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The Changing Face of Canada

Canada's Aboriginal population has broken the one-million mark. A total of 1,172,790 people reported Aboriginal identity either as First Nation, Métis or Inuit.

For more information about the 2006 Census final report turn to page 11.

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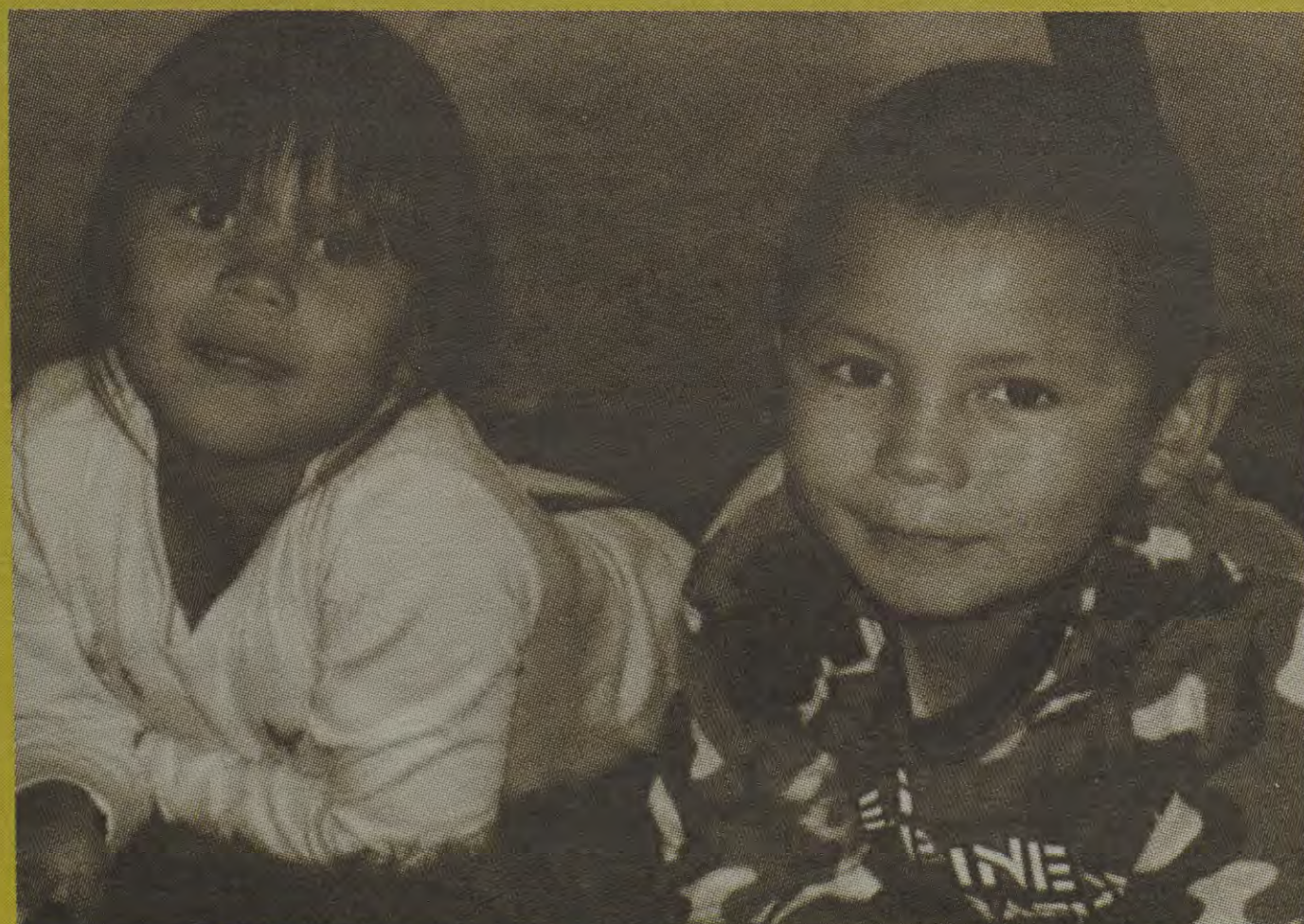
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Canada

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Police and coroner the focus of inquiry 8

The Frank Paul Inquiry is in phase two with the focus on the response of the Vancouver Police department and the B.C. Coroners Service, but their response is something the Aboriginal participants say they already know. Now they want justice and change.

Ipperwash Park returned to local First Nations 9

It's not very often that land gets restored to Aboriginal people, especially land on the shores of Lake Huron that was a popular provincial park. But just before Christmas, Ontario Aboriginal Affairs Minister Michael Bryant travelled to southwestern Ontario to announce that Ipperwash Provincial Park would be returned to the Kettle and Stony Point First Nations.

Métis delegates are determined to have election 10

Months without a president of the Métis National Council (MNC), two court interventions and a general assembly gone wrong, yet Métis delegates are determined they will have an election this February.

Report doesn't include what school has to offer 12

"We are a school that I am proud of," asserts the principal of Toronto's First Nations School, Wayne Kodje. He has been leading the school for the past eight years. The school got its 15 minutes of fame when the Safety Schools Report was released in January. The report looks at the issue of safety in over 400 Toronto schools. Kodje's school ranked lowest out of all the schools.

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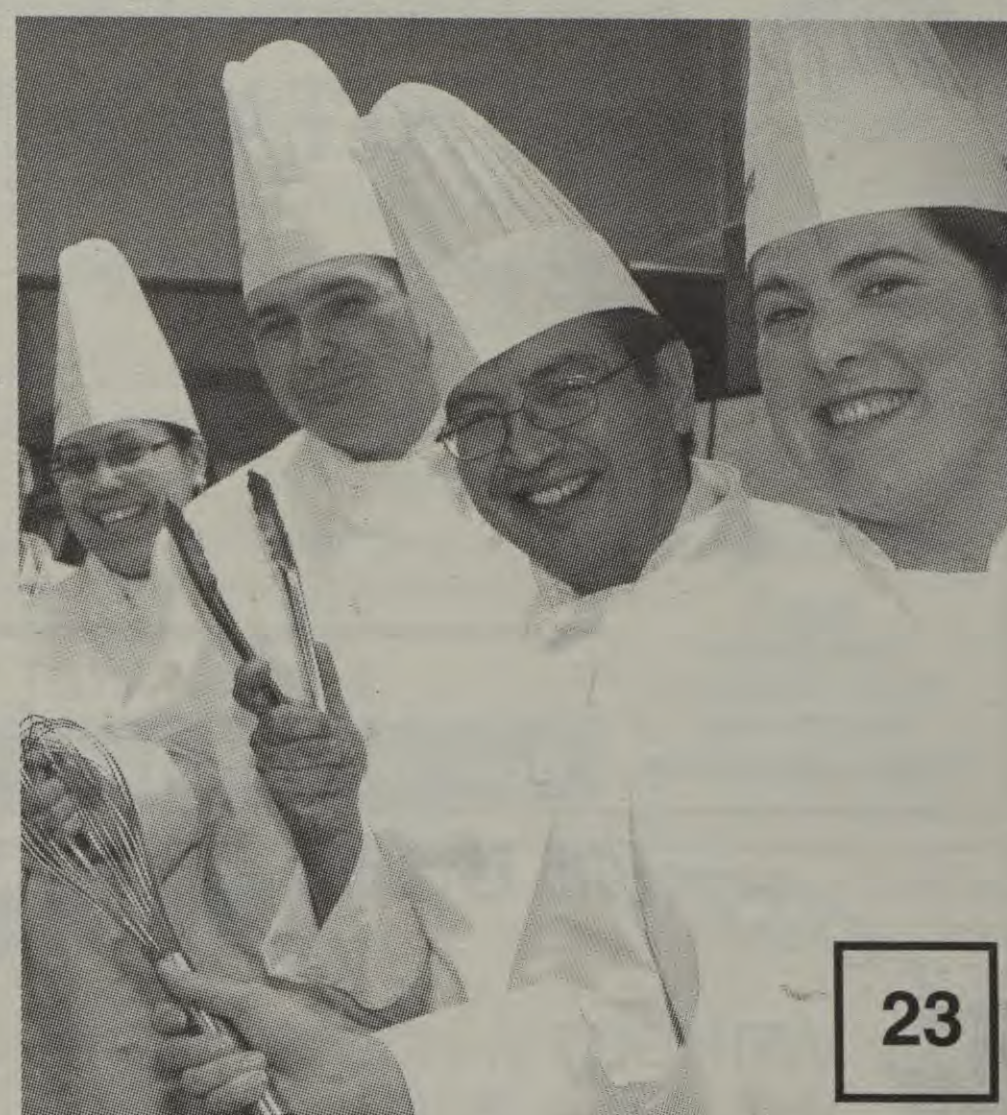
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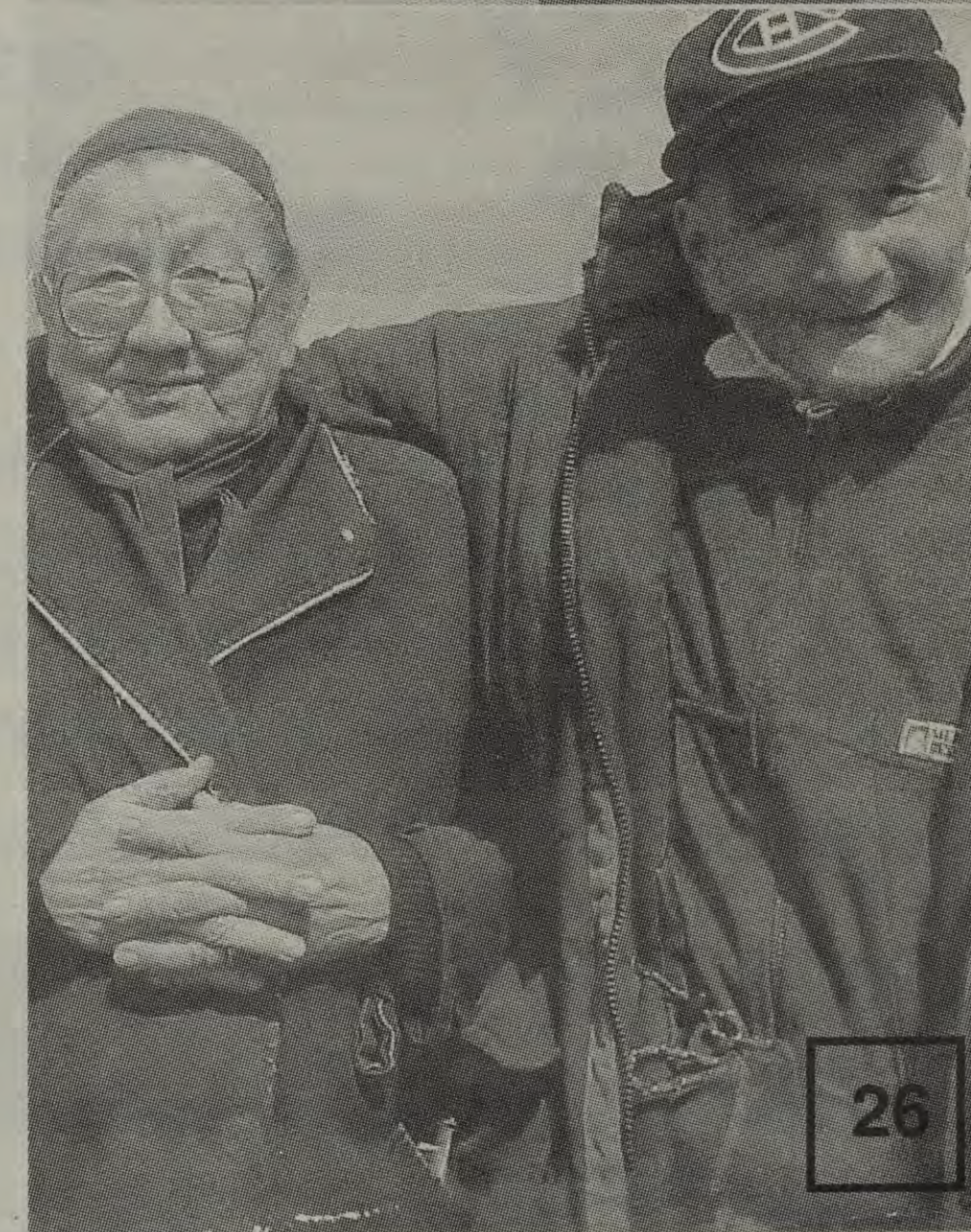
On Nov. 28, 2007 the members of Saskatchewan's Lac La Ronge Indian Band (LLRIB) suffered a great loss when former chief James Miles Venne passed away.



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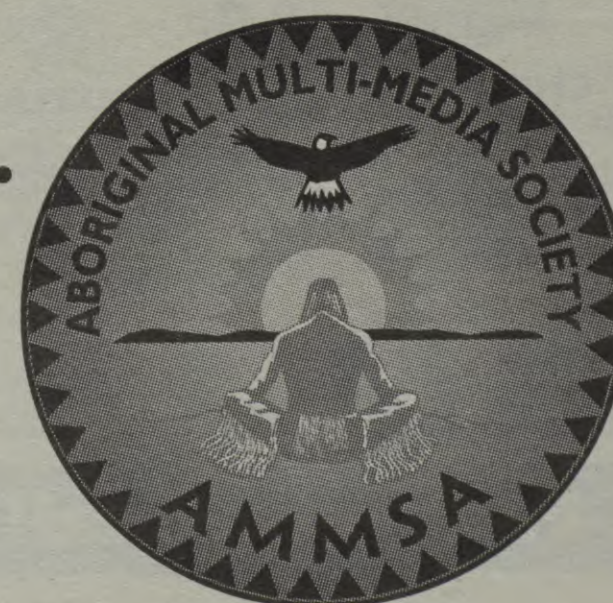
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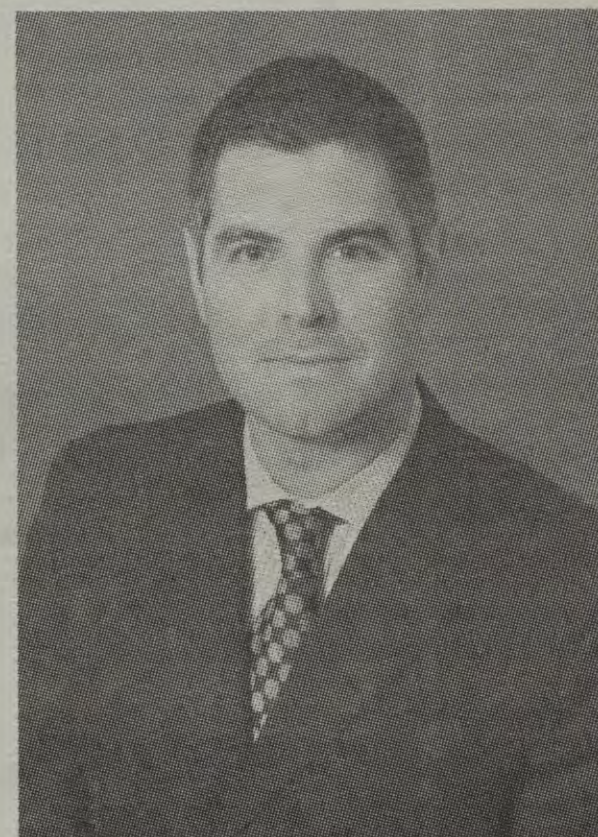
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— Appointment Announcement —

Messrs Ron Jamieson and Garry Knox, Co-Chairs of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) are pleased to announce the appointment of Clint Davis as President and CEO.

Clint was most recently the National Director of Aboriginal Banking for BMO Bank of Montreal. In that position, he was responsible for growing the business by providing exceptional service and products that met the unique needs of the Aboriginal community. Clint holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Acadia University, a Bachelor of Laws from Dalhousie University and a Masters of Public Administration from Harvard University. He is a Canada/US Fulbright scholar and a recipient of two scholarships from the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation.



Headquartered in Toronto, CCAB is a national non-profit organization that provides corporate Canada with the tools and resources to access Aboriginal people as partners, employees, and customers. Funded entirely by corporate patrons and members, its mission is to promote the full participation of Aboriginal people, businesses and communities in Canada's economy, through programs such as Circle for 2015 for networking; Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR), helping companies benchmark their work with the Aboriginal community; The Business Development Institute (BDI), which brings leaders from corporate Canada and Aboriginal communities together to develop strategic partnerships and develop business opportunities; and the Foundation for the Advancement of Aboriginal Youth (FAAY), a scholarship and bursary program dedicated to developing the next generation of Aboriginal leaders.

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Politics by numbers

As any good statistician will tell you, numbers can be interpreted in a variety of ways, depending on just what point you want to use them to make. Take, for instance, the report released on Jan. 15 that provides a statistical snapshot of Canada's Aboriginal people based on the results of the 2006 census.

According to the report, Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Metis and First Nations, Canada's Aboriginal population grew by 45 per cent between 1996 and 2006. During that same time period, the non-Aboriginal population only increased by eight per cent. The numbers in the report also show that the Aboriginal population is younger than the non-Aboriginal population, with 48 per cent of the Aboriginal population in 2006 comprised of people 24 and under, while in the non-Aboriginal population, only 31 per cent of the population fell into this age range.

While these statistics may be new, the picture they paint of a young and quickly-growing Aboriginal Canada certainly isn't. For years, Aboriginal youth have been touted as "the fastest-growing demographic group in Canada". Aboriginal youth, it's been stated time and time again, are the answer to the labour shortage that will be caused as Baby Boomers across the country reach retirement age. It's a labour shortage everyone is expecting, and given the fact that there are so many young Aboriginal people in Canada today, and that the number of young Aboriginal people is expected to continue to increase, tapping into the Aboriginal youth labour pool makes a lot of sense.

Many organizations have already recognized that attracting Aboriginal youth today to prepare them to become tomorrow's workers is a smart thing to do. Unions have set up Aboriginal apprenticeship programs. Big businesses have set up summer training programs for Aboriginal youth. But when it comes to making sure the funds are there for Aboriginal students to pursue post-secondary education so they can be prepared to take advantage of the opportunities that the future holds, the federal government doesn't seem to read the same meaning into the numbers.

In 1996, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) instituted a two per cent cap on funding for core programs, including education, and that cap is still in place, despite repeat calls by Aboriginal leaders for funding to be increased. The Kelowna Accord was supposed to work to close the gap between Aboriginal Canada and non-Aboriginal Canada in a number of areas, including education attainment, but those plans died with a whimper following the last federal election.

Report after report has talked about the importance of investing in the educational futures of Aboriginal youth - about how such an investment will not only ease the coming labour shortage, but will also provide Aboriginal youth with a chance for a better standard of living and a better quality of life. But still, when it comes to its funding of Aboriginal education, the feds get a failing grade.

Another set of statistics included in the recent Stats Can report is also open to interpretation. For the glass half-full crowd, the 2006 statistics can paint a rosy picture on the housing front. Numbers in the report show that, between 1996 and 2006, the number of Aboriginal people living in crowded homes declined by six per cent. The glass half empty view of those same figures? The number of Aboriginal people living in a crowded home, at 11 per cent, was still almost four times the rate recorded among the non-Aboriginal community.

Want another example of how statistical interpretation is in the eye of the beholder? Again on the topic of housing, the 2006 census information indicates that the number of Aboriginal people living in homes requiring major repairs remained unchanged. On the surface, that stat would appear to be more neutral than positive or negative. Except when you consider that it means nearly 25 per cent of Aboriginal people in Canada live in substandard housing, and that the situation hasn't improved in more than a decade. Now that's a statistic the federal government should be proud of.

Leaders overlook Aboriginal issues

Dear Editor:

I understand the frustration that Native governments are experiencing, with a new group representing and conversing for the federal government on issues affecting all Natives across Canada.

I am convinced that, with groups vying for federal attention regarding controlling interests of Indians, the only outcome that could arise is just a lot of political turmoil across all regions of the major Indian tribes (with a lot of casualties). This could be utterly devastating to the structure of a whole wide range of governing groups.

Who is to actually understand the history of the Indian people that have been here in Canada?

There are many different reserves that are all grouped in treaty numbers. Chiefs and council all across the provinces are skillfully trying to dodge politically shameful terms.

From their own band members damaging tales are kept quiet, either paying them off or by making things easier for those that keep them in positions of power, with no regard for (or understanding of) the underlying issues affecting Natives throughout all reserve communities.

Now, Indians who have fled those situations to reside in towns and cities across Canada are slowly losing their way of life, and yet on the other hand developing a different culture all together.

Of course, an Indian surviving in the rural and urban communities has the same if not more problems keeping young Natives from falling victim to the massive social trends while still identifying themselves as Aboriginal. The only way to identify Indians is those who have status and those with Métis status.

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) is probably something that is needed and with a fresh face-National Chief Patrick Brazeau-who will actually accomplish political Indian objectives (whatever they are).

A lot better than relying on an Indian government (AFN and FSIN) who disregard that Native people are tired of playing the spoiled victim and receiving, in most cases, nothing concrete from the media standpoint that creates a pride to even be an Indian in Canada.

Mostly these governing groups just whine to the federal government and then when monies have been received the interest in the Indian public sector is easily forgotten. Funny how federal monies make even a national chief forget his own people. Similarly, drug addicted mothers do the same.

The people of Native origins are being left to fend for themselves. The people that are actual Indians, who are not status and have no Métis Card, far outweigh the political and social capabilities.

Having a political representative to represent them such as CAP is extremely honourable and I hope that with their connection to the federal government and Stephen Harper that they prosper in all their endeavors.

Sincerely,
Jeremy B.

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or a rant?
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[rants and raves] Economic growth can shape future

Dear Editor:

There has been a lot of talk from Native Leaders about expanding the economic base for Native people, both on and off reserve. Wise, profitable business acquisitions are the keys to more prosperity for all. But, let us not forget that such acquisitions should meet the needs of all communities, which should provide jobs and serve the common good, as First Nations head into self-sufficiency.

Natural resources, tourism and computer sciences surely are strong contenders for investments. The most profitable investment however, will be the investment made into the children. Acquisitions of profitable and accessible treatment centres, group care homes, child care facilities and schools, should be considered where band members can work, teach and help youngsters heal and prepare for a more prosperous future.

Employment for adults and Elders and taking an active role in shaping the future for children has to be the most rewarding investment of all.

Sincerely,
Kenneth H. Young

Embracing our Métis rights

Dear Editor:

Recently, there have been numerous victories within the courts affirming our Métis rights to hunt fish and trap. The Powley, Belhumeur, and Laviolette decisions have shown us how irrelevant provincial boundaries are to our hunting traditions. But some governments continue to argue these are limits with great significance.

These borders are just lines on a map with no real substance and cannot be used to divide our people or deny our rights.

As I have said before, we are born with our rights; the government never gave them to us. I also say that, no matter where our Métis live, whether it is north, south, east or west, our Métis rights apply to us all.

Recently, Alberta wildlife officers have ticketed several Métis for illegal hunting, which has set the stage for a new court battle over our right to hunt and fish and trap for food year-round without a license.

Saskatchewan Métis have just won a similar legal fight and final arguments have been heard last month in a Manitoba Métis hunting rights case.

I expect that the respective governments will appeal, and attempt to further tie up the courts in the recognition of our inherent rights.

The Métis have a track record of winning such legal battles, but we would prefer to negotiate long-term harvesting agreements rather than wrangle in court. It is unfortunate we have to go this route, however, we will defend our people.

Once in court, we will again prove there is lots of evidence that Métis have rights. We have won before and we will win again.

We are a nation of people. The declaration of our nationhood, the raising of our infinity flag, and our legal, political and military battles are the historic foundations upon which we will build our future.

Remain Métis, now, and more than ever.

Sincerely,
Trevor W. Gladue
Provincial Vice President
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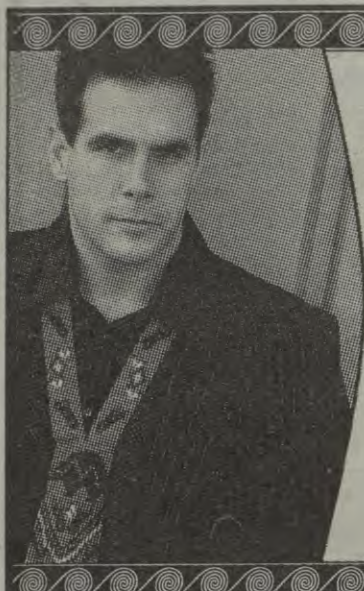


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Canada

PUBLIC HEARING ANNOUNCEMENT

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

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 April 14, 2008 at the address below and include a written submission; a statement setting out whether the requester wishes to intervene by way of written submission only or by way of written submission and oral presentation; and the name, address and telephone number of the requester.

Hearing documents (submissions) are not available on-line and must be requested through the Secretariat at the address below. For more information, instructions on how to participate in this public hearing process or the complete text of the official Notice of Public Hearing, see www.nuclearsafety.gc.ca, and refer to Notice of Public Hearing 2008-H-02, or contact:

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Windspeaker news briefs

Court agrees to new trial for Ahenakew

In a decision released January 14, three judges with the Court of Appeal for Saskatchewan dismissed the Crown's appeal and upheld a lower court ruling that David Ahenakew from Sandy Lake can have a new trial.

Court of Queen's Bench Justice Robert Laing ruled the trial judge, Marty Irwin, erred in his July 8, 2005 decision when he failed to take into account evidence suggesting Ahenakew did not intend to promote hatred when he made racial comments about Jewish people. He gave a speech to a group on Dec. 13, 2002 and referred to "goddamn immigrants." Ahenakew went on to give his opinion that Israel and the United States were going to start the next world war. Soon after his speech the StarPhoenix reporter James Parker asked Ahenakew to clarify his statements that "while serving in the army after the war, Germans had told him the Jews had started the war. Ahenakew was quoted saying, "The Jews damn near owned all of Germany prior to the war...That's how Hitler came in. He was going to make damn sure that the Jews didn't take over Germany or Europe. That's why he fried six million of those guys, you know. Jews would have owned the goddamned world. And look what they're doing. They're killing people in Arab countries."

Ahenakew later apologized and said the remarks did not represent his beliefs and that he was caught up in the heat of the moment, but was convicted of willfully promoting hatred against Jews and was fined \$1,000. Ahenakew appealed the decision.

Ahenakew served in the Canadian Forces from 1951 to 1967, where he was stationed in Germany, Korea and Egypt.

Parker is a journalist with CBC in Regina. At the time of the interview with Ahenakew, he was a reporter with the Saskatoon StarPhoenix newspaper.

Ahenakew's lawyer claimed his client's statements were made on impulse and in response to questions during the confrontational interview. In Ahenakew's testimony, he also told Parker he didn't want to argue about "the Jews" and walked away from the interview after three minutes.

The Court of Appeal agreed such relevant evidence should have been considered during the trial.

Crown prosecutor Dean Sinclair said he is still reviewing the court's decision and does not know if abandoning a second trial is an option.

After many requests from Jewish groups and Aboriginal groups, the Governor General revoked Ahenakew's membership in the Order of Canada on July 11, 2005. He received this prestigious honour in 1978 for his work in advancing Native education.

Commission hearings to hear from both parties

The AFN's National Chief met with Catholic Bishops in Ottawa at the end of January, but there were no apologies or promises of justice coming from the bishops for any of the offenses committed in residential schools against Aboriginal people.

From approximately 1870 to the late 1970's, churches and governments took Aboriginal children away from their families and communities and sent them to residential schools to train and learn the Christian and western European language. Many of the children were beaten and sexually abused.

In 2007, the government approved the 1.9 billion dollar compensation payout for the estimated 80,000 surviving students of the residential school system run by the Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and the United Church.

Reportedly, the Catholic Bishops are hoping "both sides" of the residential school story will be told at the impending Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings. There will be Commission hearings held across Canada over the next five years to hear from residential school survivors, churches and the government.

Last year, Parliament apologized to the First Nation people, but the federal government has not. Last October, Prime Minister Stephen Harper promised in his throne speech to launch the commission for truth and reconciliation and to make a statement of apology to close this sad chapter in our history. Fontaine is quoted saying Aboriginal people want to be involved in the drafting of the apology, but have yet to be asked.

Fontaine is setting up cross-Canada meetings with the churches over the next couple months to let people know along with the churches, what the commission goals are.

There hasn't been any actual meeting dates announced, but Fontaine hopes to speak in Ottawa, Vancouver, Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The commission is in the process of selecting a chairperson and two commissioners. More than 300 applicants have come forward for the job.

Police and coroner the focus of inquiry

By MARIE BURKE
Windspeaker Staff Writer

VANCOUVER

The Frank Paul Inquiry is in phase two with the focus on the response of the Vancouver Police department and the B.C. Coroners Service, but their response is something the Aboriginal participants say they already know. Now they want justice and change.

"Justice, would be us revealing everything that happened to Frank Paul from the moment he died right up until this point where we are having an inquiry into his death and make the recommendations that would evolve out of this report," said Dan David, vice president of the United Native Nations (UNN).

According to David, the UNN is the first organization to file a complaint with the police about how Frank Paul died in 2002.

The inquiry started in November 2007 with phase one to provide the Paul family with a complete record of the circumstances of his death. Phase three and four of the inquiry will be about current health care and social services and current rules, policies and procedures of public bodies in Vancouver.

"The interesting part is what's coming up. One that the UNN wanted to be part of as a participant to help shape the terms of reference for the inquiry and obviously it was everything that happened after Frank Paul was found dead in the alley," said David.

"The past ten years since Paul died have been nothing but a cover up by the police and the Attorney General of B.C.," said David.

Frank Paul a 47-year-old from Big Cove First Nation, New Brunswick was found dead on Vancouver's downtown eastside in December 1998 after being dropped off by police the night before when temperatures dropped below zero.

Paul's immediate family who live in Big Cove were told by police several versions of how he died including that he was a victim of a hit and run. The family didn't know he was in police custody at the time of or shortly before his death.

David has many questions about why there wasn't an inquest with regards to how the Crown Counsel and the Coroners' Service handled the investigation into the death of Paul. Yet, ultimately he said, they

want police policies on how Aboriginal people are treated to be changed for once and for all.

"We feel that of the 45 or 48 deaths that we are aware of over the last 30 years that a good majority of them have even deeper story lines than Frank Paul at this point. He is just representing only one of many, many deaths in custody," said David.

"The UNN wants to shine the light on many other cases where Aboriginal people have died in custody after this inquiry is over to show that it is a systemic thing," said David.

The UNN is conducting its own investigation into how many police in-custody deaths there may be by asking Elders and other traditional peoples in their areas to remember instances where relatives died in custody without explanation.

"The hard thing for us to establish in a court of law is 'Are you racist?'" said David. His concern is about young people unaware of their rights who continue to face emotional and physical abuse from police. He said right now Aboriginal people don't have the tools to fight back and reshape the relationship between Aboriginal people and the police.

When *Windspeaker* asked if the lack of resources in Vancouver's eastside contributed to why Paul died, David pointed to the legal undertaking that police have.

"Convenient obviously to their interest, that would be true. Quite clearly the Aboriginal people, our people that live in the Downtown Eastside are completely underserved. There is no housing and health services are third world. The fact that they are excusing that and saying that Frank Paul was a victim of his own circumstances, completely untrue, the police officers that were in control of Mr. Paul had a legal duty and a legal obligation of care and they flouted that obligation and it didn't result in any criminal charges," said David.

Two years after Paul's death, two Vancouver police officers were given one and two-day suspensions. One was charged with discreditable conduct and the other for neglect of duty.

In Vancouver the phrase "breaching outside the area" is quoted by the Sergeant on duty at the city jail in his instructions to the police wagon driver that took Paul's motionless body out

of the cell that night. Jail surveillance videotape released by Dirk Ryneveld, police complaint commissioner for Vancouver to the Paul family reveals Paul was dragged in from the jail in a "helpless state" into the police wagon.

Breaching outside the area means to take the person in custody to an undisclosed location and leave him or her there alone. In Saskatoon, this is known as "starlight tours" and that came to light during the Neil Stonechild inquiry, which took more than 10 years to materialize.

In 2000, Darrell Night said he was thrown out of a police cruiser on the outskirts of the city on Jan. 28, when the temperature had dipped to a chilly -23 C.

Soon after, the bodies of two other Aboriginal men who had frozen to death were found in the same area.

Night's complaints about his treatment lead to the creation of an RCMP task force and to unlawful confinement convictions against two Saskatoon police officers who later lost their jobs.

Former officers, Dan Hatchen and Ken Munson were given eight-month jail sentences.

Shortly after, the province announced a public inquiry into the 1990 freezing death of 17-year-old Neil Stonechild, whose body was found on the edge of Saskatoon.

"It is becoming more and more apparent that Frank Paul died while in police custody. Police policing and investigating themselves is colonialist in nature and built to fail for our people and the poor," said Kat Norris with the Indigenous Action Movement.

Norris is also concerned about the crown's request for immunity and the legitimacy of the justice system.

"Should Canada's law enforcement get away with yet another death of one of our people in custody?" she asked. Society needs to wake up to the reality that we are Indigenous people of this continent. "In fact, we should continue to battle legally sanctioned systemic racism and genocide," she said.

"The outcome of the inquiry is to create recommendations that should lead to a healthier relationship with police and more First Nations inclusion."

A final report to the Attorney General is expected to be released by May 31, 2008.

Have something to say about articles in this issue?
Email the editor: edwind@ammsa.com

Ipperwash Park returned to local First Nations

By KATE HARRIES
Windspeaker Writer

LAKE HURON

It's not very often that land gets restored to Aboriginal people, especially land on the shores of Lake Huron that was a popular provincial park.

But just before Christmas, Ontario Aboriginal Affairs Minister Michael Bryant travelled to southwestern Ontario to announce that Ipperwash Provincial Park would be returned to the Kettle and Stony Point First Nations.

The land where Dudley George was shot and killed fighting for Aboriginal rights will again be in the care of its original occupants.

For Dudley's brother Sam, no other outcome was acceptable.

"It's a big honour to my brother's memory," he said. "The return of the land to the people, it carried for me a whole lot of weight in the healing process."

"The achievement was all the more historic because governments don't like to right a wrong by returning land, he said. "But in this case we did get it — instead of a cheque."

The 100-acre park, once the beachfront of the Stony Point reserve and the site of an ancient burial ground, was surrendered in suspicious circumstances in 1928. It was sold to the provincial government by a speculator in 1936, after local residents had agitated for a park by the lake.

The federal government took the rest of the 2,200-acre reserve for use as a army training camp in 1942, forcibly relocating the Stony Point people to nearby Kettle Point, creating resentment and economic hardship for both communities.

In 1993, exasperated by the government's refusal to return the reserve, Dudley George and some Stony Point community members moved onto the base and gave it its original name, Aazhoozena. On Sept. 4, 1995, a small group moved into the park to highlight concerns about the burial ground. Police responded with a stunning show of force two days later, and Dudley George was

fatally shot by an Ontario Provincial Police officer.

The death of the 38-year-old, known to his friends as a prankster and a joker, would have been swept under the carpet if the provincial Conservative government of the time, headed by premier Mike Harris, had prevailed.

Sam George was equally determined that his younger brother not be forgotten.

"In the beginning, all we asked them to do was tell the truth," he testified at the inquiry called by the Liberal government that defeated the Harris Tories in 2003.

Instead, there had been many lies. A few examples: The province denied there had ever been a burial ground. But the information was readily found in a search of government files.

Harris and his ministers denied the premier had said, hours before George died, that he wanted the "f—ing Indians out of the Park." The inquiry established that he had.

Police testimony that Dudley was armed was "clearly fabricated and implausible," said a judge who convicted Acting Sergeant Kenneth Deane of criminal negligence causing death.

An OPP release the day after the shooting — never withdrawn until the inquiry — said police reacted after a group of First Nations people armed with baseball bats damaged a private citizen's car, and also that police were fired on by Aboriginal occupiers — two lies that festered in the public consciousness for almost a decade.

The return of the park wasn't one of the recommendations of Ipperwash Commissioner Sidney Linden, although he said it would be a good idea, albeit one fraught with complications.

Among those complications is the rift between the Kettle and Stony Point First Nation and the residents of Aazhoozena, who have held both the park and the army camp for more than a decade. The Aazhoozena group opposes the former reserve lands going to the integrated First

Nation and favours a disentanglement of the affairs of the two communities. But other Stony Point families, after 65 years of living at Kettle Point, disagree.

Another issue involves relations with non-Aboriginal neighbours, who are keen for the park to re-open and bring tourism business to the area. The park has remained closed to the public since Dudley's death.

Bryant's plan involves an interim stage where the park is co-managed by the government, the First Nation and nearby communities.

At present, the two sides are waiting for provincially appointed mediator Jim Thomas, a former deputy minister of labour, to convene the first meeting.

Yet another problem is the need for the park to go back to the federal government if it is to be reconstituted as part of the reserve.

A spokesperson for the department of Indian affairs said it is ready to participate in any discussion between the province and the First Nation (As for the army camp, it was ostensibly returned by the federal government in 1998, but still hasn't been handed over because toxic materials and unexploded ordinance still have to be cleaned up.)

It's been a long road for Sam George, and another stretch lies ahead.

"Sam understands there are huge complications in returning the land," said Klippenstein. "I don't think he feels stress — he's got the firm commitment of the province."

Meanwhile Sam is working with the Chiefs of Ontario in preparation for an Ipperwash implementation committee that the province is setting up.

"It's exciting to see things happening from the report," he said.

A stand alone ministry of Aboriginal affairs is in place already, the park is being returned and "everyone is working hard on the other recommendations," said George.

Windspeaker news briefs Maa-nulth treaty awaits feds approval

The Ditidaht First Nation is seeking exclusive title over some Maa-nulth treaty lands, and sections of national and provincial parks in a statement of claim filed with the B.C. Supreme Court.

In the statement, the Ditidaht claim the provincial and federal governments failed to properly and meaningfully consult in respect with the Maa-nulth First Nations Treaty. Teal Cedar Products and Western Forest Products are also named in the suit.

The Ditidaht are looking for exclusive Aboriginal title to the areas of infringement, and a huge part of the West Coast Trail inside the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, the Carmanah and Walbran Provincial parks. The current treaty breaches their traditional territory say the Ditidaht.

Located on the west coast of Vancouver Island, the Ditidaht First Nations state they have continually advised federal and provincial governments that the decisions they were making ignored Aboriginal rights and titles along with economic benefits from their traditional territories.

The Maa-nulth Final Agreement was signed in December 2006, but the federal and provincial governments initiated talks in what is being called after the fact consultation. The treaty will take effect once all parties ratify the agreement. So far the province and the Maa-nulth has ratified it; the federal government has still to approve.

New money will help develop Inuit research

Future challenges to the health and well-being of northerners may be addressed by the very people being affected by them, health and environment researchers hope.

A recent \$1.76 million grant to the Nasivvik Centre, an initiative co-directed by Trent and Laval Universities in Ontario, will develop expertise among Inuit and other young researchers to address health and environmental issues in the Arctic.

"This grant will be used to strengthen training among graduate students and among Inuit," said Dr. Chris Furgal, a cross-appointed professor at Trent University in environment and resource studies and Indigenous studies and co-director of the Nasivvik Centre.

Working closely with Inuit leaders, community representatives, and students in both the north and south, the centre will use the funds in its goal to move along the spectrum from research on Inuit, to research with Inuit and ultimately to research by Inuit, Professor Furgal said.

Historically, almost all Arctic research had been directed by southern-based scientists. This grant will ensure Inuit will become more engaged in taking control of research being done in their own area, on their own land.

A specific objective of this injection of funds includes enabling Inuit organizations and communities to identify key research needs and priorities in the areas of food, water, and traditional and natural medicines and remedies.

Another grant use involves establishing a fund and process for north-south research mentoring and knowledge exchange between Inuit youth and community members and university-based researchers. It will also provide student scholarships, and support innovative research projects and the sharing of new knowledge via the creation of innovative and accessible resources for arctic researchers and communities — all in the area of northern health and environment.

Partnership will lead to job opportunities

A partnership between Klahoose First Nation and Plutonic Power Corporation will lead to trade and technical training for community members. The turn-key 250-man construction camp to be built to support construction work in the Toba Valley will provide the First Nations in the area with trade training and business opportunity in the culinary arts. The camp will support construction of Plutonic's flagship East Toba River Montrose Creek run-of-river hydroelectric project. The 660 million dollar project has the potential to generate enough energy for about 550,000 homes and create 4,500 person years of employment.

Along with students from the Klahoose First Nation, whose traditional territory the project is taking place on, students from the Powell River School District will also benefit from the camp. The campsite is being set up as a culinary arts program through the Malaspina University-College where students work and learn. All students receive on-the-job training, a salary and classroom theory to eventually receive their "red seal" in trades training.

Dene Tha' wins in Court

The Federal Court of Appeal handed down their decision to dismiss Canada's appeal of the Dene Tha' First Nation v. Canada decision.

The ruling from the November 2006 hearing states the Government of Canada failed in carrying out its basic constitutional duties in establishing the environmental and regulatory review process for the Mackenzie Gas Project without consulting the Dene Tha'.

In a statement released by Dene Tha' the First Nation announced

it is pleased with Justice Phelan's decision in 2006 that confirms the Dene Tha' long-held view that the Crown must consult First Nations when establishing environmental and regulatory review processes.

Dene Tha' Chief James Ahnassay states his nation continues to be frustrated, however, with the Government of Alberta's refusal to make a meaningful consultation with the Dene Tha' and other First Nations in Alberta.

The northern First Nation

asserts that the Alberta government approves projects every year that adversely affect and infringe the hunting and gas projects, trapping, fishing and gathering right of First Nations where little or no consultation takes place.

The Dene Tha' want the Alberta government to scrap their unconstitutional consultation guidelines and sit down with the Dene Tha' and other First Nations in Alberta to negotiate a jointly acceptable consultation process.

Métis delegates determined to have election

By **MARIE BURKE**
Windspeaker Staff Writer

EDMONTON

Months without a president of the Métis National Council (MNC), two court interventions and a general assembly gone wrong, yet Métis delegates are determined they will have an election this February.

"Definitely, there will be an election on February 23," there's no question about it," said Tony Belcourt, president of the Métis Nation of Ontario.

Legal battles have plagued the MNC with another court order released this January outlining their February assembly election. Belcourt said there are also unsettled lawsuits by Clem Chartier former president of the MNC against the MNC for a reported \$300,000.

The most recent court intervention is a consent order that resulted after all parties involved in the first court action got together for a settlement conference on November 9, 2007. Again the court outlines how the assembly will take place. Belcourt believes this assembly will not be like the one in October.

Chartier and the Manitoba Métis Federation went to court earlier last year to seek an order against the MNC, the Métis National Council Secretariat,

Audrey Poitras, President of Métis Nation of Alberta, Tony Belcourt, and President of the Ontario Métis, Robert Doucette, and Bruce Dumont, President of the B.C. Métis.

The order outlines how the assembly should take place in October, but that is not how it happened.

"We were in an awkward situation, the chair left the assembly and sort of left us, and because that person was under a court order, when he left there was no way that we could meet, so everything was left in the air," said Tony Belcourt.

The Chairperson appointed by the September court order is Dale LaClair, who is also the Chief Administrative Officer of the MNC, left the assembly because, as Belcourt describes it, "a heck of a controversy was raised with threats aimed at the chair."

The controversy was about the Métis Nation of Alberta list of delegates being disputed by David Chartrand, President of the Manitoba Métis Federation. Chartrand made a motion that the MNA did not meet all the legal requirements in accordance with MNC by-laws.

"The MMF stood alone on this issue at the last assembly, because even though the four presidents stood together, their board of directors of their provinces didn't stand with them

and that's why I didn't let certain votes go into play," said Chartrand.

Duly elected representatives were left out of the voting process because of an agenda set by certain presidents to have their choice of president installed, Chartrand said. The agenda behind this, said Chartrand, is about past personal issues with Chartier, and because he did not support B.C. and Ontario in having more than five votes in the national assembly. Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba all have 15.

"What they wanted to do was to dominate the decision making process of the assembly and that is what their goal was and they needed those extra votes potentially from Alberta. But what they did not anticipate is that they did not have the support of the people behind them," said Chartrand.

"There has never been a decision made by the MNC in all the years going as far back as I've read minutes that any other province has ever interfered in the delegate process," said Audrey Poitras, President of Métis Nation of Alberta.

"The MNA put together their delegate list, read out at role call at the assembly and the MMF challenged MNA's list. Fifteen delegates were there though not the total provincial council, but it's not usual for any province to

name their own delegates without interference from other provinces," said Poitras.

The MNA president gave *Windspeaker* her version about what went astray.

"Clem Chartier's term expired in October 2006, but based on not being able to call a general election due to the situation in Saskatchewan, we only came back together as a board in July. And, based on a motion that was put forward that was not properly authorized at the MNC level, Clem was continuing to act as president," explained Poitras.

There has been an acting MNC president legally since 2006, she added.

The situation in Saskatchewan lead to people being charged with fraud and the MNA along with MNBC were not at the table because the concern about the legitimacy of the Saskatchewan election, said Poitras.

She attended the Board of Governors (BOG) meeting where Chartier a Métis from Saskatchewan was given an extension to his term for another year, but not as a voting member.

"The position that the Métis Nation of Alberta council took was that I would be in attendance to observe and to ensure that no decisions that were made would be detrimental to the Métis Nation of Alberta," said Poitras.

"Chartier's position was extended by a motion made by Chartrand and supported by the interim president of the Saskatchewan Métis nation. Belcourt clearly opposed the motion as per the minutes.

The by-laws are very clear that every motion of the board of governors needs to be supported by majority, which is three governors at the table," said Poitras.

The July BOG meeting where a motion carried by four of its five regional members, saw Clem Chartier removed as President. Appointed as interim president was Bruce Dumont, President of the Métis Nation of British Columbia.

Dumont's presidency was nullified by an order from the Ontario Superior Court of Justice in September.

This February's assembly candidates for presidency will be nominated on the day of the assembly.

According to Belcourt, there won't be any nomination process prior to the assembly. He believes the people who are going to be running are contacting their delegates now.

A lot of speculation is going around as to who will run. Chartier, the former president of the national council announced his intention to run for President at the last assembly. Dumont is also believed to be in the running for president.

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Census reveals Aboriginals fastest growing population

The 2006 Census final report reveals more than one million people self-identified as Aboriginal and are the youngest growing population in Canada. A total of 1,172,790 people reported Aboriginal identity either as First Nation, Métis or Inuit. The average age for Aboriginal people was 27, with nearly half of the population age 24 and under. The report shows Aboriginal people account for 3.8 per cent of the total population of Canada, an increase from 3.3 per cent in 2001. The Aboriginal population has grown faster than the non-Aboriginal population with a 45 per cent increase between 1996 and 2006. That is six times faster than the 8 per cent growth rate the non-Aboriginal population experienced over the

same time period. At least 22 bands out of the more than 600 in the country were incompletely enumerated and several bands in Ontario are disputing the accuracy of the report. The greater part of First Nations people are Status Indians, meaning they are registered under the Indian Act with those numbers already accounted for. The Statistics Canada report also estimates 40 per cent of Aboriginal people enumerated lived on reserve, while 60 per cent lived off reserve. The off reserve population was also slightly up since 1996. Winnipeg had the highest number of Aboriginal people in Canada that make up 10 per cent of the city's total population. In Alberta, Edmonton has the second highest

number with 52,100, which is 5 per cent of the city's total population. Alberta has the highest number of Métis with 22 per cent of the total population in Canada. Overall the Métis population is the fastest growing with numbers doubling since the 1996 census. The report states reasons for the increase are high birth rates and more Aboriginal people are willing to self-identify. At least 22 reserves were not reflected in the 2006 census including the Mohawks of Akwesasne and Kahnawake First Nations, Little Buffalo First Nation in Alberta and Esquimalt in B.C. and the Six Nations of the Grand River, the largest band in Canada with 22,649 members according to the Department of Indian Affairs registry.

High percentage of Aboriginal women considered obese

Poor food choices and snacking between meals are the main reasons why young Aboriginal women are more likely to become overweight than compared to their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

Statistics Canada recently released a report citing two-thirds, or 67 per cent, of Aboriginal women in a study group were considered overweight compared to 55 per cent of non-Aboriginal women. Among those who were overweight, 41 per cent were deemed obese compared to 18 per cent of non-Aboriginal women.

The study, using data from the 2004 Canadian Community Health Survey, compared Aboriginals living off-reserve with the non-Aboriginal population in Ontario and the western provinces.

It was found that Aboriginal women between the ages of 19 and 30 consumed 359 more daily calories than non-Aboriginal women. They also ate more junk food, with those kinds of foods making up 35 per cent of their calorie intake, compared to 24 per cent for non-Aboriginal women. Aboriginal women also ate more junk food between meals.

Breaking down the food choices, the study shows Aboriginal women drank about three times as many non-diet soft drinks a day as non-Aboriginal women.

Aboriginal women were also getting more of their calorie intake from the "sandwich" category of foods, which include sandwiches, submarines, pizza, hamburgers and hot dogs, rather than from fruits and vegetables.

Whereas non-Aboriginal women may reach for foods that are higher in protein and fibre.

Young Aboriginal women get a lot of their excess calories from lower quality choices that are high

in fat, sugar and salt that fall in the carbohydrate category.

The Health officials concern is that Aboriginal women, like many Canadians, fail to follow the Canada's Food Guide and aren't getting the recommended daily intake of the four major food groups, which are dairy products, fruits and vegetables, grains and meats.

Data leading to this obesity observation was based on eating habits analysis of 6,224 survey participants who listed all the foods and drinks they had consumed the previous day.

The weight analysis was based on 3,544 respondents who gave their weight and height information and then their body mass index was calculated.

Researchers admitted that using body mass index to define being overweight or obese can be problematic and has limitations.

Canada's Food guide was updated in 2007, when Health Canada developed a guide specifically for Aboriginal peoples based on the recognition that they, whether living on or off-reserve, make different food choices than non-Aboriginal Canadians and have their own traditional cuisine.

Statistics Canada deems further study will be needed to determine if dietary recommendations for Canada's populations should be adjusted for Aboriginal people again based on eating habits revealed in this study.

Through maintaining a healthy lifestyle, Aboriginal women and other Canadians can reduce the risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and certain types of cancer and osteoporosis.

To learn more about how to feel and look better, maintain stronger muscles and bones and have more energy visit Health Canada's Web site at www.hc-sc.gc.ca.

New scholarship for students

The National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation Oil and Gas Trades and Technology Bursary and Scholarship program is being added to the growing list of available financial assistance to students.

Aboriginal students can apply for the bursary and scholarship awards while studying at accredited colleges, universities and institutes in Alberta. Registered Aboriginal apprentices in Alberta can also apply. Some of the eligible programs include a general education diploma, applied diploma or degree programs in the oil and gas trades

and technology fields.

There are three types of awards available. There isn't any set amounts for bursaries, which are determined based on financial need. Scholarships awards are in the amount of \$500. The higher incentive awards will be awarded depending on completion of different programs. NAAF's Oil and Gas Trades and Technology scholarship is supported by BP Canada, TransCanada, Suncor Energy Foundation, Petro Canada and Devon Energy Corp.

By providing financial support to Aboriginal people interested in pursuing studies in the Oil and

Gas trades and technology sector in Alberta, NAAF hopes to increase the awareness of potential careers in this sector among Aboriginal high school students in particular and Aboriginal people in general.

Another goal of the OGTT is to add to the number and quality of Aboriginal candidates employed in the Oil and Gas trades and technology sector. First Nations, Inuit and Métis students can apply for the OGTT bursary and scholarships online at the NAAF Web site at www.naaf.ca. The deadline for applications is February 20, 2008.

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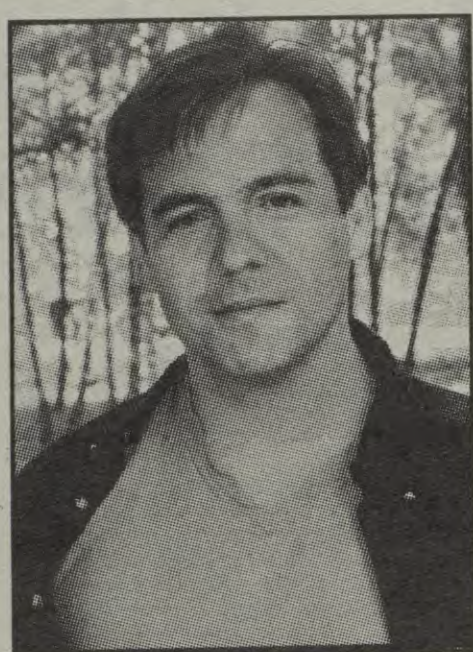
[strictly speaking]

The Stony people have a home again-65 years later

I know Christmas is over but I think the sentiment remains. I am referring to the people of Stony and Kettle Point. What a great Christmas present they got this year – their own provincial park. I bet you Santa just about had a coronary when he saw that on his list. But, as the yuletide story goes, he knew who had been naughty, and who had been nice. He, just like Justice Sidney Linden, commissioner of the inquiry into the 1995 death of Native protester Dudley George, knew that the government of former Ontario Premier Mike Harris and the Federal Government had been on the naughty side. So, after sixty five years, a week before Christmas, the status quo had been reinstated. The Stony people have a home again.

Sixty five years. That's a long time, even by government standards. It was in 1942 when the federal government expropriated the land belonging to the Stony Point Band which contained a burial ground, to build a military camp.

White people wanted Native land to train White people to fight other White people on far away White people's land. Somewhere, I'm sure, that makes



THE URBANE INDIAN

Drew Hayden Taylor

sense. At one point, the Department of National Defense did say it was willing to return most of the land, but like many other promises to Native people, something was lost in the translation.

Sixty five years. You know, if the Federal Government was smart, it would take a page from the book on how Native people operate to explain the delay. They should just pay attention to the Iroquois People, who have proudly claimed for two hundred years that the American Constitution was based on their Great Law, the basis of their government and spiritual beliefs. Well, the Stony Point People don't have a Great Law the Canadian and Ontario government can

copy, but it seems they have appropriated something else indicative of Canada's Native people: The concept of Indian Time.

It's an enigmatic and philosophical idea based around a uniquely cultural relationship with time. Simply put, things happen when they happen. There are not 24 hours in a day. Time is unlimited and impossible to be cut up into chunks. If something is to happen at 11:00, it might happen at 11:01 or 12:26 or 1:11, a.m. or p.m.. It will happen when it will happen.

The universe has its own heartbeat and who are we to speed it up or slow it down. To some, it's an excuse to be late. To others, it's a way to avoid ulcers.

Sixty five years. Or on a different scale, thirty five years since the Minister of Indian Affairs at the time – Jean Chretien – noted that the Stony Point Band was beginning to get annoyed at yet another broken promise, and perhaps the Minister of Defense should return the land or offer up another piece of land as compensation.

It's been seventeen years since Oka – more accurately Kahnasatake – happened, proving once and for all that dangerous things can happen when Native people, burial grounds, provincial police, and indifferent levels of government are all poured into the same mixing bowl.

Fourteen years (1993) since the pissed off, even for people who practice Indian Time, Stony Point Band members began moving back onto the land. In 1995, the Military thought "the hell with this" and withdrew.

Evidently after 53 years, World War II was finally over and the need for the land had ended. That was also just about the time an unknown Stony Point dude named Dudley George clumsily got in the way of a speeding OPP bullet and Indian time ended for him.

Unfortunately, the Ipperwash land is soaked in blood and death. First of all, it was a burial ground. Secondly, people were trained there to kill other people. I'm sure that left some sort of psychic imprint. And thirdly, Dudley George, an unarmed man just trying to return home with his family, was shot there.

Borrowing from an ancient Indian philosophy (the dot Indian, not the feather kind), it doesn't exactly make for good karma.

The land remembers what has happened on it. Still, all is not calm in this province about Dalton McGuinty's decision.

A casual glance at major news network's Web site showed a bewildering amount of disagreement over the return of the 109 acres. "We are all going to pay for this lack of thought on the governments behalf. I know-lets just hand over the whole province. Welcome to the Province of Ontario Indian Reserve." "They lost the land that's too bad I say that the Reserves should be removed completely and that they should become normal Canadians like the rest of us, and pay taxes."

I think these people need an "Indian time" out.

Report doesn't include what school has to offer

By MELANIE FERRIS
Windspeaker Writer

TORONTO

"We are a school that I am proud of," asserts the principal of Toronto's First Nations School, Wayne Kodje. He has been leading the school for the past eight years.

The school got its 15 minutes of fame when the Safety Schools Report was released in January. The report looks at the issue of safety in over 400 Toronto schools. Kodje's school ranked lowest out of all the schools.

The report addresses children's success in the school and makes recommendations on suspensions, school funding, and the availability of support staff.

After studying the school, the report's author, Julian Falconer, wrote that the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) "is failing one of our most marginalized and vulnerable communities."

Kodje's done numerous interviews on the issue and was wary when *Windspeaker* called. The stories coming out have been alarming and negative, raising a question of why anyone would want to send their child to this school.

"I don't know if it's as bad as they say it is," stated Phil Fontaine when asked about the report. He questioned whether the report was done in a culturally appropriate way.

Indeed, the media paints a stark

picture of the First Nations School. But coming to the school is uplifting, beginning with the artwork and honour feathers in the school's Hall of Honour.

The school is Toronto's only school with a complete focus on First Nations education. It provides Ojibway classes instead of French language classes.

"There is a sense of pride in the air," said Kodje. "The school is important for the community. If you want to have something that has the greatest experience of atmosphere, the total environment for native people, it would be this school."

"This is something very near and dear to their (the community's) heart," he said.

Kodje has two children of his own. "I had my children attend other native schools where I was principal at as well," he said. "I stand by the quality that we try to promote here at First Nations School."

"With what's happened recently, in a way it's a good thing because we are going to get more resources now so we can begin to progress even faster," Kodje explains.

Jules Koostachin is a Cree mom living in Toronto. Incorporating culture into her children's lives is a priority. Her children do not attend the school.

"I initially wanted to send the boys to First Nations School but after doing my placement there years back I quickly changed my mind. I was working in the classroom—there were too many

disruptions during the day," she said.

"I really liked the fact that it was a First Nations School with a great curriculum," Koostachin says. "But, there was too much of other things going on in the classroom that the children were not getting the time and energy needed towards developing a good education."

Kodje agrees with some of the comments circulating about the problems the school is facing, but countered, "All schools have their problems. We do have our challenges here because we do have some very needy kids."

"We are progressing in terms of teaching... we do our best."

The problem seems to lie partly in the way the school is funded. The TDSB gives funding based on the number of students attending a school. Enrolment between kindergarten and grade eight at the school sits at approximately 75 in total.

"In terms of the school size, the funding has been rich, but even so, we have a high-needs population here. We could use more staff and more resources. These items are quite expensive... it's going to have to come from the provincial government," Kodje states.

The Province of Ontario does provide funds for Aboriginal education. The report states, "Despite the funding announcements, where monies announced for Aboriginal education have been rolled out to the TDSB, they have not been



MELANIE FERRIS

Toronto's First Nations School Principal, Wayne Kodje shows *Windspeaker* names of some of the students who have received honour feathers.

specifically tied to Aboriginal education initiatives. As a result, TDSB is free to use these monies as they wish."

Parent, Messenger Hawk sits in the school office and explains that his daughter has attended the school since she was two-years-old, beginning with the Head Start Program. He said his wife was nervous about sending their child to the school in the beginning.

"She teaches me now," Hawk said of his daughter who has learned so much and is now teaching him Ojibway.

Kodje remains positive about the school, proudly listing some

of their new projects.

"This is something that I can do for my community," Kodje says. "I don't think there's a finer calling in life than to educate the children of your people and try to give them the best start in life that you possibly can. That's what this school is about and that's what I want to be a part of."

The school currently has a nutrition program that provides healthy snacks to all children. They also have a number of cultural programs that teach the Ojibway culture and language, which is available to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

Windspeaker sports briefs

By SAM LASKARIS

Ojibwe Northern Storm defends hockey title

An Aboriginal women's squad successfully defended its title at the Canadian Multicultural Hockey Championships.

The Ojibwe Northern Storm won its second consecutive crown at the 2007 tournament, which concluded on Dec. 30 in Toronto.

The Northern Storm edged the Japanese Typhoon 4-3 in the championship match. The Typhoon squad included Vicky Sunohara, one of Canada's top female players ever and a long-time member of the Canada's national women's hockey team.

Harmony Babstock led the Northern Storm with a pair of goals in the finals. Also scoring for the Ojibwe side were Kelly Babstock and Gerrilyn Manitowabi.

The Northern Storm won all four of its contests at the five-day tournament, outscoring its opponents 19-7.

The eight-team women's division also included another Aboriginal squad, the Iroquois River Chicks. The Iroquois side posted a 1-2 record in its three matches.

The River Chicks were downed 5-3 in their opener by the Irish Raiders. The Northern Storm then beat the River Chicks 5-2. The Iroquois club blanked the United World Ice Maidens 8-0 in their final match.

Meanwhile, a pair of Aboriginal men's teams also took part in the tournament.

The Iroquois Silverhawks had an impressive 4-1 record. The Silverhawks' tournament concluded with a 6-5 semi-final loss against the Nubian Kings. And the Anishinabek Thunderbirds had a 2-2 record in the tournament. One of the Thunderbirds' losses was a 5-3 setback versus the Silverhawks.

Point racks up points

An Aboriginal player is an early candidate to win rookie of the year honors in the National Lacrosse League.

Craig Point, who turned 22 on Jan. 19, has had a terrific start in his first professional box lacrosse season. Point, who is from Ohsweken, Ont., is a member of the Minnesota Swarm, one of seven clubs that compete in the NLL's East Division.

During his first pro game on Jan. 11, Point racked up eight points (six goals, two assists) as the Swarm defeated the host Toronto Rock 17-16 in overtime. The following evening Point scored once and added an assist as the Swarm downed the Rock 11-4 in Minnesota.

And Point then scored three goals and chipped in with one assist as Minnesota edged the defending league champion Rochester Knighthawks 18-17 on Jan. 26.

Point and his Swarm teammates were tied atop the East standings with the Philadelphia Wings, who also had a perfect 3-0 record. With his 14 points in three games, Point was third in the Swarm scoring race.

The fact Point is earning his share of points at the pro level is not a surprise. He was expected to have an immediate impact with the Minnesota squad.

Last year Point led the Iroquois Nationals team in scoring with 11 goals at the world box lacrosse championships in Halifax. The Iroquois Nationals club was stacked with numerous other NLL veterans.

Online petition hopes to generate funds for athletes

An online petition to generate some financial support for Aboriginal athletes had received more than 400 signatures by late January.

The petition, which was written by James Wilson, can be viewed at www.petitiononline.com/Aborigin/petition.html

The petition, an open letter to the Canadian Olympic Committee, is hoping that Canadian sporting officials show support to Aboriginal sports by funding its athletes and programs.

Wilson writes athletes would rather receive such support rather than simply showing off Aboriginal culture at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Whistler, B.C., through dance, regalia and cultural appropriation.

Another hope in the petition is to have a representational number of Aboriginal athletes on Canadian teams at all future Olympic competitions.

[sports]

Athletes aspire to play professional hockey

By SAM LASKARIS
Windspeaker Writer

WINNIPEG

Countless hockey-playing youngsters dream of growing up and graduating to the National Hockey League one day.

It's not too often one hears of individuals who aspire to play pro hockey – in the minor leagues. But since there are 30 NHL franchises, there's only a certain amount of playing jobs available in the world's premier hockey circuit. As a result, those who do not make the grade but wish to continue playing hockey can do so in the minors, provided of course, they are talented enough to toil at that level.

Three Aboriginal players who are earning paycheques in the minors are Colt King, Lance Monych and Gary Gladue.

King, who was drafted by the NHL's Colorado Avalanche, is playing for a Colorado-based squad – the Central Hockey League's Rocky Mountain Rage.

Monych and Gladue are both in the former East Coast Hockey League, known simply these days as the ECHL. Monych suits up for the Mississippi Sea Wolves while Gladue is a member of the Victoria Salmon Kings.

Though they have catchy monikers, these three minor league teams are certainly not steeped in tradition like say the Toronto Maple Leafs or Montreal Canadiens or New York Rangers are.

"I was hoping to be in the NHL by now," said King, a 24-year-old Ojibway, who has spent all four of his pro seasons in the minors. "But it's a long hard road there. I'm still kicking at the can."

King, who was the Avalanche's fourth-round pick at the 2001 NHL Entry Draft, said he cannot pinpoint one reason why he hasn't made it to the NHL.

"Maybe it just wasn't the right time," King said. "Or maybe it was things I didn't do. But I can't sit here and think of what I could have, would have and should have done."

King, who was born in Calgary, never did get to experience what should have been his first NHL camp. He was scheduled to fly to Denver for his inaugural Avalanche camp on Sept. 11, 2001. But his flight, as most others across North America, were grounded that day, following terrorist attacks in the U.S. Because of travel uncertainties in the

ensuing days, King said Avalanche officials opted not to bring some of their prospects to camp that year.

King has been to three NHL training camps since – one with Colorado, one with the Minnesota Wild and one with the Vancouver Canucks. But he was cut from camp each time.

But he hasn't given up his hockey dreams. The Rage is the fourth minor league team he has suited up for during his pro career.

King has played in the ECHL for the Augusta Lynx and Utah Grizzlies. And he spent last season in the United Hockey League (which has since been renamed the International Hockey League) with the Michigan-based Port Huron Flags.

Most minor league contracts are usually paid weekly in hundreds of dollars. And they pale in comparison to what those in the NHL are earning. Yet King still sounds content with his life.

"You're doing what you want to do," he said. "In my opinion it's the greatest job in the world. You get to hang around with 18 of your friends and play hockey. And you get to travel around to different cities. Every day is a new experience."

"It's my fourth year as a pro and sometimes I think I've had my shot," he said. "I think I'll stick with it though and play another year or two. But my girlfriend says play as long as you can and see what happens."

If another NHL opportunity does not materialize, King might take his act overseas and play in a pro circuit somewhere in Europe.

"I've thought about that," he said. "It's something I'd like to do before I hang them up."

Monych, a 23-year-old Métis from Winnipeg, has also considered moving overseas to play.

"Europe is definitely a possibility," said Monych, a third-year pro who has already suited up for six different minor league squads, in the ECHL, Central Hockey League and American Hockey League.

Like King, Monych was also drafted by an NHL team. He was the Phoenix Coyotes' fourth-round selection at the 2002 draft.

He went to the Coyotes' camp three times. And he played in a pair of exhibition contests each year before being cut.

Monych's NHL aspirations are very much still alive in large part because he has had some stints, including a six-game callup to the AHL's Norfolk Admirals this season. The AHL

is just one step below the NHL.

So he figures if he's good enough to make the AHL, no matter for how brief a time, perhaps then maybe some day he could get an opportunity from an NHL squad.

"I'm just a guy waiting for his chance," Monych said. "You never know what's going to happen."

For now, Monych continues to earn \$700 per week from the Sea Wolves. The club also pays for most of his living expenses, including his apartment, hydro and cable. Monych is responsible for his own groceries. But Mississippi players receive \$32 per diem expenses when the team is travelling on the road.

"You get to do what you love," Monych said. "I'm still having fun. And it's still really good hockey. I don't think the East Coast (league) gets the credit it deserves."

Gladue also obviously enjoys the fact he gets paid to play hockey. The third-year pro is making \$650 per week, an increase from the \$450, which he was paid during his first ECHL season. But still not much money to brag about.

"I guess the only negative is it's tough to make a living out of this," said Gladue, a 23-year-old Cree who was born in Coquitlam, B.C. "The pay isn't that great."

So far Monych has spent his pro career in the ECHL. Besides Victoria, he's also played for the Columbia Inferno and the Long Beach Ice Dogs.

The 6-foot-190-pound defenceman was never drafted by an NHL team. So he's been forced to make his own year-by-year deals.

"Being a free agent, there's a lot of options for you," he said.

And like King and Monych, he's hoping to one day get a call to the big leagues. "Maybe I haven't gotten my break yet," Gladue said.

No doubt he's hoping that his chance will still come, especially when he sees some of the multi-million dollar contracts in the NHL.

"I think it's unbelievable," he said of the amount of money some pros are paid. "There's players up there (in the NHL) you think you are better than. There are guys in the NHL that I played junior against or with."

Even though they've grown up now, Gladue and King and Monych are still dreaming of the NHL. But at the same time they're all fortunate to be playing a game they love. And being paid for it, albeit not handsomely.

[windspeaker confidential] — Daniele Behn

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

Daniele Behn: Loyalty. There are so many other good qualities I could say, but my true friends are the ones who will stand by me through the ups and downs of life.

W: What is it that really makes you mad?

D.B.: Myself. No person or situation can make me mad. It's only my reaction to situations — the way I choose to respond positively or negatively.

W: When are you at your happiest?

D.B.: The moment when I drift into enlightenment. When I'm in harmony in mind, body and spirit, when everything is in sync. Today I was with musical friends and everything was just flowing. Times like that are pure joy. It's when I'm in tune with patients, family or friends.

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

D.B.: Selfish.

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

D.B.: My mother. Why? I think just because she's been my greatest teacher and (I appreciate) her commitment to wellness and

her grace. They are a gift to others. Her attitude and approach to things are quite marvellous.

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

D.B.: Trust myself. I know the Creator has a plan for all of us. I just have to let go and let Creator flow through me.

W: What is your greatest accomplishment?

D.B.: I feel a great accomplishment for me is getting to the place of understanding that I am fine in whatever I'm doing and wherever I am.

W: What one goal remains out of reach?

D.B.: I've sort of shifted my perspective given the wonderful people I had the opportunity to meet last year. I want to be always present in the moment and that goal is out of reach when I get on the busy track.

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

D.B.: I would be doing any number of things that make my heart sing — like sewing, playing guitar and singing, hiking or running.

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

D.B.: That I should learn to

control myself and stop trying to control others around me.

W: Did you take it?

D.B.: Yes. Trying to control others doesn't look good. It's not flattering. But all of these answers are works in progress. I'm working on them.

W: How do you hope to be remembered?

D.B.: I hope to be remembered as just being my true self. I want to be remembered as someone who lived in loving kindness. As someone who was perfectly imperfect but who trusted her abilities.

Dr. Daniele-Behn has a family practice in Dawson City, Yukon. Born in Fort Nelson, B.C., the 28-year-old Eh Cho Dene woman said she wasn't raised in her culture, but was introduced to the power of herbs, songs, dreams, ceremonies and medicine wheels for healing, when she participated in a 13-part documentary for Vision TV called *Medicine Woman*. Last year she travelled around the world meeting with healers, shamans and medicine people who showed her plants and methods of helping her patients in natural and wholistic ways.



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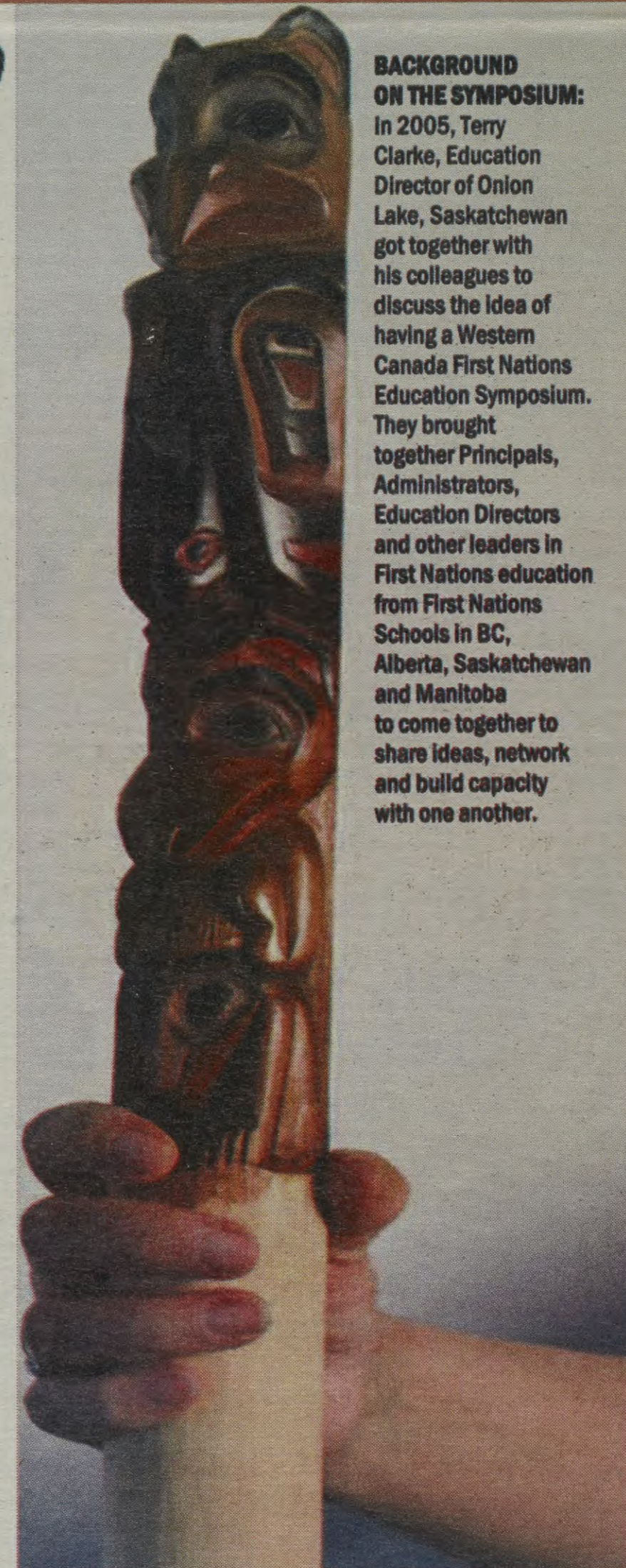
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**BACKGROUND
ON THE SYMPOSIUM:**
In 2005, Terry Clarke, Education Director of Onion Lake, Saskatchewan got together with his colleagues to discuss the idea of having a Western Canada First Nations Education Symposium. They brought together Principals, Administrators, Education Directors and other leaders in First Nations education from First Nations Schools in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba to come together to share ideas, network and build capacity with one another.



Artist—
Alyssa Delbaere-Sawchuk
Album—OmEigwessi
Reel Métis –
A tribute to Walter Flett
Song—Medicine Fiddle
Label— Independent
Producer—Alyssa Delbaere-Sawchuk

Musicians pays tribute to legend

These days, Métis fiddlers are few and far between since many of the old masters have left us for the spirit world.

But thanks to young musicians like Toronto's Alyssa Delbaere-Sawchuk, old favourites are receiving new life. The classical-trained musician received a grant from the Ontario Arts Council to spend time learning fiddle tunes with Lawrence "Teddy Boy Houle" in 2006, and the result is a new CD entitled Oméigwessi Reel Métis – A tribute to Walter Flett. The late Walter Flett was Teddy Boy's father, who played at old-time dances at the Bosco Centre every Friday night in Winnipeg in the late 60's and early 70's.

Oméigwessi means Ukrainian in Ojibway and it was Walter's nickname. Oméigwessi Reel Métis is the real deal – a true reflection of 'old time' Ebb and Flow Métis style and the waltzes, two-steps, square dances and reels Walter Flett played for years. With the first track named Robert Sanderson's Cow, your toe will be tapping, and you'll want to get right into a good session of Métis aerobics upon hearing the rest of the tunes. At the other end of the scale from the racous reels are tunes like the softer Medicine Fiddle so named because of the healing sounds made by the violin's strings tuned in a way to make their sound more soothing.

All in all, Alyssa and her Oméigwessi Ensemble (made up of her brothers, two other musicians and Teddy Boy and Jimmy Flett, both sons of Walter) bring Métis traditional music a unique youthful energy with old-style melodies. Alyssa may live in the city, but her Métis ancestry is deeply rooted in Manitoba, and it shows on this CD.

[radio's most active]

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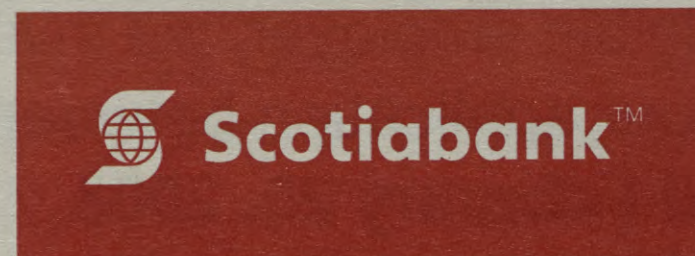
ARTIST	TITLE	ALBUM
Star Nayea	Silenced My Tongue	Silenced My Tongue
Black Rain	Wild Women	Hundred Dollar Hickey
Eagle & Hawk	It's About Time	Sirensong
Wade Fernandez	What You Didn't Say	4 The People
The Breeze Band	Road to Eden	The Breeze Band
New Horizon	Woman In The Picture	Single Release
Hector	Die For Me	Rain Dancing
Mike Gouchie	Childhood Friend	Let It Rain-Steve Rain&Friends
Gabby Taylor	You're The One	Where I Feel Alive
Guy Chaput & Sci-fi	That Girl	Awakenings
Cheryl Bear	Hey Cuzzin'	The Good Road
Farrah Meade	I'll Be Gone	Single Release
Steve Rain	Holdin' Out	Only For A Moment
Sandy Scofield/Kinnie Starr	Faith	Nikawiy Askiy
Donny Parenteau	Postmarked Heaven	What It Takes
Ron Loutit	Molly	Mine To Discover
Derek Maurice	Forgive	I am Derek Maurice
Fara Palmer	Poor Me	Phoenix
Will Belcourt	Falling To Pieces	Full Moon Blanket
Native Roots	Time To Dance	Celebrate

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Lung cancer is main cause of cancer death

The following article is the second in a series of columns by the Canadian Cancer Society that will be running in Windspeaker, providing information on healthy living from an Aboriginal perspective.

Lung cancer is the main cause of cancer death for both men and women in Ontario and the risk of getting lung cancer is higher when you smoke commercial tobacco.

"Commercial tobacco use is much higher within the

Aboriginal population," says Nancy Korstanje, Manager of Community Integration and Promotion at *Smokers' Helpline*. "Aboriginal people have used tobacco for thousands of years for rituals, ceremonies and medicinal purposes," says Korstanje. "It is important to know the difference between Sacred Tobacco and commercial tobacco."

There are more than ten different plants related to Sacred Tobacco, which when used properly can communicate to the Spirit World and to the Creator. Commercial tobacco products,

"Quitting smoking is the single best thing someone can do to improve their health."

—Nancy Kortanje

however, are addictive and smoking is the number one preventable cause of death in Ontario.

The good news is that it's never too late to quit smoking commercial tobacco.

When you stop smoking, your

body begins to clean itself of the poisons in commercial tobacco. And within 10 years of quitting, the risk of dying from lung cancer is cut in half and the risk of getting other cancers is close to that of a non-smoker.

Whenever someone is trying to

quit, the Canadian Cancer Society *Smokers' Helpline* at 1 877 513-5333, and *Smokers' Helpline Online* at www.smokershelpline.ca, are only a call or click away.

They can help make will power stronger and improve the chances of success.

"Quitting smoking is the single best thing someone can do to improve their health," said Korstanje. "When someone decides to quit smoking and wants to talk about it, *Smokers' Helpline* and *Smokers' Helpline Online* are there to help."

Important Notice to Employers

Avis important aux employeurs

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Applications can be submitted online, by mail, by fax, or in person at any Service Canada Centre.

À l'écoute des étudiants, au service des collectivités

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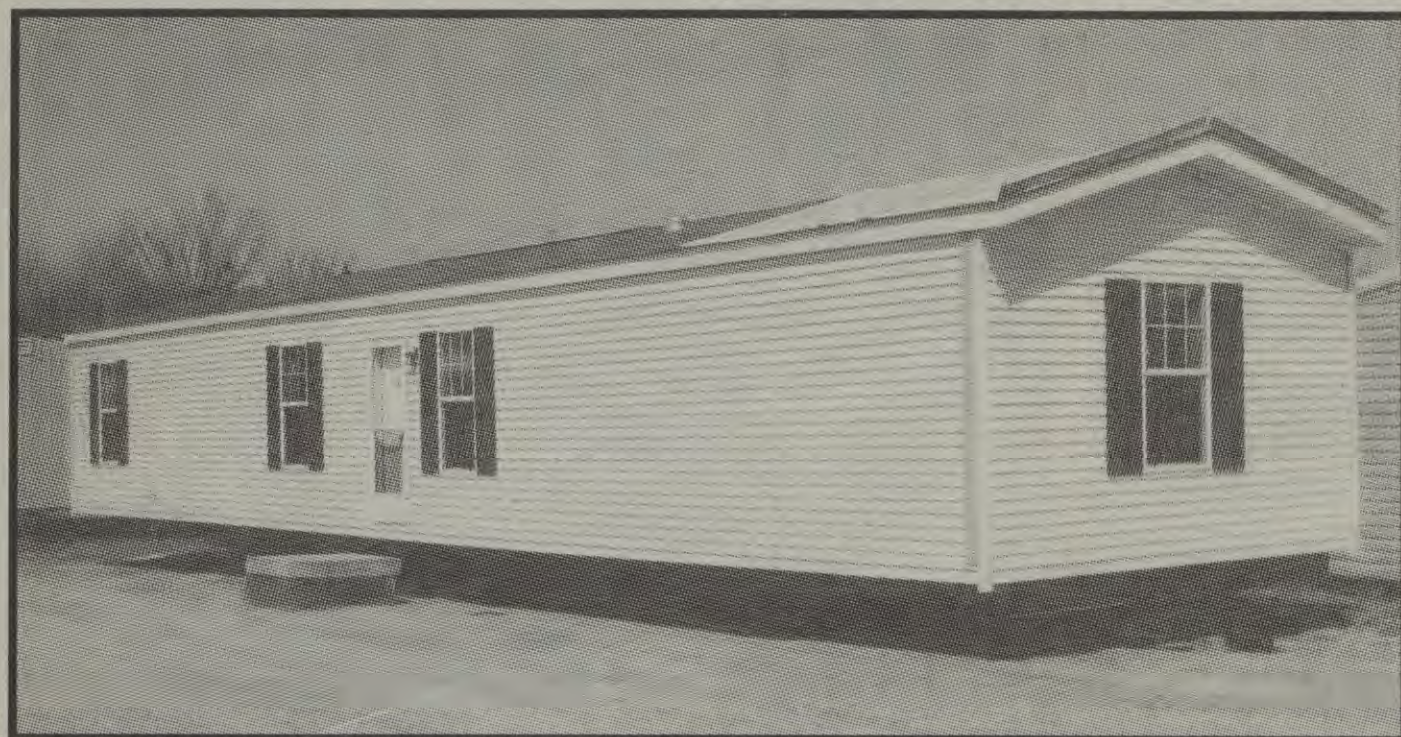
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Request for funding rejected

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

VANCOUVER

Accusations of "bias" and "wrongdoing" have been thrown at the B.C. civic advisory board and the federal government after the funding proposal from an Aboriginal non-profit organization, aimed to help homeless women and their children, was rejected.

While the Aboriginal Mother's Centre (AMC) in east Vancouver hasn't shut its doors quite yet, Penny Irons, the program's director, thinks it's just a matter of time. "We're just barely hanging in there," she said.

The community-run center was established in 2001 and since then had been relying on municipal, provincial and federal funds. Last year, the federal government allocated \$16 million to the Vancouver region for its Homelessness Partnership Strategy.

The plan is a two-year strategy to combat the high incidence of homelessness in the metro Vancouver area.

The Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness (RSCH) is a municipal advisory board with the authority to make recommendations to the government on where federal funds should go.

Last October, after three years of receiving Service Canada sponsorship, the RSCH decided to reject the Mother's Centre proposal - a rejection that is conjuring up allegations of political ignorance voiced from those in the Aboriginal social advocacy circles and community.

While Irons admitted her funding proposal wasn't as strong as it could've been, she suggested that a weaker proposal should've been seen as a realization for additional resources and not a blatant refusal of them.

"It really showed how Aboriginal agencies lacked capacity when developing proposals," she said.

Patrick Stewart, chair of Vancouver's Aboriginal Homelessness Steering Committee, also said the proposal review process was flawed and said there seems to be no real consistency in how RSCH reviews proposals.

Stewart said that through the selection process, proposals are generally branded with certain color coding following review - green meaning a recommendation will be made to pass the proposal, amber meaning the proposal is not rejected but questions must be answered within the context of the request and red meaning funds requested are denied.

Stewart said the proposal for the Mother's Centre was categorized 'amber' and the conflict of interest lies in why no questions were asked and no attempt to allow a restructure of the proposal was granted.

Yet, while the center's administrators and program facilitators are trying to come to grips with the funding refusal, members of the community will feel the biggest blow. Rosalie Tait, 25, has utilized the east AMC for the past three years and said the thought of the building closing its doors is nothing short of heartbreaking.

"It's unbelievable. It's like a second home. I can go there in my pajamas and feel at home," she said.

Like Tait, a lot of community members rely heavily on the centre. Tait, who is a member of the Gitxan First Nation from Morristown, B.C., said the centre was a lifeline for her.

Once homeless and "couch surfing", the now mother of three sadly recalls the struggles she went through finding shelter and food for herself and her 3-year-old son. Turned away from a woman's charity organization because she wasn't drug addicted, she felt desperate and alone until a friend pointed her in the direction of the centre and she was able to find a meal and basic support where there was once hopelessness.

"They've been with me through thick and thin," the young mother said.

For many women the center's potential closure would not only mean lack of resources like internet access, weekly food hampers, drop-in meals, Elder guidance, job-hunting support and parenting programs; would also mean the loss of a social network that mothers and their children rely on.

"It would affect me deeply because of the connections I have with that place," said Tait.

Not only were basic necessities provided to her, but Tait recalls a time when the center went above and beyond to help her through the loss of her own mother. Grieving and frustrated, Tait didn't have the finances to travel to her reserve in northern B.C. to lay her mother to rest last year, so the AMC and the Salvation Army rallied together and provided her with travel expenses needed to go to her reserve and pay her final respects.

"There are not many resources like that," Tait said. "I've been to a lot [of organizations] and none of them are like the Mother's Centre. The refusal to provide funding for the centre is a huge loss to other mother's in the community."

She urged the Regional Homelessness Steering Committee and the federal

government to understand the importance of the facility.

"Try being homeless," she said. "Try having no-where to go, no one to trust."

In a press release urging Service Canada to reconsider the center's proposal, the Aboriginal Homelessness Steering Committee chair expressed the importance of the facility.

"It takes children out of government care and keeps mothers off the street," Stewart said, in reference to the centre. Stewart's comment raises the question, if in fact, the outcome of eradicating these kinds of essential services is having children in government care, the closure of these important centers may be another way to keep Aboriginal families separated and under governmental thumb?

Irons said there was ignorance in the process and Stewart agreed. "That's a flaw in the whole system when the government is making non-profits compete," he said. While the outcome of the centre looks bleak, for now it is running on the generous donations of community organizations and people who believe in its need.

Since October, the centre has continued to thank the generous support of private and corporate donors.

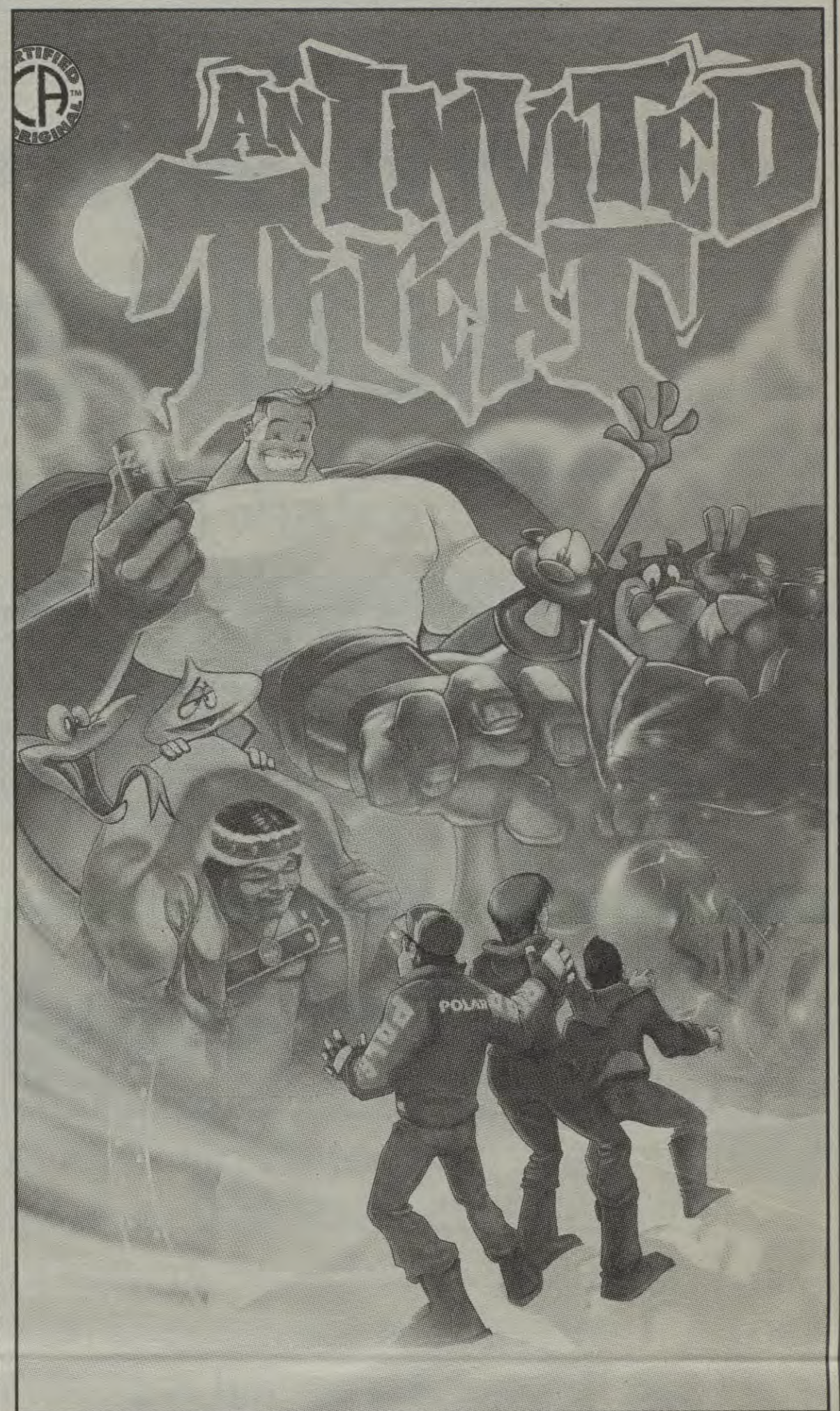
Irons said people have given whatever they have to keep the facility open - from thousands of dollars from concerned organizations to twenty dollars from anonymous supporters and women who once utilized the facility.

"It does show that there is a depth in the community," Stewart said, in regard to the donations. "There is support in the community that the Mother's Centre provides. There has to be a level of support that the government provides," he added.

However, the donations have only provided enough capital to keep administration and some basic services running. Programs have been suspended and resources limited. However, some food hampers are still being given to the hungry and the homeless are still being directed to nearby shelters.

But while the AMC fights to keep its head above water, questions remain concerning the sincerity of political bodies that claim to want an end to the homeless epidemic, yet are willing to let the future of needed social organizations - like the Vancouver Aboriginal Mother's Centre - hang in the balance.

Numerous attempts were made to contact Service Canada: Human Resources and Social Development and the Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness, however there wasn't any response before press time.



The Healthy Aboriginal Network (HAN) a non-profit promotor of Aboriginal Health, Literacy and Wellness just released a book in January, *An Invited Threat*. The comic addresses the issue of diabetes and the harmful effects it may cause if not looked after. The story translates what foods and an unhealthy lifestyle can lead to. The HAN recieved funding in 2005 to create a series of comic books that address Aboriginal youth health issues. The first comic book, *Darkness Calls* was released in 2006. It's a resource on suicide prevention for youth. Comic books about pride in the community, residential school and iving with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) are currently in the writing phase. All of the comics developed are geared to Aboriginal youth to help them become more engaged with health issues and promote wellness.

New funding geared to enhance student areas

In an effort to support the growing number of Aboriginal students in six post-secondary institutions, \$2.4 million will be dispersed from the Province for gathering places.

"We've committed \$15 million to help all of our institutions either create gathering places or enhance the ones they have, which will encourage more Aboriginal people to enroll in post-secondary education, and help them succeed when they do," said Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell in a news release.

The first round of funding will go towards gathering spaces in Northern Lights College, Kwantlen University College, the College of the Rockies, Langara

College, the College of New Caledonia and Okanagan College.

"We are breaking down the barriers that have prevented so many of our Aboriginal people from being all they can be," said Coell.

This new funding comes from the \$65 million Aboriginal post-secondary education strategy that was announced last year by Premier Gordon Campbell. It will provide up to \$600,000 to each of B.C.'s public post-secondary institutions for students gathering places.

These areas will provide Aboriginal students with a more comfortable setting where they will be able to meet in students offices and lounges.

Alberta Sweetgrass: Special Section providing news from Alberta

Former gang member inspires inmates to succeed

By Shauna Lewis
Sweetgrass Writer

EDMONTON

The Godfather, Scarface, Goodfellas. Legendary films like these depict an often sensationalized portrayal of the exciting and powerful lives of mobsters, gangsters and kingpins. But for former gang member, Rob Papin, thug-life was anything but glamorous.

"You see people getting stabbed and junkies shooting up. I thought that's what being Aboriginal was about," Papin said, during a telephone interview from his office at the Stan Daniels Healing Centre in downtown Edmonton.

Papin, 36, has broken clean from gang activity for nearly 15 years. The Enoch Cree First Nation man has been working out of the Centre as the facilitator for gang prevention program since its inception in June and says his "tough love" approach is how he gets through to inmates.

"You can cover your tattoos, you can cover everything," said Papin, "but it's the mentality that's hardest to break."

Guidance from Elders, forensic psychologists and Papin are proving successful in the break down of some of Alberta's Aboriginal prison gangs.

While the program is still in its early stages, Papin said he has already seen some high-ranking gang members give up their colors and turn their lives around. Papin said to leave a gang inside prison is risky, but the program keeps it all pretty low-key.

The surprising thing about gangs and prison is that while many inmates become gang members outside the penitentiary walls, several join while serving time. Although the lure of power and notoriety undoubtedly entice inmates to join gangs, Papin said a majority become affiliated for the sake of protection. "They have to [join] for survival. Either that or they get put in unfortunate circumstances with rapists and child molesters," he said.

Conrad Johnson, or 'CJ' as he is known at the centre, is serving a life-sentence for first degree murder in the drive-by shooting he committed at the age of 15. Now 27, the Cree man from Manitoba has spent his youth jumping from penitentiary to

penitentiary working and living the system. For Johnson, the issue of joining a gang was not a choice; it just was how people interacted in his community.

"Everyone around us was living in poverty," Johnson said. "Because you're relating with other kids and going through the same things, the media says you're a gang, so you become a gang."

Johnson was 11-years-old when his life of crime began. Growing up in an area known as "Central", in Winnipeg, he witnessed family members involved in illegal activities and substance abuse.

At 13, Johnson was sent to a youth detention centre, where he spent 18 months. By 15, the young man was tried as an adult for murder and sentenced to a maximum security prison. That was 12 years ago. Since then, Johnson has worked his way down from maximum to minimum security status.

A grade 6 school drop out, he has taken some courses while in prison and his somewhat soft spoken voice raises when he talks about working on rap music-his passion.

By all accounts, Johnson has all the hopes and dreams of anyone his age. But while he may be working toward a different life, Johnson's past will always haunt him. His life sentence and convicted murderer status won't ever go away.

Claire Carefoot, director at the Stan Daniels Healing Centre says that while all inmates need some form of rehabilitation, First Nations men are especially vulnerable to gang affiliation and desperately need specialized services to help their potential integration back into society.

"Aboriginal gangs are growing and someone has to do something about it," Carefoot said.

Carefoot is passionate about helping Aboriginal men return to their families and communities in a healthy way.

She accredits dysfunction in the lives of these men to history of abuse and racism against First Nations people and says prejudice where there should be justice is to blame.

"I feel that Aboriginal men have been unfairly treated in the justice system from the beginning," Carefoot said.

Currently, 55 inmates call the Healing Centre home- 85 per cent of them are First Nations.

The 2001 Statistics Canada report states that while Aboriginal people make up three per cent of the Nations total population, Native males make up 22 per cent of the total prison population. Broken down by province, Saskatchewan Aboriginal adults are incarcerated 35 times the rate of non-Aboriginal's and make up 77 per cent of the total prison population.

Aboriginal inmates are also over represented in Yukon and Manitoba facilities, making up 74 per cent and 70 per cent of the prison population.

In Alberta, where Aboriginal people make up four per cent of the total population, 38 per cent are residing in penitentiaries. British Columbia and Ontario prisons have the fewest number of Aboriginal inmates, with 20 per cent and nine per cent representation. (Juristat, Statistics Canada 2004/05).

The Healing Centre is a minimum security correctional institute and is affiliated with and funded by the Correction Services of Canada (CSC) under section 81- which is an agreement with the federal government for the provision of Aboriginal correctional services.

The operation of urban and rural-based facilities designed for Aboriginal offenders on conditional release is also listed under Section 81 of the CSC.

Inmates from nearby federal facilities, such as the medium security Drumheller penitentiary in Alberta, are able to relocate to the Healing Centre under very specific guidelines. Transferring inmates must fall under the category of being a minimum security prisoner. There is a zero tolerance for drugs and alcohol at the centre and inmates must relinquish any and all gang ties.

Once at the centre, inmates are encouraged to participate in workshops and seminars on everything from proper parenting and establishing healthy relationships to a computer refurbishing program, where old computers are fixed and donated back into the community.

Substance abuse meetings, such as alcoholics anonymous, are also offered at the centre and inmates are encouraged to participate in cultural activities, such as sweat lodges.

Rob Papin emphasizes the important role relationships play in the lives of these gang



Pictured at Stan Daniels Healing Centre from left to right is Conrad Johnson an inmate at the centre, Claire Carefoot, director for the Centre and Rob Papin former gang member. Papin has been working out of the Centre as the facilitator for the gang prevention program, which Johnson is currently participating in.

members.

"There is a sort of strength in numbers and the underlying need to belong and be a part of something is huge- even when that something is destructive," he said.

Papin tells *Sweetgrass* that while the guys may seem tough, in jail, everybody is a pawn in someone else's game. He also said it's not only men's relationships with other men or their families that's often dysfunctional, but these men's relationships with their girlfriends that also feeds the hype.

Girlfriends of gang members are often too insecure themselves to see they are being used.

"There's no glamour in it," Papin said, in reference to the young girls attracted to gangs. "You're going to be a junkie pushing the shopping cart down the street. You used to be a glamour queen and now you're a drama queen."

As well as praising the various workshops the centre offers, real growth for these men has been seen through their participation in activities focused on First Nations spirituality and healing.

Claire Carefoot is an advocate for the importance of culture in the lives of these men and she says the inmate's rehabilitation and integration process has a lot to do with participation in spiritually-based programs.

"They grew up ashamed of being Indians because they weren't connected to their

culture," Carefoot said.

She also said she has witnessed the effect culture-based programs have had on inmates and "the way they connect with the Elders in the program is important."

"I am convinced that Aboriginal men coming out of prison need a connection with their Elders and their culture. And, if they do that, I firmly believe they will not go back to prison," said Carefoot.

The Healing Centre accepts prisoners in various stages of sentences. From day parole, to probation, to conditional sentencing to life imprisonment, Carefoot said she has seen many inmates come and go in her 15 years of corrections work. Recently, Carefoot moved an elderly inmate into a retirement home after spending a few years at the centre. The man found it very difficult to transition into a society foreign to him. The man had spent 56 years behind bars.

Johnson, who was once a gang leader, has now turned his back on the gang life.

When asked why he thinks people join prison gangs, his reply has more to do with fragility than power.

"Some are intimidated, some are weak. They can't really stand on their own two feet as a man." "What is 'gangster' is to pay your bills and take care of your family," he said.

For Johnson, it's simply a matter of choice; "either you are going to die in prison, or you're going to live your life."

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Ontario Birchbark: Special Section providing news from Ontario

Young musician is living out her dream

By **SHAUNA LEWIS**
Birchbark Writer

WIKWEMIKONG

On the verge of releasing both a debut single and airing a six-part television series next month; one of Canada's newest rising stars in the country music scene is proving that success comes in spades for those who want it badly enough.

Crystal Shawanda, a 27-year-old Ojibway woman from the Wikwemikong reserve on Manitoulin Island, in northern Ontario, is living the life she's always hoped after signing with renowned US recording label, RCA Nashville and working with Country Music Television (CMT) to document her journey in a six-part television series, *Crystal: Living the Dream*.

For Shawanda, music is as natural as breathing. "I love to sing. I'm not really good at anything else," she said. "It was just something I've always loved."

Growing up on the reserve in the "middle of nowhere," Shawanda wrote songs that expressed her feelings of hopelessness and despair. While she admits "it was out of the norm" to have such lofty dreams of performing in Nashville's Grand Ole Opry while growing up on the reserve, she followed her passion. Singing since the age of three, she took to the stage at age 6, playing events and entering contests in Canada and the US. "It was natural," she said, in reference to a life of country music. With a family of country music fans and a trucker father who often drove from Ontario to Nashville for work, Shawanda was able to develop a taste for the honky tonk music scene at a young age—a taste that would consequently transform into a sheer hunger for the business.

As a child, Shawanda would revel in the melodic ditties of her idol, Loretta Lynn. She wrote stories of her own life, Shawanda said, in relation to Lynn's experiences woven within her words and music. Shawanda says that while she is becoming successful in her industry, she denies blazing any trails. Aboriginal singers and songwriters Rita Coolidge and Buffy Sainte Marie have paved the way for Aboriginal music artists, she said. "They made me think I could do it."

Yet, while music icons have influenced the young artist, she said personal encouragement and family and community support throughout her journey to Nashville stardom has been pivotal to her success. Her family

members are her biggest fans and she accredits them with her determination and perseverance.

"That's really why I hung on so tight and am going forward with my dream," she said, in reference to her mother and father's unwavering support.

Undoubtedly, Shawanda's parents are proud of their daughter's success. "We were always encouraging her and told her 'you can do anything you want as long as you're committed to that,'" said Shawanda's mother, Virginia.

Shawanda's life is nothing these days if not sought after and hectic. But unlike some celebrities that let fame go to their head, Shawanda seems genuinely down-to-earth and insightful.

"You have to love it, because it won't always love you," she said.

But the music scene does love Shawanda and her realization of how far she's come manifested recently when her feet touched down on Nashville's country music epicentre—the Grand Ole Opry. "It was definitely the highlight of my whole journey," she said.

When asked, what the defining moment was when she knew she had finally reached her country music goals, Shawanda said it was at the CMT music awards and sharing the stage with such country stars as Martina McBride, Brooks and Dunn and Carrie Underwood.

In her daily life, Shawanda's overall goals are simple and clear, "I want to inspire people to just take chances," she said. "It's not about being perfect, if you love something, go after it."

Shawanda's love of music has brought her much achievement throughout the years. Her parents recalled the many contests she would enter and win and the theater group she joined as a youth. Virginia said when her daughter was just three years old, she would turn on a stereo in the family home and sing the Scotty Wiseman original 'Have I Told You Lately That I Love you.' Except rather than sing verbatim, Shawanda would make up her own lyrics to the tune—proving a singer/songwriter was in the making. Shawanda's mother said singing was always just a part of her daughter.

"No matter where she was—washroom, shower, living room, driving down the road—she was always singing."

Phyllis Ellis, writer and director of *Crystal Shawanda: Living the Dream*, said working with Shawanda and visiting her First Nations roots was a benefit to her work and life.

(See Shawanda page 21.)

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Ontario Birchbark: Special Section providing news from Ontario

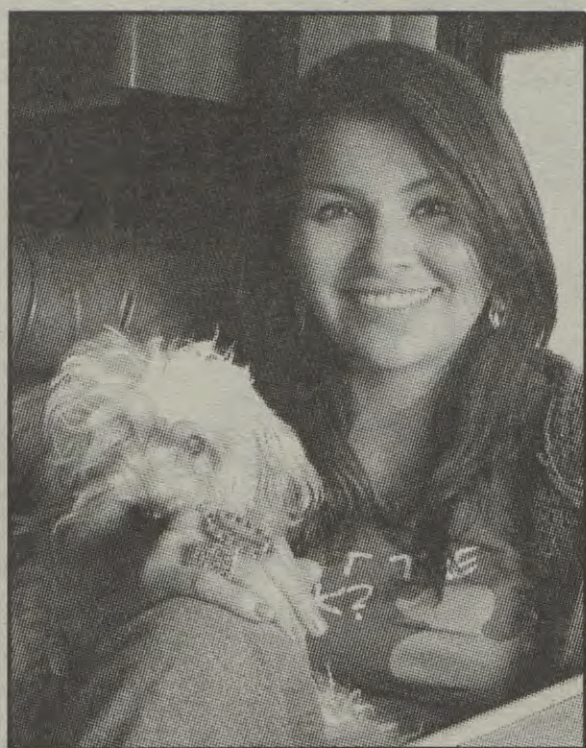
Shawanda documents love of music in series

(Continued from page 20.)

"To be invited into someone's life and document it is a pleasure and an honour," she said. "When I first heard her sing, I almost fell over. She is one of the most talented artists I think I've ever heard."

Produced by Ontario-based company, Henry Less Productions Limited and under the CMT label; the reality series was shot in various locations between Nashville and the Wikwemikong reserve. It took production and crew a year to make the series, with a budget of \$750,000.

Ellis believes Shawanda is a role model for all young people—Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike. She said the songs provoke insight, experience and humour. "Her music is direct. It is not obscure. She addresses things." Calling Shawanda an "old soul," Ellis described her as having the "knowledge of 80-year-old. She



Crystal Shawanda is an up-and-coming country music singer generating a lot of buzz in the music industry.

is complex, honest and has integrity."

Crystal Shawanda's single 'You Can Let Go' will be released by RCA records on Feb. 25th and the six-part series chronicling her life will air on CMT Tuesday Feb. 12 at 8pm ET/ 5pm Pac.

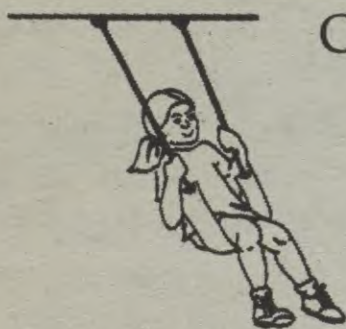
Gov't announces funding for First Nations initiative

Improvements can now be made to public health services on reserves thanks to an investment of \$3.7 million from the Government of Canada. This announcement came from Tony Clement, minister of health and minister for the federal economic development initiative for Northern Ontario on Jan. 10. The Ontario First Nations Public Health Initiative is a three-year project to ensure that on-reserve

health systems will be better integrated with improved co-ordination of health systems. The initiative will also establish a new information system, which will be used in First Nations communities for sharing on-reserve patient information with provincial public health units. First Nation communities will also be informed about communicable diseases from health professionals.

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ATTENTION: POLICE HIRING COMMITTEE

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Saskatchewan Sage: Special Section providing news from Saskatchewan

Elders share experience through parenting workshop

By **PAMELA SEXSMITH**
Sage Writer

Lloydminster

The Lloydminster Native Friendship Centre (LNFC) extended an open invitation to the Lloydminster community to attend five cross cultural workshops held from October 2007 to January 2008.

Doris Lewis, LNFC community and cultural resource worker, explained that "the goal of the workshops was to help close cultural gaps and foster a powerful exchange of traditional knowledge and understanding."

"We are hoping to see Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures coming together."

Many of the younger generation are not aware of what First Nations people have gone through and what has been lost," Lewis said.

November's workshop featured well-known "Grandparent Elders" Walter and Maria Linklater, who shared traditional teachings in a storytelling circle with a large, appreciative audience.

Elders-in-Residence at the University of Saskatchewan, the couple have helped foster more than 350 children, including some with FAS (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome).

Maria opened the workshop with a compelling demonstration of how to prevent "cultural shock" in a newborn Native child. Recreating an ancient ceremony, she wrapped an infant up in a soft blanket and laced her into a hand-made moss bag.

"The moss is a gift from Mother Earth. When I tie you up in the mossbag, I am promising to look after and protect you, and then hand you over to your mother to be breastfed. After feeding, I will sing traditional songs that will put her to sleep."

After demonstrating the "wrap", Maria held her audience spellbound with stories and wisdom garnered from a lifetime of experience.

"Once upon a time a newborn baby bison dropped his belly button into the snow and up sprang a tiny purple crocus. When the prairie crocus pushes up through the snow, that is how a baby bison's tummy looks, like the crocus. The spirit of the bison is strong and when we eat it, it makes us strong," she said.

Using an innovative prenatal doll, she shared some traditional

facts of life with workshop participants.

"As an unborn baby, your afterbirth is hooked up to your mother and if she smokes or drinks alcohol, it travels through the cord to you. In traditional culture, the afterbirth is buried in the bush with ceremony and prayer. A small girl is chosen to jump on that spot and pack the earth to help cover it, so that nobody knows where it is. Then we put a ribbon on a nearby tree. The bellybutton is placed in a small beaded bag and tied near the place where you sleep. When you are older, you can bury it wherever you want to," she said.

Raised in a family devastated by alcohol, Maria explained how she helped raise younger siblings and babies affected by FAS.

"After bringing home a little girl whose mother had been FAS, I thought that I had made a mistake for the first time in my life. I prayed to the Creator for help. I sang to her and sewed a special homemade bag to keep her close and safe. She was as tiny as a newborn child. I looked at her in the incubator and said, 'My grandfather's peace pipe is bigger than her little legs!' She was blue and should have died. But she woke up and began to move."

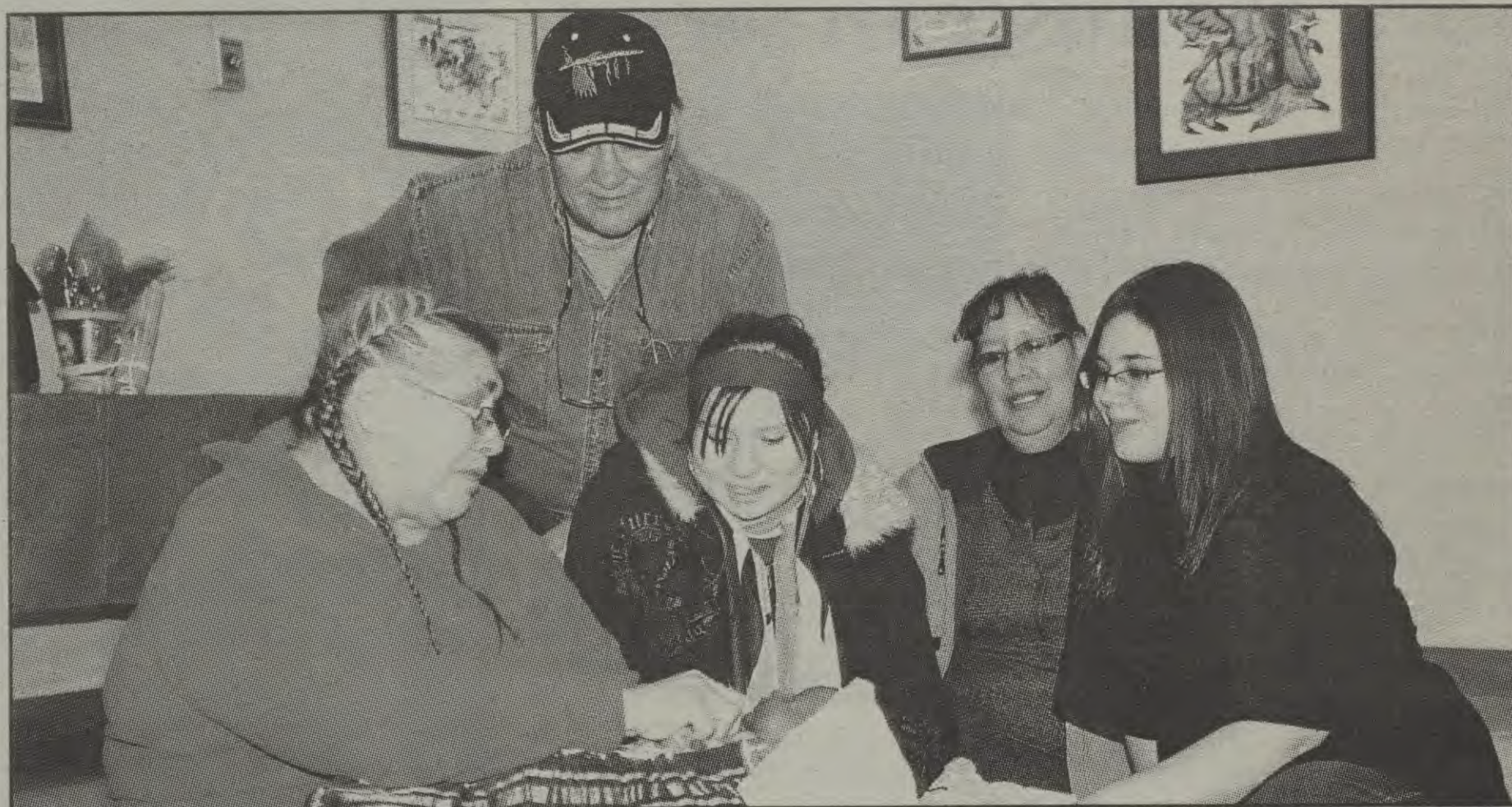
Maria turned to her own Native spirituality to save this little girl, sharing a story that brought tears to the eyes of her audience.

"I decided to give her water therapy. We are all related to the water. Everything we need to survive is in the lake. The water sponge, dried, stops bleeding if you know which plants to pick. The sand, mixed with cedar and heated up in a bag, acts as a warm compress with vapors that open your lungs."

"I went to the waters of Lake Superior, prayed and offered cedar tobacco and said, 'I am going to take what you have to offer and use it on this little girl.' I took a pail of white sand, dried it, and quilted it into little bags to use as weights in her bonnet, to stop her shaking, and sewed a little sand belt to help straighten her tiny spine. We raised her with love, hugs, kisses, herbal medication, goats milk boiled with wild rice and tiny spoonfuls of blueberry mint tea around the clock. On trips to the hospital, interns and doctors watched the process in amazement."

Maria explained how she has helped the little girl cope with her differences.

"I showed her a picture of the



PAMELA SEXSMITH

Elders Mary and Art Linklater share their wisdom and experience with Renalda Lewis (centre), LNFC community cultural resource worker Doris Lewis and April Saruk during a parenting workshop hosted by the friendship centre.

day she was conceived and how in the womb, she looked like a little fish. I told her that this was the way we all looked, but during that time, your mother drank alcohol. You are so smart, so intelligent ... but you learn differently. That is the way you are."

The Linklaters also shared insights about their "cultural boot camp" at White Calf First Nation, an initiative that offers Native families a safe space to reconnect with culture and spirituality.

"Campers are introduced to 'the medicine wheel of life' and 'the sacred place we come from before we entered our mother's womb'. We teach the creation story, that all creation is sacred because the Creator is sacred," Walter said. "We show how tobacco comes from native plants and must be used in a sacred way. We don't inhale when we smoke the pipe. We blow the smoke to

the four directions."

Guided by the Grandparent Elders, campers live in tipis, attend sweat lodges and learn how to live a good life.

"Everything from the Creator is sacred and connects human beings back to the sanctity of Mother Nature," explained Walter.

"We teach that there are proper ways to hunt, that we smudge our rifles, bullets, knives and snares. We ask the Creator to call to the moose, asking one of them to give up their life for us. We hear them talking amongst each other, ah ho, ah ho, trying to decide. After the hunt, we ask the Creator to thank the moose for giving up his life. The hunters ask the women to cook that moose in a respectful way, and take a food offering with tobacco to the north side of a tree, to share with the other animals," said Walter.

"We teach the children that

everything comes from Mother Earth. We show them how to be kind and respect their own parents. We teach that cruelty to animals is bad and not to hurt baby gophers. I speak for the trees and teach our children not to rip down branches or disrespect our sacred plants," added Maria.

Another powerful teaching shared by the Linklaters is the rebirth of an ancient Cree ritual, almost lost in time-the sacred name giving ceremony of a newborn child, swaddled, wrapped and laced up in a traditional moss bag.

"In the old days, the Elders would take that baby from the parents to discover which auras and colors surrounded them and which special animal spirits protected them," Walter explained. "In the naming ceremony, the Elders would give them their own distinctive name, and with it, a place in the tribe."



Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Chief Lawrence Joseph, Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall and June Draude, minister of First Nations and Métis Relations, speak to media prior to a chiefs' feast held at the provincial legislature on Dec. 18. First Nation chiefs from across the province joined MLAs at the event, held to give the two groups a chance to meet and begin to build a closer working relationship.

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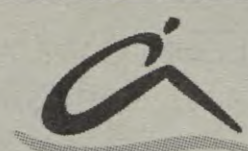
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Qualifications: Undergraduate degree in a related discipline and previous experience working with Aboriginal people including a diverse group of Elders is required. A graduate degree and three years experience working in the mental health field are preferred. The ideal candidate will have previous project management and community development experience; knowledge of Aboriginal culture within Alberta as well as excellent interpersonal, problem-solving skills, creativity, innovation and excellent verbal and written communication skills. Candidates must have solid working knowledge of Microsoft Word applications including Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook.

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From left to right is Teresa Moore, Samantha Nyce, Phillip Robidoux, Dennis Nyce and Kristin Sidoni. All of them competed in the annual Hot Food Competition, Junior Chapter in Vancouver from Jan. 27 to 28. Samantha, Dennis and Moore were the only Aboriginal team from Northwest Community College Culinary Arts program to compete. They picked up a bronze medal in the team competition.

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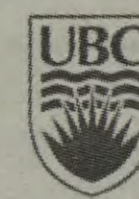
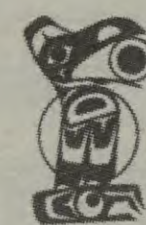
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[education]

Aboriginal people are wanted in the trades industry

By Marie Burke
Windspeaker Staff Writer

Winnipeg

The latest Canadian census report says Aboriginal people are the youngest and fastest growing population in Canada and many organizations believe that Aboriginal people may be the answer to the skill shortage in the trades and particularly in construction.

"We knew the skill shortage was coming and now it's here. It's such an advantage, this skill shortage, for Aboriginal people wanting a well-paying career," said Kelly Lindsay, president and chief Executive Officer for the Aboriginal Human Resource Council (AHRC).

The number one focus for the AHRC is to help employers recruit and retain the large and still untapped Aboriginal workforce. It means making the connection between skilled Aboriginal workers and prospective employers. Aboriginal workers could meet the current need for workers in the construction trades according to Lindsay.

"We've done more than make the connections. Once Aboriginal people and employers connect, they need to start making commitments and decide what steps they are willing to take to making this work for everyone," said Lindsay.

That means finding the middle ground between Aboriginal workers and employers to take action and respond to the growing need for skilled trade and apprenticeship workers, said Lindsay.

The AHRC created the three year "national trades and apprenticeship" initiative to strengthen partnerships with public and private sectors. Lindsay believes there also needs to be a national framework in place to ensure Aboriginal people improve their skills and employers develop the workplace.

With a booming \$130 billion construction industry in Canada, employment growth in construction has exceeded all other industries in the last 10 years.

The Canadian Construction Sector Council (CSC) is taking part in making relationships work between industry and the Aboriginal workforce.

The development of a Web site www.csc-ca.org, dedicated to Aboriginal careers in construction is part of their Aboriginal employment strategy.

"It is important to make sure people know about the successes

of Aboriginal people in the industry," said Allan Page, Project Manager, CSC.

Profiles of successful Aboriginal people in trades are featured on the web site along with information and links to Aboriginal training boards and Aboriginal training projects across Canada.

Visitors have the option of choosing a career and apprenticeship, examining industry trends and exploring prospective labour markets throughout Canada. They will also learn how to get started in the construction industry, which is readily available for both men and women.

Industry partners in the four sectors of the construction industry; new home building and renovation, heavy industrial and commercial construction, and civil engineering construction can find information on where to link up with the Aboriginal workforce. The site is also designed to inform and assist career counselors, and organizations like the AHRC.

Currently, the residential construction sector has the strongest growth with 50 per cent of the construction workforce employed in this sector.

"The construction industry has long tradition with Aboriginal people and has been a good fit. The challenges that exist for Aboriginal people to become successful in the construction industry can be overcome," said Page.

Schooling also plays an important role. "Apprenticeships leading to journeyman certification are made much easier when grade 12 math and reading skills are there at the beginning," said Page.

These types of challenges are something that Lindsay and AHRC is working on for Aboriginal people interested in a career in the trades.

"How can we breakdown some of the barriers that exist for Aboriginal and how can we awaken employers and connect them with Aboriginal people?" said Lindsay.

"Some of the answers are found in the pre-trade programs and some answers can be found in developing promising practices instead of developing best practice models," Lindsay said.

That means identifying real practices around recruitment, retention and corporate behaviors by changing people practices according to Lindsay.

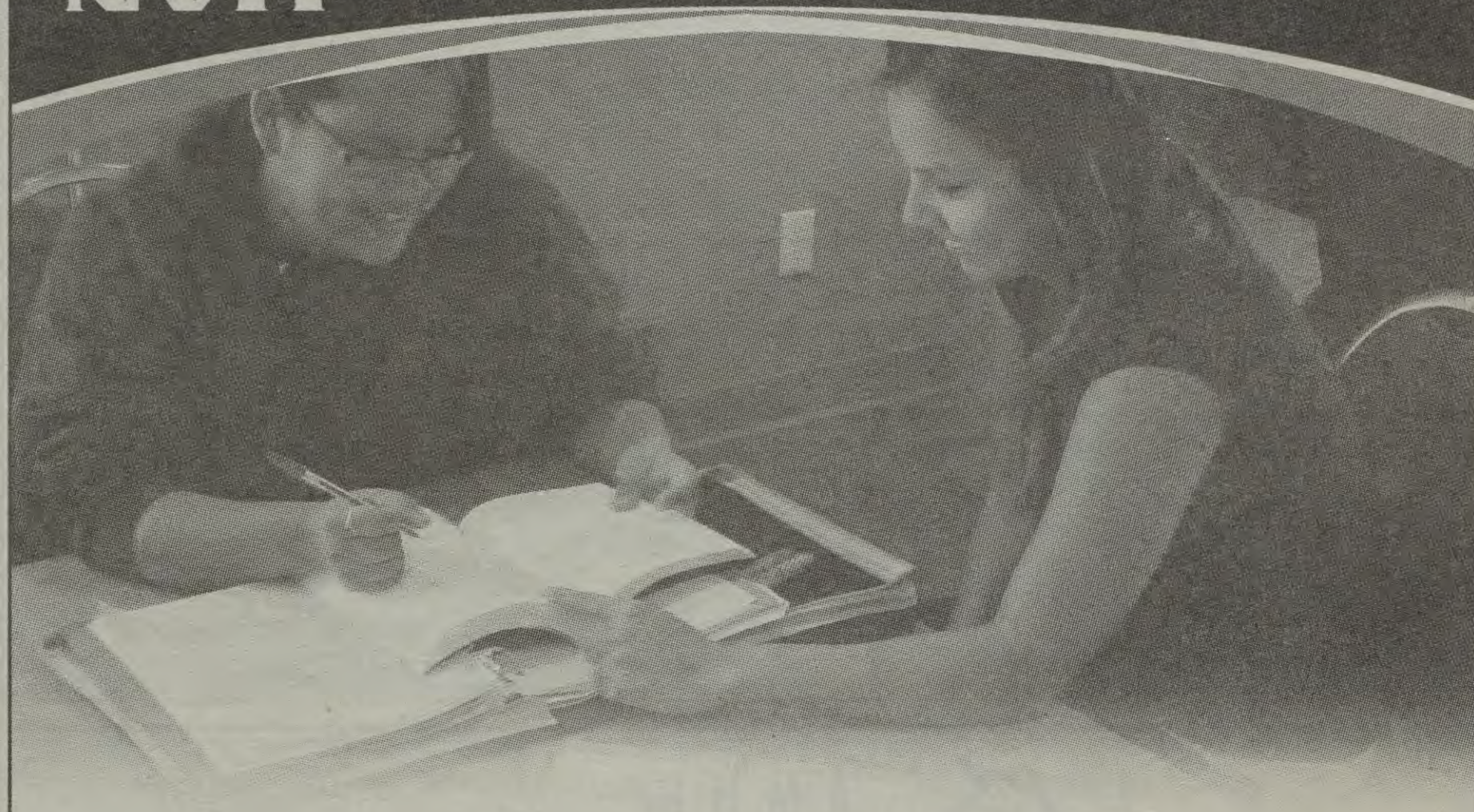
"We ask what type of career would you like to have in your lifetime and how will you get there and that's the promising part," said Lindsay.

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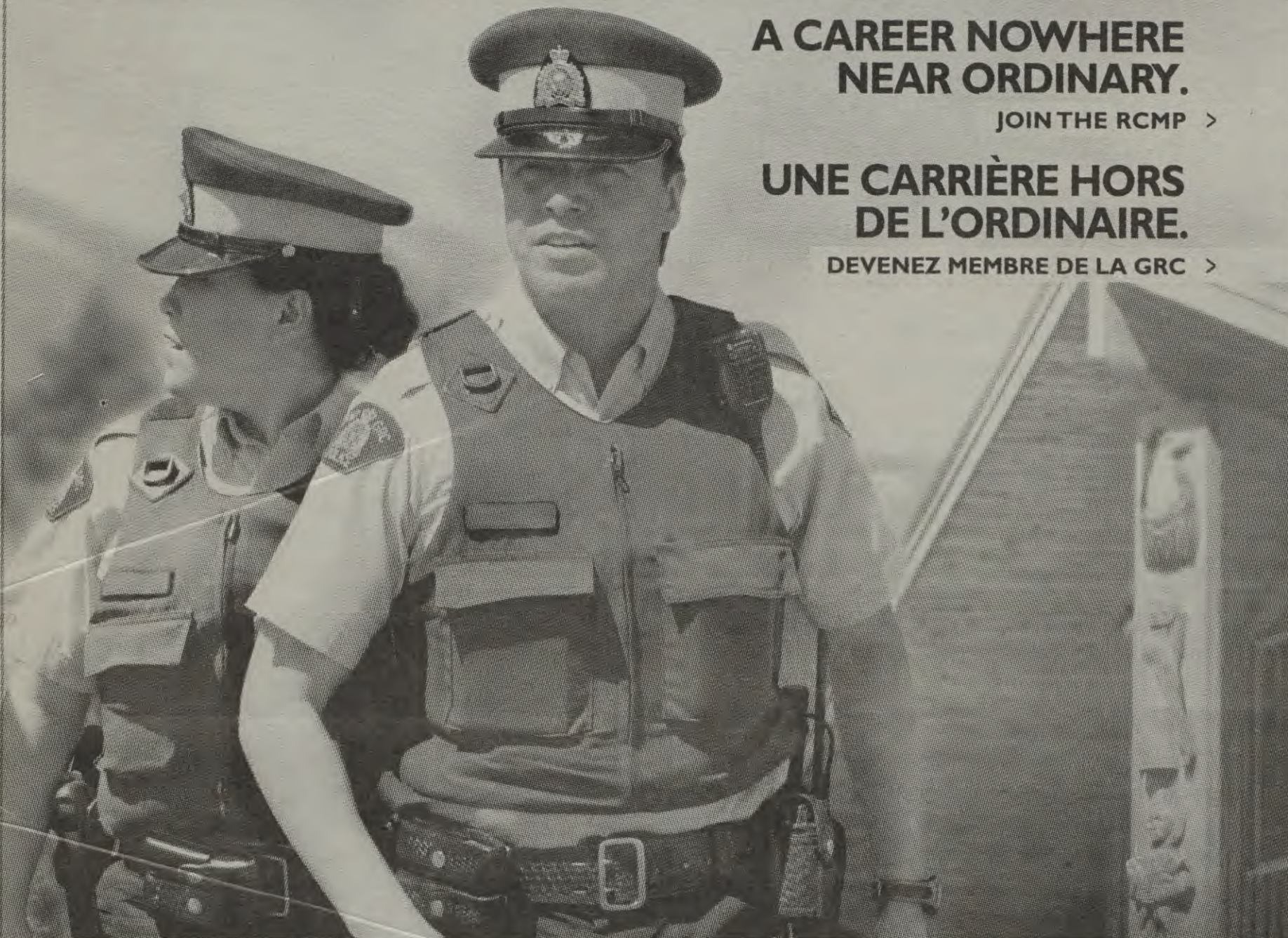
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Aboriginal Community Outreach Coordinator
Temporary Full Time – 1 Year Term
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RESPONSIBILITIES:

- ◆ Promotes Red Cross programs and services through presentations to Aboriginal community groups and participation in Aboriginal community coalitions.
- ◆ Represents the Region at the community level and establishes partnerships with various Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations to support the existing work of the Red Cross and to facilitate the development of new programs/services in Lethbridge and area.
- ◆ Works directly with the Aboriginal community to assess community needs and best practices for addressing unmet needs.
- ◆ Implements and coordinates activities related to Red Cross programs, services and initiatives including humanitarian service, RespectED, injury prevention, volunteer management and public awareness.
- ◆ Implements fund raising initiatives including developing, maintaining and growing relationships with funders.
- ◆ Ensures an appropriate volunteer base through recruitment, training, support and retention activities.
- ◆ Builds and maintains strategic partnerships with community contacts.
- ◆ Compiles and analyzes programs/services statistics, prepares reports and makes recommendations.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- ◆ The minimum requirements for this position include completion of post secondary education in a related field with 1 to 3 years experience, or an equivalent combination of education and experience, and
- ◆ Good communication skills in English are essential; fluency in another language is a definite asset.
- ◆ Experience in the community development field and in delivery of community programs is required.
- ◆ Experience in volunteer management is required.
- ◆ Good knowledge of Aboriginal communities is necessary; experience working with a diverse population and an understanding of cultural issues is an asset.
- ◆ Demonstrated interpersonal skills required.
- ◆ Ability to accommodate a flexible work week is necessary.
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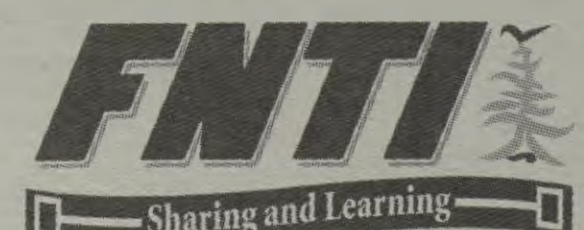
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[footprints] James Miles Venne

Leader worked to bring self-sufficiency to his community

By Cheryl Petten

On Nov. 28, 2007 the members of Saskatchewan's Lac La Ronge Indian Band (LLRIB) suffered a great loss when former chief James Miles Venne passed away.

Venne was born at Hall Lake, Sask., just west of La Ronge, on April 14, 1918. His father, Roderick, died when Venne was still a young child, and his mother, Annie, did all she could to care for her children on her own. Then the opportunity arose for Annie to send her children to All Saints residential school, where their ability to be fed would no longer be dependent on whether or not she had been successful in trapping rabbits.

It was during his time at residential school that Venne was exposed to experiences that would help shape who he was to become—a man with a deep religious faith, and a love of the land.

Venne had lived on the land with his mother before going to residential school but learned more about trapping while in school, when the principal brought local trappers in to share their skills and knowledge with the male students. Once he left school, Venne put these lessons to good use, and spent many years working his own trap line and finding employment as a guide.

Venne was a member of the All Saints Anglican Church for much of his life. He was confirmed in the church in 1937 and it was there where he married Mary McKenzie in 1944. He served as a lay reader in the church for many years and was ordained as a deacon in 1988 and as a priest in 1989.

He later served as assistant priest at All Saints, and was named Archdeacon Paul Cannon of St. Albans' Cathedral in Prince Albert in 1994.

He was also involved in the

Diocesan Indian Council, the Diocesan Synod and the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples in Toronto.

While his faith and his connection to the land were important to Venne, so was trying to improve the lives of his people.

Venne was first elected as LLRIB chief in 1971, and remained in the post until 1983. He was later re-elected in 1985 and served until 1987. But even after leaving public office, Venne continued to work on behalf of the community. In 1989, he was appointed to the senate of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, and was named a member of the LLRIB's council of Elders.

During his time as chief, Venne spearheaded a number of initiatives that continue to benefit band members to this day.

Recognizing that economic development was one of the keys to self-sufficiency for LLRIB members, Venne worked to create business opportunities for the band. Venne saw the growth in business ventures occurring in northern Saskatchewan, and knew that the band would have to become involved directly in those businesses if its members were going to benefit from that growth.

He also saw that the band's chances for success would be greater if it didn't try to go it alone, and worked to build relationships with other communities and businesses, and with provincial and federal governments, so all could work together toward a common cause.

Under Venne's leadership, the LLRIB created the Kitsaki Development Corporation, the business arm of the band's operations. Now known as the Kitsaki Management Limited Partnership, the organization is one of the most successful First

Nation business entities in the country and is involved in close to a dozen businesses, many of which are operated in partnership with non-Aboriginal businesses and/or other Aboriginal communities.

The first business venture the newly-formed corporation became involved with was Northern Resource Trucking, founded in 1986 as a joint venture between LLRIB and Trimac Transportation.

Just over two decades later, and the list of partners in the business has expanded to include 11 additional Aboriginal groups, allowing other communities to benefit from Venne's efforts all those years earlier.

While Venne recognized the importance economic development would play for his community, he also realized that another key to future success lay in the area of education.

When, in 1974, the LLRIB voted to transfer control of its education programs from the provincial government to the federal government, it was Venne who worked to assure people that the move would be a positive one that would pave the way for the band to have more say in the running of the schools in which their children were being educated. It was at his urging that the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (now the First Nations University of Canada) created a program to train Aboriginal teachers to teach in on-reserve schools.



LAC LA RONGE INDIAN BAND

Venne also fought long and hard to have a school built in each of the six communities that make up the LLRIB and helped pave the way for the band to take over control of its education system. His efforts were recognized by the LLRIB when they chose to name a school on Far Reserve in his honour.

While much of the work Venne undertook on behalf of his people was done at the local level, he wasn't opposed to extending his efforts to the national stage, or even the international stage, when it became necessary.

In the early 1980s, when it became clear that then-prime minister Pierre Trudeau's plan for a "made in Canada" constitution didn't include any protection of Aboriginal or treaty rights, Venne was one of the First Nation leaders who set out to try to change that situation. He and hundreds of other leaders made their way to London, England to lobby the British government in an attempt to put a stop to the process of repatriating the

constitution.

While the efforts of Venne and the other leaders weren't successful in ending the repatriation, they helped ensure that recognition of Aboriginal and treaty rights were included in the Canadian Constitution when it was proclaimed in 1982.

Venne was able to make things happen for his people in great part because of the man he was. He was dedicated to his family, his faith, and to working unceasingly for the benefit of the members of the LLRIB.

He will be remembered for his determination, his compassion, his humour, and for the love he had for his people.

Venne was laid to rest at the All Saints Anglican cemetery on Dec. 1.

Hundreds came to a public service held on Far Reserve to pay their last respects and to honour a man who had dedicated so much of his life to ensuring a better life for the people of the LLRIB, both now, and into the future.

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#2 Lisa & Gerald Robinson, Cross Lake, MB • 2006 Bombardier Quad 4X4
#3 Bradley Auger, Prince Albert, SK • 2006 Dazon Dune Buggy
#4 Arnold Gulle, Bogaret, MB • 2007 Ski-Doo Tundra
#5 Ivan Muskego, Norway House, MB • 2007 Dazon Dune Buggy
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2007 &
2008 GMC
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12 TO
CHOOSE
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