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Honour the Treaties tour launch

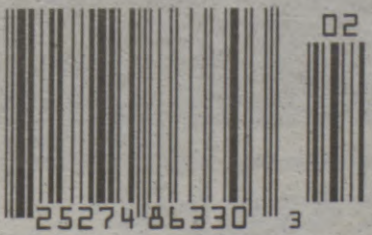
Idle No More Round Dance in front of Massey Hall in Toronto January 12 where Neil Young kicked off his Honour the Treaties concert tour. The ticket sales from four concerts in four cities will benefit the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation legal defense fund.

Please see story on page 11.

Photo: Barb Nahwegahbow

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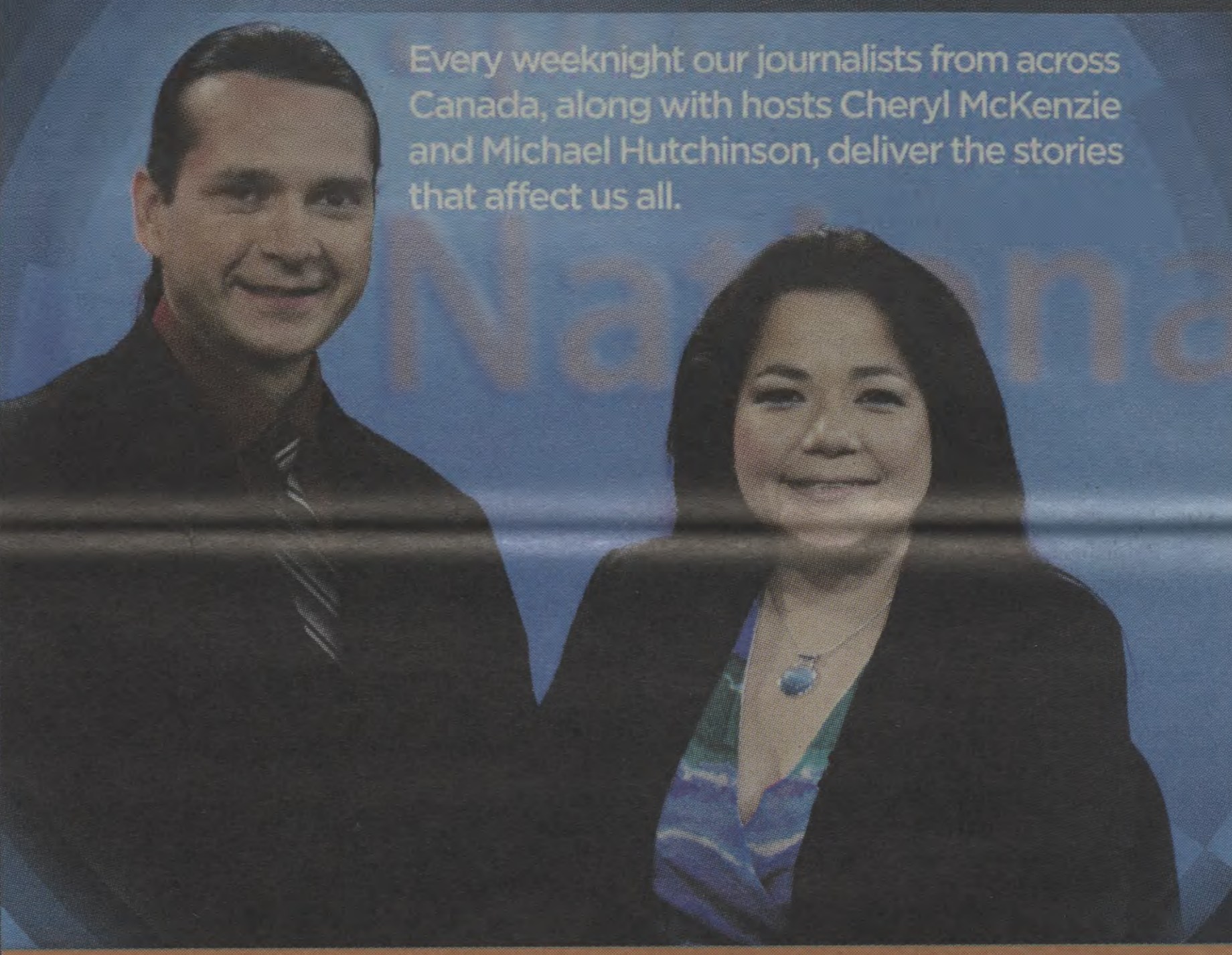
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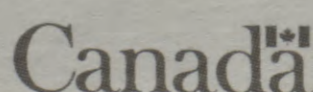
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Features

Firebrand Terrance Nelson elected southern Manitoba's grand chief 8

Outspoken American Indian Movement vice-chair Terrence Nelson has stunned observers with his election as grand chief of Manitoba's southern chiefs, representing more than half of the First Nations in the province with the highest concentration of aboriginal people in Canada.

Leader pleased government looking to root causes in deaths 9

Cheryl Whiskeyjack would like to be shocked by recently-released figures that 741 children or teens, who had been brought to the attention of child welfare services in a variety of ways, died in Alberta from 1999 to June 2013.

Lubicon appeal six-month Penn West fracking protest ban 10

"Outrage was the reaction," Lubicon Lake Nation spokesman Garrett Tomlinson told Windspeaker, "but there wasn't a lot of surprise."

Rocker Neil Young yours to help raise funds for anti-oil sands fight 11

Despite facing a barrage of criticism from Prime Minister Stephen Harper government, Sun News Network and energy companies operating in the oil sands, Neil Young's week-long cross-country tour raised more than \$500,000 for a First Nation's fight against the industrial development.

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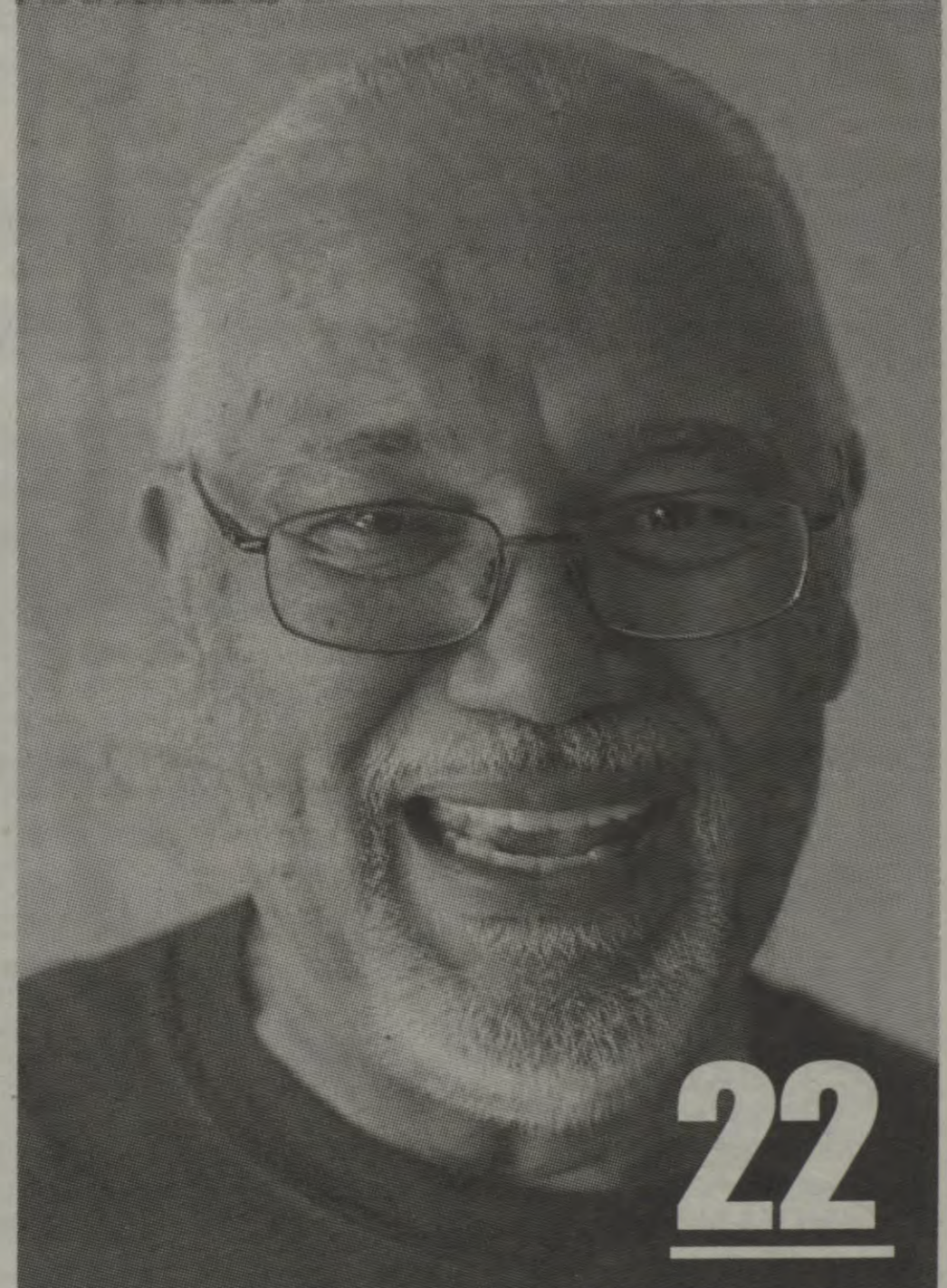
Fans of comedian Charlie Hill wished him a good journey into the spirit world and imagined the impact of his razor-wit on 'the other side'. "Nelson Mandela has a front row seat at Charlie's first stand-up show in heaven" posted one Facebook supporter, while another claimed "God is slapping his knee at Charlie's jokes as we speak."



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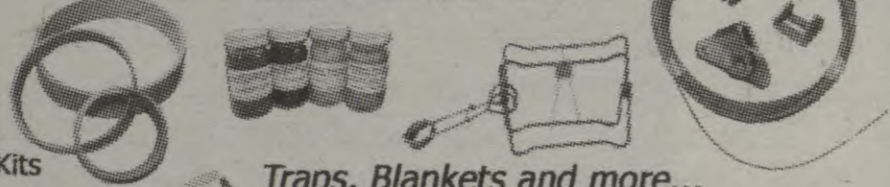
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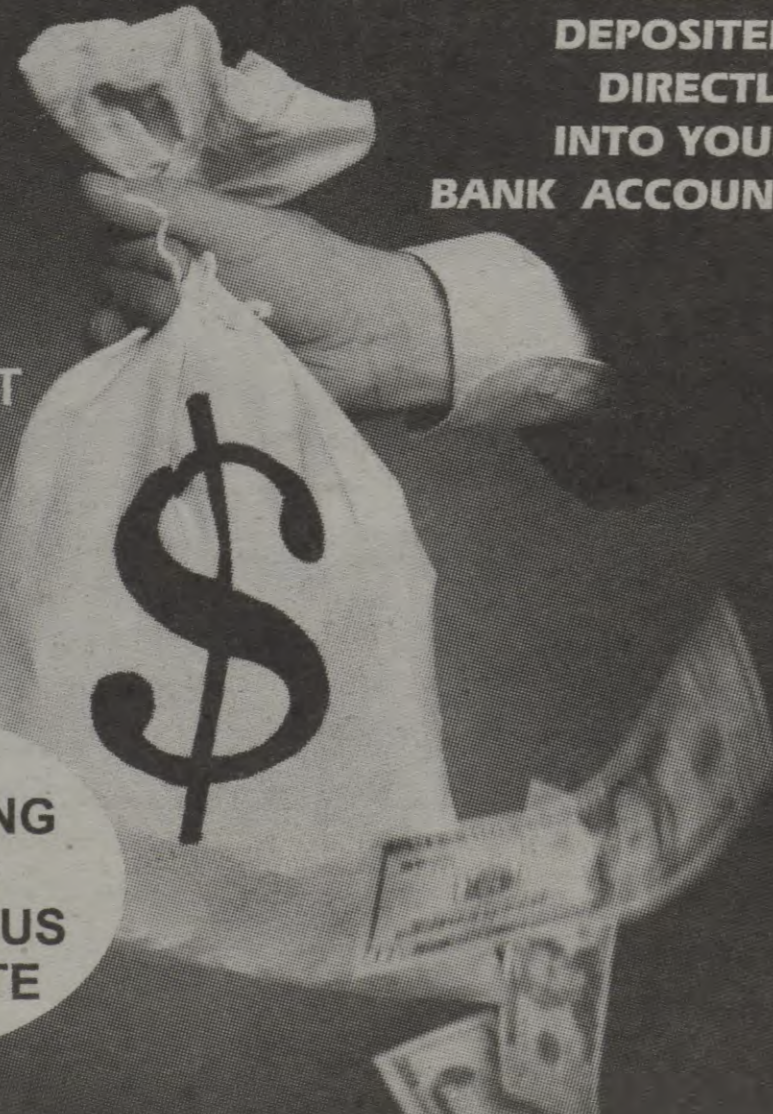
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Flaherty will fail to deliver, again

The federal Conservative government is carving close to the bone in its efforts to eliminate the deficit in advance of the next election in 2015, and this certainly does not bode well for First Nations and Aboriginal groups, which are historically the first on the chopping block when government sings from the cut and slash song book. "We are doing this without raising taxes, we are doing it without cutting transfers to hospitals, to social services, to education in the provinces..." Flaherty said. So where is it all going to come from?

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty is preparing the country for austerity, as evidenced in his comments on the upcoming budget, which will be tabled Feb. 11. The Assembly of First Nations is also preparing the ground for disappointment, sending out a bulletin in January discussing its advocacy in advance of the budget, having submitted its recommendations for investment to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance.

The AFN has communicated that the chiefs' priorities are new fiscal arrangements and investments in education, skills and training, infrastructure, water, housing, preventing violence, policing, justice and healing programs. But very specifically, the chiefs are looking for some significant movement in addressing shortfalls in education funding to First Nations schools and support for culturally-grounded education and language programming.

"First Nations have been living under austerity conditions for too long – we know that investments in our children are investments in the future of our Nations and in the future of Canada," reads the communique from National Chief Shawn Atleo.

But the Conservatives have bigger fish to fry. They want another majority and they'll do whatever it takes to get it, and whatever it takes is to get Canada out of the red. They're even willing to offend a core constituency of the Conservative Party, Canada's veterans, with cuts to Veterans Affairs regional offices that deliver programs to the men and women in uniform.

This is no small thing. The party has put a lot of weight in their support of the military, so cuts to their services and the recent mistreatment of veterans at the heavy-hands of Veterans Affairs Minister Julian Fantino does not go over well. As National Post columnist Christie Blatchford writes Jan. 29, "It's an immensely sensitive issue for the government, of course, because veterans and the military are so central to the Conservative brand, and because the government is so bent on portraying itself as the soldiers' friend." Still, the Conservatives seem prepared to knock this group about a bit now to grab the bigger prize in 2015. Because, let's face it, the Conservatives have problems; a lot of problems

to clear up before Canadians go back to the polls.

The Senate scandal continues to dominate and remains very possibly the cold water thrown on re-election dreams, and with Liberal Party Leader cutting loose his own Senators from caucus in a surprise move on Jan. 29, requiring them to sit as independents, the Justin Trudeau factor looms large on the horizon for Conservative success.

Not that Trudeau doesn't have his own baggage from his party to carry around, including on the Aboriginal Affairs front. After all, didn't former Liberal prime minister Jean Chretien in January take to the airwaves on the George Stroumboulopoulos' show with CBC telling First Nations that they had to adapt to the new reality of the oil industry, saying Aboriginals cannot be hunters and trappers anymore.

"It's not a way to live anymore," he said during his discussion about Neil Young and his Honour The Treaties tour. Having been at one-time Indian Affairs minister under the now late elder Trudeau, whose legacy includes the infamous White Paper, Chretien has, if not the authority, at least a history of making such pronouncements that clearly benefit all but Aboriginal people.

Still, it's not the Liberals calling the shots in this budget. It's the other guys. And if the Conservatives decide all of a sudden to finance language and culture programs in the schools and remove the two per cent funding cap that has put a continuing strain on education funding since the mid-1990s, as the AFN's communique suggest they must, it will be a stunner.

"The time is now to invest in First Nations to build a stronger country for all our people," reads the AFN bulletin, and while we argue the time is long past, the government has so far not moved in that direction. Surely it's a signal that in times of austerity, the investment First Nations leaders want in education may be but a faint hope.

Year after year this same message is delivered to government and year after year the message falls on deaf ears. How many times do we intend to bang our heads on this door? At the December 2013 Special Chiefs Assembly, chiefs unanimously decided to put children at the centre of their efforts. If that's the case, then the chiefs had better be ready to answer the inevitable "What now?"

"We know what is needed for First Nations children," wrote Atleo. "We cannot, must not and will not push this off for another generation. We must achieve this fundamental change now."

Chief Atleo is fond of saying the status quo needs to be smashed. So, perhaps the chiefs need to be prepared to smash it.

Native Americans are protesting a Michigan Republican

official for offensive comments he made in an article in The New Yorker titled "Down with Detroit?" Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson, referring to the historical treatment of Native Americans at the hands of non-Natives of the past, said the financially-troubled city should be turned into a reservation-style detention centre for the residence there, a largely African American population. "What we're gonna do is turn Detroit into an Indian reservation, where we herd all the Indians into the city, build a fence around, and then throw in the blankets and the corn." On Jan. 27, the Native community in Michigan reacted by holding a Circle Dance outside the county courthouse in Pontiac. They were joined by representatives of the civil rights organization the National Action Network founded by the Rev. Al Sharpton. "The comments that he made... are insensitive, they're unprofessional and they are disrespectful," said Brian Moore in an article on MLive, a Michigan news website. "I'm a little confused by it. I think he was trying to relate an atrocity that happened a long time ago with Native people... and it sounded like he was trying to interpret that into what Detroit could be like." Some protesters merely demanded an apology from Patterson, while others wanted his resignation "I took it that he wanted to kill the whole city, anybody in Detroit, because he's modeling after what they did on Indian reservations when they threw those blankets and poisoned corn; did nothing but kill us," said Andrea Pierce, an Idle No More activist, on MLive. "We were hoping for an apology from L. Brooks but his refusal has proven that he meant what he said. At this point, L. Brooks has got to go."

A hashtag tweeted by the pro-oil group Ethical Oil

has been deemed racist by many Aboriginal people and caused the group into damage-control mode. In its attempts to discredit singer/songwriter Neil Young's public views on the environment and the tar sands during his Honour the Treaties tour, Ethical Oil tweeted the hashtag #IndianIgnorant while sharing a news story from the Sun News Network. Response was swift, with one tweet calling the hashtag contemptible. Ethical Oil spokesperson Amanda Achtman said she had posted the tweet, which she described as careless. She said the hashtag was intended to describe Neil Young as being uninformed about Canadian Indian Affairs. During an email interview with the Vancouver Observer, Achtman said "As sometimes happens with on-the-fly tweeting, the phrase could be taken out of context or misinterpreted, so it was deleted."

Nuu-chah-nulth territory on the west coast

of Vancouver Island is being plagued by elk poaching so the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council and its 14 member nations, with some help from the BC Guide Outfitters Association and local business, have committed a \$31,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or people responsible for the illegal elk kills. It is one of the largest conservation rewards in Canadian history. The Roosevelt Elk population had just begun to rebound after many years of protection, including transplanting elk to replenish the herds. Many of the tribes had been waiting for this rebound to allow for a limited elk harvest. But the illegal kills put the herds back in danger. Worse for the Nation communities was the fact that much of the meat was left on the ground to rot. About five years ago Ditidaht transplanted 12 elk from the Shaw Creek area to its territory at Nitinaht in an effort to create a sustainable herd with enough numbers that would benefit the people into the future, said Ditidaht Chief Councillor Jack Thompson. "We were on the verge of being able to hunt about four elk. We were totally disgusted with the slaughter of these elk... Elk are an important source of food for Ditidaht people. Elk are also important for cultural purposes. The slaughter of these elk deprives the people of a food source. We cannot tolerate that or sit by without taking action. We will defend our resources." Said Chief Councillor Charlie Cootes Sr. of Uchucklesaht First Nation "It is a sad state of affairs when hunters go out and slaughter numerous elk putting the entire herd's existence at risk. The Uchucklesaht Tribe hunters have been trying for three years to harvest one elk for ceremonial purposes for our people and the poachers responsible for this slaughter leave the meat in the bush to rot."

Membertou First Nation and Eskasoni First Nation

have launched the Memski Project Inc., a company that they hope will increase employment rates, identify opportunities with new and emerging industries and identify gaps in the labor force. "By combining our resources, our communities are ready to meet the needs of major projects by providing companies with access to a diverse and capable aboriginal workforce," said Eskasoni chief Leroy Denny. Community sessions will be held to explain to members how the project will work.

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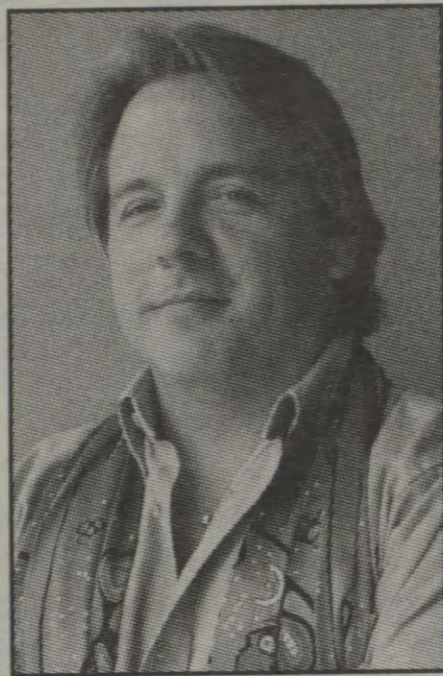
[strictly speaking] An Indian of a different colour

Several years ago in Toronto there used to be a quite clever and original Native theatre ensemble called The Turtle Gals. One of their first shows was a collective production called The Scrubbing Project.

The title was a reference to an unfortunate practice that occasionally occurred decades ago in the Aboriginal community. In this society, dominated and controlled by white people, it was not unheard of for some Native people who felt life would be a lot simpler and less unfortunate if they could "scub" the darken hues from their own skin, and enter the less oppressive world of the dominant culture. Fashionably speaking, this makes sense, because as we know, white goes with anything.

It's interesting how much things can change in a few short decades. It seems the reverse is now true. Presently, dark is in. I know from personal experience as somebody who flirted with a career in acting that for Native theatre and film, the darker you are, the better you'll show up on stage and screen.

Us blue-eyed, light-brown haired guys didn't have much of a chance. And I have met a few



THE URBANE INDIAN Drew Hayden Taylor

Native women who won't even consider having a child with anybody fair skinned. They want their babies brown and beautiful. Who can blame them? They can be quite adorable. Luckily my mother was of a different opinion.

Even the major populace of Ontario is getting in on the act. Our once descriptive and borderline racist term for all the expatriate Europeans, 'pale skin', is now actively becoming a thing of the past. Just recently, the Ontario government passed a law preventing teenagers from going to tanning salons. Evidently they were spending too much time in those contraptions and endangering their skin and, potentially, their lives. Great, now we'll have to find a new

term.

The reason I have broached this topic is the result of my recent trip to India. There, my whole perception of this skin tinted issue has been turned on its head. And quite severely. India, which is awash in a broad hue of people, has its own fixation with whitening more than just their teeth. And it's part of a national cosmetic industry. It seems there's a lot of money in decolourizing.

During my sojourn, primarily along the eastern coast of the country—Gujarat, Kerala and Goa—I couldn't help but notice incentives and opportunities in the media and in the hotel room extolling the virtues of a snowy complexion.

Commercials litter the

television channels, claiming their skin creams, with titles like 'White Beauty', will lighten your skin. One actress, during the 30-second commercial for such a product, was noticeably blanched by its end. Several of these products are by such well-known cosmetic companies like Nivea.

Men are not exempt. They are part of the 'white is right' movement too. One commercial promised its moisturizer would make your skin 'ten shades lighter'. Another was called, simply, 'Fair and Handsome'. What more needed to be said?

In some of the hotel bathrooms, right next to the complementary shampoo and conditioner, I found a face cream stating its virtues as a 'flawless lightening agent.' Meanwhile, I was trying to get a darker tan. So for both political and aesthetic reasons, I opted not to make use of the cream. Heaven forbid I come back from tropical India whiter than when I left Canada.

Things got worse. People in the spas here, when getting a facial, are routinely asked if they want bleaching with that. It also seems you can bleach your whole body here if you want, and fairly cheaply too. For a facial

bleaching, practically pocket change. A measly thousand rupees. Your arms, a little more at 1,500. Now a full body bleaching might set you back a cool 2,500 rupees, which translates into an easily affordable \$50 Canadian, approximately. It sort of answers the question "what do you get a man/woman who has everything?" A full body bleaching.

I am of mixed feelings when I write about things like this. It's difficult and occasionally rude to comment negatively on other culture's practices. As a First Nation's person I know this and hate it when other people do that to us. Why should I care that some people in Japan have surgery on their eyelids to try and make them more North American? Some black people straighten their hair. We all do something of that nature, to some degree.

Several years ago I saw a small news item about a famous porn star who went to a plastic surgeon in L.A. for something called anal bleaching. It was for business reasons. I wonder if she could write that off on her taxes.

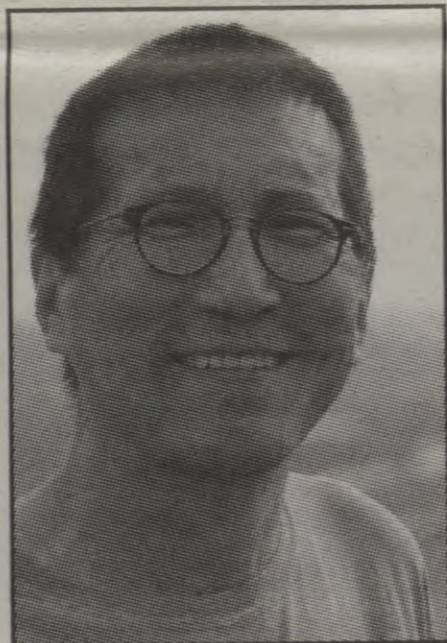
Luckily, I did not see that offered at the resort spa.

Storytellers can make a life-changing difference

Here, in Cowichan Valley, B.C., in this wide verdant valley, the Strait of Georgia undulates in close proximity and the elegant fingers that become big bays poke into the ribs of Vancouver Island. Great rivers and streams tumble out of the highlands where salmon run each year. The forests are rich and thick. Framed by mountains, the Cowichan might seem a paradise.

It is. The land has spawned successful farms, and fruit grows abundantly. In towns like Mill Bay and Cowichan Bay, expensive oceanside condos stand in stark relief to the charming, rustic intertidal life of wharfs and marinas dotted with old fishing vessels limned by a ring of expensive yachts. It is a land that draws people. It's a tourist mecca.

Yet for the Cowichan people who have called this valley home for thousands of generations, paradise remains fraught with serpents. These are a people whose suicide rate remains one of the highest in the country. They are a people who spring from a heritage of great carvers



WOLF SONGS & FIRE CHATS Richard Wagamese

and storytellers. They are a people rich in vital ceremony, song and ritual. Yet for them, paradise remains elusive.

Their people die by their own hands far too often. They live their lives in states of quiet desperation and the final struggle is too great for some to take. It's not a new phenomenon. It's been going on for a long, long time. In the end, what evolves is a peoples' story colored by the dark legacy of despair. It's a sad, dismal tale that newer generations learn to carry in their hearts.

I'm here to speak at the

Cowichan campus of Vancouver Island University. This campus hosts a great number of Cowichan students. They want me to speak on the power of story and its ability to teach, enlighten and empower. They've studied my books for many years now and they come to the auditorium eager to hear the words of a man they regard as a cultural icon.

I am not that. I am only an ordinary person. I am only someone who came to realize the nature of the gift Creator graced me with and began to use it. I am only someone fortunate

enough to have had my eyes and ears open to heed the call to my future when it came. But I am also someone who worked his tail off to marshal the scope and the extent of that gift.

So I speak to them of story. I speak to them of the idea of literature and its magical ability to allow readers to see themselves within the stories that are created. Specifically, I speak to them of Native stories and how important it is for our young people to be able to see themselves in the stories we Native writers create. If what we are doing is working to create a literature of and for our people, that task is of utmost importance.

If we can write stories that have nothing to do with pain and loss and suffering, if we can write stories instead that have to do with love, romance, successful families and a heritage of hope, we change the nature of the stories our young people see themselves in. That's the vital role of storytellers.

I tell them about my own story. I tell them how for years it was

just a morass of bleakness, despair and pain. I tell them about how I worked in order to change the way I saw that story. I tell them about a search for light in all the gloom. I tell them how, when I found that light, my story and my life changed forever.

We are all storytellers. We are all capable of changing our own stories. But it takes the willingness and the courage to shine a light into the darkest corners to see what huddles there. It takes a desire to want to be free from a legacy of misery. It takes the belief that we were always meant for more than just tales of being survivors because we are more than that. As writers and storytellers that is the nature of the stories we need to be telling.

I had no idea how long I spoke. I only know that when I finished to long sustained applause and many tears and hugs that I had told a story that had impact and resonance. People were changed. They left that auditorium bearing the seeds of new stories. Paradise may have moved a little closer to being.

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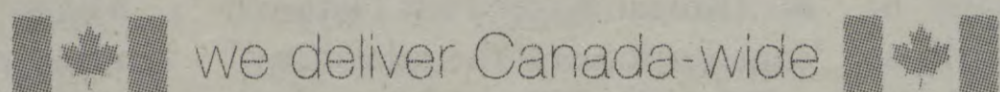


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Panel reflects on Idle No More

By Greg Macdougall
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

Two exciting initiatives came together on Dec. 10 for an event in Ottawa, marking the one-year anniversary of the initial Idle No More National Day of Action and the start of Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence's hunger strike.

Niigaan: In Conversation, a grassroots Ottawa project led by four Indigenous community members who have held 13 public events since March of last year, partnered with Winnipeg-based Ojibway/Métis comedian Ryan McMahon to host a live panel discussion recording for his Red Man Laughing podcast. The event was also a fundraiser that included food, live music, hoop dancing and an art auction.

Introducing the event, Niigaan organizer Linda Nothing explained how Niigaan came into being, not with the goal of being political. Instead, the aim is to shift thinking in settler society and help re-establish Indigenous ways of living and Indigenous laws to achieve success.

Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Grand Chief Derek Nepinak started the discussion off by recounting the circumstances of

Dec. 4, 2013 when a group of chiefs tried to storm the House of Commons. Panelist Wab Kinew related being part of the first big round dance in Winnipeg that ended with youth leading an impromptu storming of the Manitoba legislature.

Lee Maracle was serving as the Elder of the panel, and brought a historical perspective. She talked about the ancient spiral petroglyphs that are a common feature in different places throughout the country, and of how they represent things starting small, with just a few people, and then growing outwards.

She traced back to railroad blockades and roadblocks that took place more than a century ago, and talked about how active participation grows in an ebb and flow cycle, between confrontation and expansion.

She drew attention to how things have changed, for instance, with 5,000 Aboriginal organizations currently that did not exist 40 years ago, and where now the energy represented by Idle No More has spiralled out to reach the entire world.

A group of front-line land defenders from Elsipogtog were in the audience, and McMahon asked them to stand for applause.

(See Panel on page 18.)



Use your recreational, sport, artistic, and people skills to make a difference this summer

Alberta's Future Leaders

Applications are currently being accepted for Youth Mentors and Arts Mentors to work within Alberta's Future Leaders program (AFL) – for more information about the AFL program and a detailed job description, please follow this link <http://www.albertasport.ca/sport/future-leaders-program.aspx>

All positions will be located in First Nations and Métis communities throughout Alberta for the summer. Successful candidates will:

- Live in a First Nation or Métis community, becoming a link in the chain that strengthens the community
- Organize sport, recreation, leadership and arts programming for Aboriginal youth
- Work with local recreation directors, community organizations, leaders, schools, band councils and volunteers
- Develop meaningful relationships and be part of significant, "life-changing" experiences
- Work and live with another Youth Worker or Arts Mentor

The Alberta's Future Leaders program is co-sponsored by the Alberta Sport Connection and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

Compensation

The contract period for Youth Mentors and Art Mentors is from April 26th-August 22nd/2014 (INCLUSIVE), with irregular and occasional long hours, including evening and weekends as required. Maximum of 40 hours per week. Total Compensation for the contract period is \$10,800.00.

Application deadline: February 26th, 2014

Please apply for one of the following positions:

AFL Youth Mentors

Your experience in Recreation, Sport, Physical Education, Education, Native Studies, Social Work, Child/Youth Care or other relevant fields is what is needed for this unique position. Youth Mentors have experience working with youth and are able to plan, organize and implement recreation, sport, and leadership and arts programs. A Youth Mentors self-motivation, communication skills, and ability to work within a team will be imperative when living and working in aboriginal cultural setting.

Youth Mentors will be contract employees of the community in which they are placed.

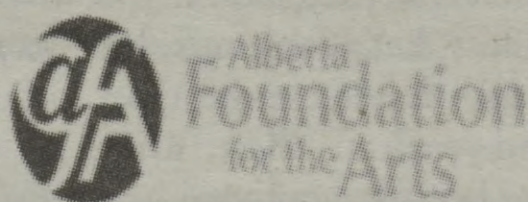
AFL Arts Mentors

Your background in Fine Arts (music, dance, theatre, visual arts, and more), Arts Education or Native Studies is required for this dynamic Arts Mentor position. Arts Mentors are able to plan, organize, create and implement arts programming, enjoy working with youth, are creative thinkers, excellent communicators, flexible and self-motivated leaders. An Arts Mentor's ability to work well in a team environment while living and working in a First Nation or Métis community is essential.

Arts Mentors will be contract employees of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

Please forward a letter of application indicating position preference along with a resume in confidence to:

Alberta's Future Leaders Program
Suite 500
HSBC Building 10055 – 106 St
Edmonton, AB T5J 1G3
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Firebrand Terrance Nelson elected southern Manitoba's grand chief

By David P. Ball
Windspeaker Contributor

ST. JAMES, Man.

Outspoken American Indian Movement vice-chair Terrence Nelson has stunned observers with his election as grand chief of Manitoba's southern chiefs, representing more than half of the First Nations in the province with the highest concentration of aboriginal people in Canada.

Nelson, who unsuccessfully campaigned against Shawn Atleo in the Assembly of First Nations (AFN)'s most recent elections, was chosen to lead the Southern Chiefs Organization on a pledge to make it financially independent from Canada.

To say Nelson has been dogged by controversies since he was chief of Roseau River First Nation is an understatement. He has, in fact, caused a flurry of consternation almost every time he speaks, whether for his widely denounced visit last year to Iran, or telling reporters in 2006 that the only way to "deal with white people" is either through economic disruption – or guns.

"I had an idea I would make it," he told Windspeaker. "But I didn't think it would be that close."

"There was enough frustration and anger amongst the chiefs to change direction. You have a lot of movement among the people. They want change, they want to do something. They're not prepared to sit by with a 60-95 per cent unemployment rate."

Nelson won his three-year term after the fourth round of voting, where he faced off in a tight race against ex-Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation Chief Norman Bone, who lost by only

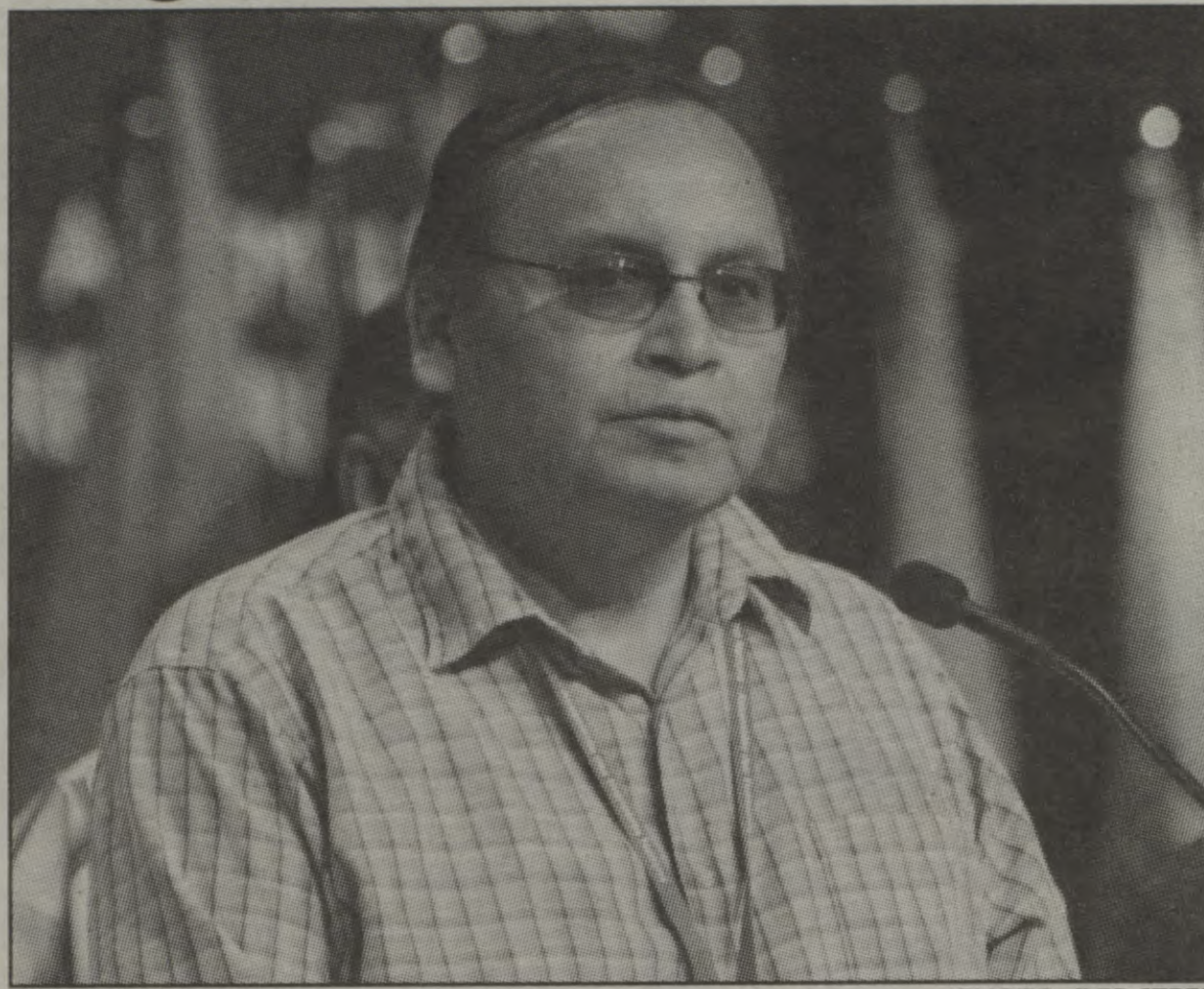


PHOTO: DEB STEEL

New grand chief of the Southern Chiefs Organization Terrence Nelson

two votes.

He added that the Idle No More movement has proven widespread impatience with the status quo – and that "either the chiefs are going to deliver, or people will take action themselves."

The head of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) – another leader who has publicly criticized the government-funded AFN's moderate approach to the Conservatives – expressed his enthusiasm to work with Nelson, particularly in his promise to create financially lucrative urban reserves that would funnel money back to participating First Nations. Nelson cited the success of similar endeavours by Westbank First Nation in B.C. and English River in Saskatchewan.

"I congratulate the Southern Chiefs Organization on a successful and well-organized election," said Manitoba Grand

Chief Derek Nepinak in a statement the day of the election. "I also congratulate Terrence Nelson in his successful campaign and I look forward to seeing his approach at developing urban reserves and economic development."

Fiscal independence from government is a key plank in Nelson's appeal, particularly as both his organization and the AMC have faced deep federal funding cuts, seen by some as punishment for their more militant tone.

"That presents an opportunity to build an organization that is independent of government funding," Nelson said. "How do you oppose the policies and direction the government is going if you have to bite the hand that feeds you?"

"The direction that the AFN is involved in right now – trying to maintain some of its government funding – is not a direction that

can solve the problems we have with resource extraction in this country."

But Nelson insisted he would work constructively with any level of government and business. However, allegations of financial mismanagement and undermining band governance at Roseau River continue to dog Nelson as he hopes to cozy up to investors in the business community at home and abroad in search of hundreds of millions in revenue.

In February 2013, Justice James Russell issued Nelson a searing tongue-lashing for what he called his "inexcusable" conduct in Roseau River years earlier, particularly over the creation of a "custom council" with a representative from each family on-reserve.

"Such conduct is totally irresponsible and places the viability and well-being of (Roseau River) in jeopardy," Russell rules, upholding a 2011 court decision against Nelson and his councillors, who "demonstrated an utter disregard for (Roseau River First Nation's) constitution and the rule of law."

Asked by Windspeaker about the judge's ruling and ongoing allegations of mismanagement as chief, Nelson insisted "there was never any mismanaged money," and repeated his claim that he was unfairly tarnished by a political smear because of his outspoken criticisms of Canada. Nevertheless, in light of his large-scale economic vision, the financial allegations might hamper his ability to work with business.

"Most First Nations never say anything," he replied. "The only ones that are ever audited are the

ones that cause a lot of trouble and embarrass the government."

"The forensic audit done by the government was released a week before my (Roseau River) election. We had cooperated fully, and the only thing the audit did was to try to impact me in the election. If there had been any charges, they would have gone to the RCMP ... The audit cleared us but we were found guilty only in the media."

After years in the political wilderness, and frequently dismissed as a fringe voice in Indigenous politics, Nelson told Windspeaker he has no regrets – not about his comments relating to political violence, nor his trip to Iran. But he acknowledged the importance of not going it alone at SCO, and said he plans to act only under the constitution and instructions of the chiefs who elected him. He even questioned the heckling of former AFN head-turned-oil-company-lobbyist Phil Fontaine in Winnipeg by protesters, saying Fontaine has a "right" to speak and advocate for industry.

Might this, perhaps, signal a compromise for a voice long a divisive outsider to aboriginal politics in Canada? And can observers expect him to tone down his rhetoric as a result?

"I want to reach out to non-Native Canadians. We must work together," Nelson says in an unusually conciliatory tone as our conversation wraps up. "I love this country too, because it's a peaceful country."

"But we will destroy that peace if they believe the First Nations are going to continue living peacefully under 60-95 per cent unemployment. People are tired of it."

Oral tradition becoming a hard sell in the Canadian courts

By Barb Nahwegahbow
Windspeaker Contributor

TORONTO

Canada and the provinces are, "waging a war against Aboriginal oral tradition in the courts," said lawyer Paul Williams, "and it's part of the larger war and, yes, it's part of land and resources and survival. It always is."

Williams spoke on the state of oral tradition in Canadian law at an event organized by the University of Toronto Aboriginal Law Program on Jan. 8. Described as a "great warrior of the law", Williams has represented Indigenous nations and communities, including the Haudenosaunee and the Anishinaabeg, for the last 40 years.

Indigenous people face enormous obstacles using oral tradition in court, said Williams, the basis of which is the huge divide between Aboriginal cultures, values, languages and norms, and the European worldview that is the foundation

of Canada's court system.

"You're dealing with stuff that's 400 years old," he said. "How do you get that across? And across not just time, but culture and language."

The courts have been steadily placing standards and conditions on oral tradition, Williams said. In the Temagami case in the 1980s, Chief Gary Potts testified about the oral tradition of the community. The judge did not accept Potts' evidence, said Williams, for a number of reasons.

Potts, who was in his early forties, was too young to be a custodian of oral tradition. His mother was white. He didn't speak Ojibway fluently and there were older people available.

"That's the first time that a court that I know of in Canada set a series of qualifications on who can produce oral tradition evidence," Williams said.

In the 1980s, the Benoit case, when it went to the court of appeal, "added a new wrinkle to oral tradition testimony," Williams said. To be part of oral tradition,

the information can't be transmitted privately, the court said.

"It has to be transmitted in a public manner because that way it can be scrutinized," said Williams, presumably by mainstream experts like anthropologists.

In anticipation of using oral tradition in court, communities should be making every effort to record elders' evidence on video, Williams wrote in an email following up his talk.

"Have them begin by saying that they've agreed the information should be recorded because they're concerned they might die before it can be used," he said. "Doing this right makes the evidence 'in contemplation of death' which is an exception to the hearsay rule... Let people talk. It's always worth having more than you need rather than miss something because you were in a hurry... And people need to tell their stories."

Make sure the knowledge gets passed on, Williams said, and it might be worth starting a tradition

of public performance to do this. There is some knowledge, however, that is none of the court's business, for example, knowledge that belongs to secret societies and medicine societies.

"Putting a court case together is like doing a jigsaw puzzle," Williams wrote, "and there are many kinds of pieces, and oral history is an important kind but can't be relied upon by itself."

Oral tradition fits into a tapestry that includes primary historical documents, books and articles written by academics, songs, places, and wampum belts are powerful evidence, Williams wrote.

"Oral tradition's legitimacy is enhanced as it is coupled with other kinds of evidence that corroborate it," he said. "The more times we show that the oral tradition confirms other facts, or enhances them, the more credibility we give oral tradition in general."

One of the things Williams learned from working with traditional chiefs, he told the

audience, is their understanding that the relationship between First Nations and the Crown has three fundamental elements – respect, trust and friendship.

Respect comes first, he said. It's a prerequisite. He thinks there ought to be standards of conduct for the Crown in dealing with cases where people are struggling to put their culture, their history and their traditions in front of a judge in a way that the judge can accept. The judge is already having problems crossing that bridge into a different culture, a different language, a different time, and then struggling just to be able to believe.

It's not up to the Crown, Williams said, to be disrespectful and tell the judge "what these people are saying is not the truth. It's just what they believe and they don't have the qualifications to be credible."

When we get into court, the issue really gets down to that first step that the traditional chiefs told him about.

"It's a matter of respect."

Leader pleased government looking to root causes in deaths

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

EDMONTON

Cheryl Whiskeyjack would like to be shocked by recently-released figures that 741 children or teens, who had been brought to the attention of child welfare services in a variety of ways, died in Alberta from 1999 to June 2013.

"They're new numbers to the public, but we've been working in this system for a while and whenever there's been a death in care, especially when it effects our community, we always hear about it anyway, even if there's a publication ban," said Whiskeyjack, executive director with Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society.

How many of these children are Aboriginal is not known. However, Aboriginal children presently account for 60 per cent of those in government care. According to figures from the provincial Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, four times as many Aboriginal children are being served by child intervention services compared to their non-Aboriginal counterparts; six times as many are in temporary care; and eight times as many are in permanent care. Aboriginal children stay in care longer than non-Aboriginal children.

The death-figure released by the province refers to children who had a sibling or parent previously involved in the system (66); children whose files were no longer active with the department (341); children who were involved in an ongoing investigation (101); children whose families were receiving supports from the province (84); or children who were in legally in the care of the province (149). Of the 149 children legally in provincial care, 94 had their ethnicity recorded and 74 were Aboriginal.

The release of these overall figures is one of the first moves made by newly-appointed Human Services Minister Manmeet S. Bhullar. It also addresses a concern that is to be discussed at a roundtable scheduled for the end of January: what information should be shared with the public regarding serious injuries and deaths in care and who is to make that decision. The roundtable was a commitment made by Bhullar's predecessor David Hancock, who now serves as deputy premier. Hancock turned down the push for a public inquiry, a move supported by Bhullar.

"Experts tell me that what we don't need are ... more reviews. We need to accelerate action on recommendations that have been made at the time," said Bhullar.

A feature series jointly run by the Edmonton Journal and



PHOTO: FILE

Cheryl Whiskeyjack, executive director with Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, said the numbers of deaths of children brought to the attention of child welfare is not surprising to those working with the system.

Calgary Herald last November revealed that the government had received 258 non-binding recommendations since 1999 through a variety of offices, forums and reports on how to improve the child welfare system.

Some of those recommendations have come from inquiries led by Child and Youth Advocate Del Graff. In Graff's latest annual report, he stated, "I believe the Ministry of Human Services can and should take more concrete action on the recommendations made in my reports that will improve services and outcomes for vulnerable children."

The Child and Youth Advocate began reporting to the Legislature as an independent officer in April 2012.

Deaths of children in care have only been reported to Graff's office since April 2013. Whether this review system is adequate, Graff says it is still in the early days of the mandate to determine.

On Jan. 8, Bhullar announced the creation of an implementation team to prioritize responses to previous recommendations as one part of his five-point plan. The four member implementation team – with the fifth member, a legal representative, to be selected later – does not include Aboriginal representation.

But Whiskeyjack isn't concerned about the team's makeup.

"These were seen as people who have influence over the areas they come from," she said. "People aren't going to be excluded. There's still an opportunity to participate in that process.... One of the reasons they invited us to take part is the work that we do at the grassroots level."

Along with the roundtable discussion, Bhullar's plan also calls for the government to consistently share information with the public to "ensure ongoing improvement;" enhance

training, education and support for child intervention workers; and focus on the root problems.

Whiskeyjack, who stood with Bhullar when he made his announcement, is pleased the government will be addressing root causes.

"(Bent Arrow is) already doing that work and the exciting part for us is that the higher levels are taking notice and seeing that it's really important," she said. "It's definitely an action-oriented plan and that's what I really appreciate with it."

Bent Arrow began 20 years ago with a focus on youth. It soon became apparent that for the organization to have an impact on young people, it had to broaden its scope to include families as a whole and to look at housing, education and employment.

"(Bent Arrow) comes at families from so many entry points, many of which aren't even mandated," said Whiskeyjack. "We have a good reputation for being able to do that. As an organization, we really do see our place in the (government's) plan."

Whiskeyjack expects the five-point plan to be reassessed as new needs are identified.

While she will be involved in the action side of the plan, she will not be participating in the roundtable.

"I have no interest in sitting at any table when it's not an action-oriented table," she said. However, she is confident that the work being undertaken by Bent Arrow and other organizations will be included in discussions.

Graff will be a roundtable participant.

"If the dialogue leads to recommendations that are acted upon then certainly it's a value," Graff said. "I'm hopeful that the dialogue that does take place moves us along. And sometimes it does ... but we struggle sometimes to recognize when is there going to be action and when isn't there."

Windspeaker News Briefs

The Omushkegowuk Walkers, Danny Metatawabin and

two other Attawapiskat residents, Brian Okimaw and Paul Mattinas, set out on foot Jan. 4 on a trek from James Bay to Ottawa. Readers may remember Metatawabin as a speaker for Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence during her hunger strike last year. Metatawabin said he was inspired to do the trek by the Cree walkers who completed a three-month walk last March called the Journey of Nishiyuu. They traveled from their community in Quebec to Ottawa. Metatawabin said he wants to raise awareness that a year has gone by since the hunger strike and Idle No More protests and despite assurances from government that movement would be made in key areas for First Nations people, nothing has changed. "A year went by and nothing really happened. There was no follow up or reports or engagement with the grassroots people," Metatawabin said. Ontario Regional Chief Stan Beardy has asked for the public's support of the walk by donating to the cause. "It is with great strength and commitment that these walkers are continuing their pledge to bring an awareness of the chronic underfunding in our communities for basic human needs such as clean water, proper housing and healthcare needs," said Beardy. "As leaders we feel their frustration in dealing with a government that doesn't listen to our concerns and with the widening poverty gap between mainstream society and the First Nations, now is the time to listen and to act. Our thoughts and prayers are with them on every step of their trek to Ottawa."

On Feb. 4, the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business

will honour the 2014 inductee into the Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame, William MacLeod, former president and CEO of Cree Construction Development Company. As well, the inaugural National Youth Aboriginal Entrepreneur of the Year Award will be presented to Savannah Olsen, owner of the Old Faithful Shop in Vancouver. This new award recognizes an up-and-coming Aboriginal entrepreneur under the age of 35 and provides a \$10,000 financial prize to the recipient. "We see recognition of our lifetime achievers and our outstanding youth as a vital part of building a prosperous business future for Aboriginal peoples in Canada. I believe our galas provide a shining moment of optimism when we recognize their outstanding achievements and provide us with an important opportunity to celebrate our entrepreneurial spirit," said JP Gladu, CCAB president and CEO.

Former national chief of the Assembly of First Nations,

Phil Fontaine, was heckled off a stage at the University of Winnipeg Jan. 22. He was scheduled to lecture on First Nations issues, but protesters booed him for taking a job with TransCanada Pipeline in December. TransCanada Pipeline proposes building the Energy East project, a 4,500-kilometre pipeline that will carry 1.1-million barrels of crude oil per day from Alberta and Saskatchewan to refineries in Eastern Canada. It also owns the line that exploded in Southeast Manitoba near Otterburne Jan. 25. The protesters held anti-oil sand signs and beat drums as Fontaine tried to deliver his speech, but organizers ended up cancelling the event. "How dare you, Phil!" said one protester, reported the Winnipeg Free Press. "How dare you sell us out to work for the enemy that's destroying this earth?" In response, Fontaine said though he works for the pipeline company, he is not satisfied with all that the industry does and said he has expressed as much to TransCanada Pipeline. University officials say the event will be rescheduled.

Current National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Shawn Atleo, said he stands with all First Nations in rejecting the Site C Dam proposal on the Peace River in northeast British Columbia. First Nations in Treaty 8 have experienced the damaging and adverse effects from development, they have told the joint review panel holding hearings into the project, and the Site C Dam proposal will further harm their lands, waters and territories, including their traditional fishing grounds. "First Nations along the Peace River are demonstrating leadership, standing up for their rights and fulfilling their responsibilities to their traditional territories," said Atleo. "There are real and serious concerns about the effects of this project on the people and their traditional territories. Government and industry must respect the inherent Aboriginal and treaty rights of First Nations, including their right to a say on any developments that could affect their lands, their lives or their people. The AFN stands with First Nations in Treaty 8 and the Peace Athabasca and Mackenzie watersheds." West Moberly First Nations Chief Roland Willson informed the panel about the concerns around potential impacts from several development projects that are already leaching pollutants into the rivers. His submission referenced 17 rivers that have been polluted by mercury, methyl mercury, selenium and other contaminants from resource development activities.

Lubicon appeal six-month Penn West fracking protest ban

By David P. Ball
Windspeaker Contributor

CALGARY

“Outrage was the reaction,” Lubicon Lake Nation spokesman Garrett Tomlinson told Windspeaker, “but there wasn’t a lot of surprise.”

That was his response to a sweeping six-month court order issued Dec. 16 against a community blockade camp against sour gas drilling by Calgary-based Penn West Petroleum Ltd., which had only qualified and applied for a week-long injunction, Tomlinson said.

Community members complained the order prevented them from accessing a large area of their hunting and trapping territories.

Sitting nearly 500 kilometres north of Edmonton, Lubicon Lake Nation has vowed to fight the ruling, arguing the Alberta Court of Queen’s Bench judge failed to consider constitutional obligations for Aboriginal consultation, which Tomlinson said led to the Nov. 26 anti-fracking blockade.

Lubicon Lake Nation Chief Bernard Ominayak issued a statement that “Penn West, the

province of Alberta, and the courts cannot simply choose to ignore our inherent rights and assist industry at the expense of our land and our people.”

But behind the land dispute is a protracted and murky battle within the community over federal government recognition, and who is authorized to represent the Lubicon people in negotiations. Until the election of the separate legal entity Lubicon Lake Band’s Chief Billy Joe Laboucan last February, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada refused to recognize any leader in the community. Ottawa does not recognize Ominayak as legally representing anyone, nor the status of his Lubicon Lake Nation. Following last February’s elections, Alberta instructed Penn West that only Lubicon Lake Band could negotiate over resources. Meanwhile, in May, Ominayak’s ousted faction — which had boycotted an election they said was “rigged” in favour of the government’s “puppet council” — held its own vote which they said reinstated the long-time chief.

But carrying the only government-approved mandate, Chief Laboucan approved Penn

West’s operations following the elections, while Ominayak’s faction maintained their longstanding opposition to oil and gas operations they say lack the Lubicon people’s consent.

Ominayak says his group has filed a Notice of Appeal with Alberta’s Court of Appeal to overturn the ruling. Refusing an interview request with Windspeaker, the company has in the past argued that it had extensively consulted with the Lubicon band, and that its drilling is legally permitted and therefore should not be impeded by protests.

“Our goal is to create and maintain long-term relationships with Aboriginal communities in all areas of our operations,” the company states on its website. “Working together, we can develop mutually beneficial community, education and economic opportunities.”

The Lubicon are no strangers to the courts, nor to contentious resource disputes. The band was for years not recognized by Canada under the Indian Act, nor did it ever sign a treaty when negotiators swept through Indian Country in the late 19th century. Unlike most other

Alberta bands covered by Treaty 8, the Lubicon nation has long argued they never ceded title to their traditional lands.

In the 1980s, the community came to international prominence with campaigns by Amnesty International and even favourable United Nations rulings over their right to have a say in oil and gas development on their traditional territories.

In the decades since, several factions in the community have attempted to gain recognition from the government, and twice new rival bands have been formed with overlapping jurisdictions. Tomlinson claimed the “divide-and-conquer” tactics are the same ones used by government every time the Lubicon gain wider attention for their land title dispute.

“I do think it’s retaliation,” he alleged. “Every time the government tries these tactics, it follows a period of time when the Lubicon gain public attention and people are beginning to notice... This is no different.

“Lubicon Lake Nation has been to court before. We’ve seen how the courts in Calgary react to First Nations issues; it’s always

an uphill battle.”

Tomlinson said it is “very important” that First Nations don’t allow what he termed a “very poor legal decision” to grant a six-month protest ban to set a precedent for other resource disputes.

“We need to try to protect not only ourselves, but other First Nations as well — to make sure this doesn’t become case law in the future that can be drawn on,” he said.

Penn West Petroleum said it has spent \$95 million drilling roughly 70 wells in the Lubicon’s traditional territories, where the firm has operated since 2008.

Lubicon Lake Band could not be reached for comment and does not have a website. But in a press release, Chief Laboucan condemned the blockade and restated his support for gas fracking.

“As the elected governing chief and council — recognized as such by the provincial and federal governments — we do not agree with or condone these actions,” he stated. “We have been working with Penn West Exploration on an ongoing basis as the legitimate representatives of the Lubicon people and don’t want this jeopardized.”

Bittersweet victory for St. Anne’s Survivors

By Barb Nahwegahbow
Windspeaker Contributor

TORONTO

Sixty survivors of St. Anne’s Residential School took the federal government to court to gain access to documents to support their claims for compensation under the residential schools settlement agreement. On Jan. 14, the survivors won their battle.

An Ontario Superior Court ordered Canada to release documents from a five-year-long Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) investigation into the physical and sexual abuse of children at St. Anne’s.

The investigation took place in the 1990s and resulted in the convictions of several former employees. The school operated in Fort Albany, Ont. for more than 70 years.

“This is good for the survivors,” said Andrew Wesley, chair of the Fort Albany Residential School Survivors Association. “They can go ahead with their applications to the IAP [Independent Assessment Process] and they’ll be able to complete their story and get on their healing journey.”

The IAP is a claimant-centred out of court process for the resolution of claims of sexual abuse, serious physical abuse, and other wrongful acts suffered at Indian residential schools.

Abuses reported at St. Anne’s

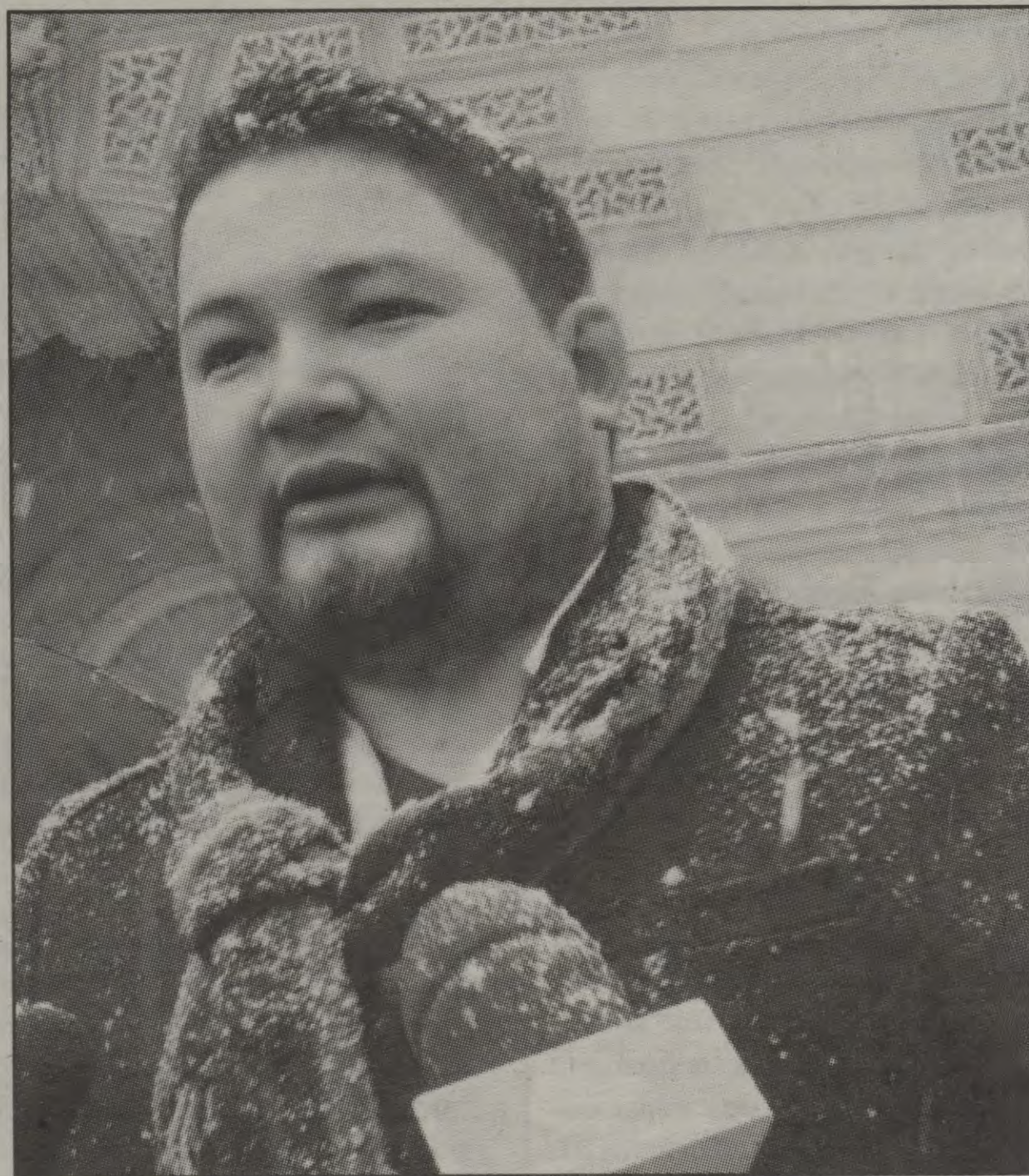


PHOTO: BARB NAHWEGAHBOW

Fort Albany First Nations Chief Rex Knapaysweet.

included children being forced to eat their own vomit and some as young as six strapped into an electric chair fashioned by the staff. Students were given electric shocks for such infractions as speaking their own language.

Wesley thinks this will also open the door on the issue of the children who went missing from St. Anne’s.

“I know of at least four who went missing and were never

found,” Wesley said.

In his ruling, Justice Paul Perrell of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice said, “Based on its unduly narrow interpretation of its obligations, Canada has not adequately complied with its disclosure obligations with respect to the St. Anne’s narrative.” Justice Perrell ordered Canada to hand over the documents to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

(TRC).

Rex Knapaysweet, chief of Fort Albany First Nation, said the decision was an obvious win for the survivors.

“But it’s a bittersweet victory because we’ve had to watch them being re-victimized by the government. That’s tough to see.”

Knapaysweet’s own parents and grandparents attended St. Anne’s and “this issue is close to my heart,” he said. “The survivors were stripped of their childhood. How do you measure that in dollars? How much is that worth?”

The federal government is making reconciliation very hard, the chief said, and it’s hard to have any trust or confidence in them.

“They have been working so hard to protect ‘Canada’s dirty little secret’, to hide their dirt under the rug, but somebody’s got to be held accountable.”

People need to know what happened to the children at St. Anne’s, he said, “because we are constantly being told to get over it. We will in time, but in order to get over it, we have to go through the process and the federal government needs to be 100 per cent accountable.”

“There are no short cuts to reconciliation,” Knapaysweet said.

Julian Falconer, legal counsel for the TRC, said this is a very important step towards creating reasonable compensation levels for the survivors. There are 7,000

OPP documents that are central to the claimant survivors, he said, “documenting the atrocities, the horrific activities” committed against the children at St. Anne’s.

“But it goes beyond that. We are protecting history. The mandate of the TRC is to document the utter tragedy that occurred in order to protect history. If it’s not protected, we are doomed to forget our mistakes. We have to make sure that the unspeakable and horrific abuses that occurred at St. Anne’s are never forgotten.”

The Jan. 14 decision is the second time in less than a year that the court has found that Canada has failed to comply with its obligations to produce documents for the TRC. In January 2013, Justice Stephen Goudge ordered production of documents housed in Library and Archives Canada. The TRC was required to bring the matter to the court because Canada refused to produce the documents.

“It’s a very positive step that the court intervened and protected the process” with respect to accessing the documents, said Falconer. What the federal government is doing, he said, “undercuts the process and the apology. You can’t say ‘I’m sorry’ and then continue to fail to carry out your broad responsibility as a perpetrator of abuse.”

Justice Perrell ordered Canada to pay the legal costs of the St. Anne’s survivors.

Neil Young raises \$500k for anti-oil sands fight

By David P. Ball
Windspeaker Contributor

TORONTO

Despite facing a barrage of criticism from Prime Minister Stephen Harper government, Sun News Network and energy companies operating in the oil sands, Neil Young's week-long cross-country tour raised more than \$500,000 for a First Nation's fight against the industrial development.

Dubbed "Honour the Treaties," the 68-year-old Canadian rocker's tour saw him play to packed audiences in Toronto, Winnipeg, Regina and Calgary as a fundraiser for Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation's legal battle to stop the expansion of the oil sands on their traditional territories.

The community has experienced a dramatic spike in rare cancers, which doctors have linked to petrochemical pollution, but the Alberta government has denied the cancer claims.

At a press conference to kick off his tour, Young described the oil sands as the "greediest, most destructive and most disrespectful demonstration of something that has run amok," and even compared the appearance to post-nuclear bomb Hiroshima.

"People are dying of cancer because of this," he said. "We are killing these people."



PHOTO: BARBRA NAHWEGAHBOW

Idle No More Round Dance in front of Massey Hall in Toronto January 12 where Neil Young kicked off his Honour the Treaties concert tour. The ticket sales from four concerts in four cities will benefit the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation legal defense fund.

"The blood of these people will be on modern Canada's hands, and it will be the result of not just a slow thing, but of a fast and horrific thing if this continues. Believe me, these people are not going to sit back and let modern Canada roll over them."

The After the Gold Rush singer's Hiroshima claim, and description of the project's

impacts as "atrocities," garnered a fierce reaction from conservatives across the country, with broadcaster Ezra Levant's industry lobby group EthicalOil.org launching a website and Twitter campaign "Neil Young Lies" to debunk his allegations.

Even the Prime Minister's Office reacted bluntly, arguing that oil sands revenues are

"fundamental" to Canada's economy and are environmentally friendly.

"Even the lifestyle of a rock star relies, to some degree, on the resources developed by thousands of hard working Canadians every day," said Harper spokesman Jason MacDonald in an email. "Our Government recognizes the importance of developing resources responsibly and sustainably and we will continue to ensure that Canada's environmental laws and regulations are rigorous."

Seated beside the acclaimed singer – who shortly after his tour won an award from the U.S. National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences for his philanthropy, creativity and integrity – was Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Chief Allan Adam.

"Right now our legal system continues to fail us," Adam said. "When all legal avenues are exhausted in more ways than one, who could hold our nation accountable if we say, 'Enough is enough,' and shut down the highway?"

"The regulatory system has to change, because we cannot continue to rubber stamp major components that are going to play detrimental effects on our environment."

He pointed to numerous Aboriginal oil sands workers as evidence of "how critical" the megaproject is for his First Nation's economy, but that the costs were simply too high.

"Look at the fact that numerous rates of rare cancers are popping up," he said, citing evidence that Aboriginal people surrounding the tar sands face up to 30 per cent higher rates of the disease than the Canadian population. "When does it stop?"

It's to a point where we're saying, 'Let's get a grip on this.'

"Why can't they live up to the laws they made, and quit breaking them and changing the policies?"

After Levant alleged that Adam had received "secret" funding from the controversial Tides Foundation – a flashpoint organization in the anti-oil sands battle – to support Young's tour, more than 20 other Canadian celebrities sprung to Young's defence.

The Jan. 20 support letter was signed by such arts and cultural luminaries as The Tragically Hip's Gord Downie, Booker-prize-winning novelist Michael Ondaatje, Through Black Spruce author Joseph Boyden, *Scream* film series star Neve Campbell, singer Sarah Harmer, National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence Wade Davis, and others.

"Neil Young is doing what poets do – forcing us to examine ourselves," they wrote. "The time has come for Canada to decide if we want a future where First Nations rights and title are honoured, agreements with other countries to protect the climate are honoured, and our laws are not written by powerful oil companies."

"Neil's tour has triggered the Prime Minister's Office and oil company executives. They have come out swinging because they know that this is a hard conversation and they might lose. But that should not stop the conversation from happening. Instead of focusing on Neil Young's celebrity, Prime Minister Harper should inform Canadians how he plans to honour the treaties with First Nations. This means ensuring the water, land, air, and climate are protected so the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nations and other First Nations communities be able to hunt, fish, gather plants and live off the land."

The stars added they are "proud to stand with Neil Young" in his efforts to call for renewable energy investment, respect for Aboriginal rights, and a transition to sustainable jobs.

"Our issue is not whether the natural resource sector is a fundamental part of the country," Young said in a reply issued to the Prime Minister Office's criticism. "Our issue is with the government breaking treaties with the First Nation and plundering the natural resources the First Nation has rights to under the treaties."

"As to the thousands of hard working Canadians, we have respect for all working people. The quandary we face is the job they are working on. They are digging a hole that our grandchildren will have great trouble digging their way out of. There are better jobs to be developing."

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PHOTO: CNW GROUP/IVANHOÉ CAMBRIDGE

Tsawwassen Mills, Tsawwassen, British Columbia

Tsawwassen First Nation began construction in January on two malls after two years of planning and site preparation. Tsawwassen Mills and Tsawwassen Commons are destination retail developments being constructed in partnership with Ivanhoé Cambridge and Property Development Group, respectively, on the First Nation's lands. Bass Pro Shops is the first of several major marquee retailers that will be featured at Tsawwassen Mills. Walmart will be an anchor retailer for the Commons mall. "This development partnership is a major step towards achieving our community's vision under our Treaty," said Tsawwassen First Nations Chief Bryce Williams. "We are delighted to partner with world-class developers to realize the commercial/retail element of our land use plan. Combined with our complementary agricultural, residential, and industrial activities, this development is a significant move forward in creating a truly sustainable community for our members."

The Wet'suwet'en First Nation has sent a warning to Premier Christy Clark to begin Crown consultation immediately on the establishment of the new LNG export industry. "Time is running out," said Chief Karen Ogen. "If Wet'suwet'en is to participate meaningfully in the LNG industry choices and plans for our Aboriginal title lands, the BC government must provide us with the necessary information to begin Crown consultation on the new LNG industry." Ogen said First Nations' support should not be taken for granted and consultation should not be considered an inconvenient afterthought. In August 2013, the Wet'suwet'en First Nation wrote to Clark requesting a meeting to begin Crown consultation. To date, the BC government has not responded to the Wet'suwet'en request, a press release notes. "It is completely unacceptable to wait five months for a reply to a letter sent in good faith regarding this important matter," said Ogen. "While Wet'suwet'en has been forced to wait for Crown consultation to begin, government and industry have been meeting behind closed doors to finalize high level

decisions, fiscal arrangements and strategic plans for the new LNG export industry. It is widely expected that taxation, royalty,

and regulatory legislation and initiatives for the new LNG industry will be introduced during the 2014 spring session of the

Legislature." Ogen cites the Wet'suwet'en people's Supreme Court of Canada Delgamuukw case, in which the court held that Aboriginal title has an "inescapable economic component." Choices about the use of title lands are for the community to make, said Chief Karen Ogen. "By proceeding unilaterally to develop a new industry on the backbone of our territory, the province is running roughshod over those constitutional guarantees." Ogen said Clark has until Jan. 31 to provide information requested. After that time, the nation will pursue next steps to ensure the province fulfills its constitutional obligations.

Nuxalk First Nation Chief Wally Webber wasn't happy with a wager between the Seattle Art Museum and the Denver Art

Museum on the Seattle Seahawks and Denver Broncos match-up in the Superbowl. Each museum has put up a prized piece of their collection to trade, temporarily, to whichever city's team wins the game. The Seattle Art Museum chose a forehead mask from the Nuxalk Nation to be put on display in Denver if the Broncos win, the CBC reports. It's because the mask looks very similar to the Seahawks logo, said the Seattle museum's representative. Webber said no one from the museum had the courtesy of calling to tell his people about the wager. "They informed the Broncos about it and they've never contacted us. If they're not going to respect what they have of ours, send it back to us where it will be looked after right," Webber said.



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**Application to Participate in National Energy Board Public Hearing for
Trans Mountain Pipeline ULC
Trans Mountain Expansion Project**

The National Energy Board (NEB) has received an application from Trans Mountain Pipeline ULC for approval to construct and operate the Trans Mountain Expansion Project (Project).

Description of The Project

The Project would expand the existing Trans Mountain pipeline system located between Edmonton, AB and Burnaby, BC. It would include approximately 987 km of new pipeline, new and modified facilities, such as pump stations and tanks, and the reactivation of 193 km of existing pipeline. There would also be an expansion of the Westridge Marine Terminal.

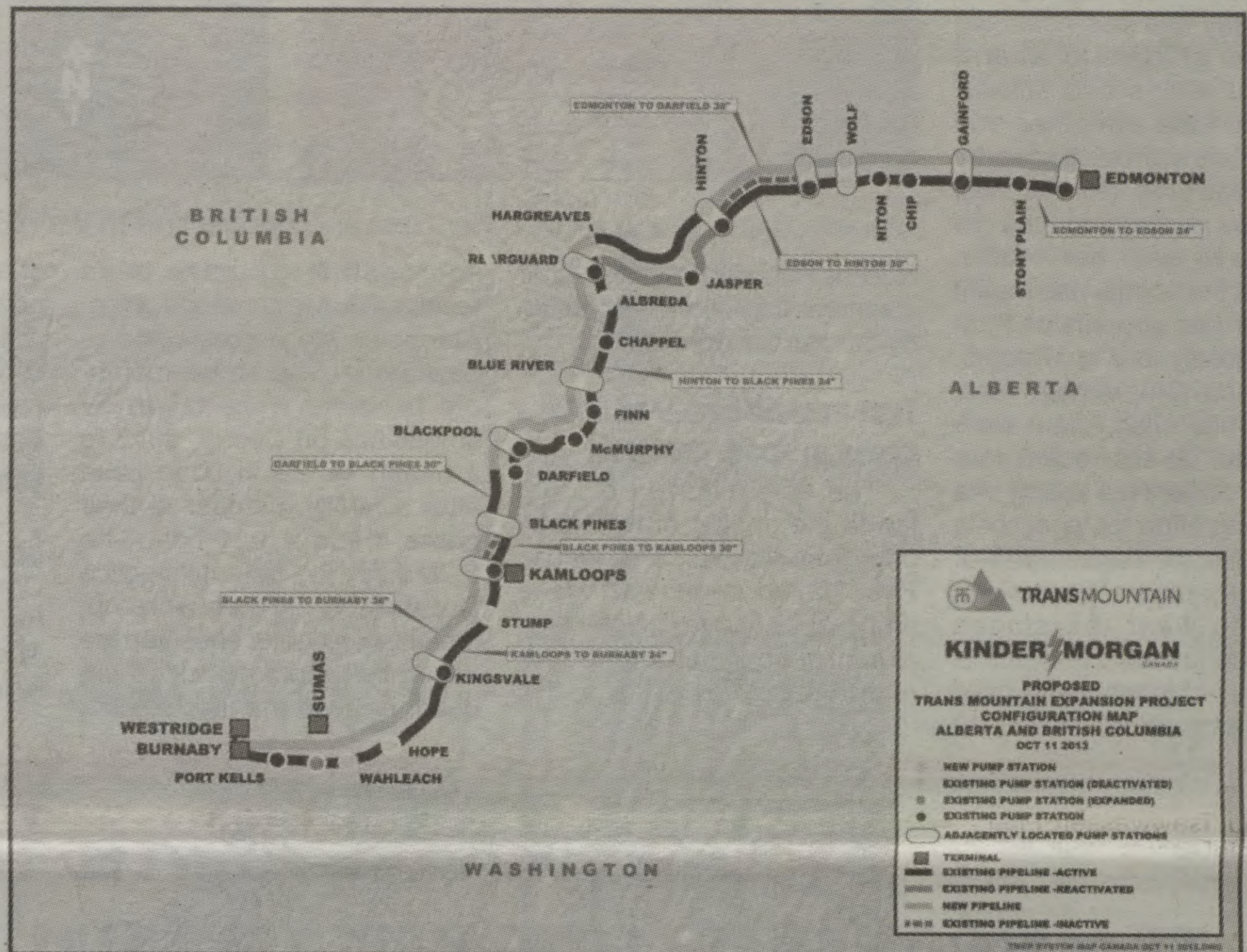
New pipeline segments would be added between Edmonton to Hinton, AB, Hargreaves, BC to Darfield, BC and Black Pines, BC to Burnaby, BC. Reactivation of existing pipeline segments would occur between Hinton, AB to Hargreaves, BC and Darfield to Black Pines, BC.

The application can be found on the NEB website.

Participation in NEB Hearing

The NEB will determine if the application is complete and if so, it will hold a public hearing.

Those who wish to participate in the NEB hearing must apply to participate. Applicants must clearly describe their interest in relation to the List of Issues for the hearing, which is on the NEB website and included in the application to participate. Those who are directly affected by the proposed project will be allowed to participate in the hearing and those with relevant information or expertise may be allowed to participate.



The application to participate is on the NEB's website at:

www.neb-one.gc.ca
select Major Applications and Projects then
Trans Mountain Pipeline ULC - Trans Mountain Expansion

Applications to participate in the NEB Hearing are due on or before noon on 12 February 2014. Individuals and groups applying to participate must provide enough information for the NEB to decide whether participant status should be granted.

Trans Mountain ULC has until 19 February 2014 to provide the NEB with comments on Applications to Participate and must provide a copy of its comments to those applicants to whom the comments apply. Applicants who received comments from Trans Mountain ULC about their Application to Participate have until 4 March 2014 to send the Board your response to Trans Mountain's comments.

Comments and Responses should be sent to the Secretary of the Board: www.neb-one.gc.ca, select Regulatory Documents then Submit Documents.

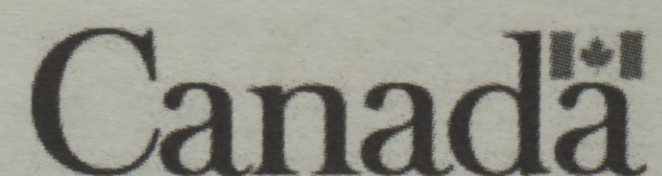
CONTACTS

Information on NEB hearing processes and participant funding is available at www.neb-one.gc.ca > Major Applications and Projects > Trans Mountain Pipeline ULC - Trans Mountain Expansion.

If you require additional information, the NEB has appointed Ms. Reny Chakkalakal as a Process Advisor to provide assistance.

Ms. Reny Chakkalakal
Process Advisor, NEB
E-mail: TransMountainPipeline.Hearing@neb-one.gc.ca
Telephone (toll free): 1-800-899-1265

Ms. Sarah Kiley
Communications Officer, NEB
E-mail: sarah.kiley@neb-one.gc.ca
Telephone: 403-299-3302
Telephone (toll free): 1-800-899-1265



Saskatchewan Sage: Special Section providing news from Saskatchewan

Hoodie slogan leads to Day of Action

The banning of a hoodie worn to school by a 13-year-old First Nations girl has resulted in a Day of Action to take place Jan. 28 organized by Idle No More and Defenders of the Land. Grade 8 student Tenelle Starr, a 13-year-old in Balcarres, wore a hoodie to school with the words, "Got Land?" on the front and "Thank an Indian" on the back. School officials initially asked her to remove her shirt. When Starr wore the hoodie another day, she was instructed by school officials to wear it inside out. After school officials met with Starr's mother and representatives from the nearby Star Blanket First Nation, school authorities relented and the girl was able to wear her hoodie. Starr said the hoodie was meant to signal her support of First Nations treaty and land rights. Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Chief Allan Adam wore the slogan on his recent tour with folk singer Neil Young in a fundraising effort for legal costs to fight the tar sands. Day of Action organizers are asking people to wear the slogan leading up to Jan. 28, which is also a day of teach-ins to raise awareness about the First



PHOTO: IDLEMORE.CA/GOT_LAND

Tennelle Starr is proud to wear her Got Land hoodie and that it has resulted in action.

Nations Education Act and other controversial action being taken by the Harper government.

Test results required before cause of death declared

The determination of what led to the deaths of twin baby boys from Makwa Sahgaiehan First Nation cannot be made until results of a toxicology test, a microscopic examination, microbiology cultures and a

neuropathology have been received by the coroner's office. Autopsies were conducted in Saskatoon. The seven-month-old brothers were taken by ambulance on Dec. 9, 2013 to a health centre in Loon Lake after a family member at their home made a 911 call. The RCMP say the caller told police that the two children were not breathing. A doctor observed the infants before pronouncing them dead. Despite the involvement

of an RCMP major crimes unit, police say the investigation has not immediately been considered a crime.

Residential fire claims two young boys

A fire claiming the life of two boys on the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation has renewed calls for better firefighting services. The boys, nine and 10, were killed in the morning of Jan. 18

when a fire broke out in the home of relatives in Pelican Narrows. The homeowners' 10-year-old daughter suffered second- and third-degree burns and was taken to a Winnipeg hospital for treatment. Three people escaped unharmed. Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation Chief Peter Beatty said he's been after Aboriginal Affairs Canada for years about improved firefighting on reserves. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

Bear sentenced to nine years for stabbing retired RCMP officer

Ryan Dalton Kelly Bear of the Dakota Whitecap First Nation has been sentenced to nine years in prison. Bear was convicted of stabbing retired RCMP officer Robert Laidlaw at a landing development north of Outlook in May 2012. Laidlaw had stopped to see if Bear needed help with a flat tire and started asking questions when he suspected Bear's vehicle may have been stolen. Court heard at Bear's trial that Bear became angry, threatened to slit Laidlaw's throat and stabbed Laidlaw twice near the heart and lungs.

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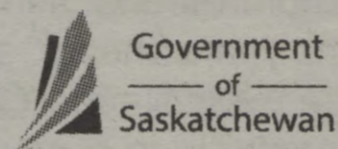
The Ministry of Environment has job opportunities at the following locations: Big River, Buffalo Narrows, Cumberland House, Cypress Hills, Denare Beach, Dorintosh, Green Lake, Hudson Bay, Ile-a-la-Crosse, La Loche, La Ronge, Lower Fishing Lake, Pelican Narrows, Prince Albert, Southend, Stony Rapids and Weyakwin.

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If you are interested, please visit one of the Ministry of Environment's Forest Protection Offices, website or call toll free.

Closing date for application is February 28, 2014

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Audit underway at Big Island Lake Cree Nation

A team of auditors from Deloitte and Touche is examining claims made against the chief and council of the Big Island Lake Cree Nation that they used government money meant for social assistance to buy themselves vehicles, horses and trailers. No charges have been laid and none of the allegations has been proven in court. The audit work is ongoing, covering the period April 2009 to March 2012. Documents obtained by The Canadian Press under the Access to Information Act show Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada received an anonymous, handwritten letter in April 2011 about the alleged misuse of federal funding. A second handwritten letter, sent in December 2011, makes more allegations specifically against the chief and councillors. Deloitte and Touche is expected to present its findings to the department in early 2014. However, department officials say those findings may not be made public "depend(ing) on privacy considerations."

FNUniv recognized for science camps

The First Nations University of Canada has been recognized

nationally by Actua with the "Making Friends with Science" award. FNUniv's Health and Science Camp was singled out by Actua, a national charitable organisation that is focused on engaging youth who are typically underrepresented and underserved in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. For the past 16 years, FNUniv has hosted a Health and Science Camp, where nearly 500 children have benefited from a hands-on introduction to the sciences and learning about a variety of career choices in the fields of health and science, post-secondary education, and First Nations and Métis culture. "We developed our programming and outreach in direct response to the under representation of First Nations and Métis people in health and science related fields," said Dr. Lynn Wells, FNUniv vice-president, academic, in a news release. Wells said that focus also extended to university programs such as the Bachelor of Applied Science in Environmental Health and Science, where an Indigenous-based perspective on health and science is promoted with the cooperation of Elders who serve as teachers of traditional ways.

Compiled by Shari Narine



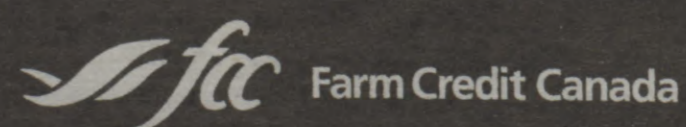
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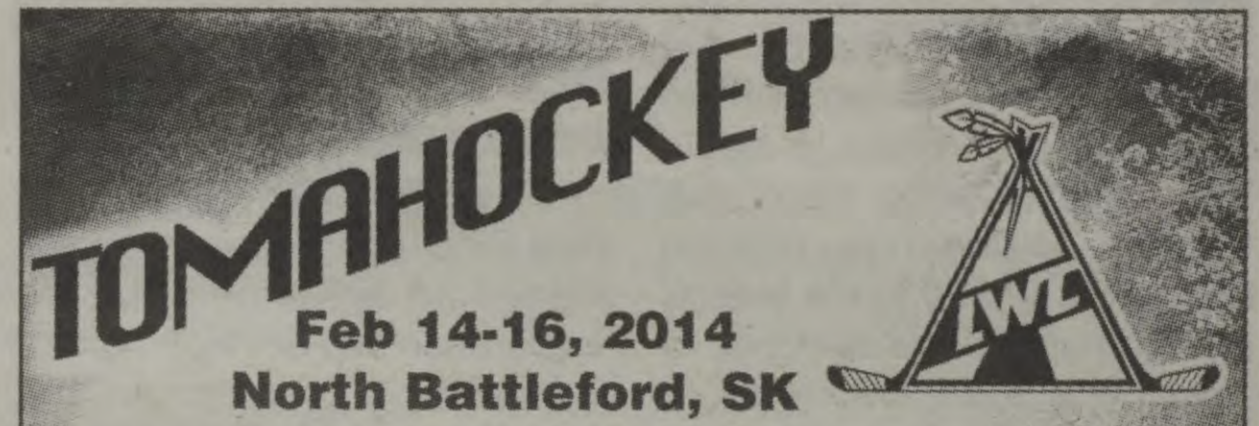


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Ontario Birchbark: Special Section providing news from Ontario

AOK to proceed to Specific Claims Tribunal

The Aundeck Omni Kaning First Nation has been successful in defending their right to proceed to the Specific Claims Tribunal of Canada. Canada made an offer to settle the AOK First Nation's claim without any negotiation and on a "take it or leave it" basis. The AOK First Nation challenged Canada's process of engagement for claims that Canada deems as "small" (claims valued at less than \$3 million). In his decision issued Jan. 17, Justice Patrick Smith of the Specific Claims Tribunal of Canada noted that the process employed by the Specific Claims Branch, which is an arm of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, is "paternalistic, self-serving, arbitrary and disrespectful." He said Canada's conduct in this claim did not uphold the principle of good faith. The Specific Claims Tribunal was established in 2008 as an independent tribunal with authority to make binding decisions on specific land claims. "The legitimate claims of First Nations are longstanding, unfinished business. They are a legal and economic liability for Canada. Resolving these claims will help all of us move forward," said Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo in a news release.

Upgrades to Chippewas of the Thames water treatment plant

The Chippewas of the Thames First Nation will be awarding a contract to begin upgrading its water treatment facility. Meanwhile interim upgrades, funded by the federal government, will be designed to provide a safe and reliable source of water for residents in the community. Additional upgrades will include installing a pre-treatment system that will remove the manganese and/or iron. Upon completion, the

upgrades will bring the plant up to provincial standards. The work is expected to go to tender soon and to be completed by late 2014. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada has also provided support for a feasibility study for a new water treatment plant to be considered as part of future community improvements.

Community sessions scheduled for proposed Marathon mine

The joint panel reviewing the proposed Marathon Platinum Group Metals and Copper Mine project has revised the start date to Feb. 18 for the public hearing, following requests from various participants. The primary purpose for the hearing, which is expected to take four weeks, is for the panel to receive information to complete its environmental assessment of the project. First Nations will get the opportunity for input through community hearing sessions which are expected to take place in Pic River, Pic Mobert and Pays Plat. Community sessions will also be held for Métis organizations. Presentations on Aboriginal traditional knowledge will be accepted without an accompanying written submission. The proposed project is to be located 10 km north of the town of Marathon and involves the establishment and operation of an open pit mine and mill for extracting and processing copper and platinum group metals.

Exploration agreement signed for Cayenne-Chili property

Flying Post First Nation and Red Pine Exploration Inc. have signed an agreement for the exploration and development of Red Pine's Cayenne-Chili property located about 110 km south-west of Timmins and which falls entirely within Flying Post's traditional territory. The agreement outlines the working relationship, which includes a

responsible approach to exploration activities, outlines environmental protection, employment, training and business opportunities, and mitigation of impacts on the traditional pursuits of Flying Post First Nation members. Red Pine Exploration is a gold and base-metals exploration company headquartered in Toronto. The Cayenne-Chili property consists of 57 contiguous mining claims totaling 8,704 hectares.

Lower Mattagami Project starts operating

A new 67 MW-unit at Little Long Generating Station, part of the Lower Mattagami Project, is now generating clean, renewable, emissions-free electricity ahead of schedule and on budget. The project is a unique partnership between the Moose Cree First Nation and Ontario Power Generation, in which the First Nation has 25 per cent equity interest. "This project has enabled our First Nation to establish a strong economic foundation to build on in the years ahead," said Moose Cree First Nation Chief Norm Hardisty Jr. in a news release. The entire Lower Mattagami Project is tracking on schedule

and on budget. By the time work is completed in 2015, the capacity of the Lower Mattagami plants will have increased to 924 MW from 486 MW. At peak construction, the project employed about 1,600 workers, including more than 250 First Nation and Métis individuals.

IndigiLINK to connect global Indigenous community

A team from the Aboriginal Policy Research Consortium (International) based at Western University has launched IndigiLINK, a cutting edge online Indigenous knowledge sharing platform. IndigiLINK has several unique engagement tools that allows for maximizing opportunities to collaborate between Indigenous knowledge holders, government agencies, organizations and professional and academic communities around the world. The creation of this communications tool will connect the global Indigenous community with leading world experts in Indigenous research and policy development, said IndigiLINK's project lead, APRCi director Dr. Jerry White. IndigiLINK is a collaborative effort between APRCi, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern

Development Canada, International Indigenous Policy Journal, and the Indigenous Health and Well-being Initiative.

More First Nations sign on to FNLM

Chippewas of the Thames, Temagami and Wasauksing join six other First Nations across the country as members of the First Nations Land Management regime. "Adding more First Nations into land management will help propel much needed economic prosperity capabilities into the lives and communities of First Nations. Beneficiaries will include Canada, regional and local communities, and individual First Nation communities right across the country," said Chief Robert Louie of the First Nations Land Advisory Board in a news release. The FNLM regime enables First Nations to manage their own land, resources and environment according to their own land codes, laws and policies. The regime also helps First Nations get out from under 34 land-related limitations of the Indian Act in order to take control of their land and resources.

Compiled by Shari Narine



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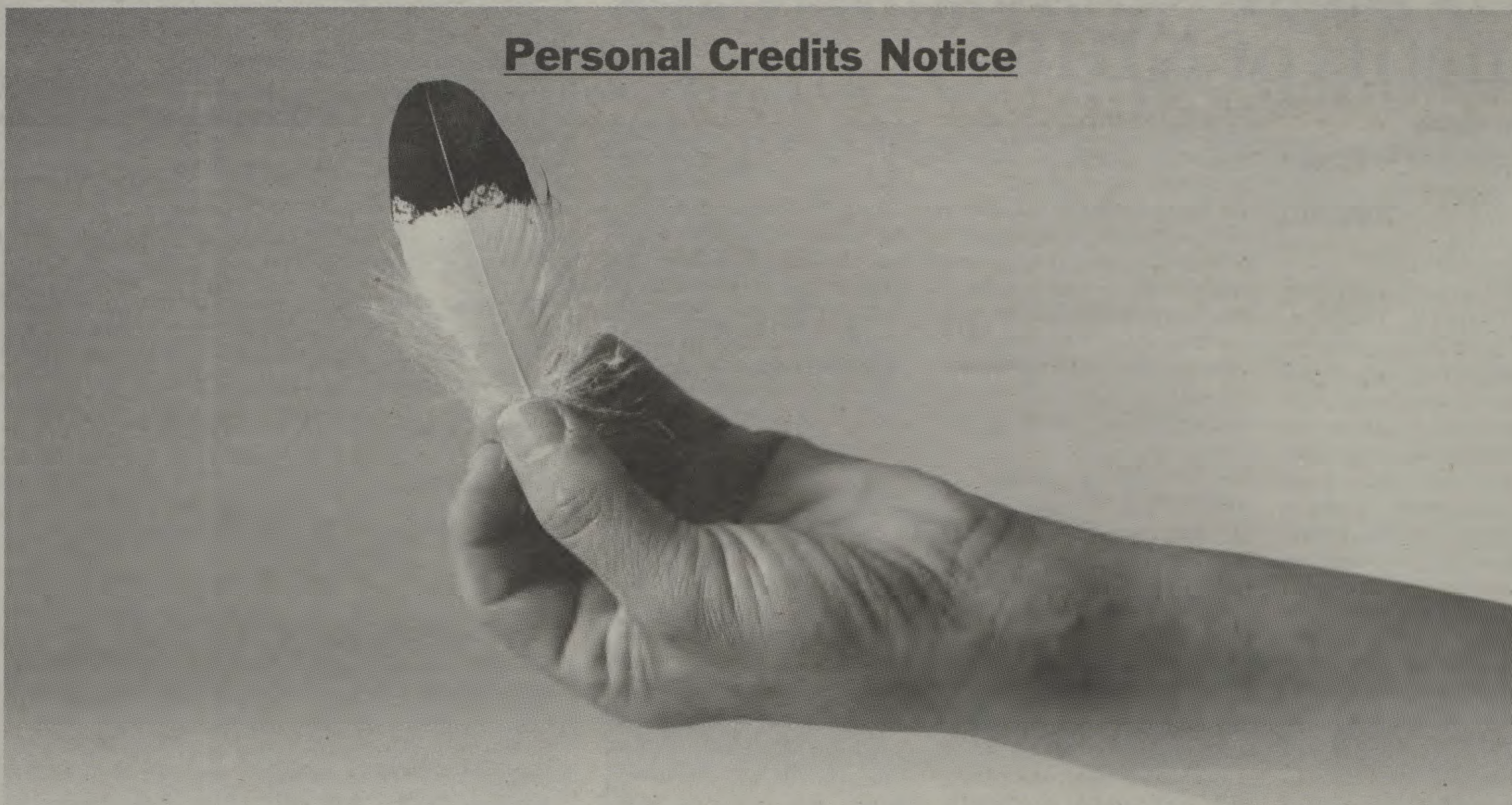
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Personal Credits Notice



If you received a Common Experience Payment, you could get \$3,000 in Personal Credits for educational programs and services.

The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. The healing continues.

Since 2007, almost 80,000 former students have received a Common Experience Payment ("CEP") as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. CEP recipients are now eligible to receive non-cash Personal Credits of up to \$3,000, for either themselves or certain family members, for educational programs and services.

What are Personal Credits? Personal Credits may be used for a wide range of educational programs and services, including those provided by universities, colleges, trade or training schools, Indigenous Institutions of Higher Learning, or which relate to literacy or trades, as well as programs and services related to Aboriginal identities, histories, cultures or languages.

How much are Personal Credits? Adequate funds are available for each CEP recipient to receive up to \$3,000 in Personal Credits, depending on your approved educational expenses.

Which educational entities and groups are included? A list of approved educational entities and groups has been jointly developed by Canada, the Assembly of First Nations and Inuit representatives. If an educational entity or group is not on the list, please consult the website for more information.

Will I receive a cheque? No. Cheques will be issued directly to the educational entity or group providing the service.

Who can use Personal Credits? CEP recipients can use the full amount themselves or give part or all of their Personal Credits to certain family members such as a spouse, child, grandchild or sibling, as defined in

the terms and conditions. Personal Credits of multiple CEP recipients can be combined to support a group learning activity.

How can I get Personal Credits? Each CEP recipient will be mailed an Acknowledgement Form. If you do not receive an Acknowledgement Form by the end of January 2014, please call 1-866-343-1858. Completed Acknowledgement Forms should be returned as soon as possible and must be postmarked no later than **October 31, 2014**.

How do I redeem my Personal Credits? Once approved, you will be sent a personalized Redemption Form for each individual using Personal Credits at each educational entity or group. Once the Form is received, provide it to the educational entity or group listed. The educational entity or group must then complete and mail back the Redemption Form postmarked no later than **December 1, 2014**.

What happens to unused Personal Credits? The value of unused Personal Credits will be transferred to the National Indian Brotherhood Trust Fund and Inuvialuit Education Foundation for educational programs.

For more information, including how Personal Credits can be redeemed by certain family members of CEP recipients that are deceased, visit www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca or call 1-866-343-1858.

The IRS Crisis Line (1-866-925-4419) provides immediate and culturally appropriate counselling support to former students who are experiencing distress.

CEP recipients have the option of sharing their Personal Credits with certain family members, such as:

- Children
- Spouses
- Grandchildren
- Siblings

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AFN tackling the dwindling benefits of NIHB

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

TORONTO

The Assembly of First Nations has stepped up its efforts to bring about changes to the Non-Insured Health Benefit program.

"I don't know how many resolutions we've had at the AFN chiefs assemblies calling for improvement of access for non-insured but looking at statistics, looking at our results, the gap is getting wider between First Nations people that depend on non-insured and the dominant society," said AFN Ontario Regional Chief Stan Beardy, who holds the health portfolio and chairs the Chiefs Committee on Health.

The AFN has mobilized at the regional level with roundtables to take place over the next couple of months.

"We need to identify what works and what does not work. We need to demonstrate to the government that the national policy is not working for First Nations people," said Beardy.

Among the issues is drug coverage, which has seen drugs delisted and more non-generic drugs covered, and lack of support for Elders, who live in remote fly-in communities.

The AFN will also continue to work in partnership with medical organizations.

"NIHB is an issue that we deal with consistently," said Dr. Peter Doig, president of the Canadian Dental Association.

The CDA and AFN have been working together for a number of years to bring about changes to the NIHB. Doig says that the

CDA and NIHB have an NIHB technical working group committee. CDA was adamant that representatives from both the AFN and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami be part of that working group. The NIHB regulates benefits for both First Nations and Inuit peoples.

Doig said CDA conducts a 'Days on the Hill' every spring and issues in regard to NIHB always make the agenda for talks with MPs, senators, government ministers and key advisors. The last few years, the CDA has included representatives from the AFN at those meetings.

"The NIHB program places challenges on the provision of dental services to First Nations people in Canada," said Doig. "There are dental services the rest of the population will get as part of routine oral health care that are restricted under the NIHB program."

The NIHB program covers 86 per cent to 88 per cent of treatment costs, although there are a handful of preventive procedures that are covered fully. The shortfall in funding leaves the dentist with a number of options: turn down a patient; bill the patient for the additional cost, whether personal or through other health insurance; or conduct business at a loss.

Doig said there are dentists who choose not to provide treatment if the patient is covered only by NIHB. He also notes that treating someone through NIHB places undue administrative strain on dentists.

There have been improvements in the NIHB program over the years – including a recently announced five per cent annual

escalator for funding – but the still existing "raft of restrictions," said Doig, need to be addressed.

Doig said other medical professions, such as optometrists and pharmacists, also have concerns with the program.

Beardy believes that the more other medical organizations learn about NIHB coverage, the more they will "begin to understand there is injustice here and (they) will be compelled to do whatever they can in their field to assist us."

The roundtables will serve a number of purposes. Not only will they put forward solutions to the NIHB crisis and options on how to implement the solutions, but they will also educate First Nations members.

"What's most important here is that our people understand what their basic human rights are in terms of health care," said Beardy. "When they go to a clinic somewhere and they're denied basic human rights, they're able to speak up and say, 'This is a human right. This is my right. I'm entitled to health care.'"

In spring, AFN will develop an action plan which will include mobilization at the political, legal and technical levels.

"We've been struggling with the system for many, many years ... and now is as good a time as any to attempt to advocate for those changes," said Doig, who adds that his organization promotes "optimal health for Canadians and that means all Canadians not just segments of Canadians."

"To be well is universal. We see health as a basic human right," said Beardy. "We expect the same type of service that everybody else in Canada takes for granted."

Panel reflects on Idle No More

(Continued from page 7.)

He talked of how inspiring their actions, and those of land defenders in other communities, are to people across the country, showing what is at stake and what people stand for.

Leanne Simpson echoed McMahon's sentiments, while also talking about the need to actively maintain cultural and political traditions, "figuring out how to occupy our territories in a good way, in a way that strengthens the relationships we have to each other."

Geraldine King added how we need to validate the diverse ways people contribute to building these movements, to not only celebrate confrontational resistance.

Youth empowerment and education was a big topic. Maracle talked about the problem with how schools make a lot of Native students feel really bad, to the point of suicide. She talked of the responsibility of adults to stop the abuse that happens in schools, abuse that comes from both other students and school officials.

There was discussion around

homeschooling, language nests, programs out on the land, and bringing Aboriginal cultural practices into schools, or even establishing Aboriginal schools, as approaches that could also help.

Celina Cada-Matasawagon, who teaches at an urban Aboriginal alternative high school program in Ottawa, was brought close to tears talking about how Idle No More activities led some of her students to lose their academic year. Her concern was for the students keeping their personal responsibility as a better path to longer-term collective success.

Serpent River Chief Isadore Day was moved to share his personal story of how taking on so much collective responsibility had made him sick on many levels, and how he had to back up and take care of himself first.

The importance of working where we have the most influence, on our own lives, and then what we can do as communities, and then outwards to nations and then internationally, was Simpson's interpretation of how we go about fulfilling the treaty responsibility

we each have, represented by the wampum belt Day brought to the event.

There were a lot of heavy topics through the two hours of the panel, but there was a good deal of humour that kept the mood balanced. The tone was set by McMahon's 20 minute pre-panel monologue. While covering some serious subject matter, he also took time to get some joking in.

He poked fun at the timing of Idle No More saying, 'we had all summer to plan everything, we could've went out there in shorts and T-shirts,' but instead it was, 'it's 30 below, let's get out there!'

He also made a big announcement during his monologue; the Red Man Laughing podcast is set to become a show on CBC radio starting later this year. The podcast has been running for the past two-and-a-half years, with a mix of humour and serious conversation, and this will now be reaching a wider audience through CBC.

Readers can hear the full podcast of the panel at RedManLaughing.com, or the video is available at Niigaan.ca

Health Watch

Nunavut to hold inquest into suicides

Padma Suramala, a registered nurse and Nunavut's chief coroner, has called for an inquest into the overwhelmingly high rate of suicide in the territory, after 45 people took their own lives in 2013 — the highest number of annual suicides since the territory's creation in 1999. Suramala announced the inquest at a news conference on Jan. 16 in Iqaluit. She plans to convene a jury of six people to examine two or three of the 2013 deaths, selected at random from the 45 suicides, the youngest being an 11-year-old boy in Repulse Bay and the oldest was 72. "We would like to highlight the risk factors and the warning signs, raise public awareness and make recommendations on how to prevent these preventable deaths," Suramala told CMAJ. The majority of those who killed themselves in the territory last year were young men between the ages of 15 and 25. Males accounted for 33 of the suicides. Given Nunavut's small population of approximately 31 000, the deaths have a devastating impact on communities, from the family and friends of those who die to front-line workers.

Sinclair inquest moves onto waiting times in ER

The inquest into the death of Brian Sinclair, an Aboriginal man who waited 34 hours in the emergency room at Winnipeg's Health Sciences Centre in September 2008, has now moved into the next phase, which is the broader subject of hospital overcrowding and delays. Sinclair, a double-amputee, had been viewed by staff as a homeless person seeking shelter and was left unattended despite his deteriorating health status. Sinclair's family wants the inquest, led by Judge Tim Preston, to examine the racism that led to lack of care. However, Preston says his mandate does not include that aspect but instead is to look at the delays in the waiting room and what can be done to remedy the situation. The inquest is scheduled to resume sitting Feb. 18 for two weeks and then for another week in June before it wraps up. The inquest began in the summer and has sat periodically since then.

MN-S launch youth suicide prevention program

Métis Nation-Saskatchewan has launched a blue ribbon campaign aimed at training trainers to help prevent suicide amongst Métis youth. "This program has been created to support the unique needs of our Métis communities and expands the capacity that already exists," said Sandra Youngchief, interim director of MN-S Health, in a news release. A training manual and tool kit has been developed as the vehicles for taking the program into communities and raising awareness around the issue of youth suicide. A blue ribbon will represent the campaign and be distributed to raise awareness of the program and its goals. Suicide rates have been identified as one of the top priorities in the Métis Health and Well Being Strategy.

Needs of homeless Inuit addressed with service point expansion

The first service point for the homeless has been expanded to five downtown metro stations in Montreal for a three-year period. Positive results of Phase 1, which was launched in December 2012, led to the extension of this service. Expanding the service points for the homeless will bolster the support provided to people living on the street. "Homelessness among Inuit living in the city is one of the serious consequences of the housing crisis in Nunavik and one that calls for immediate special attention," said Jobie Tukkiapiik, Makivik's president, in a news release. Makivik is one of the partners in this extension of services. "We plan to continue implementing the strategy aimed at preventing Inuit homelessness in Montreal."

Baseline report for cancer in First Nations

The recently released First Nations Cancer Control in Canada Baseline Report provides a baseline against which progress can be measured over the coming years. It also looks at the patient experience from screening and diagnosis through to survivorship or palliative care, as well as challenges experienced by First Nations patients through their cancer journey. "First Nations view health from a holistic perspective, so when we are presented with a problem, we look at it using many different lenses," said Dr. Evan Adams, board member for the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, in a news release. In 2014, the partnership will release separate baseline reports for the Inuit and Métis baseline which will further examine emerging priorities for action among these communities. The majority of information within the series of baseline reports for First Nations, Inuit and Métis cancer control are sourced from environmental scans completed in 2012.

Compiled by Shari Narine

By Sam Laskaris

Oshie cracks U.S. team

While Carey Price will be doing his best to prevent goals for the Canadian men's Olympic hockey team, another Native player will be trying to score as many goals as possible for his side.

T.J. Oshie, who is part Ojibwe, will suit up for the American team in Sochi. Oshie is a 27-year-old forward with the St. Louis Blues. He's in his sixth NHL campaign and is having a stellar season.

Oshie was second in team scoring after 51 games as he had collected 42 points (12 goals, 30 assists). Oshie, who grew up in Everett, Washington, starred at the University of North Dakota before turning pro in 2008.

He had been selected in the first round, 24th over-all, by St. Louis in the 2005 NHL Entry Draft.

Like Price, this will mark the first time Oshie will compete in the Olympics. He had previously represented the U.S. at the 2006 World Junior Championships as well as the global men's tournaments in 2009, 2010 and 2012.

Brocket Rocket in Austria

Colton Yellow Horn is now starring overseas in the country where he launched his professional hockey career. Yellow Horn, who is from Brocket, Alta. and is nicknamed the Brocket Rocket, is playing for Szekeshfehervar Alba Volan, a club in Austria's pro league.

Yellow Horn, a Blackfoot from the Piikani First Nation, was averaging almost a point per game with the team. He had earned 34 points (14 goals, 20 assists) in his first 35 matches.

This isn't the first time, however, that Yellow Horn has ventured to Austria to play hockey. After finishing off his junior career with the Western Hockey League's Tri-City Americans, based in the state of Washington, Yellow Horn opted to head overseas for his first pro season.

But he only spent 11 games with Austria's Salzburg EC before returning to North America, where he joined the Elmira Jackals, members of the East Coast Hockey League.

Yellow Horn, who is now in his sixth season as a pro, returned to Austria following a stellar campaign last year. During the 2012-13 season, he split his time between the ECHL's Ontario Reign, a California-based squad, and the American Hockey League's Manchester Monarchs.

Yellow Horn had 58 points, including 36 goals, in 48 contests with the Reign. He also racked up 18 points, including six goals, in 28 matches with the New Hampshire-based Monarchs. Last year marked the first time Yellow Horn played in the AHL, considered one step below the National Hockey League.

During his pro career Yellow Horn has also suited up for the ECHL's Stockton Thunder, as well as the Central Hockey League's Allen Americans.

Hoops tournament

One of the country's longest running tournaments will once again be held in Prince Rupert, B.C.

The 55th annual All Native Basketball Tournament will run from Feb. 9 to Feb. 15. More than 50 teams from across British Columbia are expected to take part in the event.

The tournament features four divisions; senior men, women's, intermediate men (22 and under) and masters (35 and over). The event's popularity is evidenced by the fact there's even a qualifying tournament, which was held this past November, to get into the main February festivities.

Redden retires

Since a phone call he was waiting for never materialized, Wade Redden opted to end his National Hockey League career in early January. Redden, who is Métis, announced his retirement on Jan. 9.

The 36-year-old, who is from Lloydminster, Sask., was an unrestricted free agent. He had been hoping to ink a deal with any team this season but no offers materialized.

Redden appeared in 1,129 NHL contests during his career. He spent the majority of his career, 11 seasons, with the Ottawa Senators. He also had stints with the New York Rangers, St. Louis Blues and Boston Bruins.

Some thought Redden's NHL days were over a few years ago after the Rangers sent him to the minors.

Redden played two seasons with the Rangers' minor league affiliate in the American Hockey League, but he resurfaced into the NHL last year. After being waived by the Rangers in January, when the shortened NHL season began, Redden inked a deal with St. Louis.

He appeared in 23 games with the Blues before being traded to Boston in early April. He appeared in six regular season contests and five playoff matches with the Bruins.

Redden was obviously hoping a club from the NHL would be keen to add a veteran such as himself to its roster this season, but with no such interest forthcoming he opted to hang up his blades in January.

Aboriginals represent on Canada's Olympic teams



PHOTO: CANADA-SNOWBOARD

Canadian Olympian Spencer O'Brien competes at a World Cup event at Copper Mountain

By Sam Laskaris
Windspeaker Contributor

The Canadian contingent at the Sochi Winter Olympics will include four Native athletes.

Among those that will be looking for some hardware at the Games, which are scheduled for Feb. 7 to Feb. 23 in Russia, will be Carey Price, Jesse Cockney, Caroline Calve and Spencer O'Brien.

Price is probably the most recognizable name to Canadian sporting fans, currently playing for the Montreal Canadiens of the National Hockey League. He is a goaltender on the men's hockey team.

Cockney is a member of the men's cross-country skiing team. And Calve and O'Brien are both snowboarders.

A closer look at all four of the Canadian Native Olympians follows.

Carey Price

Price, the star goaltender for the Canadiens, is a member of British Columbia's Ulkatcho First Nation. In fact, his mother Lynda is a former chief of the First Nation.

Price, 26, was born in Anahim Lake, B.C. He started to make a name for himself while playing for the Western Hockey League's Tri-City Americans.

His stellar junior play convinced the Canadiens' brass to select him in the first round, fifth over-all, in the 2005 NHL Entry Draft.

Price, who is now in his seventh pro season, has participated in three NHL all-star games, in 2009, 2011 and 2012.

As his Olympic team selection would indicate, Price is also having an impressive campaign with the Canadiens this season. He had a 22-16-4 record and a 2.50 goals-against average in his first 42 appearances.

Price will be making his Olympic debut in Sochi. But he previously represented his country in the junior ranks.

He backstopped Canada to a gold medal at the 2007 World Junior Championships. He also won a silver medal at the world under-18 tourney in 2005.

Jesse Cockney

Cockney, 24, is an Inuit from Yellowknife who will also be making his Olympic debut in Sochi.

Though he was born in the Northwest Territories, Cockney now lives in Canmore, Alta.

He is one of 11 members that have been named to the Canadian cross-country skiing team.

It's only natural that Cockney took to the sport. His father Angus was also an accomplished cross-country skier.

Cockney started skiing at the age of three. He continued with the sport when his family moved to Canmore when he was seven.

Not many insiders of the sport are surprised that Cockney has made it to the Olympic stage.

Many were predicting he'd graduate and star for the national team, especially after he won four medals (three gold, one bronze) at the 2011 Canada Winter Games, which were held in Halifax.

Cockney, a member of the Foothills Nordic Ski Club, is now also in his third season with the Canadian senior team.

Caroline Calve

Calve, who was born in Hull, Que., is the lone Native athlete on this year's Canadian team that already has some previous Olympic experience.

The 35-year-old also participated at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. She placed 20th at the parallel giant slalom event at those Games.

As for this year, Calve, who has

some Algonquin ancestry, will have two chances at capturing an Olympic medal. Besides the parallel giant slalom race she'll also compete in the parallel slalom event, which has been added to the Olympic program.

Since her first Olympic appearance Calve has had numerous impressive international results. As a result she is considered a medal contender in Sochi.

In December of 2011 she made a bit of history, becoming the first Canadian female snowboarder to win a World Cup giant parallel slalom event in Italy.

Calve, who has been a competitive snowboarder since the age of 22, also won a gold medal at a World Cup event in Moscow this past February.

Spencer O'Brien

O'Brien, a 23-year-old who was born in Alert Bay, B.C., is also considered a medal contender in Sochi. She's regarded as one of the world's best female slopestyle snowboarders.

The slopestyle event will make its Olympic debut in Sochi.

O'Brien, who has Haida/Kwakwaka'wakw heritage, started snowboarding at the age of 11.

In the early portions of her snowboarding career she competed in the halfpipe events.

Later on she fell in love with the slopestyle event. But it's not as if she's aspired to become an Olympian in that discipline for numerous years.

It was only in July of 2011 that the International Olympic Committee decided to include the slopestyle discipline for the Sochi Olympics.

The fact she's racked up numerous medals in prestigious slopestyle events during the past few years makes O'Brien a competitor to keep an eye on in Sochi.

[careers & training] New education dollars a good first step

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

SASKATOON

The \$3 million recently allocated by the provincial government to meet First Nations and Metis education goals, established by a joint task force on Aboriginal education, will be equalled in 2014-2015.

"In the new fiscal year there will be a new \$3 million in place ... certainly recognizing that the joint task force talked about an ongoing response and that will absolutely be part of the discussions moving forward," said Greg Miller, assistant deputy minister with Saskatchewan Education.

Bobby Cameron, vice-chief and education portfolio holder for the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, said this money, the largest amount to date that the province has announced in one-shot to address Aboriginal education, is only the start of what is needed.

"The \$3 million that they invested is something, but we still have a long ways ahead of us in terms of making sure our First Nations students are on par in terms of graduation rates and employment rates and all that other good stuff," he said.

However, both Cameron and Miller are adamant that provincial dollars going directly to on-reserve schools do not mean the federal government can relinquish its responsibility.

"I've already heard that maybe these program dollars are a way of off-loading the federal responsibility to the province," said Cameron, "but the focus for FSIN ... will always be the treaty and inherent right to education." Those treaties were signed with the Crown.

First Nations organizations have long claimed that the federal government funds on-reserve students at a much lower rate than



PHOTO: SUBMITTED

FSIN Vice-chief Bobby Cameron

their provincial counterparts.

Miller sees the money his government gives to on-reserve students as a way to support all Saskatchewan students.

"The federal government is still responsible for funding on-reserve schools. What we're doing here is to continue to develop partnership between provincial schools and First Nations to offer programming and support for Saskatchewan students," he said. "We're really trying to take this from a student-first perspective."

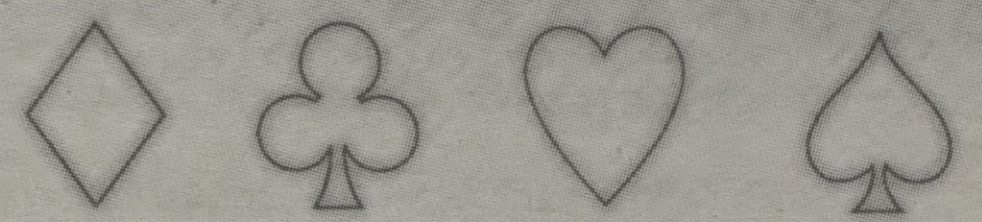
Miller adds that the province will continue its dialogue with its federal counterparts to address the "support of students in federal schools." He also says the province will not be putting money into capital projects on-reserve.

Cameron said the FSIN will continue to talk to Canada's Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt, addressing concerns with the First Nations Education Act.

"We need a commitment in writing from the federal government and the Treasury Board of Canada saying here is what our First Nations students in Canada are going to get per year ... We need to see in writing, as well the commitment that each chief and council, along with their band membership, have full control and authority and jurisdiction when it comes to the on-reserve school system," he said.

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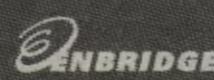
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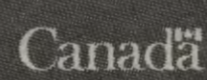
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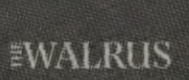
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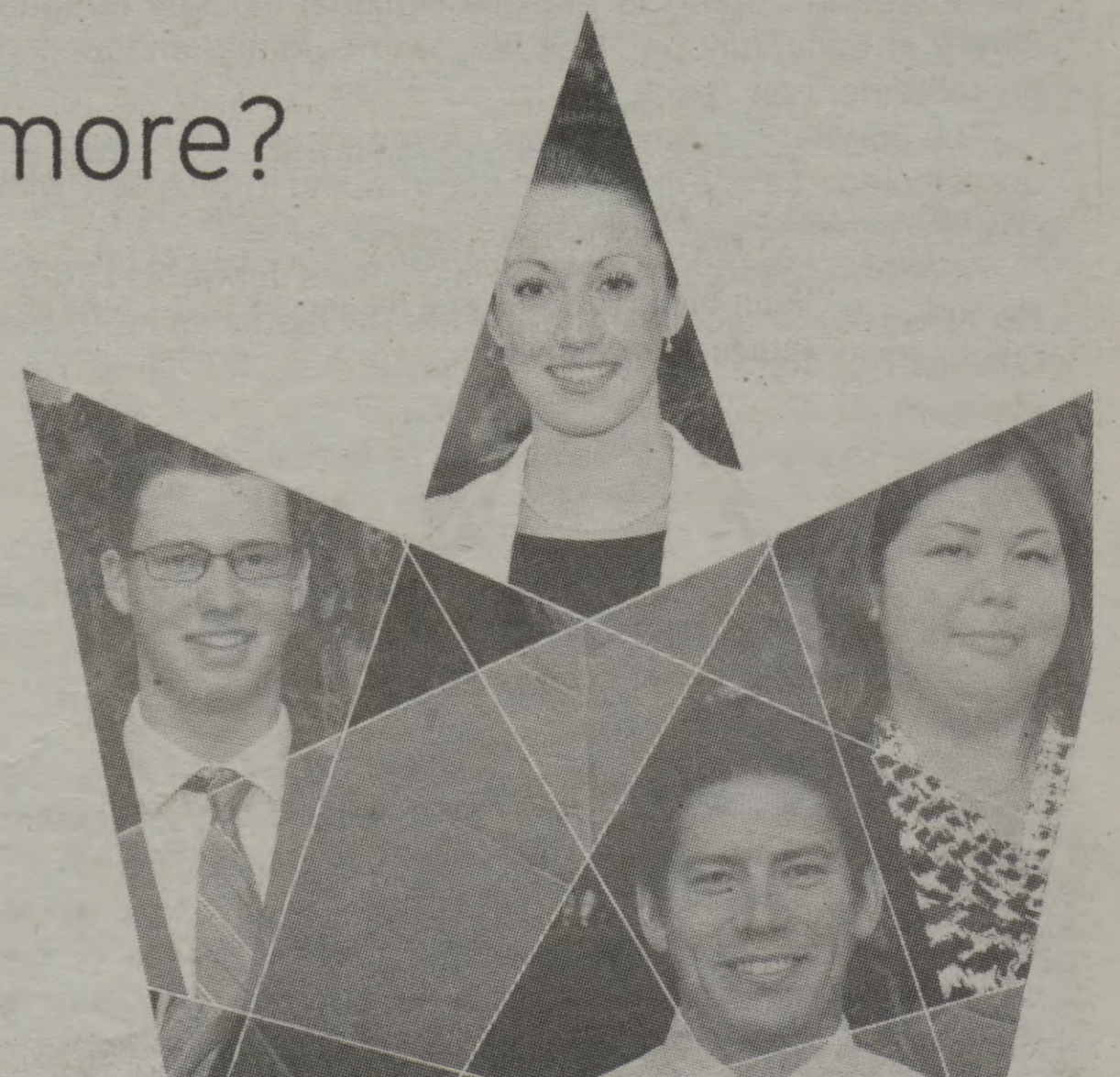
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\$18,000 to \$20,000 per student commitment from the federal government.

Of the money recently allocated by the province, half will be used for an Invitational Shared Services initiative to provide students and teachers in on-reserve schools with the same supports available in provincial schools. The other half will expand the Help Me Tell My Story program, which will re-engage parents and Elders in the oral language development and education of children.

Culture and language remain high priorities with First Nations, something that was recognized among the recommendations included in the joint task force's final report, which was submitted April 2013.

Late last year, the province began taking action in response to the task force's recommendations, which included increasing Adult Basic Education spaces, expanding

child care and pre-kindergarten spaces, and ensuring driver education is available to on-reserve high school students. The government is also working with the FSIN to support the costs for First Nations' schools to access the provincial pre-kindergarten to Grade 12 Microsoft Licensing Agreement.

Moving forward the allocation of the new \$3 million will be determined in partnership with First Nations organizations and provincial schools, said Miller.

"This is just the tip of the iceberg and we're certainly pushing for more action in terms of program dollars being committed to our First Nation students and reserves across Saskatchewan," said Cameron.

The provincial government also announced in January that it was investing \$50 million into First Nations and Métis post-secondary education and training through 2013-14.

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[footprints] Charlie Hill

Veteran comedian explored racial divide

By Dianne Meili

Fans of comedian Charlie Hill wished him a good journey into the spirit world and imagined the impact of his razor-wit on 'the other side'.

"Nelson Mandela has a front row seat at Charlie's first stand-up show in heaven" posted one Facebook supporter, while another claimed "God is slapping his knee at Charlie's jokes as we speak."

Here on earth, signage in front of the famous Laugh Factory in Los Angeles where the comic often performed read "Charlie Hill, Rest in Peace, Make God Laugh".

Designing the blueprint for today's Indigenous comedians, the comedy legend remained one of the best over his decades-long career. Battling lymphoma cancer for a year, he succumbed to it on Dec. 30, 2013.

"He broke all the barriers," said Winnipeg comedian Don Burnstick, 18 years in the business himself. "I think there's about 60 of us out there doing (Aboriginal) comedy now and it if wasn't for Charlie Hill, we wouldn't have a career."

"Just like Redd Fox and Richard Pryor did for black people, Hill did for Indian people. Charlie hung out in Los Angeles in the early days with guys like Pryor, who was so 'on the line' and ahead of his time ... well, it doesn't get any better than that."

As a kid growing up in Oneida, Wisconsin, Hill wrote down the jokes of classic television comedians like Jackie Gleason and Red Skelton. Hitting Los Angeles in the mid-seventies, he watched other stand-ups perform before eventually stepping onto the stage himself. He impressed Richard Pryor enough to be invited to guest on the top entertainer's show in 1977. In iconic footage from The Richard Pryor Show, a slight, innocent-looking Hill with long, wavy hair, slings zingers like 'I'm Oneida ... we're originally from

New York but there was a real estate problem' and 'I know for a long time you white people didn't think Indians had a sense of humour. Well, we didn't think you were too funny either.'

Hill once told an interviewer that Pryor advised 'whatever hurts you the most, talk about it and it'll be your funniest comedy'. Encouraged, the protégé merrily attacked the racial divide with insightful, autobiographic jokes to make his audiences think, all the while laughing out loud.

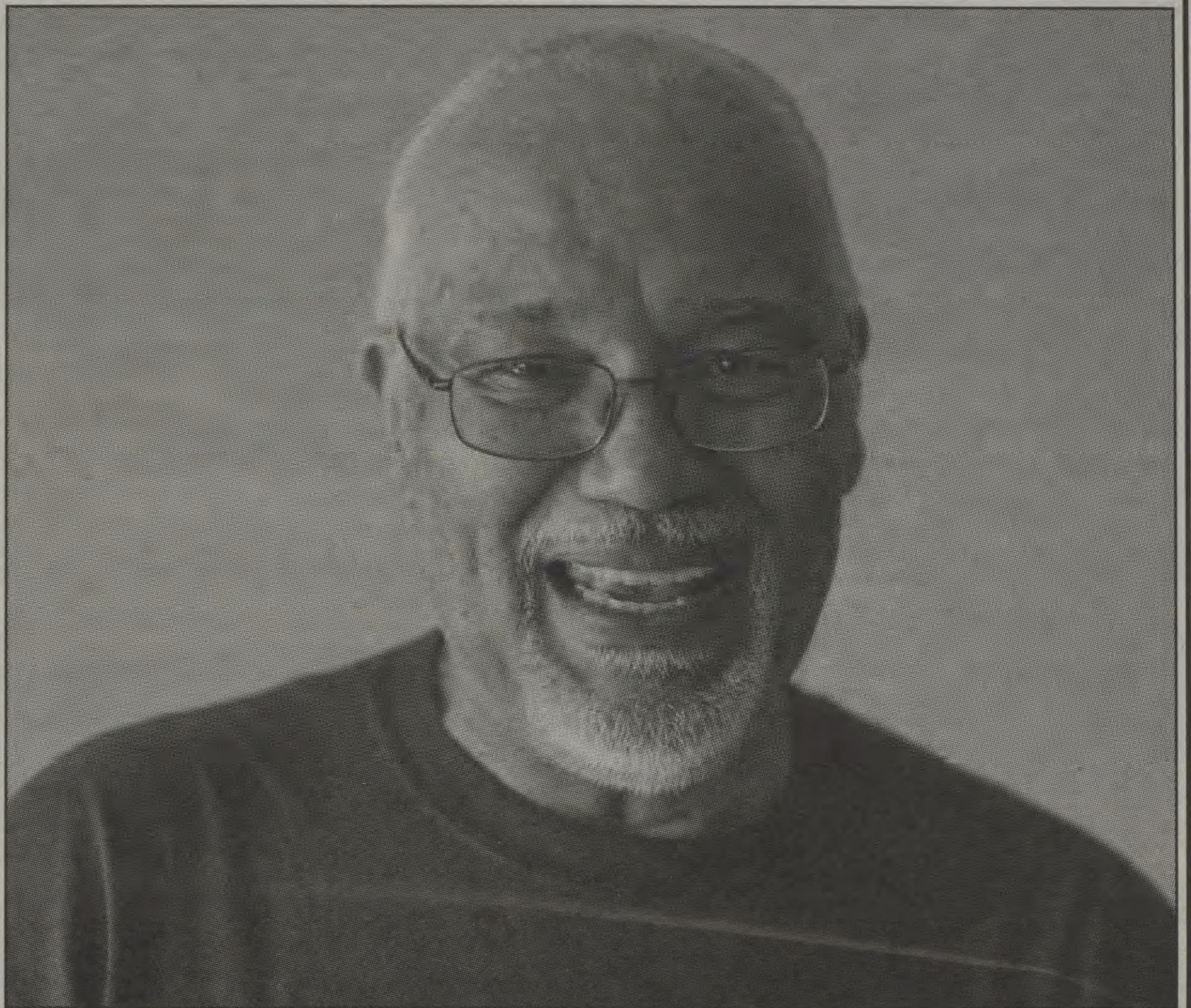
"What I do, I don't really call 'Indian humor'," Hill said, quoted on the Native-Arts Live Journal website. "It's more of a satire. Real Indian humour is something in your community or your home, and the funniest people are maybe your uncle, or a cab driver, or someone on the rez. It's something only people with Indian experience get. It's something that's personal to us. It's something beautiful. Often, I don't like guys who get off-stage and you know nothing about them. You watch Cosby, you learn something about him."

Hill became the darling of television programs like The Tonight Show, Late Night with David Letterman and Merv Griffin. He also wrote for the hit television show Roseanne.

He turned down many roles, standing up against stereotypes and misrepresentation of Aboriginal people.

"Charlie was instrumental in breaking down stereotypes and cultural misnomers about Native Americans in the national spotlight," wrote Ernest L. Stevens, chairman of the National Indian Gaming Association in Washington D.C. His letter appears on the EverRibbon website where The Charlie Hill Fund has been set up to receive donations to help the family offset medical expenses.

"We honour Charlie's memory ... he was always there for us,



Charlie Hill

taking us to a better, happier place, interrupting the mundane and historical bitterness through his comedy. He taught us to heal our generational trauma through the medicine of smiles, belly laughs and humorous insights," Stevens' letter read.

He also shed light on Hill's efforts to empower Native Americans to take their place in the entertainment industry, and that he "carved a path for Native artists and entertainers throughout the Indian gaming industry (in the United States), advocating for the hiring of Indians in Indian casinos and expanding Native-to-Native business relationships."

The funny man called Winnipeg his second home, according to Winnipeg Free Press columnist Don Marks. Marks,

who was the producer of the CTV variety show Indian Time, which featured Hill and the likes of Buffy Sainte Marie, Kashtin, and Tom Jackson, recalled Charlie's parting lines when it was time to leave. 'I'm off to New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, and if I can't find work there, I'll be back here'.

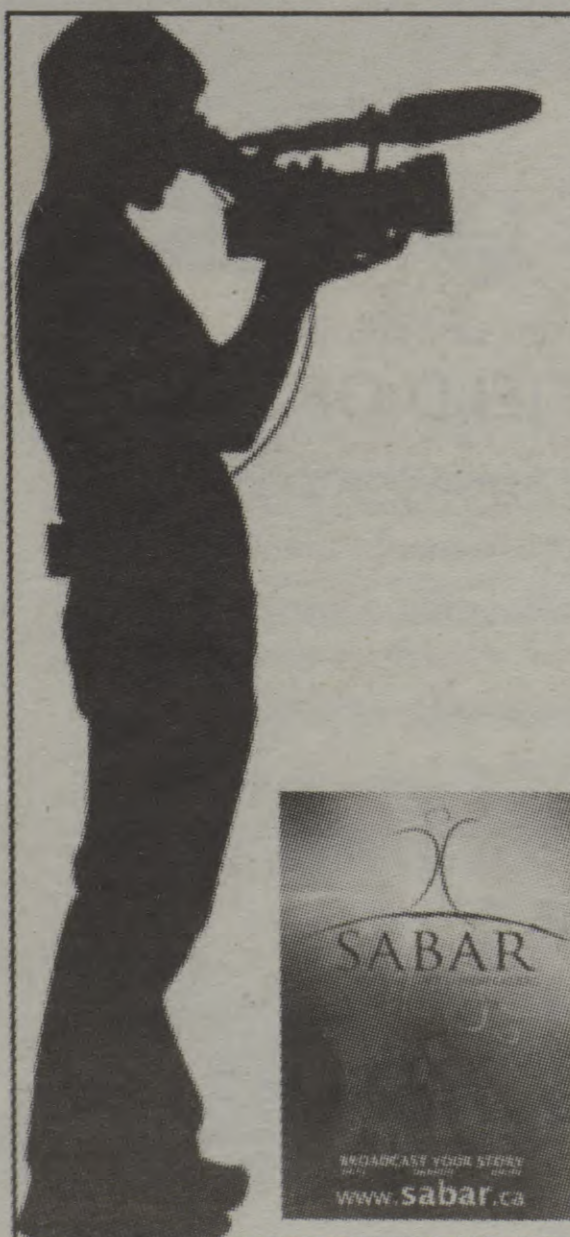
"Charlie's gift of laughter to Winnipeg ... had healing powers," Marks wrote. When humour is combined with insight and enlightenment, it "allows us to laugh at ourselves and others in a spirit of camaraderie and friendship that breaks down barriers. With the way things are between First Nations people and many Canadians, we could use Charlie Hill more than ever."

Hill disliked leaving his wife and four children (whom he referred to as 'Oneida-ho's because

their mother is Navajo) preferring to commute from Wisconsin to Los Angeles for work. Marks wrote that Hill was generous with his time when it came to charity fundraisers, though, travelling to even the smallest of communities to help. Because of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal people in jails, he also devoted much of his time to performing in penitentiaries, joking that he did so because he enjoyed a "captive audience".

Marks had the chance to speak with Hill as cancer took its toll. The comedian said he was not afraid to die but was "going to miss my family and friends a lot."

"Not as much as we'll miss him," Marks concluded, speaking for many.



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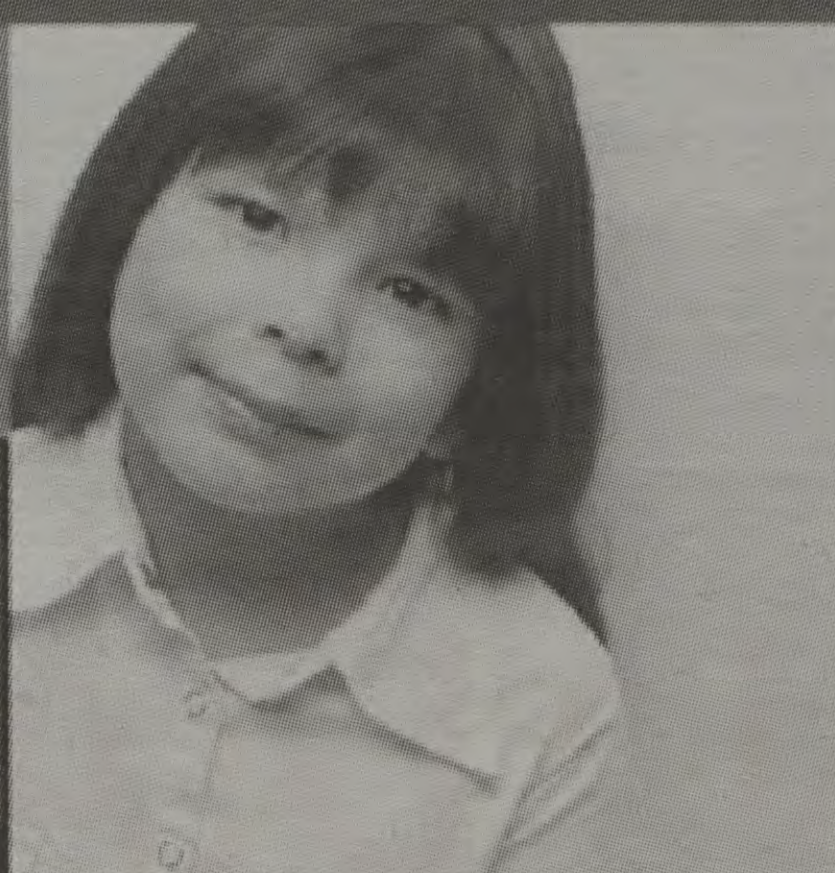
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