

# Wind speaker



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**Stand united,  
and stand firm,  
said Atleo  
Page 8**

**Catholic Church has  
proved difficult to work  
with says healing group  
Page 8**

**Let this window serve  
as a reminder of the  
consequences  
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Volume 30 No. 10 • January 2013

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Windspeaker • Established 1983



## Idle No More

First Nations in the country have reached the end of their patience. That was noticeably evident during what's being called the 'Scuffle on the Hill' on Dec. 4, 2012 as several chiefs went to Parliament Hill to voice their concerns regarding Bill C-45. Less than a week later on Dec. 10, 2012 many grassroots events were held across Canada to draw attention to the growing frustration. These peaceful events which have continued since are part of the Idle No More movement designed to engage Canadians and put pressure on the Harper government

Please see more photos and coverage on pages 20 and 21.

Photo by Brad Crowfoot

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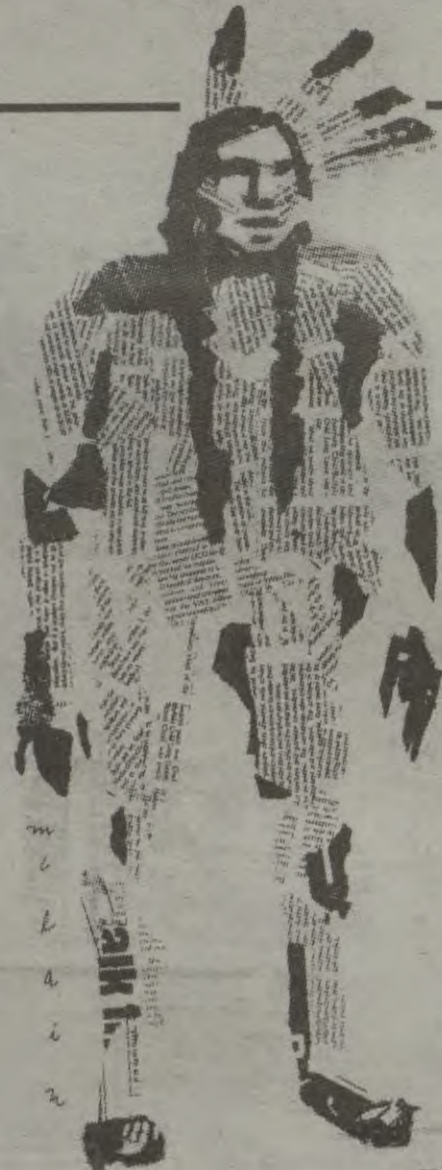


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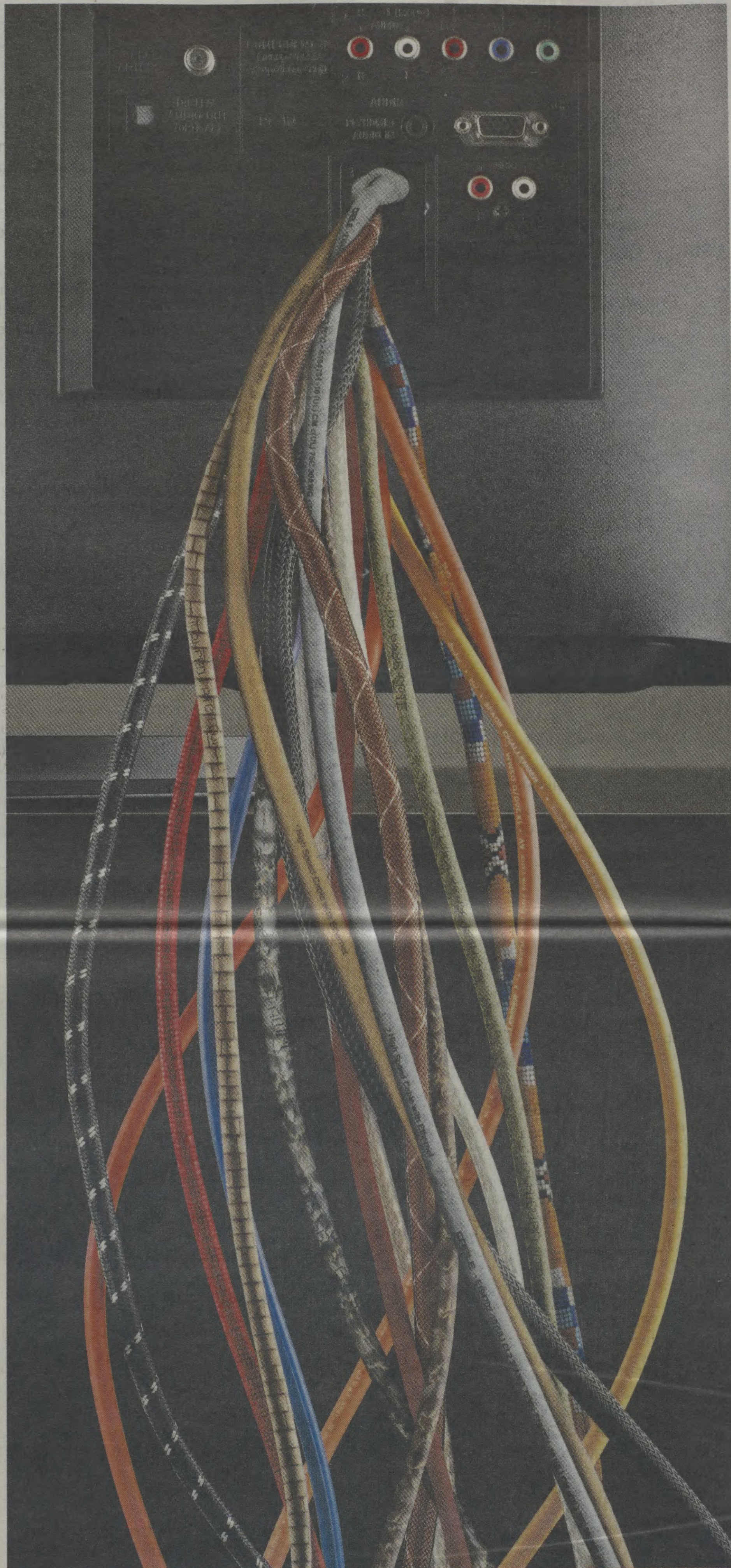
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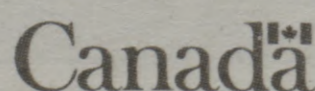
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An Alberta lawyer and an Ontario economics professor are saying First Nations have more control over revenue resource sharing than they may be aware of.

### Stand united, and stand firm, said Atleo 8

Chiefs from the Assembly of First Nations have voted unanimously to "put the government of Canada on notice." The words may have been borrowed from a resolution passed by the Chiefs of Ontario, but the sentiment is shared.

### Kinnie Starr to independently release new album 'Kiss It' 10

Juno-winning musician and producer Alida Kinnie Starr is set to release her new album in mid-January, following an intensive Indiegogo fundraising campaign to independently fund 'Kiss It'.

### Electro cellist Cris Derksen 'pow-wow-wows' with creative blend 11

Cellist Cris Derksen might just have become the second Aboriginal in space. And while she might not have literally travelled off the planet—as Chickasaw astronaut John Herrington did a decade ago—the electronically savvy, classically-trained instrumentalist was nominated for a 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Award (APCMA) for her outer space-themed video 'Pow Wow Wow,' created by filmmaker Lisa Jackson.

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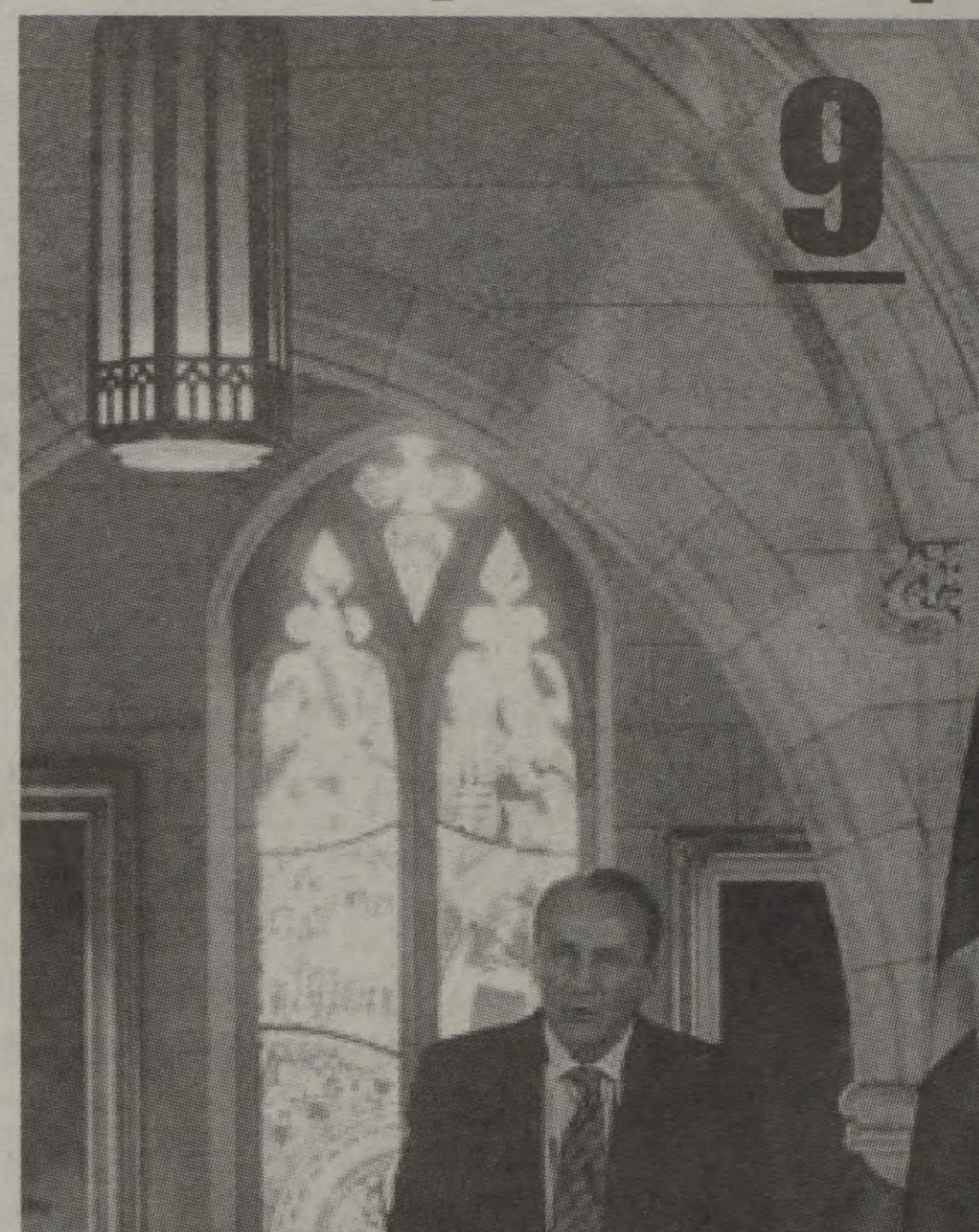
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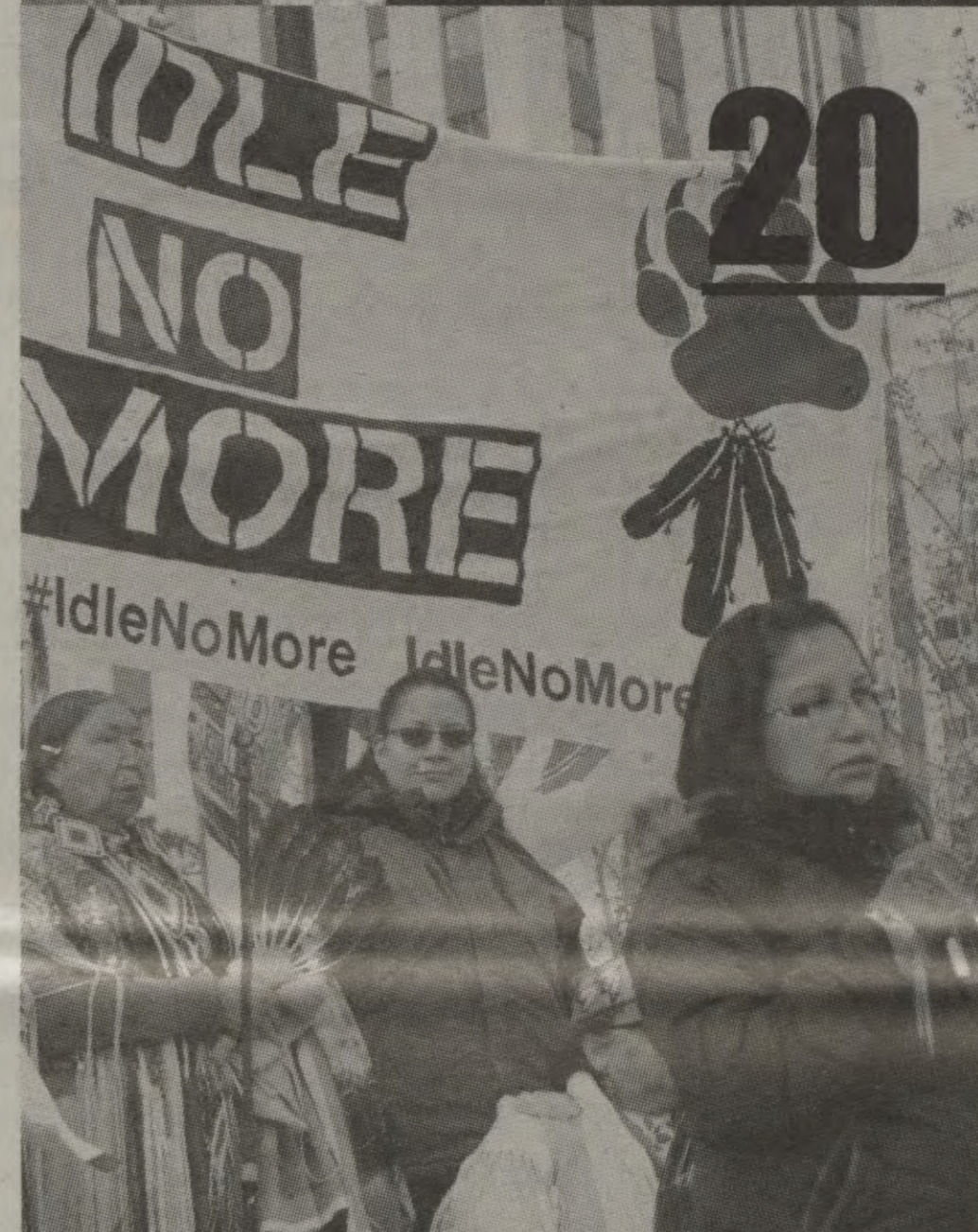
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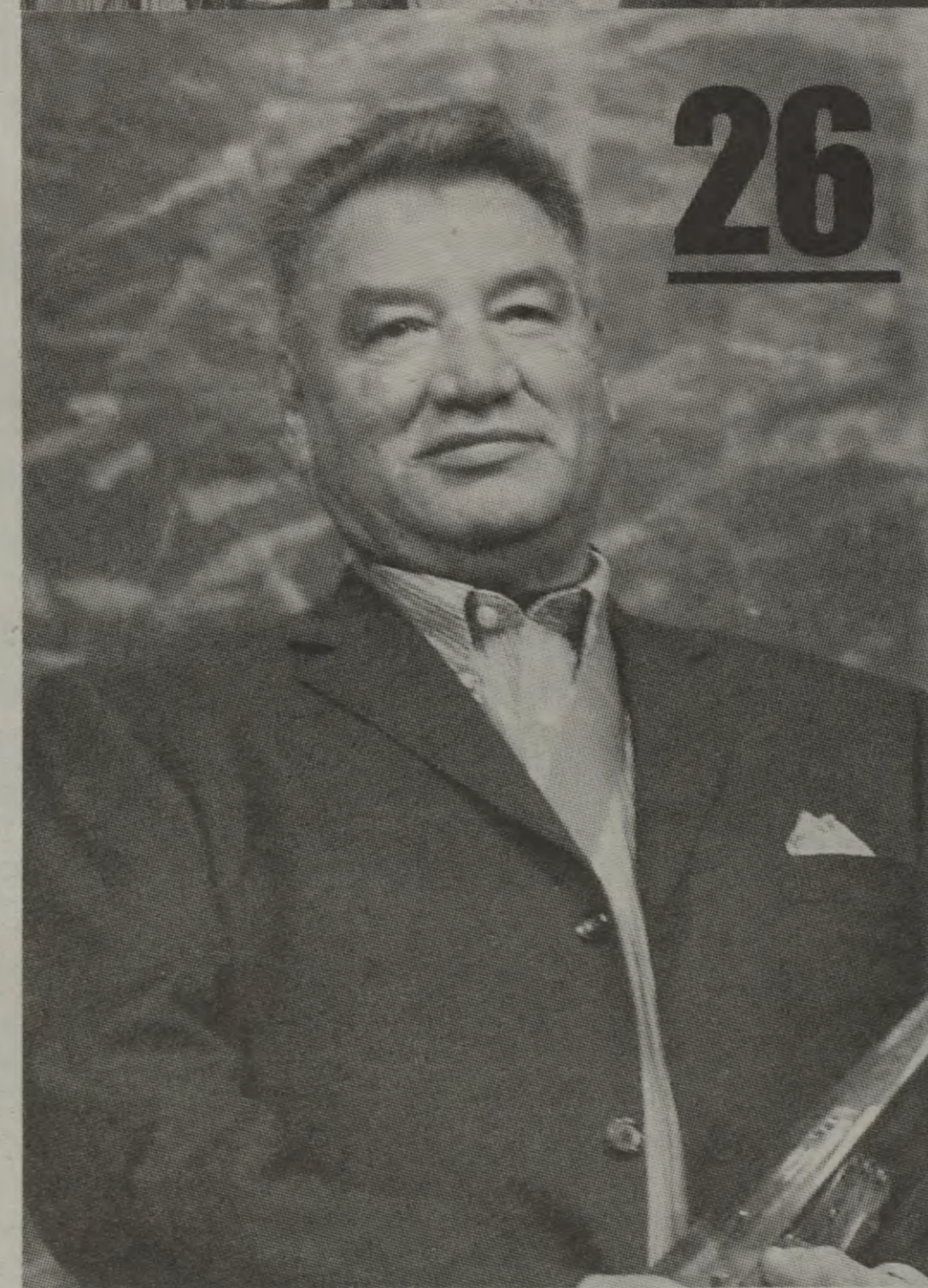
The man responsible for Métis being entrenched in section 35 of the Canadian Constitution passed away Nov. 9 after working half a decade for Aboriginal rights.



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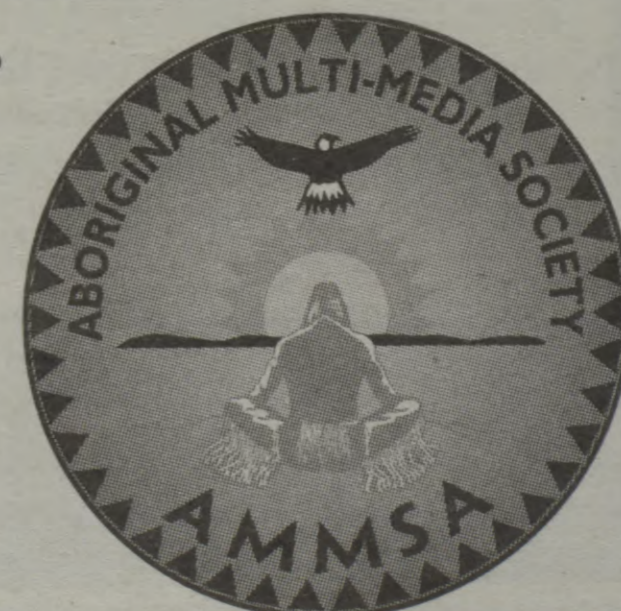


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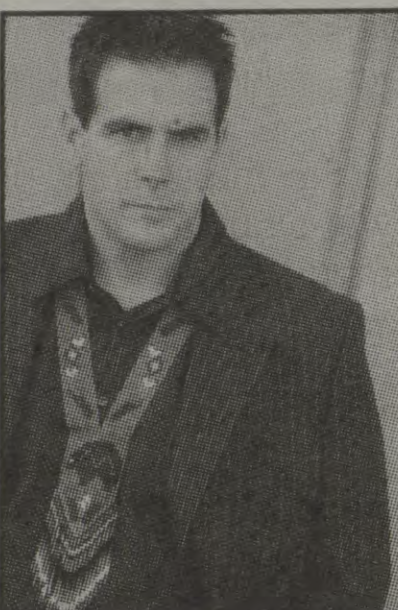
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## Calling on some substance from the PM

If you are in charge Prime Minister Stephen Harper, step up. You can no longer stand behind an ineffectual minister of Aboriginal Affairs while you, the great and powerful Oz, hide behind the curtain making all the slick decisions that have got us to this place. It's time to look out and see what you have done.

You are responsible for the embarrassing depths that Canada's relationship with Aboriginal people has degenerated to. Your words have been untrue, and your actions contemptible. Come out from your hiding place and face the throngs of 'regular Indians' who choose to challenge your 'mean and aggressive' agenda. Look out and survey the results of your work.

No, we're not just talking about the results of the last year, as we approach the anniversary of the Crown/First Nations Gathering and the disappointment that has followed from that day when you were so anxious to get away. No, this downhill slide has been a constant since your government came to power and dismissed the efforts that culminated in the Kelowna Accord.

You remember that agreement that would have seen investments and improvements in education, employment, and living conditions for Aboriginal peoples. Seems like such a long time ago, but really only since 2006 when you dismissed the work that resulted from cooperation and consultation.

Where could we be today if you had acted on those promises? Not here. Not with grassroots people protesting in the streets. Not with a lovely northern chief who you have treated so shabbily putting her health at risk through a hunger strike because you refuse to listen and hear. All she wants is to lift her community and others out of suffering. That's a good thing. But she is crying. Not for herself, though she is putting her physical self through life-altering stress. She cries for the pain her people are experiencing because of you.

In 2008 you delivered some important words about the residential schools and the legacy of government policies that worked so horrifically against First Peoples, but you have not taken the spirit of those words into your heart. You said Canada wanted a new relationship between Aboriginal peoples and Canadians, one based on respect for each other "and a desire to move forward together with a renewed understanding that strong families, strong communities and vibrant cultures and traditions will contribute to a stronger Canada for all

of us."

Come out from behind your closed door Prime Minister and see if this is the relationship that was envisioned. It's not what we thought would be the future.

Your words and their meanings are running counter to your deeds Prime Minister. Let's take the word consultation, for example. This word seems to confound you. Joe Oliver, your minister of dismantled environmental protection, used it in discussions with Chief Wallace Fox on the threshold of the House of Commons just before the 'scuffle on the Hill.' He said there had been thousands of consultations happening across the country with First Nations people, and yet the frustrations of chiefs overflow, and the citizens of their communities have their fists raised as they block highways and bridges and demonstrate across this land. You may be talking Prime Minister, but you are not hearing. Both need to occur before consultation has been achieved.

Chief Fox asked a question before Minister Oliver ran back to the protection of your house on that day.

"Why is government policy and legislation always wanting us to surrender..." Fox asked.

"What we are looking for is an equal... a partnership," Oliver told Chief Fox. Equal is hardly a word that should come from anyone who sits with you Prime Minister. You have placed yourself on top and directed your minions to unfold your will before us. This is not the respect one would expect from peoples who are equal. A partner does not dictate his will on the other. Prime Minister, you are making a mockery of your own words that seemed so sincere in 2008. We cried together on that day, and there was hope and optimism as you purported to turn the page.

We remember from that time getting a question from a non-Native student living in Ontario who asked, shouldn't an apology be enough? That's it. This chapter should now be closed. Right?

We thought about how an apology is supposed to work. The moments, days, and years following it should be better somehow, different in a good way. So we told that student that an apology is only as good as the changed behavior it brings. You have not changed Prime Minister. You have brought more legislation and policy that continues to harm our people. #idlenomore is about you, Prime Minister, and you are responsible for what is to come.

It's on you and this will be your legacy.

**Windspeaker**

[ rants and raves ]

## Page 5 Chatter

Just days after Aboriginal Affairs Minister John Duncan dismissed the #idlenomore movement as just a social media event, followers of Pope Benedict XVI enjoyed the pontiff's first ever tweet. Irony can be a scoundrel.

@Pontifex (which means bridge builder in Latin) blessed all souls from his heart and within just minutes 2,000 retweets and replies were sent out in response. Poor John Duncan just doesn't get it. Or, at least, he didn't get it until the soles of shoes started to hit the streets as the #idlenomore movement traveled from virtual space to actual space, taking Canada's establishment by surprise.

For Don Martin on CTV's PowerPlay, the frustrations of thousands of Aboriginal people who went out to protest government legislation and attitude seemed to come 'out of the blue', he said during an interview with Chief Perry Bellegarde. Martin shook his head in wonder as he told his viewers that there was even a hunger strike in progress on the hill. "A fairly grim situation," he described it.

But 'out of the blue' this protest did not come. For anyone engaged in Aboriginal issues, this has been brewing for some time, and what a shame that Canada's media was caught flat-footed, their attention even distracted on that first day of #idlenomore protests by a small, scared monkey who had got loose in an IKEA store in Toronto.

But many others are watching and reading and tweeting, even if Minister Duncan seems to underestimate the power of the social media reach.

@KnerdPaladin (a reverend) wrote "We are killing our First Nations. We are crushing the dreams ... hopes of their children. We must make amends. #IdleNoMore."

@Shaythesalmon spoke out to @pmharper to say "You are shaming and embarrassing all Canadians for your lack of commitment to human rights issues. Smarten up #idlenomore."

@anjichap writes "Treaty Partners see, listen ... dialogue w/you. Harper isn't. What do u do w/a partner like that? I tossed mine out of the house!"

@Mzlotsabearz tweets "We ain't going down without a fight!!"

And the fight is on, with sympathizers and allies joining the fray, even though some would work to hijack the agenda of the movement for their own purposes. One powerful letter came out from the Canadian Postal Workers Union to honor the courage of Chief Theresa Spence as her hunger strike entered a second week. It spoke about the "sadly dishonest and indefensible relationship" the federal government has cultivated with Aboriginal peoples.

Now this latest government is making another kind of attempt "to forever extinguish rights and title to your land while continuing the poverty, illness, homelessness, disappearances of Indigenous women, and imprisonment that it has wrought," the union president writes. "Everyone who identifies as 'Canadian' should be deeply ashamed of this sad performance but shame is not enough. Our organization will not lend our name to that destruction or defend a morally bankrupt government and system. We will not be a party to traumatizing whole populations and can no longer deny or remain silent over the fact the homes of the settlers were built on the ruins of others." Powerful words, and it's good to have such enlightened friends.

@chasing\_drewism writes: "Our numbers may not be large in comparison, but we will educate and utilize what people we have and what people who'll listen. #idlenomore." Because #idlenomore is not "just an Indian thing," writes @WabKinew.

And the beauty of this movement is that it has taken only a short while to go international. There have been solidarity marches in places around the world where you would think might have other concerns to be worried about at this time of year, and Aboriginal people have been thankful.

But at the core of the movement is a concern for a woman who is putting it all on the line for her people. Chief Theresa Spence of Attawapiskat, by her own statements to CBC, is not a part of the #idlenomore movement. She is busy making her protest in a different, most profound, way by making a sacrifice of good health with her hunger strike. She wants a meeting of all the leaders who can work to make changes to the crippling poverty and poor living conditions First Peoples must endure.

@karen\_lb\_rooney writes: 1 brave woman, 1 brave week.

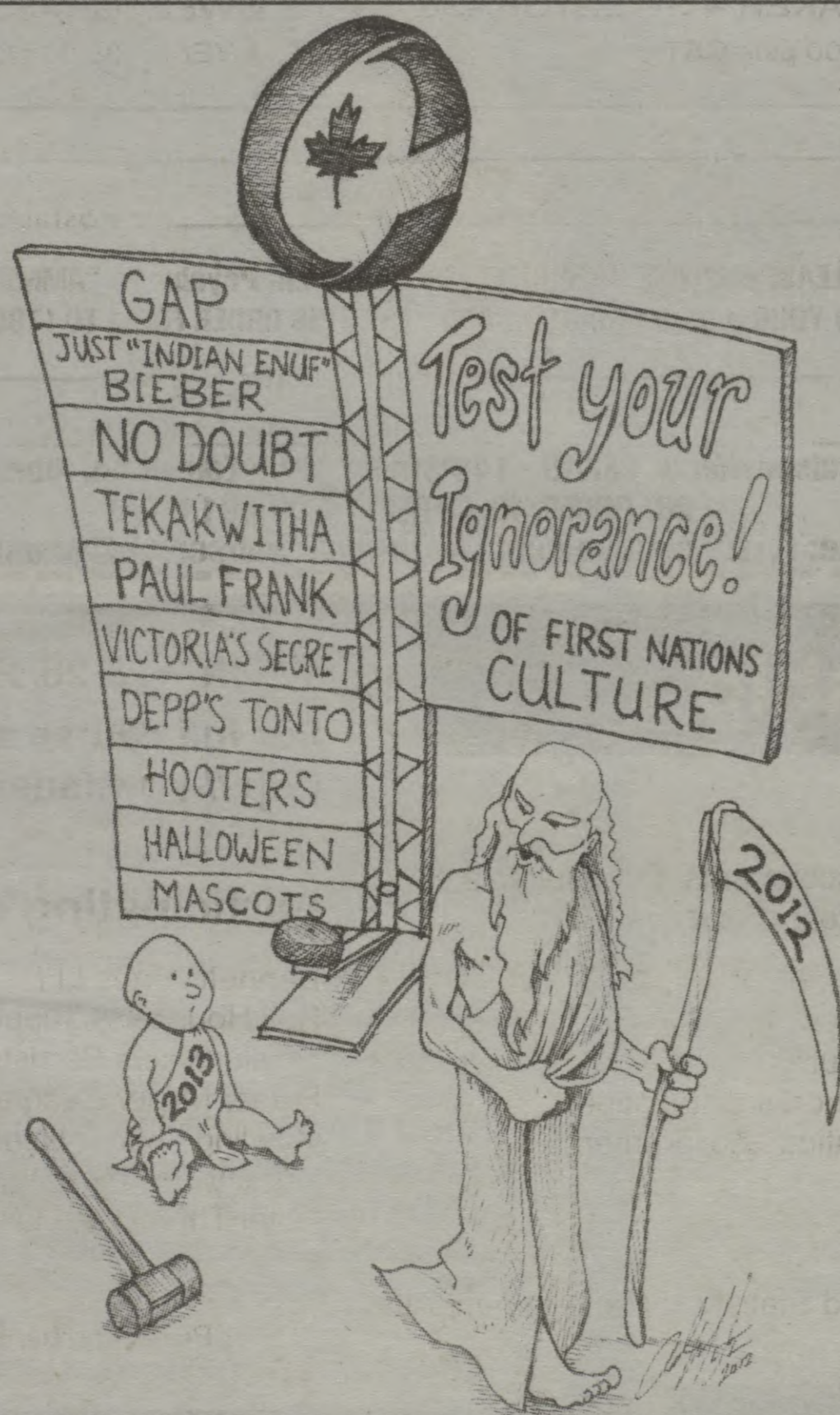
Spence says Prime Minister Stephen Harper isn't communicating the way he should with First Nations. She said he's on a power trip. His take it or leave it approach leaves people in suffering. The Prime Minister needs to listen to what's going on, said Spence from her tepee just steps from the Parliament buildings. "Canadians are willing to work with us," she believes. It's just their government that is "ignorant and disrespectful," she said.

CBC's Adrienne Arseneault finally brought forward the #idlenomore story to the national media after more than a week of silence. She said the movement has a "whiff" of Occupy. "This might just be the beginning of something," she said.

"I am willing to die for my people," said Spence. That's more than a beginning, some would argue.

## Rank Comix

by Adam Martin



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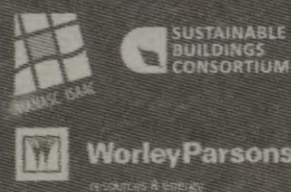
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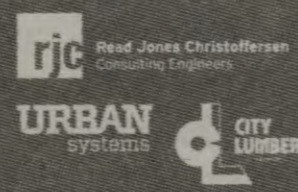
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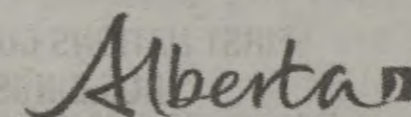
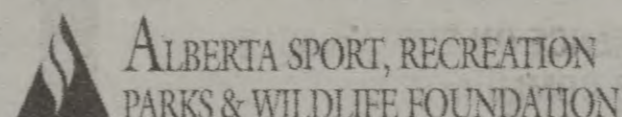
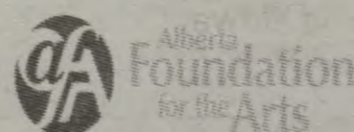
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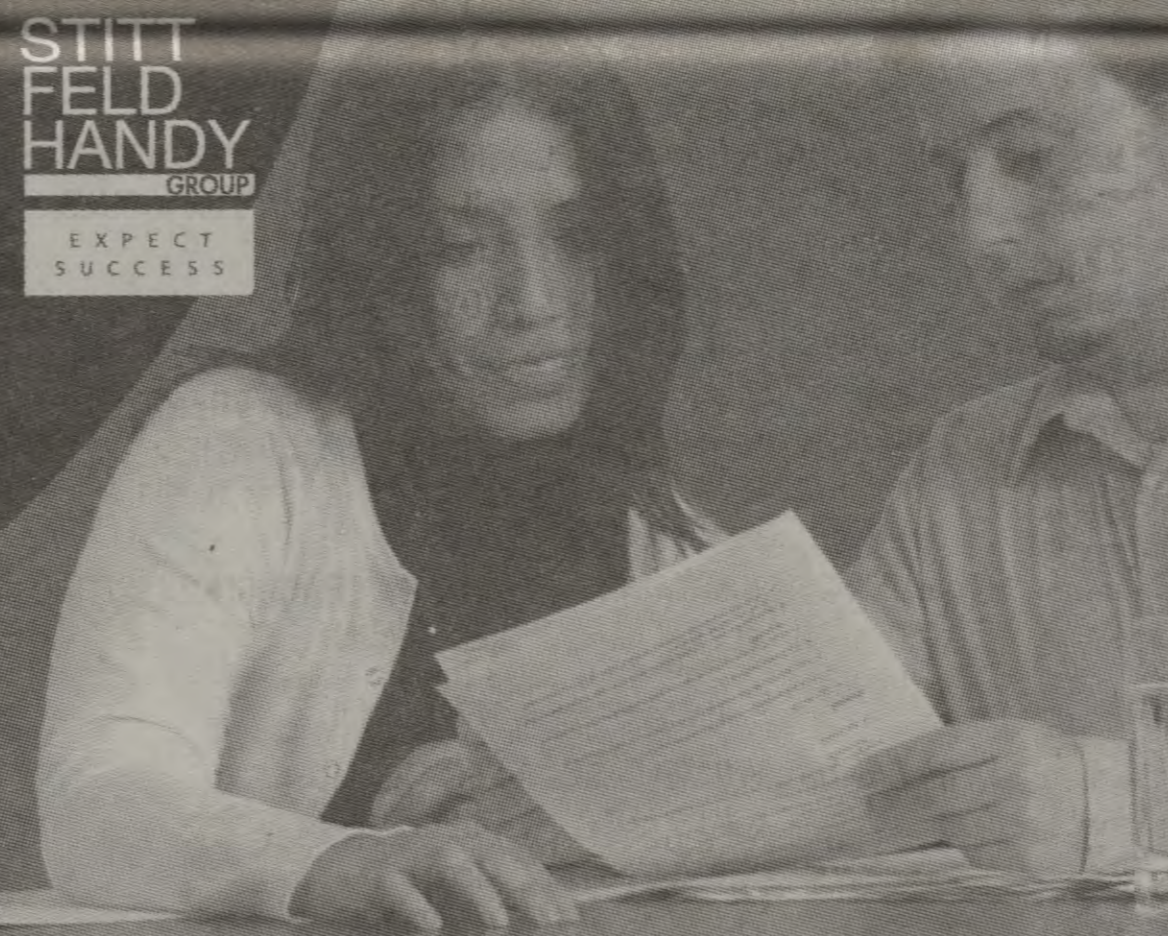
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**PUBLIC HEARING ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) will hold a one-day public hearing on the application by Cameco Corporation (Cameco) to renew its Uranium Mine Construction Licence for the Cigar Lake Operation located in northern Saskatchewan. Cameco has requested a 10-year licence term.

The current licence authorizes Cameco to perform construction activities at their Cigar Lake Operation. Cameco is seeking authorization to complete the final stages of commissioning at the facility, transition into operations, and commence shipping uranium ore slurry to AREVA's McClean Lake Operation.

Hearing: **April 3, 2013**  
Place: Hilton Garden Inn, 90 22nd Street East, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
Time: as set by the agenda published prior to the hearing date

The public hearing will be webcast live on the CNSC Web site and posted for a period of 90 days.

Members of the public who have an interest or expertise in this matter or information that may be useful to the Commission in coming to a decision on the specific matter under consideration are invited to comment, in writing, on Cameco's application. Requests to intervene must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission by **March 4, 2013** directly on-line at <http://www.nuclearsafety.gc.ca/eng/commission/intervention/index.cfm> or at the coordinates below and include: a written submission of the comments to be presented to the Commission; and the name, address and telephone number of the requester.

It should be noted that all submissions are available to the public, upon request to the Secretariat. Personal information, such as address and telephone numbers, is essential for linking the submission to its author. Please submit your personal information on a separate page if you wish to ensure its confidentiality.

Cameco's submission and CNSC staff's recommendations to be considered at the hearing are available after February 1, 2013 from the Secretariat at the address below or directly from the Web site. These documents are not downloadable. Agendas, hearing transcripts and information on the hearing process are available at the CNSC Web site: [nuclearsafety.gc.ca](http://nuclearsafety.gc.ca). Please refer to Notice of Public Hearing 2013-H-01, or contact:

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

Tel.: (613) 996-9063 or 1-800-668-5284  
Fax: (613) 995-5086  
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**PUBLIC HEARING ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) will hold a one-day public hearing to consider Cameco's application to renew, for a period of 10 years, its Waste Facility Operating Licence for the decommissioned Beaverlodge mine site, located in northern Saskatchewan

The proposed 10-year licence term would allow sufficient time to implement the remedial options identified during the current licence term and complete the necessary follow-up monitoring to verify effectiveness of these options. Should the follow-up monitoring demonstrate that conditions are stable or improving, Cameco intends to apply to transfer the properties to the Province of Saskatchewan's Institutional Control Program.

Hearing: **April 4, 2013**  
Place: Hilton Garden Inn, 90 22nd Street East, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
Time: as set by the agenda published prior to the hearing date

The public hearing will be webcast live on the CNSC Web site and posted for a period of 90 days.

Members of the public who have an interest or expertise in this matter or information that may be useful to the Commission in coming to a decision on the specific matter under consideration are invited to comment, in writing, on Cameco's application. Requests to intervene must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission by **March 4, 2013** directly on-line at <http://www.nuclearsafety.gc.ca/eng/commission/intervention/index.cfm> or at the coordinates below and include: a written submission of the comments to be presented to the Commission; and the name, address and telephone number of the requester.

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# Catholic Church has proved difficult to work with, says healing group

By Shari Narine  
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

The Catholic Entities say they do not owe money to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation says the Catholic Entities are \$1.6 million short in fulfilling their commitment under the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement. And the federal government says it "is working with the Catholic Entities to ensure their obligations towards the Aboriginal Healing Foundation are met."

In an email interview, Michelle Perron, spokesperson with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, didn't say what that "obligation" was or what steps the government was taking.

Mike DeGagne, executive director with the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, said the funds outstanding represent 10 per cent of the \$16.6 million obligation the Catholic Entities

has toward the foundation.

In the settlement agreement, the Catholic Entities and United, Presbyterian and Anglican churches were directed to provide funds for in-kind services, to start a national fundraising campaign, and to provide healing programs for Indian residential school survivors.

Eighty per cent of the money for healing programs was to go to the healing foundation, paid in instalments, with the foundation distributing funding to community-based organizations to deliver healing programs to residential school survivors.

The AHF was created in 1989 by the federal government.

The payments the churches were directed to make were proportional to the number of Indian residential schools they operated and which were recognized through the settlement agreement. The Catholic Entities accounts for two-thirds of those schools.

The Catholic Entities were to make full payment to the healing

foundation by Sept. 19, 2012. That has not happened, said DeGagne. The Catholic Entities are claiming administrative hardship as the reason for not paying, he said, and they have asked for mediation under the settlement agreement to be absolved of the remaining money owing.

"The (government) have pushed back to say, 'No, we're not going into mediation on this. It's not necessary under the agreement,'" said DeGagne.

In a brief email response, Pierre Baribeau, counsel for the Catholic Entities, said there is no "such final payment" owing and that "there is a disagreement with Canada. Therefore this disagreement is now being processed."

Baribeau points to clause 3.12 in schedule O-3, the Catholic Entities Church Agreement, of the settlement agreement, which refers to "reasonable administration costs of the Corporation" and further states in a subpoint that "the reasonable administration costs of operating the Corporation

may, with the consent in writing of the Government, be paid from the capital amount held by the Corporation. The Government may not unreasonably withhold the consent referred to in this Section."

DeGagne said the healing foundation has had a rocky relationship with the Catholic Entities throughout and because healing services have to be offered as a commitment and the foundation anticipated difficulties getting full funding from the Catholic Entities, the healing foundation worked that lesser amount into its budget when committing to fund its contracted treatment centres up to Dec. 31, 2013.

"The (Catholic) church under the settlement agreement has been a very difficult partner to work with," said DeGagne. "Their payments to date have been very erratic."

The other three churches, he said, "have been exemplary. They take their mission respective to the residential schools very seriously. They are very moral and ethical people to deal with.

They have invested the money to be further involved with reconciliation activities and you don't ever get the sense they're defending their position or trying to shirk their responsibility."

As the foundation is not a signatory to the settlement agreement, it has no recourse in pushing the Catholic Entities to pay. However, DeGagne said, the federal government has been working toward that end.

"The government of Canada [has] been very stern with the church," he said. "I anticipate that if everybody holds their position that this will eventually have to go back to the courts to make a determination."

Even though the foundation will cease operating by mid-2014, a casualty of federal funding cuts, DeGagne said an entity will be put in place, such as the Legacy of Hope, a charity which serves the interests of residential schools survivors, that can collect the final payment from the Catholic Entities and ensure the money is used for healing programs as it was intended.

# Private sector needs to be shown the way

By Shari Narine  
Windspeaker Contributor

GATINEAU

An Alberta lawyer and an Ontario economics professor are saying First Nations have more control over revenue resource sharing than they may be aware of.

A winning legal streak, an impressive national chief in Shawn Atleo, and resources wanted by Canada, all add up to power, said lawyer and strategist Bill Gallagher at the Special Chiefs Assembly on Dec. 4.

"What the research shows is that you have embarked on a sophisticated, strategic, compelling, winning streak, the biggest legal winning streak that

this country has ever seen. You could even call it off. You have won at the Court of Appeal level in every industry on every major project in this country," he said.

Gallagher said First Nations may want to rest on the legal front at this point because the law on duty to consult and accommodate "are clearly clarified."

Fred Lazur, economics professor at the Schulich School of Business at York University, agrees with Gallagher.

The federal government is not consulting and accommodating First Nations, he said, but there is no reason why First Nations cannot get that consideration from the private sector.

"Highlight the economic consequences of confrontation

and legal action," said Lazur, and then point out the economic risks and uncertainty industry faces if they don't work with First Nations.

Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo was supportive of Lazur's stand.

"We can leverage the fact that there is \$650 billion in natural resources activity being proposed in this country right now," said Atleo.

Lazur also suggested that First Nations could exercise their authority by organizing rolling blockades, rallies and protests that would interrupt business.

"The private sector will go screaming to Ottawa to do something," he said.

First Nations have wielded that power before, said former

National Chief Georges Erasmus, pointing to the 1990 Oka protest, which occurred while he headed the AFN.

"Our people were absolutely united with what was happening to the Mohawks," he said. "At that time it was very, very obvious we could bring the country to a stand-still if we wanted to.... That's kind of like the dark side of our power..."

And that kind of power has to be used wisely, he pointed out.

"You do not want to create fear in the Canadian public but I think what (the Canadian public is) mainly after is trying to figure out how they can be supportive," said Erasmus.

He added that First Nations needed to be pro-active and assert themselves effectively by

leading the changes they want to see.

"I believe we do have the solutions," said BC Regional Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould, noting that work is being done at the community and regional levels as well as the national front.

"We are in a tremendous period of transition in this country as nations as we seek to move beyond the *Indian Act* and rebuild our nations," she said.

Perry Bellegarde, grand chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, said resource revenue sharing was the key to First Nation success and that economic certainty and economic independence led to sovereignty.

"We've got to start challenging," he said.

# Stand united, and stand firm, said Atleo

By Shari Narine  
Windspeaker Contributor

GATINEAU

Chiefs from the Assembly of First Nations have voted unanimously to "put the government of Canada on notice."

The words may have been borrowed from a resolution passed by the Chiefs of Ontario, but the sentiment is shared.

After receiving direction from chiefs gathered at the Special Chiefs Assembly, Dec. 4 to 6, talks were chaired by AFN Regional Chiefs Stan Beardy and Roger Augustine.

"We need to understand when

we talk about a national action strategy, this is not an AFN initiative, it is not an Ontario initiative, it is a people movement," said Beardy, Ontario regional chief.

The Ontario Chiefs' document, which was adopted by the AFN as the guiding principles in moving forward with a national action strategy, calls for First Nations to assert their sovereign rights.

"We hereby put the government of Canada on notice that any further imposition of legislation and/or policies will be met with appropriate measures in order to protect the integrity of our treaty and inherent rights," states the document.

What "appropriate measures" are unclear.

Beardy said that in discussion with approximately 60 chiefs, which included the majority of regional chiefs, a number of questions were raised.

"A question posed to us: 'What are we prepared to do...if we are forced to stand up for our rights... how far are we prepared to go?'" asked Beardy.

Beardy and Augustine's work was the result of the unanimous passage of a resolution, entitled Assertion of Inherent and Treaty Rights to Traditional Lands, Territories and Resources. The resolution called for the development of "strategies to support First Nations to assert

their rights to their lands, territories and resources, to pursue the successful implementation of the treaties in the spirit and intent as originally negotiated by the ancestors, and to provide such assistance and support as First Nations may request in this regard."

"There are so many courageous battles being fought. Can we link this effort and pull it so that we're supporting each other?" said National Chief Shawn Atleo, speaking to the resolution.

Atleo said the resolution "represents what the Elders have been saying would awaken and it's the sleeping giant of our people."

He added that the awakening

was obvious the previous day when, spurred on by Onion Lake Cree Nation Chief Wallace Fox, chiefs marched on Parliament Hill.

"As we stood together in unison on Parliament yesterday being but a hint, as former Chief (Ovide) Mercredi said, of what is to come," said Atleo. "Can we stand firmly in our inherent rights, our title rights and our treaties, and can we stand firmly together sending a signal as we did yesterday?"

Atleo said that for any action to work, First Nations must fight against the government's divide and conquer strategy.

(See *Stand united* on page 9.)



# Let this window serve as a reminder of the consequences

By Shari Narine  
Windspeaker Contributor

## OTTAWA

Christi Belcourt continued to deliver her message even after her stained glass creation entitled "Giniigaaniimenaaning," which means "Looking Ahead," was dedicated in a special ceremony on Parliament Hill on Nov. 26.

"I wish I could speak to the hearts of MPs ... and let them know that renewal and reconciliation can be found between Aboriginal peoples and the rest of Canada through the sustained wellness of generations of Aboriginal people to come," said Belcourt.

She said the government's obligation did not end with an apology to Indian residential school survivors or the symbolic gesture of a window.

Andrew Scheer, Speaker of the House, said Prime Minister Stephen Harper's 2008 apology, while powerful, would not make amends for all the wrongs of the past, but "it does serve to begin the process of healing, the process of reconciliation and allows us to move on other paths together."

That path, said Belcourt, needs government attention.

"While this window is extremely positive, the question remains what is being done for the people?" she asked.

Belcourt called on the federal government to provide support for northern communities; to embrace resource revenue sharing as a means for economic well-being and self-sufficiency of Aboriginal communities; to lead an inquiry into the high numbers of murdered and missing Aboriginal women; to follow an "aggressive and sustained revitalization program" for the languages and culture that were lost through residential schools; and equity in funding for Aboriginal children.

The window design, the work of the Belcourt (Metis), was unanimously chosen by a committee of Indian residential school survivors and Aboriginal art experts. The window was unveiled on June 11. It is located in the Centre Block of the Parliament Buildings.

"The primary purpose of the window is to honour the First Nations, Metis and Inuit children who attended Indian residential

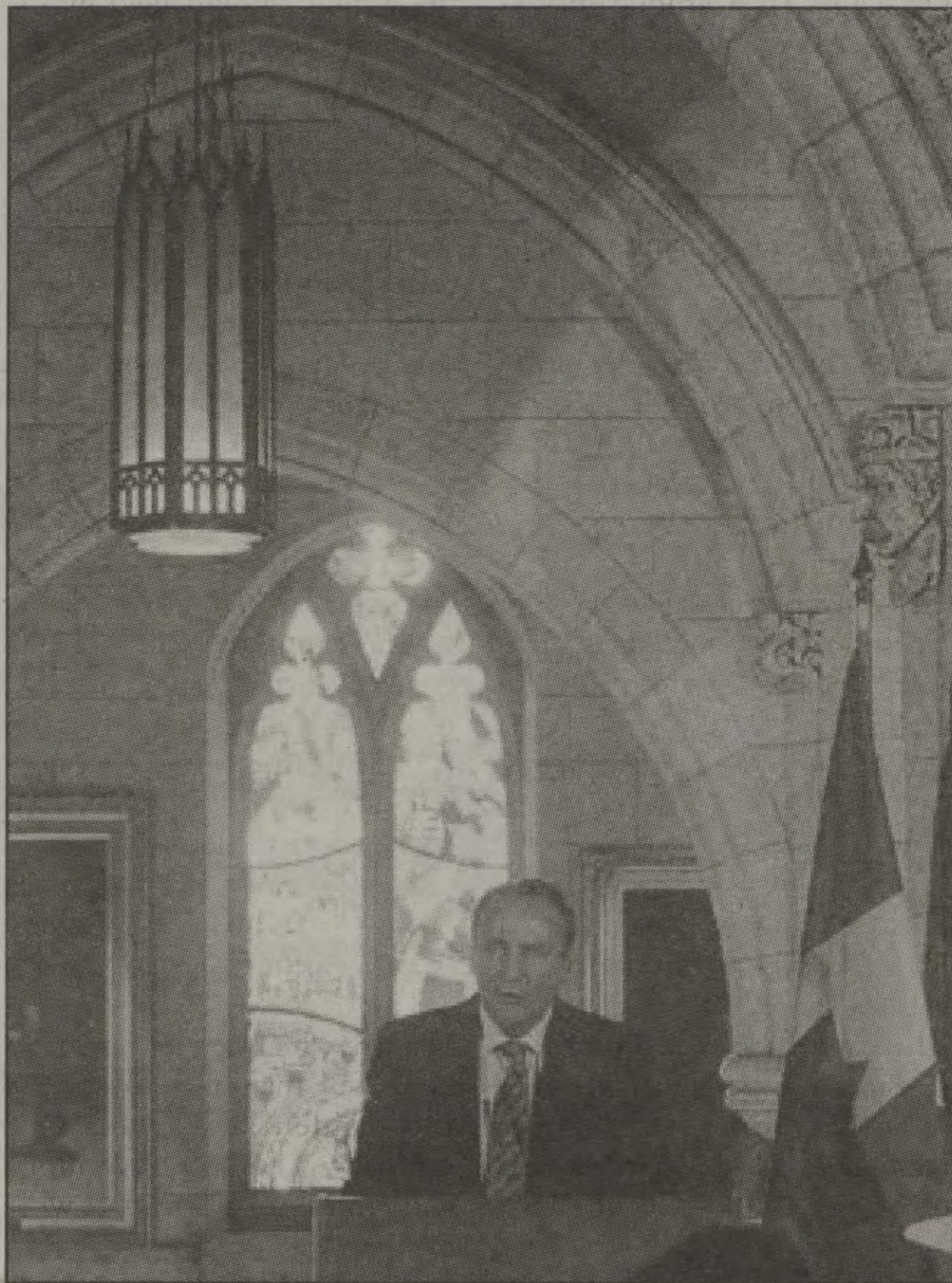


PHOTO: ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT CANADA

John Duncan, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, participates in a dedication ceremony for the stained-glass window commemorating the legacy of former Indian Residential School students and their families.

schools as well as their families and their communities who were impacted by the schools' legacy," said Minister John Duncan of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. "Through the official dedication of this window we honour your experiences and ensure they are never forgotten."

Belcourt said her work was inspired by the story of a residential school survivor, which she recounted to Cabinet ministers, Members of Parliament and invited guests.

"She said 'tell our side of the story'. She would have been within her full rights to say make it about genocide, but she didn't. She said make it about hope," Belcourt said.

While it was a Metis artist whose work was chosen to commemorate residential school survivors, Métis were neither included in the Prime Minister's apology nor in the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement. Métis could only claim Common Experience Payments or receive

compensation under the Independent Assessment Program if they attended an Indian residential school.

Belcourt called on the government to treat Metis residential school survivors and day school survivors "justly and fairly." Both groups have been excluded from the residential school settlement agreement.

However, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was created through the IRSSA, has invited all survivors, residential or day school, to tell their stories.

Chief Wilton Littlechild, who serves on the TRC, said, "(The window) will serve to remind us that the residential school story is a Canadian story."

It is a Canadian story that politicians would do well to remember, said Metis Elder Reta Gordon.

"May the spirit of this window serve as a constant reminder to lawmakers of Canada that there is real consequences of their actions to the people they are elected to serve," she said.

## Stand united, stand firm

(Continued from page 8.)

The resolution referred to "legislation and policies (by the federal government that) are designed to accentuate differences, divide regions and communities and impede First

Nation successes in governance, education, and in areas such as child welfare, housing and health."

"We (need to) gravitate to support one another, to do so in a coordinated way," he said. Augustine said the meeting

of the chiefs showed that the strength for the movement would come from the people.

"It's going to be one of the most powerful movements ever organized in this country by our people," he said.

## Windspeaker News Briefs

### NATIONAL CENTRE FOR FIRST NATIONS

Governance was down but is not out, reads an end-of-year message sent to media. After losing federal funding in 2012, the organization is announcing exciting times ahead with the opening of a "brand new centre that will operate without federal funding" and in the first few months of 2013 "we will make the transition from NCFNG to something new." The release said "the challenges faced by First Nation communities in 2012 underscores the critical need for strong, effective self governance and our new centre will be delivering services in communities to assist First Nations that want to exercise their inherent right to govern beyond the Indian Act and expand their jurisdiction beyond the borders of their reserve."

### AFTER CALLING FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

"freeloading Indians", the president of the youth wing of the Manitoba Progressive Conservative Party has resigned. The comment occurred on Brayden Mazurkiewich's facebook profile Dec. 14 when he was discussing a federal court ruling that said First Nations needed to be consulted before Kapyong Barracks, a former Canadian Forces base, can be sold. "If they build a reserve inside this city I think that will be the last straw and I will finally leave what is becoming the laughing stock," Mazurkiewich wrote. "That was built for hardworking men and women of the military, not freeloading Indians," he later wrote. PC party president Ryan Matthews requested Mazurkiewich's resignation after the comments became public. He said Mazurkiewich's comments were "detrimental to our party." Mazurkiewich became the youth president last February. The Kapyong ruling upholds the Crown's legal duty to consult First Nations with outstanding land entitlements about the disposal and use of Crown lands. In January 2008, First Nations of Treaty One (Brokenhead, Peguis, Roseau River, Sagkeeng, Long Plain, Sandy Bay and Swan Lake) filed to have a court review Ottawa's 2005 decision to transfer the vacant Kapyong Barracks land to the Canada Lands Company. Treaty One of 1871 promised the communities more land than the federal government delivered and the government acknowledges its debt. But the feds told the Treaty One communities Kapyong isn't available to them. The federal court ruled in the First Nations' favor in 2009, but the federal government appealed the decision.

### UNIONS ARE URGING THE FEDERAL

government to use a "collective bargaining approach" with First Nations people over treaty rights. They have also called on Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and the Queen's representative Governor General David Johnston, to meet with Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence. The Canadian Auto Workers union and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union were concerned enough for Chief Spence's safety, as she went into her second week of a hunger strike, to echo the demand for the meeting, first made by the Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo on Dec. 16. Spence commenced the hunger strike to call attention to the dire conditions First Nations communities and people face, and to protest the shameful treatment of First Nations by Canada. "For our entire existence as a country, the federal government has abused the rights of the First Nations people," said CAW National President Ken Lewenza. "This is no more apparent than in Chief Spence's community of Attawapiskat where, a year later, the town is still without adequate housing and infrastructure as the winter sets back in." Lewenza said that he and many others have been deeply moved by the courage and tenacity shown by Chief Spence, and are adding their voices to the legions of supporters through the #IdleNoMore movement. During the hunger strike, Chief Spence is living in a teepee on Victoria Island in the Ottawa River, near the Supreme Court of Canada and the House of Commons. "Chief Theresa Spence's fight for her people is similar to that [of the] labour movement and so many other groups—the fight for dignity, respect, and equality," said CEP National President Dave Coles. "It is urgently necessary that the government reach an equitable agreement with the First Nations people. As a country, we know all too well the reality of centuries of colonization, inequality and abuse."

### THE CALL FOR A NATIONAL INQUIRY ON

Missing and Murdered Indigenous women and girls was underscored by the emotional cries of the parents of 16-year-old Summer Star Elizabeth Krista-Lee Fowler of Gitanmaax First Nation whose body was found in Kamloops Dec. 5. They joined Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo in a press conference in Vancouver to urge government's commitment to the inquiry and to end violence against Aboriginal women and girls. "We must all commit, including all governments, to address the root causes of such tragedies so that our peoples can achieve the safety and security required and deserved," said Atleo. "How many more lives must be lost, how many more families must be devastated before we see action from government to work together with us to ensure our peoples are safe?" The murder of CJ Morningstar Fowler is a terrible tragedy, added First Nations Summit Grand Chief Ed John. "It is yet another horrific example of violence against women, and in particular, Aboriginal women."

# Kinnie Starr to independently release new album 'Kiss It'

By David P. Ball  
Windspeaker Contributor

TORONTO

Juno-winning musician and producer Alida Kinnie Starr is set to release her new album in mid-January, following an intensive Indiegogo fundraising campaign to independently fund 'Kiss It'.

The 42-year-old's work has been described by the Globe and Mail as "raw feral talent," and she confesses to having some rather unusual feral talents herself.

"I have special bird powers," she reveals in an exclusive interview with Windspeaker. Starr is serious about her mystical connection to winged creatures; her ex-husband used to call her 'Snow Beige' because of what happens whenever she plays guitar and sings outdoors.

"All the birds would come around," she explained. "And as all the choruses would build up, they would start tweeping really hard."

"Wherever we were – whether it was B.C. or Ontario or Winnipeg – we'd go for walks, and I'd start to play. We'd just watch the birds start to come around. I hardly notice it, because I've always had it. I don't really understand it... I just thought everybody had that experience."

When Starr bursts spontaneously into song mid-conversation, her powerful presence certainly grabs attention.

If her past work—starting with her 1996 Juno-nominated release, 'Tidy'—is renowned for its catchy choruses, pulsing sensuality, and earnest, searching lyrics, her upcoming album 'Kiss It' is perhaps the strongest and most mature example of her gifts.

The album weaves minimalist electronic beats with Starr's distinctive softly-spoken rapping and layered, addictive melodies. What sets the title track apart is the subject matter; the song could charitably be described as sensuality sex ed advice. (Advice that pays off, she insists: "Now that you took your time, like a philosopher / I'm outta my mind and you're in me like a river," she sings. "We rise like a landslide, roots collide / Old-growth cedar welling up in our eyes.")

Her vulnerable approach to song writing provides listeners an intimacy that is at once playful and, occasionally, uncomfortably close—but rarely self-indulgent. If Starr is anything, it's earnest.

"Overly earnest, I would argue sometimes!" she laughs. "Records just detail where you're at in your life – trying to articulate it the best you can."

"The new record is all hip-hop, but it's new-way dance hip-hop. I would say that I am more gentle; I think that's a product of getting older. I mean, I'd hope

that everybody gets more gentle as we age. Hopefully by the time I'm 'old' old, I'll be really warm!"

'Kiss It' is full of songs about identity, confidence and dignity, values Starr says she hopes to role-model herself, and offer loved ones in her life and fans alike.

"The album we're about to put out is mostly for my niece," Starr said. "She's 10."

"Having dignity is a political choice, especially as a woman. We're in a time when everybody's supposed to look like a stripper, especially in the business I'm in, pop culture and club culture."

At an recent Indigenous media arts festival in Vancouver, Starr showed off as much energy and warm stage presence as she did at shows a decade ago. Remaining authentic and present for her listeners is key, she said.

"A lot of the songs in the new record are about having presence, without having to adhere to all of the commodification of the body," she said. "That's really important to me."

"I'm trying to give myself and my nieces and nephews a feeling that they belong – as Indigenous people, as white people, as Canadians, and as kids. It's written as a pledge to make people feel like you're allowed to



PHOTO: DAVID P. BALL

Juno-winning musician and producer Alida Kinnie Starr

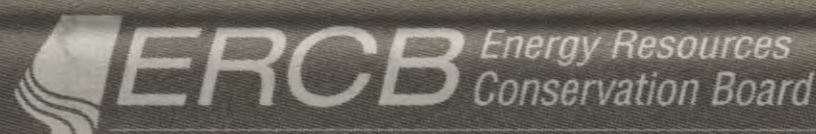
be anywhere you wanna be in your life, at any time, and know that you belong."

Starr is noted for regularly stepping down off the stage at

shows, microphone in hand, and reciting her spoken-word poetry eye-to-eye with her fans in the pit. But she confesses to Windspeaker that she is, in fact, utterly shy.

"When I'm on stage, it's petrifying," she admitted. "It's terrible being on stage being watched."

(See *Kinnie Starr* on page 25.)



Calgary Office Suite 1000, 250 - 5 Street SW, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 0R4 Toll-free 1-855-297-8311 Fax 403-297-7336 www.ercb.ca

**NOTICE OF APPLICATIONS**  
**SUNCOR ENERGY INC.**  
**DEDICATED DISPOSAL AREA 2 APPLICATION**  
**ATHABASCA OIL SANDS AREA**

**ENERGY RESOURCES CONSERVATION BOARD**  
**OIL SANDS CONSERVATION ACT**  
**APPLICATION NO. 1746320**

**ALBERTA ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT ACT**  
**APPLICATION NO. 064-0000094**

The Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB) has received Application No. 1746320 and Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) has received *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (EPEA)* Application No. 064-0000094 from Suncor Energy Inc. (Suncor) for approval of Dedicated Disposal Area 2 (DDA2) within the previously approved Mine Dump 9 (MD9) Development Area (the Project). This notice is to advise interested parties that the applications are available for viewing and that the ERCB, ESRD, and other government departments are now reviewing the applications.

**Description of the Project**

Suncor has applied to construct, operate, and reclaim DDA2 within the previously approved MD9 Development Area. This area is located in Township 91, Range 8, West of the 4th Meridian, within the boundaries of Suncor's current leases. Suncor is seeking approval for the DDA2 from the ERCB and amendment of *EPEA* Approval No. 94-02-07.

The proposed Project would allow Suncor to continue with its approved tailings reduction operations in accordance with *Directive 074: Tailings Performance Criteria and Requirements for Oil Sands Mining Schemes*. Although the proposed Project would be contained within the previously approved MD9 Development Area, the area for the existing overburden dump and its associated infrastructure would be decreased to make room for the DDA2 and its associated infrastructure.

**In support of the Project, Suncor has prepared and submitted the following:**

- Application No. 1746320 to the ERCB, pursuant to Sections 10 and 13 of the *Oil Sands Conservation Act*, for approval to construct and operate an oil sands mine and processing plant.
- Application No. 064-0000094 to ESRD, pursuant to Part 2, Division 2 of the *EPEA*, to amend Approval No. 94-02-07 to include the construction, operation, and reclamation of the Project within the previously approved MD9 Development Area.

**To obtain a copy of the applications, contact**  
Suncor Energy Inc., P.O. Box 2844, 150 6 Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta T2P 3E3, Attention: Ms. Cecilia Jeje, Manager Oil Sands and In-Situ Environmental Assessment Approvals; Telephone: 403-296-5992; E-mail: cjeje@suncor.com

**To view a copy of the applications, and supporting documents, contact**  
ERCB Information Services, Suite 1000, 250 - 5 Street SW, Calgary, Alberta T2P 0R4; Telephone: 403-297-8311 (Option 2) (toll free: 1-855-297-8311); Viewing hours: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
ERCB Fort McMurray Regional Office, 2nd Floor, Provincial Building, Box 15, 9915 Franklin Avenue, Fort McMurray, Alberta T9H 2K4; Telephone: 780-743-7214  
Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, Northern Region, 111, 4999 - 98th Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T6B 2X3; Telephone: (780) 427-7617

A copy of the application is available for viewing on the ERCB's website at www.ercb.ca on the Integrated Application Registry (IAR) under Application No. 1746320.

**To File a Statement of Concern**

Under Section 73 of *EPEA*, any person who may be directly affected by the *EPEA* application may submit a written statement of concern. Statements of concern under the *EPEA* must be submitted by **February 7, 2013**. Please quote Application No. 064-0000094 when submitting a statement of concern. If no statements of concern are received, the *EPEA* application may be approved without further notice. Failure to file a statement of concern may affect the right to file a Notice of Appeal with the Environmental Appeals Board. Please submit statements of concern to

Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, Attention: District Approvals Manager, Regulatory Approvals Centre, Main floor, Oxbridge Place, 9820 - 106 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2J6; Telephone: 780-427-6311; Fax: 780-422-0154; E-mail: AENV.NorthernEPEA@gov.ab.ca

Please note that the ERCB receives and reviews statements of concern filed with ESRD.

**Applications for Confidentiality**

Under Section 13 of the *Energy Resources Conservation Board Rules of Practice (Rules of Practice)* and Section 35(1) of the *EPEA*, all documents filed in respect of these proceedings must be placed on the public record. However, any party may apply for confidentiality of information. For objections or other submissions related to ERCB Application No. 1746320, parties may file a request for confidentiality in accordance with Section 13(2) of the *Rules of Practice* and must serve a copy of the request on the other parties. For the purposes of ESRD, such requests can be filed according to Section 35(4) of the *EPEA*.

**For information about ERCB procedures, contact**  
Oil Sands and Coal Branch, Oil Sands and Coal Mining Group, Attention: Jennifer Keturakis; Telephone: 780-743-7282; Fax: 780-743-7141; E-mail: jennifer.keturakis@ercb.ca

Issued at Calgary, Alberta, on December 10, 2012.

Patricia M. Johnston, Q.C., General Counsel

# Electro cellist Cris Derksen 'pow-wow-wows' with creative blend

By David P. Ball  
Windspeaker Contributor

## VANCOUVER

Cellist Cris Derksen might just have become the second Aboriginal in space.

And while she might not have literally travelled off the planet—as Chickasaw astronaut John Herrington did a decade ago—the electronically savvy, classically-trained instrumentalist was nominated for a 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Award (APCMA) for her outer space-themed video 'Pow Wow Wow,' created by filmmaker Lisa Jackson.

Bridging the worlds of electronic sampling and loop pedals with her university training and appreciation for Indigenous music, the half-Cree cellist sat down with Windspeaker after performing at Vancouver's noisy Railway Club earlier this year.

"I'm a bit romantic," she said when asked about her art. "I like the old sounds and then making them new."

"Traditional powwow sounds influenced me (...). For me, that's what art is: it's taking something you know and like and making

it your own. Mixing the cello with a traditional Aboriginal musical idiom sounds so beautiful. It's its own language; it doesn't belong to the Western musical culture. It sounds beautiful when you put the two together."

As a teen, Derksen attended Edmonton's Victoria School for the Performing Arts, and went on to graduate from the University of British Columbia's music program as a principal cellist in the university's symphony orchestra.

This year, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network "rising star" was chosen to compose the soundtrack to CBC television's popular 8th Fire documentary miniseries, which billed itself as a "provocative, high-energy journey through Aboriginal country showing you why we need to fix Canada's 500 year-old relationship with Indigenous peoples; a relationship mired in colonialism, conflict and denial."

Derksen's sounds reflect a growing number of young people who want to experiment with culture, ideas and sound in new and creative ways. For her, it's the "electro cello" sounds she pioneered on her album 'The



Cellist Cris Derksen

PHOTO: DAVID P. BALL

Cusp.' She cites rapper and songwriter Kinnee Starr, Native DJs A Tribe Called Red, and eccentric indie-violinist Owen Pallett as influences.

"There's a big movement happening right now of Indigenous people my age and younger who are completely immersing contemporary ideas

with traditional sounds," she said. "Culturally, I think it's probably different for each one of us. It gets us out of the box of thinking."

"Aboriginals know what's going on. We're living it, we're doing it, we're breathing it. It's really important to have a high visibility.... I hope it'll encourage them to think consciously about what's going on in the world around them, to be open-minded. Let's them know that, you know, an Aboriginal person can play the cello."

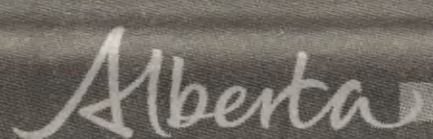
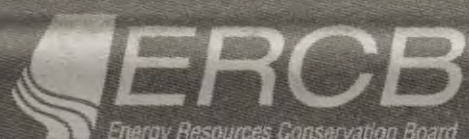
Though she now calls East Vancouver her home, Derksen grew up in northern Alberta—between summers at her kokum and moshom's (grandparents') place on North Tallcree reserve, and her mother's home in Edmonton, where she took up cello as a child.

"Actually," she admits, laughing, "I wanted to play the double bass but my mom's car was too small! So I took the next biggest thing."

"The thing about the cello is that I stuck to it. I didn't give up in junior high school — those awkward ages between 12 and 15 — those ages when everything's sex and being cool. I didn't quit, and that obviously was very important. It's the tortoise and hare story. I wasn't always the best, but I stuck with it."

Using loop pedals and creating her own jagged, synthesized rhythms, Derksen's performances create a surprising textured landscape—layering her melodies and harmonies atop one another as she stitches together a musical star blanket of sound. The Cusp was nominated in 2011 for two APCMA prizes—best new artist and best instrumental album.

( See *Cellist* on page 25.)



Environment and Sustainable  
Resource Development

Calgary Office Suite 1000, 250 – 5 Street SW, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 0R4 Toll-free 1-855-297-8311 Fax 403-297-7336 www.ercb.ca

### NOTICE OF APPLICATIONS DEVON NEC CORPORATION PIKE 1 PROJECT ATHABASCA OIL SANDS AREA

ENERGY RESOURCES CONSERVATION BOARD  
APPLICATION NO. 1731397

### ALBERTA ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT ACT APPLICATION NO. 001-308463 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB/Board) has received Application No. 1731397 and Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) has received *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (EPEA)* Application No. 001-308463 (collectively the "Applications") from Devon NEC Corporation (Devon) for approval of the proposed Pike 1 Project (the Project). This notice is to advise interested parties that the Applications are available for viewing and that the ERCB, ESRD, and other government departments are now undertaking a review of the Applications and associated environmental impact assessment (EIA).

#### Description of the Project

Devon has applied to construct, operate, and reclaim an in situ oil sands project about 25 kilometres southeast of Conklin, located primarily in Townships 74 and 75, Ranges 5 and 6, West of the 4th Meridian. The proposed Project would use steam-assisted gravity drainage (SAGD) technology to recover bitumen resources from the McMurray Formation. The Project's total bitumen-production capacity would be 17 328 cubic metres per day (109 000 barrels per day). Pending regulatory approval, construction is expected to start in 2014 and initial production from the Project is expected to commence in 2016. The proposed Project would include a central processing facility, thermal injection wells, production wells, disposal wells, dewatering facilities, utilities, and associated infrastructure.

#### In support of the Project, Devon has prepared and submitted the following:

- Application No. 1731397 to the ERCB, pursuant to Section 10 of the *Oil Sands Conservation Act*, to construct and operate the Project.
- Application No. 001-308463 to ESRD, pursuant to the *EPEA*, for the construction, operation, and reclamation of the Project.
- An EIA report associated with the above applications. The EIA forms part of the application to the ERCB.

#### To obtain a copy of the applications, contact

Devon NEC Corporation, 2000, 400 – 3 Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta T2P 4H2, Attention: Apu Sharma; Telephone: 403-232-7182; E-mail: apu.sharma@dvn.com

#### To view a copy of the Applications, EIA, and supporting documents, contact

ERCB Information Services, Suite 1000, 250 – 5 Street SW, Calgary, Alberta T2P 0R4; Telephone: 403-297-8311 (Option 2) (toll free: 1-855-297-8311) Viewing hours: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Alberta Government Library, Great West Life Building, 6th Floor, 9920 – 108 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2M4; Telephone: 780-427-5828 (toll free: 780-310-0000)

#### To File a Statement of Concern

Under Section 73 of the *EPEA*, any person who may be directly affected by the *EPEA* application may submit a written statement of concern. Statements of concern under the *EPEA* must be submitted by **February 22, 2013**. Please quote Application No. 001-308463 when submitting a statement of concern. If no statements of concern are received, the *EPEA* application may be approved without further notice. Failure to file a statement of concern may affect the right to file a Notice of Appeal with the Environmental Appeals Board. Please submit statements of concern to Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, Regulatory Approvals Centre, Main floor, Oxbridge Place, 9820 – 106 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2J6, Attention: Director, Northern Region; Telephone: 780-427-6311; Fax: 780-422-0154

The ERCB also receives and reviews statements of concern sent to ESRD. Once reviewed, the ERCB may register a statement of concern as an objection to the ERCB application for the Project, depending on the nature of the concerns expressed and further correspondence with the concerned party. Any interested party can file a separate objection with the ERCB if its concerns with the Project only relate to the ERCB application. The filing deadline stated above does not apply to objections to be filed with the ERCB, unless stated otherwise in a notice or other direction of the ERCB.

#### Applications for Confidentiality

Section 13 of the *Energy Resources Conservation Board Rules of Practice (Rules of Practice)* and Section 35(1) of the *EPEA* require that all documents filed in respect of this proceeding be placed on the public record. However, any party may apply for confidentiality of information. For the ERCB, any application under Section 13(2) of the *Rules of Practice* that is to be considered during a public hearing of the application must be copied to the other parties to the proceeding. Any application seeking confidentiality under Section 13 of the *Rules of Practice* must include the reasons for the request, including the specific harm that would result if the information were placed on the public record. The Board may grant a request for confidentiality on any terms it considers appropriate, subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Section 13 of the *Rules of Practice* is available on the ERCB website at *Rules of Practice*. For the purposes of ESRD, such requests can be filed according to Section 35(4) of the *EPEA*.

#### For information about ERCB procedures, contact

Oil Sands and Coal Branch, In Situ Oil Sands Group, Attention: Paul Greene; Telephone: 403-297-3426; Fax: 403-297-3187; E-mail: paul.greene@ercb.ca

Issued at Calgary, Alberta, on December 6, 2012.

Patricia M. Johnston, Q.C., General Counsel

[ strictly speaking ]  
**The Mayan Appocolypse:  
If you are reading this, we made it**

To quote the musical group REM, "It's the end of the world as we know it (and I feel fine)." And I actually do feel fine.

As I am sure you've heard, according to doomsday enthusiasts, the end of it all was Dec. 21 (after press deadline). This was when civilization, reality, the world, mortgage payments, Christmas specials, were all to come to an end due to some apocalyptic sneeze that nobody seems to know much about.

I am sure you heard about it. It was in all the papers. They even made a movie about it starring John Cusack. And, as is usually the case, Native people have been given the blame, this time for the end of existence. See what happens when you take too long settling land claims!

According to rumour, the Mayan cyclical calendar, known as the b'ak'tun, officially ended on this winter's solstice. That's certainly one excessive way to avoid Christmas shopping. Two thousand years ago, the Mayans created a number of highly sophisticated city-states throughout central America, where they had the time and



**THE URBANE INDIAN**  
**Drew Hayden Taylor**

intelligence to make brilliant astronomical observations and calculated amazingly accurate mathematics and calendars. There's even evidence that they created the concept of the zero all by themselves, which to me and you might not seem all that amazing but supposedly to scientists that's something pretty remarkable. So they bring some pretty impressive credentials to the art of calendar making.

Theories as to how the apocalypse would happen included a runaway planet suddenly smashing into the Earth. Unlikely, as it would have been spotted years ago as it approached. Then there's the sun developing massive solar storms toasting us in our orbit. One

NASA scientist responding to doomsday questions said this scenario was highly unlikely, that the sun was acting quite "wimpy" leading up to doomsday.

Other notions included the Earth's magnetic poles might reverse or the world will somehow travel almost 30,000 light years and fall into a black hole at the centre of the galaxy. Those darn Mayans.

I wonder if Michael Stipes and the rest of the REM group were Mayan? I must check Wikipedia.

The problem is, Mayan and non-Mayan scholars were telling people to essentially 'forgetaboutit'. As we headed toward doomsday, Guatemala and the Yucatan were not full of Mayans digging survival bunkers

or bomb shelters in the jungle. The expiry dates on their milk went way past Dec. 21.

Remember how your mother always told you to wear clean underwear in case you get in an accident? Well, on Dec. 21 you could have worn your dirtiest pair 'cause not much was going to happen on a planetary level. It was much ado about nothing.

They said the best way to understand this non-issue was to look at the calendar you have hanging on your wall or the daytimer on your desk, with your dentist's appointment listed and the birthdays of your kids circled in red. Those calendars, called the Gregorian calendar, end on Dec. 31 (unless you've got one of those 16-month calendars, then never mind). So following the logic in this case, does this sudden lack of numbered days indicate the world will end on New Year's Eve?

No, you are saying while rolling your eyes. It just means it's time to get a new calendar. That is essentially the same concept as what happened with the Mayan calendar. All calendars are cycles and all cycles end, until a new one is started up. The

Mayans never got around to developing that new calendar, what with the collapse of their civilization and all. Even though they were brilliant with calculations, they never anticipated the silliness that would happen centuries in the future when people with entirely too much time on their hands would notice the Mayan calendar was running out. How rude of the Mayans.

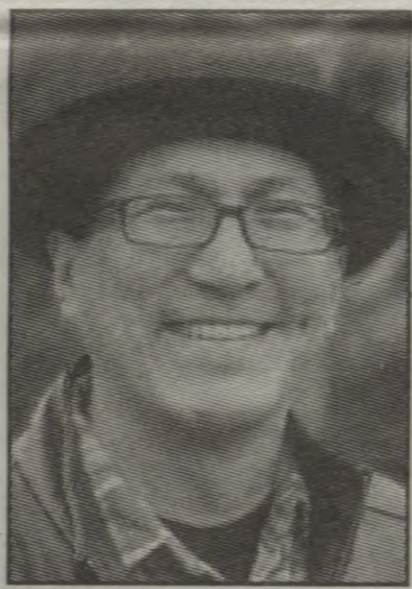
I guess the Mayans aren't totally to blame. If anybody's curious, the Ojibway have their own theories about when the end of the world will happen. There's a short story called "The Nine Billion Names of God" that theorizes that the only reason we are put on this earth is to list all the names created to express God. And, in the story, when this super computer has accomplished this, in the sky, one by one, each of the stars started to disappear. The Ojibway believe something similar. When the last land claim is settled and signed, one by one, each of the government officials, each of the lawyers, each of the chiefs, will one by one disappear (or become a civil servant).

## The work of home is the best work ever

My wife and I went deep into the mountains for our winter wood this fall. It took some doing to find an active logging road and that's good news. It means they're running out of forest to destroy. For ourselves we prefer to find downed trees or sometimes we'll drop a standing dead one, but mostly we get out winter wood from the leftovers. We found a logging road with a lot of fresh slash piles and we set to cutting our winter wood.

I love working with a chainsaw. Years ago I worked all winter in a bush camp and I still remember it as one of my favorite work experiences of my life. I love the feel of a chainsaw in my hands. I love bucking and splitting. I love the smell of fresh sawn wood mixed with tree sap and sweat and the smell of the land itself. Even when I have to lug wood to get it to the truck, it never feels like a chore. It's like a celebration.

These days I love the knowledge that the work I do is going to make the winter



**WOLF SONGS  
& FIRE CHATS**  
**Richard Wagamese**

comfortable for my wife. We use a woodstove all winter. It keeps the hydro cost down and it just feels good in an old fashioned way. She loves to put on warm and cozy socks and sweaters and lounge in the radiant heat. When the lights are low, the music is on and the fire throws an orange glow across the room, that's when we love being home the most.

That day I sawed and lugged eight foot sections of downed fir out of the nearby bush so I could buck them beside the truck. Then we hauled long sections out of the slash with the truck and chain. It was hard, exhilarating work. My wife loved

the feeling of being behind the wheel and yanking logs out of the pile. The wheels spun, dirt got spewed, and she was a working girl. She loved getting her hands dirty. But most of all we enjoyed the time together and the feeling of a good job well done.

When the saw needed to cool we sat and drank in the feel of the land. It was an overcast fall day with the wind bending the tops of the trees and we could feel the edge of the approaching winter. Birds were calling. We could hear the sounds of deer and maybe a bear moving in the dry bush. We could smell rain on the wind. There was the feeling of

change coming and it felt wonderful to be smack dab in the middle of it.

Later, when we hauled the wood back home, Deb ran the splitter and I stacked all the wood. We got three quarters of our woodshed stacked and filled. Standing back and looking at it, there was a great sense of satisfaction in seeing our day's labour piled up and ready. We'd made ready for the winter to come and even if there were another couple trips to be made we were eager to do it.

Woodcutting is home work. That's what makes it special. You bend your back to a thing armed with the knowledge that you're taking care of home. There's a special feeling in that. It's a reminder that nothing arrives on its own. You have to work for things. I like the idea of that. One of the best things I've gained from living in a rural setting is the idea that it's up to Deb and I to get things done. We can't depend on someone else or the kindness of strangers. Taking care

of home is up to us.

When you work together it gets even better. My wife just loved the feeling of hooking up the chain and dragging logs out of the slash pile. I loved the look on her face when she did it. We laughed and we got busy and we got it done. In previous year's I've done the job with a buddy but it wasn't nearly as much fun as this. Guy talk is not the same for one thing. Guys are independent. My wife and I did the job together. We helped each other. That was the most fun, that feeling of helping each other.

Because woodcutting is home work. Working side by side with the one you love is an idea and a practice as old as humanity itself. We become more through the effort. We become closer. We become a fully functioning, fully supportive unit. We are raised up by the feeling of a common effort. We are together. We are married.

I love the feeling of a chainsaw in my hands. I love the ring on my finger. One job, two joys.

**Every single Windspeaker article ever published (well, almost)  
is now accessible free through our online archives at  
[www.ammsa.com](http://www.ammsa.com)**

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

**Iskwe:** Sense of humour. To me, my best of friends are the ones I'm able to laugh with, especially when I'm feeling blue...it's always nice to have that person that you know will always help you laugh and feel better, if even just for a bit.

**W:** What is it that really makes you mad?

**Iskwe:** Being stuck in the middle seat on an airplane, next to someone that smells bad. It's really the worst thing ever.

**W:** When are you at your happiest?

**Iskwe:** When I'm at the park with my pup, hands down. She's so goofy and playful, it really makes me happy just watching her run around and play with me and other dogs. So freakin' cute!

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

**Iskwe:** Asleep. It seems that whether I'm sick, sad, bored, cranky, whatever...I choose to just take a good, long, cozy nap!

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

**Iskwe:** My sister. She's the funniest person I know! She's also extremely loving and warm, and takes her family and friendships to the deepest spot in her heart.

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

**Iskwe:** Finding the part in my brain that remembers the English language when I was introduced to Denzel Washington. He's

actually a pretty small man in height, but his presence was massive and my ability to make sound was non-existent.

**W:** What is your greatest accomplishment?

**Iskwe:** That one (of many) time I attempted making an omelet, and it did not result in scrambled eggs.

**W:** What one goal remains out of reach?

**Iskwe:** Becoming fluent in my Cree language.

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

**Iskwe:** An Arts programmer of some sort for Aboriginal youth, for sure! My passion rests entirely in the arts. I'd have it no other way. That, or a published author.

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

**Iskwe:** When I was a teenager, I was hanging out with my Grams and we were talking boys. She looked over to me and said, very seriously, "My dear, a woman should have as many boyfriends in her lifetime as she has pairs of gloves." I'm still not too sure what that means because I prefer mittens, but I thought if I could figure it out, then I'd know the key to lifelong happiness.

**W:** Did you take it?

**Iskwe:** I took in every drop.

**W:** How do you hope to be remembered?

**Iskwe:** The one that got away... Iskwe is a Canadian girl from Winnipeg who embraces her mixed heritage of Irish and Cree/

Dene. She has been writing and performing her music for the last 10 years between cities—Toronto, New York and Los Angeles—in order to find her sound. She says of her early days in the music industry, "I started off having a difficult time finding my place in music because I was really adamant about fitting into a specific genre. I was told I had a soulful voice, and that I should be a soul/R&B artist, so that's what I did." Iskwe says of her initial release, "My first EP had a solid neo-soul vibe to it, and it just didn't fit me. It wasn't a true reflection of me. I moved to the United States, lived half and half between L.A. and N.Y.C., took a crash course in the music industry, and finally found some comfort in allowing myself the freedom I needed as a writer to express and just be me. I quickly found comfort in 'dark and painful,' and began creating the album I'm soon to release." She tells us her music is about relationships with people, how she interacts with them, romantic relationships, her observations of other people's lives and how they live them.

Born into a family of artists she says she is called Iskwe (pronounced is-kway) by everyone but has two names from birth; Meghan and Wasiskwan Iskwe, which means "Blue Sky Woman" in her native Cree language. Iskwe also wears her attachment to her culture with a tattoo on the side of her neck of Cree syllabics, the back of her



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Iskwe

neck sports butterfly wings with a map inside each wing. Lastly, for now, a Haida frog for healing is on her left shoulder.

Iskwe believes in contributing to her Native community and is focused on promoting positive change and educations via youth workshops in Canada and the U.S. During Barack Obama's 2008 Democratic Convention, she performed for the Native Nations Uniting for Change gala at the Denver Art Museum. Of that experience she says, "I was so honored to be a part of that, in any way possible, and it will definitely be something I

remember until the end of time."

She has performed at the Canadian Aboriginal Festival in Toronto, the Gathering of Nations in Albuquerque and various other music festivals to bring awareness for the need for change.

Over the last four years, Iskwe's professional focus has been on the creation and release of her self-titled debut album. It is due out in early 2013. The album was written by Iskwe and in her words her "genius producer Musashi" and friend Miku Graham, "a brilliant vocalist and songwriter."

[ radio's most active ]

OUR PICK

Artist— Tracy Bone  
Song— Woman of Red  
Album— Woman of Red  
Year— 2012

Tracy Bone is a well known Aboriginal songstress from Manitoba and this 7 song cd has only one downside. Seven songs isn't enough. If you are tuned into an Aboriginal radio network, you are now likely familiar with the lively and confident opening track of *This Ol' Habit* where Tracy exercises her vocal power in an instant hit song classic.



*Back In Love* is a song done as a duet with her life partner and established music artist, J.C. Campbell, that clearly demonstrates the passion for each other as well as for a great love song. This musical duo have been leaders who have blazed a trail for many years in Manitoba as part of the emerging contemporary Aboriginal music scene. This cd has all the flavor of a solid new country release and the title track, *Woman Of Red*, pays tribute to proud Aboriginal women and the struggle they have lived and endured. Often studio recordings miss the mark in capturing the true quality of an artist we see in live performances but this release is confident, musically well executed and the sound production is first rate. All the passion and experience Tracy has under her belt as a performing artist has come together in this short collection of songs, from its blistering opening track to its soulful ending track. It's time Tracy Bone was performing alongside Canada's other top country music stars across the country rather than Manitobans getting exclusive access to the power of this *Woman of Red*.

<http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/tracybone>

Review by : K. Kanten

ABORIGINAL RADIO MOST ACTIVE LIST

SONG	ARTIST	ALBUM
Freedom Now Begins	Adam James	Children of the Sunrise
Come and Save Me	Alexander McKay Jr.	New Cowboy In Town
Newleaf	Plex	Demons
Made For More	Christine	Made for More
Free Yourself, Free Your Mind	Indigenous	Indigenous Featuring Mato Nanji
The Glue	Shy-Anne Hovorka	Interwoven Roots
So You Think That You Can Dance	Burnt Project 1	The Black List
Big Bear	Liv Wade	My Great
3 Wise Men	Nathan Cunningham Ft. Rayne	Single
Purple Mountains	The Napoleon Collective	The Napoleon Collective
Happy Here With Me	Tracy Bone	Woman Of Red
Destiny	Franklin McKay	Just Saying
Forever and a Day	C-Weed Band	Forever
Love Shines	Will Belcourt	Epoch
Turn These Grey Skies Blue	Don Amero	Heart On My Sleeve
Parasite	Christa Couture	The Living Record
Ela	Digawolf	Nake De
Some Of Those Angels	Billy Simard	Single
Sweet Music	Janet Panic	Most Of What Follows Is True
Can't Let Go	Vinnie Sixx	Single

CONTRIBUTING STATIONS:





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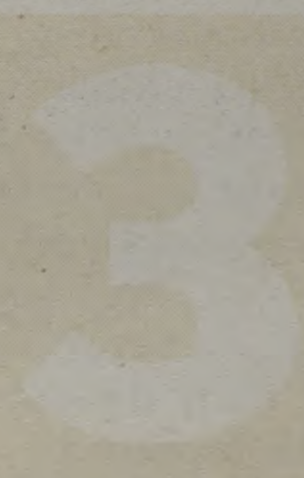
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## AFOA / AAFA

Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada  
Association des agents financiers autochtones du Canada

# [ education ] Education Act will be an erosion of treaty rights, says Fox

By Shari Narine  
Windspeaker Contributor

GATINEAU, Que.

"Disheartened" is the word Union Lake Cree Nation Chief Wallace Fox uses to describe how he feels about a meeting held between the Assembly of First Nations and federal government representatives to discuss First Nations education. The meeting took place when he was on his way home from the Special Chiefs Assembly held Dec. 4 to Dec. 6.

"One must ask themselves why the national chief did not notify the assembly (during) the three days we were there that there was a pending, tentative meeting with Minister Duncan on education. Why didn't the chief invite Minister Duncan to our session as a whole?" said Fox.

"Things are happening behind closed doors... many of us are really disappointed in what has happened."

A few days after that meeting, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Minister John Duncan announced that his department would begin consulting with First Nations this month in a move toward creating a First Nations Education Act.

That announcement came not even a week after chiefs made it clear that national education legislation under the federal government was unacceptable.

On Dec. 5, the mid-mark of the Special Chiefs Assembly, a resolution opposing the AFN's national education steering committee's work on national education legislation, and confirming the role of the Chiefs Committee on Education, was passed unanimously.

The resolution resulted in some heated discussion, despite AFN Regional Chief Morley Googoo's assertion that after the AFN heard objections early in the process about a national education steering committee, the committee was dismissed and the work put into the hands of the Chiefs Committee on Education and the National Indian Education Committee.

Fox, who moved the resolution, said that control of education belonged firmly in the hands of the chiefs.

"It doesn't belong in legislation ... it belongs with us and our people," said Fox. "There are other means to take this on, not the process that was initiated before by AFN."

Fox also said that a single approach to education would not meet the needs of all First Nations.

"We are all autonomous people," he said. "AFN doesn't

represent Union Lake Cree people. I do."

Googoo said the AFN recognizes that there is regional diversity and regional approaches.

"The most important outcome is how do we move forward to create a better education system for our children and that is our goal. Legislation for sure is not an option that is preferred by anybody," he said.

But Duncan has made it clear that a First Nations Education Act is how his government will be proceeding. Legislation is to be in place by September 2014.

Consultation will occur in two phases: from December 2012 to April 2013 through regional sessions with parents, educators and leaders; and then further feedback when prepared draft legislation is presented.

Fox said that a First Nations Education Act is only the first step in taking away the treaty right to education that every First Nation has.

"We have an existing treaty right our ancestors entered into with the Crown," he said, "and when it becomes law and becomes legislated in Parliament, a year or two down the road they can change that legislation. Then there will be no right to education, period, for treaty people."

Fox's concerns were backed up by the majority of chiefs.

Fox also said that any consultation undertaken by the government will not be sufficient.

"They can't arbitrarily create legislation. There's a duty to consult with First Nations people. Free, prior and informed consent," said Fox.

"Duncan can say (he will consult) because they're a dictator government because they have a majority government they can do what they damn well please. And that's their attitude and that's the position they're taking."

But Fox said he and other chiefs won't allow the federal government to do as it pleases.

"We're going to fight that. We're going to continue to oppose that," he said. "The Education Act will not apply in Union Lake Cree Nation and Treaty 6 territory. We will maintain that position as a sovereign entity."

A news release issued by the AFN following the meeting with Duncan made no reference to a First Nations Education Act. However, it did state that "any potential changes in the policy or legal framework requires that Canada fulfills its duty to fully consult with First Nations."

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# Chiefs of Ontario push for fair funding

By Barb Nahwegahbow  
Windspeaker Contributor

## TORONTO

The Chiefs of Ontario held a press conference in Toronto during their Special Assembly on Nov. 29, 2012. Gordon Peters, grand chief of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, the Education portfolio holder with the Chiefs of Ontario, wanted to set the record straight about the First Nations rejection of the proposed federal legislation on

education.

"It's a unilateral act by the federal government that has not had our participation and has not had our consent," Peters said. One of the major areas of disagreement between First Nations and the federal government in terms of education is funding.

"We say very clearly from some of the studies that have been done that we are grossly underfunded with respect to the standard that has been set in other areas in Canada."

Reports from the Auditor-General of Canada and the Parliamentary Budget Officer do not support the federal government's claims that First Nations are at par or better than par with non-First Nations education systems. The reports clearly indicate there is a long-term funding inequity with First Nations education, Peters said.

He added that the United Nations Committee on Racial Discrimination said in 2012 that Canada must improve First Nations access to education, and that the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has twice asked Canada to take action to address the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children in the basic areas of child development, including education.

"We'd like Canada to come clean," said Peters with regard to the education funding figures the federal government has refused to share. "Our proposition to the federal government is clear. Let's sit down and talk about the numbers as a pre-requisite to any other engagement."

Peters talked about the public campaign being waged by the federal government designed with one purpose in mind – to put First Nations in a negative light by saying they're not accountable for the dollars they receive.

Goyce Kakegamic, deputy grand chief of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN) and Alternate Education portfolio holder with the Chiefs of Ontario said, "We have a plan how we should move forward to address our education challenges. We have experienced educators who are articulate. We have a plan, we have a vision," he said. "They say Native people are failing, but it's not the Native people who are failing. It's the system that is failing our people." He spoke about the over 400 "sons and daughters" in the NAN territory who have been lost to suicide since 1987 and "a lot of these are people that have dropped out," he said.

Kakegamic is himself an educator. A residential school

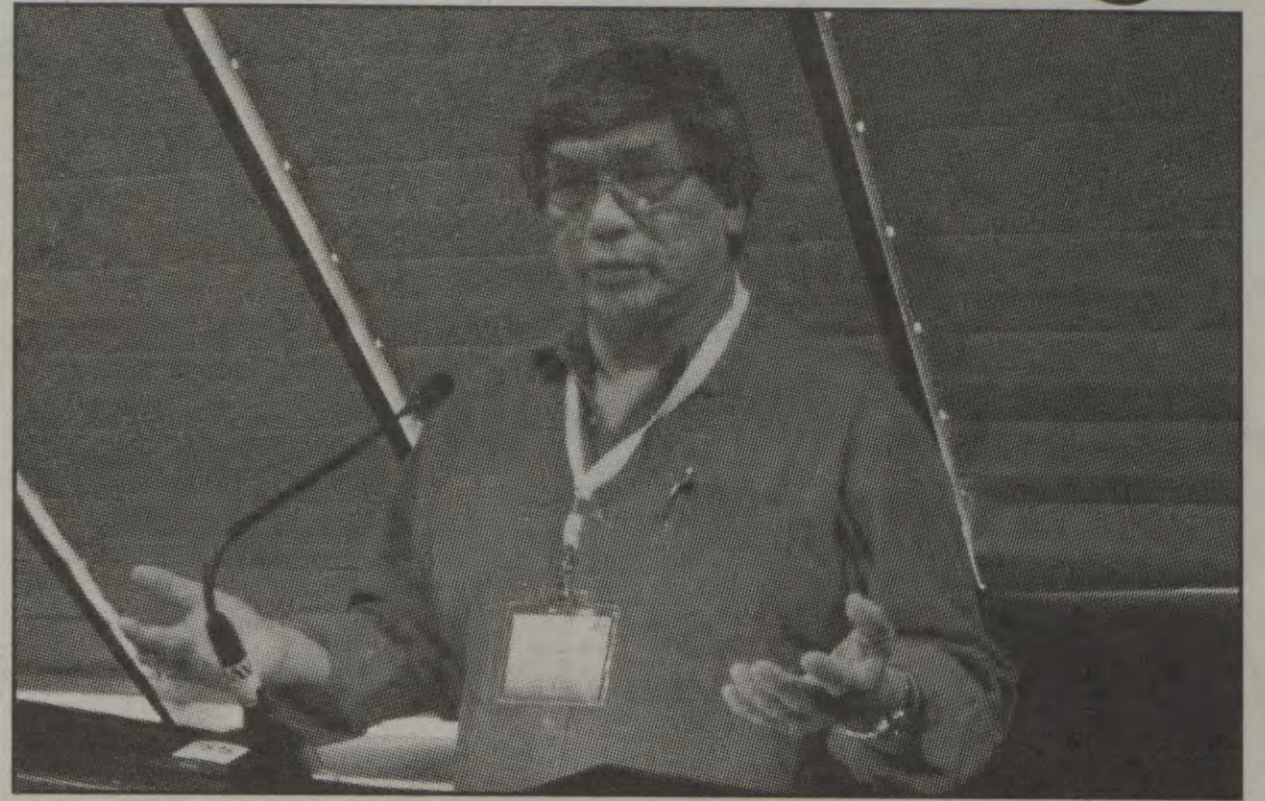


PHOTO: BARB NAHWEGAHBOW

Deputy Grand Chief Goyce Kakegamic, Nishnawbe-Aski Nation and Alternate Education Portfolio Holder with Chiefs of Ontario, speaking at a press conference in Toronto on Nov. 29, 2012

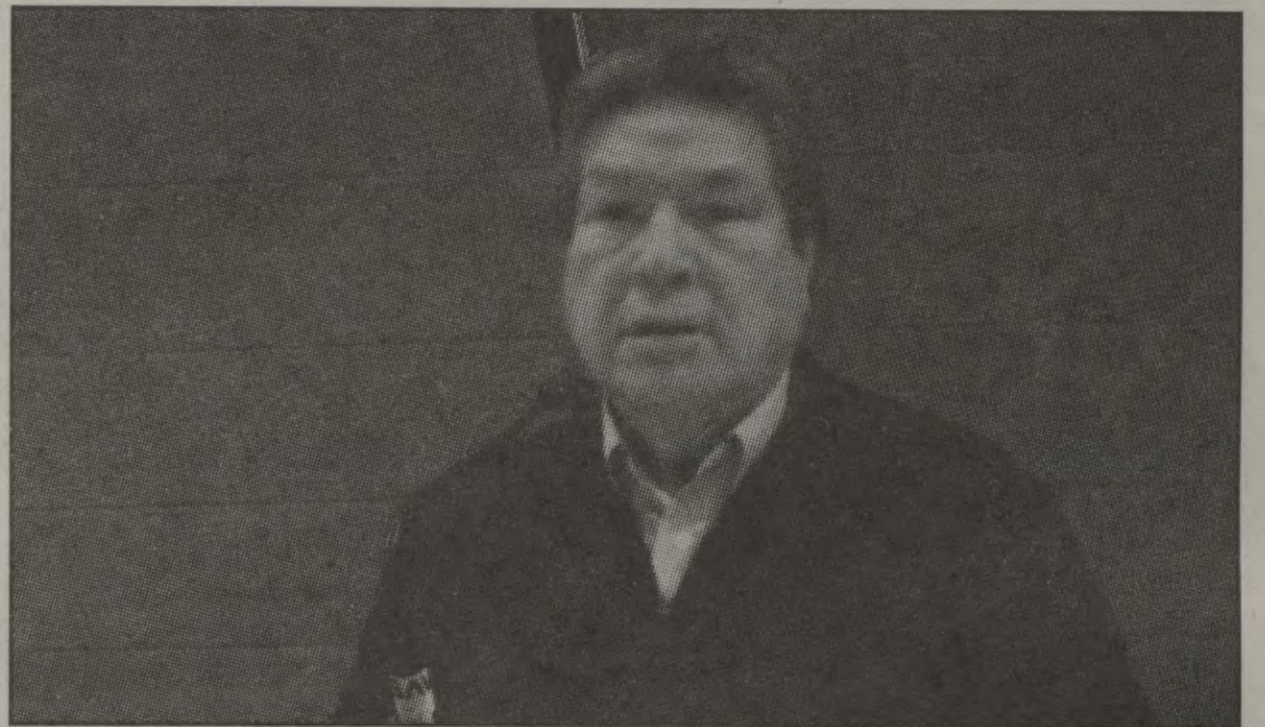


PHOTO: BARB NAHWEGAHBOW

Grand Chief Gordon Peters, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, and Education Portfolio Holder with Chiefs of Ontario.

survivor, he's also earned degrees from Lakehead University and has been a teacher, school principal and director of education. He's also one of the visionaries behind the Northern Ontario School of Medicine where he has served as a board member.

"As parents, as communities, we have a solution...and we do have people who have the heartbeat to deal with this," Kakegamic said. "We need to design our own curriculum for students to feel comfortable with their language, their culture. Residential Schools, they took away our culture and our language."

Peters said, "For 145 years, Canada has run the education system...145 years and the system has failed and yet Canada wants to move ahead with another piece of legislation that's

going to put the education of our children back into the same system..."

"No unilateral imposition is going to work in our communities," Peters continued. "The Chiefs have said those are no longer acceptable and will not be tolerated and we will take every action necessary to prevent that from happening."

\* \* \* \* \*

In a statement released Dec. 13, 2012, Grand Chief Gordon Peters addressed misleading media reports released by the federal government that First Nations and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs have agreed to a collaborative approach to overhaul First Nations education. Peters was at the meeting with the minister and confirms that no such agreement was reached on any matters, issues or process related to education reform.

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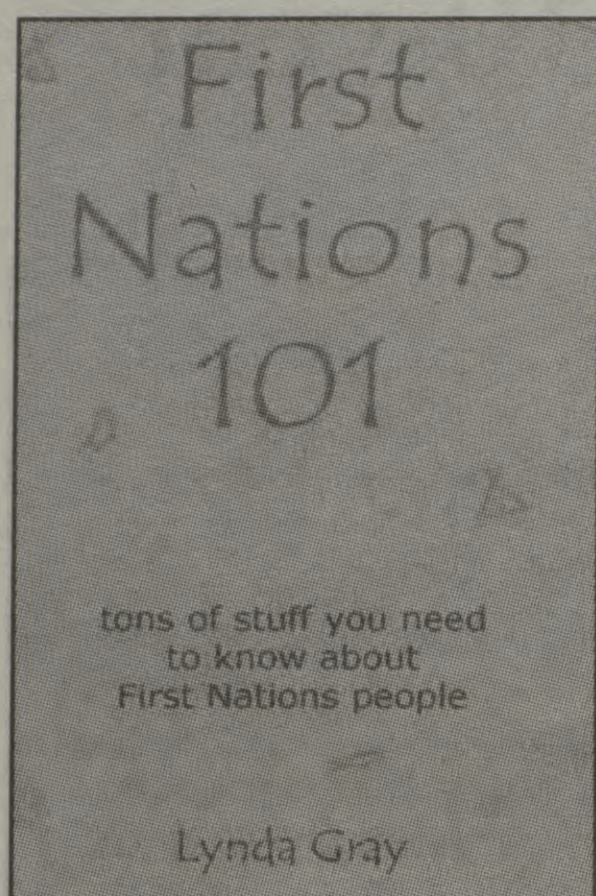
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[ education ]

# First Nations 101: Tons of stuff you need to know about First Nations people



**First Nations 101: Tons of stuff you need to know about First Nations people**  
**Lynda Gray**  
**Published By: Adaawx Publishing**  
**Pages: 275**  
**Review by Christine McFarlane**

“First Nations 101 written by author Lynda Gray is an informative and opinionated guide to First Nations issues. It is written in an accessible style and offers sections on Identity, Social Control, Community Issues, Fairness and Justice, Health and Wellness, Arts and The Road Forward: Forging A New Path.

Gray states in the opening of her book “It is not fair that educating the public about First Nations people, and concerns is left for First Nations people to do.”

First Nation 101 is different from other books written on First Nations issues because a First Nations author writes this book. Gray understands the issues and wants others to envision First Nations people in a more contemporary fashion and does not want the reader to see Native people in the usual stereotypical

and stoic ways often depicted in books written by non-Native authors.

The reader is given an overview of the history of First Nations people. Within the overview, Gray touches upon the many ways in which non-Natives and Canada’s ensuing governments have imposed a form of social control over First Nations people through various actions, policies and laws, and the results of these actions.

As an example, Gray brings up community issues about First Nations people’s health, and explains how after being forced to abandon traditional lifestyles, which were more active prior to contact, our physical health has declined due to a more sedentary life and the introduction of new foods.

It is through the introduction of new foods, such as white flour, sugar, and cow’s milk, that our

bodies have a hard time processing these foods. Due to the inability of being able to process these new foods, various health problems have arisen and are growing throughout First Nations communities. Health issues such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity are just a few that are named.

She also raises awareness of the many abuses that we all as First Nations have suffered, which have led to poor mental health, which includes low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation, the residential school era, and post-residential school era and the issue of our 500 Missing and Murdered Women.

Juxtaposing negative issues, Gray also speaks of the resilience of First Nations people, stating “it is important to remember that our people have such rich and vibrant histories, traditions and beliefs to draw from that can help

us to overcome anything, “and speaks about First Nations artists and how they are our contemporary storytellers, and are at the forefront of First Nations culture, traditions and communities by sharing their work and inspiring others to find their own voices in creativity.

At the end of each section, Gray offers a list of other resources that the reader can draw upon for more information. Educating the non-Native population of Canada is needed in order to foster widespread and long lasting positive change.

First Nations 101 does an excellent job of starting the conversation especially since many First Nations issues have been caused by and/or perpetuated by external forces.

Please visit [www.firstnations101.com](http://www.firstnations101.com) for more info about the book and where to buy it.

# Teenagers learn about life the hard way



**Hook Up**  
**Lorimer Press**  
**Written By Kim Firmston**  
**151 pages**  
**Book Review**  
**By Christine McFarlane**

“Hook Up” is a young teenage fiction book that takes readers on a journey with Cody Manywounds, a First Nations teenager from the Tsuu T’ina Nation who is trying to find his place in the world.

In the past, Manywounds had gotten into trouble with two of his best friends Silas and Jarrod, and as a result of that trouble, the police and social services became involved.

After his mother calls on the

Elders in his family for advice, and has a talk with his Uncle Tom, Cody takes up the sport jiu-jitsu. Cody figures that taking up jiu-jitsu is a way to honour his people because his nation is “a nation of warriors after all, and mixed martial arts is cool.”

As a Native living in Calgary and not on the reserve, Cody faces a lot of racism at school. He says, “yeah there is an anti bullying policy but that seems to only work on paper.” He is called names like “chief, spear-chucker, or injun,” and if he skips a day of school, the teachers think it’s because he’s been drinking and not because he had a cold.

After taking up jiu-jitsu,

Cody’s life turns around for the better. He meets his jiu-jitsu sparring partner’s twin sister Miranda, and thinks she is hot. His grades are good and the escape to university (and more girls) is just around the corner.

Manywounds gets caught up in his feelings for Miranda and loses touch with his friends and what they are going through. It is after one night of fooling around with Miranda that he finds out she is pregnant.

When he gets a text message from Miranda saying, “I’m pregnant, call me” Cody finds that his plans to go to university could be torn to pieces.

Miranda, an athlete herself, is supposed to be going to

university in the fall on a soccer scholarship, but with her pregnancy, she finds that she has to make the toughest decision possible—to get an abortion.

Cody then finds himself dealing with conflicting emotions, and discovers how little a say he is given in the matter, and this causes both Miranda and Cody heartbreak.

In one sweep, Cody Manywounds has to grow up and learn that there is more to the world than just himself and his feelings to consider.

Written by Kim Firmston, “Hook Up” is powerful, well written, and suspenseful with characters that are appealing, convincing and complex.

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Ontario Birchbark: Special Section providing news from Ontario

# Grassy Narrows re-lights sacred fire for 10-year blockade anniversary

By David P. Ball  
Birchbark Writer

Slant Lake, Ont.

In 10 years, the small log cabin by Slant Lake—just off-reserve at Asubpeeschoseewagong (Grassy Narrows) First Nation in northwest Ontario—has been home to hundreds, from anti-clearcutting community members to non-Native environmental allies and warriors of other Indigenous nations.

On Dec. 2, the sacred fire by the Slant Lake blockade was re-lit, the one-room cabin warmed, and stories of a decade of Canada's longest forestry blockade told once again as community members marked the occasion.

"Many people from many different nations have basically been holding strong here," said Judy da Silva, who organized the blockade a decade ago with her sister Roberta Keesick. "We need to form alliances with many different nations, so we can stand stronger together."

"Because if we don't walk together on this Earth—this is all our planet—then we lose. The corporations are really powerful. They have a lot of money that we don't (have). The thing that drives us is our heart. We're very poor people, but it's our hearts that make us strong, and keep us going. When we all stand together, we become really powerful."

The blockade began on Dec. 2, 2002—after months of preparation by Keesick and da Silva's ad hoc Grassy Narrows Environmental Group—two residents stepped onto the gravel road at Slant Lake and stood, arms raised, in front of a timber-laden logging truck.

Six years, and an international environmental campaign later, the community celebrated as paper giant AbitibiBowater corporation cancelled its logging on Grassy Narrows' traditional territories. Likewise, the small, remote community fended off Weyerhaeuser, another multi-national corporation.

Another victory came when the Ontario Superior Court ruled in 2011 that the province was infringing on Aboriginal rights by allowing logging of Crown Lands where operations would harm the Anishinaabe's traditional way of life—centred around hunting, trapping and fishing. Under the 1873 Treaty 3, that way of life was guaranteed by the Crown, the judge declared.

For blockader Crissy Swain, the blockade was about more than the clear-cut logging. It was about the community coming together for future generations.

"What really pushed me was my children, wanting to make sure they have what I had, and how to

survive," Swain told Birchbark as she sat by the crackling sacred fire that has remained lit for much of the past decade at Slant Lake.

"If it's up to us now to teach our children, then we need to do something to stop the clear-cutting so that we're able to teach them those things."

Swain remembers the day she decided to block the trucks and take a stand. Shortly after her stepfather passed away in 2002, she was driving off the reserve with her sister, discussing how they would pass on his teachings about the land to their children.

"All of a sudden, this big logging truck drove by," Swain remembered. "We thought, 'Let's do it—let's stop it!'"

"We went home, found a babysitter and told them we were going out to get wood. We drove out, and we kept stopping to offer tobacco to the trees. I would say it was for our children and to protect the land. That was part of initiating what was coming. A few days later, on Dec. 2, I came up here and I remember seeing young people laying on the road, and a lot of people from my community out. At that time (...) I never pictured 10 years!"

For Shoon Keewatin, founder of the Grassy Narrows Trappers Centre and a local addictions counsellor, the blockade was part of a long history of community struggle.

Like most reserves, Grassy Narrows has faced a litany of crises. Many children were abused in residential school. The band itself was relocated from their remote islands across the lake to the current site, accessible by road from the town of Kenora, one hour away. In the 1980s, Dryden Chemicals dumped tonnes of deadly mercury into the English-Wabigoon river system, poisoning the waterway and contaminating the fish.

Keewatin said the loss of their main source of food and livelihood led many to alcoholism. And though the health impacts of that disaster remain today, the clear-cut logging was simply the last straw.

"It's another thing they're taking away from us, from our people," Keewatin said. "They're removing one more thing from us being a people. First they took our language in residential school. Then it was our fishing and the mercury in the river system. Now it's the logging."

But the hunter, fisher and trapper, who built the Slant Lake cabin with local youth, told Birchbark that there is also much to be celebrated about the blockade, despite slow progress negotiating with the province. But the gains were not merely political.

"They've stopped the clear-cutting and made the province

listen," he said.

"For a lot of the young people, I think it's made them more aware of the land around them, and how much they're connected to it. Especially the youth I was working with when we were building the log cabin. They suddenly realized how connected they were to the land."

Of the young people who mobilized around her community's blockade, Swain concurs.

"I feel like in the last 10 years I've been really discovering myself, and discovering our true history," Swain said. "My eyes are open more to the way the world is; it's teaching me what I really want."

"Even after 10 years, it feels good to know we're still inspiring people. I still have hope, and I still have that fire in me."



The logging road blockade near Grassy Narrows First Nation marked its tenth anniversary on Dec. 2. Blockaders gathered at the Slant Lake site to honour the occasion.

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Canada

# [ Idle No More ] Bill receives assent, but chiefs will have last word



PHOTO: BRAD CROWFOOT

Hundreds of First Nations people and supporters jammed into Churchill Square in downtown Edmonton, waving signs and chanting on Dec. 10.

By Jennifer Ashawasegai  
Windspeaker Contributor

## OTTAWA

First Nations in the country have reached the end of their patience. That was noticeably evident during what's being called the 'Scuffle on the Hill' on Dec. 4, 2012.

Chiefs were in a special assembly hosted by the Assembly of First Nations in Gatineau. They were expressing their frustration on the legislation contained in the Conservative government's Omnibus Bill or Bill C-45. First Nation leadership marched to Parliament Hill where they gave speeches, and since the bill was being debated inside the building, they decided to go in there so Canadian politicians could hear their concerns in person.

They were worried about the many impacts contained in the legislation, including changes to the Indian Act, land claims and the Navigable Waters Act.

Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee looked as though he was trying to push past security to get into the House. In a telephone interview, he said, "We thought the Minister of Indian Affairs was

going to come out, but he didn't come out. The Minister of Natural Resources [Joe Oliver] came out and his remarks were the same old, same old sentiments that, you know, they're doing everything for First Nations, respecting the environment, they're going to create jobs for First Nations," Madahbee told Windspeaker.

"After he made his little statement, he started to get some feedback from us. We didn't agree with his approach and he walked back into the room." This was when the 'scuffle' happened. Madahbee said, "When we tried to follow him into the area to continue the discussion, to make our views known, security stopped us."

Madahbee didn't agree with the legislation and said the government was going against the commitment from the Prime Minister made at the Crown/First Nations Gathering at the beginning of 2012. Madahbee suggests the omnibus bill has done the opposite.

"We have a hardened sentiment that the government is definitely not our friend."

In the background of the Hill Scuffle, a head taller than the other chiefs, Lake Huron Regional Chief Isadore Day could be spotted holding the replica of the 1764 Treaty of Niagara Covenant Chain wampum belt.

"It was very interesting that Minister Oliver would come out and say they want to work with us, they want to do things right, all the while, going back into the House to debate the bill," said Day.

Both Ontario chiefs give credit to Onion Lake First Nation Chief Wallace Fox. It was his request that led them on a march to the Hill. But even Fox doesn't take all the credit.

"I got permission from the Elders to talk about going to the House of Commons where they were debating our future."

There's not one thing Fox thinks is good with the legislation. He said, "It's open season for industry without any consultation on the environment, on the land, the waters, everything." He said the land is also at stake through other areas in the bill and takes issue with land privatization. He said, "without the land we're no longer a people."

Meanwhile, in the House of Commons, politicians continued their debate on Bill C-45. Opposition party members were requesting clauses from different sections be deleted or amended. Green Party Leader Elizabeth May asked for several amendments with respect to First Nations, including land claims within the Northern Growth and Jobs Act as well as the Navigable Waters Act.

The issues with government reach beyond the borders of Canada.

"Obviously the land is one of the most important issues at stake here that's common to all of us," said Madahbee. "We've witnessed the Prime Minister and some of the Premiers going around the world, trying to sell out the resources that belong rightfully to First Nations."

Like Grand Council Chief Madahbee, Chief Fox indicated government tactics know no bounds. He referenced the Canada-China trade agreement.

"What right does Stephen Harper have to go overseas to enter a treaty with another country when they didn't even get permission from us? This is our land and this is our resource," said Fox.

Chief Day agreed with both. "The federal government is



PHOTO: SHARI NARINE

Sylvia McAdam: one of four women who organized the day of action, Idle No More.

going to do what they want. This Prime Minister has clearly indicated that. So, it's up to us to ensure we can respond back and be proactive where we need to and act swiftly and put our foot down."

On the political front, Madahbee didn't reveal the strategies of the Anishinabek Nation. He said, "We've lobbied our brothers and sisters from other parts of the country. All I'm going to say at this point is, is that there's planning going on here."

Chief Fox said it was definitely time for change and says the people are ready. He said the incident on the Hill reached far wide. Because of social media, news of it went around the globe. There's also been a positive response from the people. He said,

"People are saying it's time we stand up to this government. We are supporting you, we are behind you and we will continue to do what we can."

The movement has already begun by the grassroots people. The 'Idle No More' campaign was launched shortly after the demonstration on the Hill. There have been demonstrations throughout the land in the form of sit-ins, rallies and marches in various places across the country during December.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's omnibus bill was given royal assent on Dec. 15. There are plans, however, underway for more rallies and demonstrations across the land. And chiefs agree, it's time to get more aggressive to be heard.

Full coverage of  
IdleNoMore:  
[www.ammsa.com](http://www.ammsa.com)



# Idle No More a nation-wide movement



Idle No More rally held in downtown Edmonton on Dec. 10.

PHOTO: BRAD CROWFOOT

By Shari Narine  
Windspeaker Contributor

## EDMONTON

The rallying cry of “we have had enough” was heard loudly across the country as thousands of First Nations people gathered in cities from Vancouver to Happy Valley-Goose Bay to Whitehorse on Dec. 10.

“Idle No More. We’re telling the Harper government they do not have our consent,” said Sylvia McAdam, one of four women who organized the Idle No More movement. McAdam addressed the boisterous crowd of hundreds that filled Churchill Square in downtown Edmonton.

The country-wide rallies were in response to Bill C-45, the federal government’s omnibus bill that threatens to roll over First Nations rights in order to bring in budget changes.

McAdam said she told her fellow-organizers they needed to take action because “acquiescence means, in law, if you’re silent, your silence is consent.” As mothers and grandmothers, she said, they could not accept Harper’s actions, stripping land and rights from their children and grandchildren.

“Harper does not have my consent,” said McAdam.

She said the movement did not exclude men but naturally gravitated around the women.

“This is the power of women,” she said.

Onion Lake Cree Nation Chief Wallace Fox, who was instrumental in leading chiefs to Parliament Hill on Dec. 4, the first day of the AFN’s Special Chiefs Assembly, agreed with McAdam’s assessment.

“There was a prophecy many years ago (that) it’s the women who are going to rise and us as leaders we need to stand and

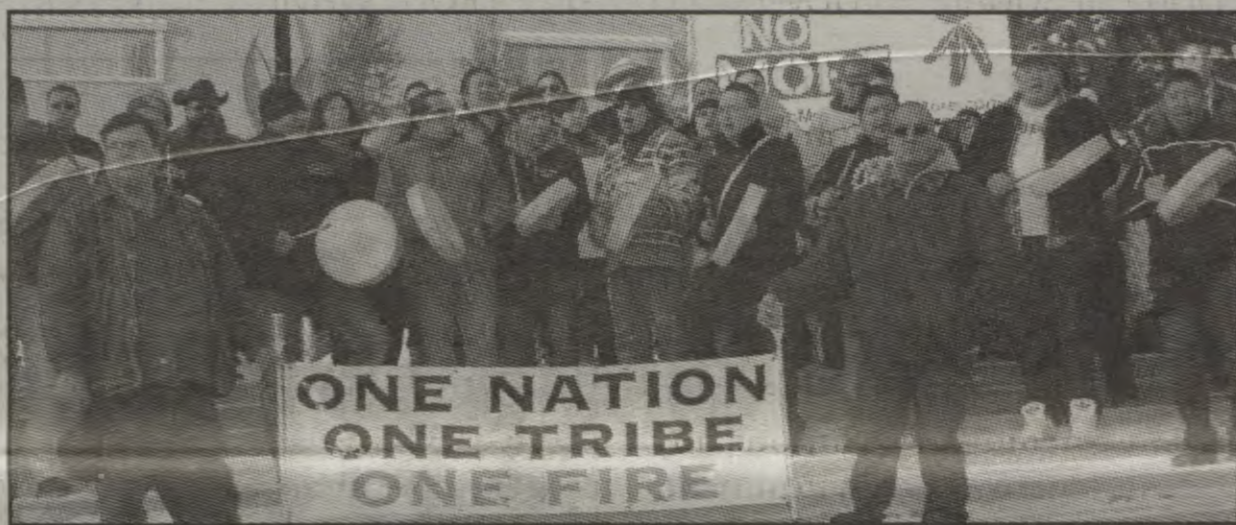


PHOTO: SHARI NARINE

“One Nation One Tribe One Fire” was evident as First Nations gathered across the country to say they would defend their rights.

support this movement and this is why many of us are here today,” he said.

“This movement that is taking place, Canada doesn’t like because they can’t control it. They can’t control people and most of all they can’t control Indians,” said Bill Erasmus, Dene Chief and Regional National Chief with the Assembly of First Nations. “Why can’t they control Indians? Because we’re free! And because we have treaties. Those treaties are what protect this land.”

Signs throughout the crowd drove home Erasmus’ point: “Our treaty is eternal,” “Honour our treaties,” “Free, prior and informed consent,” “We are sovereign,” and “We don’t own the earth, the earth owns us.”

Erasmus referred to the North American Free Trade Agreement and more recent talks being undertaken by the United Nations to extend the boundary for international waters from 200 miles to 300 miles off a country’s shoreline.

“Canada is not including us in those talks. So what do we have to do?” asked Erasmus. “We have to speak up.”

Chief Cameron Alexis of the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation pointed out the recent treaty Canada signed with China, which also did not include First Nations in negotiations.

Alexis noted that First Nations’ concerns were not limited to the federal government.

“The premier of this province has not even recognized consultation....Discussions are taking place in a back room and we’re not even part of it. It’s wrong. We need to be there at that table right from the beginning, on day one. Right from the first second it starts, we’ve got to be there. We have not been there because we haven’t been invited as chiefs. It’s wrong,” he said.

Fox was adamant that First Nations were not battling the government.

“We’re going to continue to fight no more. All we’re doing is reaffirming we have an inherent right to this land. That’s all we’re doing today,” he said.

That was also the message McAdam delivered.

“The reason these movements have gained momentum and have become so powerful is not because of leadership ... but it’s because of you, each one of you who is gathering together here today,” said McAdam. “We are not fighting... we are defending.”

Other locations for Idle No More rallies on Dec. 10 included Lethbridge and Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, and Toronto. Another rally was scheduled on Parliament Hill on Dec. 21, after press deadline.

## March is just the beginning for BC’s Idle No More



PHOTO: CARA MCKENNA

A vocal and energetic group marched from Main St. at 5th St. to the Vancouver Art Gallery waving flags and beating drums.

By Cara McKenna  
Windspeaker Contributor

## VANCOUVER

Danita Nez and Steven Kakimoosit, two Native Education College students, organized a protest against the federal government’s omnibus C-45 bill in just five days.

Now they’re thinking bigger.

The Dec. 10 protest, one of many national Idle No More events, brought out a large and energetic group that marched from Main St. at 5th St. to the Vancouver Art Gallery toting signs, waving flags and beating drums.

It all ended with a gathering and drum circle at the art gallery steps.

“One of the biggest things is land,” said Kakimoosit.

Kakimoosit and Nez urged the protesters to continue standing up for their rights beyond that day.

“This is not the only day [we will stand up],” said Nez.

The two want to turn into more of an organization, and set up a meeting on Jan. 17 at Joe’s Café to start hashing out details with anyone who is interested.

They eventually want to take the group nationally and intend to take their fight before the United Nations pleading criminal treatment of First Nations.

“We acknowledge the fact that we’re a small portion of millions of Aboriginal people,” said Kakimoosit.

# All My Relations: A work of art

By Barb Nahwegahbow  
Windspeaker Contributor

## TORONTO

Toronto, with an Aboriginal population of more than 75,000, it is often called Canada's largest reserve. However, there has never been anything that has proclaimed the presence of Aboriginal people in the city as loudly and as clearly as All My Relations, an art mural unveiled in Toronto's Allan Gardens on Nov. 9. Allan Gardens is located in the heart of downtown.

Toronto City Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam whose Ward includes Allan Gardens as well as the largest concentration of Aboriginal people in the city, said it's about time the First People in Toronto had the opportunity to tell their story. First Peoples have such a distinct history in Canada and nothing comes close to what they have experienced, she told Windspeaker, and you can't talk about the history of Toronto or the history of Canada without talking about the First Peoples and the contributions they've made.

All My Relations is an artwork of monumental proportions. The mural is the size of two football fields, more than 90 square metres. It's been painted on construction hoarding that surrounds the Gerrard Watermain Replacement Project that is expected to take at least three years to complete. From the initial discussions about the concept to the unveiling, it took one year and more than artists to complete the mural.

The bulk of the painting was done during the hot summer months. Toronto experienced a record-breaking heat wave this past summer with temperatures climbing to the mid-30s. With the humidity added, it felt more like the mid-40s.

The heat wasn't the only weather challenge. The impact of Hurricane Sandy was felt by the mural when high winds whipped through the park uprooting a nearby tree and tearing off about 20 boards. A call went out to the community and people quickly



PHOTO: BARB NAHWEGAHBOW

Toronto City Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam in front of All My Relations mural at the unveiling ceremony in Allan Gardens Nov. 9, 2012

descended on Allan Gardens to repair the damage.

It was the memorial wall for the missing and murdered Aboriginal women that sustained the damage. The wall is located on the east side where, according to traditional teachings, all life begins. The painting, done predominantly in blue, with its vast expanses of water and sky depicts the moon teachings because of the special relationship women have with the moon. It portrays the beauty and power of Aboriginal women, and with its strong affirmation of all life, it is a fitting tribute to the murdered and missing women.

Nationally-recognized award winning artists Tannis Nielsen and Phillip Cote were the lead artists for the project. They say the mural has already brought out the best in neighbourhood

residents and members of Toronto's Aboriginal community. During the hot summer days, people brought food and cold drinks for the artists. More importantly, though, Nielsen said, they provided daily encouragement for the artists to keep at the task and see the project through to completion. New and positive relationships were formed and Nielsen says this can lead to an understanding that we are all related, we are all connected and we can come together in spite of our differences to create a renewed sense of community.

The themes of the other four paintings comprising the mural are dedicated to Community, Water, Anishnawbe Teachings and History of the Land. Lead artist Phillip Cote explains that the project's Elders, Dorothy

Peters and Alex Jacobs were crucial to the success of the art project. They shared traditional teachings and challenged the artists to root their vision for the mural in Indigenous values, beliefs and community structures.

In addition, Cote drew inspiration from the work of the late Norval Morrisseau, and from The Mishomis Book authored by Eddie Benton-Banai. Cote worked on the largest painting in the mural titled History of the Land which spans the distance from the beginning of time with the birth of the cosmos, the creation of Original Man, the first ceremonies, the renewal of the earth on the back of the turtle, and on until the current time. The colours are bright, the images well-executed and there is no doubt that this painting and

in fact, the entire mural is Aboriginal story telling at its best.

The project was not without its challenges, Cote says, we became like a family and families do not always operate in a harmonious way. Tannis Nielsen concurs and says, it was only by sharing our blood, sweat and tears and a whole lot of love that we were able to work together as relatives and to achieve what we've done. Other challenges had to do with relying on multiple sources of funding, says Nielsen, and delays in receiving funds.

A project like this one is vital to our First Nations community locally and nationally, says Cote, in explaining what motivated him to get involved. It represents a reflection of a great past, but more importantly, it represents the future and cultural identity for our youth today, he says.

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## Sports Briefs

By Sam Laskaris

### Hockey equipment drive

Thanks in large part to a Junior A hockey coach, Aboriginal youth in a northern Ontario community received some much needed equipment.

Alex Welker, an assistant coach with the Ontario Junior Hockey League's Whitby Fury, spearheaded an equipment drive for the Sandy Lake First Nation in early October.

Welker's son Alex is a first-year teacher in the northern Ontario community. The younger Welker told his father the First Nation has a decent arena but not all youth had the equipment to play hockey.

With the assistance of some other organizations, the elder Welker then started collecting used equipment to send to the First Nation.

More than 400 items, including 70 pairs of skates, were collected for the fly-in community. The Sandy Lake First Nation is located about 600 kilometres north of Thunder Bay.

Besides equipment donors, the drive also required the assistance of several others. For example, the equipment was driven to Thunder Bay in a truck for free. And then an Aboriginal-owned airline, Wasaya Airways, took over from there, flying the equipment, again for free, into the Sandy Lake First Nation.

The equipment was then brought to the local school where members of the community were able to sort through and choose equipment they could use.

### Olympian lends a hand

Former Canadian Olympic cross-country skier Beckie Scott is once again helping out with the Ski Fit North program in her home province of Alberta. This marks the fourth year Scott has been involved with the program, which helps to introduce Aboriginal youth to cross-country skiing. The program is operated by Cross Country Alberta and Cross Country Canada.

Scott, who is now 38, grew up in Vermilion, Alta. She competed in three Winter Olympics, starting with the 1998 Nagano Games in Japan.

Next she competed at the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics. During those games she was presented with a bronze medal in the five-kilometre pursuit event. But her medal was later upgraded to gold when the two Russian competitors who placed ahead of her were disqualified for using a performance-enhancing drug.

Scott won another Olympic medal from the 2006 Games in Turin, Italy. She captured a silver medal, along with her teammate Sara Renner, in the team sprint event.

A year ago the Ski Fit North program visited 21 communities. More than 3,300 children, ranging in age from 6 to 14, took part in the program.

Scott and other program organizers bring along skis and poles for the youngsters to use. Besides introducing cross-country skiing to those who have never tried the sport, during each Ski Fit North visit Scott also talks to program participants on what to strive for in sports and life. She also preaches about the importance of healthy eating habits.

### Kahnawake lands nationals

Kahnawake, the Mohawk territory located south of Montreal, has been awarded hosting rights for the 2013 National Aboriginal Hockey Championships (NAHC).

This marks the second time Kahnawake has hosted the event. It first staged the NAHC in 2006.

The NAHC, which primarily features bantam- and midget-aged (14 to 17) players, has been held annually since 2002.

A total of 16 clubs (eight female, eight male) are expected to compete in the 2013 tournament.

The squads expected to enter both female and male teams represent the following areas: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Eastern Door and the North (Quebec), Team Atlantic (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland) and Team North (Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut).

The majority of the tournament games will be held at the Kahnawake Sports Complex, which has a capacity of about 1,500 spectators. Some matches will also be staged in nearby Brossard.

The seven-day tournament will begin on April 28 and continue until May 4.

### Back in California

After a year of playing pro hockey in Italy, Ryan Constant is back in North America this season, once again playing in California.

Constant, a 27-year-old defenceman from the Opaskwayak Cree Nation in Manitoba, had spent the 2011-12 campaign in Milan, Italy with a club called Hockey Milano Rossoblu.

As for this season, he's playing in the East Coast Hockey League with the Stockton Thunder. Constant had played two seasons for the California-based Thunder before heading overseas last year.

Since turning pro in 2006, Constant has also toiled for three other minor pro franchises in North America.

He's seen action with the ECHL's Charlotte Checkers as well as a pair of American Hockey League squads, the Hartford Wolf Pack and Springfield Falcons.

Constant had 11 points, including three goals, in his first 23 games in Stockton this season.

# [ sports ] Work is well underway for next NAIG



From left to right: Joe Daniels, Dave Canadian, Glen Pratt and Norman Ettawacappo.

By Sam Laskaris  
Windspeaker Contributor

### REGINA

Though their event is still 19 months away, officials with the 2014 North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) are working full steam ahead.

Regina was awarded the 2014 NAIG in May of 2011. The host society has completed many recent steps as the games preparations heat up.

Regina officials have a goal in mind: to make this the best NAIG ever.

"We're going to try," said Glen Pratt, the host society's chief executive officer. "We've adopted a theme called Raising The Bar. We want to make sure the games are done a little better each time."

The 2014 NAIG now also has a logo, unveiled in early December. The logo design features a medicine wheel along with an athlete's figure in motion.

The logo includes all Indigenous people in North America. An eagle feather at the top of the logo represents First Nations. A sash at the bottom of the logo represents the Metis. And the Inuit are represented by the ulu (traditional knife) in the right part of the logo.

Pratt, who was brought on board this past July, was the first staff member to be hired by the host society. Then an executive assistant and a sport and venue manager were added in September. That was followed by two more hirings in October; a sponsorship manager and a chief financial officer.

Four more staff members are expected to be added early in 2013.

All of the staff members work out of an office located in the Orr Centre in Regina. Officials will rent that space until the completion of the games.

Pratt said the majority of the NAIG preparations have to be

done before the estimated 6,000 athletes, coaches and support staff show up to Regina in July 2014.

"The brunt of the work is done beforehand," he said. "About 90 per cent of the work is about planning and 10 per cent is implementation."

Officials from the host society received positive reviews when they presented a progress report to the NAIG Council at a meeting held in mid-November in Buffalo.

The next major meeting, a two-day affair, is expected to be staged in Regina this coming April. That event, which will share all updated Games' info, will include representatives from all of the participating teams for the 2014 NAIG.

The games are expected to attract entrants from all 10 Canadian provinces, the three Canadian territories as well as 13 regions from across the United States.

Not all of the preparations, however, have gone entirely smoothly. Officials had a bit of an accommodations concern for a short time.

"One little glitch we had is that the public school board won't allow us to house some of the athletes," Pratt said.

About 2,000 athletes are expected to stay at the University of Regina. There is no concern with that arrangement deal. But the original plan was to also have as many as 4,000 athletes sleeping and being based out of six to eight public schools in the city.

Since that plan was nixed, officials are now planning to house some athletes at Regina-based Catholic schools.

Based on previous accommodation figures, Pratt estimates officials might only need about 2,000 beds at Catholic schools. That's because about one-third of those who participate in the NAIG usually end up finding alternative



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

accommodations.

"Some of them will stay in an RV," Pratt said. "Some of them will camp. And some of them will stay in hotels. It's up to each group how they do their accommodations."

No new facilities will have to be built for the 2014 NAIG. Pratt views this as both a good thing and a bad thing.

"Everything is already in place," he said. "But unfortunately there will be no legacy (as there will be no new facilities constructed)."

The NAIG were first held in 1990 in Edmonton. The games have been held six times since then but with no consistency in the number of years between competitions.

The gap between games has been as little as two years and as large as five (1997 and then again in 2002). But this mark will increase to six years when the Regina games are staged.

That's because the last NAIG were held in 2008 in Cowichan Valley, B.C. The 2011 games were supposed to be held in Milwaukee but that competition was cancelled after the host society withdrew its bid to stage the event.

Since there isn't sufficient time for another city to step up and host the 2011 games, the NAIG Council scrapped the event and decided to look forward to 2014.

[ health ]

# Another Conservative Minister brushes off concerns of nations

By Shari Narine  
Windspeaker Contributor

THUNDER BAY, Ont.

A few weeks ago, Alvin Fiddler was informed that as much as 80 per cent of members in some Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities were addicted to painkillers.

"That means whole communities are being impacted," said the NAN deputy grand chief.

Now the battle against painkillers such as OxyContin has become even that much harder.

Despite warnings from First Nations, tribal police forces, provincial governments and Health Canada has given the go-ahead to the production of generic OxyContin.

"It's not good news for us on many fronts," said Fiddler. "The already high rates we have of our communities abusing and misusing these painkillers, especially the OxyContin, it just means the numbers will continue

to escalate."

In November 2009, NAN declared a prescription drug abuse state of emergency. That declaration still stands, he said.

The Special Chiefs Assembly for the Assembly of First Nations recently passed a resolution, which Fiddler seconded, calling, in part, for the AFN to lobby Health Canada to reconsider its decision, as well as prevent generic forms of OxyContin being included on the drug benefit list through the First Nations and Inuit Health Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program.

The Liberal Opposition has also called for the federal government to reconsider.

Ontario chiefs joined Carolyn Bennett, Aboriginal Affairs critic for the Liberals, for a news conference Dec. 4, the first day of the Special Chiefs Assembly held in Gatineau, Que.

"It was very powerful to hear from the NAN chiefs that this is to them a matter of life and death," said Bennett. "It's a public health emergency that the minister is refusing to deal with."

Bennett, a medical doctor, said when OxyContin came on the market in 1996 it was unclear that the painkiller would be so widely prescribed and prove to be so extremely addictive. Almost 20 years later, the impact of OxyContin is clear and Bennett said she is uncertain as to why Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq is rushing to approve generic forms of the drug.

"(Aglukkaq) says she doesn't have the power (to stop it)," said Bennett, "but even if she refuses to reverse her decision she has the ability to not place it on the drug benefit formulary for First Nations and Inuit Health."

Not only has OxyContin led to addiction issues, but it has also led to increased violence and a growing black market.

In a news release, the Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service, which serves 35 of the 49 NAN communities, stated "This year alone, illicit OxyContin drugs valued at over \$1 million have been seized and prevented from ending up in northern communities. The market for these drugs in northern

communities is so lucrative that criminal organizations from the Greater Toronto Area are targeting the NAN communities."

Fiddler said communities are taking action to help those who are addicted to OxyContin by treating them with suboxone, which seems to be more effective than methadone. However, suboxone is not readily available. The resolution, which was approved by the chiefs unanimously, also calls for the AFN to lobby the NIHB program to approve the use of suboxone for clinical medical detoxification, which would allow First Nation members to remain in their communities for treatment.

Bennett said it is unclear when the generic forms of OxyContin will be available, but "within hours of the patent expiring, (Aglukkaq) approved six companies to make the generic version." However, Agglukkaq has yet to meet with First Nations.

"If the minister of health agreed to work with us that would be a good first step, so we could begin to work on a comprehensive

strategy. But based on her letter... her message basically is that she has no time to meet," said Fiddler.

In an email response, Blossom Leung, media relations officer with Health Canada, said the decision to allow for generic forms of OxyContin was made "based on a scientific review of evidence" and when used as recommended, the drug was considered safe and effective. She noted that the government "is taking strong action against the misuse of controlled release formulations of oxycodone."

Leung also noted that approximately \$90 million annually is invested to support treatment centres and drug and alcohol abuse prevention services in more than 550 First Nations and Inuit communities across Canada.

That funding is not enough, said Fiddler, if members are going to be treated in their home communities.

The Liberals are calling for the creation of a task force to study the implications of allowing generic forms of OxyContin on the market.

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## Electro cellist Derksen

(Continued from page 11.)

"I also find the cello – the way I play it with foot pedals – it lends well to hip hop," she explained. "I love playing night clubs and live beats. I want to take the cello away from the concert hall. That's been a goal of mine since I was young."

With festival performances everywhere from Europe to Texas' esteemed South by Southwest (SXSW) festival, Derksen has even accompanied hip hop legend Kanye West on the stage at Vancouver's GM Place Arena.

"I got some street cred," she laughs, sarcastically. "He sometimes hires a little string quartet when he plays. So I've done that a few times with him here at the big stadium."

Last year, Derksen toured to Paris, France with the Beat Nation Live collective, a group of Aboriginal hip hop artists who are gaining increasing recognition for their work. Part of what she enjoys most about the cross-country creative collaboration is the surge of new

music that emerges.

"We can't get over-comfortable with the material because we're constantly making it," she said. "That helps with authenticity."

But what, exactly, is authenticity? In an indie-music world that occasionally borders on gimmicky and eccentric at the expense of substance, how does a musician stay both fresh and true to themselves?

"Authenticity's a pretty tricky one," she said, pausing to ponder Windspeaker's question about defining authenticity. "Authenticity is a hard thing to quantify. How do you measure what's authentic? It's a big can of worms."

"It's that string that goes from your heart to the outside world, and how to make that string not get too lax (...). I'm also many, many things; I'm not just an Aboriginal cellist. I equate it to being a jeweller – taking all these little bits and pieces of things that I like, and are a part of me, and then putting them together to make something only I can make."

## Kinnie Starr new cd

(Continued from page 10.)

"If I go into the audience, I feel closer to people and I feel less shy. People mistake that for fearlessness, but it's actually fear that drives me to do that. That's how I make peace with being on stage. It's a lifeline, for me, and it just feels that people like it because it's different. But I like it because it makes me feel less alone."

Starr – of mixed-race Mohawk ancestry – is a member of the all-Aboriginal Beat Nation Live hip hop group, which last summer traveled to France and has released a collection of German remixes. Her music continues to be informed by overlapping identities that are as intricate and complex as her unique blend of rap, pop, rock, punk, electronica and spoken word.

"I do feel there's quite a strong movement of awareness of how half-breed people fit into the complexities of the Indigenous

landscape as we know it," she said. "That's exciting to see, but I haven't figured it out."

She's got cred amongst political activist movements – her earlier song, 'Rock the Boat' is a staple of Indigenous mixtapes – but as a self-described introvert, Starr has spent years finding a space to comfortably express her views and politics.

"It's the backbone of where I write from," she said. "But I'm actually a loner. I spend most of my time alone."

"Social movements—in terms of organized protest—is not where my forté is. I don't work well in crowds; I have serious anxiety. Even when I work on stage, I can't really talk to people very well. But the landscape of change is created by lots of different types of activists... I'm trying to make music aimed at making people feel celebratory."

Kinnie Starr's Indiegogo fundraising campaign for 'Kiss It' runs until the end of 2012.

## School offers kids a glimpse past high school

By Sam Laskaris  
Windspeaker Contributor

WATERLOO, Ont.

For the third straight year Wilfrid Laurier University officials hosted an event combining a bit of lacrosse with some post-secondary school awareness.

The third annual High School Friendship Lacrosse Tournament was staged at the university's Waterloo campus on recently.

About 70 Aboriginal teenagers, from five high schools in Brantford, took part in the day. Not all of the participants though were in their final year of high school. That's because the program was open to all Aboriginal high school students from Brantford, regardless of their grade.

The event moniker, however, is somewhat misleading. A tournament, featuring games in which scores were actually kept, was not held.

Instead, the day did include a lacrosse skills training session. Among those helping out was Johnny Powless, a current pro star with the Rochester

Knighthawks of the National Lacrosse League. Powless, who was chosen as the NLL's rookie of the year and helped the Knighthawks capture the league championship this past season, is a previous participant of the day himself.

A former NLL star, Cam Bomberry, also helped out with this year's training session.

Others that lent a hand were Lynn Orth, the head coach of the Laurier women's lacrosse program, as well as some players from the Laurier men's team.

Those that took part in the day were also able to tour the campus and meet members of Laurier's Aboriginal Student Association.

"The whole goal of the day is to get them thinking of post-secondary school," Kandice Baptiste, Laurier's Aboriginal Students Recruitment and Retention Officer, said of the high school attendees.

All of those that took part in the day received a welcome bag, which included a guidebook detailing all of the programs and activities offered at Laurier. A brochure on the university's Aboriginal student association was also handed out to all.

Various draw prizes (water

bottles and T-shirts) were also presented to some recipients.

Though she obviously hopes some of the Aboriginal teens who took part in the day will eventually enrol at Laurier, Baptiste said that this was not the main purpose of the event – to recruit potential students for the university.

"I want the students to find the best fit for themselves," she said. "It's all about further education. It's not all about coming to Laurier."

Baptiste said there was a fairly even split among male and female participants. And not all of them are lacrosse players.

"Anybody is welcome, whether they play lacrosse or not," she said. "You don't have to be a lacrosse player to take part. The skills and drills we do are not super complicated."

The day was open to high school students from Six Nations as well as the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. Students from these two areas all attend one of five high schools in Brantford.

In order to take part in the day they had to first register with their guidance counsellors at their high school.

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[ footprints ] Jim Sinclair

# Sinclair put Métis in Canada's Constitution

By Dianne Meili

The man responsible for Métis being entrenched in section 35 of the Canadian Constitution passed away Nov. 9 after working half a decade for Aboriginal rights.

"You can say a lot about a leader like Jim Sinclair. Chances are we'll never see another one like him. He had a commitment to our community and he took it to the national level and international level. But I think what's really important is that he was able to embrace his family and love them after all the time he, and they, were apart. He sacrificed a lot while he lobbied for Aboriginal rights," said long-time friend Don Ross.

"His wife and kids could have said 'Dad, don't run again. We need you here with us' but they never did. They lived here in Saskatchewan while he stayed in Ottawa."

His children and their mother Agnes, grandchildren and great-grandchildren surrounded Sinclair in the time before he died.

"That's the thing about these great leaders – most people don't realize what they give up in the sense of family life while they're fighting political battles to better our lives. "He was at peace in the end," said Ross.

Born a dispossessed Métis in Punnichy, Sask.—an Aboriginal squatter community in the Qu'Appelle Valley— Sinclair's first battle was with alcohol.

He kicked the addiction with the help of sports—specifically golf—and helped establish the Saskatchewan Native Addictions Council. By 1964 he was a fieldworker for the Métis Society of Saskatchewan, and entered politics in 1967, becoming president of what is now known as the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan in 1971. He held the post for the next 18 years.

Standing over six feet tall,

Sinclair's physical strength helped him win an early battle with a church leader in La Loche, Sask.

"Jim was helping to organize the Dene up there, and the local priest called him the devil," recalled Ross. "They had a fistfight right there on main street and Jim took him out."

"There's a picture of Jim wearing his buckskin coat and Billy Jack hat standing face to face with Trudeau back in 1978. They're a foot apart from each other, staring each other down. Jim never gave in."

He became known for his eloquent, fiery speeches, which were never scripted but came straight from the heart, Ross attests. A poignant moment came when he spoke at the failed First Ministers Conference on Aboriginal Rights in March 1987; Prime Minister Mulroney was visibly awed by the passionate and articulate case Sinclair made.

During his early, turbulent years of activism, Sinclair led movements to take over the Department of Northern Saskatchewan building, and even Waskesiu Park in 1983 before an athletic event.

"He had to have the Métis voice heard, and so he got the dignitaries' attention before they had their party," Ross said.

Even during lunch breaks at the parliamentary restaurant, Sinclair asserted his Aboriginal right.

"You had to wear a tie if you ate there. And if you didn't have one, they kept some at the entrance to put on. Jim just ignored the men at the door and walked in" while some of his entourage tied them around their heads like a like a bandana.

"He always said 'that's your (European) outfit, not ours.'"

Whether Sinclair met with the Prime Minister, the Queen, or

the Pope, "he'd wear a blazer and a scarf, but never a tie," said Ross.

As head of the Métis in Saskatchewan, Sinclair fought for increased housing, employment, and addiction treatment for the Métis and non-status Aboriginals.

During the 1970s, he also helped establish the Native Council of Canada, now known as the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, which he led from 1994 to 1996.

It was in 1982 that he successfully lobbied to have the Métis included in the Constitution Act.

Other Saskatchewan institutions, besides the Saskatchewan Native Addictions centre, owe their start to Sinclair: the Gabriel Dumont Institute, an advanced training and trades school; the Saskatchewan Native Economic Development Corporation; and the Urban Native Housing Corporations and Provincial Métis Housing Corporation.

In 2006, he was recognized with a lifetime achievement award at the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards; and this past October he was honored at the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nation assembly.

Both Sinclair's father and grandfather lost their status after returning from war. Though he crusaded for Métis rights most of his life, Sinclair was re-enfranchised in the late 1990s after affirming his rights before a judge following a hunting-out-of-season charge.

Last September, when his oldest son—who was the chief of Gordon's First Nation—passed away, Sinclair was given his headdress in a ceremony. Though he was already being treated as an Elder, called upon for advice by many organizations, after his son's death he increased his dedication to Aboriginal

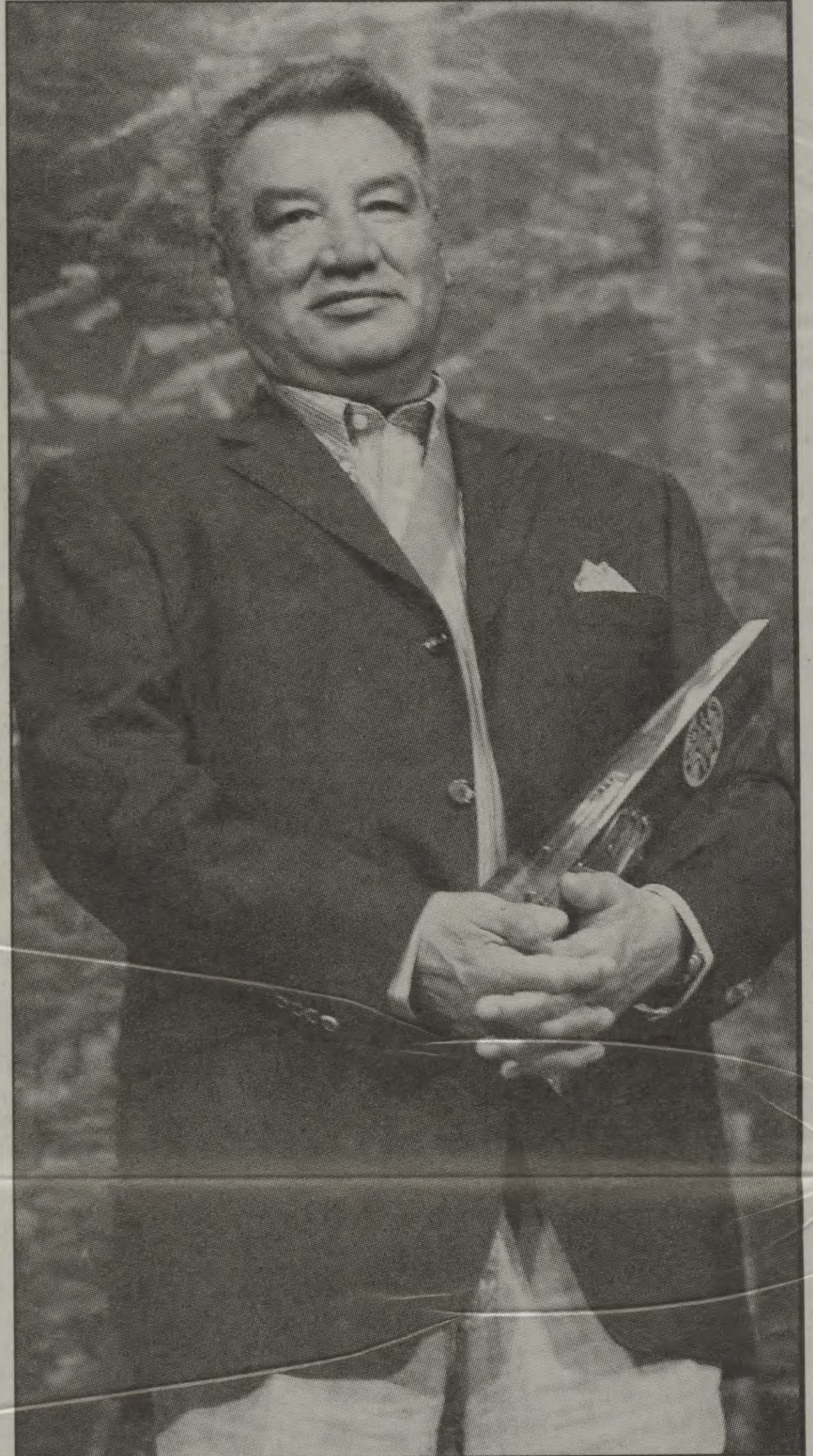


PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Jim Sinclair with the National Aboriginal Achievement Award that he received in 2006.

spirituality.

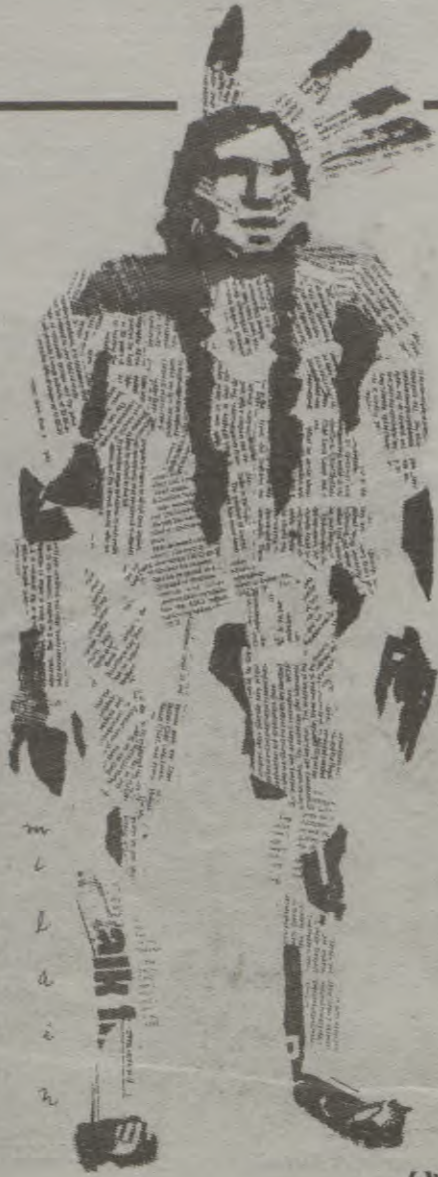
"He even received his spirit name in a pipe ceremony from Elder A.J. Felix from Sturgeon Lake," said Ross. "Jim battled cancer for the past five years, and he started to say it was his time to go and that he wanted to be

with Kenny. We always told him 'no, you have more golf games to play, you have one more hunting trip to make' but the disease took its toll."

Six children, 20 grandchildren, and 17 great-grandchildren survive Sinclair.

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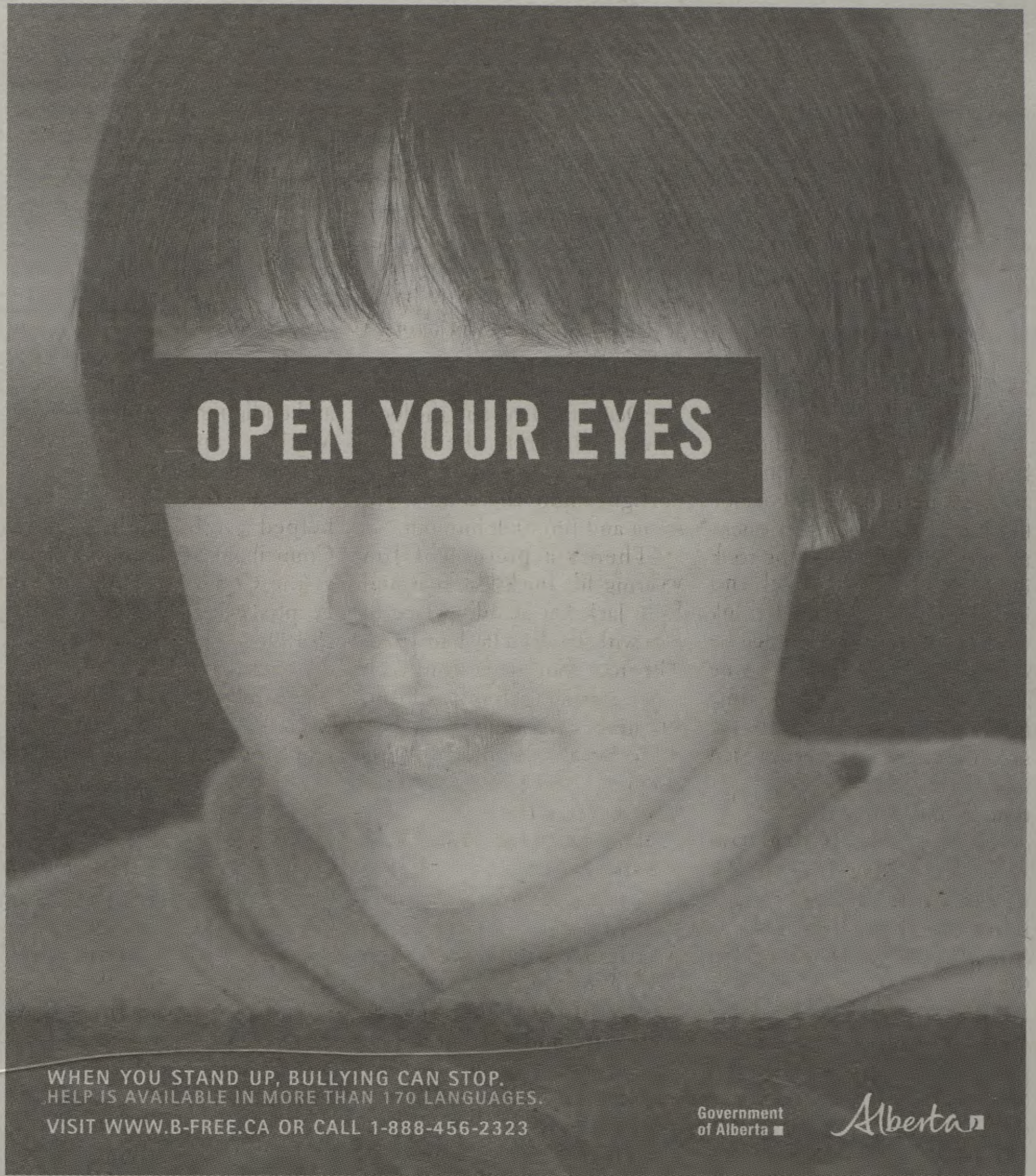
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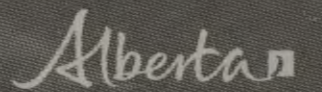
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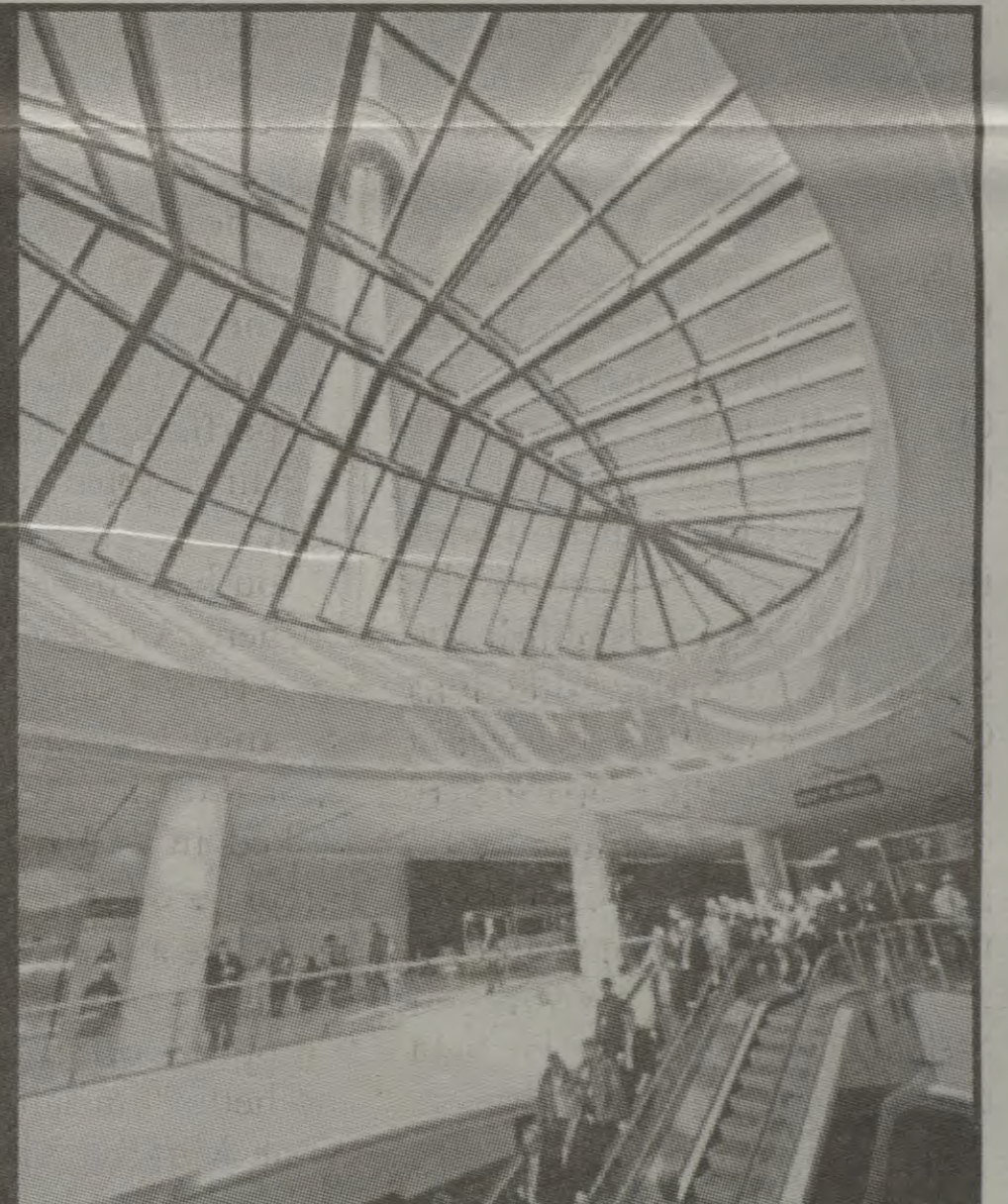
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