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New AFN national chief puts Ottawa on notice

New National Chief Perry Bellegarde receives the eagle feather that symbolizes his new position. In his acceptance speech Perry Bellegarde said, "First Nations people will oppose any development which deprives our children of the legacy of our ancestors. We will no longer accept poverty and hopelessness while resource companies and governments grow fat off our lands and territories and resources."

Please see story on page 7.

Windspeaker • Established 1983 ISSN 0834 - 177X • Publications Mail Reg. No. 40063755 Aboriginal Multi-Media Society (AMMSA) www.ammsa.com \$6.00 plus GST/HST where applicable Volume 32 No. 10 • January 2015

Subscription rate: \$55.00+GST

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Letters to the editor and all undeliverable Canadian addressed copies can be sent to:

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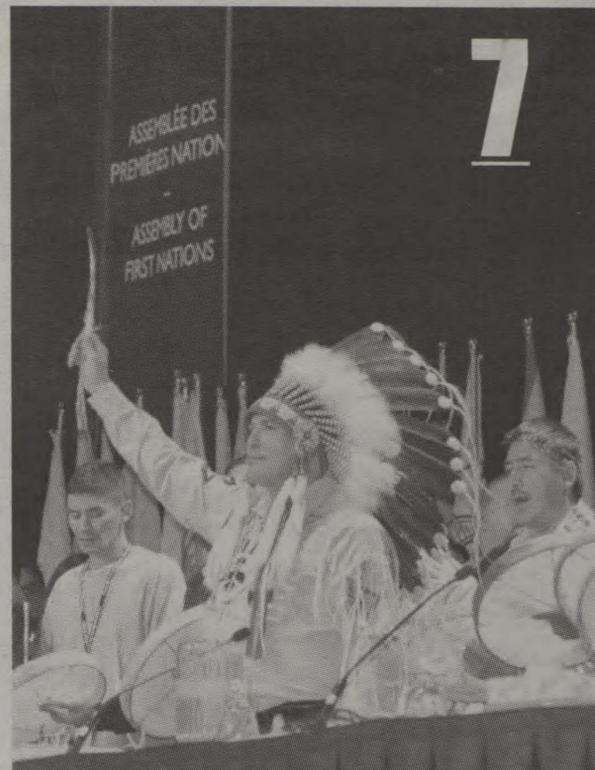
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According to the Canadian Diabetes Association, Type 2 Diabetes, the kind that usually develops during adulthood, is reaching epidemic proportions in this country. The latest statistics puts the number of people living with the disease at more than nine million, one in every four Canadians. By the year 2020, says the CDA, that number is expected to increase to one in every three people.

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Initially ostracized by the leaders of her Santa Clara Pueblo in New Mexico for pursuing a full-time career as a painter, Pablita Velarde ignored criticism and went on to exhibit her work throughout the United States and Europe.



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Minister's comments stereotype, diminish Aboriginal men

We require the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs Bernard Valcourt to walk gently—be careful—when he speaks about missing and murdered Aboriginal women in future. We have been offended by his comments to the Ottawa Citizen Newspaper in speaking about an inquiry into murdered and missing Aboriginal women, violence against Aboriginal women in First Nations communities and his perception that Aboriginal men, generally, have a lack of respect for women in First Nations communities. We need him to be very careful. He is treading on very thin ice.

On Dec. 12, the minister made some very disturbing statements about our communities across the country; ludicrous, over-generalized statements that are flawed on many levels. These are not issues to toy with, Minister Valcourt. They are not issues to gain political partisan advantage for the upcoming election. They require sensitivity and compassionate treatment regardless of what you believe the path forward is to improve the situation for Aboriginal women on reserve, whether you believe an inquiry is necessary or not.

"Obviously, there's a lack of respect for women and girls on reserve, obviously," the minister said in a video for the Citizen's website. "But, do you blame the community for letting this go, when, for example, on a marriage breakdown or the death of somebody, a couple, you know, that the woman has no rights. The Canadian woman, the non-Aboriginal one, is fully protected, she can seek a protection order, but on reserve, no. So, if the guys grow up believing that women have no rights, that's how they're treated."

"Well, we've changed that. We've brought the (Family Homes on Reserves and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act) to change that. This will have fundamental, transformational change... not overnight, but over the longer term. You know, the human rights, I think, for example, and other changes that we brought forward, which will have impact in the longer and mid-terms so, you know, they'll realize that women and girls have rights too. They are persons that must be respected."

We object to Minister Valcourt wagging his finger at us. Aboriginal men have not cornered the market on misogyny. Despite his Utopian perspective on the situation of non-Aboriginal women, we know very clearly that many communities, Aboriginal and not, are struggling with sexualized violence toward women. We cite the Dalhousie University Dentistry Gentleman's Facebook page where male college students

disparage their female classmates and talk of hate f-cking them, a disgusting phrase that we heard also through reports on the Jian Ghomeshi situation at the CBC.

In December, a Vancouver radio station had to apologize to listeners for a statement made by one of its hosts when talking about whether Liberal leader Justin Trudeau would like to fuck, kill or marry Health Minister Rona Ambrose, Laureen Harper, the Prime Minister's wife, or Michaëlle Jean, the former governor general.

Violence against women is not an Aboriginal issue alone, and not isolated to reserves, and not isolated to Aboriginal men. Obviously, obviously.

It would be disingenuous to not acknowledge that misogyny exists in our communities. We are not suggesting that violence against Aboriginal women is not amplified on reserve, but it is not rooted in the race and that's what Minister Valcourt seems to be suggesting.

That First Nations have been purposely, through government legislation and policy over the generations since contact, through residential schools and the child welfare system, distanced and detached from their traditional teachings and values and family and culture, has to receive some acknowledgment from the minister. There should be agreement among us that these abuses left marks on individuals and families.

In arguing against a national inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women, Valcourt tells the Citizen not to tell Canada to spin its wheels for years over an inquiry to get the understanding and knowledge that we already have today. That he believes government legislation, like the Matrimonial Interests Act, is a panacea to raise Aboriginal men out of the mire demonstrates a total lack of understanding, or a consciously-twisted up view of the situation before us, and is, in fact, an argument in favor of an inquiry.

But Valcourt puts the entire responsibility for violence against Aboriginal women at the door of First Nations communities and men, and holds the historical mistreatment of Aboriginal peoples by government at arms-length. No, Mr. Minister, you can't get away from this legacy. Your hands can not be washed clean of decades upon decades of neglect and misuse of Indigenous people. Canada has contributed greatly to this situation so Canada must come to the table to restore what has been lost and that starts with a clear airing. So you've been told, minister. Choose your words more wisely.

Windspeaker

[rants and raves]

Page 5 Chatter

The Lower Similkameen Indian Band is considering legal and direct action after a mine tailings spill at Copper Mountain Mine on Dec. 10. The nation is also looking for an independent inquiry to determine the cause of the most recent spill before mine operations begin again, as well as an environmental review with plans for cleanup and restoration.

Chief and council assert the spill has resulted in toxic waste contamination to Wolf Creek, which flows into the Similkameen River.

"We've been there in person to inspect the damage to the Wolf Creek, and we are extremely disturbed by the lack of long-term plans for containment and remediation to the land and water," said Chief Keith Crow.

"The Similkameen River System is the life and heart of the Similkameen people," he said. "The river is critical to the exercise of our Aboriginal title and rights. We have used these areas for traditional purposes and depended on the clean water and grasslands for generations. Government and companies can't just keep silent when they are allowing our lands and waters to be damaged and our people's health to suffer."

Crow said it isn't the first spill that has entered the river system and the community is concerned about cumulative effects. The first spill from the Basin Coal mine into the Tulameen River, a tributary of the Similkameen River, occurred in August 2013. That spill resulted in 65,000 litres of coal slurry waste contaminating the river system. Coalmont Energy has since filed for bankruptcy, leaving questions about the environmental impacts of the spill unanswered. There was no consultation with the nation either from the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Ministry of Environment nor Coalmont Energy and Copper Mountain Mine on the effects of the spill, reads a press statement.

"Our intent is to ensure that these companies are held to the highest and best standards," said Crow. "We must be involved in the restoration of these lands to their natural state for our future generations. This needs to begin now, with an immediate emergency meeting with LSIB and all related ministries to develop a plan to address the effects of the spill on our lands and our title and rights."

An actor used in police training scenarios at the Regina Police College at the University of Regina is alleging he

was the victim of racial profiling by the Regina Police Service. "I felt like my rights were violated," said Simon Ash-Moccasin.

He was walking home through downtown Regina when a police cruiser approached, he said. "I waved him on and continued walking. Then another cop came by and actually slowed down and began following me," reports the Leader-Post.

"He was looking at me and I just found it really odd and strange. I was looking back at him and waved that one on too." Then a third cruiser approached him. The officer said he "fit a description." Ash-Moccasin alleges he was thrown up against a wall by a police officer, handcuffed and taken into custody.

After being released without charge, Ash-Moccasin went to police headquarters to file a complaint, but says the mistreatment continued there. He has filed a formal complaint with the Public Complaints Commission, which is investigating.

"I'm telling my story so it won't happen again," he said. "I was treated like a second-class citizen in the land of my ancestors."

Conservative MP Rob Clarke wants an apology from Liberal Senator Lillian Dyck

after she accused the Cree politician of acting like a white man. Dyck is also Cree. During the Senate debate on a First Nations transparency bill, Dyck suggested Clarke hadn't shown the proper respect when testifying on the bill. She said he became boastful. "That, for a First Nations man, is not traditional First Nations behaviour. It was not at all. It is what we would call ... white man behaviour," said Dyck, who doesn't consider the comment offensive. "You can be insulted by that if you like."

Clarke said Dyck's comment was thoughtless and injudicious, and that she should apologize for them. "It is regrettable that Senator Lillian Dyck resorted to personal attacks against an elected Member of Parliament while she was speaking on my Bill (C-428) in the Senate on Tuesday, Dec. 9. I would hope that the Senator will do the right thing; withdraw her comments, and apologize to me and the First Nations community." As for the bill itself, Dyck said it is flawed. "It's not a good bill ... What's the rush? The only conclusion you can come to is they (the government) are doing it to promote the Member of Parliament," she said in an interview with the Canadian Press.

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[strictly speaking]

Tsilhqot'in Case: Open letter to First Nations chiefs In Canada

By Satsan (Herb George)
Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chief
Senior Associate, Centre for First Nations Governance

The Supreme Court of Canada's recent decision in the Tsilhqot'in case has changed Canada forever. Justice has been served. But for how long? The answer is ours to determine.

The Supreme Court, on instructions from previous Aboriginal title cases, has clearly affirmed the legitimacy in Canadian law of Aboriginal title over our traditional territories.

This case, and others like it, has been hard fought for many decades. Too many of our Elders and dear ones, who devoted their lives to this cause, died with a

sorrowful heart over the loss of their homelands and did not live to see this day.

Now, however, our ancestors' voices have been heard and vindicated.

First Nations are quickly running out of time. We must begin today building the institutions we need to effectively govern our territories. We have to exercise our rights as governors of our lands, develop our own territorial laws to protect our lands and sacred places, and give industry and the Crown notice that they best engage early and negotiate accordingly.

In a unanimous decision of 8 to 0, the Justices of Canada's highest court legitimized Aboriginal ownership over territorial lands and resources, as

well as the rights of Indigenous peoples to choose how our territorial lands may be used to benefit current and future generations. This is a tremendous victory for us. So, what do we need to do next?

As Indigenous peoples, we now face the difficult task of putting our title rights into place. This is a profound responsibility and we must act with vision, determination and care. We must proceed in the spirit of reconciliation.

The law provides us with an extraordinary opportunity to seize the moment and resume our place as responsible governors of our lands. We must not wait for federal or provincial governments or industry to set the stage for us and without us.

Colonialism is dead. Canadian Courts have made it clear that they will no longer tolerate unilateral Crown actions or decisions taken with respect to our traditional lands. Our consent matters and we must organize now to make sure it stays that way.

It is also time to develop entirely different decision-making mechanisms for determining how we can better govern and use our Aboriginal title lands and resources. As we have long been calling for, we need to create new government-to-government relationships of mutual responsibility and respect. Together, federal, provincial and Indigenous governments must identify and formulate those new structures and processes for

implementing Aboriginal title meaningfully and in a manner that will foster reconciliation and prosperity for all.

This is entirely possible. The challenges and opportunities that lie before us will test the ingenuity, integrity and resolve of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal leaders within government and industry. Implementing this decision will define Canada as a just and prosperous society. Failing to act on and implement title rights, will only continue the legacy of injustice and denial of fundamental constitutional and human rights, fostering even greater uncertainty, acrimony and injustice.

We are all here to stay. So what will it be? It is up to us.

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A new day, a new way, with Canada, promises Bellegarde

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

WINNIPEG

The new national chief for the Assembly of First Nations has put Ottawa on notice.

In his acceptance speech, Perry Bellegarde said, "Business as usual...that is not on. First Nations people will oppose any development which deprives our children of the legacy of our ancestors. We will no longer accept poverty and hopelessness while resource companies and governments grow fat off our lands and territories and resources. If our lands and resources are to be developed it will be done on our terms and our timeline."

Bellegarde took the election in a single ballot, believed to be the first time a national chief has been elected in only one round.

In 2009, the first time Bellegarde challenged for the position, he conceded to Shawn Atleo after a record eight ballots. Bellegarde did not run again in 2012. Atleo stepped down in May 2014 midway through his second term amidst criticism of his support of the First Nations federal education legislation and allegations of being too cozy with the Harper Conservatives.

Bellegarde, who served as AFN Saskatchewan regional chief and head of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations at the time of the election, garnered 291 of the 464 votes cast.

Interim national chief and regional chief for Quebec and Labrador Ghislain Picard was second with 136 votes. Leon Jourdain was a distant third with 35. One ballot was spoiled. To win, a candidate had to claim 60 per cent of the votes cast.

With 639 First Nations eligible to vote, almost one-third of chiefs decided not to participate.

But Tsilhqot'in First Nation Chief Roger William, who seconded Bellegarde's nomination, is confident that Bellegarde can rally the chiefs.

"For First Nations it's trust. We all have a trust issue and by all rights ... and we need to build that and Perry's going to build that. I feel that he's won right across this country," said William.

Picard was conciliatory in his remarks, echoing Bellegarde's comments that "it is now time to close the circle, work in unity and take on the challenges facing us for the best interest of the people we serve across the country."

Picard instantly made his way to Bellegarde after chief electoral officer Loretta Pete Lambert announced the results. Picard's supporters, who had blue scarfs draped around their necks, sat quietly. Picard and Bellegarde hugged.

Picard admits he was shocked by Bellegarde's decisive victory.



PHOTOS: SHARI NARINE

New National Chief Perry Bellegarde: Draped in a blanket from the Manitoba Chiefs, carrying the eagle feather that symbolizes his new position, and holding on to the talking stick he will take with him when discussing murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls.

"The results, I think very humbly, caught everyone by surprise," he said, noting that the "expectations of many in the room" was that the decision would take at least two ballots.

Jourdain did not share Picard's approach to losing. Instead, he blasted chiefs for not embracing his vision and for buying into the "corporate world" and sacrificing the generations to come.

"But the decision you made today with your eyes open, I have to respect that. But I also know that that road has led us nowhere," Jourdain said. "For those ... on the road of our own demise, this will come and haunt us all."

Jourdain said that Prime Minister Stephen Harper would be celebrating Bellegarde's win.

But Bellegarde made it clear in his victory speech that the relationship First Nations have with the federal government and the provinces would be changing.

"To Canada we say for far too long we have been dispossessed of our homelands and the wealth of our rightful inheritance," he said. "Canada, it's Indian land. This is my truth. And this is the truth of our peoples."

Along with warning the federal government that its policies from now on had to reflect Aboriginal rights and title, Bellegarde outlined three other priorities: continuing to push for a national inquiry into murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls; developing a national Indigenous language revitalization strategy; and amending the AFN charter.



New National Chief Perry Bellegarde raises eagle feather among drummers.



Chief Perry Bellegarde (right) with Manitoba chiefs.



Rinelle Harper (second from left) spoke to the AFN Assembly.

Dueling court actions over transparency in play

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

EDMONTON

Onion Lake Cree Nation is leading the charge against the First Nations Financial Transparency Act.

The First Nation, which straddles the Alberta-Saskatchewan border, filed a statement of claim in federal court in Edmonton on Nov. 26, claiming \$50 million in punitive damages from Ottawa and challenging the legislation that requires First Nations to reveal their finances.

"Because of the deadlines and the timeframes, we decided enough is enough. On behalf of our people, the Cree people of Onion Lake... the statement of claim was the last step in a long journey to get the federal government to sit and talk with the nations," said Chief Wallace Fox.

Ten days later, the federal government responded with its own court action.

"I have directed the department to bring applications to the Federal Court for an order requiring the band governments from the Council of First Nations of Thunderchild, Ochapowace and Onion Lake in Saskatchewan; and Sawridge,

Athabasca Chipewyan and Cold Lake in Alberta to publish Audited Consolidated Financial Statements and Schedules of Remuneration and Expenses for chief and council for the benefit of their members," stated Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada Minister Bernard Valcourt on Dec. 8.

While there were 49 First Nations that had not posted online their audited financial statements as well as remuneration for chief and councillors, the six First Nations singled out by Valcourt have openly stated they will not be complying.

November 26 marked the three-month extension deadline set by Aboriginal Affairs for First Nations to comply with the FNFTA.

York Factory First Nation is one of 15 First Nations in Manitoba to have not posted. Manitoba has the highest number of First Nations bucking the system.

"Why is the government trying to force us now to file? They've always received our audits, which I think is sufficient enough for them to get what they need from it, which is generally we are spending the money they send to the community properly and I think that's fine," said YFFN Chief Ted

Bland.

Ryerson University associate professor and Mi'kmaq lawyer Pam Palmater told CBC News Power & Politics that the legislation is unwarranted because band members can already approach their band councils or AANDC to get the financial information they require. She also said the legislation violates the Privacy Act.

"It violates the Privacy Act because it's third-party information that's not entitled to be distributed to the Canadian public - and there's no need for it," said Palmater, who was runner-up for national chief for the Assembly of First Nations in 2012.

"Now, (the government is) requesting too much information and I've always thought they're not entitled to it," said Bland.

He adds they have received word that the government will withdraw funding as of Dec. 12 (after deadline).

In a statement issued by Minister Bernard Valcourt, non-compliant First Nations would have their funding withheld for non-essential programs, services and activities, as well as new or proposal-based non-essential program funding, and "in the case of those First Nations who

have indicated they have no intention of complying, seeking court orders to require publication" will also be action taken.

"It's a little time to delay, it's a little time to let Canada know that this process we're going through is ... like a dictatorship," said Bland. "If I had enough money generated from outside businesses then I wouldn't report nothing at all then I would basically tell Canada to go stick it."

But Bland says meeting the needs of his community has to be his priority and having money flow from the federal government is a necessity.

"A lot of other communities don't have options... to supplement their funding. So they're caught in the situation where they have to report because for some communities, it's the only source of revenue. And for other communities, it's a little easier to hold off on it because they generate extra revenue," he said.

That is the case for Onion Lake Cree Nation, which is involved in economic ventures, has various off-reserve partnerships, and employs 800 members as full-time workers.

"If we did not have our own-source revenue we would be in the same dire straits as many of

our fellow brothers and sisters across Canada," said Fox.

The decision to take legal action is fully supported by the community, he said.

He adds that it is the community that he and council represent and it is only the community that needs to know the band's entire financial situation. He says salaries for chief and council, which is not covered through federal dollars, has been disclosed to membership.

While Onion Lake is undertaking legal action on its own, Fox says he has received correspondence from other First Nations supporting the nation's stand.

Bland said York Factory First Nation can only offer moral support.

"It's all about the funding right now and we have to supply services to our community," said Bland. "Hopefully some day we get far enough along that we can stand beside them and fight. We're not in that position."

The province with the second highest number of non-complying First Nations is British Columbia with 12. Quebec and the Yukon each have one non-complying First Nation, while there are eight in Ontario, nine in Saskatchewan and three in Alberta.

Rights and title trampled when deemed inconvenient

A decision by the province of British Columbia to proceed with the controversial Site C hydroelectric dam has been described as "incredibly stupid." The project will see a third hydroelectric station built in the Peace River region of B.C.

As well as calling the decision stupid, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, president of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, also said it was "ill-advised."

"BC Hydro has failed to make its case in terms of future energy demands and have not adequately outlined an economic business case for construction and repayment of the most expensive capital project in the history of B.C." The project is estimated to cost \$8.5 billion.

"The dam, associated structures and rights-of-ways will run directly through the heart of Treaty 8 First Nations territories and will have devastating impacts on treaty rights of Treaty 8 First Nations. The project will gravely impact the ability of Treaty 8 communities' way of life in exercising their treaty-protected

constitutionally-enshrined rights to hunt, fish, trap, and harvest across their lands," said Phillip.

"The government has determined to move this project forward without Treaty 8 First Nations free, prior and informed consent. The impacts caused by this project will violate Treaty 8 First Nations fundamental human rights and their rights as Indigenous peoples as recognized in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as set out in Article 26(1) and 32(2) that Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied, or otherwise used or acquired. The impacts this project will have on the environment, lands and resources will be deeply felt by all communities and represents environmental and cultural devastation for the Treaty 8 First Nations," said Secretary-Treasurer of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Kukpi7 Judy Wilson.

In announcing the project, Premier Christy Clark said Site

C would provide British Columbia with the most affordable, reliable clean power for more than 100 years.

"Affordable, reliable, clean electricity is the backbone of British Columbia's economy. Site C will support our quality of life for decades to come and will enable continued investment and a growing economy," said Clark.

B.C.'s population and economy are growing, and the demand for power is expected to increase by 40 per cent over the next 20 years," reads a press statement.

"British Columbia has the third-lowest electricity rates in North America and we need to meet our future needs in a way that keeps rates down," said Bill Bennett, minister of Energy and Mines. "It's clear that to keep rates low, we must choose the option of building Site C."

The Treaty 8 Tribal Association said, however, their consultants have concluded that, by taking advantage of low-cost resources allowable under the Clean Energy Act, there would be no need for new electricity resources

in B.C. until 2027.

Depending on the very uncertain requirements of LNG facilities and domestic load growth, new resources might not be needed until the late 2030s.

The First Nations Summit has called the project a major step backwards in provincial government relations with B.C. First Nations.

The proposed dam will result in the flooding and destruction of 5,550 hectares of land within the traditional territory of Treaty 8 First Nations.

"B.C. and Canada have chosen to completely ignore their constitutional duty to consult and accommodate Treaty 8 First Nations prior to making this decision. This approach is unacceptable and an affront to the cultivation of constructive government-to-government relations between the provincial government and B.C. First Nations," said Robert Phillips of the Summit political executive.

"As we have said time and time again, to both government and industry, the necessary consultation standard for any

development project in B.C., especially those with such a high potential for negative impacts, such as Site C, must be to seek the free, prior and informed consent of each and every First Nation whose Aboriginal title and rights will be impacted," said Grand Chief Edward John of the political executive.

Vice-President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Chief Bob Chamberlin said "Treaty 8 First Nations' Aboriginal and treaty rights have already been significantly infringed with existing hydro dams in their territories. This project represents stepping beyond acceptable cumulative rights infringement and crystallizes the disregard for Aboriginal and treaty rights in B.C."

Chief Chamberlin concluded the approval of this projected signals to First Nations across B.C. that their values, beliefs, title, Aboriginal rights, and treaty rights will be trampled, cast aside and disregarded whenever government deems a project economically important and significant.

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Grassroots shut out until chiefs step in



PHOTO: SHARI NARINE

Members of the ad hoc committee looking at changes to the Assembly of First Nations are (from left): Kahnawake Chief Lloyd Philips, host Mathieu Courchene, Six Nations Chief Ava Hill and Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians Grand Chief Gord Peters.

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

WINNIPEG

The need for change within the Assembly of First Nations was underscored Dec. 9 when a university student was shut down as he attempted to ask a question of the three candidates for the position of national chief during a forum.

"I cannot acknowledge you. You do not have a chief badge," said Chief Electoral Officer Loretta Pete Lambert to Clifford Sinclair, who stood at one of six microphones on the floor.

Sinclair demanded to be heard and shouts from the crowd backed him up saying chiefs needed to listen to the grassroots. But Sinclair's microphone remained turned off.

Eventually, Sinclair was given the floor when two chiefs provided him with their badges.

"This young gentleman wants to say a few words," said Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation Chief Tony Alexis, whose lanyard was draped around Sinclair's neck. "He comes to you from the grassroots. He's also a student. He studies literature."

Sinclair asked the question that had been a part of the campaign platforms for candidates Perry Bellegarde, Leon Jourdain and Ghislain Picard.

"You are making decisions that will affect me and all Indigenous people and yet I have no say in who my grand chief is," said Sinclair. "How can I expect you to fight for my rights if you're not empowered by me and by the people?"

Sinclair is one of a growing number of First Nations people who call urban settings their home. How the AFN will address this demographic has been hotly discussed and all three candidates agree changes are needed to the organization's structure. Yet the presentation by an ad hoc task force looking at restructuring the AFN drew little attention from chiefs earlier in the day.

"I'm a little disappointed that there are more of our citizens in this room right now than there are chiefs and none of the (AFN) executive," said Six Nation Chief Ava Hill, who is part of the ad hoc task force. "Because this is important. It's important to us... We have heard chief after chief say we have to restructure the AFN."

Hill pointed out that there has been no money set aside to examine the issue despite back-to-back resolutions in 2013 and 2014 to look at restructuring and rebuilding. Any chief who was interested in the discussion had to get his own funding to attend meetings.

"I think it's very necessary that the chiefs have the opportunity to have a good debate about this," said Hill, but she noted that would not be happening after her presentation, both due to the lack of chiefs and the lack of time allotted on the agenda to the subject.

Hill said the push to restructure the AFN has come about through the realization that "more and more ... our people want to be involved" and included in that discussion is whether or not the national chief should be elected through a universal vote. She said changes,

which initially were looked at eight years ago, can no longer be ignored, considering the birth of the grassroots movement Idle No More and the unexpected resignation in May of Shawn Atleo as national chief.

Hill said restructuring would fall under short-term and long-term goals, an approach that all three candidates embraced when they responded to Sinclair's question.

Both Picard and Bellegarde said amendments to the AFN charter could be done quickly, but both agreed that changing how the national chief was elected was not as easily dealt with.

"The question you raise is a little more longer-term and if the chiefs are open-minded to look at that, then we can look at that," said Bellegarde.

Picard agreed it would have to be a recommendation that came from the chiefs.

"Everybody needs to belong and right now that's not happening," said Jourdain. "It's not rocket science to involve the people on the ground."

Hill encouraged the chiefs in the room to take the issue back to their communities for discussion. She said setting a timeline for July for an initial report from a working group was feasible.

"If the work is not completed by July, come back in July and say you need more time," she said. "We've got to get together, trying our best do it right this time. Take, I guess, as long as it takes."

In his acceptance speech as new national chief, Bellegarde set the AFN charter as one of his priority issues.

Windspeaker News Briefs



Juno award-winning artist Derek Miller is hosting

a new late-night variety series called Guilt Free Zone beginning Jan. 6 on APTN at 10 p.m. ET/MT. It promises the "hippest" Aboriginal musical artists "no-hold-barred" monologues, "provocative" dance and comedy performances, all rolled into one "edgy" Tuesday evening event. Shot in Toronto, Montreal, Hamilton, Regina and Winnipeg in front of live studio audiences, Guilt Free will expose viewers to new talent and open conversation about often taboo topics like sex and guilty pleasures. Performers this season include Inez Jasper, Jayli Wolf, hip hop artist Plex, comedian Lucas Jacko, Brendt Thomas Diablo, burlesque dancer Miss Lou Lou la Duchesse de Riere, Craig James Laur, Night Switch, The Snake Oil Salesmen, Ali Fontaine and Leonard Sumner. Derek Miller opens up the topic about legalizing marijuana, but also wonders if there is truth to the rumour that marijuana causes the dreaded man-boob. "Guilt Free Zone" is produced by Big Soul, an Aboriginal owned and operated television and film production company.

Cold Lake First Nation's Chief Bernice Martial was appointed

the grand chief of Treaty No. 6, making her the first female to lead the organization.

"I am delighted with all the support from chiefs, Elders and members of Treaty No.6. This is an exciting time for our peoples and I know I will do the best of my abilities to ensure that Treaty No. 6 is protected and that First Nations are properly represented at these political tables where our issues are concerned," said Martial.

Grand Chief Martial was given a Treaty Six headdress in a December meeting with more than 250 people witnessing her appointment. "I'm going to do the best I can to inform the peoples of Treaty No. 6 on the legislation and policies that affect us. I want to bring unity to Treaty Six First Nations as we are in the hub of economic development with many successful First Nations that are working towards self-governance," she said.

Ottawa apologized to the Wahta Mohawk community

for including it on a list of First Nations that had not complied with financial transparency legislation. The nation had sent its financial information by fax before it was due—by only four hours—reports OurWindsor.ca, but it was in by deadline nonetheless. Ottawa published a list of non-compliant nations and Wahta Mohawks stayed on that list for several hours. A letter threatening sanctions seems also to have been sent to the nation. An Aboriginal Affairs official offered an "unconditional apology" for the letter to the Muskoka, Ont. area nation. But Chief Philip Franks told the online publication that the government had tarnished the nation's reputation. The vast majority of First Nations have complied with the legislation, leaving less than 10 per cent non-compliant.

The Forest Products Association of Canada (FPAC)

has awarded the third annual Skills Award for Aboriginal Youth to Shownoo Blackbird-Williams from Walpole Island First Nation in Ontario.

The \$2,500 award goes to youth ages 18 to 30 who are enrolled in an apprenticeship program, college or in university, who are a First Nations, Métis or Inuit individual with strong academic standing, and who are committed to their field of study and a career in the revitalized forest sector.

"Shownoo has a strong desire to better himself and his family and he hopes to use his Aboriginal community values to help develop the forest products industry," said David Lindsay, president and CEO of FPAC. "The forest sector benefits greatly from the hard work, enthusiasm and dedication of Shownoo and other committed Aboriginal youth."

Blackbird-Williams left the Canadian military when he heard that he was expecting a son. To be a good role model and further his education, he enrolled in the First Nations Forestry Technician Program at the Anishinabek Education Institute at Mucey Campus, associated with Fleming College. Blackbird-Williams intends to pursue a career in forestry while also running an eco-tourism business. He has also been an active participant in the Walpole Island Forest Regeneration Project where he gained experience in the Arbicultural field.

Huu-ay-aht members prepare for Round 2 in fight against LNG

By Shayne Morrow
Windspeaker Contributor

PORT ALBERNI, B.C.

A core group of Huu-ay-aht First Nation members, with the support of their hereditary head chief, has vowed to fight a proposed multi-billion dollar liquid natural gas project in the Sarita River estuary.

Huu-ay-aht is one of 14 Nuu-chah-nulth nations on Vancouver Island. Their traditional territory is located on the south side of Alberni Inlet and Barkley Sound, and the Sarita River is considered a sacred site, according to Huu-ay-aht member Stella Peters.

"When I found out where [the project] was located, I was very concerned. It's right in the mouth of the Sarita River," Peters said. "Then we found out it's even bigger than we thought. That's when I started the [Facebook page] SayNoToLNG."

Peters said it seemed incomprehensible that, after working for decades to restore coho and chinook salmon habitat in the Sarita River, shellfish beds in the Sarita estuary and Roosevelt elk herds in the Sarita watershed, that Huu-ay-aht would want to inflict a massive LNG terminal right in the middle of this ecologically sensitive area.

Fellow Huu-ay-aht member



PHOTO: COURTESY OF ALBERNI VALLEY NEWS

Steelhead CEO Nigel Kuzemko shakes hands with Huu-ay-aht First Nation Chief Councillor Jeff Cook as Councillor John Jack looks on as the community votes to continue exploring an LNG project.

Crystal Clappis joined a growing list of people who questioned the project.

"We started to voice our opinions on Facebook. Then we started to notice that there were a lot of non-Huu-ay-aht members, people from the Port Alberni community and also from the rest of B.C. that were also concerned about the project. They offered to support us," Clappis said.

Clappis questioned how such a small group of people could approve such a massive project.

"It will affect all of B.C., and I don't think it's fair that we, as Huu-ay-aht First Nation, are the only ones who get to vote on this."

The vote took place on Nov.

29 at the annual two-day People's Assembly, which was held at the Best Western Barclay Hotel in Port Alberni. Peters and a small band of SayNoToLNG supporters had intended to picket the site, but plans changed when her cousin, Huu-ay-aht Tye Ha'wilth (hereditary chief) Derek Peters arrived.

"He was accompanied by Ha'wilth from a number of the Barkley Sound nations and told us he intended to speak against the project," Peters said.

As a matter of Nuu-chah-nulth protocol, Ha'wilth normally communicate publicly through a designated speaker. That a Tye Ha'wilth addressed an assembly personally speaks to the magnitude of the issue, Peters

said.

"As a sign of respect, we did not go ahead with the protest, because our Ha'wilth had voiced our concerns."

Peters said, however, that while the Ha'wilth spoke movingly about the importance of Huu-ay-aht traditional territory and the potential threat posed by the project, he did not, as another matter of protocol, tell his members which way to vote.

In the end, band members voted 121-77 plus one abstention to move ahead with an environmental study and the purchase of 330 hectares of property on which the plant would be located. Huu-ay-aht is working with Steelhead LNG, a Vancouver based liquefied natural gas project development company.

There are many across B.C. concerned about the growing importance the province has been placing upon the LNG industry.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs said with global prices plummeting for both oil and LNG, he believes it is time for the provincial Liberal government to stop promoting the "LNG fable" as a saviour for the B.C. economy.

"My objections centre on the fact that we have upstream, mid-stream and downstream effects," he explained. "While we are told

about the downstream benefits in employment and revenue, we're completely disregarding the impacts of quadrupling exploration and drilling in Treaty 8 territories in northeastern B.C."

On Nov. 27, Phillip was arrested as part of the protest against Kinder Morgan's test-drilling operations on Burnaby Mountain. The Texas-based company intends to double its pipeline capacity to ship Alberta bitumen to Asia.

"The LNG industry has to be mindful of what is happening with the heavy oil industry," Phillip said, adding that the protest on Burnaby Mountain has attracted "an amazing cross-section of society," including First Nations, professionals, academics, seniors and the multi-faith community.

Phillip said in light of the recent Tsilhqot'in decision, developers like Steelhead have to factor in First Nations interests along the entire 1,300-kilometre corridor from the wellhead to the shipping dock.

"In the aftermath of Tsilhqot'in, we are now moving from a paradigm of consultation to consent," he explained. "I don't think industry can get away with reaching agreements with single First Nations – tiptoeing past the graveyard, so to speak."

(See *Huu-ay-aht* on page 21.)

LNG proponents address concerns about West Coast project

By Shayne Morrow
Windspeaker Contributor

PORT ALBERNI, B.C.

Huu-ay-aht First Nation elected Chief Councillor Jeff Cook and Steelhead CEO Nigel Kuzemko spoke with Windspeaker to answer a range of questions arising from the proposed \$30-billion (US) LNG terminal that received a nod from Huu-ay-aht citizens Nov. 29.

Huu-ay-aht voted 121-77 to proceed with an intensive feasibility study and the purchase of 330 hectares of property in the Sarita River estuary during the People's Assembly held in Port Alberni.

That land would then be leased back to Steelhead LNG, a Vancouver-based project development company, for the projected 35-year life span of the terminal.

Cook explained that the land was pre-approved for purchase under the Maa-nulth Treaty, which came into effect for Huu-ay-aht and four other Nuu-chah-nulth nations in 2011.

"We have an agreement with Steelhead that as long as we are moving forward, they would forgive the purchase of it," he said. "Our nation took out a loan from the bank, but Steelhead is making the monthly payments. In the

end, the loan will be forgiven."

Should Steelhead cancel the project, they would be responsible for the mortgage, Cook said, adding that should Huu-ay-aht cancel, they would take responsibility for the balance owing.

Speaking to concerns about the project's potential damage to the marine environment, Cook said the plant itself would be located on dry land. "The only thing in the water will be the jetties," he said.

Opponents to the project have cited overlap issues in traditional territories, which include the marine corridors that the massive LNG ships would use, along with impacts on traditional resources. Cook said he does not anticipate any difficulties with neighboring nations.

"The overlaps are defined pretty well from our point of view. We've established a boundary with Tseshaht First Nation; we've defined a management area with Ditidaht, and in our Maa-nulth Treaty, our boundaries with Ucluelet and Uchucklesaht our areas are pretty well defined. There shouldn't be any serious negotiations we have to go through."

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs told Windspeaker one of his main concerns is the quadrupling of

natural gas exploration and hydraulic fracturing (fracking) required in the Treaty 8 territories in northeastern B.C., in order to satisfy the projected demand for export LNG.

"The pipeline issue is the biggest hurdle we have to overcome," Cook said. "We know we are going to have to sit down with First Nations."

Kuzemko said those discussions have already begun with a two-day visit to Treaty 8 territory to learn about the extraction process.

"We took the Huu-ay-aht to a company that was doing [fracking], and they met with the two First Nations that were there. They talked about it and the First Nations were comfortable with it. They understood the benefits and they understood the risks."

Kuzemko was reminded of the sheer number of LNG proposals currently in the work in B.C. That raises two questions, he said. First: does B.C. have enough natural gas? Yes. Second: can you be competitive on price?

"We believe we will be, primarily because we are not a 'major' (petroleum company). We don't have upstream assets – all we want to do is make this project happen."

"We'll get gas supplied to it by independent producers in Canada. Those independent producers produce the lowest-cost

gas anywhere – lower than the majors... I reckon we will get the lowest-priced LNG on the market."

According to Steelhead, up to 4,000 jobs would be created during the building of the plant and the installation of LNG infrastructure. Kuzemko conceded that many of those jobs would go to foreign specialists.

But the plan is to train as many Huu-ay-aht as possible, he said. To that end, Huu-ay-aht and Steelhead have reached skills training agreements with the province and with three Vancouver Island post-secondary institutions: North Island College, Vancouver Island University and Camosun College.

"All the training programs are something we will be looking at in great detail, as of this week," Kuzemko said. "Right now, there are training slots at North Island College that are being held open for Huu-ay-aht. That process has started already."

Kuzemko noted that the first phase of the project would be an exhaustive feasibility study on a full range of environmental and engineering issues, which is expected to take about 12 months. The final investment decision is not expected until 2018, however.

Keith Hunter has served as a technical advisor for Tseshaht

First Nation during the long-running assessment process for the controversial Raven Underground Coal Project, which would see coal trucked across Vancouver Island to Tseshaht territory in Port Alberni.

"They've spent \$10 million on it and still haven't got an application through the review process," Hunter told Windspeaker prior to the People's Assembly.

Hunter said in some instances, the proposal itself becomes the revenue generator for the proponents – as long as they can continue to attract investors.

Kuzemko was asked if he recognized the risk of the Huu-ay-aht LNG project becoming a revenue-generating engine in itself, with millions of dollars being paid out in consultant's fees and executive compensation.

Kuzemko said that was a "fair question," and that Steelhead has structured itself to remove any incentive to spin out the assessment process.

"Our business is that we develop projects. The only way we will get any revenue from this project is if it goes ahead, and we begin to sell LNG. Our investors are very acutely aware of that. As we go into this, there is nothing that we would be interested in doing if we can't see a way forward."

Hospital evacuates patients because of oil leak

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

ATTAWAPISKAT FIRST NATION, Ont.

For the second time in as many years, patients at Attawapiskat hospital have had to be emergency airlifted to other facilities.

On Nov. 30, senior management with Weencebayko Health Authority, which operates Attawapiskat hospital, were notified of an oil leak caused by a cracked pipe running to the furnace from the oil pump. The initial estimate was

that 1,000 to 2,000 litres of oil leaked, says WHA acting CEO Robert Adolph.

On Dec. 5, Adolph was still awaiting the engineering report from the contractor, who was sent immediately to the site from North Bay, and accompanied by internal WHA head office staff from engineering.

"I have no timeline and I don't have the full extent of the spill," said Adolph. Why the pipe cracked is not yet known either.

The 10 inpatients at Attawapiskat hospital were airlifted to hospitals in Fort Albany and Moose Factory on Dec. 1. Based on available beds,

four were placed in Fort Albany and the remainder went to Moose Factory. It is not yet known how long they will be away from home. Attawapiskat hospital has 15 acute care beds.

A temporary health centre and emergency room were established at the Attawapiskat ambulance base, which is serviced by the James Bay ambulance. Work was underway to relocate the health and ER services to the community's health care centre, which is not connected to the hospital.

The Attawapiskat hospital is not closed, with operational support staff and security staff

still on site to assist the contractor in assessing the damage.

"We're obviously not accepting any more patients right now," said Adolph.

Patients requiring in-hospital care will continue to be air-transported to other WHA facilities, he says.

Adolph lauds the efficient work undertaken by staff at Attawapiskat hospital and the ambulance crew and the support that has been received from the community.

"They made a really special effort in this unusual circumstance," he said. Adolph

notes the situation has been discussed with Attawapiskat First Nation.

Health Canada has been notified of the situation, says Adolph.

In spring 2013, Attawapiskat hospital, along with houses in the community, suffered sewer backup and flooding. At that time, 10 patients had to be airlifted to outside facilities.

Attawapiskat hospital is served by rotating physician visits. It provides basic surgical and pediatric care along with offering prenatal and obstetric care and assistance for rehabilitation patients.

Cree youth stand against uranium to protect the land

By Barb Nahwegahbow
Windspeaker Contributor

MONTREAL

The Cree Nation in Quebec has taken a stand against uranium development and mining in their territory, Eyou Istchee.

To bring public awareness and to garner support, youth of the Cree Nation embarked on the Stand Against Uranium Walk on Sunday, Nov. 24. They began their walk in Mistissini, said Joshua Iserhoff, Youth Grand Chief of the Cree Youth Council for the Cree Nation government.

Their ultimate destination was Montreal where they hand-delivered a message to the final day of the BAPE (Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement) hearings on Dec. 15. They walked about 850 kms.

"This stand has been totally initiated by the youth in the community of Mistissini, a community in northern Quebec where the anti-uranium fight started," said Iserhoff. It's where Strateco Resources, a uranium company sought to pursue the Matoush advanced exploration project on Mistissini family hunting grounds.

Strateco came into the territory and set up the Matoush uranium project in 2006, Iserhoff said, without holding any community consultations. The Matoush project is located in the Otish Mountains, about 275 km north of Chibougamau and 210 km northeast of Mistissini and is now considered one of the highest-grade uranium projects in the world.

The Stand Against Uranium Walk was in the planning for the last year, said Iserhoff, as the youth sought not only to educate themselves, but also the elders in the community by using YouTube and community consultations.

"They even brought in a uranium specialist, Dr. Gordon Edwards, and he did a community consultation on what the effects of uranium are," he said. Learning about the devastating effects of uranium mining on the land ignited their



PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

Heading to Montreal on an 850-km walk, Cree youth raise awareness about uranium mining.



passion, he said, and "that's why Strateco really lost its luster."

"We do occupy the land. We do not want our waters or our lands to be contaminated because we do live off the land. We love to fish, we love to hunt and we want the land to be in its natural state," Iserhoff said. This is the message presented to the BAPE hearing on behalf of the Cree

Nation youth.

Twenty-one young people have been walking an average of 30 to 45 kms a day. "After 750 kms, it gets challenging," Iserhoff said. A winter walk allows for a shorter walk, he said, "because the lakes are frozen and you can just walk on them."

They've been hitting some of the towns that are affected by

uranium mining to broaden their base of support. Iserhoff said they've met with positive feedback on their journey and, "none of us have heard anything negative," he said.

"Some people understand the effects of uranium, but there's such a large number who just aren't aware of this project. We're the ones taking the initiative to

be ambassadors to Quebec, Canada and the world."

The Cree Stand has sparked rallies in other provinces and people are talking to their MPs and, "we have people following us on Twitter," he said. "We're protecting the land for future generations, not just for the Cree people or Aboriginal people, but for everybody."

The Cree Nation was successful in getting a moratorium on uranium development. The moratorium ends in 2015.

"One thing I've been taught," Iserhoff said, "is never to give up hope and if there is bad news, we must continue to fight. This is one thing the Cree people have always been known for is to be fighters. We've been challenged as a nation, but we've stood our ground because this is something that is really close to our hearts and we do not want the lands and waters to be contaminated and destroyed by uranium."

The Cree youth have been building relationships with other Indigenous groups affected by uranium. An international conference is in the works that will bring together the Navajo and the Dene with the Cree.

Iserhoff said his own epiphany occurred on a hunting trip with his father, mother and sister when he shot a bear. They were on his grandfather's hunting grounds. He watched his mother gather spruce and "we laid the bear on the bed of spruce boughs," he said.

"I remember thinking at that moment, this is really special. In the Cree territory, it is the highest honour to get a bear. I looked at the bear and its fat was so thick and I knew that this bear ate from the land and drank from Lake Mistissini. I didn't want any of our animals living in the area to be contaminated and sick because of uranium. I wanted that moment I experienced with my family to be experienced by future generations."

The youth have developed a website to continue the awareness. Check out www.standagainsturanium.com for more information about their initiatives.

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



PHOTO: COURTESY OF HA-SHILTH-SA

BMO Financial Group has donated \$20,000 to Tseshaht First Nation,

which was severely affected by the flooding along the Somass River in December. A cheque presentation took place Dec. 12 at BMO's branch at Tseshaht with branch manager Denise Martineau and Chief Councillor Hugh Braker. "We want to support Tseshaht residents who are affected by this flooding," said D.K. Bourque, director of Aboriginal Banking, B.C and Yukon, BMO Bank of Montreal. "As Tseshaht is our home, too, we want to assist those facing hardship. We're here to help." BMO has 13 branches in Aboriginal communities across Canada, including one on Tseshaht First Nation.

The Northern Shuswap Tribal Council has developed a 54-page document

outlining mining policy within its territory, including the area damaged by the Mount Polley tailing ponds breach. The policy will apply to existing, proposed and future projects in its territory. Jacinda Mack is the mining coordinator for the tribal

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

council, and she said the policy is to ensure the industry in the territory is sustainable and environmentally safe, and that it has First Nations' support. "This policy isn't about shutting down mining," said Mack. "It's basically saying we have four operational mines in our territory, and how are we going to deal with them in a way that makes them safer, more accountable and more engaged with us."

Elected and hereditary chiefs from Wet' suwet'en, Carrier, Gitksan, Sekani and

Tsimshian signed a memorandum of understanding

agreeing to explore an equity ownership stake in natural resource projects such as liquid natural gas (LNG). The signatory First Nations have agreed to a framework which establishes a steering committee comprised of chiefs with the mandate to explore ownership in natural resource projects. Within the framework, First Nations will consider asking Canada to provide a loan guarantee to facilitate

access to the required capital.

"First Nations that have signed this document recognize that we must become owners of projects if we are to successfully secure the future for our children by affirming our traditional standards on environmental protection," said Chief Martin Louie of Nadleh Whut'en First Nation.

"We also recognize that our First Nations rights and title to land must be respected, but at the end of the day, what we are after is a business deal so

that our communities can benefit from being owners of resource projects."

Chief Theresa Tait Day (traditional name Wihalyte, meaning Far seer of the Wetsuwet'en Nation) stated: "These are historic times for First Nations in the Province of BC as chiefs come together in resource development. Elected chiefs and hereditary chiefs support the vision of Chief Martin Louie to form an alliance between nations. Our time is here to take our rightful place in resource development

in BC. First Nations, for the first time, will be in the driver's seat to take control of our own future, end hand-outs and manage our own resources through our alliance."

The chiefs will meet again in mid-January to establish the terms of reference for a steering committee that will explore equity ownership options in natural resource projects. The committee will communicate their interest to commence meetings with governments and industry in the near future.



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Saskatchewan Sage: Special Section providing news from Saskatchewan



PHOTO: BLACK LAKE DENESULINE FIRST NATION

Black Lake Denesuline First Nation workers remove the white appliances from the local landfill site to be transported to Regina for recycling.

Recycling program trains, employs community members

Community members from Black Lake Denesuline First Nation have been trained and employed to safely remove refrigerators, freezers and other solid white metal appliances from the local landfill site, which serves both Black Lake Denesuline First Nation and Stony Rapids, the project also aims to collect unwanted appliances from the community at-large, including yards, basements and roadside ditches. Along with the environmental advantages to the program, is the economic benefit of training and outfitting 10 community members and employing seven.

MP's allegations raise ire of First Nations organizations

Allegations by Conservative MP Rob Clarke that the Assembly of First Nations, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and tribal councils all skim seven to 10 per cent off of funding that is destined for child welfare services has raised calls for immediate retraction and apology. Clarke made the comments during a television interview with APTN Nov. 20. In a strongly worded statement, FSIN First Vice Chief Kimberly Jonathan denied the allegations, stating, "The only entity we are aware of that the federal government identifies that takes money off the top of the so-called 'pie' is the federal government themselves." In a statement in which the AFN denied Clarke's charges, the AFN also said it was reviewing the Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River MP's statements to see if legal action was warranted. Clarke is a member of the Muskeg Lake Cree

Nation.

FNPA unveils solar project in Swift Current

The First Nations Power Authority unveiled its new technology Dec. 1, a prototype design of a solar photovoltaic power generator, which will offset power consumption at the Home Inn and Suites in Swift Current. This Strategic Off-Grid and Renewables demonstration project is another step in better understanding of how solar energy can best be used in Saskatchewan. "This is the very first step for us. This project is a good example of crawl, learn to walk, then learn to run," said FNPA CEO Leah Nelson Guay. The solar project, she said, shows that systems can be used and operated successfully in Saskatchewan and offers the opportunity to track the power usage through a live webcam feed in the front lobby. The solar unit is expected to produce a little over 26,000 kilowatt hours per year of renewable energy and will result in a reduction of about 21 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide. FNPA is proceeding with two other projects to offset power use at elementary schools on the Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation and the Hatchet Lake Denesuline First Nation. New funding, at \$150,000, for these projects, has been acquired from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's ecoENERGY for Aboriginal and Northern Communities Program.

Expansion begins on Gold Eagle Casino

In response to patron feedback, the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority is expanding the Gold Eagle Casino this winter by adding 5,000 square feet to their already 34,033-square foot entertainment facility. The building and roof completion dates have been set early in 2015. The objective of the project is to create a segregated smoking room. SIGA's goal for

completion is the end of June. The project will create an avenue for sustained growth in the business for the next 10 years. "With construction already underway GEC is focused on no interruptions in service for their patrons. Both the Kihwi Restaurant and the GEC Casino are open for business," said Zane Hansen, president and CEO of SIGA.

School curriculum project wins excellence in Aboriginal category

"We Are All Treaty People," the Office of the Treaty Commissioner's Treaty curriculum renewal project, is the Canadian Race Relations recipient of the Award of Excellence in the Aboriginal

category. The award recognizes the role the curriculum has played in building positive race relations and building awareness and understanding of Canadian values and identity that are reflective of Canadian diversity. In 2008, Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall announced that teaching treaties in the classroom would be mandatory, a first for any

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CALL FOR ARTISTS: Request for Qualifications

MISSING AND MURDERED ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S COMMEMORATIVE ART INSTALLATION

Deadline for Submissions: January 21st 2015 3:00 pm CST
Budget: \$120,000.00 (all-inclusive)
Location of the Monument: Front of the new Saskatoon Police headquarters, 76 25th Street East, City of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

The Saskatoon Tribal Council, the Saskatoon Police Service and the Provincial Government partnered to commission a commemorative art installation, to be located in the new Saskatoon Police headquarters. The objective of this public art project is to commemorate and bring awareness to missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

The Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women Partnership seek Requests for Qualifications (RFQ) from an artist and/or team to work with the community in the creation and implementation of the project.

The complete RFQ document can be found at sktc.sk.ca and saskatoonpoliceservice.ca Artists are reminded to check the websites regularly for any updates regarding this RFQ prior to submitting their application.

All inquiries about the project and the call for artists should be to Marylou Mintram by email to mmawcai@gmail.com



 Saskatchewan

Manitoba Pipestone: Special Section providing news from Manitoba



PHOTO: SHARI NARINE

Assembly of First Nations Manitoba Regional Chief Bill Traverse presents Rinelle Harper with an Eagle feather for "continued strength and courage" following her brutal attack.

Assault on girl renews calls for public inquiry

Rinelle Harper, surrounded by her family, was honoured in a drumming ceremony on the opening day of the Special Chiefs Assembly in Winnipeg on Dec. 9. Harper, 16, from Garden Hill First Nation, was assaulted and left unconscious near the Assiniboine River in Winnipeg on Nov. 8. Justin James Hudson, 20, and a second male, 17, are charged with attempted murder, aggravated sexual assault and sexual assault with a weapon. Harper called for an end to violence and spoke out in support of the need for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. She said, "I ask that everyone here remember a few simple words: love, kindness, respect and forgiveness." Earlier, Assembly of First Nations Alberta Regional Chief Cameron Alexis commended

the Winnipeg police for their efforts. Said Alexis, "We must all stand together to condemn these senseless acts of violence, particularly by our own people. We must stop hurting one another, we must end the pattern."

WAG highlights Inuit carvings

The Winnipeg Art Gallery is presenting Baker Lake Carvings until March 8, 2015. This is a collection of Inuit works in stone. "The works in this exhibition come from the WAG's premier collection of contemporary Inuit art, the largest of its kind in the world with over 13,000 pieces," said Dr. Stephen Borys, WAG director and CEO and the exhibition curator. "Popular with adults and school groups of all ages, showcasing the WAG's Inuit art collection is paramount as we develop our new Inuit Art Centre." Baker Lake Carvings features the work of 12 Baker

Lake artists, whose careers span the last five decades, the earliest piece from 1960 and the most recent from 2002. Solitary figures and family groups along with hunting and domestic activities dominate the themes. The carvings are bold in their sculptural gestures, minimal in form, compact, unpolished, and filled with the images and stories

of the people and the land.

Province, MMF start homebuilding partnership

The Government of Manitoba and the Manitoba Métis Federation are partnering for the first time to build affordable homes for Métis families across the province. A groundbreaking ceremony was held Nov. 12 at 132 Hallet St. to mark the beginning of construction of three new homes under the partnership. The partnership is made possible by a five-year, \$5.5-million commitment from the provincial government to assist in the new construction of high-quality, affordable housing for Métis families. Manitoba Housing has approved up to \$710,000 for the development of the three new homes at 132 Hallet St. Families will be able to move in when construction is completed in the spring of 2015. The three homes, each approximately 1,000 square feet with three bedrooms, will be built where only one house stood before.

Housing challenges for those moving to Winnipeg

A new report by the Canadian Centre for Policy

Alternatives says racism plays a role in preventing Aboriginal people from finding housing in Winnipeg. The report, released mid-December, says Aboriginals are among the most likely to experience homelessness or live in expensive, overcrowded or poor-quality housing in the city. "The shortfall of housing and poor housing conditions force many Aboriginal people to choose between bad housing in their home communities and insecure and unaffordable housing in cities like Winnipeg," writes Josh Brandon, a housing researcher with the CCPA in Manitoba, in a document related to the report. The report also notes that the high costs of housing are not offset by the availability of subsidized housing. The report, entitled Moving to the City: Housing and Aboriginal Migration to Winnipeg, makes 16 recommendations in boosting access to social housing, making more support available to people moving to the city, and increasing financial resources. The Eagle Urban Transition Centre, which helps people find housing, employment and services in the city, collaborated on the report.

Compiled by Shari Narine

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Ontario Birchbark: Special Section providing news from Ontario



PHOTO: VETERAN AFFAIRS CANADA

Métis veteran honoured for contributions

Métis Veteran Joseph Paquette (right) received the Commendation from Minister of Veterans Affairs Julian Fantino. The commendation is awarded annually to individuals who have contributed in an exemplary manner to the care and well-being of veterans or to the remembrance of the contributions, sacrifices and achievements of veterans. Paquette served with the Lincoln and Welland Regiment and the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada. He received the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2014 and was awarded the Queens Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012. Paquette has been active in Métis veteran affairs, having served as secretary of

the Métis Nation of Ontario Veterans Council in 2009 and being instrumental in maintaining and updating the Veterans' registry, the Métis Veterans' Wreath and the Veterans' Community Charter. In 2011, he created the MNOVC's website and currently serves as president.

Four First Nations sign agreement with Porcupine Gold Mines

Mattagami, Wahgoshig, Matachewan and Flying Post First Nations have signed a resource development agreement with Porcupine Gold Mines. Under the agreement, Goldcorp recognizes and respects Aboriginal rights and interests in the area of the Porcupine Gold Mines operation and the four First Nations

recognize and support Goldcorp's rights and interests in the operation and future development of the mine. The agreement includes provisions for training, employment, business and contracting opportunities along with a consultation framework for regulatory permitting. Scholarship and bursary opportunities will also be provided for the youth of Mattagami, Wahgoshig, Matachewan and Flying Post First Nations. Chief Murray Ray of Flying Post First Nation said the signing is "an important milestone for our First Nation as it validates what our ancestors said in the treaty signing. Our connection to the land is being recognized. This signing also gives our people hope for the future, as this partnership gives

us an opportunity to become more self-sufficient so that our families and children can have a better future. This was what our grandfathers and ancestors wanted when they agreed to the treaty." Negotiations leading to this agreement were eight years in the making.

Carleton to launch two new graduate programs in Indigenous Policy and Administration

Carleton University's School of Public Policy and Administration has developed two innovative graduate programs in Indigenous Policy and Administration that reflect the importance of sharing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal world views. They provide students with the tools, knowledge and capacity to bridge multiple world views and to enable managers and administrators who work in or with First Nations, MÉtis and Inuit governance and administration to strengthen their organizations and incorporate community-based Indigenous knowledge. Starting in summer 2015, students can complete one of the following two programs: a concentration in Indigenous Policy and Administration as part of the existing Master of Arts in Public Administration or a graduate diploma in Indigenous Policy and Administration. "The IPA programs have the potential to educate a new generation of policy-makers and administrators who can serve as bridges to create fundamental change for FNMI communities, both urban and remote," said Tracy Coates, a lawyer by profession, who specializes in cross-cultural strategies. Coates, who is Mohawk, was

hired by Carleton to meet with communities and stakeholders to discuss program design and curriculum. Her work followed up on two engagement processes undertaken by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities with respect to Aboriginal post-secondary programs.

Indigenous social network launched

Okwaho Communications has launched the Okwaho Network, which is North America's first social network for Indigenous business and economic development. The Okwaho Network is an online Indigenous business community that reflects a diverse mix of Indigenous communities, businesses and peoples. The social network provides an online platform for members to connect, engage and collaborate on business and economic development opportunities. Research in Indigenous economic development indicates an immediate need for a dedicated integrated network where economic development professionals, business and community leaders alike can connect, collaborate and together drive change on a regional, national and international scale. "The Okwaho Network offers a great opportunity to promote a company's commitment to progressive Indigenous business relations and gives companies an interactive communications platform to engage with Indigenous communities and business professionals," said co-founder and assistant director Rye Barberstock.

Compiled by Shari Narine

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Health Watch

By Shari Narine

Study shows number of incarcerated Aboriginal women growing

A newly released study by the federal Justice Department says the number of Aboriginal women locked in federal institutions grew 97 per cent between 2002 and 2012. The number of Aboriginal men in that same time period increased by 34 per cent. "Aboriginal women are particularly overrepresented as offenders in female institutions and correctional services," said the 2013 report, obtained by The Canadian Press under the Access to Information Act. The report noted that Aboriginal women in the criminal justice system tended to be slightly younger than non-Aboriginal women, had less education, struggled to find work, and suffered from substance abuse. Two out of every three Aboriginal women were incarcerated for violent crimes, such as assault, uttering threats, robbery, sexual assault, criminal harassment, forcible confinement and murder. The study found Aboriginals represent 34 per cent of all female and 22 per cent of all male prisoners in federal institutions. The numbers were slightly higher for both Aboriginal men and women in provincial and territorial facilities.

Steering committee claims rift with CIHR

The Aboriginal Health Community Steering Committee has been formed in response to what some view as the Canadian Institutes of Health Research's actions to pull back support in the Aboriginal health community. Rod McCormick and Fred Wien, co-chairs of the AHSC, say there is a "serious rift" between the CIHR and the Aboriginal health community. In a 52-page report to the Aboriginal health community and supporters, McCormick and Wien say CIHR has "ended its earlier strong commitment to build capacity in Aboriginal health research; it is eliminating the mechanisms that have previously provided a strong voice for Aboriginal health priorities and perspectives; and it is putting in place new systemic barriers which have the effect of discouraging proposals from the Aboriginal health community in the first instance and subsequently disadvantaging those who have the courage to proceed." They say concerns raised with the CIHR president and its governing council have gone unanswered. However, the report falls short of saying CIHR is targeting Aboriginal programs. "We are not claiming that the Aboriginal health research field is deliberately being targeted at least as far as we know. For the most part, the senior CIHR leadership is making decisions with system-wide application (which) has quite unequal impacts especially when it comes to the Aboriginal health community." The AHSC is asking for support to ensure that the CIHR continues to engage the Aboriginal health community in the research process.

Indigenous HIV strategy launched for Saskatchewan

On Dec. 1, World AIDS Day, a new Indigenous HIV and AIDS Strategy was launched in Regina. The number of diagnosed cases among the Aboriginal population in Saskatchewan is among the highest in the world. The strategy is a four-year plan outlining the need for agencies working with people living with the disease to address underlying social issues affecting Aboriginals. "We're looking at the teachings of the medicine wheel and looking at addressing HIV through a medicine wheel teaching. Looking at the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual and incorporating those ways into what already exists in this province," said Margaret Poitras, CEO of All Nations Hope Network. Although the rate of diagnosed cases remains high among Saskatchewan's Aboriginal population, the overall number of new cases is on the decline, but not at the same rate as the general population.

Adams named CMO for FNHA

Dr. Evan Adams, a member of the Tla'amin First Nation, assumed the position of Chief Medical Officer for the First Nations Health Authority of Canada on Dec. 1. "It has been a lifelong dream to work directly with First Nations and Aboriginal peoples on our wellness and prosperity at this level. I'm grateful to the Office of the Provincial Health Officer for the past seven and a half years. I feel like I'm coming home," said Adams. Other changes in FNHA include Richard Jock, who was moved from VP of Policy, Planning and Strategic Services to Chief Operating Officer. Jock is a member of the Mohawks of Akwesasne.

OFIFC launches public awareness campaign to end violence against women

The Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres has launched a public awareness campaign as part of a provincial strategic plan to end violence against Aboriginal women and girls in Ontario. Kanawayhitowin - Honour Life, End Violence is a program developed as a result of the strategic plan that has been in place since 2007, which continually serves as a framework for action. Kanawayhitowin is a Cree word which means 'taking care of each other's spirit.' Funding from the former Ontario Women's Directorate of the Ministry of Children and Youth has provided necessary supports for the OFIFC to work with Aboriginal communities to develop effective campaigns mandated to focus on the issues of violence against women, violence witnessed by Aboriginal children, and talking to Aboriginal men about how violence can end. Although the OFIFC is primarily an urban Aboriginal service provider, this program has engaged rural Aboriginal and First Nations communities.

Diabetes program to sunset after 15 years

By Jackie Muise
Windspeaker Contributor

According to the Canadian Diabetes Association, Type 2 Diabetes, the kind that usually develops during adulthood, is reaching epidemic proportions in this country. The latest statistics puts the number of people living with the disease at more than nine million, one in every four Canadians. By the year 2020, says the CDA, that number is expected to increase to one in every three people.

But, for Aboriginal people, the percentage is actually three to five times worse, rising to between 17 and 20 per cent nationally, compared to just five per cent of the non-Aboriginal population.

That staggering statistic was the reason behind the development 15 years ago of a federal health-care program known as the Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative (ADI). The start of 2015 marks the end of the ADI's 15-year commitment in which the First Nation and Inuit Health Branch of Canada pledged a total of \$523 million to "help reduce the prevalence and incidence of diabetes and its risk factors" for First Nations, Inuit and Metis individuals, families and communities across the country.

The ADI has been operating through eight regional offices, in three five-year phases, each designed to accomplish a specific goal. The main objectives included community-based health promotion, awareness and primary preventions; screening and management; enhanced community health-care training and finally, improvements in knowledge sharing on what actually is working best for "promotion of health, and prevention of diabetes and associated risk factors."

Health Canada reports a wide range of "innovative" delivery systems, tailored to accommodate different regions and communities, all aimed at improving the overall number and management level of diabetes. Exactly how successful the program has been, however, in terms of actual percentages or best practice methods, were not readily available, neither

regionally or nationally, at the time of publication, according to an ADI spokesperson.

The CDA estimates that diabetes shortens the average person's life span by up to 15 years and causes 30 per cent of all strokes; 40 per cent of heart attacks; 50 per cent of kidney failure; 70 per cent of "non-traumatic" limb amputations, as well as substantial numbers of vision loss and blindness.

While there are no comparative statistics for Aboriginal populations per province specifically, Statistics Canada's general population figures, from 2009, shows Newfoundland leading the country for the highest rate of diabetes, followed by Nova Scotia, Ontario and parts of Alberta.

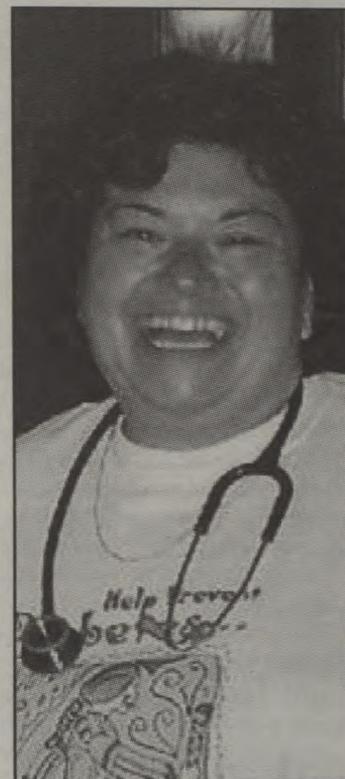
Current public health-care dollars for treatment of diabetes, and its resulting long-term complications, is around \$13.5 billion annually with a projection of \$17 billion by 2024.

However, the CDA reports that national and provincial health-care programs are not alone in the struggle to cover spiraling diabetes costs. More than half of individuals living with diabetes cannot afford to manage their disease properly, including being able to pay for insulin, medical supplies and healthy foods on a regular basis.

Registered Nurse, Shelley Francis, an ADI Diabetes Community Consultant, working for the Union of New Brunswick Indians and responsible for no less than 12 First Nation communities in the province, has been on the frontlines of the battle since the ADI program started a decade and a half ago.

Francis agrees with the overall CDA assessment that one of the biggest barriers towards even minimal diabetes management is poverty, but for Aboriginal people, she says, the problem involves more than just a lack of money.

"I also think there is a connection between long-term stress and diabetes," said Francis. "Any person living with prolonged stress and even PTSD, like many of the victims of (Indian Residential Schools) has



Shelley Francis, RN

physiological changes that predispose them to diabetes. The mental illnesses that have resulted from years of destruction of our culture has led to alcohol and drug addictions, leaving little room for self-actualization and self-care," she said.

Francis is very hopeful that the ADI program will be renewed in 2015 and cites the importance of the next generation as the major reason to continue the effort.

"Childhood obesity, unless addressed immediately, usually leads to adult obesity and ultimately diabetes and other devastating chronic illnesses," said Francis. "In addition, despite getting the message out there about the seriousness of diabetes, we are still seeing many people living in denial [which is] leading our people down a terrible path of self-destruction and severe loss of quality of life."

Francis is urging the public and professionals to "lobby all levels of government to get a handle on diabetes before the next generation becomes more affected."

The ADI says application for renewal of the program has been made but "as of this point in time" there has been no word or an expected date as to when a decision, one way or the other, will be announced.

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Sports Briefs

By Sam Laskaris

Horn-Miller Receives Pan Am Games Post

A Mohawk woman will play a key role for the Canadian squad at the 2015 Pan American Games.

Waneek Horn-Miller was recently named as an assistant chef de mission for the Canadian contingent that will compete at the Games, set for July 10 to July 26 in Toronto and surrounding communities. Horn-Miller, who is from Kahnawake, Que., is no stranger to the Pan Am Games. The former Canadian national team water polo player helped her squad capture the gold medal at the 1999 Pan Am Games in Winnipeg. Horn-Miller went on to become a co-captain of the Canadian women's squad that competed at the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia.

And a year after that she was a member of the Canadian entry that brought home the bronze medal from the world water polo championships.

Horn-Miller is currently living in Ottawa and working for Manitobah Mukluks, a Winnipeg-based Aboriginal footwear company that also has an office in Gatineau, Que.

Horn-Miller was one of two assistant chef de mission chosen for the Canadian squad. Josee Grand'Maitre was also selected as an assistant chef de mission. She's a former national team racquetball player. Former Canadian cycling star Curt Harnett had previously been named as the Canadian chef de mission.

He participated in four Olympics, three Commonwealth Games and a pair of Pan Am Games.

Former Pros Help Raise Funds

The Montreal Canadiens' alumni squad will be playing a charity game at the Mohawk community of Kahnawake, Que.

The contest, scheduled for Feb. 6, will be staged at the Kahnawake Sports Complex. The Kahnawake all-stars will provide the opposition for the match.

Proceeds from the event will go towards the construction of a new children's park in the community.

It is estimated that it will cost between \$30,000 to \$40,000 to build the new park. John Chabot, who is Algonquin and played a portion of his pro career with the Canadiens, will suit up for the Montreal alumni squad.

Chabot appeared in a total of 541 NHL contests. He played 77 matches with the Canadiens. Chabot also played for the Pittsburgh Penguins and Detroit Red Wings.

Team Appoints First Nations Advisor

Tewanee Joseph has joined the Vancouver Stealth, one of the Canadian entries in the National Lacrosse League (NLL). But the former lacrosse star will not be suiting up for the NLL franchise.

Instead, Joseph has been appointed as the Stealth's Senior First Nations Development Advisor.

The Stealth, which plays its home contests in the Vancouver suburb of Langley, is gearing up for its second season in British Columbia. The franchise relocated to Canada from the state of Washington in 2013. Since arriving north of the border, the Stealth brass was keen to work with Aboriginal youth in the area. Joseph sounds like an ideal candidate to lead this venture.

He's a former Senior A and Senior B lacrosse star in Canada. And he was also a member of the Iroquois Nationals squad that competed at the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Victoria, B.C., where lacrosse was a demonstration sport.

Joseph is now the CEO of Tewanee Consulting Group. This company, based in North Vancouver, works on a broad range of projects including First Nations federal legislation, land management, communications and governance.

Joseph will be responsible for implementing the Stealth's First Nations community outreach program. The NLL includes three other Canadian clubs, Calgary Roughnecks, Edmonton Rush and Toronto Rock.

The 2015 NLL campaign will also include the Buffalo Bandits, Colorado Mammoth, Minnesota Swarm, New England Black Wolves and Rochester Knighthawks. The Stealth opens its season on Jan. 3 in Calgary.

Demons Name Coaching Staff

Two coaches that won the 2013 Canadian Lacrosse League championship have been reunited.

Ron Henry has been named as the head coach of the Oshweken Demons while Roger Chrysler will serve as his assistant coach. Chrysler had also been a Demons' assistant coach last year in the league, which is more commonly known as CLax. Henry and Chrysler previously worked together two seasons ago helping the now defunct Iroquois Ironmen capture the CLax crown.

When the league began in 2012 the Demons and Ironmen made a bit of history. They were the only two professional sports franchises to feature all-Native rosters. The Demons won the inaugural CLax championship in 2012.

The Ironmen folded after winning their league title the following year. As for this season, the five-squad CLax will also include the defending league champion Niagara Lock Monsters, Barrie Blizzard, the Oshawa-based Durham Turfdogs and the SouthWest Cyclops, who will play their home contests in Paris, Ont.

The Demons kick off their schedule Jan. 18 on the road versus the Lock Monsters.

[sports]

Journalist braves the bruises of competition for Warrior Games



Heather Kashman

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

By Sam Laskaris
Windspeaker Contributor

VICTORIA

Though he is closing in on the Big 5-0, Steve Sxwithul'twx has taken participatory sports journalism to a new level.

And even though he incurred some injuries along the way, the 49-year-old Victoria resident, who is a member of Penelakut tribe of the Coast Salish Nation, would be willing to continue broadcasting his sporting ventures.

Sxwithul'twx is the host and producer of Warrior Games, a 13-episode series created for the Aboriginal People's Television Network (APTN).

The 30-minute episodes follow Sxwithul'twx to various communities in Canada and the United States. For each episode he explores how Aboriginal youth embrace either a traditional or modern sport. He also trains with local athletes and plays the sport with them.

Warrior Games began airing on APTN this past September. Episodes started being rebroadcast in early December. All episodes can also be seen on the APTN website.

Sxwithul'twx said discussions have not been held on whether to have a second season of the series. But it is something that he would definitely consider.

"There's definitely enough (activities) out there to have another season," he said.

Plus, the series was well received.

"It's an educational show," he said. "It had a lot of support from across the country."

Besides having Sxwithul'twx partake in various sports, viewers are also introduced to Aboriginal athletes that are training for local and international competitions.

Sxwithul'twx founded his own company, Kwassen Productions, in 2009 after having worked as a reporter and producer for various television networks.

Having previously worked as a tribal police officer and liquor inspector, Sxwithul'twx decided to take his life in a new direction. He went back to school and obtained a diploma in Broadcast Journalism.

He currently also works as an Aboriginal employment co-ordinator for the Vancouver Island Health Authority.

The Warrior Games idea was hatched three years ago.

"The concept ironically came about as I was working as a second cameraman on another show," he said.

At the time he was filming a show in Arizona for a series titled Down2Earth. That Indigenous environmental show also aired on APTN.

Sxwithul'twx said that while filming that series another crew member and himself were struck with the idea of doing an Indigenous sports related series.

"That's when the lightbulb went on," Sxwithul'twx said. "We said we'll talk about it more when we get home."

APTN officials were not sold on the concept initially.

"When we first submitted it to them it was rejected," Sxwithul'twx said. "They wanted something more in depth, more focus on what the show would be about."

That rejection, however, did not dissuade Sxwithul'twx from continuing his pursuit to bring the series to fruition.

"We were able to fine-tune it," he said.

The first episode of the series saw Sxwithul'twx travel to Mississippi to learn about the ancient sport of Stickball.

That would be Stickball, as in the Native American version of the game, which some believe evolved into the sport of lacrosse. This type of Stickball is not to be

confused with the sport that has the same name but is a baseball-related street game.

Sxwithul'twx incurred some bumps and bruises playing Stickball.

"It's a tough game to play," he said. "And I'm 49 now. The body can only take so much."

Sxwithul'twx suffered another mishap in a later episode when he travelled to Whistler, B.C. to tackle snowboarding. Members of the First Nations snowboard team provided some lessons for him.

Though he's an experienced skier, Sxwithul'twx had not been on a snowboard before. And sure enough, one of his pre-show concerns, falling and hurting himself, came true.

"I had this bad fall and cracked some ribs," he said.

A series highlight for Sxwithul'twx was when he travelled to Sault Ste. Marie, Ont. There he was able to witness and take part in an annual community event, the Metis Voyageur Games.

"I really liked the Metis games," he said. "That was one of my personal favourites. It had a variety of games."

Other episodes saw Sxwithul'twx learn about war canoe racing, lacrosse, hoop dancing and Arctic Games.

During the episodes of Warrior Games Sxwithul'twx also talked to various Elders, who discuss both the cultural and historical significances of the sport.

Though 13 half-hour episodes were made for the season, Sxwithul'twx said it took a considerable amount of time to make them all.

"Everything was done over a period of one-and-a-half years," he said. "We started in 2012 and finished up early this year."

Aboriginal pavilion will tell "our story" our way [careers & training]

By Barb Nahwegahbow
Windspeaker Contributor

TORONTO

A \$1.2 million project known as the Aboriginal Pavilion will showcase the best in Indigenous arts and culture during the July 2015 Pan Am Games in Toronto. The Pavilion will occupy 1.2 acres at Toronto's Fort York.

Cynthia Lickers, executive producer of the Pavilion, reports to a group known as the Aboriginal Leadership Partners (ALP). Fourteen groups including First Nations, political representative organizations and Toronto community agencies have come together for the very first time, she said. They are operating independent of the Toronto 2015 Pan Am Games, a decision taken by the ALP to be in their best interest. No financial support is being provided by the Games, said Lickers and one of her responsibilities is to secure the funding.

Included in the ALP is the host First Nation for the Toronto Games, the Mississaugas of the New Credit. Other partners include the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, Metis Nation of Ontario, Six Nations of the Grand River and Miziwe Biik Employment and Training.

Rheanne Chartrand, artistic associate for the Pavilion, said the intent of the project is to provide a gathering place where visitors can gain a greater awareness of Aboriginal people,



PHOTO: BARB NAHWEGAHBOW

Rheanne Chartrand, artistic associate, and associate producer Jason Jenkins will be looking for volunteers for the Aboriginal pavilion held during the 2015 Pan Am Games.

the diversity of nations and within that, the diversity of individuals. Evening concerts, theatre and dance performances, markets featuring arts, crafts and traditional food, and cooking and crafts demonstrations are being planned. Chartrand said a central feature is the Cultural Village which will include up to six homes around a common fire. Included, among others, is a Metis Voyageur tent, a Haudenosaunee Longhouse and an Inuit home where visitors will learn how different nations live, see a craft demonstration or even take part in a craft class.

"We're providing a gathering place to tell our story," said Chartrand; "our story from our

perspective. We want visitors to feel enriched by their experience in the Pavilion. All of our activities are geared toward a general audience – families, children and adults. We want them to celebrate with us and to have a good time while they're learning."

Lickers said they are also hoping to ignite enough interest to have lacrosse included as a Pan Am game in future. Currently, she said, there are only 10 countries playing lacrosse and 14 are needed to have it included in the Games. Two lacrosse games are planned in the Pavilion area, Lickers said, and she hopes these will generate enough excitement to get at least four other countries

to take up lacrosse.

Lickers and her staff of three are crowded into two small offices on the third floor of the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto. "There are about eight of us working on this," said Lickers, "with the design and media relations people and others working from home." It's a small group to carry out what Rheanne Chartrand calls, "a monumental project. This has never been done in Toronto before, not on this scale and it's important we get it right."

Associate producer Jason Jenkins is looking for between 500 to 1,000 volunteers for everything from setting up the Cultural Village to working with

Elders and artists, and greeting and directing Pavilion visitors. Volunteers don't have to be Aboriginal, he said. Outreach activities at various venues across the city are planned.

Jenkins is also responsible for arts and food markets and recently issued a call for vendors. "We want high-quality products that are representative," he said.

A key partner, said Lickers, is Planet IndigenUS, a global, multidisciplinary contemporary arts and cultural festival. The festival is co-produced by the Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford and Toronto's Harbourfront Centre. Planet IndigenUS is scheduled to take place during the Parapan Am Games in August 2015.

"There will be a lot of competition for an audience with everything else that will be happening in the city. Everyone's vying for the same audience," said Lickers. The Pan Am Games is also planning programming with Aboriginal content, said Rheanne Chartrand. The team is hoping social media and networks of participating artists will generate a high volume of visitors.

A press conference that took place on Nov. 18 (after deadline) launched the Pavilion initiative. An announcement of funding for the Pavilion from the Ontario Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Michael Coteau was expected.

More than 7,000 athletes from 41 countries are expected to participate at the Toronto Pan Am Games.

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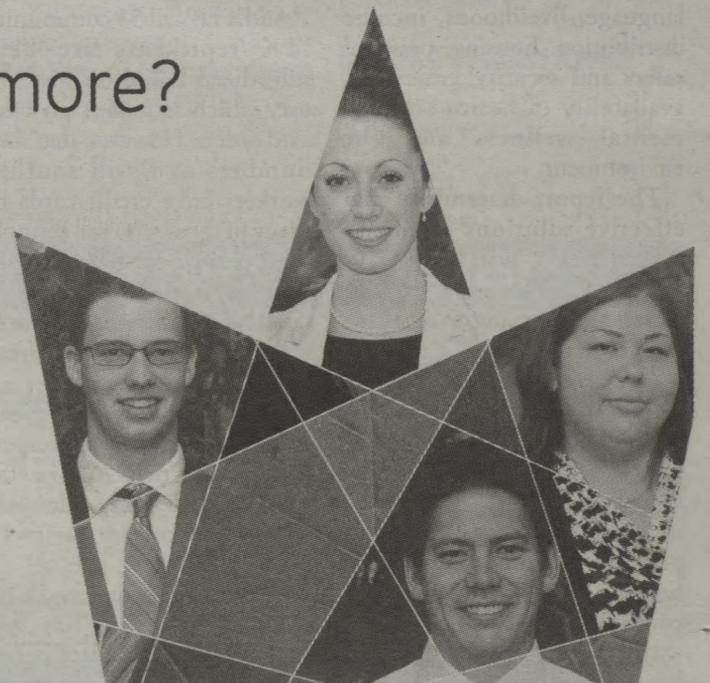
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ITK looking for more from nutrition in the north

By Shari Narine
Windspeaker Contributor

OTTAWA

The auditor general's recommendations on the federal government's Nutrition North Program are welcomed by National Inuit Leader Terry Audla, but the president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami is quick to point out that the report encompasses only one aspect of living in Canada's north.

"You need to look at not only the subsidy programs, (but) income disparity, income distribution, transference of knowledge when it comes ... to being able to live off the land, and there's an education aspect as well," said Audla.

The auditor general's report follows on the heels of the ITK comprehensive report on the Social Determinants of Inuit Health.

Looking at food security, the ITK report presented grim numbers for Nunavut: 70 per cent of Inuit preschoolers resided in food insecure homes; the rate of household food insecurity is six times compared to the Canadian national average; Nunavut food insecurity is the highest for an Aboriginal population residing in a developed country; and it costs between \$395-\$460 to feed a family of four in an isolated Inuit community compared to \$226 for the same diet in a southern city centre.

Other social determinants examined in the report include the quality of early childhood development, culture and language, livelihoods, income distribution, housing, personal safety and security, education, availability of health services, mental wellness and the environment.

The report determines that effective solutions to health disparities will involve addressing these underlying factors and focusing on a holistic view of health.

Auditor General Michael Ferguson's report focuses on food security. In the 28-page chapter on Nutrition North Canada, Ferguson notes that there is no indication that changes in the program have resulted in savings being passed on to the consumers.

Initially food costs were lowered through the Food Mail Program, which subsidized shipping costs for nutritious perishables and other items. Inuit saw direct savings, but this approach was not without difficulties, said Audla, as orders could only be placed through credit cards and many Inuit did not have credit cards.

In 2012, Nutrition North Canada replaced that program.

Now, subsidies are provided directly to the retailer. And that raises concerns for the auditor general, who wrote in his report, "Overall, we found that Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada has not verified whether the northern retailers pass on the full subsidy to consumers. The department has not required the information it needs to verify this in the contribution agreements it has signed with northern retailers."

Audla is not surprised by this finding, which was also noted as a yet unassessed concern in ITK's Social Determinants.

"In the initial revamping of what was known before as the Food Mail program, we had tried to reach out to participate in consultations and discussions and we weren't necessarily included," he said. "At the time we felt that (the changes) were a bit too centred on the retailers."

Audla also says that as retailers are subsidized regardless, they have no incentive to ensure their product is sold.

Another shortfall of the program highlighted by the auditor general was the lack of clearly identified communities requiring subsidies.

"Overall, we found that although (AANDC) has consulted with Health Canada to base food eligibility ... on nutritional value, (AANDC) has not identified eligible communities on the basis of need. This finding is important because it is essential that subsidized foods be healthy and that communities in need benefit from the subsidy," said the report.

Audla says all 53 communities ITK represents are being subsidized based on historical use, which is reliant on credit card orders. However, that skews numbers as fly-in southern workers have credit cards but many of those who call the north their permanent home, do not have credit cards.

AANDC has responded to the report by listing actions already completed or underway, including striving for "greater clarity" in funding agreements with retailers that will take effect April 1, 2015, and undertaking retailer compliance reviews in 2014-2015.

For community eligibility, AANDC says it "has been examining this matter for the past year, and is conducting a detailed review of the requirements for eligibility."

While Inuit getting the full subsidies available to them in food costs is important, Audla says more comprehensive action is necessary.

"There needs to be an educational aspect to it, preparing nutritional food... How do you build the southern

grown produce into a nutritional meal?" he said. "That's one aspect the auditor general didn't necessarily touch on."

Too often unhealthy food is purchased, says Audla, and with harvesting becoming an expensive proposition and dying

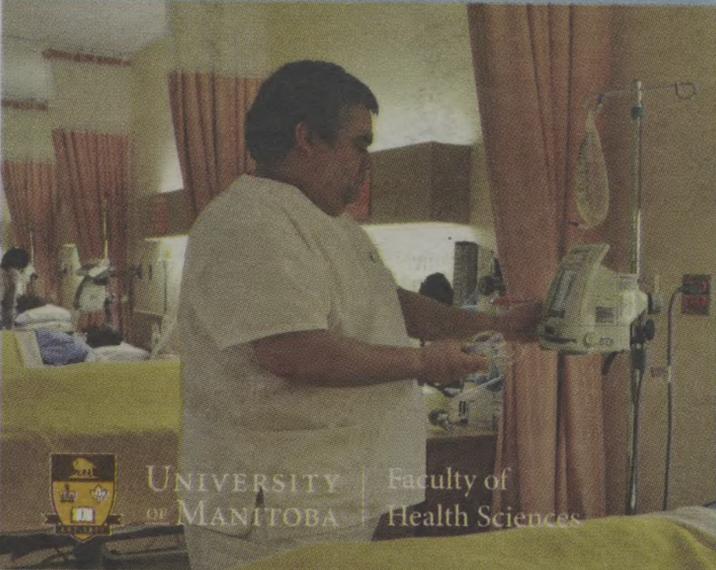
tradition, health issues, such as diabetes, are cropping up. Audla would like to see localized community kitchens established, with retailers instructing Inuit on what food products are being subsidized, their nutritional values, and preparing meals with

a budget in mind.

"We want to try and take the holistic approach," said Audla. "Looking at all aspects of how one can, at the end of the day, put food on the table and ensure that their family is fed and that the hungry are fed."

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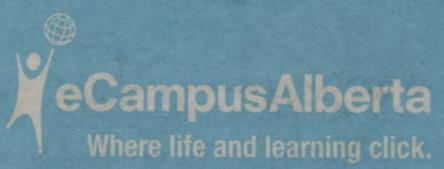
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Huu-ay-aht members prepare for LNG fight

(Continued from page 10.)

"The bar being raised to consent not only involves that single First Nation, but also the ones that are directly adjacent. There may be overlap issues, and in this case, it sounds like there are overlap issues."

According to Steelhead CEO Nigel Kuzemko, the company must now undertake a comprehensive feasibility study, from environmental assessments and consultations with First Nations along the entire corridor to engineering details on the plant itself, right down to archaeological studies on the

plant site.

"Then we'll sit down and talk about it as partners, and ask, 'Is it worth going to the next stage?' We'll make that decision in about 12 months."

For Stella Peters and SayNoToLNG, the feasibility stage may be the last chance to convince Huu-ay-aht, and the greater community, that the project is not worth the sacrifice of the nation's spiritual homeland.

"Now I guess we've got to get ready for Round 2," she said. "For Steelhead, the real work begins now, and we have to do some work on our part."



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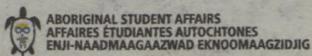
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Sage Briefs

(Continued from page 14.) province in Canada. The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner teamed up for this project that supplies curriculum and training for teachers. "We Are All Treaty People" incorporated the teaching of treaties into every grade from K-12 in all provincial and First Nations schools in Saskatchewan.

Environmental scan of Aboriginal services in Saskatoon

An environmental scan of Saskatoon's Aboriginal community has compiled more than 1,000 programs and services. The Kitaskinaw project, a partnership between the City of Saskatoon, Saskatoon Tribal Council, United Way of Saskatoon and

Area, and the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research, includes feedback from Saskatoon's Aboriginal community about the comprehensive inventory of programs and services currently accessed. "The Kitaskinaw project is an important step in the delivery of services for citizens," said Saskatoon Tribal Chief Felix Thomas. "This is especially true for the First Nations population and the need for the delivery of effective, meaningful services to individuals and families." The report also highlights the need for mainstream organizations to be inclusive of Aboriginal people as employees within their organizations in order to build culturally-competent service delivery.

Compiled by Shari Narine

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[footprints] Pablita Velarde

Pioneering painter earned fame for creating childhood images

By Dianne Meili

Initially ostracized by the leaders of her Santa Clara Pueblo in New Mexico for pursuing a full-time career as a painter, Pablita Velarde ignored criticism and went on to exhibit her work throughout the United States and Europe.

In the 1940s, when women were expected to be potters, selling their work at local trading posts, art fairs and roadside stands, Velarde disregarded custom to become a leading professional American Indian artist, capturing everyday and ceremonial life from her childhood.

"My grandmother was born absolutely dirt poor and she survived the school of hard knocks," said granddaughter Margarete Bagshaw, a successful painter and Santa Fe gallery owner herself. "She and her sisters were left without a mother. Her father sent her off to mission school when she was only about three years old."

Credited for painting Pueblo life from a woman's point of view, one of her most famous paintings is a cutaway view of a two-story Pueblo home in the early 1900s, showing women inside busy with daily activities like cutting dry meat and grinding corn.

Her chosen subject was of little concern to other Pueblo artists and non-Indian observers at the time, but she persevered as a defiantly independent voice for her gender and won more art awards than any other painter, male or female.

"What I want her to be known for is being a master of Pueblo history and recording that history through the world," said Bagshaw, quoted at the time of Velarde's death in 2006 in The New Mexican newspaper.

"She was very proud of the fact that she looked at herself as a plain little ordinary Indian woman who accomplished a whole lot," explained Bagshaw, who established the Pablita Velarde Museum of Indian Women in the Arts in Santa Fe to honour her grandmother. The museum features the art of women able to trace Native ancestry within three generations.

Velarde drew from motifs found on petroglyphs, pottery, and ancient Pueblo murals to enlarge the scope of her subject matter. She experimented with perspective, color, levels of realism and abstraction to express her unique interpretations of Pueblo life.

Born in 1918 at Santa Clara Pueblo, Velarde was named Tse Tsan, Golden Dawn, by her grandmother. Her father sent her to Saint Catherine's Indian Boarding School in Santa Fe shortly after her mother died and there she was given the name Pablita.

Velarde transferred to the Santa Fe Indian School in the eighth grade and began easel painting at 14, becoming one of the first female students in teacher Dorothy Dunn's painting program, known as "The Studio." She was also mentored by an older student, Tonita Pena, the sole Pueblo woman easel painter of her generation, whom Velarde met when they both painted murals at the school as part of a federal art project.

It was after being hired by the Works Progress Administration, created to provide jobs to the unemployed during the depression, that Velarde gained notice. Tasked with creating paintings and murals at Bandelier National Monument, she continued to paint detailed images of her people in everyday and ceremonial poses, making a name for herself for works that had artistic and historical value.

Her work at Bandelier was restored as part of the monument's 90th anniversary celebration in 2006, and several of her murals can be seen at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Centre in Albuquerque, where Velarde lived for nearly 50 years.

Velarde revealed in a 2005 Albuquerque Journal interview that her early life on the Santa Clara Pueblo was without conveniences like electricity, running water, and gas. But there was plenty to look at.

"Every time my dad would holler at me to go to the well and get a bucket of water, I'd walk as slow as I could. I'd come back



Pablita Velarde

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

with half a bucket. I'd stare at the horses in barns, at cows, at sheep, at people walking by.

"There was always something up there. I'd look at the trees and the rocks and the animals in my head. There'd be something growing in my head, a picture."

After gaining recognition at Bandelier, Velarde painted as a hobby after she married and had children. One of her daughters, Helen Hardin, was included in the 1970s modernist wave of artists who wrenched Native American art into a contemporary realm. Her star was rising fast until breast cancer ended her life in 1984.

Between 1939 and 1945,

Velarde produced more than 84 paintings in casein on Masonite, matte board and glass. By the 1950s she was painting professionally and began winning regional and national awards while earning international recognition.

A corner of the Pablita Velarde Museum of Indian Women in the Arts is reserved for its namesake, set up as a re-creation of Velarde's art studio. It includes a metate and mano (stone mortar and pestle) where she ground mineral and rock elements into powders for making earth-coloured paint.

"The museum is small and humble now, like my grandmother was," said Bagshaw.

In time, she hopes to see it expand to feature painters, potters, sculptors, weavers, jewellers, dancers, musicians, film-makers, poets and writers.

An education outreach program will bring school-age children into the museum to learn about the contributions Native American women artists have made throughout history, while planned initiatives will assist emerging artists to take their art to a higher level.

"My grandmother started something from being born into nothing," concludes Bagshaw, satisfied her grandmother's ground-breaking legacy will endure.

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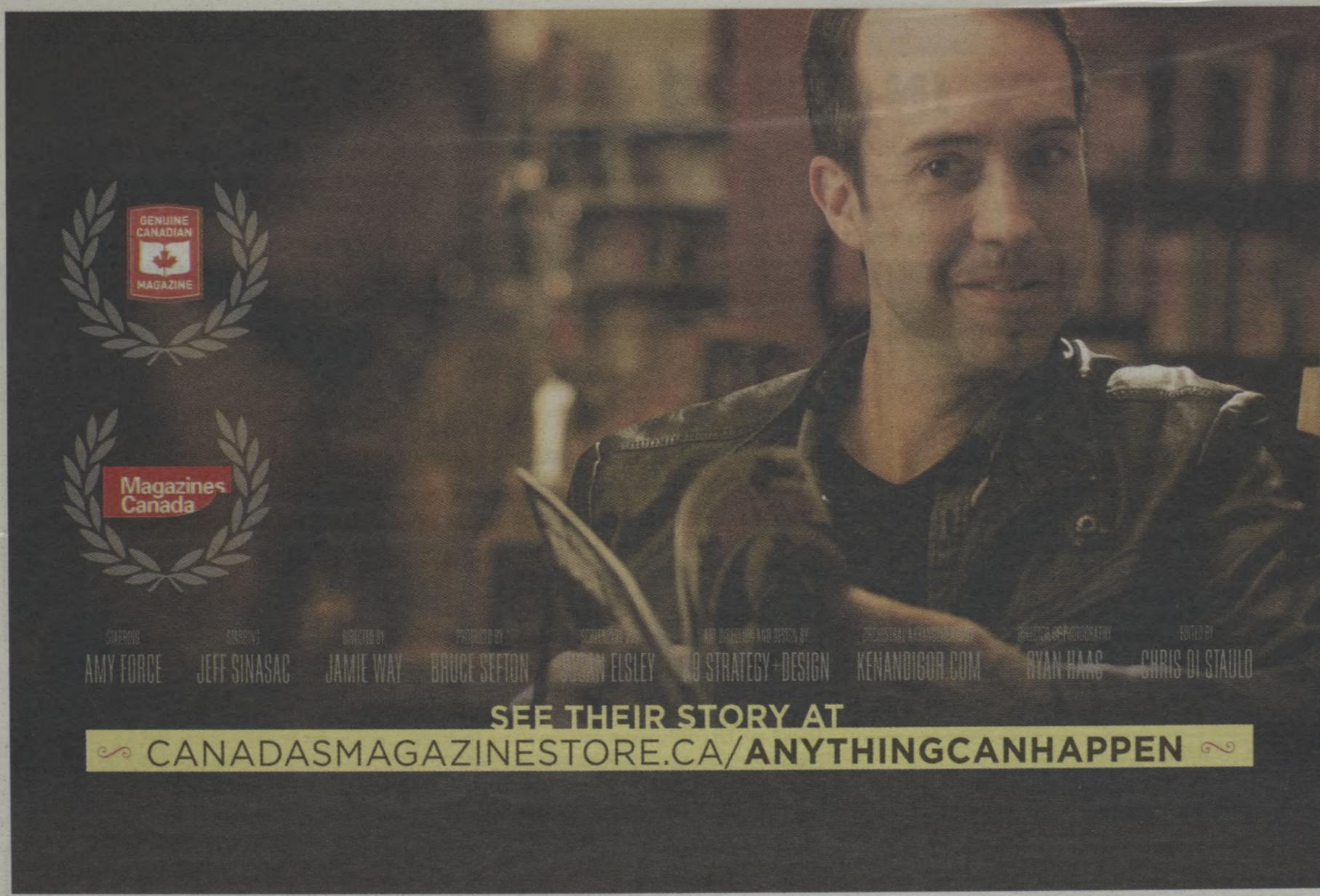
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