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**Education focus lacks
Indigenous perspective**
Page 9

**Report highlights keys
to business success**
Page 11

**The economic urgency
of water rights**
Pages 13

Volume 27 No. 10 • January 2010

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Aboriginal Multi-Media Society (AMMSA)

Publications Mail Reg. No. 40063755

ISSN 0834-177X

Established 1983

**A powwow dancer performs at the Canadian Aboriginal
Music Awards gala held in Hamilton on November 27, 2009.**

**For more photos and list of award winners, please turn to
pages 14 to 17.**

Photo Credit: Paul Macedo

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Monthly Circulation: 22,000
Windspeaker 1-year subscription: \$55.00+GST
Published since 1983, Windspeaker is
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Letters to the editor and all undeliverable
Canadian addressed copies can be sent to:

Windspeaker
13245 - 146 Street NW,
Edmonton, Alberta T5L 4S8
General Enquiries: windspeaker@ammsa.com
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The advertising deadline for the
February 2010 issue of Windspeaker
is January 22, 2010.
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We acknowledge the assistance of the Government
of Canada through the Publications Assistance
Program toward our mailing costs.

Canada

Features

Chiefs turn up the heat on treaty rights 8

There is a consensus among chiefs across the country, particularly when it comes to authority over their territories. They want the government to acknowledge that authority and share the wealth.

Education focus lacks Indigenous perspective 9

The cookie-cutter approach of the public school system in Canada is not serving Aboriginal children well. A recent report calls on customized education programs tailored to Indigenous groups to combat low high school graduation rates and the lack of post-secondary achievement in the Aboriginal community.

Limited roll out of new ID begins 10

The glitches have been worked through and the first wave of the new Secure Status Indian Cards began to be distributed in mid-December to First Nations membership living along the Canada-United States border.

Report highlights keys to business success 11

Can an Aboriginal entrepreneur really know whether a business will succeed or if it is doomed to fail? Well, the Conference Board of Canada's Centre for the North set out to find ways to make that determination by studying Aboriginal businesses across Canada.

Departments

[rants and raves] 5

[what's happening] 7

[windspeaker briefs] 9

[strictly speaking] 12

[canadian aboriginal festival] 14 - 17

[radio's most active] 19

[windspeaker confidential] 19

[provincial news] 20 to 23

[health] 24

[sports] 25

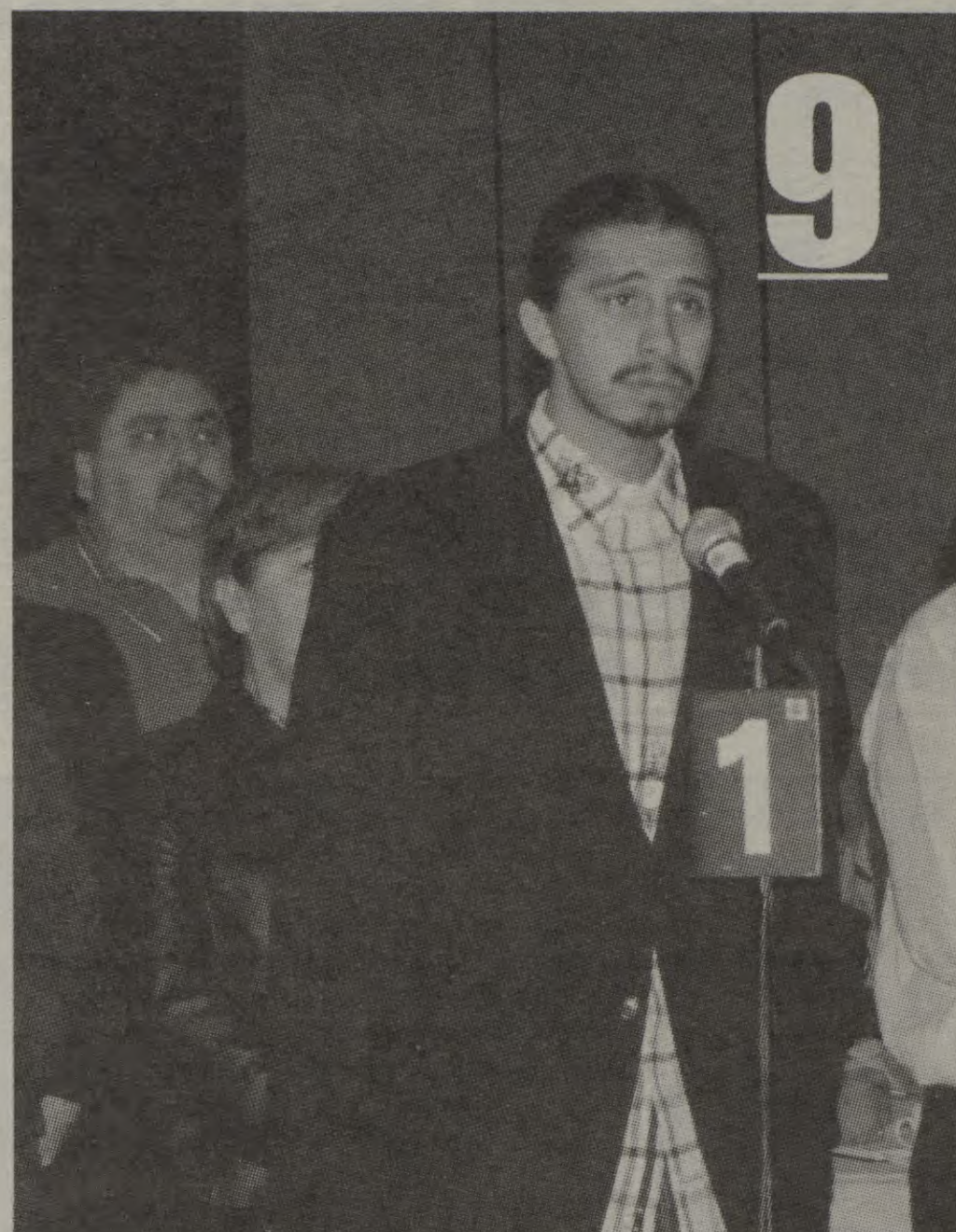
[education] 26 & 27

[careers] 28 & 29

[footprints] Joane Cardinal-Schubert 30

The late artist Joane Cardinal-Schubert frequently used her media artwork as an examination of labels and the stereotypes experienced as a Blackfoot woman growing up in a predominately non-Native society.

9



17



30



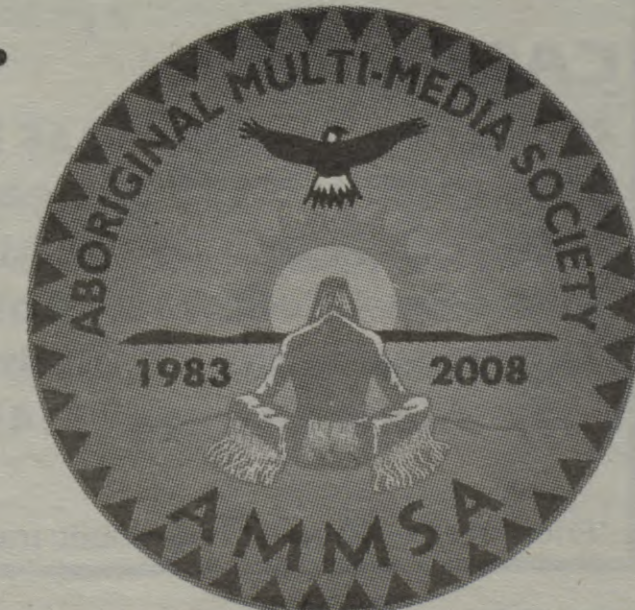
Windspeaker is published by the Aboriginal Multi-Media Society (AMMSA)
Canada's largest publisher of Aboriginal news and information.

AMMSA's other publications include:

Alberta Sweetgrass — The Aboriginal Newspaper of Alberta

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Stroke, stroke, stroke

A column published in the *Winnipeg Free Press* entitled "Christmas wishes that only you can fulfil" has writer Colleen Simard suggesting that mainstream Canadians hug an Aboriginal over the holiday season, so if unexpectedly some stranger starts pumping your hand or patting your back, thanking you for bannock and smoked cod, you can credit her for the added attention.

To get herself into the holiday mood she created a wish-list that asks Santa for a couple of things. High on her list is to get Canadians to stop thinking they have all the solutions to First Nations' problems. Simard said that the reserve system and the residential school system are just two examples of how that kind of thinking can go horribly wrong.

Ah, if only residential schools had been about solving problems for Native people and not about solving problems for Canadians then we could chalk up that tragic experience to an innocent, but badly conceived, notion rather than the insidious plot that it was to rid the country of its Aboriginal people. But it just ain't so.

Another item on Simard's wish list was for each non-Native person to make friends with a Native person and vice versa. She admits to having made that suggestion before and been raked over the coals for it. For us we hear an old commercial playing in the background—"We'd like to teach the world to sing, in perfect harmony"—but that's the Grinch in our heads speaking. Must be a spike in blood sugar.

Really, Simard's Christmas wish list is a very sweet thing. A very sweet, sweet thing.

She admits to having had the thought to put on her wish list adequate funding for Native education, and enough houses to shelter us all, action to end violence against women, and the like, but, hey, "he's only Santa," Simard writes. Let's not burden him with all that real stuff.

Yes, it's enough for her that we get a little nod from the non-Natives as they acknowledge Aboriginal heritage, deciding to stuff their turkeys with wild rice (our contribution) or add a side dish of pickerel to the Christmas table. But is it good enough for the rest of us?

Baloney. It's time we stopped tip-toeing around the big issues with all the bland stuff. Walking on egg-shells is killing us, and so is taking a light, warm and fuzzy approach.

Or so says another Native writer, Richard Wagamese, who brutalized the new Assembly of First Nations national chief in a column published in the *Yukon News*.

Wagamese was commenting on Shawn Atleo's interview in December with the CBC's Peter Mansbridge on his show *One on One*. Wagamese said the national chief portrayed First Nations people as "dullards," a fate worse than the stereotype of the war-bonneted chief on the test-pattern in the CBC's TV broadcasts of old.

Wagamese characterized Atleo's

performance as a one-dimensional, nondescript, vacuous portrayal of leadership, and that description was just in the second paragraph, so Wagamese was just getting warmed up.

His complaint was that Atleo refused to tackle the hard issues in his appearance with Mansbridge, a great lost opportunity to impress upon Canadians that our concerns are real and the problems we face cost us dearly every day.

"Canadians wanting answers and information about the lives and issues of First Nation people got nothing."

Wagamese said he felt abandoned by the man that not only purports to represent him, but is expected to defend his rights as a treaty Indian.

There is a time for diplomacy, certainly, and a time for taking a people by the elbow and gently guiding them along, but can Atleo's performance be described in such a way? Not according to Wagamese. He called Atleo a milquetoast, a weak and timid leader who accomplished nothing "to build bridges, open communication or lend credence to Native issues."

Are we agreeing with Wagamese at this early stage of Atleo's term? Hardly. We felt the milquetoast crack was overly critical. Anyone who could go on *The Hour* with George Stroumbouloupoulos and bust a move a la Michael Jackson can hardly be described as milquetoast.

But Atleo has been put on notice. There is a time for standing at people's backs to provide a push and a shove, and Atleo is expected to have a plan for when that time comes. For our part, we are prepared to wait, for a bit, for that plan to be revealed.

Atleo likes very much to quote his late grandmother Elsie Robinson, a trait that Wagamese describes as charming, but ineffectual when it comes to movement on the big issues. Atleo describes his family as fighters. Granny, he said, tells us that we no longer fight with our fists, but with education. The important thing here, however, we have to remind Atleo, is that a fight sometimes must occur.

If we were to make a wish list, as Simard has done, we'd ask Atleo to consider if his approach so far is helping to keep our children safe in their beds. Is it keeping our young men and women off of the dangerous streets of the urban centres? From selling their bodies to strangers to buy alcohol and drugs to relieve the pain of generations' past. Will women be protected against violence? Will there be houses built that won't cause sickness and disease? Will even one more person choose life rather than suicide?

If he's not prepared to articulate this reality, clearly and passionately, even aggressively, then he can break dance his way to the ends of the earth and back. It won't impress us at this time next year, and we'll take to a paddle in Wagamese's canoe.

Windspeaker

[rants and raves] Page 5 Chatter

NUNAVUT TUNNGAVIK INC.'S

Vice-President of Finance Raymond Ningeocheak launched a hotline to give Inuit the opportunity to express concerns about polar bears. NTI wants Inuit to call the toll-free or local telephone numbers in order to collect traditional knowledge about polar bears and climate change.

NTI set up the hotline following the United States' attempts to have all trade on polar bear products banned worldwide under the Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species (CITES). Nengeocheak plans to use the information gathered to present at a CITES conference planned for March 2010.

THE LONDON FREE PRESS IS REPORTING

that Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty may be throwing stones from inside a glass house. The paper said McGuinty "took another shot at the federal government" for its unwillingness to sign the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

"Ontario is taking meaningful steps to strengthen our partnership with Aboriginal people so that, together, we can improve the quality of life in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities and strengthen our province," McGuinty said in a press release. "A change in Canada's international position on the rights of indigenous peoples would enhance these efforts by setting a new tone that will lead to a deeper and more productive relationship with Aboriginal people."

But the McGuinty government's plan to harmonize the GST and the PST puts him directly at odds with First Nations groups, who say the new HST will put more of a financial burden on their people. Ontario chiefs have promised six months of direct action if the province or the feds can't come up with a plan to accommodate the treaty right to tax exempt status. See the *Birchbark* page inside of this publication for details.

THE UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS IS

also battling the imposition of a harmonized sales tax proposed for BC. The organization opposes HST saying it will place a heavy load on First Nations families who are living in poverty or are working poor. Both levels of government failed to consult with First Nations on the implementation of HST, and both levels of government have refused to meet with UBCIC to discuss the impacts of this tax, they charge.

Chief Keith Matthew, Simpcw First Nation and member of the UBCIC HST Committee stated "They are brushing us off. First Nations strongly believe there is a need to have discussions based on prior, and informed consent when the actions of government infringe on our Aboriginal and Treaty Rights. Taxation is one of those rights under Section 87 of the Indian Act. Any action that impacts these rights has to be discussed with our elected representatives prior to enacting this legislation. The honour of the Crown is at stake."

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip observed "First Nations families on and off-reserve already experience high poverty rates and will no doubt be greatly impacted by the proposed HST. This tax will further marginalize and add hardship to First Nations families and communities while increasing the coffers of industry and government. The UBCIC will work with like-minded organizations here in BC, and will reach out to First Nation organizations such as the Union of Ontario Indians and the Assembly of First Nations."

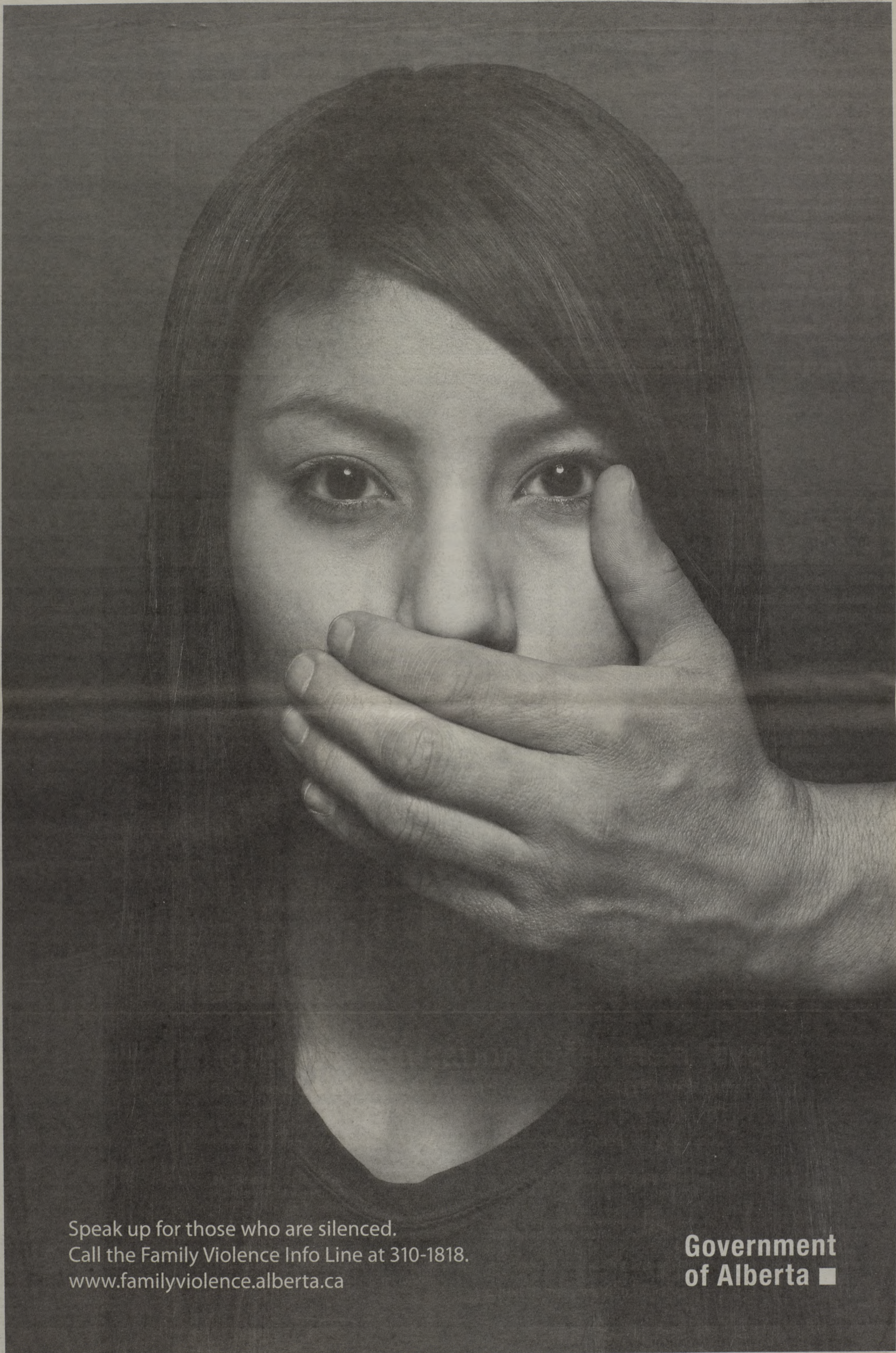
BLOODVEIN RIVER FIRST NATIONS HAS

become an active member of Pimachiowin Aki Corp. joining with four other First Nations to have a portion of the Manitoba-Ontario boreal forest designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Bloodvein River's decision means that additional lands will be added to the project planning area. Bloodvein River spokesperson William Young says he anticipates that more than 50 percent of his community's traditional territory will be added to the 40,000 square kilometres currently in the World Heritage Site project area.

Located 210 kilometres north of Winnipeg, Bloodvein River First Nation sits on three kilometres of shoreline on the east side of Lake Winnipeg directly north of the Bloodvein River and is home to about 1,500 residents.

"Our community knows that a World Heritage Site can help protect the boreal forest and our culture. We want to be closely involved in the development of the nomination to UNESCO and in the future management of this potential new World Heritage Site," Chief Frank Young who joins representatives from Pikangikum First Nation of Ontario, the Manitoba communities of Poplar River, Pauingassi and Little Grand Rapids and the Manitoba and Ontario governments on the board of directors of Pimachiowin Aki Corp.

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Chiefs turn up the heat on treaty rights

By Isha Thompson
Windspeaker Staff Writer

OTTAWA

There is a consensus among chiefs across the country, particularly when it comes to authority over their territories. They want the government to acknowledge that authority and share the wealth.

The chiefs attending the 2009 Assembly of First Nations gathering in Ottawa from Dec. 8 to 10 made it clear to the federal government that they want fair revenues from reserve resources, not welfare.

"Billions of dollars are being made by corporations and it comes back to us in the form of welfare cheques. That's got to stop," said Saskatchewan politician Jim Sinclair, who echoed the opinions of several chiefs who spoke at the conference.

The Indian Act came under fire for interfering with treaties that carefully outline specific rights Aboriginal people and their communities have over land and resources.

Sinclair spoke passionately about putting an end to the current system that, he said, allows Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to keep a large portion of Canada's Aboriginal people under its control, reliant on government

financial aid.

"They want to make sure we stay on welfare," he said.

Chuck Strahl, the minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), spoke at the podium on the final day of the three-conference. His speech followed two days of heated debate surrounding issues, such as education and treaty rights, which included impassioned remarks that criticized the minister's department.

"The Indian Act is not a piece of legislation that I am proud of," said Strahl, who admitted that the Act, implemented in 1876, had its flaws. He told the assembly that he is willing to work closely with Aboriginal leadership to discuss fair solutions to their concerns.

Many chiefs at the annual convention said they were tired of waiting and no longer wanted to hear the same old rhetoric about Aboriginal communities taking control of their treaties. It's been heard before at several past assemblies, yet, year after year, nothing comes of their resolution.

Chief Wallace Fox of Onion Lake First Nation made it clear that he is taking the initiative and taking back control of the resources on his reserve.

Fox, who had returned from overseas three weeks prior to attend the assembly, said he had signed a contract with an Asian

government to build a refinery on the Cree nation, located 50-kilometres north of Saskatchewan.

"They have a lot of financial resources and they want to work with us, First Nations people," said the chief. "They are looking at millions and billions of dollars to invest."

Fox, who has maintained his position as chief at Onion Lake First Nation since 1986, said he was unable to release the details of the contract due to the confidentiality agreement he signed.

Section 93(a)(i) of the Indian Act reads that a person who removes or permits anyone to remove minerals, stone, sand, gravel, clay or soil from a reserve without written permission of the minister is guilty of an offence.

Fox, however, offered no apologies.

"Nobody is going to tell Onion Lake people 'You can't do it.' We'll tell them to go to hell," Fox said. "We have to take care of our own and that's why we have to go overseas. We're thinking outside the box."

Thunderous applause from the 1,000-plus crowd of delegates greeted Fox's announcement. Many of the chiefs supported his plan to export the band's resources to the opposite side of the world.

Federation of Saskatchewan

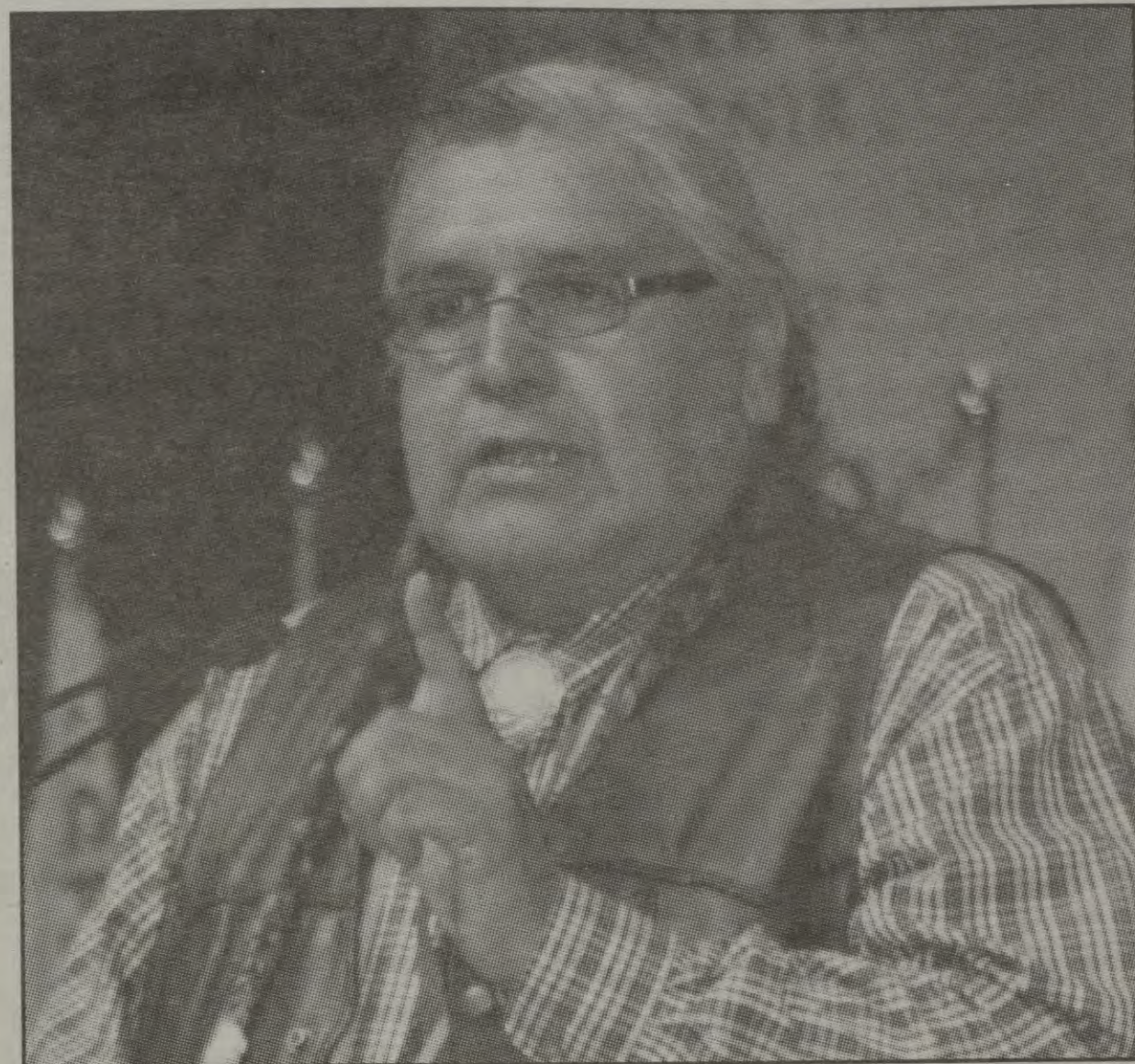


PHOTO: DEBORA STEEL

Chief Wallace Fox of Onion Lake First Nation in Saskatchewan is taking control of the resources in his territory to advance the nation's economy.

Indian Nations (FSIN) Chief Guy Lonechild asked Minister Strahl to honor the memory of several ancestors who had fought to have treaty rights recognized, by taking the time to address the concerns over, what some call, the neglect of the intention behind treaties.

Strahl immediately agreed. "Treaties are marching orders for us all."

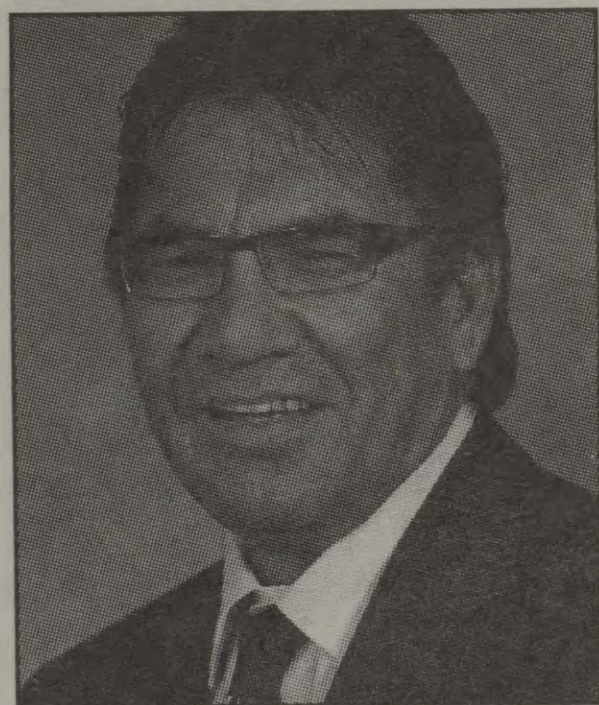
Minister Strahl added that concrete plans and programs to

better implement treaties are in development; although, he added, that progress was something that would take time.

Many speakers reminded Strahl that treaties are eternal agreements.

"It should last as long as the sun shines, grass grows and the river flows," was a phrase repeated by several chiefs and community members when describing how long treaties were to be honored.

Taxpayer organization pushes for taxing on-reserve purchases



FSIN Vice Chief Morley Watson

By Isha Thompson
Windspeaker Staff Writer

SASKATOON

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation's (CTF) claim that First Nations tax exemptions give their businesses an unfair advantage clearly proves that they are poorly educated, says the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) vice-Chief Morley Watson.

Saskatchewan CTF director Lee Harding caught the attention of many when he told reporters at a Regina gas station that "a race-based tax exemption is not something that should exist in 21st-century Canada."

"I don't really take the comments of Mr. Harding all too seriously," said Watson. "I think

he hasn't done his homework."

Watson added that Harding is certainly entitled to his own opinions and he explained that most First Nations communities have bigger fish to fry than striking back at the criticisms of a lobby group, such as the CTF.

"We're not too worried when people from CTF talk about 'race-based taxes.' We have real issues to deal with," said Watson.

Widely publicized issues surrounding, health, education and employment are some of the concerns Watson listed off as serious priorities that legitimately need attention.

"I think if Mr. Harding is so concerned that he wants a level playing field, he should speak to these public school systems that take all this money but don't educate our children," said Watson, who is angered that many on-reserve schools are underfunded and neglected when compared to public schools that are off-reserve.

At the beginning of November, Harding said the CTF was determined to push for change in the Indian Act that allows on-reserve businesses to offer band members tax-free prices.

The owner of Sonshine Car Wash and Gas, where Harding spoke to the media, told CBC that his business has suffered a 75 per cent drop in cigarette sales since the neighboring Piapot First

Nation opened Cree Land Mini-Mart.

The new on-reserve convenience store sells items tax-exempt to status Indians.

The manager of Cree Land Mini-Mart responded to the accusation and said the First Nation business benefits from tax-free status, he pointed out how his business has created 43 jobs for community members.

Watson agreed that focusing on the employment opportunities that come with on-reserve businesses should be the primary focus.

As a member of Ochapowace-Chachas First Nation, Watson referenced First Nations treaty rights that were created in the 1870s as a way for Indians to receive compensation for their land and resources.

"We've supported them for many decades and we're trying to do something for ourselves," said Watson. "Rather than condemn us for it, they should be looking at more ways they can create more employment and wealth for our people."

As an associate professor of Indian Education at the First Nations University of Canada, Dr. Linda Goulet strongly believes the accusations from Harding and the CTF don't stand up against the history of Canada.

Goulet explained that the tax exemption is a big part of the

treaty agreement. She likened it to First Nations collecting rent for their land.

"First Nations people have that advantage given to them through the treaty rights, non-Aboriginal people (also) have all sorts of advantages given to them through their treaty rights," said Goulet.

"They got access to the land, to the resources, to the wealth of the country."

Harding, who purposely mentioned that he had taken some Indian studies courses, doesn't agree that century old history is as relevant today.

He said with all the taxes non-status individuals are forced to pay in the 21st-century, First Nations should be "responsible" and pay their share.

When asked if the CTF had received any support for their goal to change the Indian Act and create a new law that doesn't include a tax-exemption, Harding's response was not promising.

"Not really," said Harding reluctantly. "Politicians are weary of creating political firestorms where they don't need to."

Harding admitted that he did receive a letter from the FSIN expressing their "disappointment" in his initiatives.

FSIN Chief Guy Lonechild was quoted as calling Harding's language "hurtful" when he referred to the tax exemption as

"race-based."

Harding is unapologetic.

"Whether it hurts or not, is not as relevant as if it is true," said Harding. "It is a race-based tax exemption."

Harding, who is a former journalist, strikes down any accusations that his rhetoric is discriminatory.

"I have lots of Aboriginal friends," he said. In fact, Harding said, the advantage First Nations receive of not paying taxes is encouraging racism.

"We would argue that in the long-term this actually feeds racist attitudes because there is an unfair environment."

According to Watson, First Nations supporting the CTF's vision of changing the Indian Act is unlikely. However, he did agree that slight changes were necessary in order to make the act – which was enacted in 1876 – more effective with modern issues, like health and education on First Nations reserves.

The CTF was founded in Saskatchewan in 1990 when the Association of Saskatchewan Taxpayers and the Resolution One Association of Alberta joined forces to create a national taxpayers organization.

The CTF has a federal office in Ottawa and provincial offices in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario.

Education focus lacks Indigenous perspective



Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Regional Chief Guy Lonechild speaks while AFN National Chief Shawn Atleo listens.

By Isha Thompson
Windspeaker Staff Writer

OTTAWA

The cookie-cutter approach of the public school system in Canada is not serving Aboriginal children well.

A recent report calls on customized education programs tailored to Indigenous groups to combat low high school graduation rates and the lack of post-secondary achievement in the Aboriginal community.

"It's time that we did something different... The learning issues that we are facing are also issues of poverty. They're issues of improper housing," said Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Shawn Atleo. He announced his support of the findings in the report at a press conference on Dec. 9 during the AFN Special Chiefs Assembly in Ottawa.

The support of finding ways to improve Aboriginal education goes to the heart of advancement on all socio-economic fronts. Atleo offered the wisdom passed along to him from his now late grandmother.

"We don't fight our fights with our fists anymore. We fight our fights with education."

The report entitled "The State of Aboriginal Learning in Canada: A Holistic Approach to Measuring Success" was released by the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL). It argues that First Nations, Inuit and Métis learning is heavily influenced by several factors that exist beyond the regular classroom model, like learning at the knee of an elder, as Atleo has.

CCL's research shows Aboriginal learning is spiritually-oriented, community-based and rooted in Aboriginal languages and cultures.

The release of the report came only days after the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) announced a proposal to create a separate school system for Aboriginal youth.

National Inuit leader Mary Simon spoke passionately about incorporating some of the findings in the report as a method

to keep youth in the classroom and increase the current Inuit graduation rate of 25 per cent.

"To be successful, the education system has to be rooted in our culture and our language," said Simon, who added that in the past, children were taught their history through oral tradition; a method she considers extremely effective.

CCL took the opportunity to announce the report during the AFN conference as a way to provide Aboriginal communities across Canada with a picture of their learning strengths and weaknesses.

Atleo spoke to the insufficient funding most Aboriginal schools receive compared to non-Aboriginal public schools.

Jeannette Corbiere-Lavell, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, said the report proved how important it is to support all areas of an Aboriginal child's life in order for them to achieve excellence with their education.

"[We need] specific funding targeted to women in communities to support the learning of our children, to bring opportunities to pass on knowledge in both formal and informal ways," said Corbiere-Lavell.

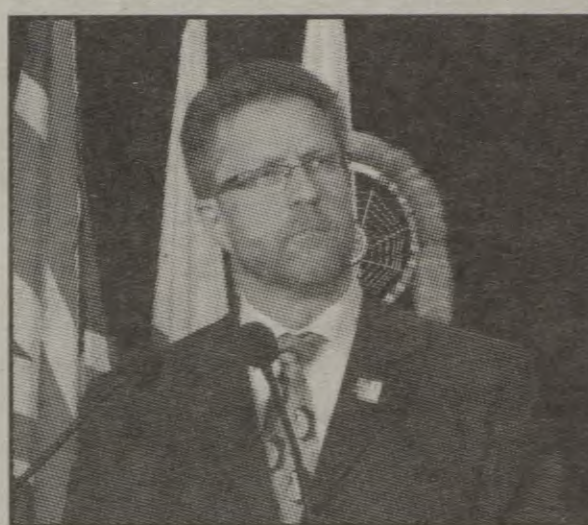
She also demanded that this new holistic approach to learning must be used to change the status of Indigenous education now, rather than being tied up by government bureaucracy.

The following day of the AFN conference, the minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) spoke. The crowd of more than 1,000 delegates took the opportunity to educate Minister Chuck Strahl about the sub-par conditions their children are forced to deal with while they attend school every day.

AFN youth council co-chair Colby Tootoosis made an emotional plea for the minister to act fast.

With voice shaking, Tootoosis linked the insufficient funding for Aboriginal education to the high amount of suicides in some Aboriginal communities.

"The current education



Minister Chuck Strahl



AFN youth council co-chair Colby Tootoosis

formula is like receiving \$20 of gas money to drive 100 miles," said Tootoosis, whose comments were met with loud applause.

"That's not enough. Our education is slowing down and we need something more than \$20 to get where we need to go."

Minister Strahl acknowledged the concerns brought forward and vowed to work closely with communities to find reasonable solutions to preserve Aboriginal languages and improve upon a system that has too few schools and little supportive programming.

But with his words came a caveat. Strahl reminded the crowd of the global recession.

"Many of the economic issues that you are talking about are issues we face as a federal government... They are difficult times for you and many of your communities and they are going to be increasingly difficult for governments as well," said Strahl.

According to the parliamentary budget officer Kevin Page, the funding to operate First Nations schools must increase.

He estimates that there is currently a gap between \$169- to \$189 million in capital funding between what INAC provided for the 2009-2010 fiscal year and what is actually needed.

Windspeaker news briefs

THE GITGA'AT FIRST NATION,

Haislan Nation, Heiltsuk Nation, Kitasoo band, Metlakatla First Nation and Wuikinuxw Nation have signed an agreement with the government of British Columbia that will promote economic development.

The Coastal Reconciliation Protocol, announced Dec. 10, includes \$25 million for a new ferry terminal at Klemtu, shared decision-making on resource and land use, allocation of carbon-offset revenue from forests on First Nations' traditional territory and revenue-sharing of commercial recreation permits.

Some are calling it a new-style treaty. The protocol "will ensure lasting and comprehensive reconciliation with the coast First Nations by giving those First Nations a direct say in the decisions that impact their people," said Premier Gordon Campbell.

The premier also signed an agreement with the Haida Nation on Dec. 12 that included shared decision making, increased prosperity through responsible economic development on the land base and a commitment to continue working together towards a comprehensive reconciliation. The protocol agreement also changes the name of the Queen Charlotte Island to Haida Gwaii, the Haida's traditional name of the territory.

"After a hundred years of conflict, we have set the ground (work) for a more productive era of peace," said Guujaaw, president of the Haida Nation. "We have already agreed to the care and protection of the land; and now we develop processes for more responsible management. This marks an opportunity to build a relationship on mutual trust and to design a model for a sustainable economy."

LYLE WHITEFISH, A VICE-CHIEF

with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, has concerns about the Independent Assessment Process (IAP) that hears the cases of Indian residential school survivors. A problem is the length of time it takes former students to receive compensation.

The IAP provides a non-adversarial adjudication for determining compensation for former students who suffered sexual or physical abuse, among other acts, committed against a child attending residential school.

"The IAP process is too slow; some of the former students have passed on before a settlement can be reached," said Whitefish. "There is a long waiting period between filling out the application, to the hearing date, then to the final decision and finally a settlement. Sometimes these settlements take up to two years."

A complex point system is used to rate the abuse. A claimant completes a detailed application form of their experiences, and evidence is collected to substantiate allegations. A private hearing is held and questions from a neutral adjudicator are answered. Usually within 30 days after the hearing, a decision is made and compensation is issued.

"What we are finding out is there is a shortage of adjudicators. This shortage is creating a back log in cases. Saskatchewan makes up the largest number of residential school survivors in Canada," said Whitefish.

THE TOBIQUE FIRST NATION AND THE GOVERNMENT

of New Brunswick have signed a five-year, \$2.5 million hydro deal. The deal sees remediation of erosion on the St. John and Tobique rivers caused by building the Tobique Narrows and Beechwood dams in the 1950s. The government also will clean up a contaminated dump site on the reserve, and provide training so that members can get work at the dams. The government will also transfer five megawatts of power to the First Nation, the start of future opportunities around power generation.

Tobique's commitment in the deal is to guarantee the employees of NB Power, which has been suffering with a spate of protests impacting power generation, will continue to have access to the dam.

OSOYOOS INDIAN BAND IS GOING GREEN

for their new enterprise, an environmentally-sustainable industrial park to be located in Oliver, B.C. The Senkulmen Enterprise Park received \$2.7 million in partnership funding during a ceremony on Dec. 12 to launch the project. Osoyoos Indian Band Chief Clarence Louie said, "Realizing this goal concludes a 40-year journey for our Band to develop a state-of-the-art Enterprise Park that will attract new businesses to the area, provide year-round well paid jobs and generate economic spin-off benefits for the South Okanagan for generations to come."

The Senkulmen Enterprise Park will be located on a 207-acre parcel of land at the north end of the Osoyoos Indian Band reserve with 112 acres dedicated for commercial activity and 95 acres set aside as environmentally-protected land. The enterprise park will be developed in phases and is expected to take 10 to 20 years to build-out. The park will ultimately accommodate 40 tenants.

Osoyoos will partner with environmental organizations to replant conservation areas, and will conserve sensitive habitat areas.

The 460-member Band runs nine businesses, including the largest tourism resort in the South Okanagan region of British Columbia, a desert cultural centre, and NK'MIP Cellars – the first Aboriginal-owned winery in North America. Osoyoos Indian Band businesses have won numerous awards for their innovation.

Limited roll out of new ID begins

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

The glitches have been worked through and the first wave of the new Secure Status Indian Cards began to be distributed in mid-December to First Nations membership living along the Canada-United States border.

"We were supposed to be one of the pilot communities (for the card)," said Chief John Thunder, of Buffalo Point First Nation in Manitoba. "We were told there was a delay, but (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada) didn't tell us why. It's just typical of government bureaucracy. They've never done anything in a timely fashion. We've just gotten used to it."

The cards were to be rolled out in June. But in September INAC suspended the application

process because privacy issues became a concern and caused delays.

"In order to provide assurance to First Nations individuals that the information collected remains protected, INAC worked with independent assessors to assure the security of the technological components of the card are reliable and secure," said Margot Geduld, with INAC media relations.

In the initial phase of the project, 15,000 applications were received. Those applications are now being processed.

"A new application process is being developed and will be implemented in a phased approach across Canada," said Geduld.

The delay in receiving the Secure Status Indian Card hasn't been a big deal for Buffalo Point First Nation citizens.

"I have a passport," said Thunder. "Most of us are like that."

Thunder said that his First Nation had discussed the possibility of approaching INAC to pay for passports for membership instead of delivering the Secure Status Indian Card when the cards were delayed. United States passports are good for 10 years, while Canadian passports need to be renewed every five years.

Thunder noted that because the nearest hospital for Buffalo Point First Nation is in the U.S. instead of Canada, most members are born in the U.S. and have U.S. and Canadian passports. Not only are members born in the U.S. but most work and have families in the U.S. so being able to cross the border with little hassle is important. At one point, a portion of the Buffalo Point First Nation

reserve was in the U.S.

"It's almost as if the border doesn't exist to us," said Thunder, "other than the inconvenience of having to go through (customs)."

Prior to September 2001, it was easy for Buffalo Point First Nation members to travel back and forth between the two countries.

"Our customs are pretty friendly and we deal with them on a day to day basis. It's almost a personal relationship," said Thunder.

But after the terrorist attack on the twin towers in New York, "it is now a pain in the butt. I understand the need for security because of 9/11, but when they see your face everyday, they don't need to be treating you like you're some kind of terrorist or outsider," said Thunder.

The chief noted that membership had more hassle

with Canadian custom officials returning to Canada than they had with U.S. custom officials.

While INAC embarks on the process of getting the new Secure Status Indian Card to First Nations members, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security will continue to accept the present identification.

"INAC has been advised that the Department of Homeland Security will continue to accept the current Indian status card as a Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative compliant document for a reasonable transition period into 2010 while the secure certificate of Indian status cards are distributed," said Geduld.

There are more than 800,000 status Indians in Canada.

"We do caution individuals that the period of flexibility is entirely at the discretion of U.S. officials," noted Geduld.



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Report highlights keys to business success

By Debora Steel
Windspeaker Contributor

Can an Aboriginal entrepreneur really know whether a business will succeed or if it is doomed to fail? Well, the Conference Board of Canada's Centre for the North set out to find ways to make that determination by studying Aboriginal businesses across Canada.

"True to Their Vision: An Account of 10 Successful Aboriginal Businesses" discusses keys to Aboriginal business success for those operating in an often challenging marketplace. What the authors have learned is that it takes strong leadership, sound business practices, and solid relationships and partnerships to overcome these challenges to realize success over the long-term.

Entrepreneurship is a growing trend. The authors note that creation of businesses in the Aboriginal community rose by 30 per cent in the years between 1996 and 2002.

"Aboriginal businesses face the same challenges as non-Aboriginal businesses, as well as unique challenges," said Ashley Sisco, a research associate with the Conference Board of Canada. "The successful businesses featured in this report show that these challenges can be addressed."

"Successful Aboriginal businesses not only create jobs and wealth, they play a role in

improving overall socioeconomic outcomes for Aboriginal peoples."

The authors acknowledge that Aboriginal businesses enjoy some distinct advantages, including taxation exemption and procurement set-asides, and those non-Aboriginal businesses that partner with them can benefit.

But be forewarned, there are some challenges that need to be overcome, including "limited access to capital, limited access to resources, issues related to band governance (for band-owned businesses), and stereotyping."

A key to overcoming these issues is strong leadership. The report describes the Aboriginal business leaders featured as "expert communicators and negotiators; passionate and inspirational." They are genuine people who act with integrity. They are courageous people who embrace continuous learning. They are strategic thinkers who are results oriented.

The businesses featured include Arctic Adventures, an Inuit-owned professional outfitting business in Nunavik; Big Soul Productions Inc., an Aboriginal-owned production company located in Toronto; Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park Inc., a cultural, educational, and entertainment centre at Siksika in Alberta; Five Nations Energy Inc., a non-profit electricity transmission corporation owned equally by Attawapiskat Power Corporation, Kashechewan

Power Corporation, and Fort Albany Power Corporation; KAVIK-AXYS Inc., a leading environmental impact assessment and protection planning consulting company in Inuvik, N.W.T.; and Khewa Native Art Boutique, which specializes in Aboriginal arts and crafts in Wakefield, Que.

Also featured are Kitasoo Aqua Farms Ltd. and Kitasoo Seafoods Ltd., a salmon-farming operation and fish-processing plant owned by the Xai'xais/Kitasoo band of Klemtu, B.C.; Membertou Corporate Division, a band-owned business and the economic development wing for the Membertou

Mi'kmaq community, which owns and operates several businesses in Nova Scotia; SAY Magazine, a lifestyle magazine for Indigenous peoples; and Tron Power Inc., one of the leading general contractors in Northern Saskatchewan located in Patuanak and Saskatoon.

The report concludes that in addition to having classic leadership traits, the business owners are also collaborative and community focused.

The "True to Their Vision" report also discusses one of the biggest challenges facing Aboriginal business—access to capital.

"According to the 2002 Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, the majority (80 per cent) of Aboriginal entrepreneurs require under \$50,000 for start-up

funding. Personal savings and commercial bank and credit loans were the most common sources of funding used by Aboriginal entrepreneurs (83 per cent and 51 per cent, respectively) to start their businesses."

Stereotyping is also seen as a major challenge. In 2003, almost half of off-reserve Aboriginal people reported they had been a victim of racism or discrimination in the previous two-year period.

Kelly Lendsay of the Aboriginal Human Resource Council said stereotyping of Aboriginal peoples often takes the form of "microinequities." These are subtle forms of racism; small, but the cumulative effects can result in exclusion or the limiting of opportunities for Aboriginal people.

Stereotyping can make potential partners hesitant to become involved with Aboriginal business.

"Jack Royal, Blackfoot Crossing General Manager and President, feels that it is important that each of his staff members is especially knowledgeable and professional to dispel common misconceptions about Aboriginal businesses," reads the report.

"Many of the businesses featured in this report even channel these stereotypes as motivation to succeed—to prove them wrong," the authors found.

The report is hopeful though that Canada's, and Canadians',


relationship with Aboriginal people is beginning to turn around. The conflicts and confrontations still exist, but trust is building that will lead to more corporations partnering with Aboriginal business.

Asked what they look for in an Aboriginal business partner, Aboriginal relations executives and experts interviewed by the Conference Board in 2009 said they sought out business leaders with strong business knowledge, capacity, and who will participate actively toward the success of the enterprise. They also looked for clear communications, trust and good will, shared objectives, stable business governance, and community support of the endeavour.

This is the first report developed by the new Centre for the North. The centre provides insights into how Canada can best address the challenges and opportunities in its Northern regions. These challenges include the effects of climate change on the people and the resources of the territory which offers vast economic opportunities.

"Adding to the tensions, Aboriginal communities, businesses, and the federal, provincial, territorial, and local governments will each want their share of the benefits from economic development," reads the centre's home page on the Web at <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/centre-for-the-north.aspx>


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[strictly speaking]

Real Indians don't do it for money

My goodness, how times have changed. Up until the 1950s, it used to be highly illegal for Native people to practice any form of their religious beliefs, whether it was participating in a Sundance, potlatch or sweat lodge ceremony. Bingo excluded, of course. Now-a-days, those same rituals have become exceedingly popular among the dominant culture.

About 10 years ago, I directed a documentary about Algonquin Elder William Commanda and the Circle of Nations, a gathering of people from all around the world held in Gitagan Ziibi (formally known as Maniwaki), Que. During a long weekend in summer, more than 2,000 people would camp on his front door step and take part in a series of workshops, lectures and seminars on a variety of subjects ranging from teachings of the wampum belt to the running of sweat lodges. It was an interesting place to be.

Of course, three quarters of the people there were non-Native. Not that there's anything wrong with that, as Seinfeld would say. Knowledge and spirituality needs



THE URBANE INDIAN

Drew Hayden Taylor

no status card. Some of my best friends are white and looking for direction. Some of my best friends are also Native and looking for direction. Anyway, I remember interviewing these three people who had made the journey from New York City. Two were white women and one was a black guy. All three said they practiced the Lakota path of spirituality in the Big Apple. Another guy said he used to hang out with the Hells Angels at one time, till a conversation with the Dali Lama convinced him that Hell didn't need angels. He now finds himself tending the fires at the sweat lodges. There was an eclectic group of people gathered at Maniwaki, all being welcomed, fed, and taught.

And then you find things like what happened recently in Sedona, Arizona. Last October, three people died from

participating in a poorly-run sweat lodge ceremony. Twenty-one additional people were taken to area hospitals with illnesses ranging from dehydration, respiratory and kidney failure. This is a lesson in what can go wrong.

Here's an advanced tip on how to avoid tragedies like this – don't pay for it.

If the guy running these types of ceremonies presents you with a bill or tells you the path to spiritual strength requires a credit card, chances are it's not for you.

The guy who ran this enterprise, James Arthur Ray, charged these people \$9,695 a pop to sit in a big round artifice and sweat their brains out, literally. It was part of a five day "Spiritual Warrior" event that culminated in the sweat lodge ceremony where a reported 64 people crowded into a single

sweat lodge. That's almost \$640,000 dollars for less than a week's work. Excellent work if you can get it, I suppose.

I don't mean to sound snarky. After all, this is a true tragedy. However, after getting his guests to sign a liability release, he did promise the retreat would absolutely "change your life." It did for at least three people. He told participants they may experience "physical, emotional, financial or other injuries" during the five-day spiritual quest in the wilderness.

Note the term 'financial.' In case I didn't mention this earlier – don't pay for it.

That must be stressed. A total of 99 per cent of the people I've met who have run or held sweat lodges don't charge. Paying for this kind of thing goes against the point. At the risk of sounding racist, most Native people know this. It's mentioned somewhat extensively in the operator's manual we get with our status card.

Alvin Manitopyes, a Cree healer, says it all: "Our elders conduct sweat lodge ceremonies out of love for their people to

help them in their healing and spiritual growth. When someone attaches a price tag to the ceremony, then the sacredness is gone and it comes down to them playing around with our sacred ceremonies."

Then again, \$640,000! That is an awful lot of money for five days. Obviously, if people are willing to throw it away on something like this, it's money they don't want or need. That gave me an idea.

Just come over to my place. We'll sit around my living room wearing only towels. I'll jack up the thermometer as high as it will go, and I'll read aloud from some Tom King or Tomson Highway. We'll sing a few Native songs, like Kashtin or Buffy Sainte-Marie, and then I'll give you all traditional Indian names. After the five days of traditional Native foods—baloney and Kraft Dinner—we'll roll around outside in the leaves and call it in a day.

I do take cheques, as long as you have two pieces of I.D., plus GST.

I'm half white; I should know how to do this.

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The game has changed for First Nations in P.E.I.

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

LENNOX ISLAND FIRST NATION, P.E.I.

The first fully-owned and operated First Nations fishery in Atlantic Canada is scheduled to open its doors in May 2010.

Minigoo Fisheries Inc. is an operational partnership between Lennox Island First Nations, Mi'kmaq of Prince Edward Island, and Jon Osmann Aranson, former operations manager of Ocean Choice International's Souris plant.

Work toward making the seafood and lobster plant a reality began in August.

"The (official) announcement of Minigoo (in December) will have a long and lasting positive impact on our community. To me, it represents the beginning of the journey to self-sufficiency," said Chief Darlene Bernard. Bernard will also serve as chair of the board of directors for Minigoo Fisheries.

Part of that journey included securing financing for Minigoo.

The fishery is 100 per cent privately funded, which means no federal or provincial dollars.

"I wanted a plan that we could take to private lenders and get them interested in it.... The team we put in place and the business plan we generated was very well received by the Bank of Montreal and I think that speaks volumes," Bernard said.

The Bank of Montreal is financing the First Nation's operation.

Profit from the fisheries will go back to Lennox Island, which is the largest First Nation band in P.E.I. Money will be re-invested in infrastructure, programs and services for community members both on and off reserve. Some areas noted by Bernard include housing, road construction and maintenance, and addictions programs.

"These are areas that have been chronically underfunded and will remain underfunded if we remain reliant solely on Ottawa for funding," Bernard said. "We are excited about having the potential to invest in many of these areas."

Aranson, who lives in Charlottetown, has custom designed the Minigoo Fisheries facility, which will be built to Canadian Food Inspection Agency specifications. He is also overseeing construction, which is an expansion and renovation of a current building on the reserve.

Aranson is in charge of the purchase and installation of state of the art leading edge equipment and technology. He will be personally responsible for sales and marketing of the Minigoo Fisheries product line.

Lennox Island band member Robert Augustine has been retained as Manager of Operations for the facility, which is expected to employ 60 to 75 workers through the processing season, which runs from May to as late as December. Workers will be trained on the job and positions will be filled by community band members first, and then opened to regional and provincial residents as required.

"As Lennox Island is a First Nation under federal jurisdiction, that will be the required licensing for the

processing and selling of lobster to regional, national and international markets," said Dennis King, director of Communications for Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island.

Lobster will be the primary product processed at Minigoo Fisheries, although smaller quantities of other fish will also be handled. Lobster will be processed and marketed in a variety of ways, both fresh and frozen.

"We will be filling voids in the marketplace in those traditional areas, but also will be exploring new and innovative markets," said King. "As we gain more experience and expertise in the industry, we will explore opportunities to expand and diversify as the industry and marketplace dictate."

Citing "competitive reasons," King would not elaborate on the amount of lobster to be purchased or sold. The band does operate eight lobster fishing vessels. The processing operation will purchase lobster from both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal

fishermen in PEI.

Also serving on the board of directors are Colin MacDonald, president of Clearwater Seafoods; Gerald Amirault, CEO of the Lobster Institute at the Atlantic Veterinary College; and, Stan MacPherson, senior partner in MacPherson Roche Smith.

"When I addressed my community, I told them I didn't know if I was going to jump and scream for joy, or just bury my hands in my face and cry," said Bernard. "I am just so very proud of this accomplishment and the hope for the future we have. I am grateful for those who have gone before us who helped pave the way to get us to today. I am optimistic for the future of our children and grandchildren. And most of all, I sincerely hope this will become one of the days many of us remember as the day the game changed for Lennox Island, and for all the Mi'kmaq on Prince Edward Island. I am just so energized and excited for our future."

Lennox Island First Nation is located on the northwestern coast of PEI.

The economic urgency of water rights

By Lee Ahenakew
of 4Sight Consulting
Windspeaker Contributor

It is often now said "water is the new gold."

Water is essential for economic development, including residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural development.

As First Nations develop their economies and maintain their culture they will require water to do so. The problem is, federal and provincial governments have not specified how much water First Nations are entitled to, nor are there any Canadian court decisions that set a precedent as to how much water First Nations are entitled to.

In practice, provinces exercise the power to allocate water to users. Merrell-Anne Phere asks the question in her new book "Denying the Source—The Crisis of First Nations Water Rights" that "Regarding waters that may be needed by First Nations...there is complete uncertainty as to who is in

control of, or responsible for, or can allocate water. What entitlement do First Nations have?"

Provinces, in practice, control water use, but do not have any fiduciary obligation to First Nations; that rests with the federal government. First Nations rights and entitlement to water are currently without any significant government representation.

Provinces allocate the available water to users, with most of this allocation going to industry and agriculture. In the North Saskatchewan River Basin, industry uses 85 per cent of all water allocations. This is much different than the Oldman River Basin, a sub-basin of the South Saskatchewan River Basin, where 87 per cent of all water allocations are for agriculture.

Alberta has already allocated all the water that is available in three river basins, including the Oldman River, Bow, and South Saskatchewan sub-basin.

Dr. David Schindler and W.F. Donahue, prominent Canadian

scientists, recently published a paper that estimated water levels in rivers in Alberta have declined 20 per cent to 84 per cent in the last 100 years. Dr. Schindler warns that water levels are sure to deteriorate further with climate change.

Eastern Canada is equally challenged for water. The Great Lakes represent 18 per cent of all freshwater on earth, and the renewable water supply is also challenged. Peter Annin warns us in the "Great Lakes Water Wars" that "less than one per cent of water in the lakes is considered renewable, that is, charged by rain, snowfall, and groundwater every year." He also informs us that, according to a report in 2000 by the International Joint Commission, which helps resolve water disputes between Canada and the United States, that "If all interests in the Basin (Great Lakes) are considered, there is never a 'surplus' of water in the Great Lakes system; every drop of water has several potential uses."

The available water for use in

many areas of Canada is becoming scarce. This will create a conflict between industry and agriculture, and between users of water. The winner will reap the rewards of the associated economic development.

Treaty rights include the right to benefit from reserve lands. Originally, this benefit was meant to be from agricultural purposes which may require rights to large amounts of irrigation water. Many communities also want to 'benefit' from industrial and commercial developments on reserve land that produce large scale employment and profit. These developments require water rights too.

The right to benefit from reserve land is under threat due to current and looming water shortages in Canada. Climate change will intensify the water shortage by creating additional demand for irrigation water while depleting the supply of available water.

Tribes in the United States won their water battle to secure

water rights for the full benefit of their reserve lands in the 1908 decision *Winters v. United States*. This court case established that the creation of reservations included water rights. In other words, settlers could not use up all the water that existed leaving none for tribal reservations.

Phere points out what water the Navajo were entitled to under the "Winter's Doctrine": A whopping 270,000 acre feet per year for irrigation of 110,630 acres of land. To put it in perspective, the "Colorado River Compact (1922)....gives the entire states of Nevada and Arizona just 300,000 and 50,000 acre-feet per year respectively."

It is clear that water is scarce. Communities need to be aware of who else is currently claiming rights to the water, because once those rights are allocated to someone else it will be much more difficult to get them back. Aboriginal communities in Canada need to assert rights to the quantity of water required for economic development for seven generations before it is too late.

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An ALM Event

[entertainment] Sto:lo singer shut out of music awards

By Debora Steel
Windspeaker Contributor

Hamilton, Ont.

Poor Inez, the talented and beautiful Sto:lo Nation singer that this year had taken the Aboriginal music scene by storm with her CD "Singsoulgirl." What an unfortunate year to be nominated for a Canadian Aboriginal Music Award.

Inez, who in any other year would have been a shoe-in to take home the award in the Best Female Artist category, came up against a powerhouse in the industry. Buffy Sainte-Marie swept the nominations and beat out the competitors in the four categories in which she was nominated. The gala show in Hamilton on Nov. 27 featured two performances by the music icon.

Even earthy Inuit rocker Lucie Idlout, who was the other contender for the Best Female Artist award, didn't stand a chance against the veteran singer/songwriter. At least Idlout managed to squeeze out a win for Best Rock Album for her CD "Swagger," a category that didn't feature a Sainte-Marie nomination.

Idlout was nominated in four categories.

"I have to say I'm totally overwhelmed." The best rock album, she said, was really the one that was most important to her.

ShoShona Kish of Digging Roots, who spoke to the press after her win in the Best Group or Duo category for "We Are," also seemed to believe that Inez would be collecting some hardware that night. Kish cut her interview short to listen on a backstage monitor to Inez' gala performance.

"I'm sure Inez will be back here with your guys later on tonight," Kish told reporters.

But it was not to be.

"What, are you nuts," Sainte-Marie joked with the audience at Hamilton Place Theatre after being called for a third time to the stage to collect her award for "Running For The Drum," a CD which features the award-winning song "No, No, Keshagesh," and the energetic dance tune "Cho Cho Fire."

Sainte-Marie has stacked up, not only Grammy awards, but an Oscar too, and now has more CAMAs than a girl can shake a stick at.

Not only did she get the Best Female Artist nod, but Best Song Single and Best Song Writer for "Keshagesh" and Best Album of the Year.

Sainte-Marie's accomplishments are as varied as her music, and the Aboriginal music awards in Canada hold a special place in her heart. When asked what keeps her motivated to create, even though many people in their late sixties, as she is, would have put their feet up to rest on past glories, Sainte-Marie said "because it's fun."

Many of Sainte-Marie's songs have withstood the test of time, including Universal Soldier, as powerful and relevant a piece today as it was when it was created 40-plus years ago. The Academy Award winning Up Where We Belong also continues to be sung and appears in movie soundtracks to this day.

Sainte-Marie said she loves coming together at the show with other Aboriginal musical artists because it's a time to visit with people she doesn't get to see enough.

"We have a lot of fun together."

She also really enjoys touring the album around to the Aboriginal communities, visiting with the grassroots population who she described as being "really, really kind to us." At Fort McLeod in Alberta, for example, she said they were taken to Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump for a

tour. Fans bring sweetgrass and moose meat as gifts.

"It's possible as an Aboriginal artist to have a really sweet life," but make no mistake, it's a hard life, Sainte-Marie said.

"It takes a lot of discipline."

A reporter asked Sainte-Marie whether she thought last year's lifetime achievement award wasn't given to her too soon considering the obvious contribution she still has to make to music. She laughed and said "Were we supposed to go home after that?" But more thoughtfully she said "I don't know. People are really nice to me."

This year's Best Male Artist went to Don Amero for "Deepening." Amero is a fresh-faced Manitoba boy from Winnipeg with an easy-listening style. Amero was a hardwood floor installer before his music career took off. Earlier in November he became the first Aboriginal to receive artist of the year at the Canadian Folk Music Awards.

"I always want to come authentically and true to myself, and at the end of the day, if it's a song that love, whether it be a pop song, or a folk song, or a rock song, I say 'Is this a song that I can really show off and tell a great story to,'" he explained as the reason why he is experiencing such a current surge of popularity.

Best Rap or Hip Hop Music Video went to Feenix, a.k.a., Shawn Bernard, for On Tha Rise.

Benard is an ex-gang member who spent a lot of years going in and out of jail, unable to realize his dream of getting into the music business. When he kicked the drugs and alcohol, he said, and started to focus full-time on his dreams "they all started to come true." He said the video that features the song "From The Get-Go" encourages people to start making dreams a reality from the start, rather than

detouring the way he had through the gang life.

Best Rap or Hip Hop Album went to a Florida girl, Lakota Jonez for "Beautiful."

Shane Yellowbird, who was a no-show to the gala event, won in the Best Music Video category for "Life is Calling My Name: Summer Day."

Best Blues Album went to the Pappy John Band for the self-produced "Havin' A Good Time Now."

Other winners were Ry Moran for Tiga Talk in the Best Original Score in Aboriginal/Indigenous Theatre, Dance or Film/Video Production; Eagle River, Campfire Blues, Forbidden (Best Hand Drum Album); Whitefish Bay Singers, Way 2 Expensive (Best Traditional Powwow

Album); Art Napoleon, Siskabush Tales (Best Country Album); R Carlos Nakai, Talisman, Song of Darkness (Best Traditional Flute Album);

Joel Goldberg, Dreamcatcher: The 10th Annual Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards (Best Television Program or Special Promoting Aboriginal Music); Out of the Blue, Garrison Parker (Best Album Cover Design); Cheevers Toppah and Kevin Yazzie, Awakening of Life (Best Instrumental Album); Arvel Bird, Tribal Music Suite, Journey of a Paiute, (Best Instrumental Album), Eric Ashdown, Back Home Fiddle (Best Fiddle Album) and Arvel Bird, Tom Wasinger, Chas Williams, Tribal Music Suite, (Best Producer Engineer).

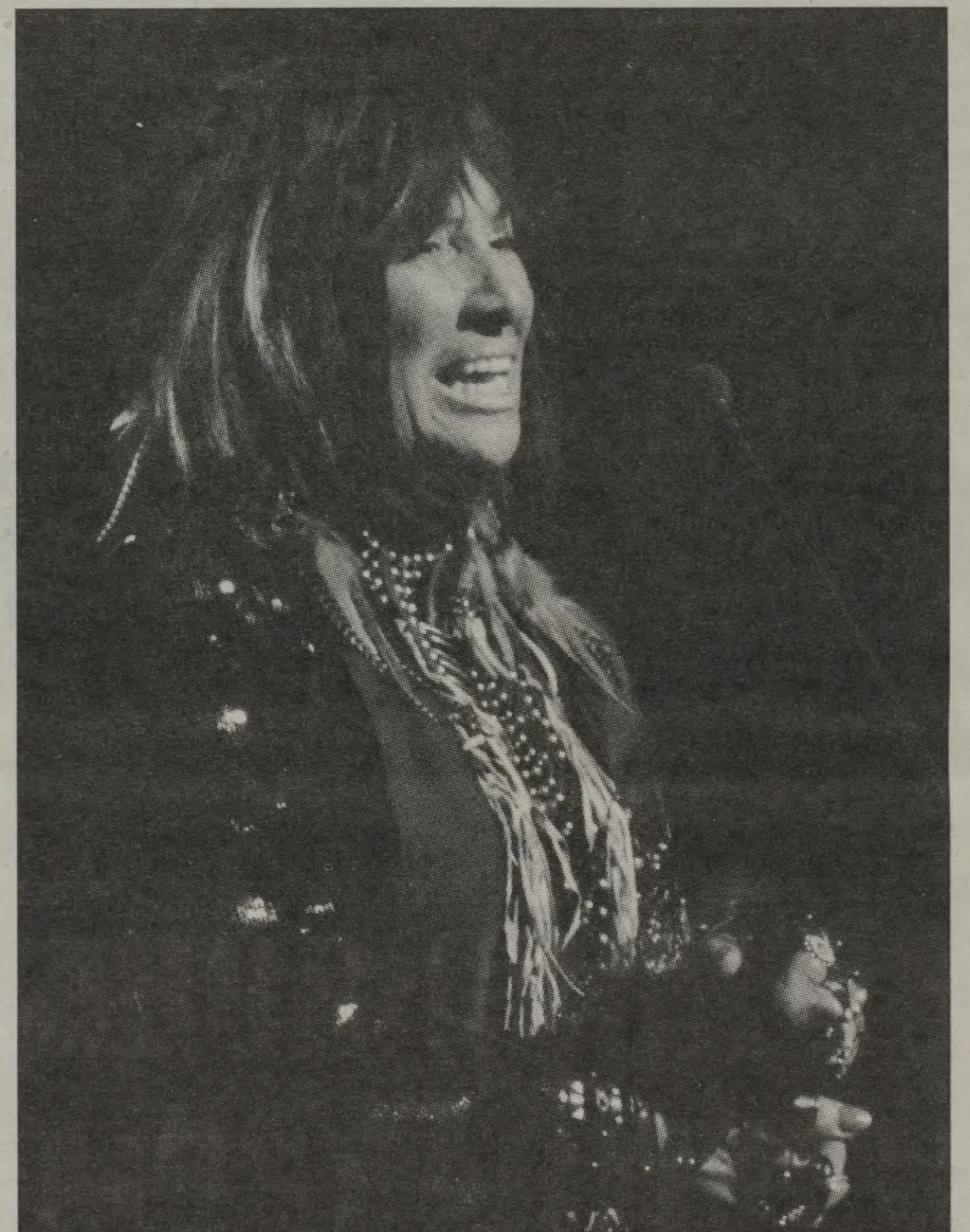


PHOTO: PAUL MACEDO

Buffy Sainte-Marie accepts one of four CAMA Awards she was to receive



PHOTO: PAUL MACEDO

Sean Bernard aka Feenix, from Edmonton accepts his CAMA award for Best Rap or Hip Hop music video for his work on "On tha Rise".



PHOTO: PAUL MACEDO

Lucie Idlout accepts her CAMA award for Best Rock Album for her album - Swagger.

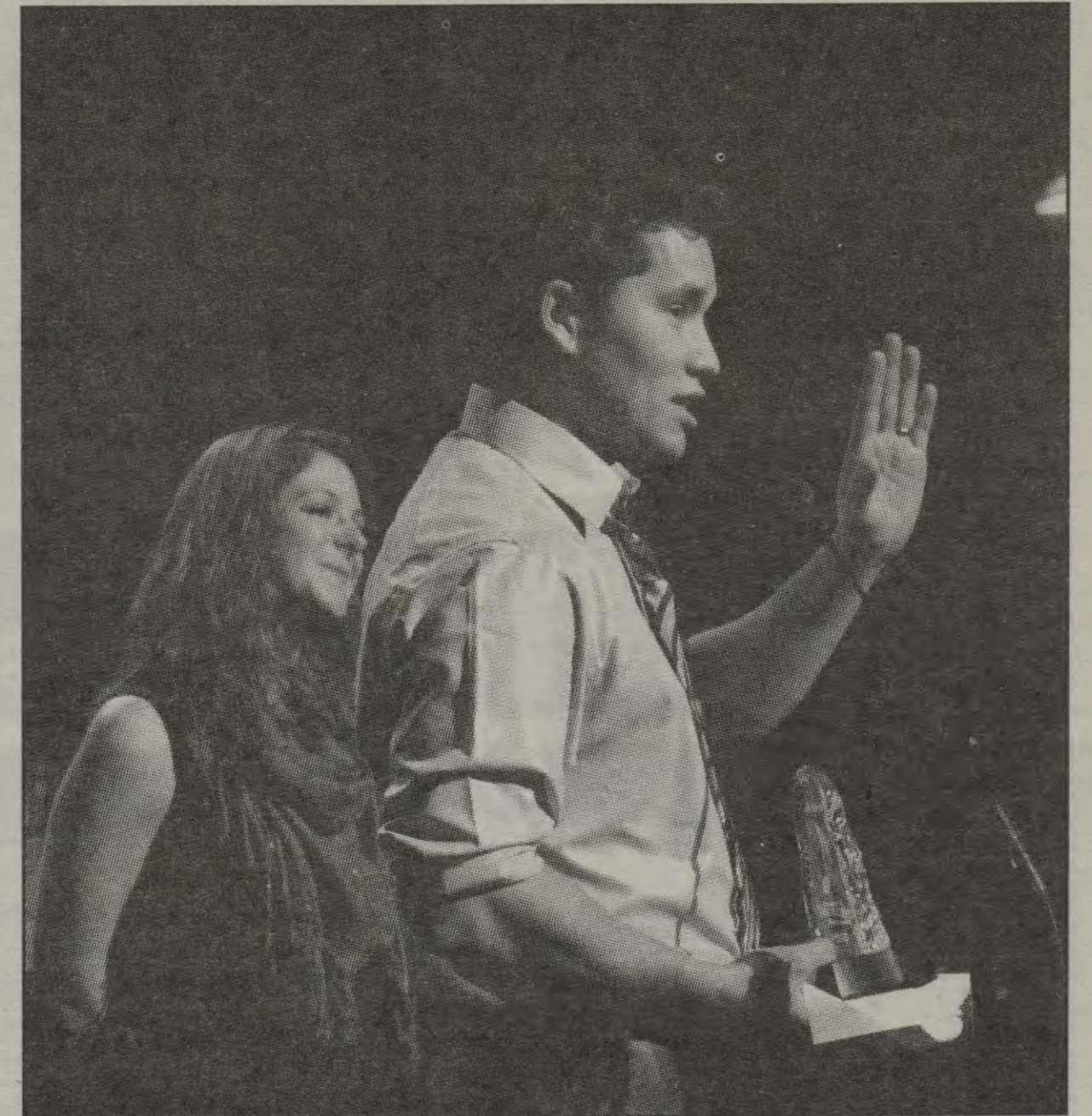


PHOTO: PAUL MACEDO

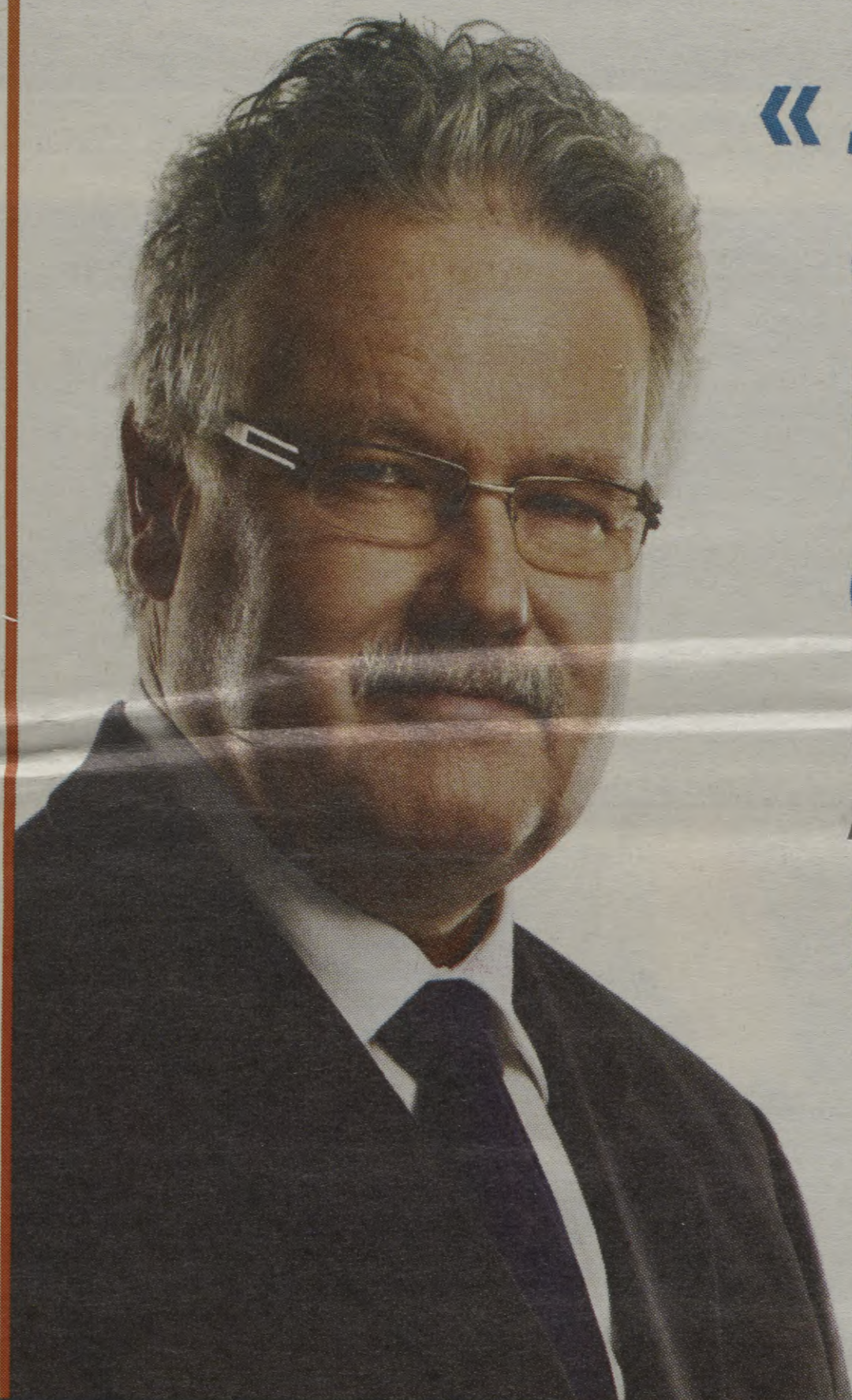
Don Amero from Winnipeg accepts his CAMA award for Male Artist of the Year.

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[festival]

2009 CANADIAN ABORIGINAL MUSIC AWARDS



PHOTO: PAUL MACEDO

The 11th Annual Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards (CAMA) were held in Hamilton, Ont on November 27, 2009 and were hosted by Andrea Menard and Derek Miller.



PHOTO: PAUL MACEDO

Don Amero (singing) performs and demonstrated why he was awarded the 2009 CAMA for Male Artist of the Year.



PHOTO: DEBORA STEEL

Inez (left) and one of her dancers take a moment to pose while on the red carpet.



PHOTO: DEBORA STEEL

Mike Bruyere (left) and Buffy Sainte-Marie on the red carpet before the awards show.

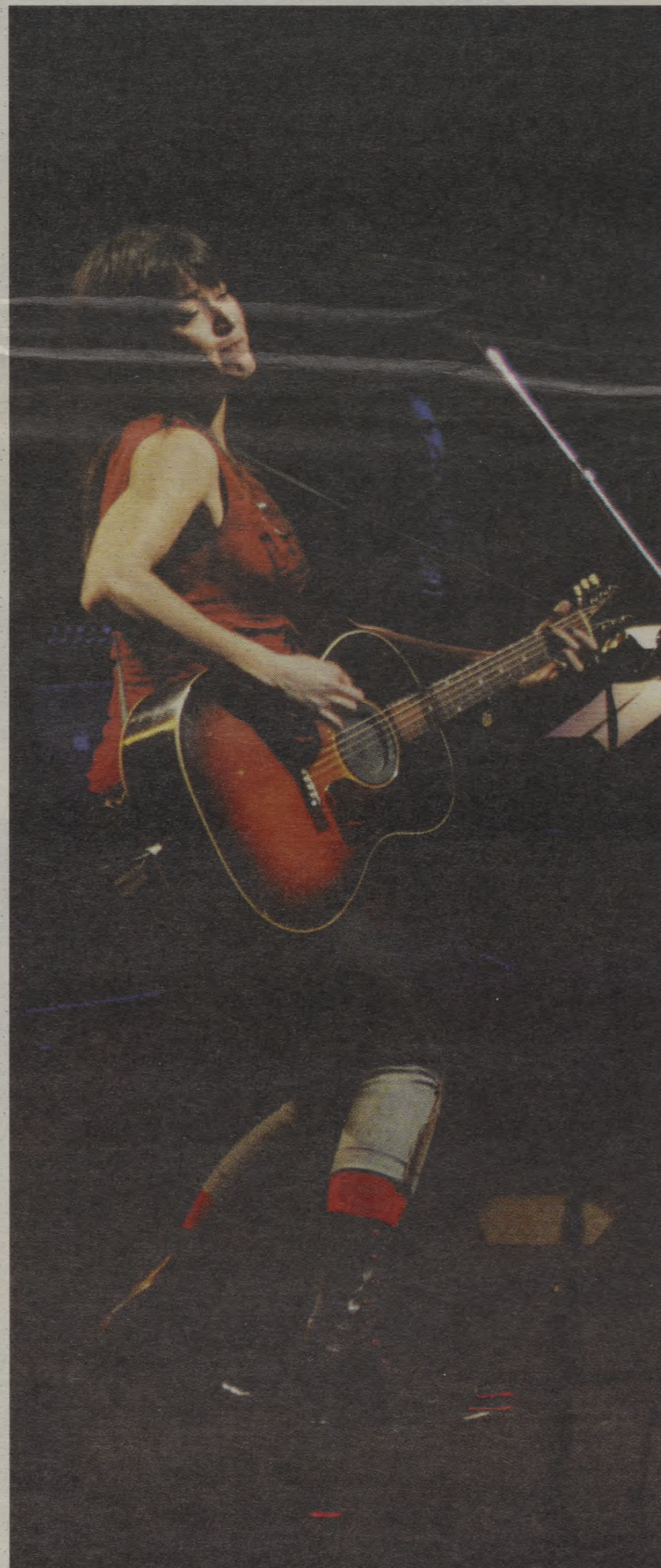


PHOTO: PAUL MACEDO

Lucie Idlout performed before being awarded her CAMA for Best Rock Album for her album - Swagger.

2009 CANADIAN ABORIGINAL FESTIVAL



Saturday afternoon's Canadian Aboriginal Festival Grand Entry.

ALL PHOTOS: PAUL MACEDO



Waiting for Grand Entry.



Women's Jingle dancers wait during Grand Entry.



You're never too young to Powwow.



Some of the men waiting during the Grand Entry.

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March 2-4, 2010, Westin Hotel, Ottawa, Ontario



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Many communities and organizations have travelled far on the path to self-government and building their economies. They have developed strong financial systems, accountability frameworks and focused on performance and results. They are building infrastructure and enhancing programs and services. They are engaging in long-term planning and improving relationships between management and elected leaders. And they are doing all this in the face of significant challenges.

This conference will celebrate our achievements in the last ten years. The program will focus on success stories and best practices in finance, management and governance in Aboriginal communities and organizations across Canada. What are the main factors underlying their success? How can we learn from their experience?

The Conference program will also look into the path ahead. What do we see in the future? What is needed to maintain the momentum of progress? Where should we be 10 years from now in 2020?

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Leadership Best Practices in Comprehensive Community Planning; Governance and Management Self-Assessment; Success Stories in Building a Constitution; Governance Codes

Success Stories The Westbank First Nation; the Whitecap Dakota First Nation; the Frontier Centre's Aboriginal Index; Successful Corporate Partnerships

Healthy Workplace Bridging the Generational Gap; Conflict Resolution; Pandemic Planning

Beginners A Beginner's Guide to Constitution Building; Disaster Recovery Planning

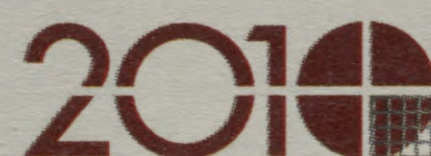
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Don Amero — [windspeaker confidential]

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

Don Amero: Honesty. I think if we're going to be friends, I wanna know that we can be truthful with each other.

W: What is it that really makes you mad?

D.A.: Stubbing my toe... and drivers from Winnipeg who act like they've never driven in snow before!

W: When are you at your happiest?

D.A.: Lying on the couch watching a romantic comedy with my wife.

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

D.A.: Lost

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

D.A.: I just went to see Jann Arden for the fourth time. She has the ability to make you laugh hysterically and then make you cry with her beautiful voice and lyrics. I've been a big fan of hers for well over 10 years now.

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

D.A.: Watch my parents split up. It was a very unexpected event and it had a lasting effect on me. A lot of my writing comes from that single experience.

W: What is your greatest accomplishment?

D.A.: Giving my dreams a

shot. Being a musician is not an easy job, but my heart longed to be here. Having now been at it full time for two years is a huge milestone in my life.

W: What one goal remains out of reach?

D.A.: Being financially able to buy my parents a house.

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

D.A.: Probably a labor job, like hardwood floor installation (It's what I was doing before I became a full-time musician.)

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

D.A.: Treat others as you want to be treated.

W: Did you take it?

D.A.: I do as best I can to always treat everyone with kindness and respect. Just don't talk to me after I've stubbed my toe (ha ha).

W: How do you hope to be remembered?

D.A.: As a loving, passionate, funny man who gave life all he had and never gave up. To be remembered as a man who inspired a nation to do great things for themselves and the world around them.

Don Amero has been called the Métis John Mayer and his soulful, easy-listening style is reminiscent of Blue Rodeo. He just picked up the Male Artist of the Year Award at the

Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards and won Aboriginal songwriter of the year at the Canadian Folk Music Awards at the end of 2009.

He said he tried out for a school play when he was 15 to impress a girl and, upon landing the lead role, he realized how much he loved performing. He picked up his father's old Gibson guitar and, 14 years later, left his hardwood floor installation job for music full time.

Don engineered and produced his debut album "Change Your Life" using his computer, and released it in the fall of 2006. His first single, "Freight Train," went number one on the national Aboriginal countdown.

In February of 2009, Don released his second album "Deepening" and he spent the rest of the year touring the album across Canada. He's working on his third album and said it's some of the best music he's written yet.

"I find it easier to write about trials and tribulations," Don said, adding the songs he wrote at 15 were considered "very mature" by his peers. Deeply affected by the split-up of his parents, he poured his emotion into songwriting. "Until the break-up I thought we had the perfect family," he recalled, and the shock sent him on an exploration of the deeper issues in life.

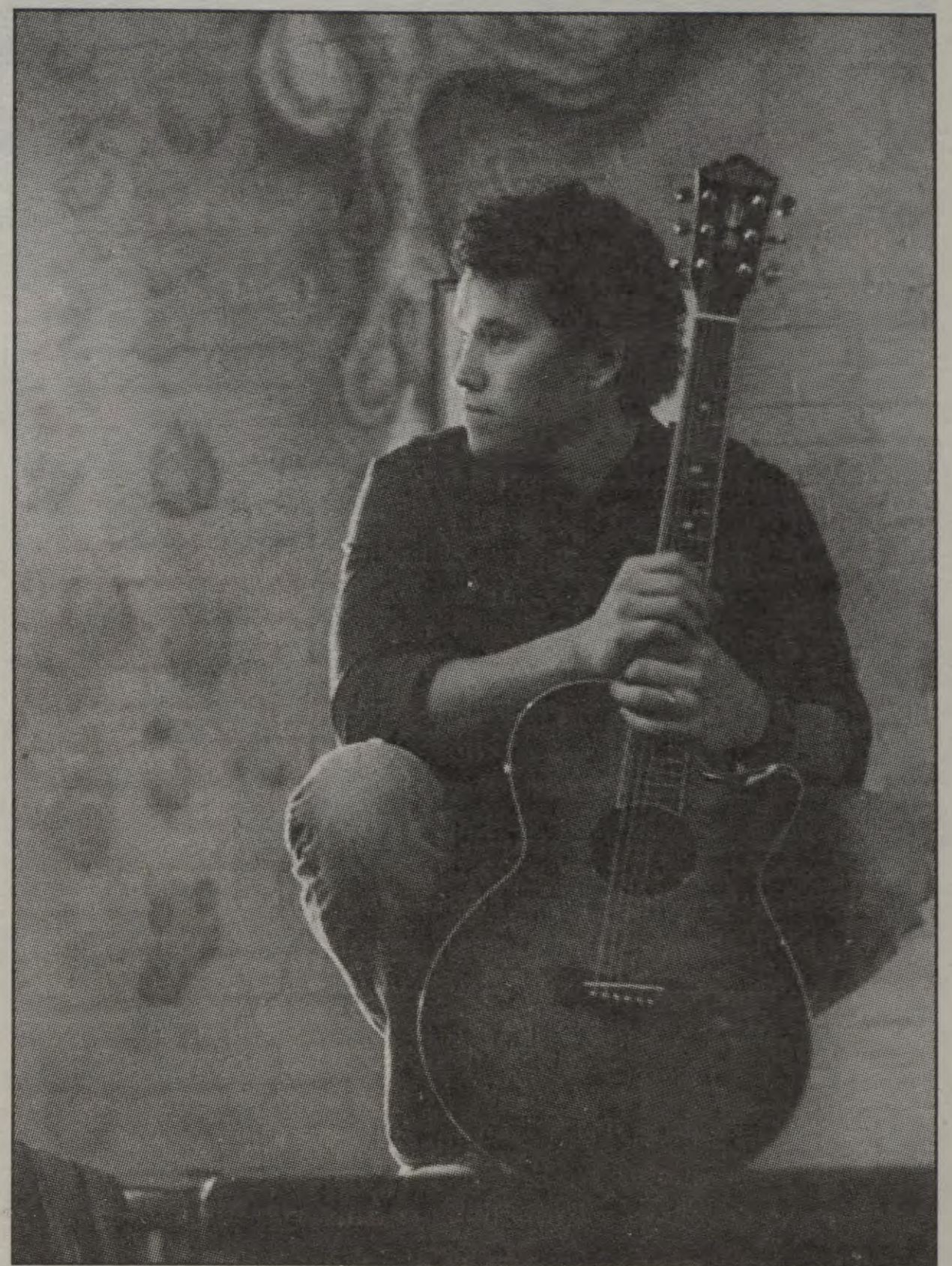


PHOTO: NADYA KWANDIBENS

Don Amero

Married for five years it's only now he's considering backing off from some performance dates to have personal time with his wife. But he can't turn down the chance to play in a "soft, theatre

venue" because he's a born storyteller and likes to engage his audience.

"I love talking with people about where the songs come from," he said.

[radio's most active]

OUR PICK

Artist—John McLeod
Song—Métis Indian Song
Album—Moving On
Written by—John McLeod
Label—Northern Lights Music

When you truly believe in yourself, you never second guess the decisions you make to make your dreams come true. A proposition to make a dream a reality is something to be held inside your heart and released with the tools that our Creator has passed on to us.

One of the gifts that are pure and original is the ability to have the talent of creating music. John McLeod who is from the Ojibwa tribe from The Pas, Manitoba is a fellow native brother who is gifted with a talent for creating great music. His voice is unique and full of story. *M tis Indian Song* from the album, *Moving On*, describes his journey that brings him to where he is now.

I'm a northern Canadian Indian, made of stone and red clay soil, I got M tis blood deep within me, when I was born it began to boil, words that give you a taste of lyrical genius that John created in that song, which is full of guitar, drum, fiddle and everything you need to make a beautiful song about your heritage, culture and influence. The more I hear it, the prouder I am to be an Original, Unique, Northern Canadian Indian.

For more info on John McLeod go to: www.johnmcleod.com or check his MySpace page and become a friend: www.myspace.com/canadiancrooner

Review by Angela Pearson

ABORIGINAL RADIO MOST ACTIVE LIST

ARTIST	TITLE	ALBUM
Yoza	Don't Let Go	Spirithorse
W.T. Goodspirit	A Native Woman	Single Release
Tim Harwill	Sittin' In A Hotel Room	The Wander Man Revisited
Jason Burnstick	I Pray	Colours Of My Life
John McLeod	Metis Indian Song	Moving On
Digging Roots	Spring To Come	We Are
The Mosquitoz	No Place To Go	Single Release
Don Bouvette	Marlin' Darlin'	Marlin' Darlin'
Wayne Chartrand	Could It Be You	Single Release
Rik Leaf & Tribe As One	Hope	Manitoba Aboriginal Artists '09
Ashley Robertson	Woman In The White Dress	Woman In The White Dress
Lawrence Martin	Dancing For Life	Dancing For Life
Rick Burt	Manigotagan River	Manigotagan River
Chris Barker Band	Rock And Roll Getaway	Six String Highway
The Stephanie Harpe Band	Baby You're The Only One	The Stephanie Harpe Band
isKwe	Wandering	Single Release
Jana Mashonee	Solid Ground	New Moon Born
Out Of The Blue	May 2, 1998	Out Of The Blue
Buddy Gouchie	Road Back	FN Artists 20 Most Wanted
The Dusty Roads Band	Killin' Time	Searchin' For A River

CONTRIBUTING STATIONS:





Raven's Eye: Special Section providing news from BC & Yukon

Investigation has taken too long, provided too few results

By Isha Thompson
Raven's Eye Writer

PRINCE GEORGE

The investigation into the cases of Aboriginal women who have gone missing or have been murdered in British Columbia needs a new approach, insists a social worker who maintains communication with the families of some of the victims. The delay in solving the cases is unacceptable, she says. Some of the cases date back to 1969.

"We have to look at where the justice system failed," said Mavis Erickson, who is the Highway of Tears coordinator at Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS) in Prince George.

The Highway of Tears is Highway 16 that runs between Prince Rupert and Prince George. It was dubbed the Highway of Tears because of the many young women who have vanished or been murdered along that remote stretch of road.

According to a Web site devoted to the victims, 30 women who were last seen on the highway between the two northern BC communities have

either gone missing or have become victims of homicide. Almost half the women have been identified as being of Aboriginal heritage.

In 2005, the BC RCMP created Project E-Pana, which is a special unit devoted to investigating missing women's cases. E-Pana team commander Staff Sgt. Bruce Hulan reports that before a woman's name can be put on E-Pana's list, she had to be engaged in "high-risk activities," or last seen on one of three BC highways—Highway 16, Highway 97 between Prince George to Kamloops, and Highway 5.

The risky activities mentioned include hitchhiking or involvement in the sex trade.

Erickson says the project is adding insult to injury when it comes to the cases under investigation. She fears the RCMP, along with the media, are falsely labelling the women.

"They say that the women were engaged in 'high risk behaviour' and yet, if you talk to the families about the girls that went missing, they weren't hitchhiking, they weren't prostitutes, and they weren't into drugs," said

Erickson.

She added that stereotypes against people involved in high-risk behaviors would prejudice the RCMP and cause them not to work as hard to solve the cases.

Cpl. Annie Linteau of RCMP E Division said many people link "high risk activity" with the sex trade, but she emphasized that it is not the only scenario. She stressed that the RCMP "are fully investigating" all 18 cases that are on E-Pana's list.

Even though none of the cases has been solved to date, she remained optimistic.

"We feel like we are progressing... We hope to give some of the families closure," said Linteau, who encouraged anyone with any tips to immediately call the RCMP.

On Dec. 12 it was reported that Project E-Pana had identified 2,000 "persons of interest" in the Highway of Tears investigation. None of the 2,000 has been identified.

"Somebody out there knows what happened," said Linteau, who explained that it is common for the culprit to tell a friend about the crimes committed.

Despite RCMP assurances,

Erickson is not satisfied with their results. She has called for an inquiry into the RCMP's delay in solving the cases, one that is arms-length from the police organization itself.

"I don't think Aboriginal women would come forward to an inquiry that is run by RCMP middle-class men," she said.

Erickson explained that many women she speaks with say they wouldn't feel comfortable coming forward to the RCMP; however, many have opened up to her.

"What you have is a police organization that's out of touch with First Nations people," explained Erickson.

CSFS has garnered support for the idea from a few regional Aboriginal organizations, and at least one influential leader, newly elected BC Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould. They call for a full inquiry into the mysteries along the Highway of Tears, and the RCMP's handling of the investigation.

Wilson-Raybould confirmed that she, along with the First Nations Summit and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, have written letters to the BC Attorney

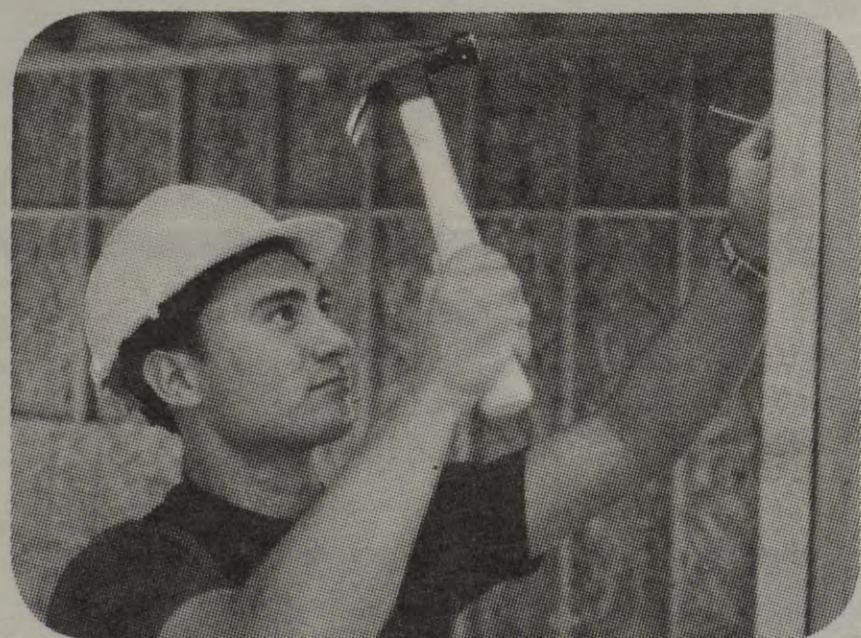
General's office showing their enthusiasm for such an inquiry.

She hopes it would include a thorough study that will provide solid answers, as opposed to the anecdotes that she said are circulating about the victims.

"There needs to be some reflection, and a look into the policy and procedures that guide responses from law enforcement officials, in terms of reports made about missing women," said Wilson-Raybould. She specifically referred to the treatment that some the victim's families have received when dealing with law enforcement.

Though Wilson-Raybould didn't come out and accuse RCMP of not taking families' concerns about their missing women seriously, she clearly implied that families felt as though the police service was not always accommodating.

CSFS has also submitted a request for an inquiry to BC Attorney General Michael de Jong. The organization has yet to receive an official response, although Erickson said she is "cautiously optimistic" it will happen in 2010.



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FOR GENERATIONS

Raven's Eye: Special Section providing news from BC & Yukon

Haida singer's sound is sweeter still

Lalaxaaygans: Beautiful Sound received recognition for Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson, whose CD nabbed a Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards (CAMA) in November in the Best Female Traditional/Cultural Roots category.

The award was presented at an awards gala on Nov. 27, 2009 at the Hamilton Place Theatre in Hamilton, Ont.

Williams-Davidson opened the evening awards show with a love song for Mother Earth. She was emotional when she met with the press backstage after winning the award.

"It's overwhelming," she said, tears brimming in her eyes.

She is part of the Haida Gwaii Singers Society which compiled a large album of all the songs of the Haida Nation spanning back to 1913. They also produced a box set of contemporary music, and Lalaxaaygans: Beautiful Sound was one of the CDs in that set.

"I think when most people think of Aboriginal people, they don't think of music from the West Coast. It's a very different

genre of music than music from the East Coast. It's equally as beautiful, but most people don't know of it," Hamilton, Ont.

Williams-Davidson said, adding that it is important for West Coast Aboriginal music to be honored in the wider Canadian Aboriginal music realm.

This is the second CAMA for Williams-Davidson, who last year received the prestigious "Keeper of Traditions" special honor award for her dedication to Haida musical traditions.

Bruce Ruddell, the producer for the Haida Gwaii Singers Legacy Project, where about 300 songs were recorded and preserved, was also honored last year with the "Industry Builder" special award.

"The CAMA awards gala ceremony was an inspiring experience: to share the stage with diverse Aboriginal talent across Canada, including the iconic Buffy Sainte-Marie. It is exciting for our ancient musical traditions to gain wider recognition, and to help shine a light on the beautiful songs of the Haida Nation", said Williams-Davidson.

The goal of the Haida Gwaii Singers' Legacy Project is to give new voice to ancient songs. The Haida Gwaii Singers Society is comprised of five long-standing singers from the Haida Nation who have worked together since 1978.

Reg Davidson is the principal dancer for the Rainbow Creek Dancers, and is a renowned artist working in wood, metal, and paint.

Guujaaw is a powerful singer who has circled the globe as a performer, and has mentored many younger singers; he is the president of the Haida Nation, a well-known sculptor in wood and a traditional medicine practitioner.

Marianne Jones has been a dancer and singer with the Rainbow Creek Dancers for 20 years, and is also a filmmaker, actress and the creative director of Urban Rez Productions.

Robert Davidson is the principal singer and founder of the Rainbow Creek Dancers, and is an internationally acclaimed artist.



PHOTO: DEBORA STEEL

Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson

Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson has recorded for film, television and stage productions, and has performed throughout the world. She is also an Aboriginal environmental lawyer at White Raven Law Corporation.

The Haida Gwaii Singers Contemporary Anthology, which contains five CDs and 86 songs,

and the Archival Anthology of digitized archival recordings in nine CDs, are available in a limited edition cedar collector box set. Sample sound tracks and all box sets are available at www.haidagwaiisingers.ca, or through the Society at info@haidagwaiisingers.ca or by calling 604-536-5541.

Advertising Feature

Electricians: The Trade Detectives

Like a detective, being an Electrician means there is always a problem to be solved. That is what inspired **Joanne Allison** (Métis) to become an Electrician.

Asking questions and putting pieces together to figure out why the breaker keeps popping, how to correct the wiring of a baseboard heater installed by the owner, or how to wire the house renovations are a few of the challenges an Electrician faces.

Electricians are often working on large equipment or new buildings and technology. This is one of the aspects that appeals to **Daniel Gagne**, a Métis, who just entered the third year apprenticeship. "I'm looking forward to a new challenge working with green energy and renewable energy."

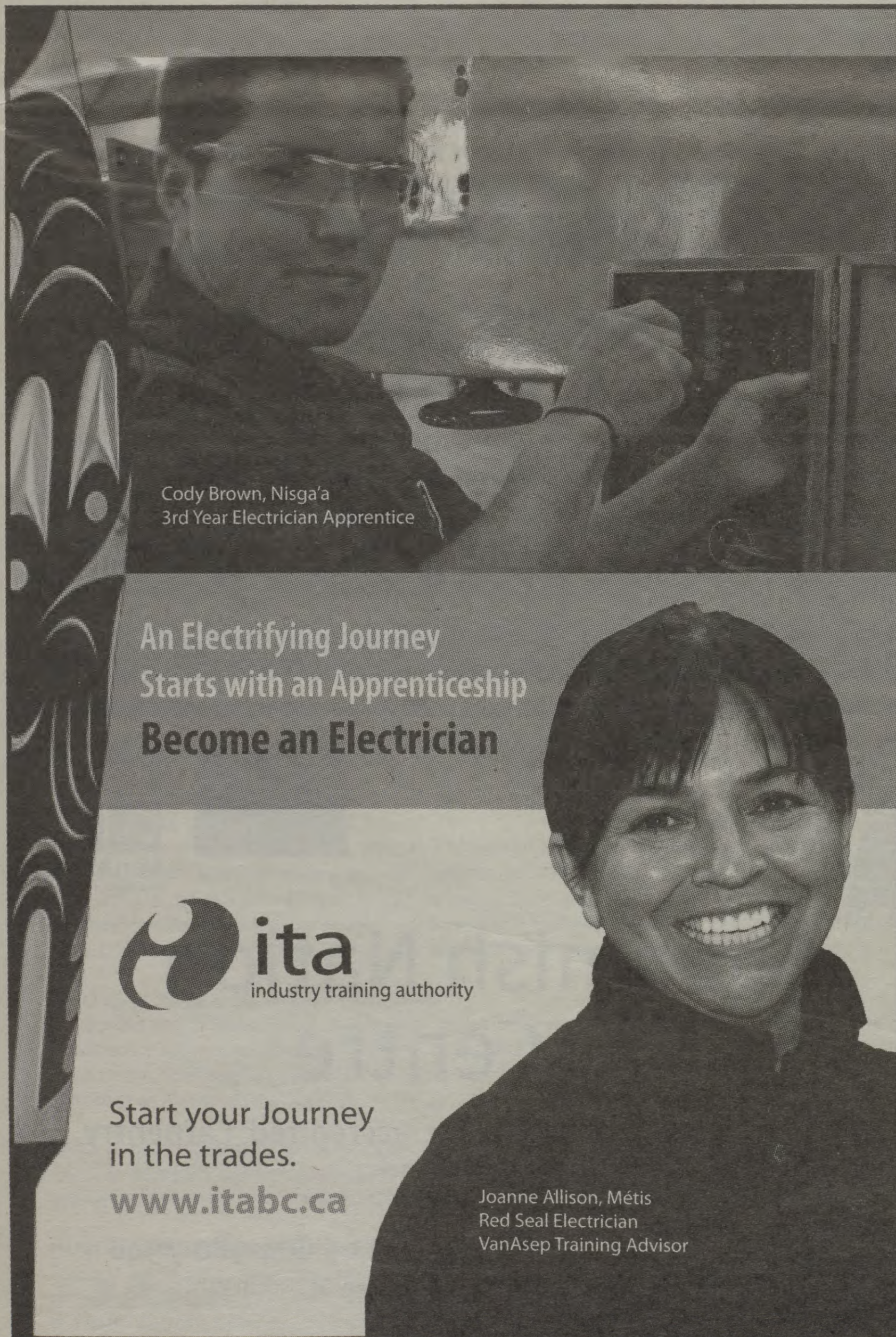
The Electrical trade offers several career options as a Construction Electrician or an Industrial Electrician in residential or commercial buildings, working on wiring and equipment, small and large appliances. The many career options are coupled with the chance to be self-employed in this trade – a trait that appeals to Daniel who looks forward to starting his own Electrical Services business, and is something Joanne has been doing for years. For StU:LM Nation citizen, **Peter Wealick**, the Inter-provincial Electrician ticket (also called a Red Seal) he gained in the 1980s prepared him to launch Aboriginal Computer Solutions Ltd. about a decade later. His electrician experience is used regularly on computer repairs and

installation of large networking equipment for offices.

Other than an interest in problem-solving, the Electrician trade requires strong math skills to do things like calculate voltage distribution systems and design circuit concepts. Because of this, the trade recommends people wanting to become an Electrician take a Foundation program which is designed to help people have a successful start in an apprenticeship. The Foundation program is a 10-15 week Level 1 course offered through an ITA designated training provider, including the Electrical Joint Training Committee. Visit the ITA website to find an approved training centre near you.

Start Your Journey, Become an Electrician: www.itabc.ca

Established in 2004, the Industry Training Authority (ITA) is charged with the responsibility of managing BC's industry training system to develop the province's skilled workforce. As a provincial Crown agency, ITA works collaboratively with Aboriginal communities and agencies, industry, training providers, labour, governments and other stakeholders. An Aboriginal Advisory Committee counsels the ITA on matters related to increasing Aboriginal participation in apprenticeship training. The ITA Aboriginal Initiatives are proudly supported by the Labour Market Agreement between the Governments of British Columbia and Canada.



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Joanne Allison, Métis
Red Seal Electrician
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Raven's Eye: Special Section providing news from BC & Yukon

Get juiced over APTN series

By Debora Steel
Raven's Eye Writer

VANCOUVER

Belly up to the bar boys and girls—the juice bar that is—and take a load off your shoulders, or your spirit over a carrot concoction or a protein shake.

Writer/producer Jason Friesen is serving up wheatgrass and a new series about to premiere on APTN. It caters to the health nut in all of us. And nut is the operative word here.

Health Nutz is a comedy about a group of new age yoga enthusiasts whose safe little world is taken over by a washed-up cynic of a con man, Buzz Riel Jr., who is played by Kevin Loring, who is nowhere near being

typecast for this role.

This member of the Lytton First Nation of the Nlaka'pamux peoples is the recipient of the 2009 Governor General's Award in Drama-English for his play *Where the Blood Mixes*. He not only writes but is an actor as well.

His character in Health Nutz, Buzz Jr., is forced by an accident to retire from professional hockey at the ripe-old age of twenty-two.†More than a decade later, he is jobless, and an alcoholic gambler, who discovers he has inherited everything from his estranged father, Buzz Sr. (PAUL STANLEY), including the successful Health Nutz Juice Bar in North Vancouver, and the patent to a lucrative energy drink, Buzz Berry Juice.

But junior is forced to change,

or at least hide, his evil ways. In order to benefit from the inheritance, Buzz Jr will have to get sober and stay that way as a condition of his new-found wealth.

The series stems from the experiences of Friesen who spent time as a juice bartender during a six-year stint in Toronto. The Metis originally from Kamloops has lived in Vancouver for about 15 years, but had moved to the big smoke to study at the famous Second City there.

"I love improve," he told Raven's Eye, "so I went there and studied at Second City and did some stand-up for awhile. Nothing to write home about, but just the experience, and ended up working in a natural health juice bar."

There he met a wide assortment of characters who suffered from all these weird idiosyncrasies related to the natural health world.

"I started to realize it was very much like a bar in the sense that you have people coming in and sitting at the bar and telling you their problems."

And all this talk would primarily take place over a glass of carrot juice.

"The thing you'll find in the natural food and health industry in general, is a lot of people who have gone to (doctors) and they really do want a quick fix," Friesen said. "We did have a lot of eccentric types of people who came in and just start off talking about the weather and then all

of a sudden they would just unload a lot of their personal problems."

A press release about the new series describes Health Nutz as like the long-running television series "Cheers" without the beer.

Friesen wrote the pilot of Health Nutz, which premiered on APTN Dec. 27 (check your local listings for other dates and times), and is in development for six more episodes which he will write with producing partner Dasha Novak.

The pilot is directed by Tony Dean Smith. Included in the cast are Lucie Guest, Ali Liebert, Chris Gauthier, Chad Krowchuk, Chief Byron-Moon, David Hamilton Lyle, Cyler Point, Sam Bob, Jim Shield, Ken Lawson and Laura Mennell.

Novak said the show touches on subjects that are Native specific, but, like Vancouver where the action takes place, it features a multi-cultural cast that deals with a wide spectrum of issues that are not necessarily always specific to the Native community.

Liebert is upcoming actress who plays Tammy, a massage therapist/yoga teacher; young, blonde and in the style of a Pamela Anderson who has an aversion to germs so she only uses her elbows when she practises her craft.

"She's naive, so perfect game for someone like Buzz Jr.," said Friesen.

The pilot was shot in August at an old pub called the Astoria

in the Downtown Eastside on East Hastings.

"It's down and out," said Novak.

The exterior of the bar was shot at Orange Number 5, a well-known strip bar in the area.

This is the second project the pair has produced for APTN. The first is an animation series called *The Adventures of Artie the Ant* which is heading into its second season. The show features lots of music.

"The purpose of the music is for conflict resolutions," said Friesen. Whenever Artie and his friends get into trouble, they all they break into song.

"We are all about grassroots," said Novak. With the children's program, they like to make the kids aware of the nature around them, inspire them to dig in the dirt and get dirty and look at the little creatures there.

The relationship with APTN began eight about years ago, and the television network seems to value the partners' efforts.

"I always wanted to work in the industry," said Friesen. "My initial contact with them was that I did documentary called *Not Just a Half-breed*."

As for Health Nutz, a preview can be seen at the www.healthnutz.tv. Initial feedback, said Friesen, is that people appreciate that the characters are just a bunch of wacky people who are trying to find their place in the world, and some of them happen to be Native.

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Ontario Birchbark: Special Section providing news from Ontario

Hot time expected despite winter's chill

By Debora Steel
Birchbark Writer

OTTAWA

The chiefs of Ontario are devising a number of strategies to make the provincial and federal governments sit up and take notice of their concerns about the plan to impose the harmonized sales tax (HST) come July.

Grand Chief Patrick Madahbee of the Anishinabek Nation, representing 42 First Nations, predicts it's going to be a long winter of sustained activity in the province. Expect direct action, political lobbying, and litigation.

Madahbee has even told the chiefs that any political party that supports the HST legislation should not be welcome in their communities. Given the fragile nature of the federal minority governments, he said, it won't be long before politicians come knocking at the door looking for support. If they come from a party that supports the HST, they should be punished at the polls.

The grand chief insists the chiefs have drawn a line in the sand on this issue, because the HST represents just the tip of the

iceberg of an erosion of their treaty rights, and the responsibilities to them by the federal government.

"We see it as part of other government strategies on assimilation and municipalising our communities. There is a whole number of agendas going on," he told Birchbark.

"We should have drawn the line when it came to child care issues, and education or housing or social services. The fact, I guess, is that this is such a crucial issue that not one single individual, both on or off reserve, is not going to feel the brunt of this thing. It's going to hurt that single mom that's trying to buy stuff for her kid. They've gone to the heart of hurting people here. That's why we can't allow this to happen, because it's just going to be too devastating to our communities."

Mainstream business has been calling for the implementation of a harmonized sales tax system for some time now. Once the HST is implemented in July, businesses will be able to claim 13 per cent as input tax credits as compared to the five per cent GST now claimed.

But Kady Stachiw, a co-author of a report on the HST prepared

by the Small Business Consulting Department of Lakehead University, says that while the HST is a good thing for business, consumers and First Nations will be hit hard.

From the First Nations perspective it erodes the tax exemption provisions of treaties, and, specifically, removes the point of sale exemption of the current provincial sales tax.

"Look, tax your own people, but you have to acknowledge and recognize our treaty rights to tax immunity," Madahbee said he told Indian and Northern Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl, who promised to raise the issue with the finance minister, who had refused to meet with the chiefs.

The grand chief said that many of the concerns being raised are falling on the deaf ears in both the provincial and federal governments, with both governments pointing fingers back at the other saying it's the other guys' responsibility to provide provisions to protect the tax exempt status of First Nations.

"There is a real federal/provincial ping-pong match going on...but neither of them are going to do anything about

it."

Madahbee speculated the impact of the HST could mean the start of a whole new black market economy on reserve.

"You think they are having problems with the cigarette trade.... If they don't listen to us, well, we're already starting to talk other tactics here."

One of the tactics came before the holiday season when the Batchewana and Garden River First Nations asked their citizens to use their Christmas spending clout to fight the HST, withholding revenues from local business. The chiefs of those nations encouraged their members to cross the border into the United States and spend their Christmas cash there. They even provided transportation to the U.S. malls on Dec. 21.

"We call on the 10,000 plus Native people in the Sault Ste. Marie area and the 220,000 First Nations people across the province to join with us in solidarity for this momentous occasion. We call on you to spend your millions of Christmas dollars in the United States," said Chief Dean Sayers in a press release on behalf of both councils.

He also called upon business

to contact local MPs to voice their concerns about the HST.

"It's not too late. It isn't law yet. It is still making its way through Canada's Senate and has not attained royal assent," Sayers said of the legislation.

Madahbee also said the chiefs were seeking to put pressure on the Senate to find ways to address First Nations concerns about HST. He said even if the Senate approves the bill, the fight will not be lost.

"Even in July this fight won't be over. I didn't say we drew our line in the sand for nothing. We don't plan on giving up on this issue," Madahbee said.

There has already been a rally in Toronto, and chiefs are working on what will come next.

A legal challenge is being considered. Each nation in Ontario would be expected to contribute to the cost, and it could be based on a constitutional breach or on the lack of consultation and accommodation of First Nations interests, an issue of law as set out in Supreme Court decisions.

Madahbee says the strategy will be to attack the legislation on several fronts.

"We expect things to get a little hot around the territory here."

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CULTURAL CONNECTIONS FOR ABORIGINAL YOUTH (CCAY) ONTARIO REGION

2010 —2011 Request for Proposals

In partnership with the Department of Canadian Heritage and the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC), the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC) is requesting proposals for the Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth (CCAY) Initiative – Ontario Region.

WHAT IS THE CCAY INITIATIVE?

The overall goal of the CCAY Initiative is to create a network of Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth that will provide accessible, Aboriginal community-based, culturally relevant and supportive projects, services and counselling to urban Aboriginal youth, and facilitate their participation in existing projects in order to improve their economic, social and personal prospects. The Initiative is in support of measures that equip and encourage urban Aboriginal youth, regardless of status, culture or gender, to meet their challenges and improve their life prospects.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR CCAY?

Incorporated non-profit Aboriginal organizations located in off-reserve, urban and northern communities with populations of 1000 or over are eligible for project funding. Other eligible recipients include: Incorporated, non-profit organizations, Non-Aboriginal organizations in partnership with an Aboriginal organization, where there exists a clear absence of an Aboriginal organization(s).

WHO IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Any CCAY third party delivery organizations, individuals, for-profit organizations, other federal departments and agencies, and provincial/territorial and municipal governments and their agencies are NOT eligible for funding.

HOW TO RECEIVE AN APPLICATION AND GUIDELINES

Copies of the electronic application form and guidelines are available by visiting the OFIFC website at www.ofifc.org or by contacting Nishin Meawasige, CCAY Regional Desk Coordinator at 416-956-7575 or 1-800-772-9291, Extension 230 or via email: nmeawasige@ofifc.org.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Please review the 2010/2011 CCAY Guidelines and Program Application.
- Your proposal must correspond with the format of the application form provided by the OFIFC.
- All submissions must be signed, all questions answered and required documentation provided. Otherwise, it is classed as an incomplete proposal.
- Three (3) fully completed proposals, including authorized signatures and required documentation for each application, must be submitted by mail, in person or courier, in addition to one (1) emailed digital copy, directly to the OFIFC by the deadline. Proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted and will be returned.

DEADLINE: Applications for projects must be received no later than
Thursday, January 21, 2010 at 4:00 pm EST

CCAY Initiative - 2010/2011 Proposal Submissions
c/o Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC)
219 Front Street East
Toronto, Ontario, M5A 1E8

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN THE
CCAY INITIATIVE – ONTARIO REGION**



[health] Prescription medicines lead to lives with addictions

By Jennifer Hansford
Windspeaker Contributor

SUDBURY, Ont.

Addiction to prescription drugs has been the ruin of many a life, and the Aboriginal community is no stranger to it. But there is hope, if there is a will to put the pills away. Three Aboriginal people from Sudbury spoke to *Windspeaker* about their experiences with prescription misuse, on the condition they remain anonymous.

A young Métis man tells *Windspeaker* his story around his addiction to prescription drugs. It began at the age of 14 after years of sexual abuse that started when he was just five years old. The years of abuse left him with nightmares and night terrors, which caused physical reactions, such as screaming, kicking, and crying in his sleep. It is a condition he continues to suffer with today.

It was when he tried to get rid of a headache that he took his first Percocet, and realized that the pill could relieve more than just physical pain.

"When I took the pills, I had no more nightmares," he explained to *Windspeaker*. "I also

got better grades in school, because they gave me more concentration."

He began to take more pills, such as Demerol and Morphine. He was taking up to seven different drugs a day, he says, just to "get to a normal state," where he felt wide-awake and not restless. He estimates that from 2004 to March of 2009, he took more than 43,000 narcotics.

This addiction led him to steal both the pills and the money needed to buy them. When he needed more money to buy the pills, he would pawn his belongings, or give things up as collateral until he could re-pay what was owed. If re-payment could not be made, he said, there were times when knives were held to his throat to threaten him.

Another effect the pills had on him is that he felt full when he was taking them, so he didn't eat as often as he should. He says he lost 160 pounds in eight months.

His addiction led him to rack up the credit cards bills of a family member and a friend, a deacon he knows, in order to get the pills he required to feed his habit. Although the family member brought him to court over the matter, the deacon

extended a forgiving hand.

"I caused him to go bankrupt, and he was still willing to help me," he said with amazement. "It's amazing he didn't press charges."

The Métis man is doing his best to put these painful memories behind him, and is taking methadone to treat his addiction to pills. Since he began this treatment, he has gone from 45 pills per day to three pills per day. However, he said that when he is not taking the pills, his nightmares return.

Some people who have these addictions find themselves living on the streets. A Métis woman tells *Windspeaker* she spent two years living rough, but now has a place of her own to call home.

At the time she spoke with *Windspeaker* she had been clean for six weeks, but admits she still has the urge to use. It's an everyday battle, she said, but she works hard to stay clean for her grandchild.

"This is the one goal that helps me stay clean," she said. "I want to be in his life, because I wasn't in my kids' lives."

She said the friends she once had no longer come around, since she became clean. She doesn't mind though, as long as

she has her fiancé, her children and her grandchild.

"I am trying to better myself," she said. "And I enjoy helping other people stay clean."

An older man spoke to *Windspeaker* about his addiction. He now lives in Sudbury, but is originally from Kashechewan First Nation. He too spent some time living on the streets.

His addiction started when he was young, at a time when he was being sent from foster home to foster home. He was passed around in care until he was in Grade 12. It was during his high schools years he experimented with acid. All of his friends were doing it at the time, and it led to taking pills.

He used to steal T-3s from one of his foster mothers who, he said, kept a large container of them in a freezer. His circumstances became even more challenging when, in 1990, his daughter died of cancer, and his girlfriend committed suicide.

In 1997, when he first came to Sudbury, he had job and a place to live, but he said that all ended when he started to drink again. In April of this year, he quit drinking, and has kept sober since then. He has even taken a

computer course, and has been able to get himself a laptop, which helps him keep in contact with his children.

He no longer takes pills, and even tries to avoid taking Aspirin to relieve a headache. This is because there are triggers he has to be careful of. He, too, is trying to better himself, and rid himself of the old life of drug abuse.

"I don't miss it at all." The most common feeling when these drugs are taken is the numbness of emotions that occur.

"It just takes the pain away," said the Métis woman.

"Your heart speeds up. You have no emotions," agreed the older man.

"I am thinking about becoming a priest," the young Métis man told *Windspeaker*. He would like to be able to help people the way the deacon helped him.

"I owe him (the deacon) a debt of gratitude," he said. He adds that he also owes a debt of gratitude to all the other people who have helped him kick his habit, such as counselors, psychologists and doctors.

"I am very grateful to have a family that was willing to get me help."

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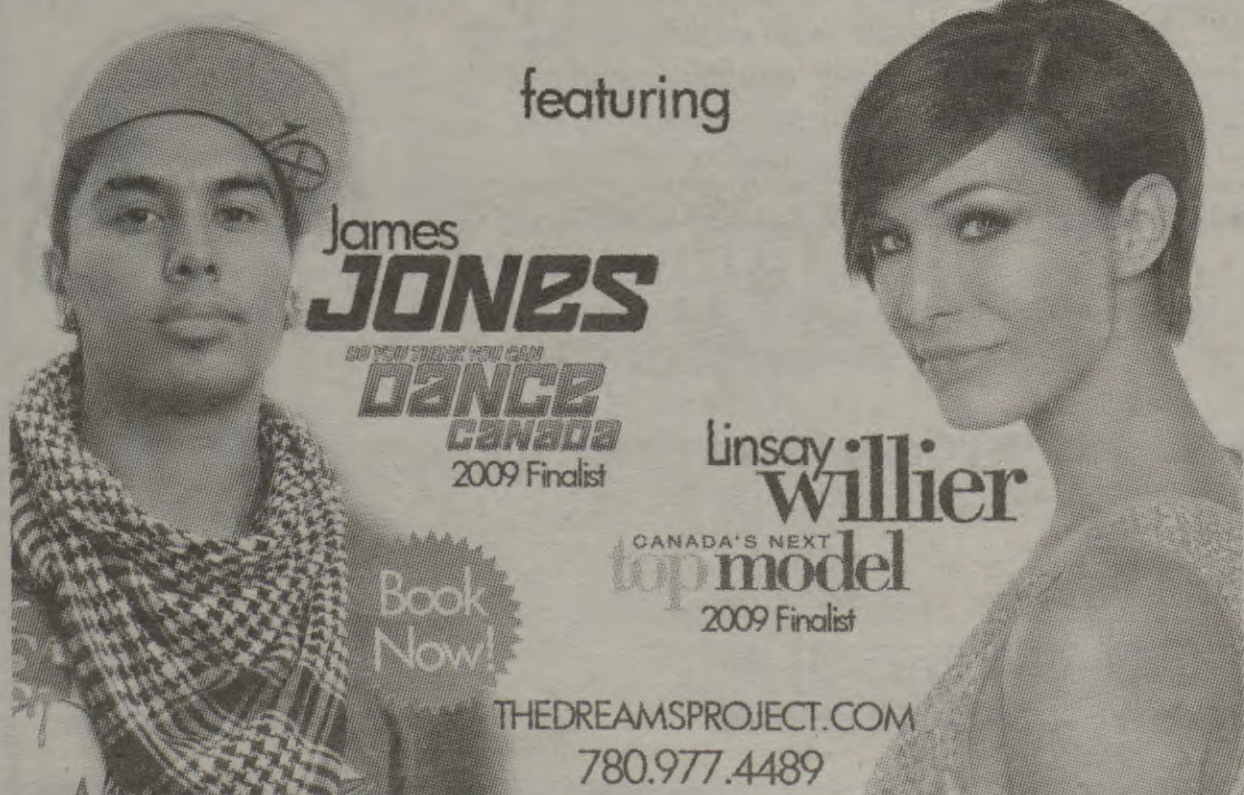
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Windspeaker sports briefs

By Sam Laskaris

New logo required

It will be next spring before a Toronto high school will have a new logo to replace one that was deemed offensive to Aboriginal people. But the sports teams at West Hill Collegiate will continue to call themselves the Warriors. Gone, however, is the Warriors' old logo. It depicted an Aboriginal chief with war paint on his face and feathers coming out from the back of his head.

The logo was deemed to be in violation of the Toronto District School Board's equity policy. Officials, however, ruled that West Hill could maintain the name Warriors. Students at the school are being asked to submit logo designs to go with the moniker. Students and staff at the school are expected to vote in either April or May on which logo they deem best suitable.

Not everybody associated with West Hill was in favor of getting rid of the old logo. An alumnus of the school had started a Facebook group in an effort to keep it. The group had about 1,200 members.

West Hill is not the only Toronto high school to alter its logo or name. Runnymede Collegiate used to call its sports teams the Redmen. But it changed that to the Ravens back in 1994. Also, earlier this decade, David and Mary Thomson Collegiate changed the name of its sports teams from Redmen to Titans.

Nolan luncheon in Moncton

Ted Nolan is going back to Moncton, but not to coach the city's Quebec Major Junior Hockey League franchise as he did during the 2005-06 season. Instead, Nolan will return to the New Brunswick city as the Ted Nolan Foundation stages its annual general meeting from Jan. 8 to 10.

Nolan, a former National Hockey League player and coach, will also attend a fundraising luncheon scheduled for Jan. 8 at the Delta Beausejour Hotel. Nolan's foundation will award a pair of \$4,000 scholarships to two Aboriginal women from New Brunswick. Nolan is presenting the awards in honor of his mother Rose, who was killed in 1981 after being hit by a drunk driver. Tickets for the fundraising luncheon cost \$75 each. A total of 600 tickets will be available. Besides the scholarships, other funds raised at the luncheon will go towards developing local programs for Aboriginal youth.

Nolan spent just one season with the Moncton Wildcats, but it was a memorable one when the Wildcats captured the QMJHL championship.

Nolan grew up on the Garden River First Nation, near Sault Ste. Marie, Ont. He played eight years in the pro ranks and had NHL stints with the Detroit Red Wings and Pittsburgh Penguins.

Nolan also coached in the NHL, with the Hartford Whalers, Buffalo Sabres and New York Islanders. While with the Sabres, Nolan won the Jack Adams Award for being the NHL's coach of the year during the 1996/1997 campaign.

Nolan, who is 51, is currently the vice-president of hockey operations for the American Hockey League's Rochester Americans.

Aboriginal showcase in Saskatoon

Pre-tournament festivities for this year's World Junior Championships in Saskatchewan had a unique Aboriginal connection. An Aboriginal Hockey Showcase was staged in Saskatoon from Dec. 17 to 22. Among those who were expected to be in attendance were former Aboriginal pro hockey players Fred Sasakamoose, Reggie Leach, Jim Neilson and Richard Pilon.

This was believed to be the first time a world tournament sanctioned by the International Ice Hockey Federation had a strong Aboriginal flavor.

The showcase, which had free admission, was held in part to educate the public about the numerous contributions Aboriginal players made in the amateur and pro ranks. Besides having the opportunity to meet some of the former Aboriginal stars, the public also had the opportunity to view various pieces of memorabilia relating to Native players.

This year's WJC, being held in Saskatoon and Regina, begins on Dec. 26. Canada is seeking a record sixth consecutive championship at this year's tournament. Besides Canada, the 10-nation event also includes Sweden, Russia, United States, Finland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Austria, Switzerland and Latvia. Some of the tickets for the tournament will include photos of former Aboriginal hockey stars.

Site chosen for NAHC

Details are still being finalized, but officials with the Aboriginal Sport Circle announced in November they had finally selected a site for the 2010 National Aboriginal Hockey Championships. The tournament, which is expected to begin in late April, will be held in Ottawa. Officials had originally hoped to announce the 2010 site this past spring, but in the fall the call went out again seeking cities that were willing to host the event.

Busy coach gives his all to his teams

By Sam Laskaris
Windspeaker Contributor

OHSWEKEN

Greg Henhawk already has a lengthy list of sporting accomplishments, but the 47-year-old Mohawk from Six Nations still has some goals that he would like to eventually fulfill.

Henhawk has been a physical education teacher at Hagersville Secondary School since 1986. And he's been the head of the school's physical education department since 1997. Over the years he's coached his share of basketball, badminton, soccer, tennis, track and field, cross-country running and field hockey teams at the school, but he's limited to how much coaching he can do at the school now since he's also in his second season of being an assistant coach with the University of Waterloo Warriors women's basketball squad.

Before joining the Warriors, Henhawk spent seven years as an assistant coach with another women's university basketball team, the Toronto-based Ryerson Rams. Though his teaching and coaching schedules are hectic enough, Henhawk also is heavily involved with coaching Basketball Ontario and Basketball Canada programs.

Henhawk has coached some boys' basketball teams over the years, but he also obviously enjoys working with female teams.

"I would say girls are more receptive to coaching," he said. "It's a little different game. There are more tactics with the girls and more emphasis on skill development. With the guys it's mostly natural athleticism, and what they can bring to the game."

Henhawk got heavily involved with coaching girls' basketball during his first year at Hagersville.

"That was the first need when I started coaching," he said, adding he took over the reins for the girls' midget, junior and senior teams during his first year.

After his teams' successes, Henhawk was asked to become an assistant coach with a girls' rep team in Brantford. That squad went on to win four provincial championships.

Though he's now in his ninth season of serving as an assistant coach at the university level,

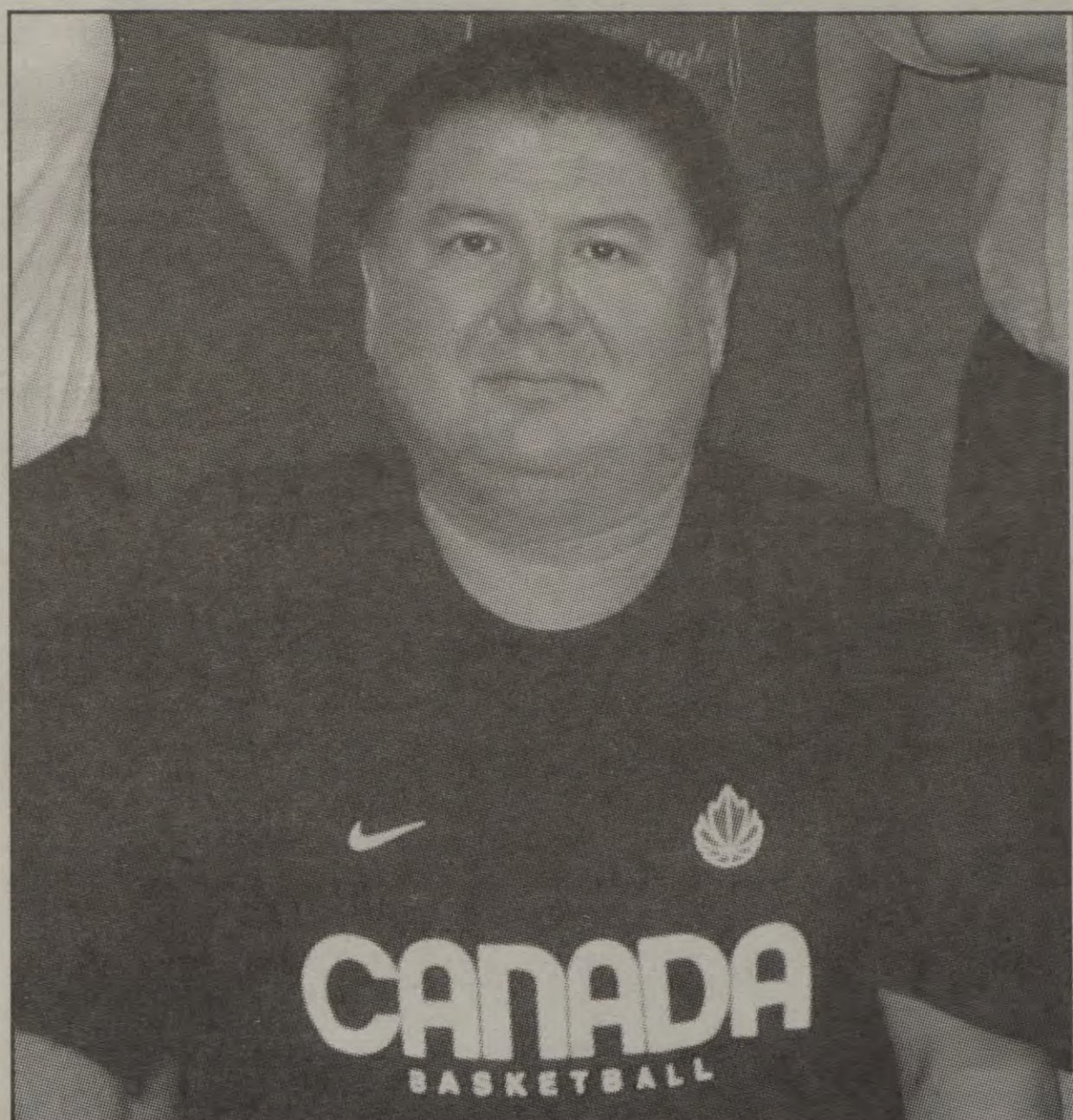


PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Greg Henhawk

Henhawk said he is often asked why he has yet to become a head coach at that level.

"I can't be a head coach and keep my teacher's job," he said, adding it would not be financially sound for him to give up his teacher's salary for a less-paying university head coaching position.

But Henhawk could very well end up being a head coach in the Ontario university ranks by the middle of the upcoming decade.

"I'm very close to retiring with teaching," he said, adding he will probably do so during his first opportunity, around 2015, when his age and the number of years teaching will add up to 85. At that point, Henhawk will in all likelihood apply for university head coaching positions.

"It is something I would definitely consider doing after I retire," he said.

Another goal for Henhawk is to one day be a member of a coaching staff that participates at a world basketball championship. "I guess that would be the ultimate dream," said Henhawk, who has coached numerous other rep and provincial level teams over the past two decades. "But I don't dwell on it."

Henhawk almost fulfilled his goal a few years ago. He was listed as an associate coach for the Canadian junior women's national team that participated at a world qualifying tournament in Colorado Springs. He was not,

however, officially accredited for the event, as each club could only have a head coach and two assistants.

Though the Canadian squad did advance to its world tournament, Henhawk was not allowed to attend again as the team had the maximum of two other assistant coaches.

Henhawk though was fortunate enough to compete in another prestigious tourney.

"My initial goal was to coach at an international event," he said. "And I did that."

Henhawk coached a Six Nations boys' 15-and-under team at the International Children's Games in Hamilton in 2000.

As for this season, the Warriors are struggling early on. The club won just two out of its eight games before Christmas.

And the Warriors were in seventh place in the eight-team Ontario University Athletics' West Division. "We're rebuilding," Henhawk said. "I think we've got talent, but it's young talent."

The Warriors did miss the playoffs last season, but Henhawk believes the club, which has 14 regular season contests remaining, will see some post-season action this year.

The top six finishers in the division advance to the playoffs.

"I think we can do that and make some damage in the playoffs," he said.

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The Yawenda Project: Can the Huron-Wendat language be revived in Wendake?

By Marie White
Windspeaker Contributor

WENDAKE, Que.

"Öashen..., tedih tewahsen..., ashienhk iwahsen..."

The participants of a workshop held last September count "10, 20, 30..." in a simulated Huron-Wendat language class held by Megan Lukaniec as part of the Yawenda Project, designed for the revival of the now lost ancestral language.

Lukaniec is from Connecticut, studied at Dartmouth College, has family in Wendake and is currently doing her master's degree in linguistics at Laval University. She has been part of the project since its beginnings.

Launched in the summer of 2007, the Yawenda Project has a five-year life span and a \$1 million grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to reconstruct the language in the hope of making it the Wendake community's second language.

The project is a collaboration of university specialists, such as Louis-Jacques Dorais from Laval University, Quebec University in Abitibi-Témiscamingue and various linguists. The village of Wendake is involved, as is the First Nations Education Council and the First Peoples' Heritage and Language Council. The project plans to train teachers and create pedagogical material to teach Huron in pre-school, elementary school and adult education classes.

Presently, 10 future teachers are following weekly workshops in the language and in the arts of teaching a second language. Conferences, such as the September conference, are on-going, and include inspirational talks, such as on how the Mohawks preserve their language, which helped the Huron-Wendats to think in terms of an Iroquoian language model, unlike the now more familiar French one.

Back in September, several members of another Wendat

group for the revival of the language, called the Linguistic Committee, attended the workshop. The committee was begun about 15 years ago, and was revived in 2006 to start work on standardizing aspects of the written language.

Its handful of members has been trying to achieve a consensus on how to reconstruct the language based on the expert knowledge of scholars who also have studied the language.

"Language is an integral part of culture; it is the essence of culture," said Linda Sioui, a member of the Linguistic Committee and Yawenda's organizer. She has worked for many years on the cause, speaking out in her 1992 article "Is there a future for the Huron Language?"

At that time she was already asking the question "Is the revival of the language a possibility or a utopia?" Seventeen years later, the Yawenda Project is dedicated to making it possible.

"Culture is the soul of a nation, and language its cement," said Linguistic Committee member and anthropologist-poet-artist Louis-Karl Picard-Sioui.

"Yawenda will reinforce a sense of identity and bring the community closer."

Since a language is also a window on the world, a way of seeing life, Linda Sioui hopes to better understand her ancestors' thoughts and vision.

"One of the aims of restoring the language would be to shed light on how the ancient Huron thought," she wrote. For others, like fellow panelist Marcel Godbout, it means taking pride in continuing the ancestors' traditions.

Huron-Wendat linguist Michel Gros-Louis opened the September conference with a talk on the history of the language. Though French-speaking today, the nation was originally located in the Great Lakes region in Ontario. When the Wendats fled the Great Lakes region in the late 1600s because of disease and warfare, some dispersed south

forming American Wyandot groups in Kansas and Oklahoma, while others merged with Iroquois groups. A small handful followed the French Jesuit missionaries to the Quebec City region.

In 1697, with a population of under 200, the Huron-Wendats settled permanently in Wendake. The Jesuits introduced the term Huron, the Catholic religion and the French language, all of which estranged the community from its mother tongue.

"The Huron language 'died' toward the end of the 19th or the start of the 20th century," wrote Sioui. Once the foremost language of trade and diplomacy, believed even to be "the original language from which the other Iroquoian languages stemmed," Huron died "at the hands of Christianity."

According to a Lorette Huron who spoke to Mgr. Turgeon in 1850, "We regret ... that we did not have a missionary who could have learned and insisted that we learn (our language). We had to learn everything in French; that really helped its loss."

On the other hand, Wyandot was spoken well into the late 1900s in Oklahoma. Recently, there has been a revived connection between the Huron-Wendat nation in Quebec and the American Wyandot nation, both of whom were forced to disperse in 1649.

Chief Jan English of the Wyandot Nation of Kansas sent a letter of encouragement to Yawenda, highlighting a momentous meeting of the two groups in 1999 in Ontario.

"It was then that we began to realize the value of reclaiming our language," said English. As proof, Richard Zane-Smith from the Wyandot nation in Oklahoma was present at the September conference and sang children's songs in his nation's original language.

However, the last fluent Huron speakers were mostly from the Vincent family, including Grand Chief Nicolas Vincent, painter Zacharie Vincent and Brother

Prosper Vincent.

In recent times, Marguerite Vincent devoted herself to the study of her nation's language and François Vincent Kiowarini sang and recorded the songs of his ancestors.

Since the Huron-Wendat language is said to be the most documented Native language, ranging from the time when Jacques Cartier arrived in 1534 to Gabriel Sagard's lexicography to Jean de Brébeuf's Huron Carol in 1648 to Père Chaumonot's work, and many more, the Language Committee has many sources to consult.

This does not always make the reconstruction work easier. Finding a group consensus on the correct spelling of a word, for instance, can be challenging. One example is the Jesuits' writing by which the number eight has been used to express a unique sound.

"The committee worked to eliminate that transcription," said the committee's Picard-Sioui, "but, frustratingly, the community is still using it for the local elementary school's name, Ts8taie."

One of the prominent debates for the community and its committee revolves around the complex questions of who to teach, how, and with what method. So the Yawenda conference allowed outside experts to share their knowledge and voice their opinions for the community to consider. Diverse views were expressed, but the dominant attitude was, according to Godbout, that "Though no one person has the absolute truth, together we can find our truth."

A round table discussion was held on the closing day in which a panel of nine speakers shared their ideas on three key issues: spelling uniformity, teaching and the future of Huron-Wendat. Several, including Picard-Sioui, called for standardization through the continuing work of the local committee.

"We need committed members from different sectors of the community. We need to train

teachers, and we must give greater value to the language, such as having street signs in Huron-Wendat."

Outside expert and guest speaker John Steckley from Toronto's Humber College, a Huron language specialist, highlighted characteristics of the original language where there was no concept of zero and no swear words. So to swear, one had to use French or English.

"I guess the Europeans gave the nation both a way and a reason to swear," he joked.

"The Huron language is such a beautiful, beautiful thing," he said. "Most words are verbs and a whole thought can be expressed in a one-word verb unit."

Steckley was proud to inform the group that on Dec. 2 when the Olympic Torch travelled to Quebec City, a Huron-Wendat phrase was part of the theme song he contributed to.

It means "They, the people of the sky, are bringing a message."

Craig Kapris, an American linguist who did his thesis on the Huron language, spoke of the variety of spellings that causes difficulty when trying to reach a writing consensus. Despite these challenges, reviving a language is possible, given the example of Hebrew, according to Linda Sioui's article, but "it requires collective goodwill."

The key then to rebuilding the language in a meaningful and real way, all seem to agree, is in getting the community involved, including the financial and political support of the nation's leaders. There could even be a language department within the council, suggested Steven Gros-Louis.

"We need to reclaim our pride and heritage and transmit it. We need to build pride to get over historical shame," said Nathalie Picard, a Huron-Wendat artist, musician and teacher. She believes the community needs to find a place and a time to gather the children and elders together to talk and sing.

"To survive," said Picard, "The language needs to be spoken."

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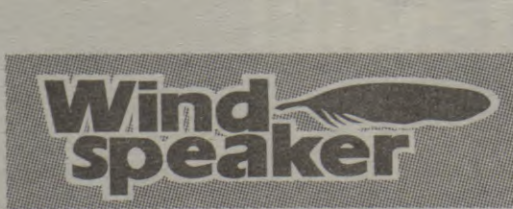
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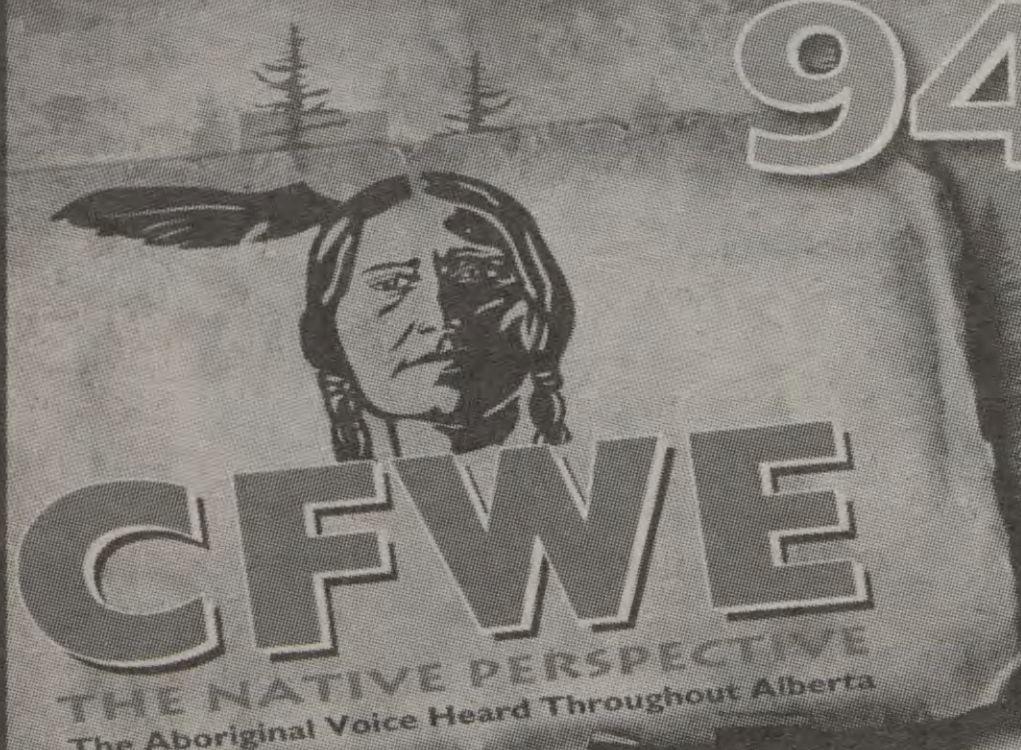
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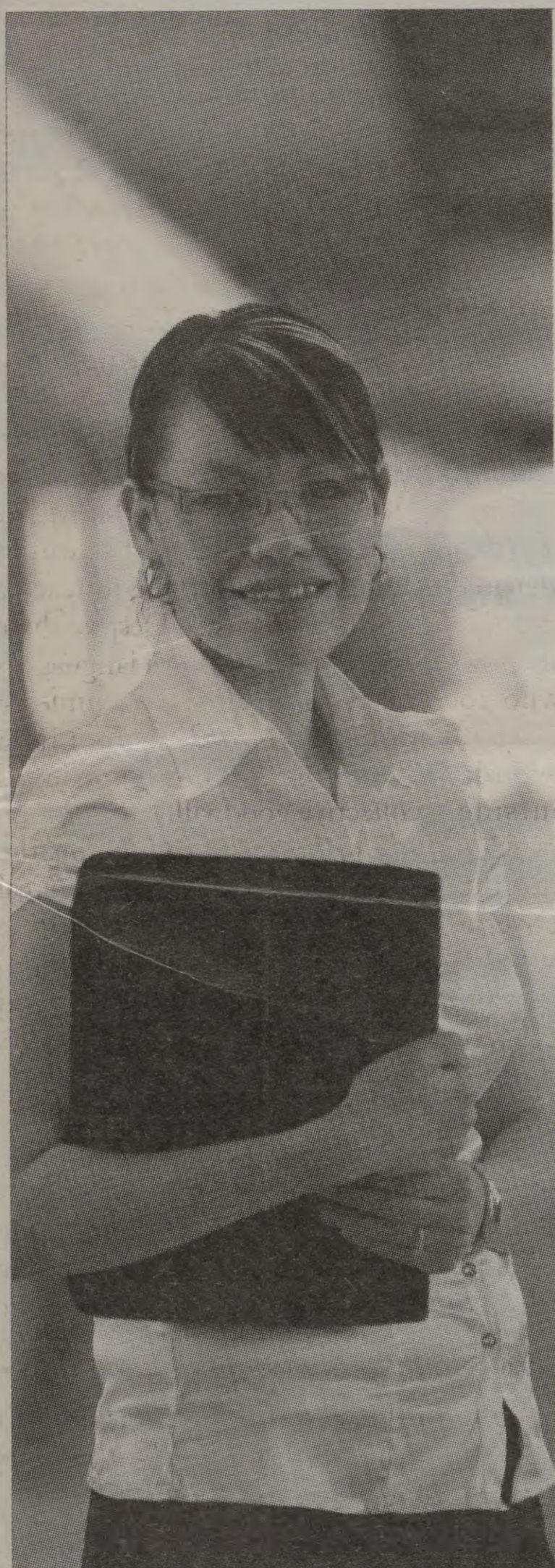
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[education] Olds, Ermineskin project earns teacher national nomination



PHOTO: SUBMITTED

Video conferencing takes part between the Olds and Ermineskin elementary school as part of the Mamawihisicikewin project.

By Sharon Goulet
Windspeaker Writer

OLDS, Alta.

Early last spring, with the support of several individuals, including Iris Loewen, coordinator of the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Chinook's Edge School Division, Helene Fisher began a long journey of hope to win the Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History.

The "body of work" that Fisher was specifically nominated for was called, Circle of Understanding or Mamawihisicikewin (the act of working together). Loewen was an integral partner in the creation of the work. "Iris was always a constant, and was my mentor. Without her, this body of work and this nomination would not have occurred," said Fisher.

This "body of work" took place during 2008 and 2009 between two schools. Part A and B have focused on "creating the present" by working together and learning about past local history. One hundred and seventy five students, in seven classrooms from grades one, two, four, six and eight were able to come together during the past and present school year at various stages. "Together we worked on a joint project based on Canadian Aboriginal history and local Olds history with numerous cross-curricular components. Through this body of work we have introduced local First Nations culture and history to assist students, both in Olds and Ermineskin, in beginning to form accurate images that reinforce positive views reflecting Alberta's Aboriginal People today," Fisher said.

Since Olds Elementary School has a primarily non-Aboriginal population and Ermineskin Elementary School is a band school with a First Nations population, Fisher believed that both groups could benefit from knowing more about the other.

"We both have roots in Alberta's history and through an inquiry-based approach and artifact study we have worked on two parts to this project. The impact of this collaboration is that through appropriate curriculum and sensitive teaching, students in these classrooms can begin to understand the similarities between people rather than the differences. It can assist children in appreciating cultural differences among people, recognizing diversity and learning to feel accepted with our differences," Fisher said.

In September, Fisher was announced as one of the 25 finalists for The Governor General's Excellence in Teaching Award. As a finalist, she was recognized for her exemplary and innovative teaching concept. Although Fisher was not one of the six chosen to attend the ceremonies in Ottawa, she still considers herself a winner.

"The announcement was made nationally, which was thrilling, mostly because something I had passionately become involved with had been recognized. Even before the 25 finalists were announced, I knew that what we had experienced over the past two years was special for everyone involved - students, teachers, parents. I had listened to people talk about their experiences and I knew that some of them were changed because of them," Fisher said. "What more can anyone ask of anything?"

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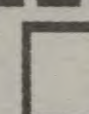
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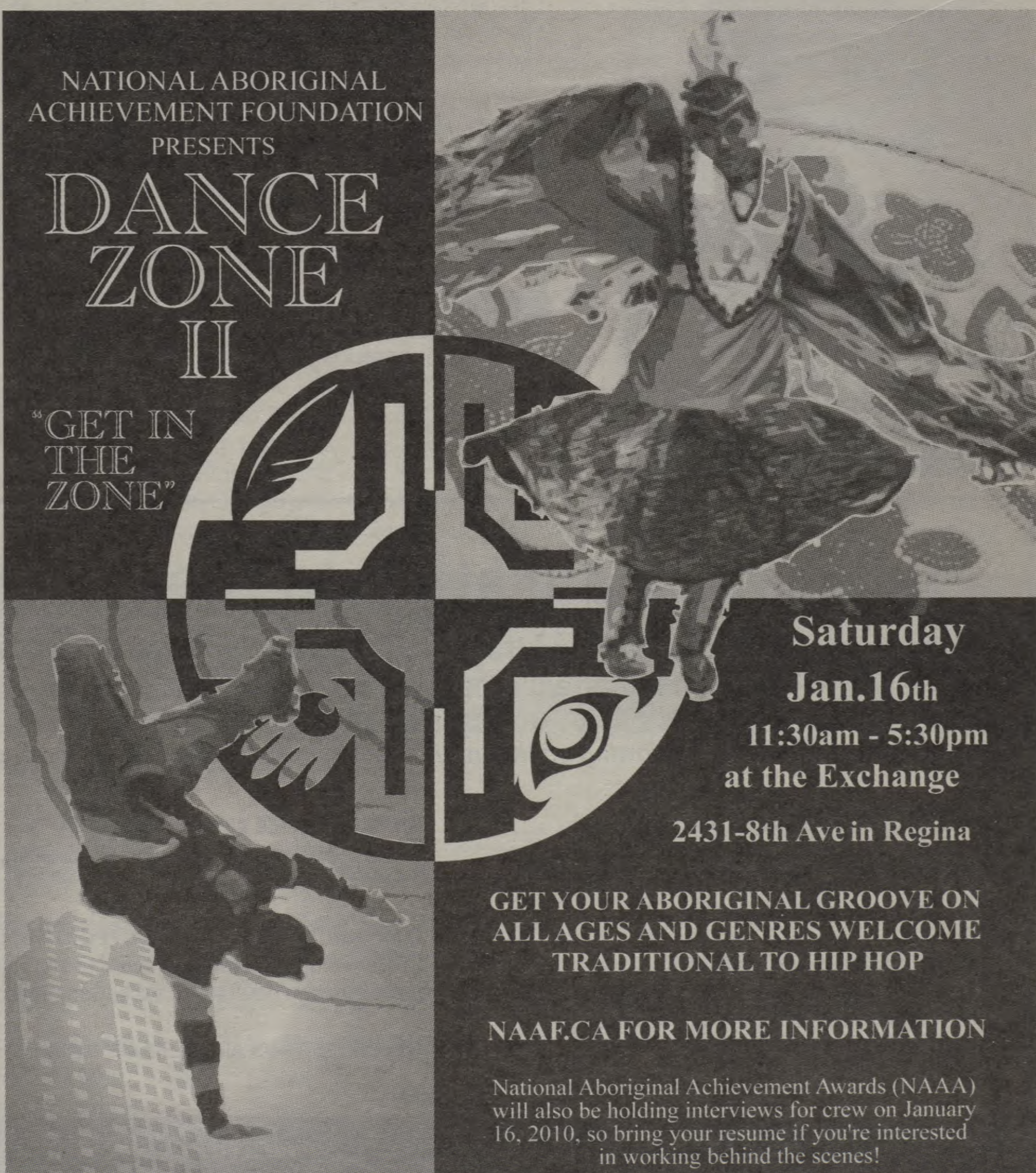
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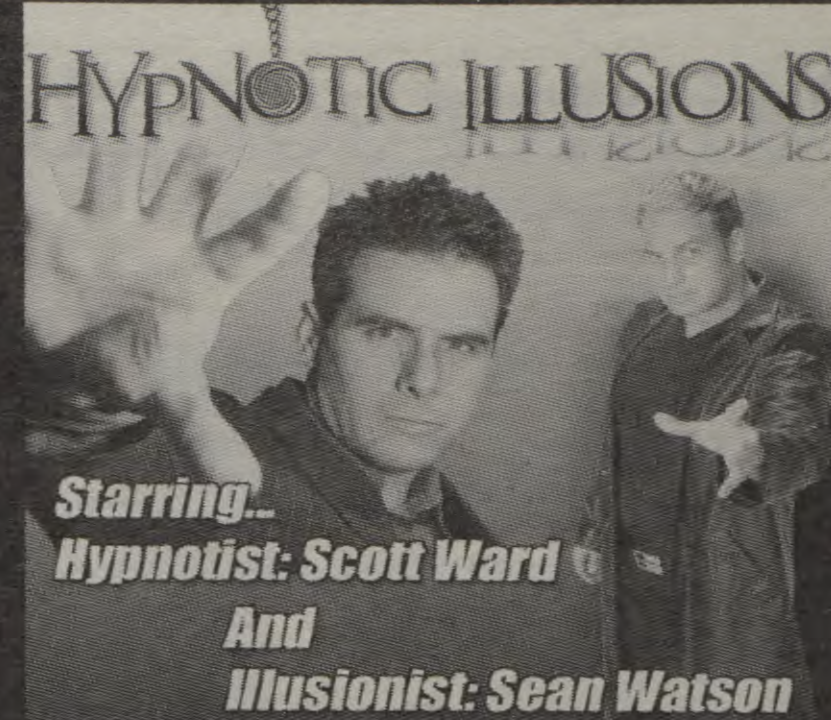
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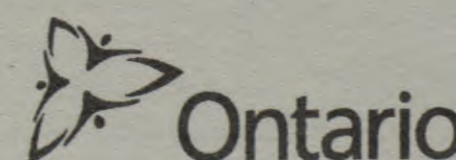
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[footprints] Joane Cardinal-Schubert

Painter sought emotional response from viewers

By Dianne Meili

What does being "part Indian" mean? (which part?)

You don't get 50% or 25% or 16% treatment when you experience Racism - it's always 100%.

These words were written in white chalk on a blackboard over the smiling and serious photographs of the late artist Joane Cardinal-Schubert. They were part of her 1990 installation called *Preservation of a Species: DECONSTRUCTIVISTS - This is the house that Joe built.*

The mixed media artwork was her examination of labels and the stereotypes experienced as a Blackfoot woman growing up in a predominately non-Native society.

The installation toured internationally in 1992 and clearly declared what Cardinal-Schubert was all about.

"You have to look through peepholes in boards to see this site," she commented about the work in *Indigena*, a book of the same name as the Canadian Museum of Civilization exhibition in which *Preservation of a Species* was featured.

"It is difficult to see all the facts in just one look. It is uncomfortable to peek through the little holes. You miss some of the picture. What's more, it is an uncomfortable and unsettling experience. Good! Now you know how I have felt for most of my life."

Through her art, writing, curating and teaching, Cardinal-Schubert achieved recognition as an Aboriginal artist of considerable talent. She followed the path laid down for her by the first generation of contemporary Native artists like Norval Morrisseau, Daphne Odjig and Alex Janvier.

"Because I'm Aboriginal, my work has been considered political," Cardinal-Schubert observed further in *Indigena*. "But I don't think of it as political. I think of it as personal."

Born in 1942 in Red Deer, Alta, Cardinal-Schubert grew up "roaming around on our land and by the lake, testing my strength, learning my place, looking and seeing," she is quoted as saying in a 2003 *Legacy* magazine article. As a schoolgirl she expressed her creativity writing poetry, taking dance lessons, skating, acting and singing in a choir.



One of Joane Cardinal-Schubert's art installations was set up in front of Edmonton City Hall in the early 1990's to draw attention to the Residential School experience.

Family friend Lillian Shirt of Edmonton observed Cardinal-Schubert's older brother Douglas, an architect, encourage his sister's artistic interests.

"Douglas had artwork by northern Alberta's Henry Nanooch hanging in his office and Henry would come down and talk to Joane about painting. Douglas urged his sister to study art in school," Shirt said.

She did, studying at the Alberta College of Art in the early 1970s, and hoping to enroll at the University of Edmonton, until she hit a brick wall.

The chair of Fine Arts at the time refused her application and Cardinal-Schubert went home to bide her time, painting and raising her two sons, until that authority left the position and she reapplied, receiving her bachelor of fine arts in 1977.

Though exposed to the styles and techniques of leading European artists in school, Cardinal-Schubert's diverse cultural heritage influenced her work, and she was especially inspired by her grandmothers: one of German descent, and the other a holy woman of the Peigan (Blackfoot) nation.

Working out of her studio in

Calgary, the artist combined the symbols of her Canadian Plains people with her own life experience, enabling her to create a history of personal and cultural significance.

Many of her more recent paintings included pictographic images taken from sites throughout Alberta. Stylized horses, buffalo, elk and human shapes were often repeated in simple line drawings rendered in rich, earthy tones of red, yellow and brown, underneath a deep blue night sky dotted with the stars by which her ancestors navigated the prairies.

Cardinal-Schubert felt gratified to know the symbols carved in stone would continue to tell their stories and be appreciated by generations to come.

She wanted her paintings "to be beautiful so as not to alienate" but to also evoke an emotional response. "I want to engage the intellect ... allow the viewer room to make a choice," she wrote in a spring 2003 issue of *Galleries West* magazine. "I am simply creating a mirror for them to look into and they see what they want to see and therefore they have a part in the process. I

know I really don't have any control over how they interpret my work."

More than just art and written word creation, Cardinal-Schubert's creative energy was channeled into theatre, film, and video. She was an outspoken champion of Native rights, land claims, and education, and one of her passions involved rewriting the ethics of museum ownership and display of Aboriginal artifacts, and the appropriation of Aboriginal imagery.

She brought considerable authority to the meeting tables of numerous arts councils and initiatives, and served as the president of the Calgary Aboriginal Arts Awareness Society in 2000, after sitting on the Arts and Culture Committee of that organization for many years.

She was inducted into the Royal Canadian Academy (RCA) in 1985, received the Commemorative Medal of Canada in 1993, and the Queen's

Jubilee Medal in 2002.

In 2007 she was given the National Aboriginal Achievement Award in the Arts category.

Many in the Aboriginal and arts communities were shocked when Cardinal-Schubert passed away in Calgary this past Sept. 16 after the cancer she had battled for 14 years returned just three months before her death.

She is survived by her husband Mike and sons Christopher and Justin.



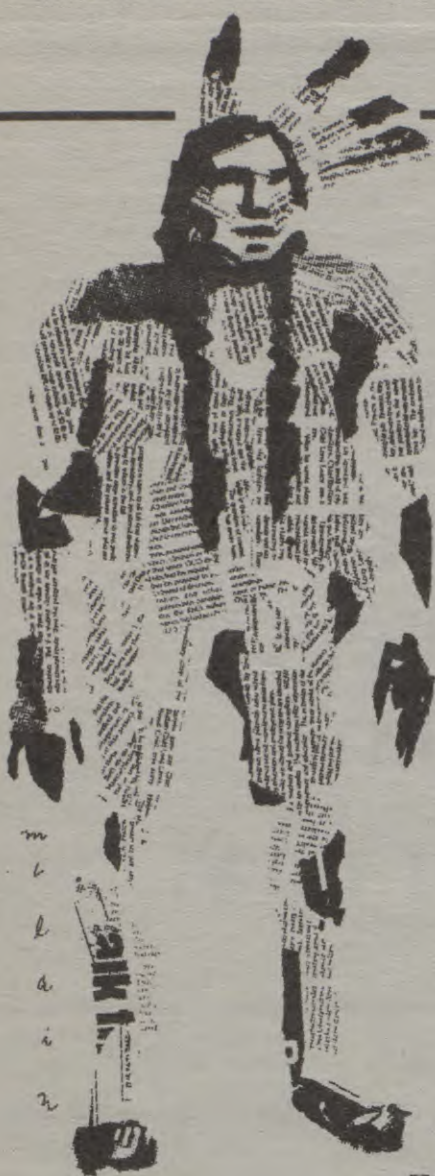
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Joane Cardinal-Schubert

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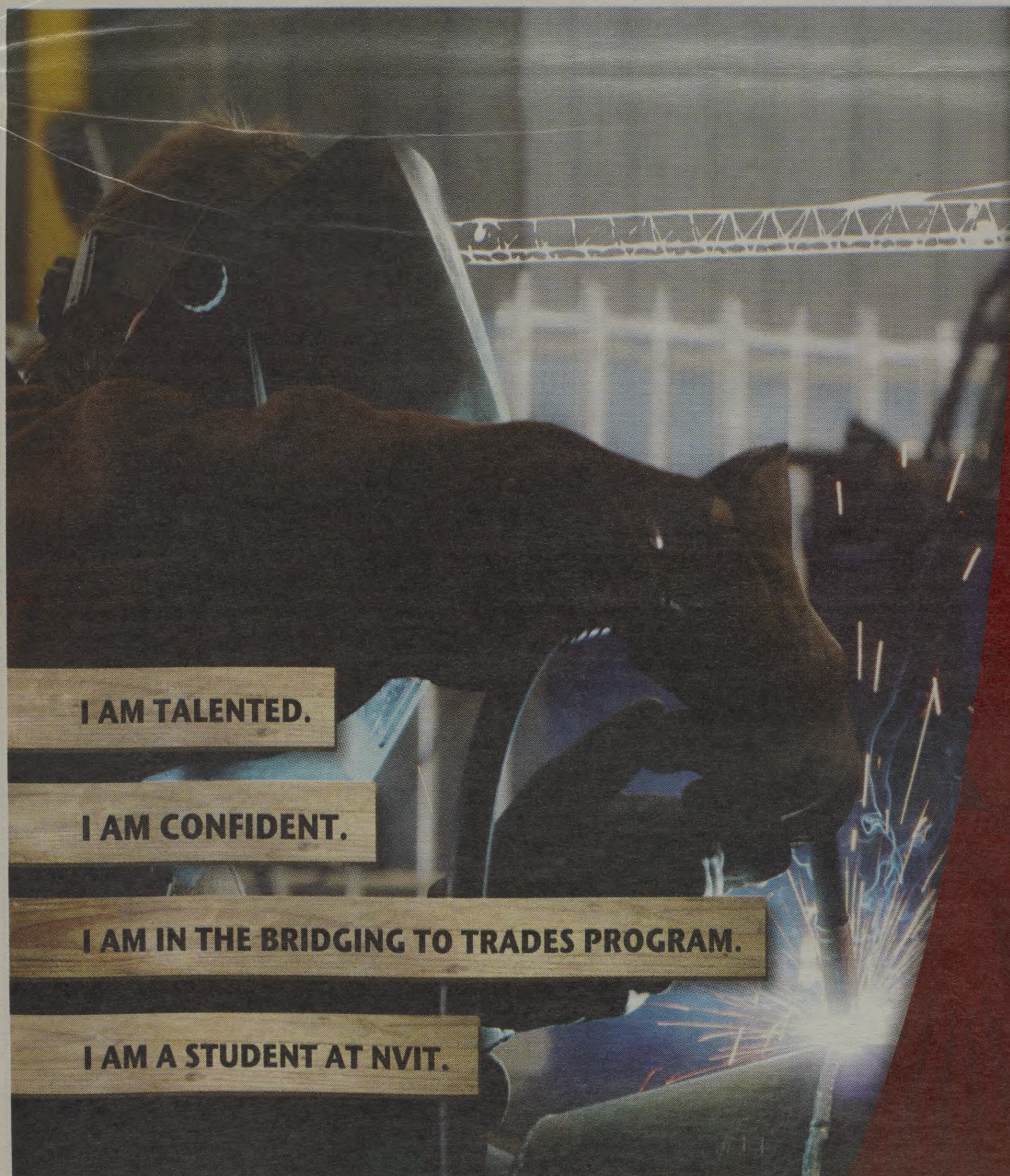


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