

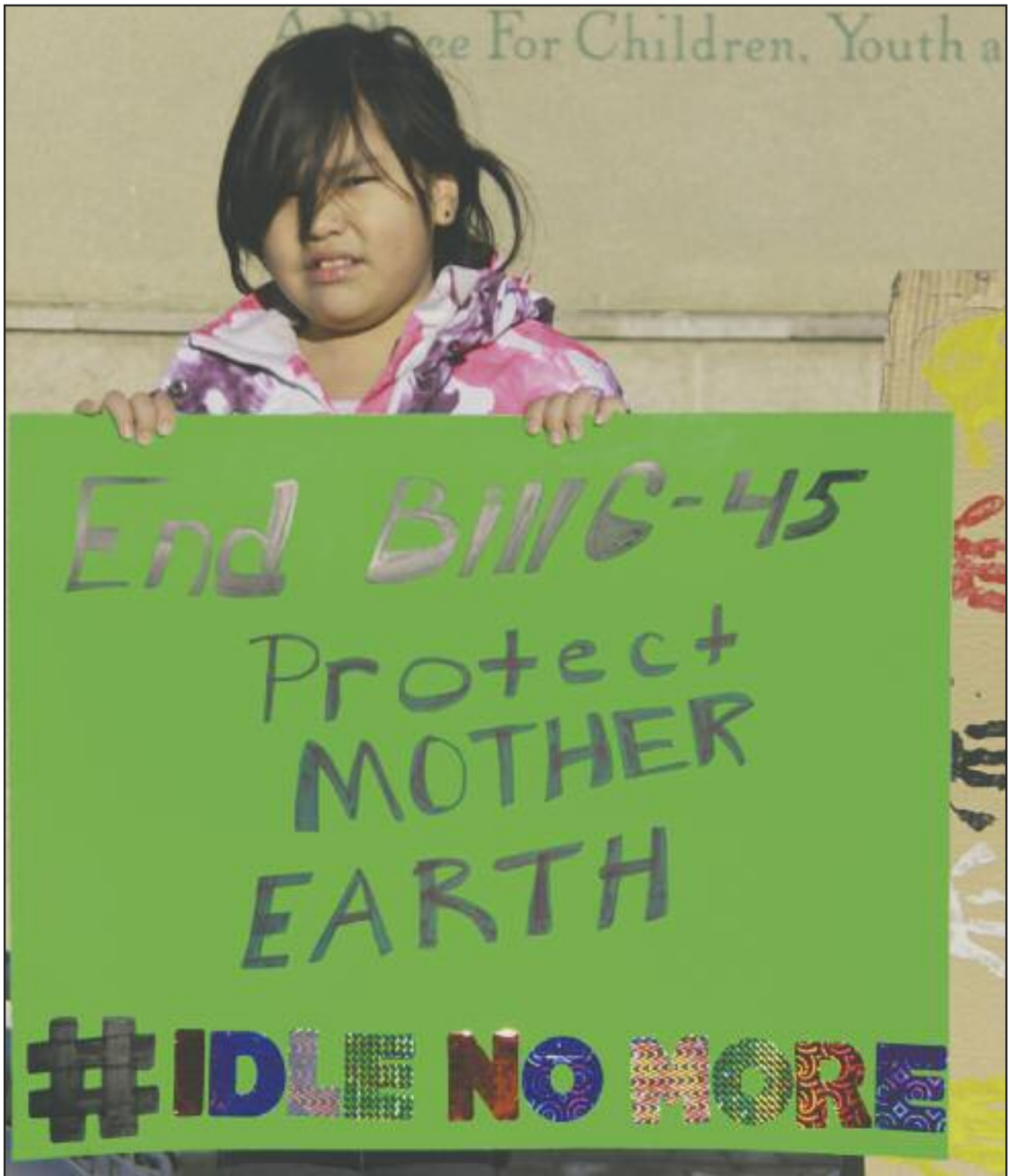
Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

Idle No More gains global support

This young activist held her spot and sign during the entire Idle No More rally at the White Buffalo Youth Lodge in Saskatoon. The movement has caught fire with rallies happening across the world.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)



Protesters vow to continue until demands are met

By Diane Adams
For Eagle Feather News

It all started in Saskatoon. Now, Idle No More has spread like wildfire across the globe, and its organizers say they won't stop – until all of their demands are met.

Last month, Sylvia McAdam was organizing rallies from her home on the Whitefish Lake First Nation. Now, she's travelling across Canada and teaching others how to organize events around the world.

"I am trying to coordinate events in London and

Germany," she said.

This, after more than six weeks of high profile marches, rallies, barricades, flashmob roundances, and ceremonies all in the name of Idle No More.

Originally the project of Sylvia McAdam and three others, Idle No More was started as a means to protest the federal government's controversial Bill C-45. Now, it's become a worldwide call for the Crown and the Canadian government to honour their Treaty obligations to First Nations people.

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Welcome to our
Year in Review Issue

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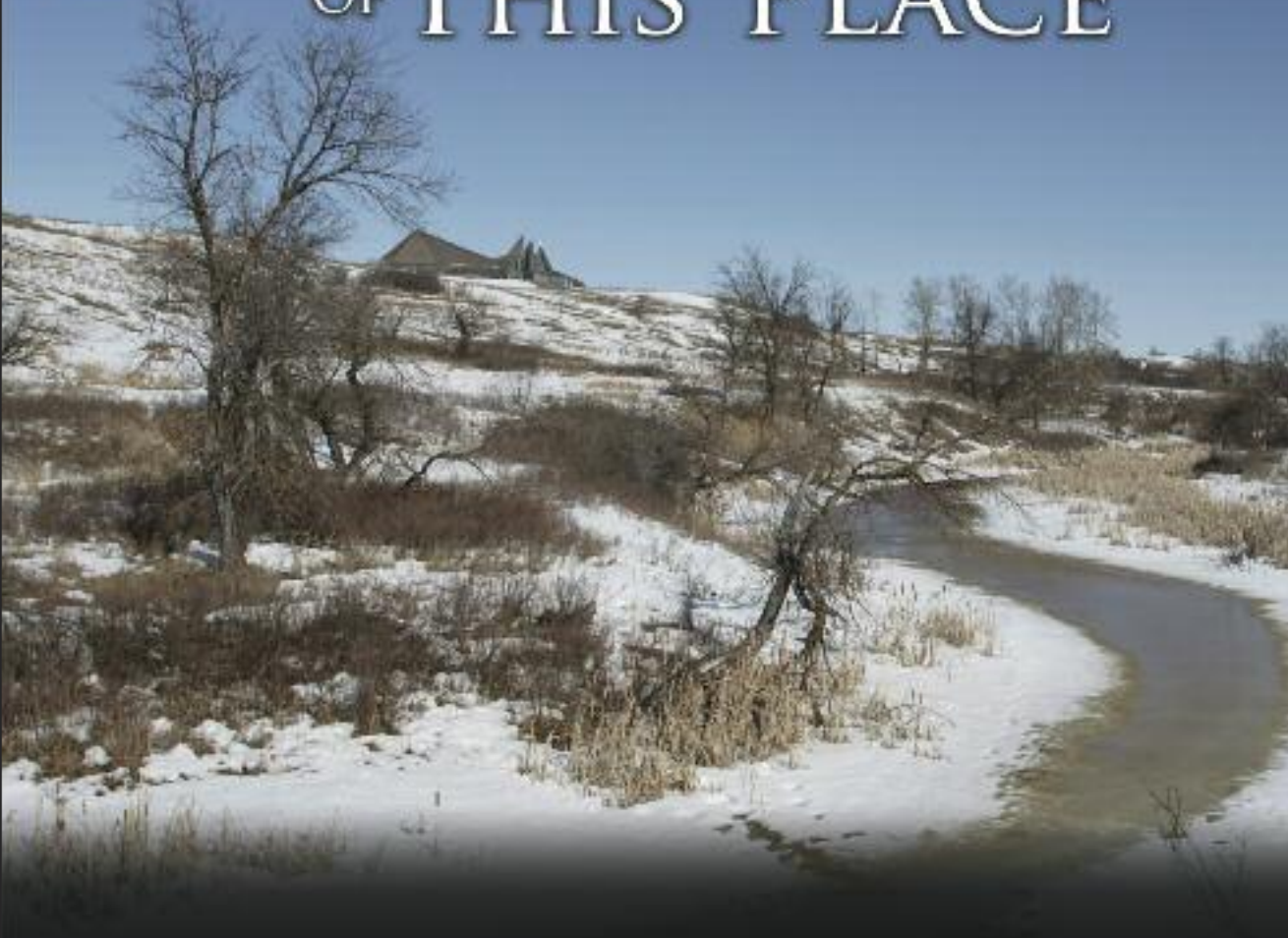
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SIGA scholarships help Sask First Nations students pursue academic dreams

by Fraser Needham
For Eagle Feather News

The cost of a higher education does not come cheap these days. Just ask Jaris Swidrovich.

Swidrovich, who hails from the Yellow Quill First Nation, aims to be the first Aboriginal doctor of pharmacy in Canada.

However, he figures it will have cost him roughly \$100,000 by the time he is finished his program. Tuition in the two-year program at the University of Toronto is \$40,000 per year plus living costs of about \$10,000 each year.



JARIS SWIDROVICH

So while First Nations students all over Saskatchewan continue to pursue their academic and career dreams they are also running up some serious debts. The Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority is aware of the financial challenges students face and this is why the organization announced \$25,000 in student scholarships last month.

SIGA awards scholarships on an annual basis. Two \$5,000 scholarships are awarded to students pursuing courses in any of information technology, commerce, hospitality and tourism management or masters and doctoral programs in any field.

As well, an additional two \$2,500 scholarships are awarded to students studying communications or electronics

and ten \$1,000 scholarships are awarded to students in various other fields.

SIGA announced the 15 scholarship winners at a ceremony at the Wanuskewin Heritage Park on Dec. 19.

Swidrovich is one of the \$5,000 scholarship recipients as is Cassandra Opikokew of the Canoe Lake First Nation who is studying public policy at the University of Regina.

This spring, as part of his research, he will travel to Australia to study how that country's Aborigine population uses pharmacy.

Swidrovich says he was perfectly happy practicing as a pharmacist in Saskatchewan but he always knew he wanted to do more.

"I always knew I wanted to do something more and be a leader in my profession," he says. "From a very early time in my pharmacy curriculum I really noticed we were lacking Aboriginal education in pharmacy and I knew that by having the doctorate of pharmacy degree I could be that leader."

Wendie Marks of the Anishinabe of Wauzhujshk Onigum First Nation, a doctoral student in psychology at the University of Saskatchewan, is one of two \$2,500 scholarship recipients.

The other is Kevin Lewis of Island Lake First Nation – Ministikwan Lake who is pursuing a masters in Indigenous languages at the First Nations University of Canada in Regina.

The focus of Marks' research is the causes of psychiatric illnesses such as depression. She says she will put the money toward helping to pay for tuition and finishing her thesis.

"I plan on finishing my PhD by the end of the summer so this money will help pay for tuition for both the winter term and the spring and summer term," she says. "So, it will really take me into the completion of my PhD which is perfect."

Pat Cook, vice-president of corporate affairs at SIGA, says the scholarship money is not only targeted at university students but also those pursuing trades.

In fact, she says SIGA has specifically tried to use the program to encourage students in fields of study that include jobs the organization itself has found hard to fill.

"We were having trouble selling some of the more technical aspects of our company and certainly thought that by offering scholarships in some of those hard to sell positions it would be ideal in helping us recruit into the future."



Saskatoon Tribal Council Chief and SIGA Board Chair Felix Thomas, \$2,500 SIGA student scholarship recipient Wendie Marks and SIGA President and CEO Zane Hansen at the 2012 SIGA Scholarships Ceremony on Dec. 19.

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Mark Delorme, Roseville

Suck it up buttercups, no cheap smokes or tax exemptions

The other morning I woke up and heard a chuckle from the after-world. An hour later, I heard on the news that the Federal Court had ruled on the Daniels Case and that Métis people and non-status Indians are now recognized as Indians under Section 91 (24) of the Constitution. Then I knew that the chuckle belonged to long time Métis activist Harry Daniels.



DANIELS

As President of the Congress of Aboriginal People, Harry had helped launch a case against the government that aimed to establish that

Métis and non-status Indians are Indians under subsection 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867; second, that the Crown owes to Métis and non-status Indians a fiduciary duty as Aboriginal peoples; and third, that they have a right to be negotiated with, on a collective basis, in good faith with the Crown.

The lawsuit did not list out any specific rights that were being sought; most importantly it was looking for a designation as to their status. In Canada, the Constitution acknowledges three Aboriginal groups; the Indian, the Inuit and the Métis. The government, up until Jan. 8, had only dealt with the Inuit and Indians under Section 91 (24) in regards to benefits and lands and fiduciary responsibility.

"You Métis," they said, "You are a provincial responsibility." For years the Métis were the forgotten people ... the third cousin down the line so to speak as they bounced back and forth negotiating with provinces, then the federal government, then the provinces, oftentimes seeing issues fall through the cracks with no results for the Métis.

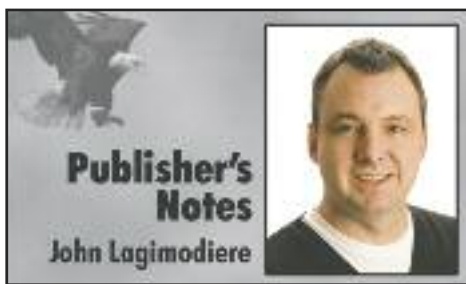
This falling through the cracks led to exacerbated housing and health issues for

some people and communities. It led to delayed or ignored land claims and it kept Métis people from fully participating in the economy of Canada.

Finally, 13 years after the case was filed and after pouring through reams of historical evidence and hundreds of documents that were once top secret the Honourable Michael Phelan has agreed that yes, Métis and non-status Indians are indeed Indians under the Constitution. The judge did dismiss the other two parts of the claim, but really, once the Métis and non-status are recognized as Indians, the fiduciary responsibility only follows. Expect this case to go to the Supreme Court.

But the big question is what does this mean to Métis people and for Canadian citizens. If you go read the CBC comment board and Facebook, Canada is going to be broke because approximately 600,000 more Indians have been added to the gravy train and it is the end of the world. That's 600,000 more people at the government teat that will drain our country of resources. Less taxpayers, more welfare etc, etc. Why can't we all be equal? Wahwahwah ... Well suck it up buttercups.

It actually means nothing of the sort. Nothing has changed for your average Métis citizen except the fact that the federal government now has the direct responsibility for Métis people, programs and issues. By no means does this decision give non-status Indians back their Status nor does it bestow Status benefits on Métis people. So, sorry, but there will be no cheap smokes or tax exemptions or the alleged "free" education that causes so much resentment from the ignorant. And Buffalo Narrows will not become a reserve and all the Métis can't move back to Batoche and form the Métis Nation of Batoche and declare sovereignty. We certainly aren't getting Winnipeg back (which is



kind of a relief...have you been there lately?)

Any benefits that arise out of this for Métis people will still have to be negotiated or litigated.

Regardless of that, we do expect a big line up at the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan registry office in order for many people to claim their Métis ancestry and be registered. Of note, all you guys that bought Métis cards from crooked Local Presidents when we got hunting rights in the late 1990s, those cards are obsolete and entitle you to nothing.

Also a note to the great hockey players who conveniently received a Métis card so they could play in the native tournament in North Battleford, same thing. They aren't any good for you. Sorry. But you are still good hockey players if that means anything.

Now it is incumbent on Métis people who have not gone to the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan and gone through the registry process to get down there and start the process. Don't even start to give us the old "I don't need a card to tell me I'm Métis" angle, that doesn't fly any more. The MN-S has an independent and objectively verifiable system through which Métis people can prove their ancestry and become citizens of the Métis Nation. The importance of doing this can't be stressed enough.

The more people that are registered properly, the more ammunition President Robert Doucette and the executive at the MN-S will have when they do get to negotiating or litigating any sort of rights or benefits with the Government of Canada. It is your duty as a citizen of the MN-S to do it. Don't wait.

Harry would get mad.

Idle No More focusing

It is nice to see the Idle No More group starting to post some criteria on

their website as to what kind of protests they endorse. This movement has become so big that many people have become "spokespeople" for the cause. This can lead to some confusion. Just before the Chiefs were to meet with the Prime Minister, a Manitoba Chief came out and said that if the Prime Minister doesn't meet in good faith, the Idle No More people will blockade Canada and cripple the economy.

This is on the same day that one of the Idle creators said they are for peaceful engagement and not for road blocks. Idle is a grass roots movement and some of these Chiefs are over stepping their boundaries.

The fast that Chief Theresa Spence has been on has also confused people. She started the fast to support Idle No More and now she has become the poster child for it, once again confusing the media and people, with some elevating her to saint-like status and others, mainly the mainstream media and the crazy conservative news skills at Sun News, trying to vilify her to deflect attention from the real issues.

We also have Pamela Palmater enjoying her time in the sun. The radical academic and defeated Assembly of First Nations candidate is making hay, piles of hay, with the controversy around Chief Spence and Idle No More. There is talk of her falling out of favour with the Idle No More leaders so we will certainly be watching that develop. It seems she can't pass up a chance to lay the boots to Assembly of First Nations Chief Shawn Atleo whenever she has a chance. I wonder if there is a political motivation there. Hmm.

Regardless of the characters on the national stage, the issues are real and need to be addressed now. The grassroots people have awoken. It has been amazing to watch the energy grow since December and we can't see it stopping anytime soon. At least not until the issues are addressed. I wonder how long that will take.

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Idle No More touches our hearts, spirits

The New Year arrived with a big bang. Saskatchewan kicked off the Idle No More movement in early December and in less than a few weeks it went global. Mámaskac!

Folks are Idle No Moring all over the world! The teach-ins kicked-started Idle No More but it really took off when our worthy young men and women brought out their drums, songs and created a place for everyone to participate through flash mob friendship dances.

Colonialism is about gaining economic wealth by force or manipulation. It is about unequal power relations where those in power, use that power to protect their interests by controlling anyone who tries to resist. Control over First Nations, control over the environment and control over all Canadians is exerted in two ways: (1) through laws and policies, and (2) in the attitudes that support those laws and policies.

Attitudes towards First Nations, the environment and those who support us, are often uneducated and based on stereotypes. The attitude that the environment is here to exploit for economic gain does not see its sacredness nor consider long-term impacts. This is how people are able to support pipelines, oil sands, nuclear waste dumps, and the pollution of our waters and air.

Attitudes that First Nations only want money and are a drain on Canadian tax payers do not consider that everyone benefits from tax dollars, that we pay taxes, too, and that the

revenues we get from the federal government are rent for sharing the land and resources.

Those who think that the Treaties are worthless do not realize that they also continue to reap benefits, and that the Treaties are foundational constitutional documents that helped create this country.

When the majority of Canadians support the federal government's actions, like the Bill C-45 omnibus bill, we have a lot of educating to do to change attitudes.

Educating the public and governments by protesting against injustices and for the implementation of our Treaty and Aboriginal Rights has been going on a long time. In 1969-70 we joined in solidarity and successfully defeated the White Paper Policy. In 1974 there was the armed occupation of Anishinaabe Park in Kenora and Native Peoples Caravan protest on Parliament Hill, demonstrations and take-overs of Indian Affairs offices throughout the 1970s.

We had the Constitution Express Train in 1981 and other protests against the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution without First Nation, Métis and Inuit involvement, the protests and hunger strike against the cap on Post-Secondary funding (1980-90), Oka, Gustafson Lake, Ipperwash and many others. Some of these protests resulted in changes, others did not.

What makes Idle No More different from all the other protests? The flash mobs touch our

hearts and collective spirits. They also create a space for everyone to participate through dance. Song and dance are healing; they keep us focused and transform anger into positive energy. But

just as important, they are friendship dances that welcome non-Indigenous people, they help build relationships and alliances.

The beauty of Idle No More is that it's a grassroots movement. A grassroots movement is social activism at its finest, it is natural, spontaneous and infectious. "Grassroots" is an attitude of freedom, creativity and unrestrained political enthusiasm grounded in shared beliefs that create a community of people who band together to address a pressing issue that needs to change.

The function of grassroots movements is to educate, build alliances, articulate demands, change attitudes, and pressure decision makers to make change. Grassroots movements alter public and elite thinking to bring in new policies, social practices and laws.

Calls for solidarity and unity cannot discriminate or exclude certain peoples or positions. Solidarity is about unity, it is based on a community of shared interests and objec-

tives. Unity is the quality of oneness, it consists of a combination of different parts (people) that create a whole (united community). Grassroots movements work best when they appeal to others, create alliances, and work to alter public and elite attitudes.

They are most effective when the voices, visions and demands of the people are taken up by lawyers, political leaders, policy makers and others who have the skills and resources, and are in the positions to make the change happen.

The malls have been well covered, now we're moving onto campuses. Where next for maximum impact? How about the offices of the 14 members of Parliament from Saskatchewan (1 Liberal, 13 Conservatives) since they are the ones who create and repeal federal laws; Service Canada Outreach Centres; and the AFN and FSIN Assemblies to continue to reminding the leaders mandated to protect Treaty and Inherent Rights.

We have not seen the strength and beauty of Idle No More for a long time. The feelings of empowerment and pride, the feeling that everyone has value and something to contribute, are seen in smiling faces and sparkling eyes.

Hiy hiy to our young men and women who sing life back into the people, to the resource people who provide guidance, to those who will take our demands to the next level, and to all the dancers. As one, we are all dancing for change.



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Looking back and ahead

The year 2012 ended with a rich menu of events that touch upon issues relevant to Indian and Métis people in Canada.

The New Year promises to be most interesting, starting with another 'Crown-First Nation' meeting on January 11 that can only be helpful if it results in agreement on a process to deal with the many issues at stake in the country. We will have more on that next month.

The Americans' worship of the gun resulted in another massacre of innocents that captured the attention of the world in the Newtown Connecticut gunning of school children and teachers in an elementary school. A proper response to this unique cultural situation cannot be complete with the outlawing of military assault rifles, which is obviously a good start notwithstanding the insane ravings of the National Rifle Association.

Such weapons, as has been pointed out, are not designed to shoot game animals but humans and have no defensible purpose in the hands of ordinary citizens.

The scourge of the repeating rifle always brings to my mind the Saskatchewan history of 1885 where Mr. Gatling's repeating rifle was first tested on the Métis and Indian people in the events leading up to Batoche.

The idea in 1885 was to test the new American invention on indigenous people who were viewed as 'inferior humans'.

It is tempting to believe that new human inventions come with a price to pay. The repeating rifle has become the scourge of the world in fueling warfare in the international trade of weapons, crime in big cities and, as we see too often, the killing of innocents by lunatics.

The Ojibwe of Onegaming in Treaty Three territory lost an Elder statesman and teacher in Tobasonakwut Kinew (Peter Kelly) in December.

A former Grand Chief of Treaty Three, Tobasonakwut was eulogized by prominent Manitobans and others at a memorial service in Winnipeg, where his role was reviewed in First Nation political developments reaching back to Anishinabe Park in Kenora in the early 1970s and culminating in his promotion of indigenous thought and language in universities in Canada and the United States, for which he has been widely acclaimed.

The service included active roles by brother Fred Kelly, his son Wab Kinew and nephew Don Kelly, both well-known names in contemporary media, as well as former Grand Chief daughter Diane Kelly, the Premier of Manitoba and the Archbishop of Winnipeg.

The rise of the Idle No More movement, born in Saskatchewan, will undoubtedly receive commentary on other pages of this publication. I am one of those who is left marveling at the ingenuity of modern thinkers linked with modern communications technology.

I was born during the Second World War and I have experienced awe at the coming of the electric light bulb, the cranky 'party line' telephone, and then the incredible fax machine!

In my day it was not a compliment to be told you were 'all thumbs', but it is now for those people who send text messages faster than I can type. (Remember the typewriter?)

And as a youngster being told by the teacher to stop 'twittering' in the back of the classroom had a completely different meaning than it would have today.

The hunger strike by Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence in Ottawa drew more and more media attention after being relatively ignored in its early stages, in part,



I speculate, because of IdleNoMore.

Hunger strikes have been used by an interesting range of folks over the years, and their use is not a matter of universal agreement amongst indigenous peoples. I recall the Navajo representatives refusing to join a hunger strike at the United Nations offices in Geneva during the work on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on the basis that food is regarded as sacred and not to be used for political purposes.

Chief Spence's personal sacrifice, which I respect deeply, also recalled the death of Nelson Small Legs, the young Kainai man who killed himself in May 1976, leaving a note on his condemnation of the government's treatment of First Nations.

It is discouraging to read the slanted views of most journalists on the recent events. Journalists who don't know the difference between 'begs the question' and 'raises the question' are suddenly experts at putting in qualifiers that barely hide the disdain and antipathy in their minds and hearts.

Of course, the on-line comments of the nutbars who comment on these 'news articles' leave nothing to the imagination about how deeply ingrained is the antipathy towards the original peoples of Canada.

On January 8 the federal court released its decision in the Harry Daniels case, holding that Metis and Non-Status Indians fall within federal legislative authority under s.91(24) of the Constitution Act 1867.

More on that topic in next month's column. Happy New Year to everyone!

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BRINGING TECHNOLOGY TO FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

A Proud Generation calendar marks 10 years

By Morgan Beaudry
For Eagle Feather News

They run the gamut from athletes to scholars to hip-hop artists, but what this year's A Proud Generation honourees have in common is that

each is a role model to young Aboriginal people from all walks of life.

The 2013 A Proud Generation Calendar was launched during a media event and feast at the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina in December and was

attended by bursary winners and their families, Sask Gaming's director of guest and community relations, George Reed, Sask Energy's assistant manager of community relations, Trish Watier, and the Regina Aboriginal Professionals Association's board of directors.

"Each year we choose between 12 and 14 exceptional young people between the ages of 15 and 30 who have demonstrated a commitment to achieving their goals in areas such as leadership, academics, arts, sports, community and/or cultural involvement," said Kristin Francis, chair of the Proud Generation Calendar Committee.

Being chosen as one of the 12 exceptional young people featured in the 2013 Proud Generations calendar "was a surreal experience," says 23-year-old Jenel Markwart of Prince Albert who will graduate with her bachelor of education degree in May. Her post-graduation goal is to find a job as Grade 6-8 public school teacher.

"My own role models are my mom and my aunts – very strong women," Markwart said. "It's humbling that my professors, my mom and my friends nominated me."

"There are so many deserving people; this makes me want to work even harder."

Twenty-one year old Brandon

Charles sees sport as an antidote to many of the crises young people face.

"I try to preach sports to the younger ones. For it me, it got my mind off of problems at home and it kept me in school," said the SIAST student who is working on a teaching assistant diploma.

Starting with baseball in Grade 6, Charles became hooked on sports adding proficiency in volleyball, football, hockey and basketball.

Currently a coach to the Star City junior boys in Melfort, the Sturgeon Lake First Nation and James Smith First Nation member wants young people to embrace sport as part of living a healthy balanced life.

The year 2013 is a landmark tenth anniversary year for the calendar. Cree fashion designer and creator of the Timeless Shadows Clothing label, Tracey George Heese, founded the A Proud Generation Calendar and launched the first edition in 2003.

Since its inception, the A Proud Generation Committee has distributed more than \$50,000 to over 80 Aboriginal youth in Saskatchewan.

All proceeds from the calendar, which are \$20 each, are re-invested in the youth through the bursaries and into the program next year.



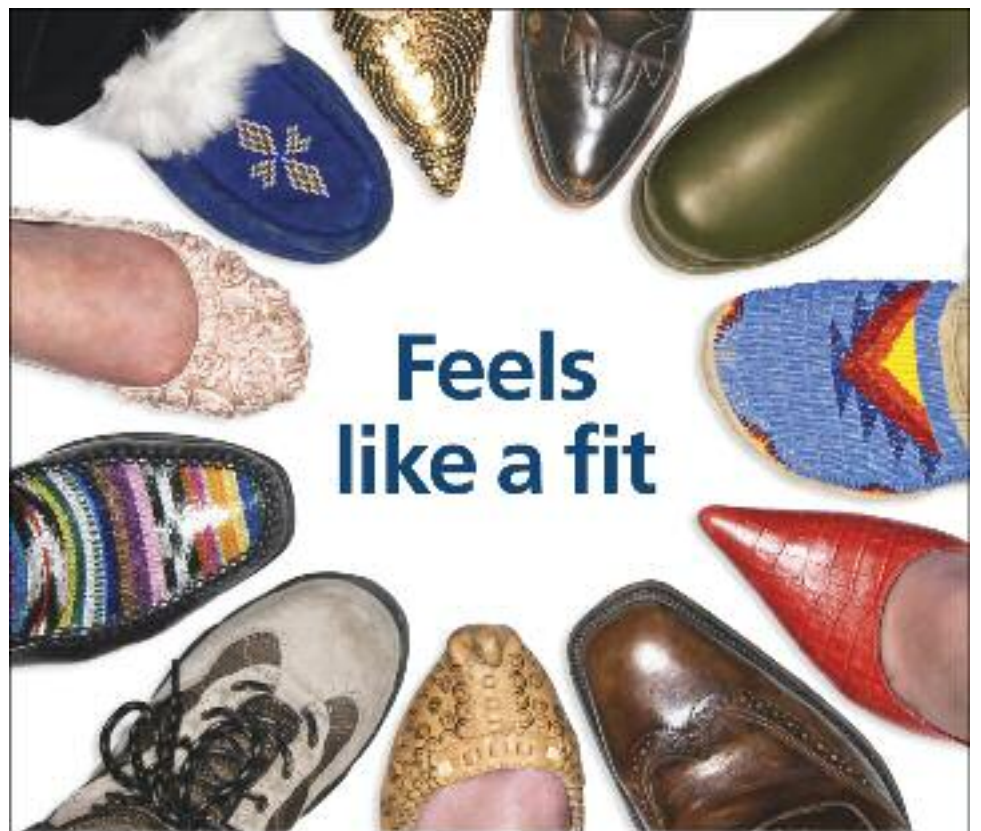
Jenel Markwart was one of 12 exceptional youth to be featured in 2013.



Thank you to the Métis people for your support during the recent election. I promise to work hard as Secretary of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan for the betterment of all Métis people.

All the best in the New Year.

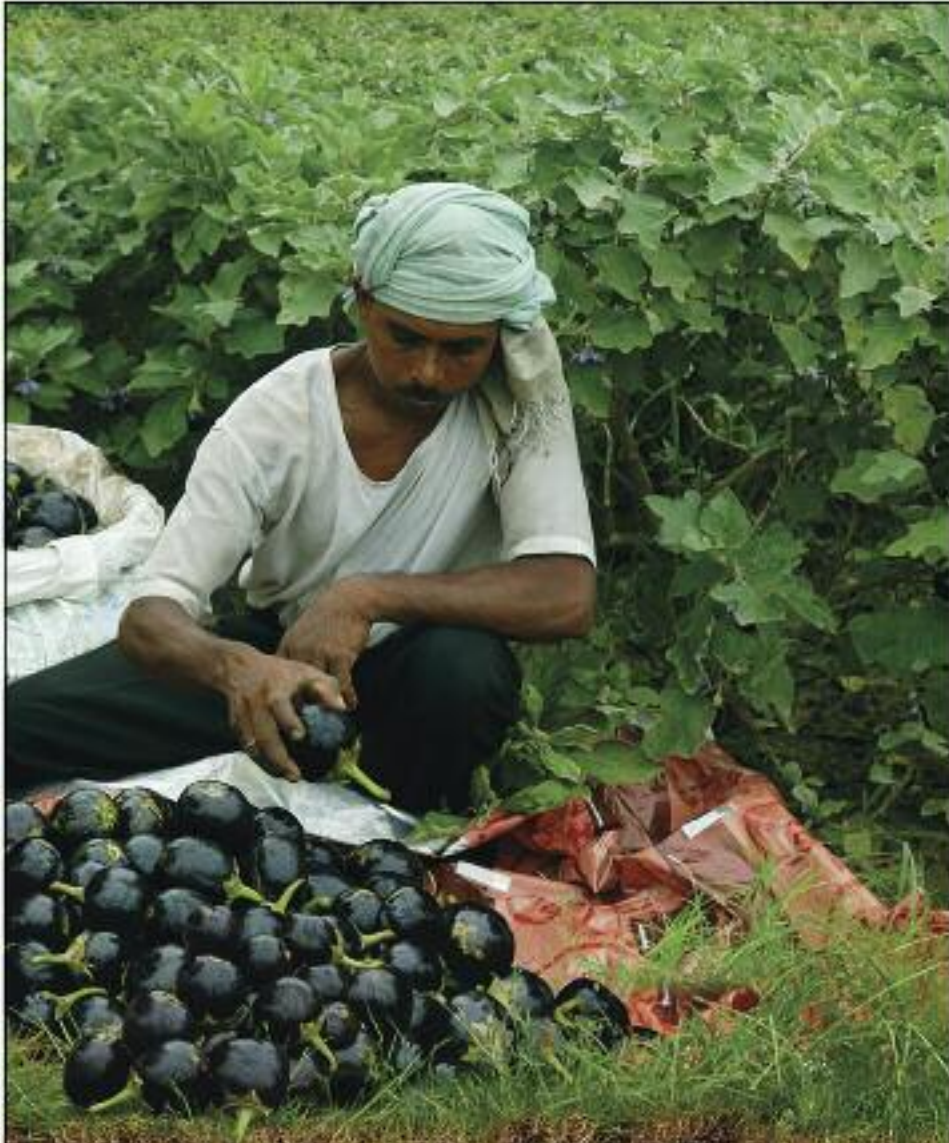
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Hunger strikers at left is Shaunice Tapaquon-Pelletier, and on the right is her Aunt, Tara Lee Pelletier. (Photo by Diane Adams)

Chief Spence's fast inspired Regina women

• Continued from Page One

It's also sparked action from others across the country and turned Chief Theresa Spence into a household name.

Spence began a hunger strike on Dec. 11. Refusing to eat solid food, Spence took to a teepee on the Ottawa River until Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Gov-Gen. David Johnston met with First Nations leadership regarding Treaty rights.

That inspired a group of Regina women to fast for four days in support of Idle No More and Theresa Spence.

On Dec. 27, Eight women took to a small cabin on the outskirts of the city. They took no food or water for four full days.

Candy Fox is one of the fasters. She says it helped her understand what's at stake.

"I really gained an appreciation for fluids and liquids and water. The basic necessity of life is water, and that relates back to what this movement is about. It's about protecting our lakes and waters," she said.

Shaunice Tapaquon-Pelletier is a lifetime powwow princess and a teenager. It was her first time fasting.

"It was hard," she said.

Tapaquon-Pelletier says she was not only fasting for Spence.

"(It was) also for youth who need their education to best serve our people, to speak and negotiate the future of our First Nations" she said in a hand-written account of the fast.

Since then, Prime Minister Harper agreed to meet with the Assembly of First Nations. Spence refuses to give up her hunger strike unless the Governor General – Canada's representative of the British Crown – attends.

Spence's hunger strike and political footballing with the federal government have spurred a national media circus and become an unofficial face of Idle No More.

That concerns Sylvia McAdam. She says it's not correct.

McAdam says Idle No More was intended to be a movement by grassroots people. She worries the media's focus on Spence and other self-proclaimed INM spokespeople could derail the movement's image.

"It does take away from the faces of Idle No More, like all the grassroots people," she said.

McAdam says she's trademarked Idle No More, to ensure rallies and spokespeople use the name appropriately.

Idle No More organizers have asked all Chiefs to refrain from speaking on their behalf.

"(The Chiefs' Call to Action) is not part of the Idle No More movement," organizers said in a statement.

"The vision of this grassroots movement does not coincide with the visions of the Leadership," they added.

In fact, McAdam says she would prefer if Harper would meet directly with the grassroots people and hereditary treaty leadership instead.

Hoping not to alienate leadership, Idle No More organizers have called Chiefs from across Canada to meet with them in-person and by teleconference on January 11. They hope to explain why the Chiefs have to simply step back.

"No organization can lead Idle No More," she said. "The grassroots voice would be lost."

• Continued on Page 9

Organizers demand that future protests are peaceful, ethical, moral and legal

• Continued from Page 8

The movement's efforts to clarify their leadership and message come after extensive media commentary calling the movement unfocused and without clear goals.

McAdam says that's simply not true.

"Come and talk to us ... ask us, they're in our blog," she said. "We have our work plan posted, we have our manifesto posted ... I don't know how much clearer we can be.

Idle No More's website now includes a plan for anyone wanting to organize an Idle No More event. This coming just as Idle No More gears up for a Global Day of Solidarity. It will be held on January 28, coinciding with the start of the House of Commons' winter session.

McAdam hopes more everyday people will organize events.

"All we ask of the (organizers and protesters) is the event – whatever event they choose to celebrate that call of solidarity – is peaceful, ethical, moral and legal," she said.

McAdam says that rules out illegal blockades or violent confrontations. While she admits she's not against those actions in some situations, she says Idle No More is not the right place.

"Our elders and our children will attend these events. Our priority is their safety," she said.

McAdam stresses that any event that doesn't follow their guidelines won't be able to use their name.

Despite their hectic schedules, the four women behind Idle No More did have a moment to reflect this month.

On Jan. 5, Nina Wilson, Sheelah Mclean, Sylvia McAdam and Jessica Gordon – the four women behind the movement received a special gift. They were presented with eagle feathers by Tantoo Cardinal and Maria Campbell.

"I have always admired (Cardinal)," McAdam said. "It made the sacrifices worthwhile," she added.



Idle No More organizers from left Sylvia McAdam, Sheelah McLean, Nina Wilson and Jess Gordon received eagle feathers from Maria Campbell and Tantoo Cardinal. (Photo by Harvey Knight)

SASKATOON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Saskatoon Public Schools anticipates the need for great leaders to fill the following permanent positions for the 2013-2014 school year:

**ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY PRINCIPALS
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY VICE-PRINCIPALS**

Please visit our website at www.saskatoonpublicschools.ca for full details on how to apply for these exciting and challenging positions.

Application deadline: January 18, 2013



Tansi! Edlanete! Hello!

2012 was a fascinating year

The world didn't end December 21, 2012 as some misguided non-Mayan folks predicted. Aboriginal people are Idle No more, Obama won another term as President and the FSIN finally elected a woman as Vice-Chief. I would say that 2012 was the year of great surprises.

Thursday December 21 started as the day some people believed would be the end of the world. Friday afternoon Facebook was full of jokes, T-shirt companies made money selling shirts that said "I survived the end of the world" and people woke up with massive hangovers from end of the world parties the night before.

In the ancient Mayan city of Chichen thousands of people gathered to pray, dance and chant around ceremonial fires and ancient pyramids to mark the end of the 5,000-year-old Mayan calendar.

The Mayans believe that the end of the calendar is the birth of a new era; here's hoping it's a new era for Indigenous peoples of the world.

Four women from Saskatchewan started a movement, Idle No More, to highlight their concerns with the

governments' omnibus bill and lack of consultation with Aboriginal people.

By December there were flash mob round dances and road blockages across Canada.

Throughout the world people were tuning into the movement and voicing their support for Idle No More. Imagine what would happen if the same number of Aboriginal people turned out to vote in the federal elections as did for the flash mobs?

To the south of us the Americans voted President Obama in for another term. I thought for sure they would kick him to the curb but with the current economic situation I think they needed to have someone to blame and who better than a "black" Democratic President.

I used to think that it didn't matter what happened with our neighbors to the south but with our global economy when the USA is hurting so is everyone else. Got to love capitalism and globalization!

Women made big news in 2012;

the biggest surprise is the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations finally

electing a woman, Kimberly Jonathan as Vice-Chief. I wish her all the luck with the "old boys club" and she is going to need it.

Chief Spence from Attawapiskat goes on a hunger strike hoping that her actions will force the prime minister to meet with First Nation leaders and after 24 days of fish broth and medicinal tea, the PM finally agrees to a meeting.

The Sisters in Spirit continued their fight to have a national inquiry into the murdered and missing Aboriginal women. Their fight continues and Aboriginal women continue to go missing.

The world is still here and we still have lots to do. Women are taking their rightful place at the governing tables. People of colour are moving into leadership positions and the Indians are Idle No More. Look out world!

Take care out there Aboriginal women: there are predators hiding in the shadows.

Let's make a change in Canada people: get out and vote in the next election. There is strength in numbers. Tapwe.

Have a safe, happy and healthy 2013.

Keep your letters and emails coming?

Send your questions or comments to: Sandee Sez c/o Eagle Feather News PO Box 924 ST Main Saskatoon, SKK 3M4 or email sandra.ahenakew@gmail.com



Sandee Sez

Sandra Ahenakew



A kettle doesn't boil by itself

High blood pressure is a major problem in Canada's fast pace, high stress world. It is a silent condition that steals health and is the forerunner of cardiovascular disease that can steal life.

Some symptoms can be brought under control by a food treatment plan and lifestyle improvements. Common symptoms are headaches, irritability, dizziness and ringing in the ears, flushed complexion, fatigue and sleeplessness, frequent urination, chronic respiratory problems.

Common causes are insulin resistance, poor sugar metabolism, thyroid imbalance, obesity, lack of exercise, too much salt, kidney malfunction, stress or anxiety.

Keeping body weight down is important. One of the biggest risk factors is excess fat storage. Eat smaller meals more frequently. Avoid refined foods, caffeine, salty, sugary, fried, fatty foods, prepared meats, heavy pastries and soft drinks since all cause potassium depletion and allow arteries to clog.

If you have high blood pressure monitor your progress with a free drugstore electronic machine reading. Avoid tobacco in all forms to lower blood pressure. Smoking constricts blood vessels, making your heart work harder. Smoking also aggravates high blood sugar levels. Eliminate caffeine and hard liquor. They can cause adrenaline rushes that make blood pressure rise.

Exercise is important. Take a 30-minute brisk walk every day with plenty

of deep breathing. Relaxation techniques are very important. Massage, meditation, reiki, reflexology are recommended to lower blood pressure. Calcium and Magnesium is suggested, without calcium the cells cannot contract and the result is lower blood pressure.



Health Matters


Flo Lavallie

Calcium is an important mineral for heart health. Calcium regulates the contraction and regulation of the heart and stops the spasms. Calcium is most beneficial when it is brought into the body with a balance ratio of 30 magnesium.

Obesity, stress, excessive salt intake, nervous tension, kidney malfunction and many other factors make it necessary for the heart to work harder in order to pump blood and nutrients to the various body parts. Low blood pressure on the other hand, if it is accompanied by fainting, dizziness, anemia, bleeding or excessive fatigue it may be a symptom of low blood sugar, rheumatism or adrenal, thyroid or pituitary insufficiency.

Suggestions – Seeing a physician is recommended. It is also wise to avoid overeating, tension and stress, and to eliminate excess weight. Ensure that the heart and circulatory system are properly nourished.

www.companionhealthoasis.com



Representative Workforce

Step into Health Careers

A pre-employment program targeting First Nations and Métis People

ORIENTATION SESSIONS	
Thurs, Feb 7th	White Buffalo Youth Lodge 602 - 20th Street West 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
Wed, Feb 20th	Friendship Centre 115 Wall Street 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Who should attend?

- Unemployed or underemployed
- 18 years or older

Requirements

- Minimum grade 10 or equivalent
- Interested in working health care

Program will run from: April 11 - May 22, 2013

For more information, contact:
Julie at 655-0201 or Phoebe at 655-3968
representative.workforce@saskatoonhealthregion.ca

My dreams led me to home in mountains

Nowadays we live in the mountains of the B.C. Interior. My wife and I moved here full-time in 2007 after two frustrating years commuting from the Lower Mainland.

It's hard to cope with a city when your heart resides in the open places. So we made the move permanent as soon as we could. Our home is a small rancher-style house that overlooks a lake that's snagged between clefts of mountains. The view is astounding and to be able to write here is a pleasure and a tremendous gift.

This is my home – this red house with blue shutters and a white door. It took me a long time to find it.

Through the years I spent a lot of time on the road, drifting from job to job, looking for the one place in Creation that said 'haven.' Here, where deer, coyotes, bears, bobcats, and a wolf I only ever saw the paw print of, prowl the edges of our yard, I write and find corners of my heart I never knew existed. My wife and I are happy here. It is home.

But my birth home is north of Kenora, Ontario. Even though I've never lived at White Dog, I call it my home wherever I go. I've visited a handful of times through the years and each time I've carried away a small piece of my identity. To me it's a touchstone to my culture, history and traditions. In that, it's important to me, as all homes should be.

Here though, my life eases itself into fullness. I work well here. The land is mere steps away and the dog and I enjoy our daily walks up the timber road or around the curve of the lake. To feel the land around you is amazing every time and it's no different, really from how it feels in northern Ontario or any other place that's touched me with its magic.

Once I walked out into the bush again or stood at the edge of a northern lake I understood what it was I'd been missing

My elders say that we dream ourselves into being. That sounds powerfully esoteric but it isn't nearly as hard to decipher as you might think. It simply means we have the ability to become whomever we choose to become. All of us.

There's no limit to our human potential and there's no limit to where our spirits can choose to go. Hot on the heels of the power of choice is the power of allowing. We Ojibway have a phrase for that – yuh-gotta-wanna.

For me, the great fact is that I would be Ojibway wherever I went. It's just here in this idyllic setting where I choose to express myself and where I allow magic to happen.

Within me are the legends and teachings and philosophy of my people and I carry them proudly.

Not a day goes by that I am not thankful for the guidance of those things nor a day when they do not

affect the way I travel through that day.

I've walked the shores of the Winnipeg River. I've visited sacred sites and ceremonial places. I've trekked to the remote sites where my family camped to trap and fish when I was born. That territory marked me and it is special to me.

To go there is to feel a connection I have never found an appropriate word for in English. To say it is spiritual somehow reduces it. It's spiritual, emotional, mental and physical all at the same time.

I don't know whether I really get homesick. The way my life went, I was in and out of a lot of homes as a kid and teenager. As a young adult I never really felt at home until I came here. I do get lonesome for the land though.

Stuck in cities as I was for so many years I felt a melancholy I never could figure out. Once I walked out into the bush again or stood at the edge of a northern lake I understood what it was I'd been missing.

We dream ourselves. I dream of those things and those places where my life began. Sometimes I see

myself walking there. Sometimes I see myself surrounded by people I never got a chance to know. But I

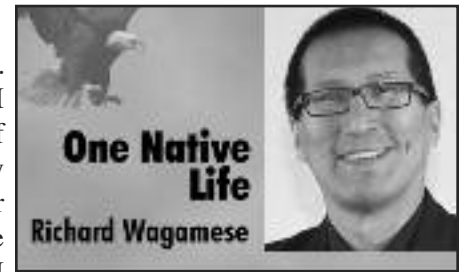
always awake to the silence of our home in the mountains and I am always grateful to be here. There is no other place for me.

Within each of us is the residue of the places we come from.

We carry the information of our cultures and our histories within us like latent genes.

When we move, when we choose to live somewhere other than our traditional homes, those are the things that allow us to dream ourselves into fullness. Our touchstones.

The feel of home we carry between our ribs. It's not an Ojibway thing. It's a human one.



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Image ©Kevin Pea-Ace, Yellowquill First Nation | cameco.com

Musicians throw their support behind Idle No More

When I first heard that Holly McNarland was a supporter of Idle No More, I thought she was very cool. Then I learned that she was Métis and wanted to join with other musicians to raise awareness through music about the Idle No More movement.

So I was super excited to hear that she would be joining forces in organizing the music community online with Marty Ballentyne of Breach of Trust, as well as Kevin Joseph of Black Rain and Ron “Ostweive” Harris.

“Marty contacted me after he saw that I was going gangbusters on my Facebook and Twitter about (Idle No More) and so we started brainstorming,” said McNarland.

“His initial idea was a record, and that’s a great idea, but from my experience with social media we needed to move fast in fear of (Idle No More) fizzling out the same way Occupy Wall Street did. I really wanted to catch people on a free level and try to steer attention to (Idle No More) through music and let music lovers know that artists are behind this project.”

Together, the four musicians set out to create an online music playlist full of free MP3s donated by artists. It can be accessed at: www.rpm.fm. Artists can each donate one free downloadable song and more artists are being added to the list every day.

“I feel like there are plenty of people that will tune out and ignore the whole ‘Indian thing’ but maybe if they see an artist getting behind it and stating why they do so, those people just might take a look and try to find a place in the movement.

“As a music lover, if I saw my favourite artist say, ‘Hey, here is a free download of my song that I have donated because I, too, am Idle No More’ I would most definitely read up on the movement and find out what it’s really about,” said McNarland.

“To me, it’s not a money issue. It’s a communication issue and people need to know what Harper is doing to all of Canada. My focus is to speak to my fans and to hopefully sway some of the opinion about First Nations people and shine some light on how Harper is selling us out via our water, land and resources. Being Métis myself and having the benefit and ability to ask for help via the music connections I have is amazing,” said McNarland.

Joseph agrees. “Much like the way the whole (Idle No More) movement started with four Saskatchewan women emailing each other, the (Idle No More) “Songs for Life” (working title) concept started with the four of us emailing each other and combining our musical contacts,” said Joseph. “We are not featuring any specific genres but have already had artists express interest from such diverse musical backgrounds as death metal, hip hop, traditional drum groups, country, folk, blues and of course rock.

“What I hope the online playlists do is inspire individuals to realize that they all have something to offer the (Idle No More) movement. It is about empowering people. We are all musicians, so what we are doing hardly seems like work. But it will keep the momentum building nationally and internationally,” said Joseph.

They already have a number of American artists donating music to the project. Before they actually release a CD, they are concentrating on a series of on-

line “mix tapes” – playlists comprised of the free MP3s donated by artists.

They are taking it day by day. They are very close to the release of their first playlist and already have an overabundance of music to choose from. They’re confident that it will only pick up momentum just like the movement itself.

They aren’t sure how it will all evolve, but they’ve already witnessed artists offering their time and talents to concerts supporting Idle No More.

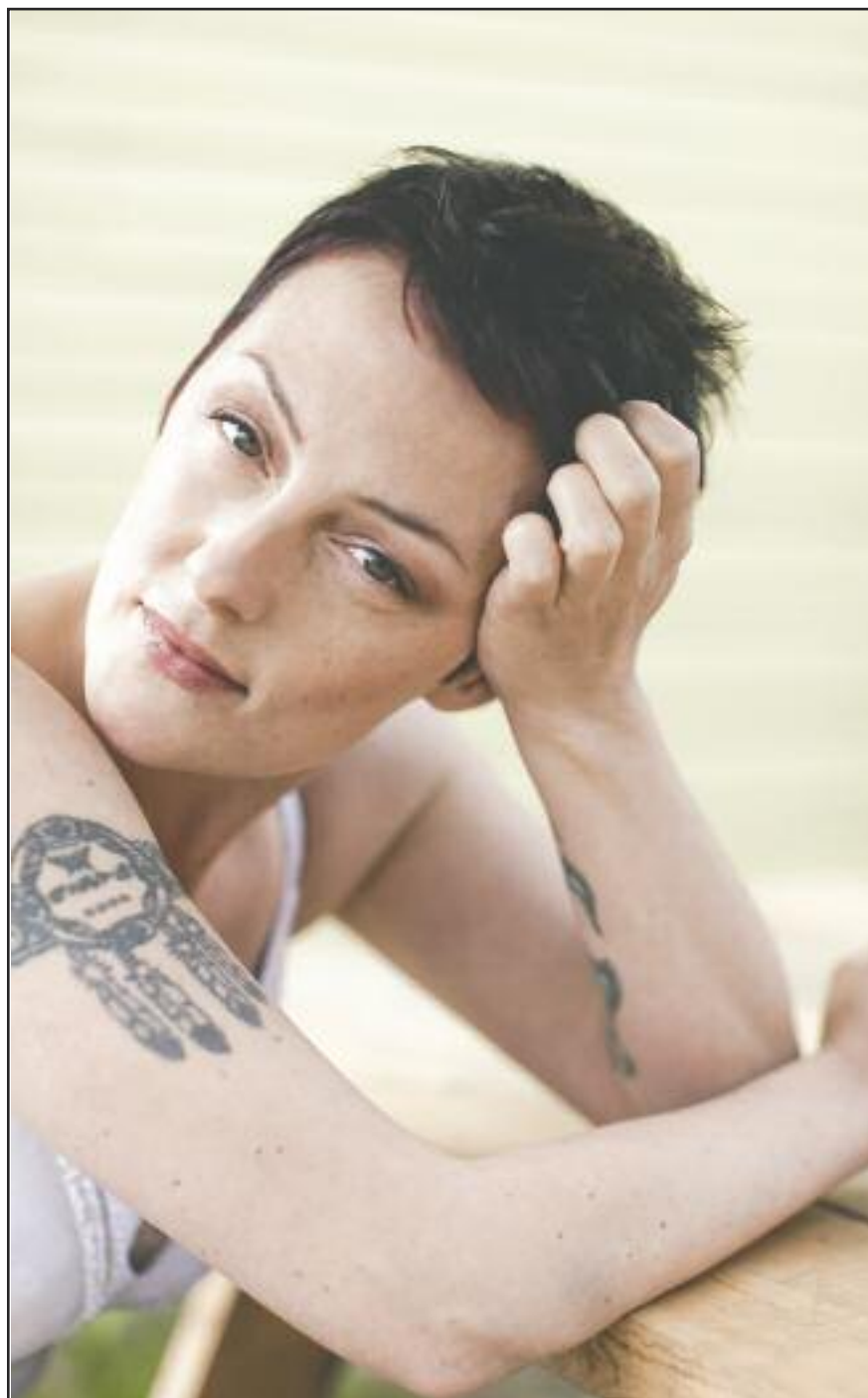
“Idle No More is about empowerment, not power,” said Joseph. “Individuals, including me, are realizing that we can use our God-given talents and abilities to further strengthen and build on the foundation created by Sheelah, Sylvia, Nina and Jess. That is where we will create the most change. Rather than telling people what they should do, we will do more good by embracing each individual’s strengths.

“We are inspired, we are awakened and we are all doing what we can to ensure that Idle No More gets bigger every day.”

Go Idle No More!

If there’s an artist, entertainer or event that you think should be featured in Eagle Feather News, give me a shout at: snazyjess@hotmail.com.

See you next month!



Musician Holly McNarland is lending her talents to Idle No More.



Dirk's list of things you will see in 2013

John L: The local grassroots First Nation movement Idle No More has swept Canada. Round dances, blockades, protests and even hunger strikes have sprung up against federal legislative and policy initiatives designed to bring accountability to Indians and redefine criminality for Canada. Dirk Dashing, what do you make of all this?

Dirk: Looking to 2013, John, we will hear loudly from a vocal few who do not get what we brown-skins are after. When they hear of land claims, or the environment, or lack of funding, their eyes roll as though pinned to the back of their heads.

John L: Now I know you don't mean the "oh, Dirk, you brute, that's the spot, gimme some more," kind of eye rolling.

Dirk: Hmmm.

John L: Yeah, I know. That didn't sound right coming from me.

Dirk: So, let me give you an example of what I mean. This guy on the radio says "If we bring accountability to these people that will be the key." Lousy grammar, but you know what he's driving at.

John L: Harper's initiatives are supposed to raise accountability of First Nation governments and remove barriers to economic development, right?

Dirk: Sure, John, and if you say it fast enough it takes on a gloss of nobility like Hitler's "The Law to Remedy the Distress of the People."

John L: True that. I heard that interview.

Wasn't our radio buddy claiming to be an accounting professional with years of working with First Nations people? Who needs enemies when you have friends like that!

Dirk: But he may have an excuse. Many people – professionals and average Joes and Janes – have had history concealed from them. It's a history that can be painful to look at, for it means dropping the blinders of blissful ignorance. It's irresponsible and short-sighted not to look, but thankfully more and more mainstream Canadians are willing to look. And act.

John L: What buzzes my cockles are people like Conservatives media hack Ezra Levant, or Calgary professor Thomas Flannigan or that megalomaniac Senator Patrick Brazeau who revel in fanning the flames, and praying on the fears and prejudices of ordinary citizens.

Dirk: John, there is money to be made, power to be had and egos to be puffed up in the peddling of stories that Chiefs are corrupt. So when I hear the lady screech on the TV that her tax dollars are wasted on Indians I know she too has been duped into the great lie.

John L: I gotta ask, what great lie?

Dirk: That only people with neutral



colour have the monopoly on truth, goodness, and normal, and that it is the "Neutrals" God-given right to fix up them non-Neutrals for they be backward, corrupt, and they just ain't normal.

John L: Wow. Did someone lay a long brown one in your corn flakes this morning? Last month you promised predictions for 2013. I'm guessing you're not making the funny this time around.

Dirk: Yeah, there was corn in that mother too, so the funny is not happening today. As for 2013 I predict that more Canadians, and even our own people will begin to realize that ...

1. Chiefs are accountable ... to the Minister of Indian Affairs, but not to their own people. The system is fixed that way. But if you fail to report, say good-bye to your funding. That's going to happen more with Harper's new accountability racket.

2. Even some provincial governments cannot meet Harper's vision of accountability. This is not a problem as Harper's dictums are reserved for Indians and lands reserved for Indians, so federal transfers to the provinces are not in jeopardy. Although ...

3. If Harper's strategy to convert First Nation reserves to brown municipalities succeeds, provincial governments are on the hook for hundreds of millions of dollars in welfare and healthcare. Annually.

4. The new definition of a terrorist makes it risky for Chiefs to resist Harper's new Reich: the Band could lose its funding.

5. Chiefs will be criticized for not joining the Idle No More movement, but these customers were elected by and therefore responsible for the lives of hundreds of ordinary Indian people who need that next welfare cheque to put food on the table.

6. Some leaders will risk it anyway. They will be vilified and pilloried thanks to the poo flung by the likes of Levant, Flannigan, and Brazeau and scores of other faceless minions in Harper's Ministry of Truth. Sorry Chief Spence. Speaking of Chief Spence ...

7. The leaked Attawapiskat audit covers 2005 to 2011, but Chief Spence was only elected Chief in 2010. Reporters skillfully overlook this fact.

8. In the midst of all the hoopla, and when no one is looking, a once proud and fierce defender of the Treaties will be dismantled by its own leadership.

Dirk says, What the hell is a cockle? And is it wise to buzz it? Or them?

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Agreement promises significant economic benefits for Pinehouse

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

Kineepik Métis Local #9 and the Northern Village of Pinehouse have signed a historic Collaboration Agreement with Cameco Corporation and AREVA Resources Canada.

The agreement builds on 25 years of co-operation between the community of about 1,000 people and the uranium mining industry and sets out specific commitments by the mining companies with respect to workforce development, business development, community engagement, environmental stewardship, and community investment.

“This agreement will provide long term benefits to our community,” says Mike Natomagan, Mayor of Pinehouse.

“It allows us to expand on our strong mining culture and do it our way. We want to be accountable to ourselves. The socio-economic benefits give us hope for success and prosperity, especially for our young people. We want to earn our way.”

The potential value of the agreement is estimated to be approximately \$200 million over the next 11 years including employment income, business development and community investment. The agreement also confirms the support of the Northern Village of Pinehouse and Kineepik Metis Local Inc. for the companies’ existing projects and operations subject to the mining companies continuing to protect the health and safety of people and the environment, operating responsibly, and addressing the concerns of Pinehouse residents on an ongoing basis.

“This collaboration agreement demonstrates the uranium mining industry’s commitment to partner with northern communities in developing Saskatchewan’s resources,” said Cameco President and CEO Tim Gitzel.

“Northern people make up a large part of our work force and northern businesses provide the services that keep our operations going. Cameco and northern communities have a strong shared interest in the continued success and growth of uranium mining in Saskatchewan and this agreement reflects that,” added Gitzel.

The agreement was reached after several years of negotiations and will mean lots of opportunity for Pinehouse citizens through their business arm Pinehouse Business North Developments, a company wholly owned by the Northern Village of Pinehouse. Even though both jobs and profits have already been entering the community some citizens do not support the agreement.

Dale Smith is a lifelong resident of Pinehouse and he knows the importance of the industry to the town, but he has voiced concerns about the process by which the agreement was signed, a confidentiality clause and a clause in the agreement that he considered a gag order.

“I am not necessarily against the agreement, because we do need those things,” said Smith who had run against

current Mayor Mike Natomagan on some of these same issues.

“But I do believe in due process. The

businesses about our agreement.

“People are overwhelmingly in favour of this agreement. The night before

attended a five-hour session in our community centre. At the end they gave a standing ovation in support of the



It was handshakes all around for Areva Vice President Richard Gladue, Pinehouse Mayor Mike Natomagan, Cameco President and CEO Tim Gitzel and Cameco Vice President Gary Merasty after the signing of the collaboration agreement. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

community did not see or hear any details about the agreement until one month before they signed it. Then we only saw eight pages and it included that gag order. Now they tell me that there is no gag order in the new agreement, but we have not had an informational meeting since as to the wording. I believe this was against the democratic process and duty to consult.”

A petition was started after the agreement was signed that garnered just over 110 signatures. Those against the agreement have retained a lawyer and are exploring their options.

“We don’t know what it will mean to renegotiate the deal,” added Smith. “But we want to do it at the community level. We should be making the decision. Before, with the gag order, we felt we were duct taped. Now that it is signed, we feel the tape is off and the chains are on now.”

Mayor Mike Natomagan believes they did a good job informing the community about the agreement and the council did its job in representing the people.

“We were elected to lead and act in the best interests of our community in the long term and we did just that,” said Natomagan.

He added that there are public meetings quarterly in the community, an annual report to the community on the business dealings in December and that he is available to answer any questions.

“We have minutes of public meetings in English and in Cree and we even allowed for those most concerned about the agreement to meet in private with the lawyer to discuss any concerns. There is no gag order and the confidentiality clause is so we don’t tell other communities and

we signed with Cameco and Areva, we had a community meeting and 265 people

Collaboration Agreement. That made it very clear.”

RCMP-GRC

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February 5 at 6 PM

SIAST, Wascana Campus, Rm 619
4500 Wascana Parkway
Regina, SK

DEVENEZ MEMBRE DE LA GRC

PRÉSENTATION SUR LES CARRIÈRES

février 5 à 18 h

SIAST, campus de Wascana, salle 619
4500 Wascana Parkway
Regina (SK)

CAREER PRESENTATION

February 9 at 6 PM

SIAST, Kelsey Campus, Rm 317
Idylwyld & 33rd Street, Main Bldg.
Saskatoon, SK

PRÉSENTATION SUR LES CARRIÈRES

9 février à 18 h

SIAST, campus de Kelsey, salle 317
Immeuble principal, Idylwyld et 33rd St
Saskatoon (SK)

Attendance at a career presentation is now the mandatory first step in the application process. / Assister à une séance d'information sur les carrières est maintenant la première étape obligatoire du processus de recrutement.

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Love of martial arts turns into successful business for Scales

Name: AJ Scales

Sport: Martial Arts

Signature move: Triangle

First Nation: Gordon's

Hometown: Regina

GOZ: You are the Head Instructor at Complete MMA in Regina. Why did you decide to open a training facility?

AJ: It started out as a place for me and my friends to train but it blew up to more than that. I've

turned it into a business and it's still growing.

GOZ: What's it like walking down the street and knowing you could kick the crap out of essentially anyone?

AJ: I've never walked down the street thinking that ever. The best thing I can do is just walk a humble walk and I'm good with that.

GOZ: Have you ever had to use your training on the street? If so, do you have a filter on how much ass you kick?

AJ: I have been in street situations but they were all prior to me being a true martial artist. In the past when I've taught self defense classes I taught do what you have to do to get yourself to a safe place. So, I don't think there's a filter on that.

GOZ: You have competed internationally quite a few times. Does a bout with an international competitor raise the stakes a bit?

AJ: Yes it raises the bar quite a bit. Those competitors come with a great deal more experience. There's no telling what they bring to the table. But I tell all my students that they are only other men or women and they have a set of skills that their competitor better be careful of also.

GOZ: There's a pretty impressive MMA scene in Regina. Why do you think that

is? Guys just wanna be tough or it's a simply a great sport?

AJ: I'm the promoter of Saturday Night Fights here in Regina and just finished my sixth installment this past December. You know the sport has grown when kids walk into my gym and ask for the MMA classes because they think that's what martial arts is.

GOZ: MMA has taken over as far as combat sports entertainment. Bigger than wrestling and boxing combined. Why do you think that is?

AJ: I think that Dana White has

done a great job on promoting it. More high level athletes such as wrestlers, Judo practitioners, football players and boxers are making easy crossovers. More Martial Artists are finding MMA events an outlet to display their skills if they wish to take that path.

GOZ: Who is your pound for pound all-time favorite MMA fighter?

AJ: BJ Penn is my favorite. He's a Black Belt from team Nova Uniao like I am. Back in the day I used to watch all his videos and mimic his style of Jiu Jitsu. I really like his 'I will scrap anyone' mentality.

GOZ: Who would win Royce Gracie or GSP? Why?

AJ: Back in Royce's day Royce would win. Right now in GSP's day, GSP is the full meal deal. He's a true mixed martial artist. Royce, back in the day, was on a different mission. He was doing his thing to educate people about Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and that is why I'm in it to this day. Royce changed a lot of people's lives.

GOZ: Who would you most like to get in the cage with? What would happen?

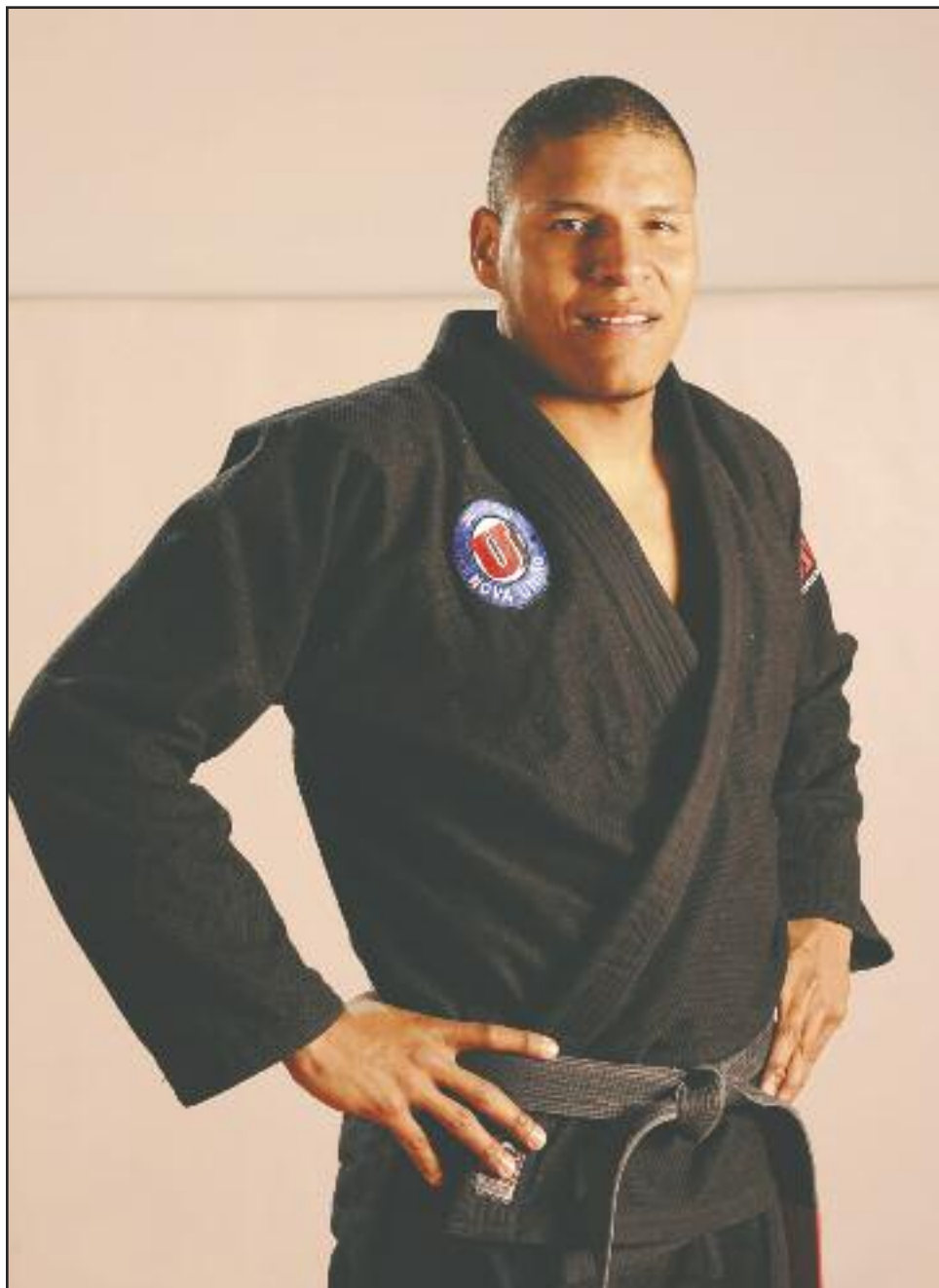
AJ: Man, I don't know. Maybe a bully that I used to go to school with.

GOZ: Boxers or briefs?

AJ: Boxers!



Wesley Bowman lands a hard right on Ben Fehr and eventually won this bout by Unanimous Decision. (Photo by Mike Dubois)



AJ SCALES

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Maria Campbell inspires at Dumont Technical Institute's 20th anniversary celebrations

By Darren Prefontaine
For Eagle Feather News

On November 9, 2012, as part of the Dumont Technical Institute (DTI)'s 20th anniversary celebrations, Maria Campbell—Métis author, playwright, mentor, and icon—delivered a keynote address to the Institute's students, staff, and board members.

A blizzard, an extended layover in the Calgary airport, and a lack of sleep, did not deter Maria from delivering an inspiring and memorable address. Several hundred people sat enraptured as Maria discussed the importance of honouring Métis culture and of remembering the long and difficult struggle to create the Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) and other Métis institutions.

In her 25-minute address, she discussed her love of the Métis community with great humility. She began by acknowledging all the elders and veterans present, and touched upon the importance of remembering and honouring our veterans since Remembrance Day was only two days away. She indicated that six of her uncles and one great-uncle were in the Second World War. Later that evening, DTI held a gala honouring Métis veterans, which included the musical talents of Donny Parenteau, Andrea Menard, Ray St. Germain, Mike Gouchie, Jess Lee, and Krystle Pederson who sang songs from the GDI CD, "Honouring our Heroes: A Tribute to Métis Veterans."

In an address that was prepared with humility and many humorous moments, she indicated that she was honoured to share her weekend with DTI.

"The Métis are crazy, loving, and kind as long as we don't get political."

She further added, "Cultural gatherings bring out the best in us," and by attending this event, "We are honouring our ancestors who weren't as privileged as we are."

Métis identity and nationhood are alive and well, and that the Institute is clear proof of that fact.

"When we're vulnerable, we're poor. Gatherings like this give us collective strength."

She further indicated that the Métis are rich in stories, art, music, dance, and history, and illustrated this point by describing GDI's Museum and its artefact and art collection

as a treasure chest of gold, silver, and gemstones. To her, it is an "orgasm of the spirit, soul, and heart"—to which the audience erupted in rapturous laughter with Maria saying, "I am too old to blush."

She told the audience, "Whenever I am lost, I come to the GDI Museum, open the door and look at our things."

She concluded this segment by stating that visiting the DTI classroom building and the GDI Museum are culturally affirming things, which taken together, "Blow your mind when you think of where we were 20 or 30 years ago."

She discussed the grinding poverty and racism that the Métis faced, but returned to highlight the enduring strength of the Old People, the elders, the spiritual and cultural keepers, as well as the political leaders who fought against racism and societal indifference. What followed was a summation of the long and hard journey to create the Institute.

She paid homage to those who struggled to build the community following the 1885 Resistance, including Patrice Fleury, the dizaine captain of the 1885 Resistance, who shared stories of that struggle with Leonard Pambrun who in turn shared them with Maria. Later, many of those who struggled to build GDI, through community organization, were mentioned, as was the first generation of GDI employees, many of whom were young and newly educated.

Maria added poignant vignettes from her personal life to show how far the Métis had come in just a few generations. Discussing her time spent as a Métis Society of Alberta fieldworker in the mid 1960s, she told of Métis people living in ramshackle shacks with dirt floors.

The racism of the period was so omnipresent that the Métis were utterly invisible in the consciousness of the larger society. Whole families disintegrated and fell apart despite the work of the Métis community to keep them together.

She shared a poignant and sad story about her visit with a dying mother and four young children. The woman, who was stricken with tuberculosis, lived in a small one-room poplar log cabin furnished with only one table and an old metal bed. The elders and community looked after her and her children, providing them with food and game.

The mother's wish was to live with her



Maria Campbell is presently the University of Ottawa's Trudeau Foundation's Visiting Fellow for 2012-2013. She came home to Saskatchewan to deliver the keynote address for DTI's milestone anniversary. (Photograph by Envoguephotography.ca)

children before she died. A month after the visit, the woman died and her children were scooped up by Social Services. Decades later, Maria met up with one of the little boys who, despite his sad past, had made a life for himself. He still remembered Maria and her visit. Maria concluded by saying that this sad, poignant story showed that "our people looked after one another."

Despite these sad stories and decades of colonization, Maria offered the audience her optimism about the Métis' future.

"Some accuse me about being overly romantic about Métis people. When I see Métis people, I see kindness, gentleness and love."

She read lyrics from a song written about the Métis by her late husband, Shannon Two Feathers.

"Our soul is an old shack, an old weathered photograph."

The song paid tribute to all the cultural

keepers who are special people for "Keeping our stories alive," Maria said. "Our way is a good way."

She mentioned the necessity of maintaining the Cree/Métis concept of wakhootowin or gently taking care of each other and the land and its resources.

She then concluded her speech by using a metaphor—"the Métis and our stories and culture are a Red River Cart. GDI and DTI are a Red River Cart, which is loaded down with our culture, our knowledge. We're going to go into that cart and go into a proud future."

Later that day, Maria held an entertaining and informative storytelling circle involving traditional Métis scary stories such as li Jiabile (the Devil), Whiitago, Paakuk (a flying skeleton), and rougaroos. Elders Dorothy Aubichon and Joanna Potyondi shared some very scary stories with a group of very entertained listeners.

