of Native literature from the collected poems, play extracts and narratives by the thirty-one participating writers. The title *Mots de neige, de sable et d'océan* is meant to reflect the diverse backgrounds of its authors. Collected by Maurizio Gatti, an associated researcher with Laval University's *Centre interuniversitaire d'études et de chercheurs autochtones (CI...RA)* and published by the CDFM, it



Louis-Karl Picard-Siouï brought the CILAF to life.

was edited by Louis-Karl Picard-Siouï.

Mots de neige, de sable et d'océan was officially launched midweek. "I get goose bumps right now by just remembering the incredibility of that moment," said Marcel Godbout, cultural agent with the CDFM for this event.

"All of those authors from all over the world were sitting around the authors' table for the autograph signing."

Godbout, deeply touched by the significance of the moment, remembers the years of work,

vision and planning that made Picard-Siouï's dream come true and knew then, that it was all worth it. Seeing Native cultures honoured and shared is Godbout's greatest motivation and reward.

Authors from around the world included, New Caladonian Kanac Luc Enoke Camoui; Moroccan Barbar Mohamed Agoujil, Casablancon Nadia Chafik; French Polynesian Rai Chaze and Jean-Marc Pambrun; Algerian Salem Zenia, and Tahitian Acadamian Flora Devatine.

(See Author's on page 17.)

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Inuit students ask for help to lower suicide rates

(Continued from page 15.)

Perhaps one of the biggest steps in dealing with suicide is talking about it.

"We have to at some point grab the bulls by the horn and stop denying it's a problem and bring it out in the open," said Hendrie. "When we talk about it in the open, it allows people to realize that they're not alone, that we can provide support and demonstrate that respective organizations are doing different things about it."

ITK is pushing the federal government to not only implement a national suicide prevention strategy but for that strategy to include policy specific to the Inuit.

In a news release marking World Suicide Prevention Day, Simon states, "Canada needs to take this issue seriously. Canada must develop a national suicide prevention strategy and within this strategy recognize that there is an ongoing need for an

"We don't want to bring in all the negativity of suicide into our communities although we experience it a lot throughout the year."

—Tommy Akulukjuk

enhanced sustainable National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy. Countries with a national strategy have succeeded in dramatically lowering their suicide rates. In coordination with that we need a

National Inuit Mental Wellness Strategy – the two would work together (to) ensure policy and programs that are responsive to the health, social and economic realities in Canada's Arctic."

Presently communities are

working with Inuit organizations, governments and non-government organizations in the four Inuit land claim regions to increase supports for coping, promoting resiliency and raising awareness, so Inuit know where to go for help and how to help when asked.

These communities are home to over 80 per cent of the Inuit's population of 55,000 and 90 per cent of these communities are accessible by air alone.

Author's dream comes true after years of planning

(Continued from page 16.)

Canadian First Nations were represented by Huron-Wendat poets, playwrights and writers including Jean Sioui, Georges Sioui, Yolande Okia Picard, Sylvie-Anne Sioui-Trudel, Louis-Karl Picard-Sioui, Yves Sioui-

Durand and Wendat/Wabanaki Christine Sioui Wawanoloath. Innu writers included Jean-Louis Fontaine, Innu/Wendat Geneviève Mackenzie-Sioui, Réal Leblanc, Mélina Vassiliou, Maya Cousineau-Mollen and Jacinthe Connolly, Charles Coocoo, the first Attikamek to publish a poetry collection, Algonquin Métis Michel Noël, and Cree

writer Tomson Highway.

Highway, an internationally-renowned Manitoba author, playwright and musician, wrote the preface to the *Mots de neige, et de sable et d'océan* anthology. Highway speaks fluent French though his work is best known in the English language.

Highway lives six months a year in France and plans to continue writing in French.

Asked by moderator Louis Hamelin about his three languages, Highway responded: "Cree is the language of my heart; English is the language of my head and...French?" a beaming Highway laughs: "Well, French is somewhere in the middle."

He is trying to write less in English and more in Cree or French.

"English is such a serious language," said Highway. "But Cree, you know, is at least five times funnier!"

Minutes before Highway's comments, Marcel Godbout had been asked about the Wendake Arts Festival that had just been held beside the new Huron-Wendat Hotel. It too had exceeded all expectations.

"We are very pleased," said a happy Godbout who admits that *Tourisme Wendake* had had a difficult first fall last year, but it has since "made a lot of changes, done a real cleaning up, and is

now on the right track."

The success of recent top-quality events including this summer's pow wow are certain proof. Last year's events had been criticized for not involving the people of Wendake but this summer and fall, villagers were at all events especially at the CILAF's jam-packed closing show.

The closing show featured special guests Florant Volland and Gilles Sioui whose ever-popular and familiar music rocked the tent. Villagers and visitors alike united in a chain dance around the tent in celebration.

Local and international performing artists like Wendat

silversmith Michel Savard who performed traditional Huron-Wendat chants and Inuit throat singers, alternately shared the stage with small groups of writers who read from their week's work.

CILAF, Tahitian writer Flora Devatine, expressed the common hope that the event be repeated, and offered four necklaces for the four corners of the earth, as traditional symbolic parting gifts.

She chose to give a necklace to Wendat writers Louis-Karl Sioui-Picard, Georges Sioui, Yolande Okia Picard and Innu writer André Dudemaine to honour them for their role as "carriers of the spirit of the Native people here."

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[language]

Methods explored to engage youth in Native language

By Dianne Meili
Windspeaker Writer

CORNWALL

Lying in her crib, tiny Gantowisa's mouth curls into a sleepy smile as she drifts off to a Kanien'keha (Mohawk) lullaby sung softly by a grade four student.

Though today's language lesson is over, the infant will coo and clap her hands when the students return to act out a silly skit delivered completely in Kanien'keha.

Such scenes sound too idyllic for school curriculum, but in Cornwall, Ontario, this vibrant, intergenerational dynamic is fostering a new generation of first language Kanien'keha speakers.

The pilot program, called 'The Language Nest', currently involves five babies and toddlers, zero to three years old, who, it is hoped, will eventually speak Kanien'keha as their first language, and naturally think in it.

"The dayhome, called Lakhinoronhkwa (We Love Them), where the project is being carried out, is full of the Mohawk language – on television, in music, on posters," explained Kaweienon:ni Margaret Cook-Peters, a language specialist for the Ahkwesahasne Mohawk Board of Education. "Grade four students visit the babies to sing, perform skits, dance, talk, tell stories and interact with them in Mohawk. We like to find situations where our elementary immersion students at Tsi Snaihne School have to speak Mohawk.

"It makes sense to start them so young. Language is picked up in the womb – the sound of the voice, the rhythm of the words. It should start from birth," said Cook-Peters. "The intergenerational transmission of language does not always have to be from Elder to youth."

Cook-Peters' husband, Theodore Peters, has hit upon a number of activities to make the Mohawk language come alive for his grade three and four students. Last spring, they planted a garden that highlighted the "three sisters" – corn, beans and squash – traditional diet staples. Now, as they're harvesting the last of their squash before the frost hits, they're discussing in Mohawk how the plants cooperate: the corn provides a climbing stalk for the beans, the beans provide nitrogen to the soil to nourish the corn; and the squash leaves spread out, preventing competition from unwanted vegetation and shade for corn's shallow roots.

"We make the program fun, using a lot of music in the teaching, translating contemporary songs into language, and starting every day with the Thanksgiving Address," explained Cook-Peters. "Children hold the wampum (traditional sashes painstakingly woven of

carved purple and white shells) to represent sincerity of their words and how they'll be carried. And we constantly create new media resources. We use video as an assessment tool with our Mohawk students and, with some editing, we make them into CD's and DVD's for parents and children, or anyone in the community, to use. We even have film festivals in the Mohawk language and we rent the local theatre to show them on the big screen for the community. The result? Kids are using their language outside the classroom and with each other."

Across the country in Vancouver, a language resource on a somewhat smaller screen is making equal impact. It's 7:30 in the morning and four-year-old Maya is watching her favourite kiddy show. It's not 'Dora the Explorer' or any other cartoon, it's 'Nehiyawetan' (Let's Speak Cree).

"She gets to watch one show every morning and she always asks her grandmother to turn on 'that Cree show'," said Maya's aunt Kamala Todd, a writer and one of two directors responsible for the series aimed at city children who might not have a family member or school teacher to teach them ancestral language.

"Maya gleefully tells everyone 'I'm learning Cree!'," Todd adds, explaining the show has been well received by children watching the first season of Nehiyawetan. In each show a group of six- and seven-year-olds embark on an adventure with their language teacher – such as visiting a farmer's market to shop for fruit and testing their new Cree counting words as they fill a bag with apples – meeting interesting people, exploring fun places, singing songs, playing games and telling stories.

"We're filming the second season with Josephine Small from Hobbema as the kids' teacher," said Todd. "She's warm and natural. The shows aren't over-scripted or overstaged. The kids are learning as they go – they haven't rehearsed everything over and over."

"We even had a consultant from Sesame Street, Cathy Chilco, tell us to always include the viewer as part of the group learning to speak Cree. I think that's why kids like the shows so much. They feel included."

Todd has high hopes for the show's continuation, especially since cast members and show producers are beginning to become involved with their viewers and undertake outreach projects.

"We're forming relationships and networking with people in Aboriginal communities. One of our shows is about having a feast and we're going into a community to actually have a feast with the people there."

When asked why a Plains Cree language show is being filmed in a west coast setting like Vancouver, Todd responded

many Cree speakers are indigenous to B.C., and that a good team of local people in Vancouver – Canada's Hollywood – are able to produce it.

"The show is aimed at urban viewers. For this reason, Nehiyawetan isn't necessarily so much about the land that the language comes from," Todd explained.

Hundreds of kilometres north of Todd's Vancouver home, Inuvik Elder Lillian Elias thinks the land has a huge role to play in teaching the Inuvialuktun language. In fact, the 65-year-old retired teacher is excitedly preparing to spend a day with Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment Minister Jackson Lafferty, hoping to talk him into letting the land do just that.

"I'll be telling him about my dream," said Elias. "I'd like him to give me a one month, on a trial basis – to take a couple of young language teachers and maybe a couple more Inuvialuktun speakers out on the land. It's the only way to give our young people the knowledge that



Left to right: Grace Wabegjig, Kiyano John and Kai Todd-Darrell. These three students are learning Cree in fun ways during the first season of Nehiyawetan (Let's Speak Cree.)

goes behind the language. While we're picking berries, or looking for the vegetables that grow on the land, I'll be speaking to them in the language. While we're eating them with whale oil, I'll be telling them what they're eating.

While we're fishing for whitefish, I'll be telling them old stories in Inuvialuktun and teaching them about the way our sentences are structured so they can confidently speak them."

(See Educators on page 29.)

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Olympian Monica Pinette leaves Beijing with lasting memories

By SAM LASKARIS
Windspeaker Writer

SCHAFFHAUSEN,
SWITZERLAND

Even though she did not come close to achieving her goal of a Top 12 finish in the women's modern pentathlon event, Monica Pinette will still have some rather fond memories of the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Pinette, a 31-year-old Métis born in Vancouver, placed 27th over-all in her sport, which combines five disciplines; swimming, running, fencing, shooting and riding (show jumping). There were a total of 36 entrants in her competition.

Participants in the modern pentathlon must compete in all five events. They are awarded points for how well they perform in each discipline.

"I wasn't happy with my over-all placing," Pinette told *Windspeaker* in a post-Olympic interview from Schaffhausen, Switzerland, where she lives with her newlywed husband Philipp Waeffler, who is also the coach of the Canadian pentathlon squad. "I had wanted to finish in the top 12. I knew I didn't have medal potential, but I also could have had a better day than I did."

Pinette had also represented Canada at the 2004 Athens Olympics. She placed 13th in those Games, which marked the country's best ever Olympic performance in the pentathlon.

Aside from her previous Olympic efforts, Pinette felt she could place among the top dozen finishers in Beijing since she had an 11th-place result at the world pentathlon championships earlier this year in Budapest, Hungary.

"I shot and rode very, very well," she said. "And my physical events, the swim and run, were OK for me. It was the fencing where I really messed up. Normally, I am pretty good at fencing but on that day I was having some troubles."

That sub-par result translated into a huge drop in the event's over-all standings.

"The fence is what killed any hopes for a good placing because I was more than 200 points lower than normal," she said.

Waeffler couldn't pinpoint the reason for Pinette's fencing performance. "Why (she didn't do better) is difficult to answer," he said. "Mainly this day she was not on top of everything that would be necessary for a good result."

Pinette had been to Beijing twice before the Olympics.

"I had a pretty good idea of what to expect," she said. "I didn't expect that in the one year since I was last there though that they could have cleaned it up so much. I think they must have planted more than a million trees."

And except for the fact she didn't fare as well as she wanted, Pinette immensely enjoyed the experience.

"Of course, I will remember my competition because that is why I was there, but I was most impressed with the incredible organization," she said. "China really made sure we would be impressed."

Pinette did not attend the Games' opening ceremonies as she was still in South Korea at a Canadian team training camp. But she did go to the closing ceremonies.

"They were great," she said. "The closing ceremonies were a lot more relaxed and we just ran around out there so I liked it. And, we had those ridiculous crazy red pants so it was like wearing pajamas - comfy, but I felt a bit under dressed."

When she wasn't competing Pinette did manage to catch some other Olympic action.

"We went to watch track and field one night so I was glad to get my first peek inside the Bird's Nest (Stadium)," she said. "And (Canadian) Gary Reed was running so it was nice to cheer for someone who I know. We also went to watch ping pong, except I have learned that ping pong is NOT a politically correct term at the Olympics."

Pinette was in the midst of some rather boisterous supporters at that event.

"The atmosphere in there was wild," she said. "China was just about to win all three medals. My ears didn't forgive me for the whole next day. There was more energy in that table tennis final than any other Olympic experience."

At this point, Pinette is uncertain whether she will remain in the sport long enough to try and compete at the 2012 London Olympics.

"I am giving pentathlon another couple of years but I'm not committing to 2012," she said. "I don't know if I can justify it for that much longer because it is so expensive for me to be an athlete. I'm not a carded athlete so I have to raise a lot of my own funds."

Waeffler believes Pinette can still be one of the world's top performers in her sport.

"Monica has made continuous progress and developed (including this year)," he said. "But her age will only allow her a few more years in the sport at the highest international level."

Pinette said having her husband also serve as her coach creates some unusual situations.

"Basically, I have two Philipps, my coach and my husband," she said. "I have to separate them otherwise I get upset on occasion. I think he is more committed to developing me than if I was just another athlete."

Josh Sacobie waits for his chance in a CFL spot

By SAM LASKARIS
Windspeaker Writer

OTTAWA

There's no denying Josh Sacobie is an above-average football player.

The 24-year-old Maliseet is a record-breaking quarterback currently with the University of Ottawa Gee-Gees.

For Sacobie, this is his fifth and final season in the university ranks.

And though he realizes the odds may be against him, he's hoping to move up and play professional football in the near future.

Ideally, Sacobie would have preferred to be in the Canadian Football League now.

He was one of 50 players that attended the CFL combine camp in Toronto this past March where officials from all of the league's clubs saw prospects showcase their skills while performing various drills.

Though some teams had expressed an interest in him, Sacobie did not end up getting drafted in the CFL this past April.

So now he is a free agent, who will have to earn an invitation to a training camp.

"That's all I want is a shot," said Sacobie, who is from the St. Mary's First Nation in New Brunswick.

Regardless of the impressive numbers he drives up at the university level, Sacobie realizes he would be a longshot to play in the CFL. That's because a league rule stipulates all teams must have 20 Canadian-born players on their rosters.

And teams tend to reserve their skilled positions (for example quarterbacks and running backs) on American players who are deemed imports.

"It's harder for us," Sacobie said of Canadian quarterbacks wishing to play in their own country.

The CFL, however, is not Sacobie's only professional option.

Though cracking a National Football League roster would be considered by many to be much more difficult to do than making a CFL team, Sacobie actually believes he might have a better chance to earn a QB job south of the border.

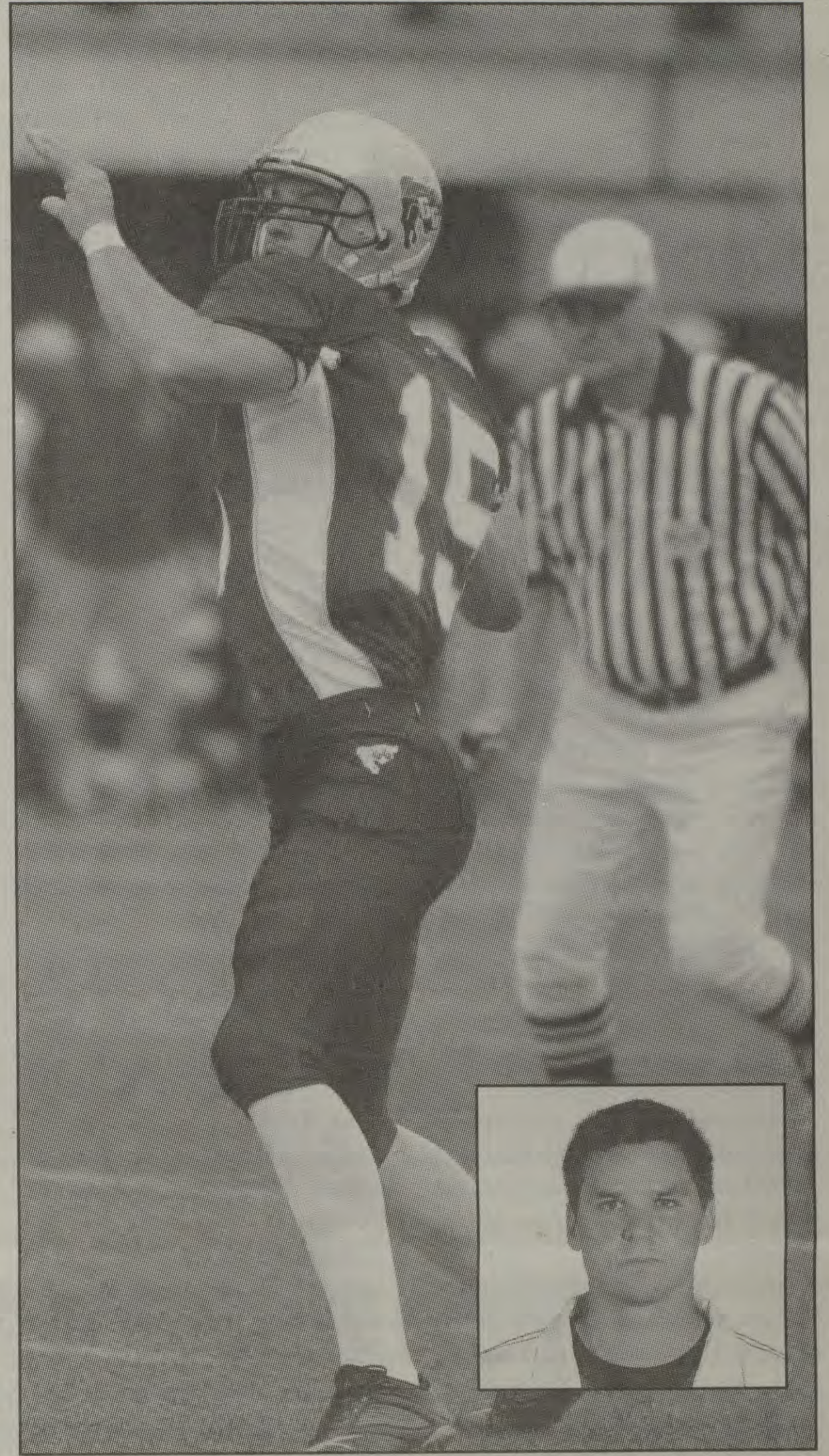
And if not in the NFL, then perhaps in a pro indoor arena football league.

To get his name out there, Sacobie is planning to hire an agent either near or at the end of the current football season.

And he'll be doing his best to make sure people know just exactly who Josh Sacobie is.

"I'm going to do my best to make myself visible through different promotions," he said.

And then it will be a wait-and-



The 24-year-old Maliseet, Josh Sacobie is eager for a chance to play with a CFL team.

see process once his university athletic career is over this fall.

"I've just got to cap it off with a good year again," he said. "And I've got to get a good highlight tape out there."

Overcoming odds, however, is something Sacobie has become accustomed to. He admits he had trying teen years growing up on three First Nations.

"I went through my share of battles," he said.

Those battles - which included alcohol, drugs and violence - were hard to stay away from.

"It's so visible," he said. "It's so hard for Aboriginal kids."

Sacobie said he started to drink alcohol at age 10. Then he started doing drugs about a year or two later.

Though he said he drinks responsibly now, Sacobie said he hasn't used drugs since he was 14 - the same age he started playing football.

"The sport saved me in a lot of ways," he said.

Sacobie entered his final year with the Gee-Gees already as the team's all-time leader in touchdown thrown and career yards thrown. So each game this

season he's been adding to his totals.

And this season he's chasing down various national university all-time quarterback records.

A year ago he was chosen as the most valuable player in the 10-team Ontario University Athletics (OUA).

He led Ottawa to a perfect 8-0 record in OUA regular season action.

But Sacobie and his teammates were not able to defend the OUA crown they won in 2006.

Sacobie though was nominated for the Hec Crighton Trophy last year, annually presented to the top Canadian university football player.

As for his goal with the Gee-Gees this season, it's a fairly simple one.

"It's the same as the last four years - to win all the games," he said.

Ottawa, which won two out of its first three contests this season, is once again expected to be a contender for the league championship. And then perhaps with a bit of luck, Sacobie will be able to continue playing football - but at the professional level.

Internship program prepares youth for career jobs

By Chereise Morris
Windspeaker Staff Writer

BRITISH COLUMBIA

With the inspiring success of its first year, the new and innovative Aboriginal Internship Program in B.C. is now able to recruit an additional 10 students to the original 15 this year. The 15 interns were chosen from approximately 80 Aboriginal youth who applied and won the internship after a rigorous recruiting process, said Sasha Hobbs, the program manager of the Aboriginal Internship Program.

"We think that due to its success in the first year, the provincial government is definitely moving forward and expanding the program this year. It's been a successful model of engaging with Aboriginal youth and providing them with just an unparalleled professional and personal experience. We would love to see this as something that other provinces could take a look at as well," stated Hobbs.

The goals of the provincial program are to encourage Aboriginal youth to consider the B.C. Public Service or Aboriginal organizations as a place to pursue a meaningful career, help Indigenous youth develop their leadership skills, provide opportunities for Aboriginal youth to contribute and improve relationships between First Nations communities/organizations and the provincial government as well as help closing the social and economic gaps that exist between Aboriginal people and other British Columbians.

The program starts with a week of orientation, followed by a nine-month placement in a variety of the B.C.'s public service ministries, from the Ministry of Children and Family Development to the Ministry of Environment. The interns then

spend their last three months with an Aboriginal organization related to their ministry placement, bringing the length of the program to one year.

Some of the interns expressed they were deeply affected by the program and expressed that it gave them direction and inspiration for their future.

"To see so many young people come together people of a like mind motivated and proactive, really affected me in a good way on a professional level because I had no major direction before," said Carrie Lynn Victor, who was placed in the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. "This is a great kick-start to a career. On a personal level it's great learning, I learned to sit in on a discussion and have a healthy debate. It is something I think I will carry with me for a long time rather than being afraid to express my opinion."

Elaine Alec who was placed with the Ministry of Childhood Development received an honour of being nominated for the position of Chief of Pentiction Indian Band.

"Our overall goal was to improve relationships between Aboriginal people and communities and government, so I had two main projects that I worked on, one was called honouring the journey of our youth, for children who were transitioning out of care from the ministry."

Alec also created a workshop called learning your rights through play, and learning your rights through music.

"We organized workshops for children in care from ages of six to 18 and taught them what their rights were in care and their rights based on the U.N. declaration on the right of the child. So, we traveled throughout the region and just did a lot of youth engagement. We talked to a lot of social workers about cultural



Front Row, l-r: Sarah-Lynn Johnson, Ellen Newman, Matthew Louie and Don Tom.
Second Row, l-r: Theresa Morris, Krista Wilson, Tresley Tourond-Bouvier and Marie Sandy.
Third Row, l-r: Minister Ida Chong (Ministry of Technology Trade and Economic Development), Natasha Fountain, Carly Cunningham, Ayla Brown, Elaine Alec, Jose Robinson
Fourth Row, l-r: Auggie Thomas (drummer), Sasha Hobbs (program manager), President Bruce Dumont (MNBC), Grand Chief Ed John (Leadership Council, First Nations Summit), Priscilla Sabbas (Program Manager) and Minister Murray Coell (Ministry of Advanced Education.)

values and how to meaningfully engage the youth that they were working with and how to be culturally sensitive to the different protocols that we have in different areas so if they needed to approach an Elder we taught them how they would do that and who they would go through," said Alec.

Alec said she has encouraged other Aboriginal youth to complete the program. She believes her personal experience in the program is really in alignment with her passion for empowering Aboriginal youth, and added fuel to her fire.

"My goals stay consistent through anything I do, any position where I can work to help strengthen and empower Aboriginal people. I see myself in a position where I am always helping create awareness, inspiring and motivating young people to go for their dreams. I am not sure what that means for

me, whether it's a leadership role like chief and council or just an advocate for children and youth," said Alec. "I think it changed my life. I think it changed the direction of my life. There are so many Aboriginal youth out there that need that chance—to get that exposure, and need the opportunity to show what they can do, what they can achieve. I think this program does that successfully. All of us have walked away standing tall, being more confident of who we are. I would love to see many of our Aboriginal youth get involved in programs like that because it helps empower our youth and it helps shape the leadership that is coming up."

Alec said the most that she gained from the program is confidence in herself, and pride of who she is as an Aboriginal person.

"I was able to work with 14 other youth who are so culturally grounded, knowing who they are,

speaking their language, knowing their roots, and still being educated and being able to take leadership roles. I became so proud of who I was and had so much hope for the future of our leadership because I knew that we had so many talented and educated Aboriginal youth out there who are willing to take those leadership roles," said Alec. "Sometimes we just need to stop and take the time to teach somebody a little bit about who we are, to develop that respect and understanding from each other. Once you get through that you will find it easier to work with people and I think that is what I will take away the most. For me, I have to be able to have the patience to be able to stop and to understand that not everybody knows who I am or where I came from."

The applicants who were not accepted are encouraged to reapply next year.

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BC invests in literacy projects

British Columbia is investing \$6 million towards literacy programs across the province, in an effort to improve its literacy strategies in school districts and establish new programs for Aboriginal, rural and remote areas.

The plans were announced on International Literacy day by Education Minister Shirley Bond.

"By funding literacy projects in all areas of the province, as well as encouraging lifelong learning by ensuring those projects are available to all citizens, B.C. is well on its way to meeting that goal," said Bond.

The 2010 Legacies Now was granted \$2 million to expand literacy organization in all 60 B.C., school districts. This new investment will build on previous funding of \$1.6 million for regional literacy co-coordinators at 16 public post-secondary institutions to improve the delivery of adult literacy programs.

"This funding will help B.C. build a seamless adult education

system," said Advanced Education and Labour Market Development Minister Murray Coell in a news release. "Access to education will be designed and co-ordinate to benefit British Columbians of all ages and abilities in all communities."

Free tutoring for the adults who would like to improve their literacy or improve their education will be provided by post-secondary institutions thanks to an investment of \$2.4 million in 70 community adult literacy programs.

"The funding for Aboriginal family literacy programs will be able to better reach many children and adults in our communities," said Grace Neilsen, president of the B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centers. "Improving literacy is a goal of our organization and we welcome this opportunity to work with the province to improve the lives of our clients and their success in work and life."

Help for the accomplishment of Aboriginal family literacy

programs in friendship centers around the province will be found as the B.C. association of Friendship Centers is receiving \$1.2 million.

An Imagination Library book program will be established with \$110,000 in partnership with the First Nations Education Steering Committee, Métis Nation B.C., the Dollywood Foundation and Invest in Kids.

Aboriginal children living in 30 rural and remote communities should be provided with a free, age appropriate book every month until the age of five, as a goal of the new program.

"Improving literacy for Aboriginal learners is a key objective of this government and part of our commitment to help close the social and economic gaps between Aboriginal people and other British Columbians," said Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Minister Michael de Jong.

The government has invested more than \$140 million in new literacy initiatives since 2001.

New monies help create new programs

Support for the Aboriginal education at Okanagan College (OC) is coming in the form of over \$150,000. With more than \$159,733 coming from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, new programs will be established for Aboriginal education and curriculum content.

"These investments in Okanagan College will contribute to interdisciplinary studies and encourage further collaboration and dialogue," said Lake Country MLA Al Horning in a press release. "With active recruiting and expanded support services, Aboriginal students will now have more assistance with any challenges experienced with transitioning into college programs."

Some of the funds will go towards a new Okanagan Environmental Studies Program in the sum of \$70,000. The program will work on environmental interdisciplinary

programming for Aboriginal students, which first started in 2007 at the earth, geography and environmental sciences department at OC. Helping the new program to collaborate with the First Nations Lands' advisory board and keeping a core curriculum sensitive to Aboriginal cultures and traditions.

The rest of the investment of \$89,733 will go towards the OC's Aboriginal Student Recruitment, Promotions and Transitions Initiative.

This year 37 new and continuing projects were supported in 25 public post-secondary institutions around the province of British Columbia to a total of \$2.98 million.

The special projects fund are part of the ministries Aboriginal post-secondary education strategy providing funding of up to \$100,000 to post-secondary institutions to work with Aboriginal communities addressing priorities to culture,



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Aboriginal Education & Employment Strategy Team

Jeannie Cranmer
Aboriginal Education and
Employment Coordinator

333 Dunsmuir Street
13th Floor
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 5R3
Toll free 1 877 461-0161
Phone 604 623-4401
Fax 604 623-3799
Cell 604 417-2312
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FOR GENERATIONS

Burial site has potential as a National Historic designation

By Thomas J Bruner
Sweetgrass Staff Writer

Edmonton

Rossdale Flats continues to be contended by groups who want to protect the historical Indian burial ground from being blotted out by expansion of the nearby Rossdale Power Plant.

While most Aboriginals are requesting that the area be designated a National Historic site, consultant Lewis Cardinal, believes it could be even more than that.

"Edmonton is suffering from an identity crisis. It doesn't seem to know what it is or even where it came from. And right at the heart of the city, right at the Rossdale Flats is an answer to that— traditional gathering and waiting place," Cardinal explained.

"Once the city recognizes its origins – the birthplace of Edmonton is the Rossdale Flats or the Pehonan (in Cree), out there. And that is the spirit that underlies the whole city. And as I've said before, while the downtown may be the heart of the city, certainly the pehonan down at Rossdale Flats is the spirit of the city."

Many years ago, Rossdale Flats was once a gathering area for Aboriginals where they held a wide array of events, such as sacred and traditional ceremonies.

The area has been dated to have a history of 8,000 years. It was

"Even greater than a National Historic designation, I feel it is significant enough to be warranted a World Heritage Site; not just Rossdale Flats, but the whole river valley."

—Lewis Cardinal

given the name 'Pehonan'; a Cree word meaning a gathering place.

Cardinal stresses to *Sweetgrass* that this is definitely an area that needs to be recognized.

"We recognize that there is a significant historical component to the very core of the city of Edmonton and that's what we're trying to impress upon the city. Rossdale Flats is not just a forgotten little package that happens to be in the centre of the city of Edmonton but rather it's a historical component that's very important to the identity of the city of Edmonton."

According to Cardinal, positive steps have been made towards getting the National Historic Site designation.

"Work with myself, and with other individuals who have worked on this project for a while, and the support from the community members down at Rossdale; the city has now moved to begin the process of the National Historic designation. This initiative started back in 2001, so it's picking back up again and moving forward for a National Historic designation," said Cardinal.

Cardinal hopes that Rossdale

Flats can be earmarked for an even larger designation.

"Even greater than a National Historic designation, I feel it is significant enough to be warranted a World Heritage Site; not just Rossdale Flats, but the whole river valley."

In Canada, there are 935 National Historic Sites, 59 of which are in Alberta. As for the World Heritage Site designation, there are currently 878 sites that are listed to date. Only five of those sites are located in Alberta.

Waiting for a designation has been a trying affair for those concerned.

"Well, you see the first application for a National Historic designation has already met a number of criteria and now, according to that first application, the city needs to pass the resolution to that effect. But now the city wants to do a bit more research on it, and to begin the process for the application. That's where that is at right now," explained Cardinal.

To learn more about the Edmonton Rossdale Flats burial site go to www.abheritage.ca/eldersvoices/history/beginnings_pehonan.html.



NICOLE ROBERTSON

Left to right: Blood Tribe Chief Charles Weaselhead, Samson Cree Nation Councillor Claude Saddleback, Saddle Lake Cree Nation Calvin Cardinal and Charles Wood, CIBA conference coordinator. They came together on Aug. 26 to welcome back the 2nd annual Canadian Indigenous Business Association (CIBA) 2008 conference and tradeshow. The four First Nations that will co-host the conference from Sept. 30 to Oct. 2 in Calgary are: Saddle Lake Cree Nation, Samson Cree Nation, Fort McKay First Nation and the Blood Tribe.

"Alberta First Nations are in a unique position being in the heart of the oil and gas country. This province has generated much wealth and we're opening the doors to share innovative ideas and business partners, industry and the private sector," stated Charles Weaselhead, Chief of the Blood Tribe in a press release.

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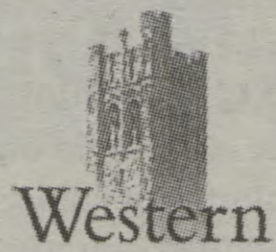
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Cabinet shift shocks leaders

Premier of Ontario Dalton McGuinty has shuffled his cabinet, leaving some leaders shocked.

The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Honourable Michael Bryant is no longer holding the position, but has been reassigned to the role of Minister for Economic Development. The new Minister of Aboriginal Affairs is the previous Minister of Labour, Brad Duguid.

President Métis Nation of Ontario Gary Lipinski said that Bryant's commitment, knowledge and passion for their issues will be missed, but states that he will continue to be a strong ally to the Métis Nation in his new role.

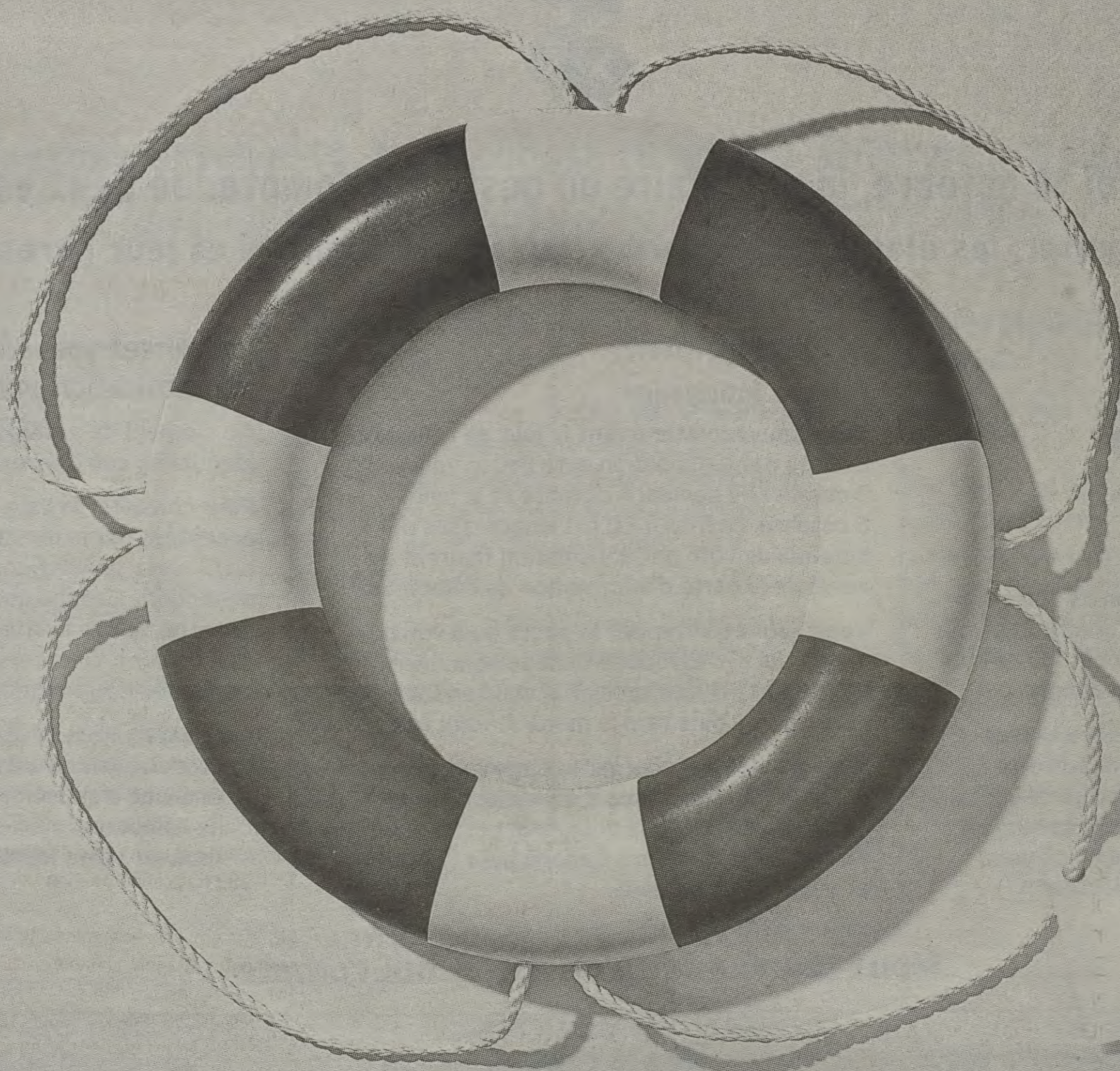
George Smitherman, Ontario's deputy premier and minister for Energy and Infrastructure, announced the desire to increase the amounts of renewable energy the province creates, directing the Ontario Power Authority to "undertake enhanced consultations with First Nations and Métis communities" because of the crown's duty to consult.

Lipinski shared some of his

plans for the near future.

He said that they will be holding meetings of the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) and the Captains of the Hunt at the end of the month in Toronto, along with a meeting of the MNO's Directors to review progress on the MNO's operations and strategic planning process.

"We will be making a significant announcement about the Chair of Métis Studies in partnership with the university that has been selected to host the Chair position; we will be bringing PCMNO Councilors and representatives from MNO Community Councils together to discuss the Ontario Government's recent announcement to modernize the Mining Act to address the Crown's duty to consult our communities that are potentially affected by mining development; and we will continue to work with MNO Community Councils on putting in place process to ensure the Crown's duty to consult and accommodate our communities is being fulfilled."



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[windspeaker confidential] — Dorothy Grant

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

Dorothy Grant: Honesty and respect for one another.

W: What is it that really makes you mad?

D.G.: Racism and ignorance, mixed with apathy.

W: When are you at your happiest?

D.G.: When I make someone else happy when dressing him or her in my garments and I see it makes them shine with pride. It is most satisfying to see that happen.

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

D.G.: Jetlag.

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

D.G.: Iona Campagnolo, former Lieutenant Governor General, British Columbia. I admire her because she had an elegance — in her impeccable delivery of speech, her regal mannerism, her respect for native people, her humanitarianism, and

her sense of balance in all things. She had an ability to make everyone around her feel welcomed and honored. She embodies a lot of qualities that I want to see more of in myself. I think when you meet a lot of people — which I do — and they affect you, you want to emulate them.

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

D.G.: Walk away from broken dreams that were not fixable. There have only been a few major ones in my life, but you learn to reinvent a new dream.

W: What is your greatest accomplishment?

D.G.: This is very difficult to answer because there is always something greater on the horizon and if you rest in your last accomplishment, it can deter you from your focus. However, I make a stand for my place in fashion and culture and have broken some barriers in both arenas, mainly for the acceptance of First Nations art in fashion.

W: What one goal remains out of reach?

D.G.: Worldwide brand recognition and distribution.

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

D.G.: I would love to be able to be a personal buyer of art and fashion for people. I think I have developed a pretty keen eye over the years. Traveling the world looking for that exquisite piece of art or clothing with a specific person in mind would be a creative outlet for me; I would really enjoy seeing my clients happy.

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

D.G.: Lloyd Kiva New, America's first Native American designer during the 1950's, told me to stick to what I do best and maintain my vision and quality, and the rest will follow.

He said there is not a lot of uniqueness out there, so strive for it and use the venues and media and all of the things that come by for your manufacturing that will further your place in the fashion industry. He was a dear and valued friend and mentor.

W: Did you take it?

D.G.: Yes.

W: How do you hope to be remembered?

D.G.: Dorothy Grant made people happy and proud with what she made for them, and she was damn good at it!

Capping off more than 20 years' work in the art and fashion worlds, Dorothy Grant opened the Dorothy Grant studio in downtown Vancouver this summer. There, displayed beside the artist's signature Haida "Feastwear" and "Black Label" clothing lines, are stunning glass sculptures and ceremonial hats she was inspired to create, including art from emerging Native artists.

Grant's new studio also accommodates a sewing centre that allows Aboriginal women entering or re-entering the work force to acquire sewing skills; and to craft apparel, bags and blankets.

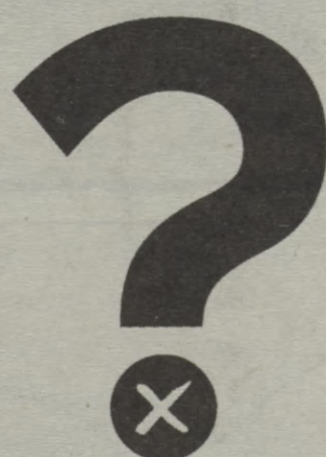
Born in Hydaburg, Alaska, Grant was raised in Ketchikan, and is of the Kaigana Haida of the raven clan from the Brown Bear House of Howkan.



Dorothy Grant

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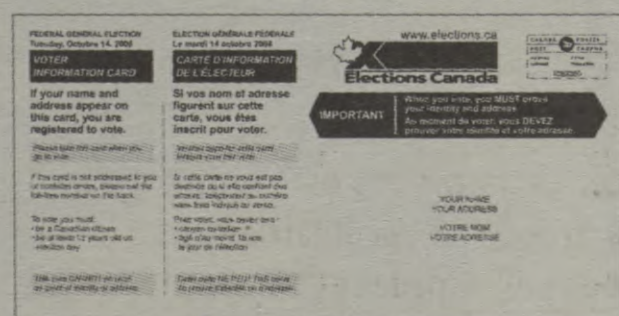
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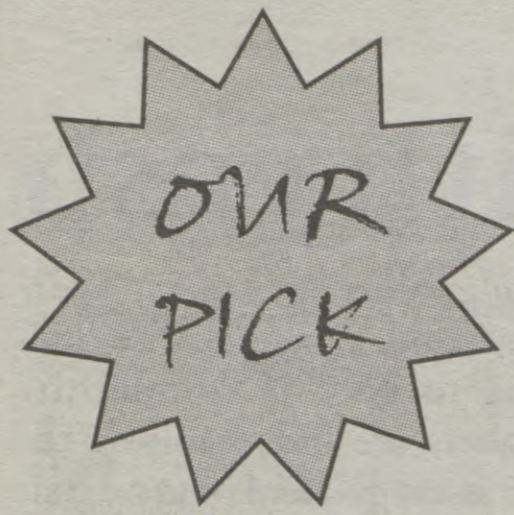


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Artist—Ray St. Germain
 Album—Life Ain't Hard
 Song—Life Ain't Hard
 Label—GR Records
 Producer—Ray St. Germain, son DJ and daughter Sherry

Ray St. Germain gives an easy listen

Ray St. Germain's new album entitled "Life Ain't Hard" was officially released in early September. The album turned out to be a family affair because the album was co-produced with son D.J. and daughter Sherry. They also provided instrumental and backing vocals.

The CD features a wide variety of original country songs sung only in a way that Ray can pull off. There is a lot of fun and energy that will leave listeners in anticipation to hear what's on the next track.

The title track "Life Ain't Hard" was also co-written by his daughter Sherry and also showcases Ray's strong vocal talents that we are familiar with. The uptempo arrangement will have your toes tapping and hands clapping as the song focuses on the lighter side of what life offers and a message to stay happy and positive.

St. Germain was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1940 and began singing and playing music at an early age. He began performing all over Canada when he was still a teenager, earning the nickname "Winnipeg's Elvis". During his career, he's shared the stage with such greats as Johnny Cash, Porter Wagoner, and Johnny Horton, artists who are no longer with us.

Most of the other songs on the album were written by St. Germain, a man who writes what he's familiar with.

Ray St. Germain is a legendary country music entertainer and is known throughout Canada as one of Manitoba's best performers and you will know why after listening to "Life Ain't Hard". For more information on St. Germain go to, www.raystgermainmusic.com.

[radio's most active]

ABORIGINAL RADIO MOST ACTIVE LIST

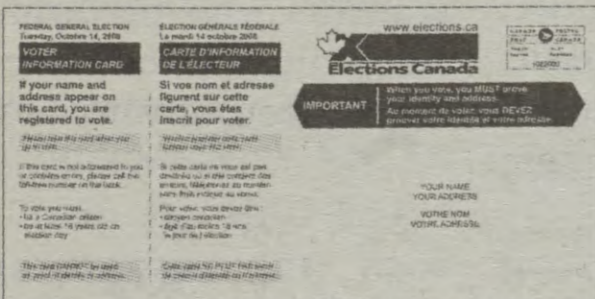
ARTIST	TITLE	ALBUM
Ray St. Germain	Life Ain't Hard	Life Ain't Hard
Wilbert Jack Kendi	Delta Blue	Tetlit Zheh
Sierra Noble	Possibility	Single Release
Crystal Shawanda	What Do I Have To Do	Dawn Of A New Day
Donny Parenteau	Belly Up	What It Takes
Cheryl Powder	Burn	Can't Wait To Fly
Leela Gilday	Time Rushes By	Sedze
Uasheshkun	Eshakumitshiku	Ninan
John J. Cook	Hey! Hey!	Of Love And Life
Shane Yellowbird	Life Is Calling My Name	Life Is Calling My Name
C-Weed	Redemption	Redemption
Jordan Dunning Band	Cake Walk Into Town	Roots At Hand
Rayne Delaronde	Ripple	Forgiveness
Robert Mirabel	Brave New World	In The Blood
Robby Romero	Who's Gonna Save You	Painting The World
Lester	Life Flies	Day One
Jesus Murphy	Faithful	Elochin
Michelle Boudrias	I Like It Like That	Single Release
Jace Martin	What I Need	Jace Martin
Floyd Red Crow Westerman	Folsom Prison Blues	A Tribute To Johnny Cash

CONTRIBUTING STATIONS:



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Where and when to vote?

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You can vote before election day. Advance voting will be held Friday, October 3, Saturday, October 4 and Monday, October 6, from noon to 8:00 p.m. Locations of advance polling stations appear on the back of the voter information card.

You can vote by mail or at your local Elections Canada office using the special ballot if you make the request by 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 7.

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Portage Collegiate motivate students with cash

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Writer

LONG PLAIN FIRST NATIONS

For brothers Shavez (17) and Shaden (15) Meeches, along with students at Portage Collegiate Institute, \$50 a month is a nice bonus for attending regularly and getting their homework done. But the extra cash in their pockets doesn't mean a big change to what the boys have already been doing.

"I need to get an education. That's important," said Shaden, a 15-year old grade 11 student.

Now, the Meeches brothers and other grades nine to 12 Long Plain First Nations students are making money for putting in the time and effort of getting a high school education.

The money is "pretty good," said Shavez, a 17-year old grade 12 student.

"It's not the motivation me or my brother need. But that doesn't mean it hasn't motivated other students," said Shavez, adding that he thinks there are a few students who are coming to school for the money.

Long Plains Elementary School principal Liz Merrick is thinking

the same thing. "I have to send two buses now (to nearby Portage la Prairie, in Manitoba, for high school). I've never had to do that before. I've doubled my numbers and I think it's because of my incentive program."

The band is using money earned through the Arrowhead Development Corp., which has chief and council as its directors, to pay students \$50 each month as a high school attendance incentive.

This is the newest phase in ongoing perks being offered to Long Plains students to keep them in school. Three years ago, graduating grade 12 students started received \$1,000. The band already pays for busing, student fees, school supplies and provides lunch for all their students.

But the difference seems to be the money. The \$50 incentive was implemented in May 2008 and back paid to March of the same year. For the first time that Merrick can recall, Long Plains graduated seven students from PCI (a total of 14 students graduated in 2008 from a variety of schools). Up until that point PCI saw only one or two Long Plains students graduate.

The feedback from the

community on the \$50 incentive has been positive. And, notes Merrick, phone calls have come from band members living off reserve, who send their children to schools other than PCI. The band has agreed that for 2008-2009, the \$50 incentive program will be available to these students as well. Merrick has also received phone calls from other First Nations education boards.

Merrick plans to make the incentive program about more than simple attendance. She will look at midterm and final marks and tie that into the \$50. Says Merrick, "All they have to do is get up in the morning, do the work and I'll give them money."

She admits that \$50 a month is not big pay out, but when families are on social assistance, it can make a difference.

Shaden has been saving his money and will be using it to "buy things for my guitar."

Merrick has yet to receive negative feedback on Long Plains' innovative incentive.

"Whatever works to keep them in (school). They're going to get it if they want it. For me, it's just money. Whatever I can do to keep my kids in school," she said.

Greg Louie is principal at

Maaqtusiis school, a kindergarten to grade 12 school, in Ahousat, north of Tofino, on Vancouver Island. He sees Long Plains' approach to keeping their students in school as "whatever's going to work for each community."

In 2007-2008, Maaqtusiis school had 10 graduates, with approximately 60 students in grades nine to 12 (and 200 students in the school). Of those graduates, notes Louie, all of them have left the community and are pursuing educational options. He expects to have a dozen graduates this year. There are a few drop outs, he admits, but nothing to create concern.

"There are a number of things we do which make our school a success," says Louie. A home school coordinator meets with parents; a teacher's assistant stops at specific homes in the morning to ensure children are up and ready for school; a field trip is planned for the grades 11 and 12 to show them some of their post-secondary options; and basketball is a passion. Students can't be part of the basketball team if they aren't getting their homework done or if their attendance is lagging.

And, points out Louie, "We're on an island. Where are those kids going to go?" If community members see kids strolling the street during school hours, Louie is sure to get a phone call.

For Maaqtusiis school, said Louie, it's about committed staff, committed students and committed parents.

"Some people have to start somewhere. If you're having a really difficult time getting your kids to attend school, to finish a course, to get through grade nine then sometimes you have to come up with an idea like (a financial incentive). Will this work? Maybe two years from now they might begin to slip it away because the community will just appreciate that their kids are going to school and they won't need this monetary incentive," said Louie.

Support for the Long Plains incentive program is coming from such daily mainstream newspapers as the *Regina Leader-Post* and the *Edmonton Journal* (which reprinted the *Leader-Post* editorial). Writes the *Leader-Post*, "The best reason for experimenting with such a program is existing systems for getting First Nations students to graduate clearly aren't working."

Bursary could help relieve student financial woes

By Thomas J Bruner
Windspeaker Staff Writer

Ottawa

There have been numerous ongoing reports pointing out that the state of Aboriginal health in Canada is sub par when compared to the general populace. One institution is making efforts to ensure that Aboriginal health makes a 180, and declines no further.

The Canadian Medical Foundation (CMF) has expressed a strong concern towards what they refer to as "inequalities of the health status of Canada's Aboriginal people." A health expectancy that is five to ten years less than the Canadian average, and an infant mortality rate that is two to three times above the Canadian average are just a couple of the inequalities that the CMF would like to change.

Other concerns are the diabetes rate; mainly Type Two Diabetes which has been a consistent plague for First Nations. The rate for Canadian Aboriginals averages three to five times higher than the rest of Canada. Tuberculosis, a highly infectious disease clocks in at ten times the rate for average Canadians.

However, one of the biggest concerns is accessibility. The ratio of Aboriginal physicians compared to Aboriginals is

certainly a ratio the CMF intends to address. Hence the creation of a bursary for undergraduate Aboriginal medical students.

Created to provide financial support during medical training, this year the bursary will provide a maximum of \$4,000 per academic year. A total of \$40,000 will be available in total for the academic year. However next year, the bursary will become even more generous.

"Our board just recently made a commitment to next year to increase the funding to \$100,000 every year," said Kristin Smith, Director of Communications & Operations, who added that it's a primary focus for the CMF.

Being that most Aboriginal students struggle financially, the bursary was a welcome addition.

"The Canadian Medical Foundation bursary makes a world of difference. It relieves so much stress to know that I have help with that debt load, that I can keep on pushing to get where I want to go, and that I can keep my dream of being a physician alive and well," explained Melanie Halvorsen in a press release, who is now a third year medical student.

"I really believe that being a physician may give me the ability to reach out and really help people through difficult times," said Halvorsen. "Plus, the ability to apply my knowledge to major

"I really believe that being a physician may give me the ability to reach out and really help people through difficult times."

—Melanie Halvorsen

health issues like environmentally borne illnesses and epidemics is really important to me."

A report from the Canadian Institute for Health Information weighed in on all the potential causes for the less than stellar health record of Aboriginals.

The report states that the average educational attainment is lower for Aboriginal peoples, fewer Aboriginal peoples are employed and their average incomes are lower. These factors could be contributing to their lower health status relative to non-Aboriginal people in Canada.

Housing is at least 33 per cent higher of First Nations and Inuit people, compared to 18 per cent of non-Aboriginal people, that live in inadequate, unsuitable or unaffordable housing, according to data from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Poor housing has been associated with a host of health problems. For example, tuberculosis rates increase with

crowded housing.

The report notes that Aboriginal peoples also identify the legacy of residential schools as a unique determinant of health. In two surveys, six out of 10 First Nation and Métis respondents identified residential schools as a significant contributor to poorer health status.

According to the report, climate change and contaminants is also one of the potential causes attributing to poor health among Aboriginals.

The state of the physical environment and the affects of global climate change effect all Canadians. The environment is particularly important for Inuit because it affects a cornerstone of Inuit life—the harvesting and eating of traditional food. Research suggests that considerable changes in climate are already occurring in the North that could have direct negative impacts on Inuit health, including changes in weather patterns and increased exposure

to ultraviolet rays.

Research suggests that efforts to preserve and promote cultural practices and to control and manage resources are to be related to Aboriginal people's health status.

There are other bursaries available to the students as well. A \$1,000 bursary, in honour of Dr. Jack Armstrong will be handed out to students who display an interest, experience, and capacity to address Aboriginal health. It is understood that the bursary program for Aboriginal med students was his brainchild.

The CMF also offers the Dr John Big Canoe scholarship as well, which offers \$2,000 to those students who perform strong academically, and have shown significant contributions to the Aboriginal community.

The CMF are quite pleased with the opportunity to contribute to the future of Aboriginal students aiming for the medical profession.

"We're absolutely thrilled. This year at our strategic planning session we identified it as one of our main priorities to raise funds for and to increase the funding for Aboriginal med students," expressed Smith.

To find out more information about the bursaries, log on to www.medicalfoundation.ca/page/en/aboriginal_bursary

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NAN youth welcomed to city First Native women to chair board of College

By Marie White
Windspeaker Writer

THUNDER BAY

Thunder Bay, the most populous municipality in Northwestern Ontario, also has a significant First Nations' population nearby. So, when fall hits the area, so too does the call for students to leave home and go to school. This life-changing step can be particularly challenging for students who come from smaller, more remote communities to settle in the city.

A special activity to welcome three hundred new students from northern reserves was held in Thunder Bay's Sports Dome. It was sponsored by the Settlement and Welcome Committee, a group of community members dedicated to easing the transition for Aboriginal students to Thunder Bay who joined with the Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Strategy Neighbourhood Capacity Building Program.

According to the Thunder Bay's Source, the community paper, local school boards worked together to help make the

transition from a First Nation community to Thunder Bay an easier one for students. Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School and the Public and Catholic school boards teamed up to host the event at the Thunder Bay Sports Dome.

Students were shown local support services, enjoyed some recreational activities and heard from guests such as Nishnawbe Aski Nation Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler and Elder, Isabelle Mercier, for Lakehead University's Aboriginal Education department.

This activity is in response to recent issues in the area concerning Aboriginal students who arrive from remote communities and have more difficulty adapting to life in larger, and less familiar Thunder Bay. Many new students must be flown in where they must adapt to the impersonal population of over one hundred thousand people.

Student Kaiyah Duncan from Muskrat Dam First Nation said that when she arrived, she felt homesick. "It was hard to leave my family."

Located in the Sports Dome were local services, which Duncan said will help her if she needs it, even though she admits that asking for help, isn't always easy.

"Many youth from Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) territory are forced to move to Thunder Bay to attend high school, hundreds of miles away from their homes, their friends and their families. Tragically, many of these students lack an adequate network of social support and simply cannot cope with what can be a challenging and sometimes hostile environment," said Fiddler.

The Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School, draws its student body of 250 from reserves across northwestern Ontario. It is run by the Northern Nishnawbe Education Council and aims to provide a family atmosphere for students who are away from home, many for the first time.

The NAN is a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nation communities within James Bay Treaty 9 and Treaty 5 territory, two-thirds of the province of Ontario.

The Northwest Community College (NWCC) has elected Irene Sequin to Chair their Board of Governors, marking this as the first time in the college's history that the post will be held by a First Nations person. Sequin is a Gitwinksihlkw resident and long time college supporter.

Sequin is a graduate of NWCC's First Nations Public Administration Program, and the education administrator, and housing services manager for the village of Gitwinksihlkw.

She said that her election as the first Aboriginal Chair would only strengthen what is already a college known for its high Aboriginal student numbers.

"The inclusion of First Nations board members, staff and professors at Northwest

Community College is critical to creating a learning environment in which First Nations people will really be comfortable," said Sequin in a news release.

NWCC has helped improve access to Aboriginal students and is supportive of their journey.

"Irene is a highly respected mentor and Elder in her Nation and in the college community," said Stephanie Forsyth, president of NWCC.

The NWCC is involved in 14 different First Nations communities, operating closely with First Nation institutes such as Wilp Wilxoskwahl Nisga'a and Kitimat Valley Institute. NWCC has more First Nations and Métis students than any other post-secondary institution in the province.



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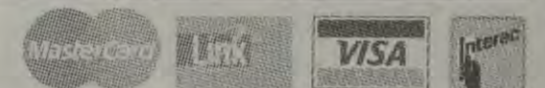
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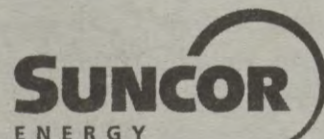
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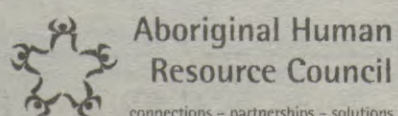
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- ◆ Make referrals to support services and community resources.
- ◆ Attend court, prepare and present evidence.
- ◆ Provide smooth transition for the child and family from investigation to family enhancement services or protection services.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- ◆ The person must possess one of the following: Bachelor of Social Work Degree or a Social Work Diploma and/or a minimum of two years experience in Child & Youth Service. Equivalencies maybe considered.
- ◆ Excellent interviewing, assessment and analytical skills.
- ◆ Excellent written and verbal skills, as well as computer knowledge.
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- ◆ Knowledge of the Cree Culture and the ability to speak Cree an asset.

Salary: dependent on qualifications and experience.

Your application **MUST** include your résumé, 3 references, recent CYIM & CRIM checks, and must be received by 4:30 p.m. October 31, 2008

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We thank all applicants for their interest; however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

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Educators bring the language alive through students

(Continued from page 18.)

Elias's sole purpose, before she dies, is to make the old language come alive again in the north.

"Since I was a teenager, I was an interpreter for my parents and grandmother when they had to deal with doctors or the government. I didn't do it to get money or anything. I just wanted to do it for my family. Now I want to give language to young people, so when I get really old, I won't have to struggle and run around anymore. I can just sit back and say 'yes, I did it; our people know their language.'"

Elders like Elias, working with teachers like Sandra Ipana, a kindergarten teacher at Inuvik's Sir Alexander MacKenzie

"It makes sense to start them so young. Language is picked up in the womb – the sound of the voice, the rhythm of the words. It should start from birth."

—Kaweienon:ni Margaret Cook-Peters

School, and Priscilla Haogak, a teacher at Inualthuyak School, have put in long hours to revamp a regional language program that needed reworking. The new, ready-to-use curriculum has helped grade nine students at the Inualthuyak School in Sachs Harbour to learn the Siglitun words for "weather" – sila – and "winter is coming" – ukiuugaqsiyaa. The curriculum supports teachers of students in kindergarten through Grade 12

to teach language without having to devise their own exercises or relying on Elders to come into their classrooms.

"It's way better than what I had to work with as a teacher at the Samuel Hearne Secondary School back in the early '90's," said Elias. "We had a little

here and there, but I had to make most of my own materials.

"And now we have the new reading and writing system that has eliminated a lot of the "oo's" and "ee's" so it's much easier for students to learn.

"But, still, I think the best way for children to learn the language and its meaning is to be out on the land. That's what I'll be drilling into the education and culture minister, but in a very gentle way," she laughed.



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The Justices of the Peace Appointments Advisory Committee reviews and evaluates applications, conducts interviews and classifies applicants as Not Qualified, Qualified or Highly Qualified. Classifications are then reported to the Attorney General, who ultimately recommends individuals for Order-in-Council Appointments. Applicants who have been chosen by the Committee to be interviewed will be contacted regarding the next steps.

For further information about the position, the regions of the province, and the filing requirements for submitting an application, please visit the Justices of the Peace Appointments Advisory Committee's website at www.ontariocourts.on.ca/jpac/en/

Applications must be submitted on the **current** prescribed application form and received by **4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 7, 2008**. If you wish to apply to more than one region, you should be aware that your degree of knowledge of those regions, their culture and issues will be considered.

Applicants of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

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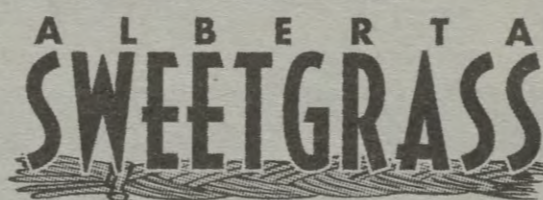
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[footprints] Louis Riel

Many followers will celebrate Riel's fight for Métis identity

By Dianne Meili

Next month marks the 123rd anniversary of the death of Louis Riel, the martyr who gave identity to Métis people.

Born on Oct. 22, 1844, Riel's role as the undisputed spiritual and political head of the Métis was set by religious parents and authorities who recognized his brilliance at an early age. His father Louis Riel and mother Julie Lagimodiere were both devout Catholics and had considered a religious life before marrying each other. Their piety was an important factor in the family's daily life.

Young Louis Riel spent his childhood on the east bank of the Red River, growing up among the Métis and extremely conscious of his identity, inherited through his father's line.

He began school at the age of ten, and was sent to Montreal to study for the priesthood. Immersed in Latin, Greek, French, English, philosophy and the sciences, Riel placed himself at the top of his class until the death of his beloved father in 1864. His grief overwhelmed him; his interest in his studies flagged and he eventually left school altogether.

After his romance with a young woman named Marie Julie Guernon was squashed by her parents, who didn't want their daughter marrying a Métis, Riel then disappeared to the United States, arriving back in St. Boniface as an educated but unemployed man.

The fact that he was educated, as well as ambitious and bilingual, made him the perfect choice to lead the Métis in their fight for

rights in the Red River settlement. He spearheaded the writing of a "List of Rights" in 1869 that preceded the entry of Manitoba into the confederation. In part, the List of Rights included such provisos as: the people will have the right to elect their own legislature; English and French languages will be used by the government; and that all sheriffs, magistrates, constables, and school commissioners will be elected by the people.

A group of transplanted Loyalists saw this list as evidence of sedition and they had the ear of the Government of Canada, which procrastinated in accepting the List of Rights. When Riel established a Provisional Government to help block the inclusion of the Red River territory in the United States, his efforts were judged as revolutionary. A group of Orangemen from upper Canada also took their revenge on Riel's Provisional Government by trying to overthrow it.

Thomas Scott, an exceptionally violent and racist man, was caught and charged with treason for his role in the overthrow. After a lengthy trial, Scott was found guilty and killed by a firing squad.

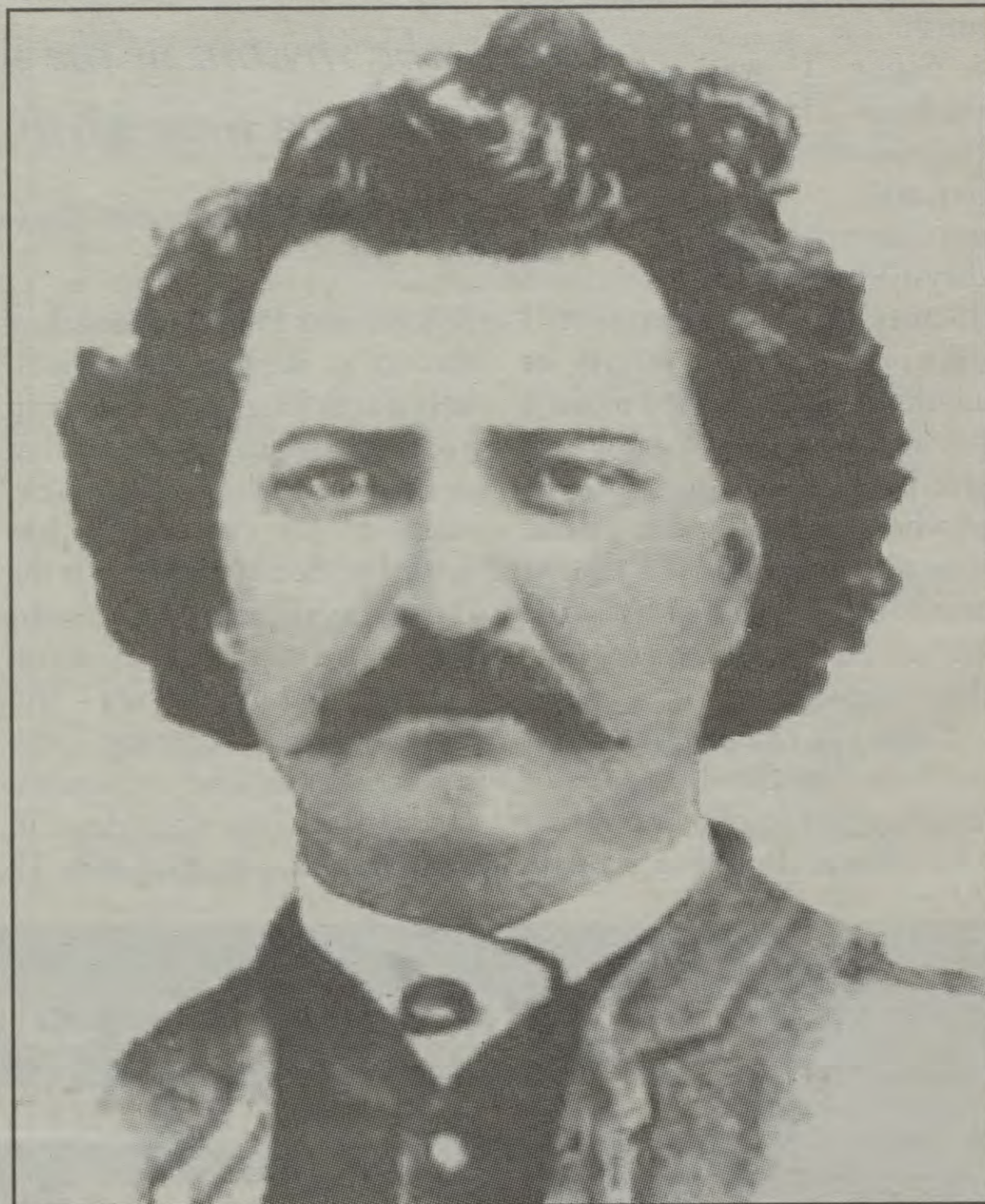
Enraged anti-Catholic and anti-French sentiment in Ontario blocked Riel from taking his seat in the House of Commons, and, in retaliation for his part in Scott's death and playing a part in the creation of the Provisional Government, Riel was banished to the United States in 1875 for five years.

Isolated and lonely, Riel brooded in severe depression

punctuated by euphoric states of joy. He was lonely, cut off from his people and country, but he began encountering the "divine spirit" which led him to believe he had a religious mission to lead the Métis people of northwest Canada. While quietly teaching at a Montana Jesuit Mission, Riel received a visit from a delegation of Métis who had traveled from northern Saskatchewan where they, along with other Métis families, had settled after 1869. They told Riel they had resumed their traditional way of life, but they were now threatened again by the influx of settlers and immigrants. Their borders were again disappearing, their rights were no longer being respected, their lands were being taken and the government was not listening.

Riel helped them petition the government, which promised, a year later, to appoint a commission to investigate the Métis' claims and titles. The first step would be to take a census of the Métis in the North-West Territories. These proposals angered the Métis who were hoping for a quicker solution to their problems.

Desperation escalated throughout the hungry winter of 1885, when Indian tribes, dying of hunger and disease, joined Riel's cause. Once again, Riel formed a provisional government and decided to capture Fort Carleton without violence, and use it as his base, but the Mounted Police reinforced its garrison. Riel asked for the peaceable surrender of the fort, but then skirmishes between Indians and police led to



Louis Riel

increased hostilities between Riel's followers and the government, climaxing in the famous and final battle at Batoche.

By spring it was all over. Riel surrendered his freedom to the police and was transferred to Regina and charged with high treason. After a two-week trial, he was found guilty and sentenced to hang, despite his lawyers' appeals. On Nov. 16 in 1885 at around 8:30 in the morning Riel was led to the gallows to meet his fate.

Though he was originally branded a traitor to Canada, due to the prevailing prejudices of the time, today Riel is celebrated as a patriot who bravely stood up for his people and his beliefs. His family home in St. Vital, Manitoba – just outside of the French community of Saint-Boniface where he was born and grew up – has been designated a national historic site and at this time of year, Métis communities across Canada celebrate their unique culture in memory of their benefactor's brave life.

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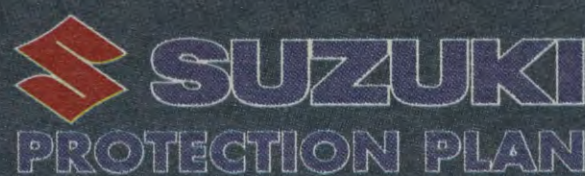


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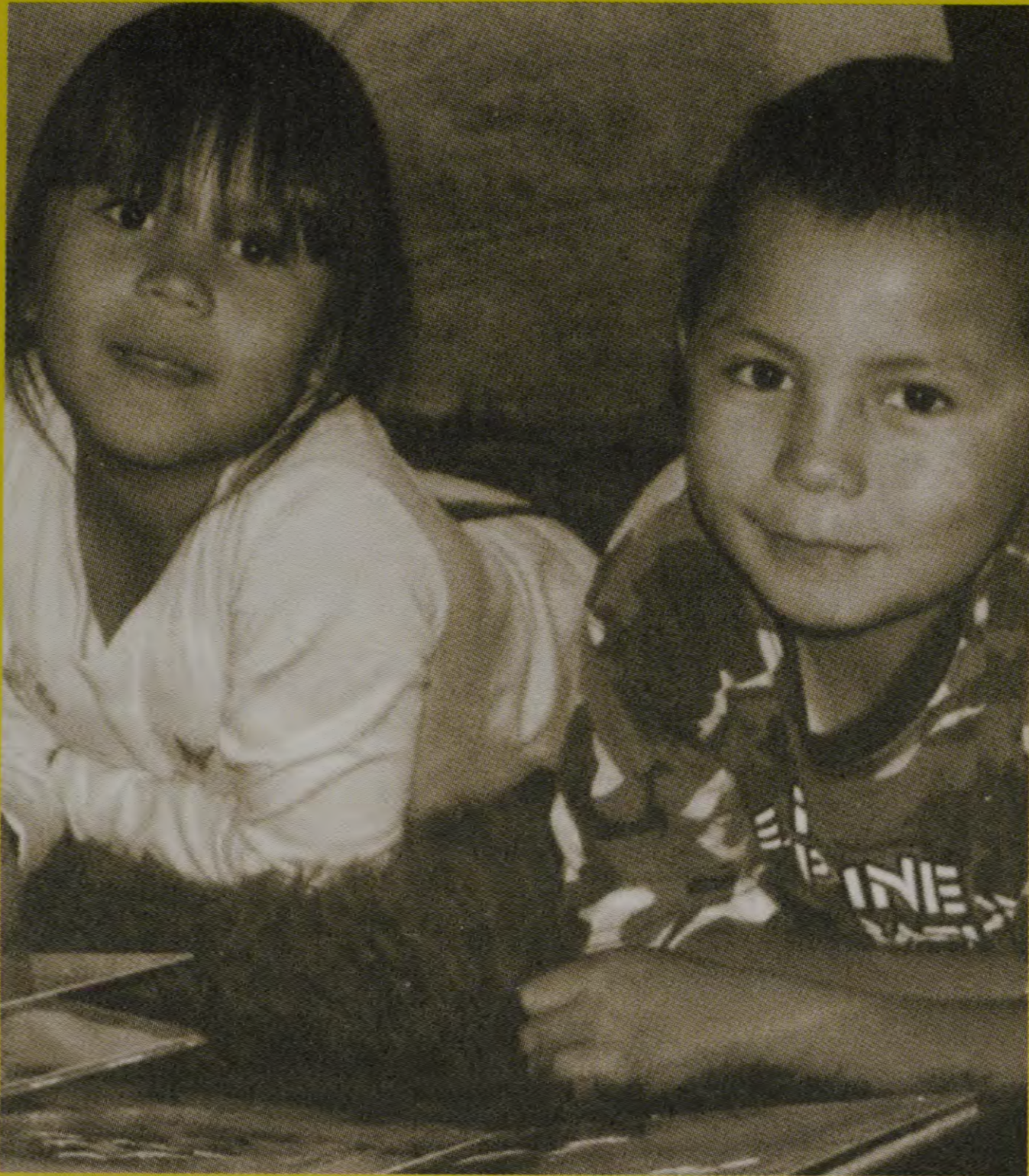
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**BC Treaty
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**Huu-ay-aht: A fly in the Maa-nulth treaty ointment
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Third Quarter - Fall 2008



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AON

Chris Fawcus, President and CEO of Aon Reed Stenhouse Inc., is pleased to announce the appointment of **Marshall M. Murdock**, Vice President and National Practice Leader to lead Aon's National Aboriginal Services Group.

Marshall has several years of experience with major Canadian financial services institutions. As a National Director with a chartered accountants and management firm, he was instrumental in building and growing their Aboriginal practice. As the Associate Vice President – National Aboriginal Banking Services of a major Canadian bank, Marshall had a pivotal role in growing their Aboriginal business and employment equity practice, including establishing the first and only nationally chartered First Nations Bank in Canada. Marshall is the former Chief Executive Officer of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Secretariat, has been a consultant to Corporate Canada, and has also been an advisor to key provincial educational institutions.

As Canada's leading insurance brokerage and risk management firm, Aon services commercial and personal clients through a national network of 27 offices. An organization with strong Canadian roots, Aon's specialists have been meeting the insurance and risk management needs of First Nation Canadians for more than a century.

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On The Agenda

Oct. 5-8

Economic Development: Power of Technology Montreal, QC

The 15th Annual National Conference and Annual General Assembly of the members of the Advancement of Native Development Officers will be held in Montreal. Host organizations are the Cree Regional Authority, and Tewaohnni'saktha. Visit www.edo.ca for conference information and updates or call 1-800-463-9300.

Oct. 14-16

NWT Aboriginal Business Conference Yellowknife, NWT

Establishing Economic Cooperation, Conference on Northern Business and Workforce Development is a prime opportunity to network, examine and build industrial capacity to meet and benefit from world markets. Conference delegates will learn about business opportunities from expert business leaders presenting information in plenary and workshop settings.

Contact: prestige@theedge.ca.

Telephone: (867) 873-6121.

Oct. 20-21

Aboriginal Business and Economic Development Western Conference Vancouver, BC

The three key issues that will be considered: Overcoming the obstacles to speeding up Aboriginal economic development; Increasing the Aboriginal leadership role in the process; taking key actions to move Aboriginal economic development forward while earning a good return on investment. Register online or call 1-888-777-1707.

Oct. 20-21

Alberta Aboriginal Business Symposium and Gala Edmonton, AB

The Aboriginal Capital Corporations of Alberta is hosting this gathering. The purpose of the event will be to pay tribute to Alberta's Aboriginal Entrepreneurs and to the Aboriginal Capital Corporations' success in business excellence of the past 20 years. Call 1-866-592-4827.

Email: info@ACC2008.ca.

Oct. 22

18th Annual Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund Business Awards Timmins, ON

For more information on this year's event call toll free at 1-800-465-6821 or 1-807-623-5397.

Nov. 2-4

Developing Minds, Managing Resources Saskatoon, SK

Aboriginal Community Development with the Resource Sector. Attend this important conference to hear about youth education, skills and capacity building, environmental management, gold diamond, treaty land entitlement and more.

Email: info@canadaforum.com

or call 1-866-404-0036.

Nov. 17-18

Aboriginal Law and Economic Development Halifax, NS

The five issues that will be considered at the conference: Overcoming the obstacles to speeding up Aboriginal economic development while earning a good return on investment; Consultation and accommodation litigation developments across Canada, plus a review of what Aboriginal communities expect in terms of Consultation; Treaty process: current challenges and potential solutions; Aboriginal taxation law plus updates on legislation relating to Aboriginal C-30, *Specific Claims Tribunal Act* and *First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act*; Industry and Aboriginal joint ventures—best practices. Call 1-888-777-1707.

Nov. 19-20

International Indigenous Forum 2008 Vancouver, BC

Discuss the current key issues impacting the world's Indigenous peoples. What does Indigenous culture and tradition mean in the midst of globalization? What potential do they have to influence issues on the national and global agendas? Contact (604) 730-2500 or 877-730-2555.

Business Quarterly

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Shari Narine, Andr ea Ledding,
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COVER PHOTO –

Robert Dennis leads the delegation of Maa-nulth at the BC Legislature for ratification of the Maa-nulth Final Agreement on Nov. 29, 2007.

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January 2009

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Third Quarter – Fall 2008

Appointments and Inking the Deal

Chief Victor Buffalo of the Samson Cree Nation will be installed as an "officer" of the Order of Canada. The announcement was made by Governor General Michaëlle Jean on July 1.

Buffalo has a long list of honors under his belt, including his installation in 2007 into the Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame by the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. He is one of the guiding forces behind Peace Hills Trust, Canada's first Aboriginal-owned financial institution. His efforts also led to the development of Samson Oil and Gas. He is a member of various boards, including Savanna Energy Services, the National Aboriginal Industries Committee, and the Aboriginal Program Advisory Committee at the Banff Centre for Management.

Roberta Jamieson, president and chief executive officer of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, has been elected as a director of the Empire Club of Canada.

The Empire Club is recognized as one of Canada's longest-standing and largest speakers' forums with a membership comprised of some of Canada's most influential leaders, from the professions, business, labour, education and government.

Donna Cona, which provides a full range of business and technology services to its clients, has appointed Holly Cooper as an account executive stationed in Ottawa.

She will be focused on working with clients in the federal government. Cooper is of Aboriginal descent with over 20 years experience working with Aboriginal companies, and has had a 10-year career in information systems sales. Donna Cona is a supplier under the government's Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business. Donna Cona is always on the lookout for Aboriginal IT and management consulting professionals. Visit the Web site at www.donnacona.com for more information.

Windspeaker Business Quarterly

Northern Superior Resources Inc., its joint venture partner Lake Shore Gold Corp, and Neskantaga First Nation announced the signing of an Early Economic Benefits Agreement, which defines the working relationship between the parties at the early stage of exploration associated with the Ti-pa-haa-kaa-ning gold project in northwestern Ontario.

The agreement allows Northern Superior to continue exploration for three years, or until the exploration program proceeds to an advanced exploration stage involving the delineation of a resource.

New funding will triple the number of Aboriginal communities in British Columbia benefiting from business training to help Aboriginal people become self-employed or start their own businesses.

The Aboriginal Business and Entrepreneurship Skills Training (BEST) program will receive an additional \$500,000 in funding as part of a six-year strategy to improve training and employment opportunities across the province. In 2007/2008, the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation provided \$80,000 to support the program. The additional \$500,000 funding from the federal government will allow Aboriginal BEST to develop and sustain a six-year strategy to expand the program and deliver training opportunities to more people.

The Assembly of First Nations and the Forest Products Association signed a memorandum of understanding that sees First Nations and forest industry leaders agree to work together to strengthen Canada's forest sector through economic development initiatives and business investments, strong environmental stewardship and the creation of skill development opportunities, particularly targeted to First Nations youth.

The forest industry is the largest employer of Aboriginal people and depends on 1,400 Aboriginal businesses for its day-to-day operations. Shared objectives ground the MOU, including the creation of high skilled jobs for First Nations youth, the use of forest practices that set global standards for environmental stewardship and the development of solid business relationships that create economic opportunities for remote communities. First Nations have a vital role to play in shaping the future of a healthy forest industry," said National Chief Phil Fontaine. "The fate of the industry is tied up with the fate of hundreds of rural communities across this land as the forest sector has been the main source of business investment, employment and educational opportunities for First Nations people.

**Have a business announcement you would like to share with our readers?
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Chair to advance Aboriginal economic development

Canadian-born Métis scholar James Hopkins has been named the inaugural National Aboriginal Economic Development Chair based in the Faculties of Business and Law at the University of Victoria. He begins his duties in July 2009.

Working closely with Indigenous law scholar and professor John Borrows, who holds the Law Foundation professorship in Aboriginal justice and governance, and with business professor Brent Mainprize, who worked with the Nisga'a Lisims Government to promote economic development within its territory, Hopkins takes on the mandate to promote Aboriginal economic development in Canada.

Hopkins' position is supported by \$2 million in federal government funding, \$1 million each from the BC government, BC Hydro and EnCana, and \$200,000 from Enbridge Inc.

The objective of the chair is to develop and direct a program of research, relationship-building and education. The chair will be the

repository of best practices in Aboriginal economic development, will encourage partnerships among interested parties, and provide courses to the faculties of business and law.

"A big high-end concept of this would be to run applied research in the classroom setting," explained Hopkins in a phone interview with *Windspeaker Business Quarterly*.

Hopkins graduated from the University of Toronto law school in 1996, and graduated from Harvard Law School's joint Master of Laws and International Tax Program in 2000. There he earned the Award of Excellence in Research and Writing on public policy solutions to Aboriginal taxation and governance.

Hopkins went on to the University of Arizona's Indigenous Peoples Law and Policy Program where he served as associate clinical professor, and was the program's inaugural director. Prior to his appointment as Chair, Hopkins was a faculty member at the Univer-

sity of Alberta law school, and a visiting professor at the University of Ottawa, and, in the summer of 2005, for UVic's Indigenous Legal Studies Program.

"We have secured an outstanding candidate and the resources necessary to launch the Chair's essential work, and to help improve the lives of Indigenous peoples in the years to come, said UVic's business dean Ali Dastmalchian upon Hopkins' appointment.

"I am delighted that UVic has been able to attract a scholar of Professor Hopkins' calibre to carry out the wide-ranging goals of this position," said University of Victoria President David Turpin.

Hopkins has taught and written about Indigenous self-governance, Aboriginal business and economic development, and taxation policies. He believes there is rich soil in Canada that will provide important research and information on the economic environments in Aboriginal communities that will help advance economic development initiatives.

"Currently there are lots of anecdotes, but it's hard to get a pulse on what's happening broadly," said Hopkins about Aboriginal economic development activity across the country.

Though Hopkins' position doesn't begin until next July, he is already formulating program ideas based on his extensive experience.

For example, he said he'd like to replicate in Canada some of the work that was done with tribal governments at the University of Arizona. There the tribes had access to top people in their fields to discuss business ideas, and research them thoroughly before investing in projects.

One tribe, Hopkins said, wanted to develop gourmet lettuce, but after working with the agricultural scientists, economists and research students at the university, the tribe decided to leave the gourmet lettuce business to the large-scale producers who relied on Mexican labour. Instead the tribe decided to raise traditional crops through culturally-accepted practices that reflected their population.

The feasibility study undertaken in partnership with the university allowed the tribe to make its decisions on the product with "eyes wide open," said Hopkins.

"It's a great opportunity to provide service and outreach by the university to these communities," he explained, providing a win-win scenario for all parties.

Continued on page 7.



James Hopkins, the inaugural National Aboriginal Economic Development Chair at the University of Victoria

Continued from page 6.

“The key, and I think what’s missing in Canada, is the framework for research and applied studies where communities can actually see the ideas thought of, projects worked on, because right now there’s really nothing to centralize these activities.”

An element of Hopkins’ mandate is to research models of governance that will lead to a greater realization of First Nations’ autonomy.

There is little in the way of field research on Aboriginal activities around economic development, and even less on the relationship between economic development and its impact on governance, he said.

He stresses that each First Nation is distinct and he does not want to generalize or prescribe a one-size-fits-all solution in either economic development or governance.

He can provide warnings, however, of what can impact negatively on First Nations autonomy. One such warning comes with resource co-management agreements.

In some cases, said Hopkins, when the documents of an agreement are examined closely, the indemnities and waivers found within favour the province, and the Indigenous rights become eroded or completely negated.

Another area of concern for him comes with land claim negotiations where governments will only negotiate a small piece of the claim for a short term, and promise to deal with the rest later. Again, when the language is examined in the agreements struck, it becomes clear they are settling some of the broader land claim issues permanently, by including language that overrides the duty to consult.

Hopkins said the Supreme Court of Canada established the duty to consult as a procedural requirement, but the Crown, whether provincially or federally, has now been getting around that duty by making separate deals and then considering it a fulfillment of consultation across the board.

“This is being encountered with Indigenous people all over the world when dealing with governments,” said Hopkins. His advice is to read the fine print, because the agreements may be seriously misleading.

“Once signed and done, the court is very reluctant to interfere with what they see as a Crown-initiated agreement.”

Hopkins said governments have a critical role to play in the advancement of Aboriginal economic development.

“To facilitate projects. Not simply write cheques, but get outside investors engaged, and get the Aboriginal community engaged; to invest in each other.”

It’s in their best interest to make sure the Aboriginal community is not left behind,

Hopkins said.

The country’s economic progress and any land claim processes, including treaty negotiations, are critically intertwined. And policies must be developed that encourages and eases the way for economic development in Aboriginal communities, making it comfortable for third parties to invest.

In Arizona, for example, 21 tribal governments have a number of mutually-beneficially compacts with the state. Arizona even has tax revenue sharing agreements so there is no double-taxing.

A significant contributor to the state’s economy is one tribe, said Hopkins. Along with this economic power is the creation of a significant voting block, and therefore political clout.

The state policies today reflect the influence of the tribes, but it wasn’t always so. In the 1970s there was constant court wrangling over the economic development initiatives the tribes were undertaking.

So, it’s almost as if making economic headway has enabled the groups to iron out other issues and pave the way for more favourable policies. On the other hand, more favourable policies and practices also help make economic headway.

“It’s really tough, because you have to engage with the government to at least facilitate the beginning of economic development,” observed Hopkins. Otherwise any third party will have misgivings over what it terms “a cloud of title.” The government plays a vital role in clearing the landscape of that uncertainty.

“Banks, until recently, have not been proactive in investing in this part of Canadian society,” he said.

A bank may be reluctant to invest in a project, partly because treaty and related rights are still being negotiated.

He said governments need to be sensitive to its dual roles. On the one hand arbitrating, defining, and litigating, but also being the principal player to get projects going.

“They’re coming around more. In B.C. you’re seeing some very significant changes to policy and attitude, but it’s not at an equitable level by any means.”

Hopkins would like to see Aboriginal and federal governments work on squaring away their roles, and in the case of Aboriginal governments, he would like to see them take seriously the advancement of their own sovereignty; to be respectfully creative and pro-active in laying down delivery and planning methods with the governments and corporations so there is no room for ambiguity.

By *Andréa Ledding*

BQ

Business Quarterly

In Canada, Aboriginal people are experiencing a renaissance – there is hope in the air and opportunity on the horizon.

— *Jocelyne Soulodre*
CEO & President
Canadian Council
for Aboriginal Business (CCAB)

2008/09 Schedule:

Edition	Booking	Pub.
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Q1 - Spring	05-Mar-2009	April
Q2 - Summer	25-June-2009	July
Q3 - Fall	10-Sep-2009	October

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Nations dreaming



of economic self-sufficiency

Chief Councillor Robert Dennis (Huu-ay-aht) leading the delegation of Maa-nulth to the legislature on Nov. 29, 2007.

The Maa-nulth Final Agreement was initialed on Dec. 9, 2006 by the five Maa-nulth nations on Vancouver Island, along with the federal and provincial governments. It is the first multi-nation modern treaty negotiated in the province.

The Maa-nulth treaty gives the First Nation signatories the rights to the lands and resources throughout the settlement territory. It provides the Maa-nulth First Nations with modern governance tools to build strong and workable relationships.

“This treaty allows us to shake off the shackles of the Indian Act,” said Uchucklesaht Chief Councillor Charlie Cootes, Sr. His tribe, along with the Huu-ay-aht First Nations, Ucluelet First Nation, the Toquaht nation and the Ka:’yu:’k’t’h’/Chek’tles7et’h’, make up the Maa-nulth.

Though it has yet to be ratified by the federal government, much planning has occurred that will set in motion a variety of economic development initiatives for the nations.

“Everything you do in regard to economic development has to be okayed by someone in Ottawa,” said Cootes of the Indian Act system. “(This treaty) gives us self-sufficiency and self-

determination to make our own decisions about actions that need to be taken to move ahead,” Cootes said.

Anne Mack is the program manager with Toquaht Nation.

“This treaty is not a money-making thing so that we’ll become rich over night, but we do have a lot of benefits coming from the treaty that will be helpful.”

Mack characterizes Toquaht as “quite unique to the other nations.”

Although Huu-ay-aht and Uchucklesaht are also located in the Barkley Sound area, Toquaht has the most ocean front land on the West Coast of the Island and this land will play a large role in its economic development plans.

Construction of a tourist resort in one of the bays will be the priority with outside developers enticed to invest, because at this point the band doesn’t have the money to undertake its own capital expenditures.

Although there are six reserve sites in Toquaht, the only inhabited one is Macoah, which recently had its power generator replaced with hydro. That move, said Mack, will allow more houses to be built. There are only 20 or 30 people living on the site.

“Our people have been away from the traditional territory for a couple of generations. Our first emphasis will be to get people back and see what employment will be there when they return.”

A health survey carried out last summer indicated that more than 50 per cent of the 130 people living off-reserve expressed interest in returning.

Along with the tourist resort, Mack notes that recreation tenures, allowed through a side agreement to the treaty, will provide other options for employment, including sport fishing and ecotourism. Agriculture will be pursued, along with the development of a shellfish program.

Tourism will also be the focus of development in Uchucklesaht, said Cootes, noting that the 12 hectares guaranteed each nation through a side agreement to the treaty, figure prominently in the creation of ecotourism possibilities, such as hiking, canoeing, sport fishing, animal watching and whale-watching, as well as cultural activities for tourists. Development will be undertaken both by the band and individual members.

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As well, a tourism resort with waterfront on three sides and minutes from Barkley Sound has also been identified as an economic opportunity.

"We're in the process of identifying jobs in all sectors where opportunities are created," points out Cootes. The spin-off jobs from tourism, logging and fisheries will be able to bring Uchucklesath Nation members home to live and work.

"We have started proposals to do feasibility studies and we're working on a master business plan for all opportunities throughout the territory to have done by effective date of treaty implementation," said Cootes.

While Ucluelet is still in the "very preliminary stages" when it comes to planning its economic development, said Chief Councillor Vi Mundy, tourism will be a major focus, both in the town site, as well as in Ucluelet's remote areas.

This summer Ucluelet hired a chief executive officer for the Ucluelet Development Corp. "They're handling all of our economic development enterprises. We're just getting off of the ground," she said.

Mundy expects a mixture of band money and private dollars to go into developing a destination resort in the town, while fishing lodges and youth camps will be the focus in the remote

areas.

The band has begun building new homes already in anticipation of their members returning home. Mundy said that during the treaty ratification process, members living off-reserve were contacted.

"We found that people in the semi-retirement age were anxious to move home, to share their talents and their careers."

Mundy also notes that many of Ucluelet's youth that are pursuing post-secondary education are in the fields of hospitality or commercial recreation. Their careers will fit perfectly with the direction in which Ucluelet is moving.

Hydro-electric power and forestry are among the industries that will be targeted to help further Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Chek'tles7et'h's economic development, said Chief Councillor Tess Smith.

About one-third of Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Chek'tles7et'h's membership lives on reserve. Smith is hopeful that economic development opportunities will bring more of the nation's members home.

"With this treaty there is potential for expansion," said Smith. "Without this dependency (on the federal government), we'll probably have a better outlook on our future."

Because of Huu-ay-aht's location, tourism isn't a viable focus, said Chief Councillor

Robert Dennis, without further negotiations with the federal and British Columbia governments to pay for a paved road to the village near Bamfield.

"I'd hate to put \$1 million into a resort and not have any customers."

Dennis said Huu-ay-aht attempted to make the paved road part of the treaty, but neither the federal nor the provincial governments were interested.

"We made it very clear that in order to develop a diverse economy and to be participants in the federal and provincial economy there is certain infrastructure that needs to be in place."

He said the Huu-ay-ahts wanted to be very prudent and develop economic businesses that are viable.

"So we're not going to go spending millions of dollars on campground development or resort development or whatever else, until we know that we're going to be able to get more tourists into Huu-ay-aht."

Until that infrastructure is in place, the focus for economic development will fall on resource extraction in both forestry and fisheries, with the possibility of power generation. But Dennis notes that the forestry industry is presently in a downturn and it's anticipated to remain that way for a couple of more years.

By Shari Narine



(From left to right) Hereditary Chief Tye Ha'wilth Bert Mack (Toquaht), Chief Councillor Therese Smith (Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Chek'tles7et'h'), Chief Councillor Charlie Cootes, Sr. (Uchucklesaht), Chief Councillor Vi Mundy (Ucluelet) and Chief Councillor Robert Dennis (Huu-ay-aht) join BC Premier Gordon Campbell, and Mike de Jong, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, on the ratification of the Maa-nulth Final Agreement in the legislature on Nov. 29, 2007. The paddles and the canoe behind represent the province and the Maa-nulth nations pulling together for a better future.

Treaty delay frustrates First Nations leaders



Photo credit: Ha-Shilth-Sa

Ucluelet's community ratification vote held on Oct. 21, 2007 was a tense one, but a loud cheer went up through the hall when the threshold for approval of the Maa-nulth Final Agreement was reached. Chief Councillor Vi Mundy gets a congratulatory hug from a communications worker.

The upcoming federal election on Oct. 14 is just the latest obstacle that is set to delay the ratification of the Maa-nulth Final Agreement in the House of Commons, but it's not the only hurdle left for the first multi-nation modern-day treaty on its journey towards legislation.

The treaty was initialed in December 2006 by the federal and British Columbia governments along with the five Maa-nulth First Nations on Vancouver Island.

Huu-ay-aht, Uchucklesaht, Toquaht, Ucluelet, Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Chek'tles7et'h' and the province ratified the agreement in 2007, and four of the five nations officially signed the agreement with the province in July of this year.

But if the government thought it was tough getting single nation treaties to the finish line, that effort pales in comparison to the fortitude required to wrangle five nations to the end of the long treaty process.

Canada has a less than stellar record on treaties, as anyone who follows this kind of thing knows.

It has only one treaty finalized within the BC Treaty Process—Tsawassen. Another treaty that it had high hopes for was the Lheidli Tenneh Final Agreement that went down to defeat in a community ratification vote in March 2007.

The Tsawassen and Maa-nulth agreements were ratified in the provincial legislature within weeks of one another, and Tsawassen quickly went on to the House for passage, but there's a fly in the ointment for Maa-nulth, and right now its name is Huu-ay-aht.

"I'm very frustrated," said Charlie Cootes, Chief Councillor of Uchucklesaht. "We have a strong mandate from our community to move ahead and the longer we take in having a treaty in place, the more opportunities we're losing."

Huu-ay-aht has dug in its heels on a principle over a fisheries litigation it is

involved in. Huu-ay-aht is, as are the other Maa-nulth nations, part of a larger group of people on the West Coast called Nuu-chah-nulth, and the Nuu-chah-nulth are fighting in court for recognition of their commercial fishing rights, and have been for a number of years.

At one point, three of the Maa-nulth nations were party to the litigation. But since the finalization of the treaty, only Huu-ay-aht remains and Canada is insisting that it break off from the suit. Canada will not bring the treaty to the House until that happens. And until that happens, Maa-nulth, and any treaty implementation monies that could flow, are stalled.

Huu-ay-aht has said it will not abandon the litigation and will not sign the treaty. If the Huu-ay-ahts did sign, they would have 10 days to remove themselves from the litigation.

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“We chose to follow through with the discontinuance agreement (signed prior to the litigation) so we could sign off on the treaty and begin our implementation,” said Ka:’yu:’k’t’h’/Chek’tles7et’h’ Chief Councillor Tess Smith. Ka:’yu:’k’t’h’/Chek’tles7et’h’ believes that the Maa-nulth treaty, and its side agreements, address their fisheries allotment concerns.

But Huu-ay-aht is not so convinced.

Chief Councillor Robert Dennis contends that no judge will give Maa-nulth fishery concerns a second look if no Maa-nulth nation is part of the Nuu-chah-nulth fisheries litigation.

“What we’re concerned about is that a judge may turn around and say, ‘That’s good enough for Maa-nulth nation, so I don’t have to make a decision regarding those nations. That’s one of those things. Because if we’re no longer part of the case, why should a judge rule in HUU-ay-aht’s interest?’”

It’s expected, regardless of the lower court decision, that the litigation will climb its way to the Supreme Court of Canada. HUU-ay-aht has committed to the case until the initial trial is complete, which Dennis anticipates will be later this year or early next. And regardless of the ruling, he said, the HUU-ay-ahts will then sign.

Among the concerns that HUU-ay-aht has with the Maa-nulth fisheries side agreement is that only seven fish species are named in it; fishery management, especially in remote areas, is vague, and the harvest allocation numbers aren’t what “we would have liked to have seen.”

Dennis also said that although the side agreement to the Maa-nulth treaty addresses some fisheries issues, not all their concerns, the ones that have been voiced in the litigation, are included. And a side agreement is not constitutionally-protected, Dennis notes. The federal government can pull the plug on it with a simple 180-day notice.

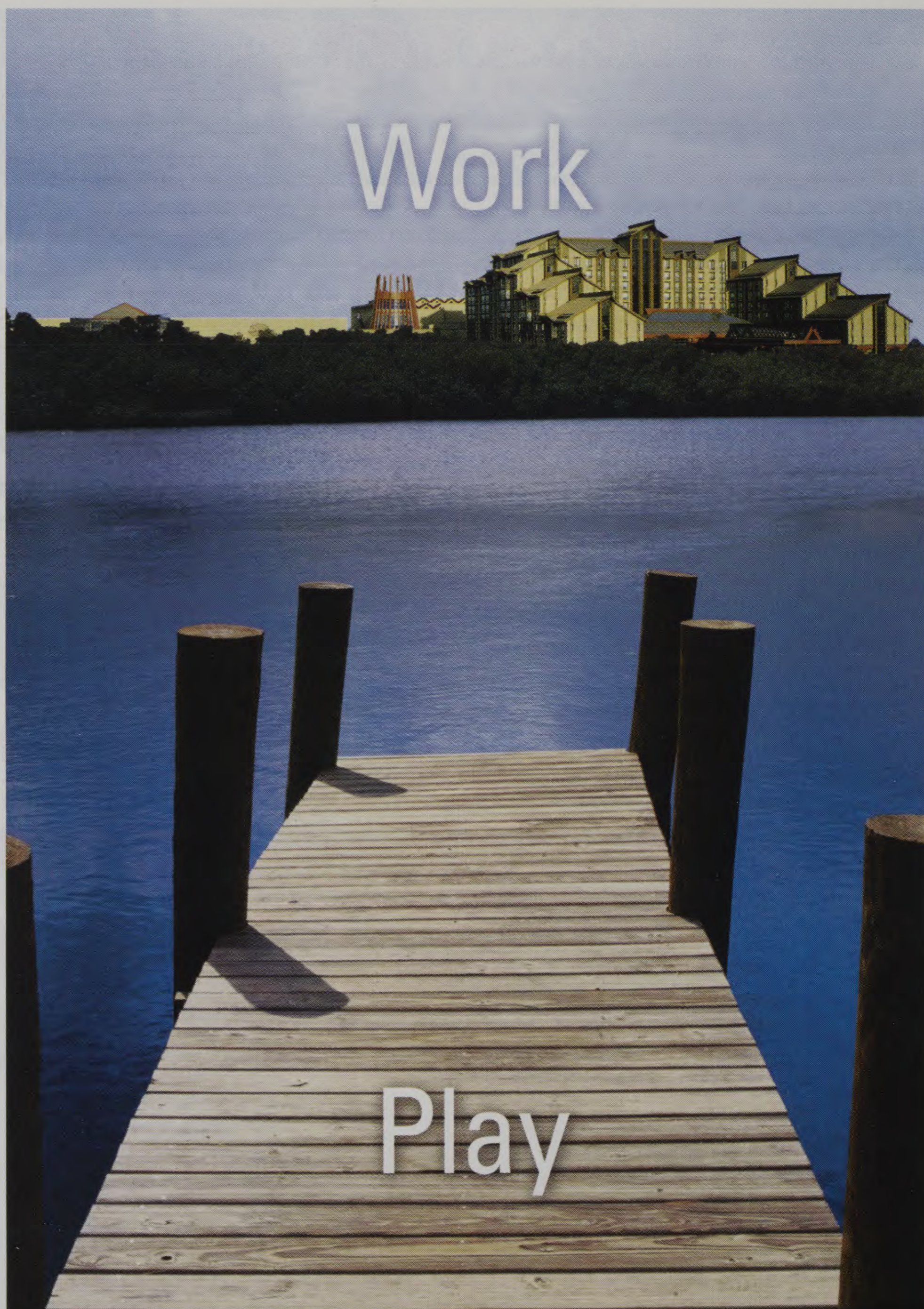
Cootes counters that argument by pointing to the “Me Too” clause in the treaty. He said any findings in the litigation that benefit the Nuu-chah-nulth will become a harvest agreement for Maa-nulth and will be moved into the treaty and receive protection under the Constitution.

Dennis insists that HUU-ay-aht is not the root cause of the delay of Maa-nulth. He said it was a failure of the treaty negotiations when it came to discussion about implementation funding that’s at fault. Maa-nulth negotiators failed to put in place necessary conditions to tap into that funding.

At issue is \$1.6 million that can be used over a two-year period to prepare the Maa-nulth nations for implementation. And, contrary to what others may say (there has been reports that hundreds of thousands of dollars per month in interest is being lost), that’s the only money the nations are losing out on, said Dennis.

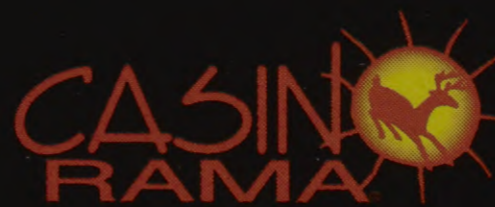
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The rest of the funding won't come through until the effective date, which still has to be negotiated between the parties of the treaty.

Although the funding is not available for the nations to begin the implementation phase, it doesn't mean that they are sitting around twiddling their thumbs.

Each nation has already begun making the changes necessary to be ready for effective date, so "we can hit the pavement running," said Cootes.

"We are trying to negotiate alternate solutions to get some money flowing so we can prepare for implementation date. But it's very difficult as most funding agencies have specific criteria for money they make available for First Nations."

Among the work that needs to be undertaken is the drafting of new laws and restructuring of the government.

Ucluelet, the second largest of the Maa-nulth nations, is moving forward with implementation using the regular funding it receives.

"Ucluelet has always had committees set up and a lot of the (implementation) work is going to these committees and the pertinent staff,"

said Chief Councillor Vi Mundy.

Ucluelet is also in the process of developing its citizenship code and is on the second draft of its election code, which could possibly see terms increased from two years to four.

"We just keep the communication open with our community, reassuring our members and asking them for the continued support in assisting us with ideas and support in way of giving us a mandate or instructions on how to deal with all of this," said Mundy. Meanwhile, Smith points out that Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Chek'tles7et'h' is in the process of structuring its 10 core laws "which we need to develop for implementation."

"We had momentum going," said Anne Mack, a spokesperson for the Toquaht Nation. She, too, said she is frustrated with the delay.

"We've brought on additional staff to help with implementation, but I don't know how long we can carry this on."

Meanwhile Huu-ay-aht has borrowed money from the bank to begin its implementation process. There is a treaty implementation committee that meets monthly and their work includes a comprehensive economic develop-

ment plan.

And talks are continuing between the members of the Maa-nulth Treaty Society, both individually with Huu-ay-aht and as a group.

"We may call the traditional leaders together," said Mack. "Sometimes that makes a lot of sense, but that's not in place yet."

The upcoming federal election is also troubling the Maa-nulth leadership, and that, in itself, said Dennis, is a more pressing issue than Huu-ay-aht's involvement in the Nuuchah-nulth fisheries litigation.

Cootes does agree that the federal election is a "serious concern. It drives the signing of the treaty back six months. After a federal or provincial election they don't do anything for awhile, because they're organizing."

"An election will hang it up," said Mack. "We have heard that ever since we've been negotiating, and we know there's a possibility things could change."

And what could make the issue worse for Maa-nulth is if the Conservatives lose.

"If there's a new government in place, a treaty isn't a top priority for a federal government," said Cootes.

By Shari Narine



Photo credit: Ha-Shilth-Sa/Denise Titian

Toquaht hereditary chief Tyee Ha'wilth Bert Mack gives the thumbs up at the signing ceremony of the Maa-nulth Final Agreement in Ucluelet on July 22. Beside him is Mike de Jong, B.C.'s minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation.

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Governance and economic development

By Lee Ahenakew and Satsan

This is the first of four articles to explore key drivers for economic development, including governance, corporate partnerships, entrepreneurship and infrastructure. The articles are co-authored by experts in these fields.

Good governance is the number one contributor to the economic success of any state in the world. The Harvard Study on Native American Economic Development also found that “practical sovereignty” and “formal and informal mechanisms of governance and societal control” were the most important factors for Native American Tribes to be successful in economic and social development.

Recent Supreme Court of Canada decisions have clearly recognized Aboriginal and treaty rights and called for proper and meaningful consultation and accommodation regarding those rights. This recognition has made effective and efficient governance more critical than ever for communities to realize opportunities for wealth creation as a result of development on traditional lands.

In 1997, the Delgamuukw/Giday’wa Supreme Court decision affirmed that Aboriginal title has an inescapable economic component. Over a decade later, First Nations are just starting to translate that “economic component” into wealth from accommodation agreements.

Aboriginal title flows from inherent and treaty rights, which are collective rights owned by all members of an Aboriginal community.†

It takes well-organized governance to turn the will of the people into economic opportunities made possible through Delgamuukw/Giday’wa and other related Supreme Court of Canada decisions. Getting organized is the biggest barrier to realizing those opportunities.

Communities and their leadership must realize they have effectively re-gained jurisdiction to their territories in the context of their Aboriginal and treaty rights.

Exercising jurisdiction requires First Nations to develop, for example, land use plans and land management plans for their entire traditional territory in order to properly engage the Crown for proper consultation and accommodation.

It is critical that Aboriginal governments realize they do not have to negotiate for rights

any more. They just need to decide what their vision is for the future and to develop and organize government structures to effectively and efficiently exercise their jurisdiction.

Until Aboriginal governments organize, it is likely that provincial and federal governments will not properly enact the duty to consult and accommodate to the full extent required by Supreme Court of Canada rulings.

A recent example is the 2004 BC Supreme Court ruling against the Minister of Forests, in favour of the Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs and Gitanyow First Nation regarding the change of ownership of a forestry license.

The minister did not satisfy his duty to First Nations, of proper consultation and accommodation, before he consented to the change in control of a forestry license in Gitanyow’s traditional territory.

Aboriginal communities must be well organized to influence provincial and federal governments to live up to Supreme Court of Canada decisions.

The most important step for communities to organize for good governance is to determine what they want. This should begin by engaging community members for input on what they want their governance structures and systems to look like and what they want their government to do.

Governments need to reflect language, traditions, spirituality and homelands. Aboriginal inherent rights are collective rights and belong to the people. You can’t have a vision without going to the people to define what they

want to do with their land, society and economy.

If the community shapes what its governance will look like then their government will succeed because the community will have ownership in the governance structures, laws, policies and systems that are put into place because it is based on their collective vision.

A recent trend is the development of constitutions, which reflect a community’s values and traditions. Constitutions form the basis for development of governance structures and systems. It is the most advanced expression of how a community wishes to be governed.

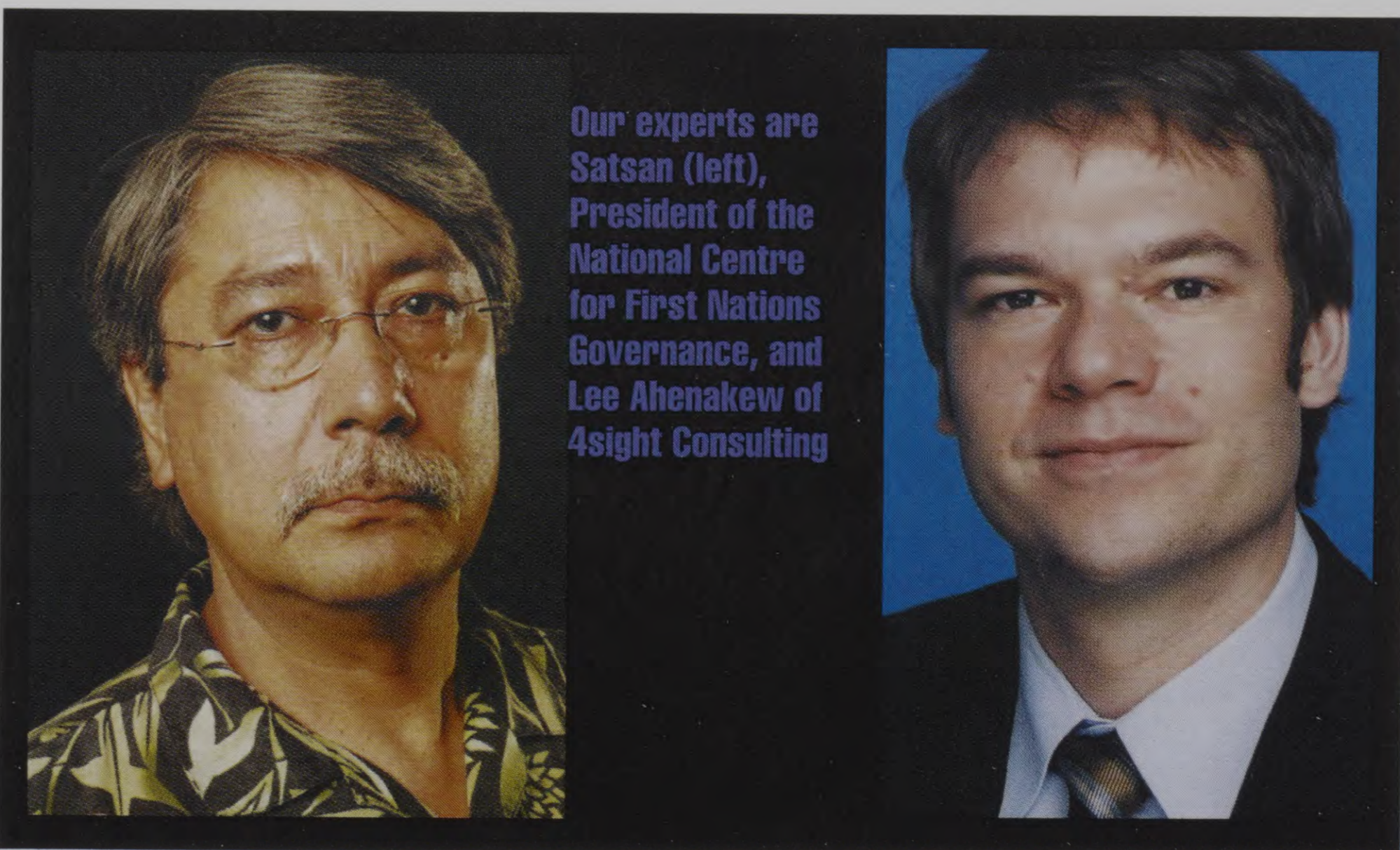
A surprising number of First Nation communities are working on constitutions, perhaps as high as 50 per cent.

The Indian Act system has created barriers to engaging First Nation community members, because they are used to councils administering the Indian Act and Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC) policies which have not improved their quality of life.

Community gatherings based on the Indian Act create low participation because people don’t trust meetings based on the Indian Act. However, community gatherings based in the context of their own culture and traditions will receive support.

It is important to realize that administering the Indian Act and INAC policies does not equate to exercising the inherent right to governance.

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Our experts are Satsan (left), President of the National Centre for First Nations Governance, and Lee Ahenakew of 4sight Consulting

go hand in glove

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Moving beyond the Indian Act to effective and efficient governance based on inherent rights is an enormous challenge because the Indian Act presents ominous barriers to good governance.

Communities are so busy just trying to survive under the Indian Act that they don't have the time to devote to achieving higher levels of governance. The government, through the department of Indian Affairs, has the power and creates policies that First Nations must try to survive under. It takes a mental shift and a high level of commitment for the leadership of a community to step outside of the reserve boundary and the Indian Act to assert their inherent rights.

Another barrier to achieving successful governance is that there is not a full understanding of the nature and content of Aboriginal and treaty rights. Communities have been forced to live under the Indian Act for so long the true meaning of Aboriginal and treaty rights is becoming difficult to define.

If communities do not know what these rights really mean it will be difficult for them to support their government, which is trying to assert those rights. It is crucial for people to understand the true meaning of these rights.

To maintain the healthy growth of the Canadian economy, all parties must recognize the pre-existing sovereignty of First Nations and the rights that have been gained through Supreme Court of Canada decisions.

The Supreme Court of Canada has repeatedly called for reconciliation, in their own words, "between the pre-existing sovereignty of First Nations and the assumed sovereignty of the Crown" through direct relationships between the Crown and First Nations at the highest level of government, "at the strategic level of government".

The way forward is for First Nations to achieve meaningful and respectful participation in the resource, energy infrastructure and commercial sectors of the overall Canadian economy.

Many non-Aboriginal Canadians fear the creation of this third order of government. However, aspects of our economy are paralyzed right now because Aboriginal and treaty rights have not been respected.

Canadians and companies doing business in Canada will benefit from recognizing Aboriginal and treaty rights and dealing with strong Aboriginal governments that exercise their inherent rights.† Clear governance structures and practices will provide comfort and access to resources from those who want to develop projects on Aboriginal communities' traditional territories. Canadians at large will benefit from the spin-offs of these projects.

Aboriginal communities have a tremendous opportunity to benefit from being organized to realize their substantive right to proper and meaningful consultation and accommodation and the inescapable economic component of Aboriginal and treaty rights.

Communities can re-invest the wealth gained from the inescapable economic component of their rights into education of their children, the health of the people, and re-building the structures of their nations.

Strong, independent and organized Aboriginal governments will result in private sector projects proceeding. Aboriginal participation in these projects will create wealth and self-sufficiency for communities that have been dependent on wealth transfer from other Canadians for too long.

All Canadians have a vested interest in Aboriginal communities fully developing their forms of governance.

By Lee Ahenakew and Satsan

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