

INSIDE

A Special Fireside Christmas Section — Page 1-40

Windspeaker

Quote of the week:

"We find that they're being discriminated against, not just because they're women, but because they're minorities. We term it double discrimination and something has to be done." — Sylvia Farrant, after releasing results of a study showing Native women continue to be discriminated against in the workplace.

December 15, 1989

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Northern Inuit agree to largest-ever Native land claim settlement

Nunavat to receive \$580 million 225,000 sq. km. in NWT deal

By Jeff Morrow
Windspeaker Staff Writer

OTTAWA

The largest Native land-claim settlement in the nation's history was agreed to in principle by the Government of Canada and the Inuit of the Northwest Territories in a landmark decision last week that could split control the far northernmost regions of Canada between Native governments.

The Tungavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN) has negotiated a 225,000 square kilometre land settlement and \$580 million in compensation over the next 14 years.

It will also gain 36,000 square kilometres in subsurface rights.

The TFN, an organization representing more than 17,000 Inuit, will have

a strong decision-making role in environmental management and a guarantee to wildlife harvesting rights and resource revenue-sharing.

TFN chief negotiator Paul Quassa said the tentative agreement is a dream come true for the Inuit of the eastern Arctic who have waited 15 years for the creation of the Nunavut Territory.

"This is what the Inuit have been waiting for... a separate territory in which we can show the people in the rest of Canada that we are able to run our own affairs," he said.

The Inuit, federal government and the Government of the Northwest Territories must enter into further negotiations to ratify the agreement.

Talks will take place over the next six months.

The Minister of Indian Affairs, Pierre Cadieux, said there will be a plebiscite with northern residents to determine if a division will be made.

The Inuit, which make up about 80 per cent of the population of the eastern Arctic, will control an area that is equivalent to a third of the Alberta if the deal is put through.

TFN president Donat Milortok said his people still have a lot of work ahead of them in landing their rightful claims, but admits they're at a turning point in acquiring self-sufficiency.

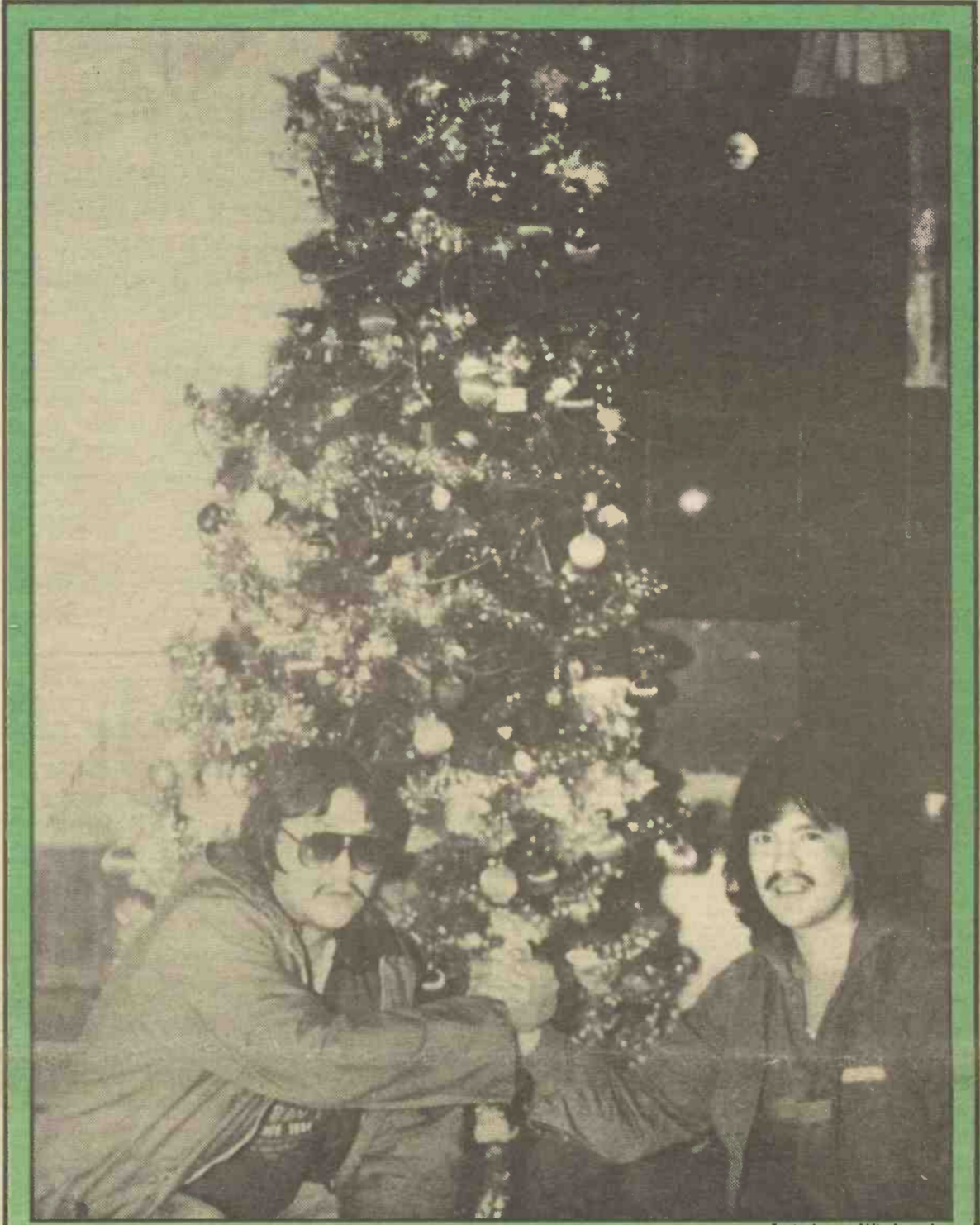
"We still have a lot of work to do in communicating the contents of this tentative agreement to our people. But I want to assure them that we are ready to continue to pursue our dream and will push for the recognition at last of Nunavut," he said.

In 1984, a similar agreement was made between the Inuvialuit of the west-

ern Arctic when they negotiated a 93,240 square kilometre settlement and \$45 million in compensation.

Last year Indians in the Yukon received a 41,000 square kilometre, \$243 million settlement and the Dene/Metis of the N.W.T. negotiated a \$500 million claim and a 181,000 square kilometre settlement.

The boundaries for the Nunavut Territory have yet to be determined but the area chosen will be traditional land used by the Inuit, said Quassa.



Josie Auger, Windspeaker

Brotherhood spirit!

Two inmates from Edmonton 'Max' Institution give the brotherhand shake after inmates and their families celebrated an early Christmas with a Christmas Social on Dec. 10.

Paddle vote 'invalid', charges councillor

By John Holman
Windspeaker Staff Writer

PADDLE PRAIRIE, ALTA.

A dissenting Paddle Prairie councillor is calling into question the validity of a decision by three other councillors to pull the community out of the Federation of Metis Settlements.

Mervin Bellerose, who along with councillor Joe Cardinal, was absent when the council's three other members voted Nov. 14 to separate from FMS, charged last week that one of the council members — Emma Martineau — had already submitted her resignation in June, making the Nov. 14 vote invalid.

Chairman Robert Parenteau and councillors Pat Gaucher and Emma Martineau voted on Nov. 14 to separate immediately from the federation over serious disagreements over the federation's \$310 million land and resource settlement agreement with the prov-

Council bitterly divided over FMS walkout

ince. Bellerose alleged the council had accepted Martineau's resignation on June 5 at a meeting although she stayed involved with the council afterwards.

other way that you can get back in as a councillor is (to be) elected by the people or appointed by the minister (of Municipal Affairs)," said Bellerose.

But minutes from a June 19 council meeting show

indicated that the council members should agree to accept the withdrawal of her resignation on the advice of Dennis Surrendi, assistant deputy minister of the Alberta government's Native Services division.

Martineau could not be reached for comment but Paddle Prairie councillor's liaison officer Lawrence Cunningham, speaking for Martineau, explained this is enough evidence that she is still a member.

Bellerose also claimed that in a Dec. 6 council meeting, 40 of 58 residents supported a non-confidence vote against Paddle Prairie council chairman Robert Parenteau. A previous meeting, he claimed, brought strong negative reaction to the decision to separate.

The vote of non-confidence, said Cardinal,

"The public was told that they don't have a voice at the meeting. What's the use of having a general meeting if the public can't speak?" — Mervin Bellerose.



Cora Weber-Pillwax

"In the Metis Betterments Act, it states in there that the only way you can hold office as a councillor is to be elected by the people or appointed by the minister," he explained.

"And once you resign as a councillor, the only

that a motion was passed rescinding Martineau's June 5 resignation because there was not a legal quorum accepting her resignation.

Cardinal moved the motion and Bellerose seconded it. The minutes also

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Provincial News

Job study finds Native women discriminated against

By Jeff Morrow
Windspeaker Staff Writer

CALGARY

Native women are no further ahead in gaining equitable employment than they were four years ago when their poverty-stricken existence was recognized in a national study, says a spokesperson for the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women in Calgary.

Native women in Canada are still being hit twice by employment discrimination when they look for work, Sylvia Farrant said.

And it's no different now than when the Secretary of State of Canada released a report in 1986 called "Native Women: A Statistical Overview."

"We find that they're being discriminated against, not just because they're women, but because they're minorities. We term it double discrimination and something has to be done," she said.

Farrant said her organization has been conducting its own research and will be releasing a book this Spring, "Women and Poverty," because there is currently no government department set up to tackle the problem on its own.

She said her group is also preparing some data for a comprehensive study into employment discrimina-

tion aimed at minority women.

"We recognize it's an area we don't have specific recommendations for any specific government body. But we recognize that it just isn't fair to be forced into jobs. They would make better money on welfare," she said.

The Advisory Council on the Status of Women has found that there is still a high percentage of minority women in low-paying jobs qualified for better paying employment.

"We find that they're being discriminated against, not just because they're women, but because they're minorities. We term it double discrimination and something has to be done."

The Secretary of State report revealed that the unemployment rate for Native women was 16.5 per cent of the population in the 1981 census, the last taken of the Native people. Non-Native women in the labor force had an unemployment rate of 8.6 per cent.

According to the census, there were 491,460 Native people in Canada in 1981, 248,815 were women. Native people made up 2.1 per cent of the total population of Canada which was estimated at 24 million in 1981.

A recent report by the Canadian Centre of Policy Al-

ternatives in Ottawa suggests federal employers, falling under the Employment Equity Act, especially Canadian banks, discriminate against visible minorities.

The report said Native people make up 30 per cent less than non-Native bank employees. The figure increases with women to 42 per cent and 40 per cent for Native women.

The 1986 Employment Equity Act legislation calls for companies to report their hiring and wage practices for specific minority groups.

The National Employment Equity Network, the coalition of women and minority groups that campaigned for the legislation, believes the legislation should be more binding than it is.

Researcher Marjorie Cohen said the contents of the latest report is an indication that government legislation is useless in providing minority women equal employment opportunities.

"It's appalling. You can see the lack of representation by minority women. The banks are the worst," she said.

The federal banking system is the largest employer that falls under the act.

Cohen said the most startling conclusions that banks were not hiring the minority women they should come from their own records.

"It's very clear exactly what they're doing," she adds.

Mill would devastate Indian lifestyle — band consultant

By Dana Wagg
Windspeaker Staff Writer

DESMARAIS, ALTA.

The proposed Alberta Pacific pulp mill would have a devastating impact on the lifestyles of Bigstone Cree Indians, says a band consultant.

Logging alone, which would create hundreds of new miles of roads in the most important wildlife areas, would seriously affect the band economy, said Tony Pierce, a resource planner, who appeared for the band before a review board weighing the impact of the planned mill. He spoke at a recent hearing held at Desmarais, where the band administration is located.

The Bigstone band's territory accounts for about one-third of the area in the proposed Al-Pac Forest Management Agreement.

The new roads will attract hundreds of additional legal and illegal sports hunters, who will "drastically" reduce game populations, predicted Pierce.

Indian hunters will be squeezed and will be forced to go to more remote and more inaccessible areas, he said.

"Their returns in the bush (will) diminish, households in the villages (will) become hungrier and have to rely increasingly on sources of cash, probably government support payments to buy store food to live," he said.

"Even without wide-scale habitat destruction caused by logging, the massive influx of sportsmen represent a real economic competition to Indian harvesters and will be enough to undermine the village economies of the Bigstone Cree," he said.

"Harvesters will become despondent, because of their sense of loss of self-

worth in the community as economic providers and their loss of self-esteem in being forced to rely more heavily on welfare from the outside world to get by," said Pierce, who has advised small Native communities on the west coast of British Columbia threatened by resource developments.

He noted the Al-Pac mill is expected to double the existing population of 4,000 to 5,000 people in the Bigstone Cree homeland bringing with it a new culture that usually means bad news for traditional Native areas.

"Things happen bigger, they happen faster and they happen with more unpredictability. More often than not, they place incredible stress in a number of different ways on the communities they contact," said Pierce.

The conflict between Native and non-Native worlds will trap many Natives "in a kind of spiritual or psychological wasteland," he said.

While the project will bring substantial amounts of money to Bigstone communities, it will lead to "escalated sales of alcohol, drugs and Indian women," he said.

He strongly recommended the project not go ahead but that governments instead use some of the money being provided to subsidize the \$1.3 billion project for alternative projects appropriate to the area.

He said if small timber stands were set aside for municipalities, workers' co-ops and Indian bands, the projects would, over the long-term, employ a greater number of people and without the boom and bust effects of large-scale industrial projects like Al-Pac.

Pierce said it is Natives not the developers of large projects like Al-Pac, which

is 65 per cent Japanese-controlled, who have to live with the devastating effects of development decisions.

"If the forests don't regenerate, if the animals don't come back, if the waters, air and soil are poisoned by industrial effluent and pesticides, if the young die violent deaths or otherwise destroy their lives, all these risks are borne by the Indians not the exploiters," he said.



Hundreds packed a recent pulp mill hearing in Desmarais

Dana Wagg, Windspeaker

Health study urged for Hinton mill

By Jeff Morrow
Windspeaker Staff Writer

HINTON, ALTA.

The \$400 million expansion of a bleach kraft pulp mill in Hinton is more a safety concern to the company's employees than the residents of the small, northwest Alberta community, says the director of the Alberta Wilderness Association in Hinton.

But Ann Notnes says the cancer-causing gas emissions that have forced tradesmen at the Weldwood Canada Ltd. mill to walk off their jobs should be just as offensive to the 9,000 residents of Hinton.

She wants to put pressure on the provincial government to do a health study on the town to prove there is a problem, but Hinton residents are reluctant to support her campaign.

The working conditions at the 32-year-old Weldwood mill have come under fire in recent weeks by tradesmen who fear chlorine and asbestos emissions are damaging their lungs.

Notnes believes similar concerns should be shared by residents of Hinton, who she claims are also targets of the toxic pollutants.

"But a lot of the people just don't care. I know there's a problem but there's just no interest," she said.

"Our group thinks it's high time a health study was done here. Our claims would be backed up," she said.

After a recent landmark decision by the Workers' Compensation Board to uphold the claim of former Weldwood employee Leroy Kidner, who died of cancer last year after being exposed to sawdust and lime dust, the company's employees have waged a protest.

Kidner died of cancer in the summer of 1988 after working for Weldwood 18 years.

Tradesmen working for the company doing the Weldwood expansion, Commonwealth Construction, have complained to their union chiefs they are being exposed to chlorine gasings, and some have walked off their jobs.

Notnes said their concerns are evidence something "very serious" is happening at the mill.

She notes Hinton is still heavily reliant on the mill

for employment and many of the residents are "split" in their views of the project's environmental effects.

Notnes said the Hinton-Wilmore chapter of the Alberta Wilderness Association has 12 members and is pushing for the health probe but their efforts are going unnoticed by area residents.

Former Hinton resident Lorraine Sinclair said she isn't surprised.

As short as one year ago, she said it was difficult to get anyone in Hinton to criticize the mill, and even with the sudden rash of public complaints, mill workers are the only people speaking up.

"It's a pulp mill town. But people are starting to get concerned about it. Especially the people that work there," she said.

Sinclair, a Metis, lived in Hinton from 1967 to 1986.

She said people there don't want to jeopardize their community status by objecting to the mill effluent or toxic discharges.

Former mill employee Randy Lawrence said the entire Weldwood project is a hazard to human health but he understands why the town's residents are cautious about their criticism.

He said most of the community has economic ties to the mill as it did when Hinton was established around the first mill, Northwestern Pulp and Power, in the 1950s.

He noted the workers complaining now are from Commonwealth Construction and not long-time mill employees.

Lawrence, who worked for seven years alongside Kidner at the lime kiln, said most of the mill workers and Hinton residents don't want to sacrifice their jobs and homes by "speaking out."

"It's really not a formal conspiracy to keep quiet, but nobody really wants to risk it. They would rather risk their health," he said.

But Hinton pharmacist Ken Brady, a member of the town's medical board, said he hasn't seen any evidence to cause residents worry.

Last week the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety division sent out an eight-man team to investigate complaints by 1,100 Commonwealth Construction employees.

Provincial News

Social study to be started in Grande Cache

By Dana Wagg
Windspeaker Staff Writer

GRANDE CACHE, ALTA.

Alberta Social Services has agreed to fund a \$11,000 study to identify the social needs of Grande Cache area Natives.

"I would see the needs' study identifying the strengths and weaknesses and coming up with recommendations of what's best needed for the community," said Keith Purves, program director with Native Counselling Services in Edmonton.

Denis Bell, regional director for the Edmonton area with social services, told Windspeaker Dec. 13 his department decided to find the money for the three-month study after an agreement in principle was reached at a recent meeting with Chester Cunningham, executive director of Native Counselling.

Social problems in the area were highlighted after the suicide deaths of 16-year-old Wayne Moberly in May and his 24-year-old brother Larry in November.

The decision to fund a study, which is seen by Grande Cache agencies as a first step towards identifying social problems and finding solutions, was hailed by Loretta Belcourt, who works on the front lines in the community with Native Counselling.

"That's great," she said. "After a lot of years, something good is happening."

A study is the right place to start, she said. "That's where it has to grow from."

A number of program suggestions are already being discussed in the community.

"The pressure is on everybody (to act)," said Purves, who met in Grande Cache with about 20 people from the community last month after Larry took his life.

"I think Grande Cache is going to end up with some (additional) services," he said. "The need is identified in our minds. An assessment would nail down that need."

A list of suggestions was developed at that meeting of services and programs wanted by residents. Heading the

Moberly suicides prompt gov't response



These Grande Cache kids will get their concerns heard with the funding of a new social needs study.

list is a multi-purpose centre, which would deal with a wide range of social needs.

Other suggestions include:

- life skills' programs,
- a counsellor dealing with problems of young children from alcoholic families,
- an adult treatment program for alcoholics, and
- suicide prevention and awareness programs and bereavement therapy.

Alcohol abuse was identified as a problem with some members of the Moberly family but wasn't a direct factor in Wayne's death. However, Larry was "significantly intoxicated" at the time of his death, according to the medical examiner's office in Edmonton.

Purves said Native Counselling hopes to have the study done by local people, who will then deliver it to local agencies which would be given the responsibility of initiating the recommendations.

"Grande Cache has some very strong and skilled people. They have the ability to deal with their own problems and all they need is funding help to bring those skills together to be able to do something for themselves in their own community," he said.

Meanwhile, Donald Beggs, an education consultant with Grande Cache School District No. 5258, said he has been asked to have a draft policy on suicide prevention and bereavement therapy for young people ready for a January meeting of area school counsellors and administrators.



It was a happier Christmas for this couple and their baby

Josie Auger, Windspeaker



A father piggybacks his child in a free-spirited skate

Josie Auger, Windspeaker

Christmas comes early for Edmonton 'Max' inmates

By Josie Auger
Windspeaker Staff Writer

EDMONTON

On Sunday, December 10, inmates at Edmonton Institution, the maximum security prison, celebrated their Christmas two weeks early.

For eight hours, inmates forgot about being in jail. They were able to smile, laugh and even cry with their loved ones.

The Christmas Social took place in the gymnasium at the Edmonton Institution.

Colorful streamers hung from the ceiling rafters. Poster-size pictures of Santa Claus, Christmas trees, children, reindeer, sleighs and bells were hung on the wall.

An 8-foot Christmas tree lit up the the centre of the gymnasium as Christmas carols and rock music were played.

A constant buzz of happy children, chattering and laughing, filled the room as they waited for the feast to begin.

After dinner, Santa Claus arrived in his bright red suit and white beard. All the children ran to greet the jolly old man. The children pulled and tugged at him, wanting to get closer. Santa Claus made his way towards the Christmas tree and the children stared in awe.

Gifts were handed out to the children. Some even sat on Santa Claus's knee. Over \$1,300 was generated from the prisoner's canteen this year to buy toys for the visiting children.

Once a year, at the Christmas Social, the inmates and visitors can put on some ice skates and go outside to the rink. Within its boundaries the cries of laughter echo across the field.

Doug Levesque, coordinator of the Christmas Social, is spending his twenty-second Christmas in prison.

"Most guys like me don't know what it's like to celebrate Christmas on the outside. It's a chance to spend time with family," said the 42 year-old inmate.

However not all inmates get visitors. Those who are kept in 'the hole' or solitary confinement stay there until time is up.

Some inmates may have their friends and family out-of-province who can't afford to make the trip. In order for family and friends to visit, Christmas is moved ahead two weeks.

"For the people who have family, they're happy. The others who don't have guests stay in their cells. They don't want to intrude. That's the sad part of it," said Levesque, adding: "They got nothing, they could be here but they're not."

For those inmates, Christmas is like all other days, a clockwork routine starting with a head count in the morning, showers, meals, work, exercise and skin frisks. Those who don't work are locked up in their cells.

"There is no real training. No automotive training. They should have specific courses to have something to look forward to. The place is not geared to give incentive," said Levesque.

"Prison is a big wheel — you go out, you come back in," said Levesque, who has seen this wheel turn many times in his twenty-two years behind bars.

Yet Christmas is one of those few times that is anticipated among inmates even if there are some drawbacks.

Upon entry into Edmonton Institution, visitors including children may be skin searched. Visitors are asked to disrobe while guards search for drugs or anything a person might be trying to sneak in.

Searches are mandatory for anyone who wants to come in and visit.

It's a time-consuming process that cuts into Christmas visiting time. It also depresses and frustrates the inmates when they find out their relatives and friends have been subjected to such an ordeal.

Preparations for the Christmas Social are planned months in advance by the inmates.

Guest lists have to be submitted, menu planned, children's gifts have to be bought and wrapped. Most importantly, Santa Claus has to be notified.

After the eight-hour visit, inmates went back to the routine of jail life.

"Soon as we're out of here, we're back in jail. We go back to the skin frisks," noted Levesque.

Windspeaker

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Viewpoint

Grande Cache study much-needed

The Native community in the Grande Cache area has had more than its share of pain.

It's not unlike any number of Native communities around the province.

But its troubles have become very public, because of the suicidal deaths of Wayne and Larry Moberly.

Suicidal deaths are always a slap in the face to families and communities. And they leave us twisting and turning for answers. The question 'why', which automatically follows any tragic or violent death, is more difficult to answer.

It signifies a troubled individual, perhaps a troubled family, and often a troubled community.

Wayne's suicide shook his family, friends and fellow students at Grande Cache High School.

His brother, Larry who took his own life less than six months later, was particularly affected by it.

The ripples of fear that the Grande Cache area may be developing a deep-rooted suicide problem are spreading.

But community agencies, the local high school, Alberta Social Services and Native Counselling Services are responding.

They're not hiding their heads in the sand. They're re-evaluating policies and they're confronting their approach to the community's hurts.

News this past week from Denis Bell, a senior official with Alberta Social Services, that the province will pay for a probe of the community's concerns is welcome.

It will shine light on what the community's greatest needs are and point the way to solid answers.

The concerted action that has begun must continue.

When the study points out which support systems in the community need shoring up, Alberta Social Services must step in with financial help.

Bell, who has seen the great pain in Grande Cache, said his department is committed to helping the community. Paying for the study is putting his money where his mouth is.

Keith Purves of Native Counselling in Edmonton said he's optimistic the study will lead to improved services in the area after the needs are nailed down.

Let's hope so.
The need is clear.

'Twas the night before Christmas...

'Twas the night before Christmas when all through the House, not an MP was stirring, not one single mouse.

Nothing was tabled, no Bills were discussed. Holidays were looming so legislation was rushed.

The ministers were nestled all snug in his beds, while visions of pensions danced in their heads.

Cadieux in his kerchief and ready doze, he heard some excitement from his cot he arose.

Away to the window he flew like a flash, tore open the shutter and threw up the sash.

He looked to skies with amazement and fear, to see a great spirit with a shield and his spear.

As he drew in his head and was turning around, the spirit descended and was on the ground.

He was dressed all in fur from his head to his toes. He stood like an arrow and spewed flames from his nose.

Listen to me, he roared with a scowl. My people are people and need your help now.

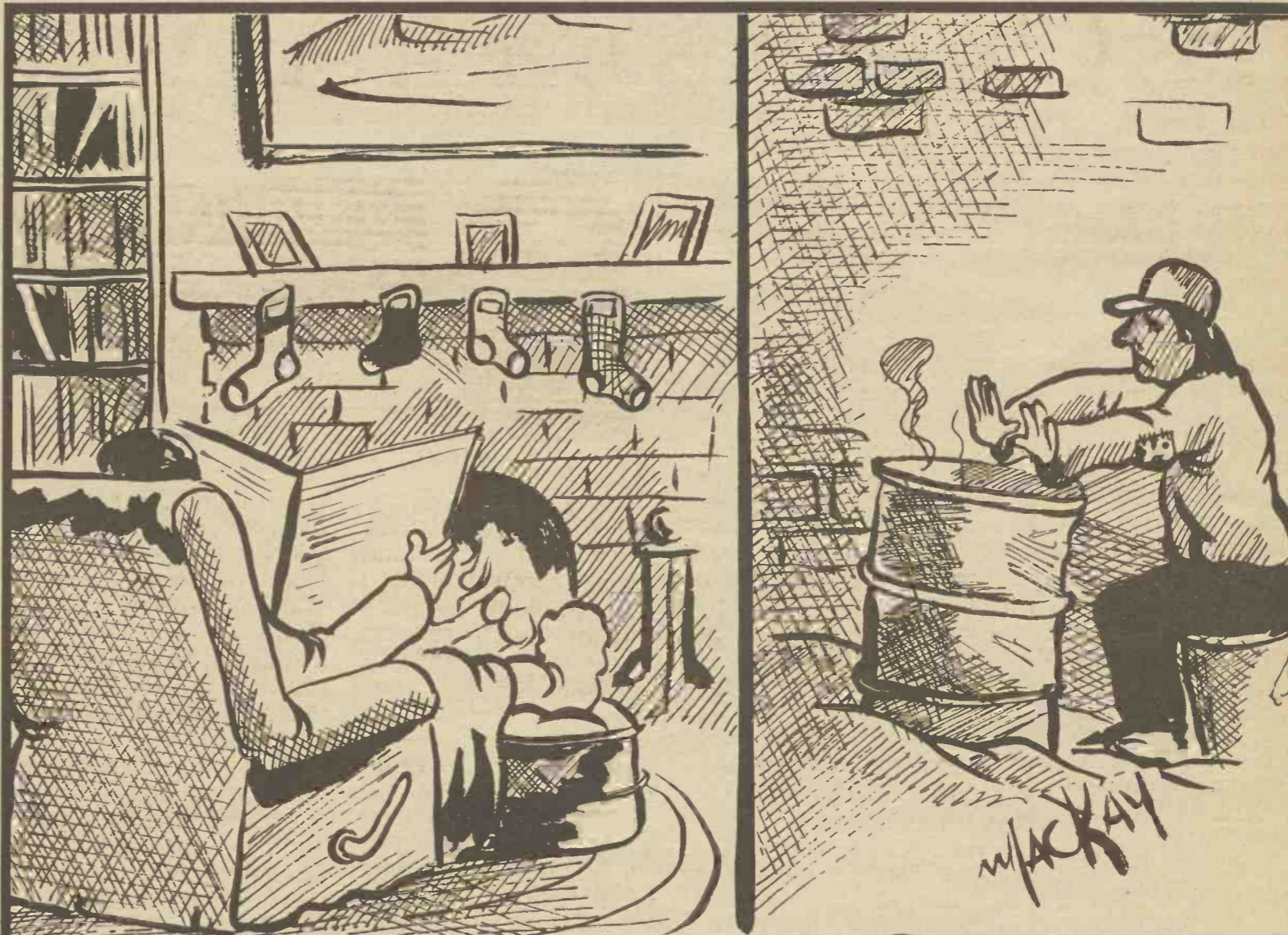
He rendered a notice for Cadieux to abide. He said to be honest, and giving and kind.

Then with a blink, the spirit was gone. Cadieux shook his head then looked out on the lawn.

Engraved in a stone that sat high in the grass, was a heavenly law that will someday be passed.

Traditions are sacred, and God's children are pure, leave them to flourish and mankind will endure.

Editorial Page



CHRISTMAS IS A TIME TO SHARE

Letters to the Editor

Christmas message from Georges Erasmus

1989 turbulent year for First Nations

For the most part, 1989 has been a turbulent year for First Nations all across Canada.

But, never in such a long time have our people acted more collectively, stood more unified and embraced with such deep conviction our goals and principles.

It is in this noble manner that First Nations people took to the streets, went on hunger strikes and occupied federal government offices.

We went to court, and yes, jail, to assert basic fundamental human rights.

Whether we were fighting against low-level military flying, encroachment on our traditional lands by multi-national corporations, adequate housing, better child care, economic prosperity, good health, equal treatment under the law, or for the protection of our languages, we stood together.

And we stood boldly.

The fight for our right to education highlights best our determination this past year to uphold sacred promises made in treaties.

But it also gave us a glimpse of the capability of the leadership that will follow us.

A new decade is upon us and with it new hopes and new challenges.

Despite the setbacks and obstacles, I have always been personally impressed by the strength and purpose of the First Nations.

It is the strength of your resolve that has created the

immense possibilities of hope for our children and the children yet to come.

It is also this commitment that will help us face the many, many challenges ahead.

Along with sincere good wishes for the coming year, I would like to express my appreciation for the support and confidence you have shown throughout the year when

I have visited you on the front lines.

Best wishes to all of you and your families.

Georges Erasmus
National Chief

Paper makes reader aware

Dear Editor:

(Mai-Dul-Ane) Hello:

I'm writing in respect to your Native Weekly Newspaper "Windspeaker" which I have been receiving for a few months now.

My name is Larry Francis and I'm a MicMac Indian from Eastern Canada, New Brunswick. I enjoy reading your paper very much and am always looking forward to receiving your next issue.

There are a lot of interesting articles and information concerning Native affairs abroad and at home and I see that your paper is not only for news in your province but other provinces who share our achievements and struggles.

It has also given me a greater awareness of my Native brothers and sisters west of me who are struggling to survive as people with dignity and honor for a better tomorrow for our children who will follow us.

I've had the opportunity to travel extensively throughout the United States, Mexico and across Canada from British Columbia to Sidney, Nova

Scotia. During these sojourns, I noticed the plight of the Red man is very similar throughout these lands.

The way the government has brainwashed society of our heritage depicting our people as pagan and mundane is opposed to the ways of our teachings.

In recognition of our forefathers and elders who taught us to respect all living things that our Mother Earth has to offer, it is being quickly absorbed by negligence and greed from those in corporate positions and those in control

of economic stability.

By seducing society with political promises that are very seldom kept, needless to say broken treaties, our people may have to return to the old ways of achieving our plight in reference to the Battle at Little Big Horn and Custer's Last Stand. May our footsteps always follow the path of beauty. Ho!

(Wel-lau-lin) thank you
In the Spirit of Crazy Horse,

I remain
Larry Francis

Windspeaker welcomes your opinion

Windspeaker welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be brief and include the name, address and telephone number of the writer. We will not print unsigned letters unless there is a good reason for withholding the identity of the writer. Windspeaker reserves the right to edit letters for taste, length and grammar.

Opinion

This Christmas reach out with an open heart

Tansi, ahnee and hello. And you have your moments. Sometimes it seems that all the time you spent back in those hollow years before you walked this Red Road you spent like a spectator in your own life. Hanging around waiting for someone or something to explain things for you.

No longer. These days you enter the world like a child again. Walking alone beside the river this morning felt almost like the first time. In the birdsong, the water music and the blaze of color across the sky was

a message of awakening that rang inside you like an eagle whistle. Home.

Inside this warm apartment now there is music and there is coffee. There is no need for anyone to explain things. The sweetgrass in the air around you is like the whisper of the Creator leading you to these words and inward to where the real stories live.

This world is the greatest spiritual teacher. Until I learned that in order to learn I had to open my eyes I was blind to the teachings. This morning as I walked along that river I was searching for something inside of me that I could give to you.

Searching for words to express the essential message in this time of the year. This season that is dedicated to love and sharing and family. The river gave me words. This is the Long Snows Moon. This is the time when Mother Earth blankets all of her children in snow and ice. This is the time of rest and wisdom. This is the time when the elders would speak around those old tribal fires and tell the legends.



TOUCHING THE CIRCLE

By Richard Wagamese

The time of teaching.

I stood on the bridge watching the river and thought about all of this. I thought about sharing. I thought about the times in my life when sharing was a foreign idea. About the times when there was no direction.

There was ice. From one bank to the other the river was becoming covered with a thick layer of ice. Somewhere near the middle there was still a thin trickle of open water. I found myself wondering how this was possible. I wondered how a large powerful river like this could surrender its motion to the ice. I wondered how the river became frozen.

I closed my eyes and listened to the sound of the water. I remembered

what the Old One had told me concerning this. He told me that water is the blood of Mother Earth. Water is nature's way of cleansing itself. As I remembered these things, I became more connected to this river that flowed beneath me.

With that connection came awareness.

I opened my eyes and found the answer I looked for. Before this I believed that the river froze only on the top. I believed that the ice formed on the surface and the water below it was freely flowing. I was wrong.

As I looked closer at the open stretch of water I realized that there was a thick layer of ice along the bottom. Here was the beginning of the freeze-up. All of the motion along the

surface kept the truth hidden. Only by really straining to see was I able to discover this. It wasn't immediately visible.

It was then I realized that the river was teaching me about sharing.

Sharing is communication that flows freely between people. It's an open stretch of water that reveals everything. Sharing is the life-blood of human relationships. It has the power to nurture, cleanse and give growth to the bonds that are formed between human beings.

Whenever I stop sharing with my brothers and sisters, I begin my own personal freeze-up. And it starts where it can't be easily seen. Whenever I begin to keep the things which hurt or bother me all to myself the ice begins to form at the bottom of my spirit. The more I retreat within myself, the further I get from the people who can help me.

Unless someone knows the nature of the freeze-up they might miss it entirely. It's like the river. Only by really straining to see was I able to learn about the way the river freezes over. Only by discovering the

process was I able to understand and appreciate the workings of this part of nature.

When I pull away from people the ice builds. Looking at my life my friends and family would be able to see the motion on the surface and think everything was okay. As long as the surface of my life was flowing no one would know that I was freezing up inside. NO one would know until suddenly one day everyone would notice that there was no motion and I had become cold and hard and alone.

And you have your moments. At this time of the year it is good to consider the meaning of sharing. This time of the year is dedicated to the openness and free-flowing nature of human beings. Coldness and hardness and aloneness were never meant to be part of our realities. As brothers and sisters of our Creator we were meant to reach out to each other with open hearts, open minds, and open spirits and take care of each other.

Until next week, Meegwetch.

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Paddle vote 'invalid', charges councillors

From front page

was a response to the residents' fear that by cutting itself from the federation it is cutting itself from the benefits of the \$310 million settlement between the federation and Alberta, stated Cardinal.

But Parenteau refused to acknowledge the vote and walked out, alleged Bellerose.

"No way can you hold a meeting without the people having a voice and that was how these council members tried to run that meeting," he added.

"The public was told that they don't have a voice at the meeting," he claimed.

"What's the use of having a general meeting if the public can't speak?"

But Parenteau denied having heard of the vote of non-confidence.

"They never told me what the non-confidence was about. I don't know what they're talking about," he said, in an interview.

The vote, Parenteau said, must have taken place after he left when the meeting was ad-

joined.

"There's 100 people that have signed the petition (in November) for us that are behind what we've done," Parenteau added.

The 40 residents also struck a committee to meet with the council "to see what their problem was," Bellerose said.

He claimed that Parenteau refused to talk with the committee — consisting of Bellerose, Leslie Nooskey and Rod Chali-foux.

Parenteau denied having met the council or having any knowledge of it.

The Dec. 6 meeting was supposed to be more of a presentation by deputy minister Surrendi and no voting was to take place, said Cora Weber-Pillwax, spokesperson for the councillors who voted to pull out of the federation.

It was previously decided between Surrendi and the council that no votes would be taken at the meeting, she said.

Surrendi met with the people to get their views of the Paddle Prairie separation and to inform them of their options, according to Weber-Pillwax.

Weber-Pillwax said the council's decision to pull out had to be made quickly and there had been no time to consult the people. The council felt it should pull out of the federation as a way to draw attention and get their concerns heard.

It would also be a way to deal directly with the minister responsible for Native programs, Ken Rostad.

Bellerose, however, charged that the meeting in which the motion was passed was illegal in the first place because it did not have a quorum of three councillors.

There are only four legal settlement councillors, he said, and two did not attend the meeting — Cardinal and himself — would have voted against the move.

Last week, the two represented Paddle Prairie at the all-council meetings of the Alberta Federation of Metis Settlement Associations in Edmonton.

Bellerose and Cardinal are following the mandate of the June referendum in which 78 per cent of the voters accepted a \$310 million settlement with provisions for limited self-government, Cardinal said.

"To me they're (the council) defeated now." Most of the public reaction to the motion to separate from the federation has been negative, he claimed.

Cardinal believes that he and Bellerose have more supporters than the other three councillors.

Alberta government officials are working closely with Paddle Prairie residents and its bitterly-divided council to resolve the dispute over Paddle Prairie's pullout from the Federation of Metis Settlements.

Rick McDonald, director of the government's Metis Settlements Branch, said last week that the government is "working with the community and the council to confirm their position."

"We're still working with the settlement, with the community itself and with the council to confirm the community support of that decision (to pull out)...but nothing has been decided yet," said McDonald.

McDonald indicated Surrendi, will consult the Paddle residents and council over the separation to get a clearer understanding of the decision.

"We really don't know what they're saying in their resolution, that's what I'm saying," McDonald added.

"We really want to find out," he said.

The province have not "even addressed" the potential impacts on the federation's settlement from Paddle Prairie's motion to pull out of the federation, he said, and there won't be any public comment until they have reviewed it with Paddle council and residents.

Negotiations are still continuing at the all-council level, McDonald noted.

And the province has taken no sides in the issue.

"We're not working with them (the federation) to keep Paddle Prairie in or to let Paddle Prairie go...we have no position on that," he said.

Corrections

In a story on Dec 1, it was reported that Roy Louis, president of the Indian Association of Alberta, met with the IAA executive board on Dec. 11. It should have read Dec. 4. In a story on the same page, the Metis Framework Agreement was signed Dec. 4, not Dec. 11 as reported.

In a story Nov. 24 on Action North, director John Loftus was quoted as saying: "Eighty to ninety per cent of alcoholics are Native. Almost half of them are illiterate."

The quote should have read: "Eighty to ninety per cent of their clients are Native. Half of them are illiterate."

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Community News

Christmas is worth it ... just look at your kids' faces

Merry Christmas! So, have all the little kiddies made their Christmas list yet. Better hurry! Christmas is just around the corner.

My two boys made their list. Between the two of them, their Christmas order came to \$11,225.33.

Isn't it funny (scary) how much Christmas gifts cost today? I went and looked at some children's items and one toy truck, batteries not included, came to \$49.99.

It's enough to make a person want to hijack Santa Claus and his sleigh full of toys as he flies overhead.

Just kidding, little people everywhere.

Christmas. It is a great time of year, isn't it? With your children, you have to think smart when it comes to them buying a Christmas gift for you. I made sure.

I saved up all their family allowance money for them and yes, they didn't get an allowance for two months prior to Christmas eve. But just think.

Now I'll get that new guitar case I've wanted for so long. My kids hate me, but, what the heck, I just told them, "Take a good look at the age in my face. Do you think old Saint Nick would bring this face a new guitar case?"

They took a close look and said, "You're right, dad. But it has nothing to do with the age in your face."

Smart kids, I'd like to... but then it's Christmas, isn't it.

Another thing. Society is always hollering about how Christmas is for children. Why? I like Christmas. I want a gift and I want a small card attached to that gift, signed by Santa Claus! Personally!

No one on the surface of Mother Earth is ever going to convince me that there is no Santa Claus!

Christmas is for children only? Why? I'd push little babies out of my way to get to my present under the tree first, if I have to! At our house it's a dogfight to beat me to the Christmas tree.

But yes, it is always a pleasure to see the kiddies little eyes all sparkly and bright just before Christmas and of course on Christmas day.

It's worth it all, isn't it? Even though most of us know that when January arrives, six thousand bill collectors will arrive at your hungry door. Christmas is indeed worth it.

BOYER RIVER: Merry Christmas Chief Harvey Bulldog and all the people of the Boyer River Band. Harvey, I understand you almost came to Edmonton



Droppin' In

By Rocky Woodward



Eva Ladoceur

to attend the Holmes/Ruddock fight, until it was cancelled of course. I heard this from your friend, Ron Louis, who happens to work here in...? Where we're not sure. But he's always here...doing something? Ron somehow, had tickets to the fight. Big deal.

Top this Ron. Harvey! Have I got a deal for you! I can't offer the same but how about two seats to a hockey game! Yes, Harvey, and free. I can get you in (I have my contacts like Ron) to a hockey game between the Good Shep Destroyers and my team, the Annunciation Bulldogs!

Can you believe it. It's uncanny! The team I coach has the same name as Chief Harvey Bulldog.

I just amaze myself. I mean, because of my contacts I can impress Chief Harvey Bulldog of the Boyer River Band, by taking him to an Edmonton hockey game! Oh yeah, Harvey. Please bring your winter parka. It gets a little chilly at the Thorncliffe community outdoor ice rink.

Now beat that Ron!

EDMONTON: Listen to this. Cree Christmas Carols. That's right. And it's all happening on ITV on Dec. 24. The show will be broadcast at 12 noon.

Now, who will be doing the songs? Why, none other than that talented lady, EVA LADOCEUR.

Eva has been singing gospel songs in Cree and English at the Native Pastoral Centre for many Sundays, so this show will sure be something special. If you've ever heard Eva sing, especially Christmas carols in Cree, then you know ITV's viewing audience are in for a real Christmas treat. Don't miss it.

If you're interested, the Edmonton Aces co-ed volleyball team will be holding a tournament at the Sacred Heart School in Edmonton, Jan. 20 to 21.

The deadline for entries is Jan. 17, adults only and the cost? \$150 per team.

According to co-ordinator and volleyball player Doreen Huppie, prize money and trophies will be awarded to winning teams.

For more information, please call Doreen at 475-1643 or Joan at 476-8784.

INUVIK: Ed Louie, wherever you are, have a very Merry Christmas.

Ed, a few years back (as people in the far North will remember) did a lot of good for many teenagers at the time when suicide among these teens was running rampant.

He was one of the first to reach out a helping hand to them in their time of need.

Since then Ed has been doing a lot of drifting from place to place, for reasons he could only tell you about. Ed, again, wherever you are, have a great Christmas and call me.

FORT CHIPEWYAN: A special Merry Christmas to my Dad, Jim Woodward, and Dad, don't believe everything I write. We had some great Christmases when I and my three (great sisters) were small, because of you.

We had some wonderful Christmases and Dad...yes I'm sorry for sending away for all those boxes of Christmas cards to sell when I was a kid, and then keeping the money. And I knew you loved me when you opened your wallet for that awful company again, when I tested your love by doing it a second time! Love sure hurts sometimes Dad. I love you.

Merry Christmas.

Compiled by Tina Wood and Connie Morin

NATIONAL FILM BOARD, Special Screenings of Aboriginal Films, beginning Sept. 6, every Wednesday at noon, 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.; N.F.B. Theatre, 120 Canada Place, 9700 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION ANNUAL FRIDAY NIGHT SUPPERS; Fort Vermillion; Starting Nov. 24; Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

ST. HENRY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOL; every Sunday in Ft. Vermillion at 10:15 a.m.; children 3-8 years old are invited to attend; for more info. call Leona Skulmoski at (403) 927-3712.

POWWOW DANCING LESSONS; every Monday from 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.; and Wednesdays from 7 - 10 p.m.; Bonnyville Native Friendship Centre; for more info. call (403) 826-3374.

FREE SOUP KITCHEN; Tuesdays & Thursdays 12 - 1 p.m.; Bonnyville Native Friendship Centre; for more info. call (403) 826-3374.

AA MEETINGS; Tuesdays & Thursdays starting at 8:00 p.m.; Bonnyville Native Friendship Centre Hall; for more info. call Larry Ducharmes at (403) 826-3374.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS; Tuesdays starting at 7:30 p.m.; Bonnyville Native Friendship Centre; for more info. call Brian Tercier at (403) 826-3374.

SWIM NITE; Fridays from 9 - 10 p.m.; Bonnyville Swimming Pool; free to all members; for more info. call (403) 826-3374.

HEAD-SMASHED-IN-BUFFALO-JUMP MINI-EVENTS; Each Sunday from Dec. through March; celebrating this rich Native heritage; Dec. 17, Native Films; Dec. 24, Beadwork Display; Dec. 31, Artifact Display; arrangements can be made to accommodate large group tours; for more info. contact Louise Crow Shoe at (403) 553-2731 or Calgary Office (403) 265-0048.

FIRST ANNUAL FEDERATION CUP; Dec. 15, 16, & 17; Enoch Arena (7 miles west of Edmonton); presented by Alberta Federation of Metis Settlement Association; men's recreational hockey tournament; for more info. call Ralph Ghostkeeper or Richard at (403) 428-6054.

OLDTIMERS' HOCKEY TOURNAMENT; Dec. 16 & 17; Morley, Alberta; for more info. call Terry Rider at (403) 881-3744.

12 TEAM MEN'S HOCKEY TOURNAMENT; Dec. 15-17; Saddle Lake; for more info. contact Dennis Moosewa or Ken Kakeesumat at (403) 726-3829.

INDIAN ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA STAFF CHRISTMAS PARTY; Dec. 20; Continental Inn West; tickets available from staff at \$10 or at the door; Cocktails at 8 p.m.; Dance at 10 p.m., Harley Buffalo Band; Midnight snack; sponsored by I.A.A. staff.

Indian Country Community Events

NATIVE PASTORAL CENTRE CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES; Dec. 24, 8:00 p.m. Youth Mass for families; Midnight Mass 12 Midnight English & Cree for adults; for more info. call (403) 424-1431 or 428-0846.

MEMORIAL ROUND DANCE & HANDGAME TOURNAMENT; Dec. 27, Kehewin School Gym; Kehewin, AB; Handgame tournament starts at 10:00 a.m., Feast starts at 5:00 p.m. for more info call (403) 826-3333.

HEALING MASS; Native Pastoral Centre; Dec. 27, 7:30 p.m.; Celebrant Fr. Bernard Black and Our Lady of Mercy Music Ministry will be coming to sing; for more info. call (403) 424-1431.

COWBOY ROUND DANCE; Dec. 22 & 23, Onion Lake Band Hall; Onion Lake, AB; for more info call (403) 344-2107.

CHRISTMAS CASEY HALFE MEMORIAL NO-HIT TOURNAMENT; Dec. 28 - 31; Goodfish Lake Lakeside Arena; \$350 entry fee; prizes and round dance; for more info. call Albert Houle or Ronald Bull at (403) 636-3622, Ext. 11 or Albert's residence at (403) 636-2067.

BRING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH THE EDMONTON METIS LOCAL; Dec. 31; Featuring Dave Boyer & Rocky Mountain High; Saxony Motor Inn, 15540 - Stony Plain Rd. Edmonton; Tickets \$20, for more info. contact Lyle Donald at 461-0779.

NEW YEAR'S EVE BALL; Dec. 31; Recreation Centre; Fort Vermillion; sponsored by the Indoor Rodeo Assoc.; Band-Midnight Cruisers; for ticket info. call Tracy Flett at (403) 927-4445 or Wendy Randle at (403) 927-4356.

NEW YEAR'S EVE BALL; Dec. 31; Fort Vermillion; sponsored by Royal Canadian Legion, Branch #243; music by D.J. Rockin' Roger; for ticket info. call Reg Scarfe at (403) 927-3342.

C.N.F.C. AEROBICS PROGRAM; Preregistration Jan. 5, 1990; for more info. call Brian Gladue at (403) 452-7811.

PRINCE ALBERT INDIAN METIS FRIENDSHIP CENTRE 6TH ANNUAL ABORIGINAL TOURNAMENT; Jan. 12, 13, 14, 1990; Prince Albert Communiplex; Entry Fee: \$550 payable in advance; 1st Prize - \$3,200, trophy and jackets, 2nd Prize - \$2,200, 3rd \$1,100 & 4th

\$1,100; for more info call Prince Albert Friendship Centre at (306) 764-3431.

C.N.F.C. MODELLING PROGRAM; Jan. 17, 24, 31 & Feb. 7; 13-18 year olds, males & females; for more info. call Rene at (403) 452-7811.

CLIFFORD METCHAWAIS MEMORIAL HOCKEY TOURNAMENT; Jan. 26 - 28, 1990; Goodfish Lake, Alberta; no contact but slapshots are allowed; for more info. call Randy Metchawais at (403) 594-1457.

MEMORIAL ROUND DANCE; In Memory of Simon Prosper Jackson; Jan. 27, Goodfish Lake, AB; Pipe Ceremony at 5:00 p.m., Supper to follow; There will be giveaways, singers will be paid; Everyone Welcome; Sponsored by Prosper Delver & Lillian Jackson & Family.

4th ANNUAL 1990 TUNE-UP GOLF; Feb. 2-5, 1990; Sahara Golf & Country Club, Las Vegas, Nevada; for more info. call Gina (403) 585-4298 (home) or Bill (403) 585-2139 (home) or Emile (403) 585-3805 (home).

CO-ED NATIVE VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE; For interested Native Groups and Associations; Registration deadline, Feb. 5, 1990; for more info. call Brian Gladue at (403) 452-7811.

C.N.F.C. NATIVE RECREATION HOCKEY TOURNAMENT; Feb. 16, 17 & 18; Held at Enoch Recreation Centre; for more info. call Rene Houle at (403) 452-7811.

SENIOR HOCKEY TOURNAMENT; March 16, 17 & 18, 1990; Regina Exhibition Stadium - Exhibition Park, over \$7,000.00 in prizes; Entry Deadline: March 9, 1990; for more info. contact Milton Tootoosis at (306) 584-8333.

REACHING JUST SETTLEMENTS (LAND CLAIMS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA); Feb. 21 & 22, 1990; University of Victoria, Victoria B.C.; conference sponsored by the School of Public Administration & The Division of University Extension and Community Relations, University of Victoria; for more info. call (604) 721-8055.

BUFFY SAINTE-MARIE: LIVE IN CONCERT; Mar. 30, 1990 at 8 p.m.; Calgary Centre for the Arts, Calgary; for ticket info. call (403) 294-7472.

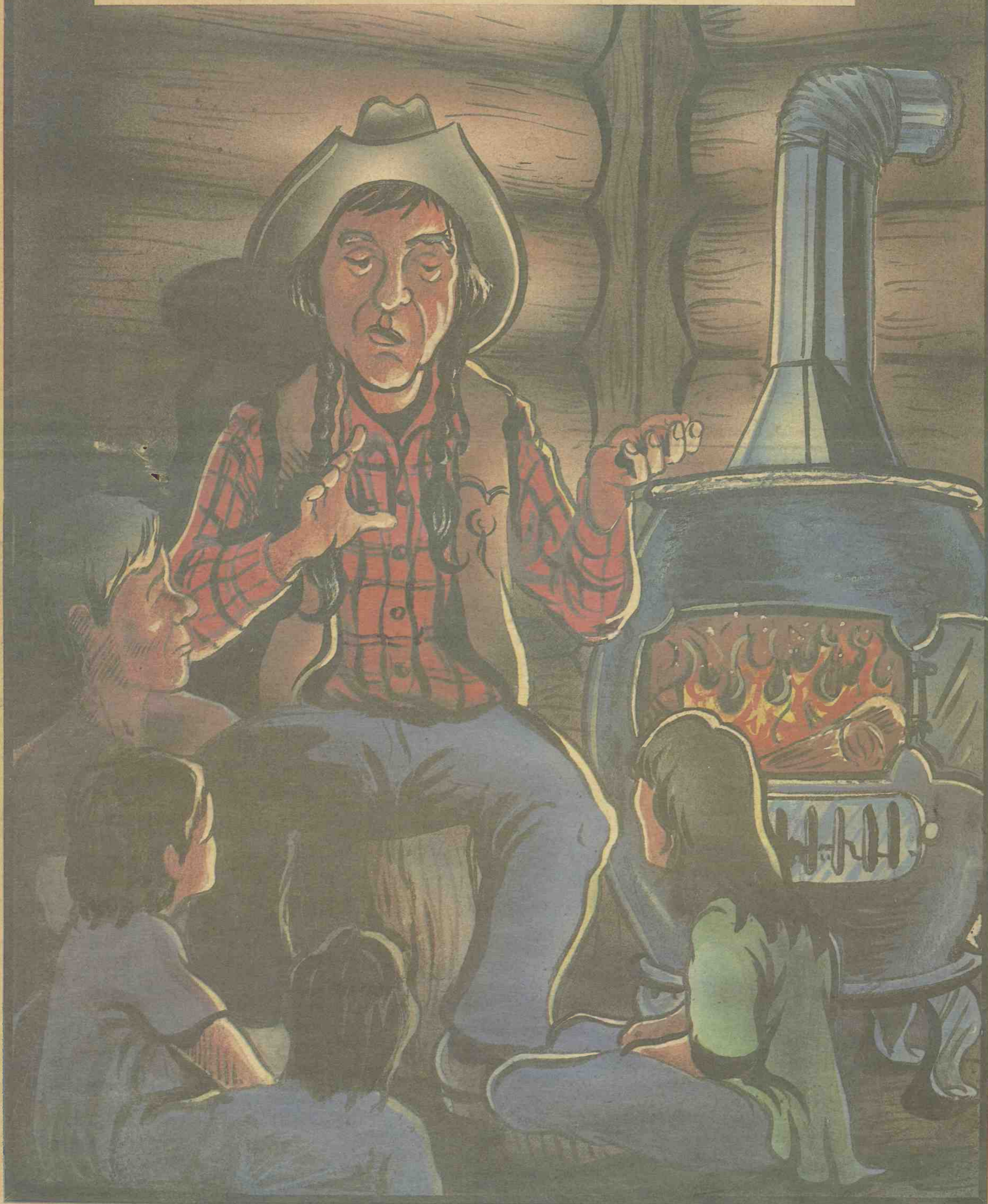
NATIONAL INDIAN ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION VOLLEYBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS; (Men/Ladies), April 7-8, 1990; University of Regina Physical Activity Centre; Entry deadline: March 29, 1990 for more info. contact Milton Tootoosis at (306) 584-8333 or Fax (306) 584-0955.

12th ANNUAL SPRING POWWOW; April 14-15, 1990; held at Canada Centre East Building Regina Exhibition Park; for more info. contact Melody Kitcheonia at (306) 584-8333 or Fax (306) 584-0955.

BIRTLE INDIAN SCHOOL REUNION; July 1990; Winnipeg, Manitoba; for more info. Write to W.C. Thomas, Box 280, Hodgson, Manitoba, R0C 1N0 or call (204) 645-2648 (bus.) or (204) 645-2456 (Hm.).

Special
Section

Windspeaker's Fireside Christmas



A Fireside Christmas



A Fireside Christmas

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The Drums . . . That Mendo Made

By Dianne Meili
Windspeaker Correspondent

In a Slavey summer camp in the Northwest Territories, near Dehcho (Mackenzie River), there lived a master drummer.

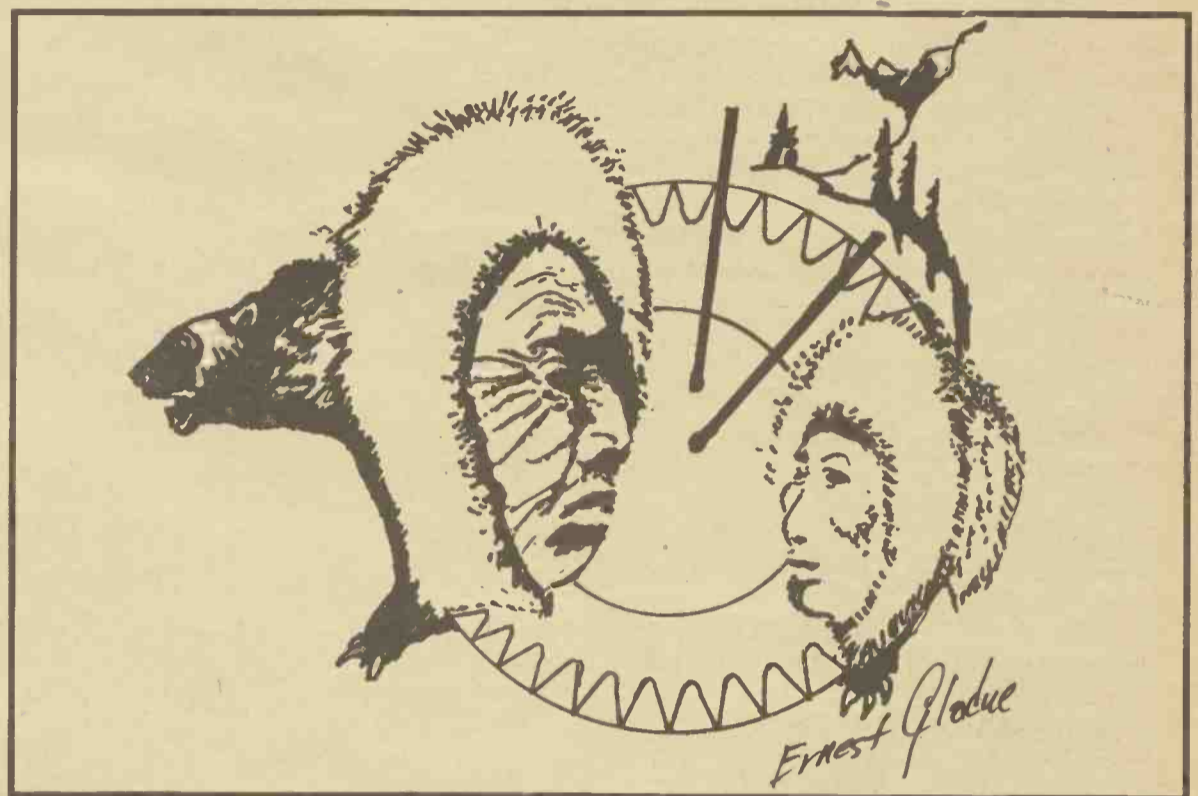
Mendo Oudza had learned to make hand drums of caribou hide from his father, and Mendo's father had learned from his own father, and on and on down the line for many generations.

Ever since the people could remember, drum songs, sent by the creator, helped them survive the hardships of living.

Drums were played for fun when the singers sang for the people gathered to celebrate the tea dance.

Drums were sacred, used by medicine people who'd been given drum songs for praying, healing and seeing into the future. All along Dehcho, each tribe had men who made drums but none made drums like the Oudzas.

The drumbeat from an Oudza drum struck in Tultit a (Fort Norman) could be heard clear up Dehcho to Radeli Ko (Fort



Good Hope) many miles away, calling the five tribes of Dene to a tea dance.

When an Oudza drum was played, even though the people might be starving, the hunger pains would subside and they would be happy for awhile just listening to the sounds.

The Dene would gain strength from hearing the drum, which echoed their own heartbeat.

Oudza drums were always perfectly round

and of the smoothest, unblemished wood.

The caribou skin stretched across the frame seemed to give off a light of its own, even without the sun's rays behind it. Few Oudza drums were made because it took almost a year to craft one.

When Mendo was born, at Tultit'a, there had been much hushed discussion in meetings amongst the elders. Not too much later, he had been taken away to

live in the Shih Kaedenila (Rocky Mountains) in his grandfather's lodge.

Some hunters kept the old man's lodge well supplied with ducks and caribou meat so neither grandfather nor grandson returned to the Dene.

It wasn't long before most of the Dene forgot Mendo had been born. Often they would see Mendo's mother standing

Con't page 3

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A Fireside Christmas



From pg. 2

by the river in the summertime, looking deeply into the water, sometimes for as long as an hour.

She never stirred, only held her face between her hands as she stared into the swift current. But neither she, nor Mendo's father, ever spoke of their son.

In the year or so after Mendo was born, friends would inquire as to the health of the little boy and both parents would say he was fine and then walk away, or return to the task they were doing, indicating they wished to speak no further.

The people respected the couple's silence and, eventually, even relatives gave up inquiring.

Faraway, the mountain climate was harsh, but Mendo's grandfather Gochee knew how to make a good life. He was of the Shihta Go'ine (Mountain People), and he knew the high, rocky places.

He had developed a strong mind which enabled him to do many things beyond an ordinary man's ability.

As a young man he had made friends with Nogha (wolverine), an animal able to see things which are hidden.

Gochee had also learned the ways of the wind and many times during the winter, when the visits from the meatbearing Tilit'a hunters were few and far between, he would sing his song.

Gradually, the north wind would cease its whistling call and rattling of the lodge poles. Then Gochee would grab his babiche and go out to snare rabbits. He always came back with one or two.

Gochee was known as a prophet to the Slavey people. He could dream into the future and tell them things that would happen ahead of time.

For many years he had also been a hunt master, telling the young men where to go find animals to kill for food. When food was needed, he would lay down and drop off to sleep.

Then, in his dreams, he could see the caribou pawing the snow near the west shore of Sahtu (Great Bear Lake). Up on the slopes of Bear Rock, where the Dene hero Yamoria had hung three huge beaver pelts to dry many years ago, he could see Dall's sheep.

When he awoke, he would tell the hunters exactly where they would find the animals.

And each time, before the young men left with their bows and arrows, he would tell them, "Remember, it is only if you have been kind to others, and always give away your best meat when they come to you...only then will the animals want to give themselves to you."

Gochee knew Mendo had a strong spirit. In his dreams, he knew the people would have need of Mendo's knowledge in the days to come.

That is why he isolated Mendo from people, so there

would be few distractions for the boy as he learned all Gochee had to teach. He also wanted Mendo to gain powers from the animals who lived high above others in the mountains.

When Mendo was still a child, Gochee would tell him stories about the land and the great Creator who always eased the suffering of the poor Dene.

As little Mendo sucked sheep's milk from a bottle, Gochee had fashioned from a caribou stomach, he would gurgle and coo especially loudly when his grandfather

She never stirred, only held her face between her hands as she stared into the swift current. But neither she, nor Mendo's father, ever spoke of their son.

In the year or so after Mendo was born, friends would inquire as to the health of the little boy and both parents would say he was fine and then walk away, or return to the task they were doing, indicating they wished to speak no further.

The people respected the couple's silence and, eventually, even relatives gave up inquiring.

told the legend of Yamoria, the one who travels all over the creation, the eternal traveller.

"Long ago the Creator sent a special man, Yaromia, who travelled into our land. He put everything in its rightful place and got rid of whatever was harmful to people.

By doing this he set laws for people and animals to follow. Until this very day, we are still holding on to them," Gochee would tell Mendo, in a soothing voice.

Even when the little one's eyes closed in sleep, Gochee went on telling about how Yamoria chased away the large beavers who were tipping the people's canoes as they tried to travel across Sahtu to hunt caribou.

Even though the boy looked like he was asleep, the old man knew his spirit was listening.

"Yamoria started chasing beavers around the lake. The big beavers went down Sahtu De (Big River), but the young ones were harder to chase toward the river.

While Yamoria was chasing the younger ones around the lake, the bigger beavers had built a dam on the river and that's where the Sahtu De Rapids are to this very day.

Yamoria got the young ones to head down Sahtu De and then chased them all down the river to where the two rivers meet," the old man continued.

When Gochee got to the part about Yamoria killing two medium-sized beavers and one small one at the confluence of the two rivers, Sagtu De and Deh Cho, Mendo always woke up and seemed to listen intently.

"After Yamoria killed the three beavers, he stretched and pegged the three hides on the south face of Kweteni 'aa (Bear Rock Mountain).

"And, do you know little Mendo, you can still see the beaver pelts hanging there to this day. Someday, I will take you there and you can see for yourself."

Mendo grew quickly. When he was three years old, during the long days of the midnight sun in June, Gochee took him for long walks along Bega De (Keeke River).

Sometimes they set snares for rabbits along the way. Often they would go to the hot springs Gochee discovered many years ago while on a hunting trip.

In the shallow water, Gochee would lie back and watch the clouds slipping by, noting the pictures they made. Mendo would play in tall green grasses that grew beside the pool.

After awhile he would come to sit beside his grandfather, and together they would gaze up at the blue sky, calling out the animals they saw in the clouds.

Other days were spent collecting plants, Gochee making Mendo say the name of each one as they collected a few leaves from it, and reciting a prayer to the Creator for his having providing for His people.

Gochee had even made a small mooseskin boat just big enough to hold him and his grandson, and some days they paddled down the river to a saltlick to watch the moose that gathered around it.

During the long, cold nights of winter, Gochee decided it was time to test the little boy's capacity for medicine. Late one evening in autumn, as the sun was painting the sky pink and gold, Gochee grabbed the wat-ape (spruce-fir root) gourd and asked Mendo to go to Bega De to fill it.

Mendo took the gourd and folded back the door flap. Darkness was spreading its cloak fast over the mountains and Gochee noticed the boy shiver and hesitate for just a second, then step out of the lodge.

Con't page 4

Merry Xmas - Happy New Year

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Merry Christmas

From the Management & Staff

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A Fireside Christmas

From pg. 3

The boy was away longer than it should have taken to fill the gourd and return. Gochee gazed into the fires and took his magnificent drum out of its bag. It had been made by one of his ancestors countless years ago. A steady, yellowish glow beamed from the drumhead as the grandfather chanted a slow song.

Suddenly the door flap was thrown aside and Mendo stood with the stars twinkling behind his shoulder. Without a word, he knelt down to enter and, in the fires glow, Gochee could see his face was flushed and his eyes were bright.

"Sit down and make some tea. We'll drink before we sleep tonight," Gochee said. Still the boy was quiet as he put glowing stones into the water vessel and measured leaves from the pitcher plant into it.

Grandfather lit his pipe and the smoke drifted up to blend with the steam from the boiling water, up and put the lodge smokehole.

"My grandson, your tea is about to boil away!" Gochee almost yelled when Mendo left the vessel sitting by the fire.

Mendo jumped up and almost fell forward into the fire. He poured the tea and put the cup slowly down in front of his grandfather. Then he plopped down to the floor and slid himself toward the back of the lodge to lean against the wall.

Silence hung between the old man and young boy. Finally, the old man spoke. "My grandson, did you see something tonight?"

"Yes, My grandfather."

"And when you saw it, were you frightened and did you run away?"

"No, my grandfather."

"Then tell me what you saw."

"As I was bending down to fill the gourd, I heard noises. Something walking in the water and the sound was getting closer. I almost ran away but I couldn't move."

"Then I saw him... he was huge. He was so big! An old, old man with long white hair. But he looked kind. He put out his hand toward me and he started to tell me..."

"No, you don't need to tell me what he said. Those words are for you, you alone. I'm glad you didn't run away, that you stayed to hear what he had to say to you. You've had a big experience. Sleep now. Tonight I will dream for you, to know what lies ahead."

Mendo rolled into his sleeping robes. For a long while he laid with eyes wide open. Finally, he began to concentrate on his breath, as Grandfather had shown him, which was jumping around like two hawks fighting over

a mouse.

Soon, he dropped off into a dreamless sleep.

The years passed.

Since the night Mendo had seen the old river man, it seemed his grandfather made bigger demands of him and expected too much. Every day he taught him something new, and at night he insisted Mendo repeat what he had learned. If he forgot, his grandfather would yell and scold him for not remembering properly.

Harsh words would suddenly rain down upon poor little Mendo, and the lodge shook with his grandfather's anger.

Then, just as suddenly, grandfather would become calm again, gently requesting that Mendo try again.

After awhile he would come to sit beside his grandfather, and together they would gaze up at the blue sky, calling out the animals they saw in the clouds.

Other days were spent collecting plants, Gochee making Mendo say the name of each one as they collected a few leaves from it, and reciting a prayer to the Creator for his having provided for His people.

Mendo disliked upsetting Gochee.

Throughout the day he worked his mind hard, going over and over what his grandfather had shown or told him, so he would be able to repeat exactly what he had learned. Little Mendo's mind was growing strong.

One morning in early spring, grandfather's nudging awoke Mendo, who was a young man now and looked after camp chores. He had let the fire go out in the night and the cold air slapped his face as he inched out of his robe.

It was late and light was beginning to show through the smokehole. Mendo yawned and stretched, absent-mindedly looking out of the lodge door. It had turned colder overnight and a thin skiff of snow covered the ground.

Mendo remembered what his grandfather had told

him the night before and excitement surged within him. He was to begin learning to make drums today and felt a rush of excitement.

Leaning back to shake his grandfather awake, Mendo hesitated. Maybe his grandfather was dreaming and should be left alone.

Mendo pondered sitting beside him until he awoke, but then decided to walk down to Bega De for his morning wash.

At the river, Mendo jumped into the current and let out a howl. The icy water shocked his body and he howled again. Let the world hear his cry! He was Mendo, and he was to be a master drum maker! His grandfather was now impressed with him enough to teach him the craft of the ancestors. He shook himself like a wet dog and ran back to the fire's warmth.

Inside, his grandfather was sitting up and packing his pipe. He motioned for Mendo to sit beside him. "I have dreamed. I have seen when it is I am to leave this earth. It is some time away and I have to finish your teaching before I go.

"I leave for a happy place of green grass and always-blue sky, but you must stay behind to help the people. I see hard times coming, like the people have not yet known.

"Your songs and your drum will be sorely needed to help the pitiful people. You must listen to me and learn like you never have before. Here comes your most important teaching. Let us pray and be thankful that you will learn the ways!"

Grandfather and grandson prayed until noon. Finally, Gochee rose stiffly and Mendo sprang to his feet. "Ah, the drum making will start now!" he thought to himself.

He followed Gochee out of the lodge, almost stepping on the old man's heels, so anxious was he to hear what his grandfather would say. But Gochee only began putting the paddles in the mooseskin boat.

"So we are going down the river to a special place to begin the drum making?" Mendo timidly asked, breaking the silence.

"We are going all the way down the river. And further. We go to Kwetani'aa, Bear Rock Mountain, the place I told you of when you were a baby. We go to the place where Yamoria pegged the beaver skins. You must go for a song."

Mendo felt slightly deflected because the drum making would be put off. But, he thought, this trip would probably be as much fun. He ran to get meat and tea supplies.

"Kaaaaah! What is that? Put it back in the cache. We

Con't page 5

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A Fireside Christmas

From pg. 4

need nothing," Gochee growled as Mendo places the food in the boat. "While we travel on the water to Kweteni'aa, you neither eat nor drink anything. You will fast."

Mendo's eyes grew wider and he shivered a bit in the frosty air. He'd fasted before, but how long would he have to fast while on the water? He put the food back in storage and climbed behind his grandfather in the boat, shoving them away from the riverbank with his paddle.

"This trip will be made in silence," Gochee said, not turning to look at Mendo.

For four days they travelled from sunup to sundown. Gochee would snare rabbits and roast them over the fire in the evening while Mendo sat miserably on the riverbank, the smell almost driving him mad.

His mouth watered and his stomach grumbled loudly. Since they'd been travelling north on Dehco, he had been working harder to manoeuvre the large canoe they'd found tied to a stick at the confluence of Bega De and Dehcho.

It was a sturdier boat for travelling the big river, but Mendo's arms ached. He was cold and weak. He felt words catching at this

throat: "I want no more of this grandfather. I can't do it."

But he fought the urge and kept plying his paddle. Luckily, they travelled with the current.

By evening of the fifth day Mendo was ready to give up. Just as he opened his mouth to speak, his grandfather raised his arm and pointed. There, about halfway up a distant cliff,

place that appealed to him and shelter himself, with tree branches. He should stay as long as it as long as it took for him to receive a song and animal helper. He should pray the whole time.

Three days later a transformed Mendo walked down the mountain. He moved easily and as aura of light seemed to shimmer around him.

the drum was finished, a wondrous thing to behold. It was light as a feather, yet the sound it made when struck was as deep as thunder rolling across the summer sky. Mendo couldn't believe he'd made it.

As he admired it, he stole a look at his grandfather. Gochee was holding his own drum, the ancient one, and beginning to sing his wolverine song, his death song. Mendo felt a sadness that made him want to die. He would soon lose his grandfather.

The next morning Mendo was alone in the mountains as he piled rocks over Gochee's body. All night he and listened to his grandfather explain prophetic dreams and the role Mendo would play in the coming days.

He described Mendo's parents and said he should return to them and the Dene. He comforted the young man with the promise he would always be with him.

Mendo was lost. His spirit wanted to follow his grandfather into the other land. Mendo knew the way back to Tuli'ta, but he put off going.

Finally, after days of sitting in his grandfather's lodge, he didn't know what to do with himself. So he packed his new drum and his grandfather's old one, and returned to the Dene.

Finally, at the beginning of spring — a year after he'd fasted on Kweteni'aa, the drum was finished, a wondrous thing to behold. It was light as a feather, yet the sound it made when struck was as deep as thunder rolling across the summer sky. Mendo couldn't believe he'd made it.

were two large reddish patches, and one smaller one. The beaver skins on Kweteni'aa! They were almost there!

Mendo felt better and paddled harder. Tonight they would camp and share a meal of roast rabbit. But when they reached the shore, Gochee sent him up the rock face and into the bush at the top of the mountain alone.

He explained carefully that Mendo should find a

His grandfather had baked swan and tea ready for him. "We eat, and then we leave for home," was all Gochee said.

Over the next year, Mendo made his drum. He sent on long searches for the materials and learned many songs at each new stage of construction. He fasted often and grew lean and hard.

Finally, at the beginning of spring — a year after he'd fasted on Kweteni'aa,

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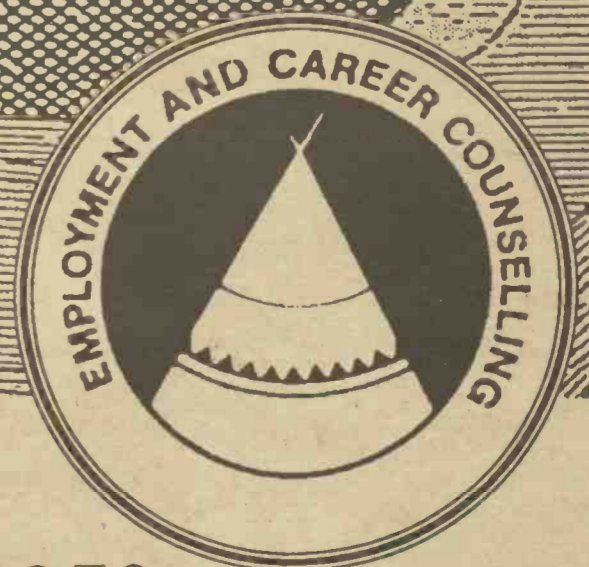
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Gendarmerie royale du Canada

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Commandant divisionnaire

To: The Native People of Alberta December, 1989

From: The Commanding Officer, Officers, Members, and Staff of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police of Alberta

Once again the Christmas season is upon us and I would like to express my sincere best wishes to all.

My reflections of 1989 are indeed most gratifying as I ponder the many positive steps we have taken together. I am particularly grateful for the time and support I have been given by the Elders, Chiefs, and Native Leaders of this Province in our various meetings during the past year.

I welcome the challenges which face us in the New Year to work even more closely with each other for the benefit of this and future generations. Our strength lies in the youth of our country and we must be committed to help them prepare for a bright and prosperous future.

I take great pride in the historical ties shared by the Native People of Alberta and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and look forward to a greater strengthening of those ties and increased understanding in the years to come.

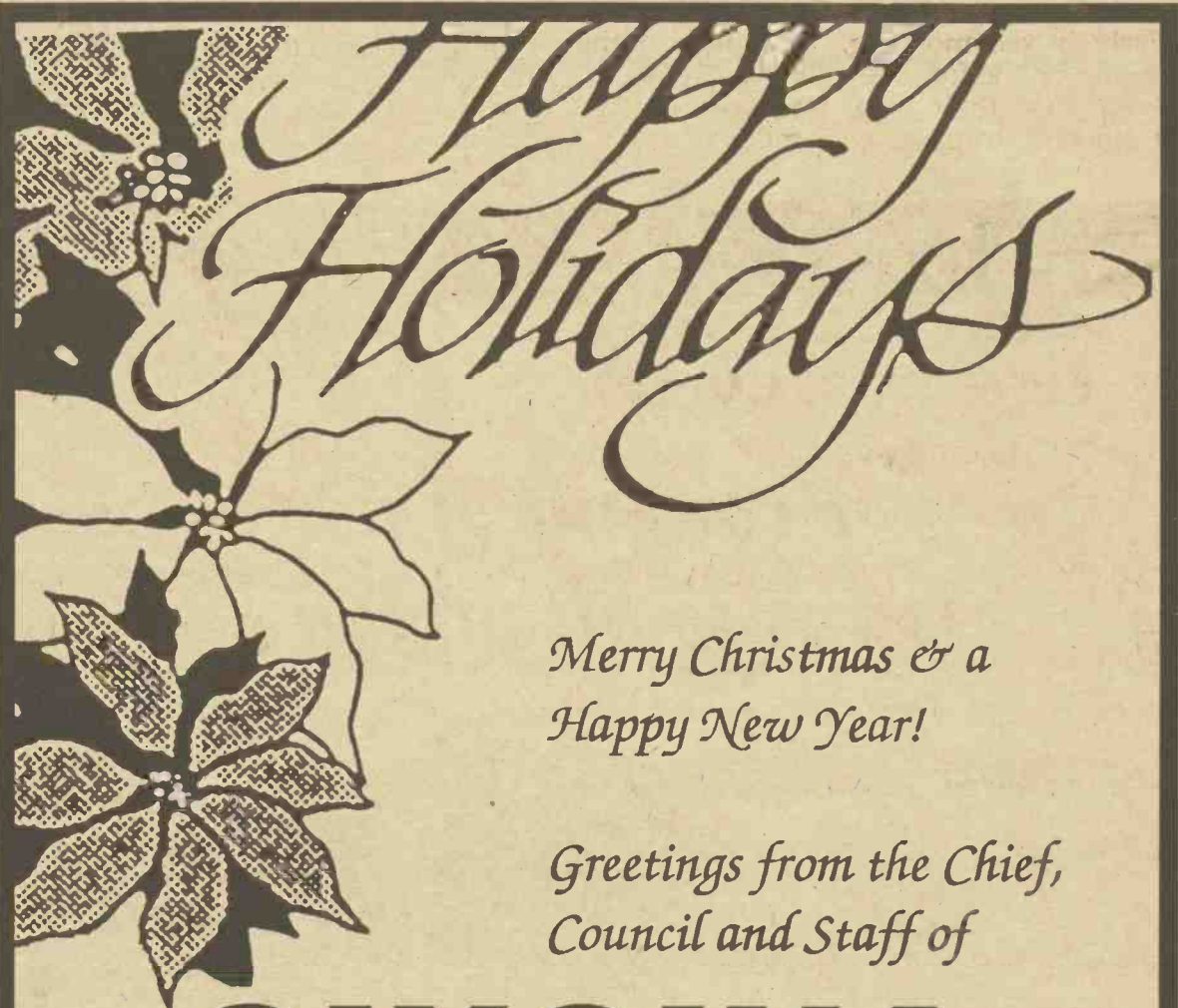
On behalf of all of the Members of the R.C.M.P., I would like to wish you and your loved ones a safe and joyous Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Yours truly,

[Signature]
G.J. Greig
Assistant Commissioner
Commanding Officer "K" Division

P.O. Box 1320
Edmonton, Alberta
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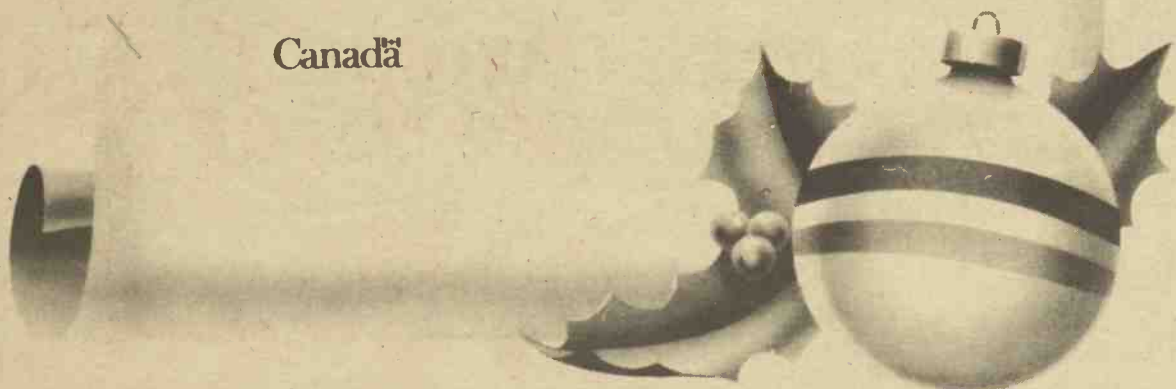


Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year!

Greetings from the Chief, Council and Staff of

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A Fireside Christmas

Celebrating Christmas 107 years ago . . .

By Dr. Anne Anderson

One hundred and seven years ago, one of the first Christmas celebrations was held at Fort Walsh.

Major Walsh, a proud, outstanding man and a born leader, was in command of Fort Walsh.

Another officer, Captain MacIntyre was also there. He was just the opposite in temperament from Major Walsh. His word of command was carried with a loud voice which had a great deal of influence on the Indians.

Captains Denny and Clark also attended the festivities.

The arrival of many brought horse thieves, bush whackers, desperados, Indians and Metis who came west as voyagers, trappers, interpreters, traders and Hudson Bay employees.

Early in the morning, surrounding the fort, they arrived with their guns and knives strapped to

their waists.

For many of the staff personnel, it was a day to remember for they were far from home and friends.

There was plenty of food to eat and liquor to drink.

The menu consisted of wild game and fish dishes, buffalo roasts, venison meat pies, plum pudding and dried apples, prunes and apricots.

The Indians pitched their teepees all around the fort. They were not allowed inside the fort but Christmas dinner was served to them in the teepees.

Their horses and ponies were tied to a hitching post nearby so they could be watched.

After supper the dancing began with much merriment, and everyone joined in.

Good feelings remained throughout the evening. Occasionally, a wild war whoop was heard, or the mule skinner's blood-cur-

dling yells. Liquor was talking.

Music was supplied by the bull whackers and with moonshine under their belts, they kept their fiddles a-humming and feet a-tapping.

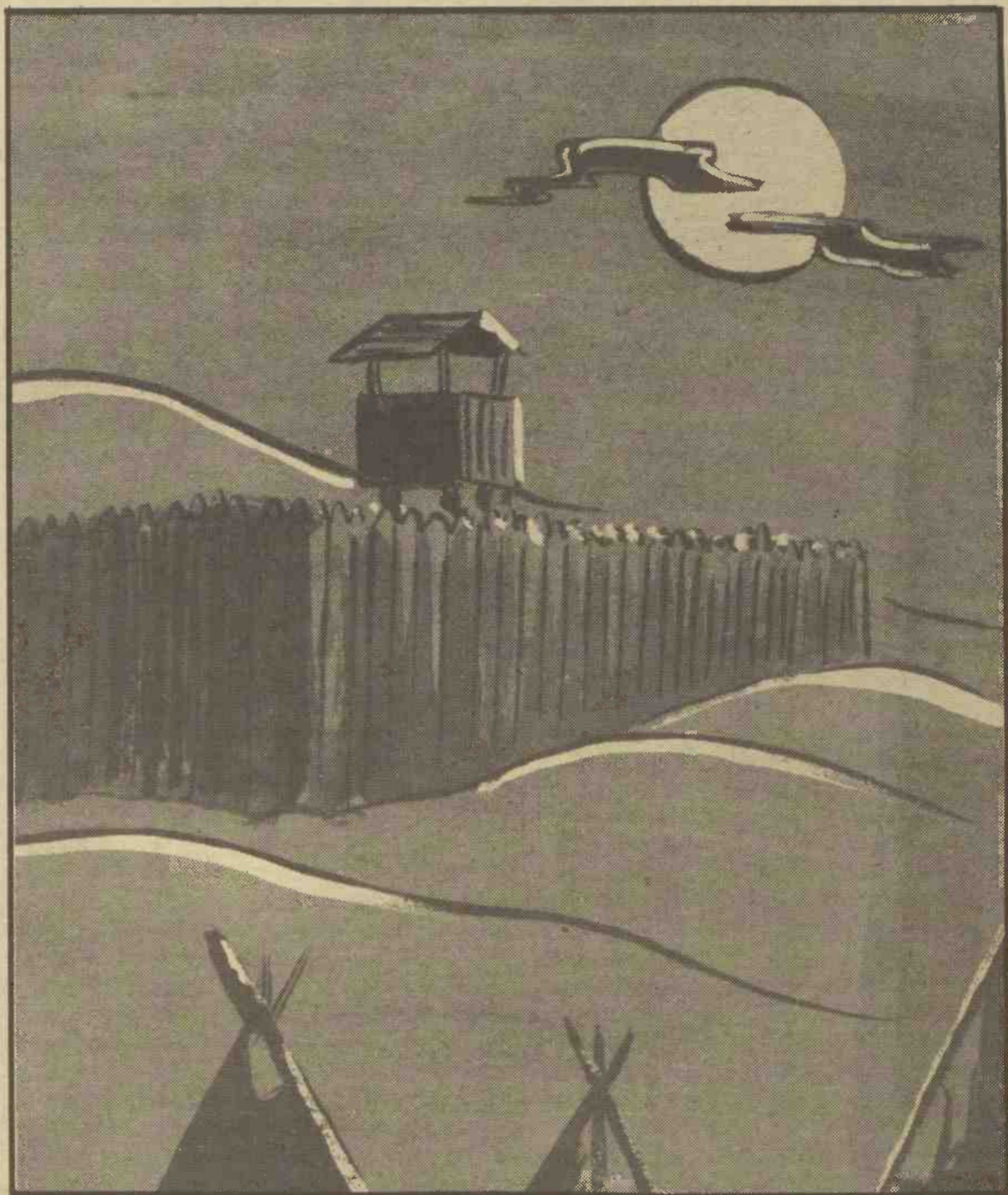
These men were unknown in the area. Most had heavy beards, wore their black hair long, and had coal-black eyes that sparkled.

They were a sight not to be forgotten.

Chief Sitting Bull, with many of his braves, was also there and started a powwow.

Sitting Bull was in a dangerous mood for it was the day after Custer's battle. Some were worried that the powwow would get out of hand considering the amount of liquor and moonshine which was about.

The officers quietly closed the gates. The dancing continued. By this time the powwow was in full swing, with the wild beat-



Bill MacKay, Windspeaker

ing of drums, and people dancing with great frenzy until the sun appeared on the horizon.

The sunrise quietened the dancers who by now were totally exhausted. Some rode off on their

horses, others sat and talked in groups.

This Christmas day in Fort Walsh was in 1877.

It was a huge success and became a pleasant memory for many. The fort was situated among roll-

ing hills, beside a fast-flowing creek with high banks.

Today, this area is known as the Cypress Hills and it was the hunting grounds for both the Cree and the Sioux in times long past.

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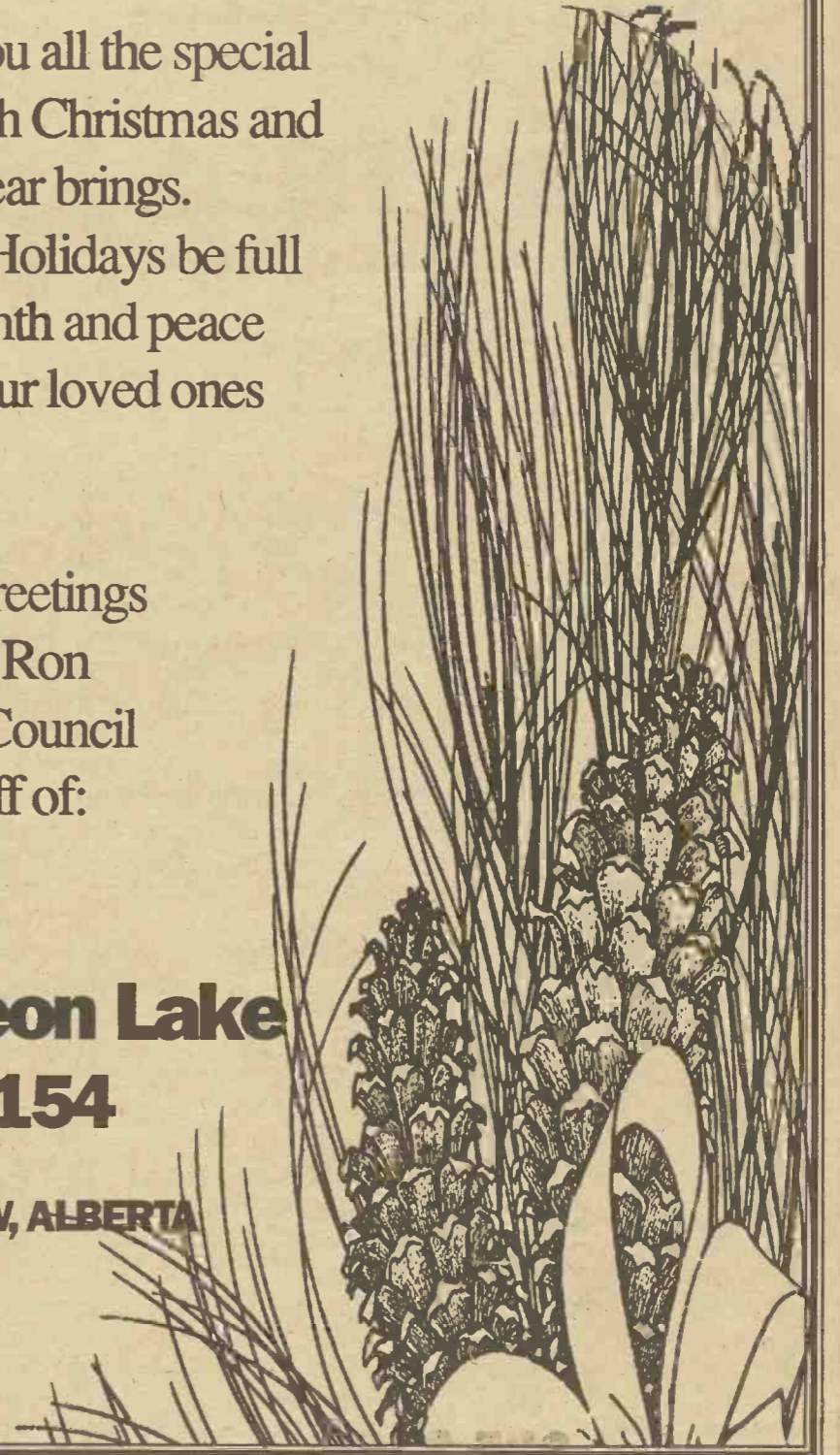
Wishing you all the special joy that both Christmas and the New Year brings. May your Holidays be full of the warmth and peace you and your loved ones deserve.

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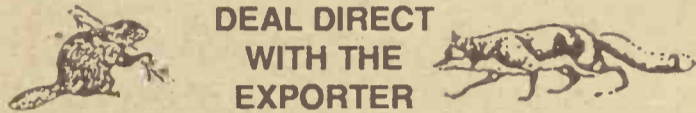
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A Fireside Christmas

The Downfall of Emily Tobacco Juice...

By Gail Duiker
Windspeaker Correspondent

"Pride is the downfall of man," the Anglican Minister's voice thundered.

"It has been since the Garden of Eden," he continued. He looked down the pews.

The congregation was dressed in their Sunday best. Those that couldn't afford the luxury had taken advantage of the lard pail with the same results.

For dignity, the women were scarved and stockinged. Those who couldn't afford stockings used the lard pail with the same results.

Everyone wanted to look their best for Sunday. As a result, conservative black was favored.

As the Minister scanned the room critically, a sense of doom descended. A martyr was going to be sacrificed. The Minister hadn't yet decided on whom.

"Women have been the temptation of man since Eve," he shouted. The few panes of stained glass, hanging between sheets of plastic, trembled.

Collectively, the men breathed a sigh of relief. Now, they looked around with interest. Which woman would represent Eve this Sunday?

In the back pew, Ernest Baptiste and Michael Thomas, took bets. "Two cigarettes on Emily Tobaccojuice," Ernest offered.

"Nah, she's an old bag, refuted Michael Thomas. You gotta pick 'em young.

Emily Tobaccojuice sat in the front pew wearing a hat. Michael scanned her upright head.

Undoubtedly, she was



also wearing her usual pious expression. When he had been brave enough, Michael had sat in the front pews too.

"Scarlet Woman!" urged the Minister.

"Three cigarettes on Tobaccojuice," whispered Ernest Baptiste.

A flicker of disappointment flickered in Michael Thomas's eyes.

Ernest Baptiste noticed this real quick. He believed Michael didn't have a potential bet. "Well, who you gonna bet on?"

"Geez, damn!" It was so easy. Michael Thomas almost began to squirm with guilt. He had spotted Mary BadJay strolling into the church.

For sure, she had bought a tube of lipstick at the five and dime in town. The other day, he had saw her at Teresa James's house.

Teresa had said she was flashing her ruby lips at all the men. "There might be trouble!" Teresa warned.

"Vanity thy name is woman!" The Minister's face was as red as Mary BadJay's lips.

Before the Minister could say the word "sin" Michael Thomas blurted. "Six smokes on Mary BadJay!"

Ernest smiled angelically. "Black Cats?"

They shook on the deal. For luck, Ernest took aim at the holy water bowl and sent a wad of snuff flying. Plunk! The sound of a splash was heard.

From the pulpit, the Minister paused in his strategy. The Native's were getting restless. It was time for the kill. He pointed in the direction of Mary BadJay.

"Painted women are the beginning of corruption!"

He loosened his collar. The skin around his face sagged. His brown eyes became limped pools in a beagle-like face.

"You women, beware. God wants the clean of heart, the clean of spirit in

heaven. He will not accept harlots!" He almost added the clean of face.

The women were casting sideways glances at each other. Mona Lisa smiles were abundant.

Mary BadJay was swinging a leg back and forth. She chewed on her lip till the lipstick was gone.

When it was almost time for collection plate to be passed around, the Minister let up.

A smile of benediction shone from his face. "Oh, my children," he sighed.

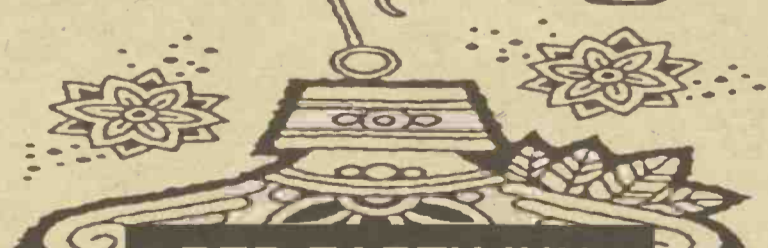
"If I'm hard on you it's only for your spiritual well-being. Please, remember that we not only share in our earthly wealth." Then he blessed them.

In the back pew, Ernest handed the six cigarettes to Michael Thomas.

Later, outside the church, Michael Thomas smoked triumphantly. A thought crossed his mind.

Con't page 10

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A Fireside Christmas

From pg. 9

Ernest hadn't seemed too concerned about the loss. He poked Ernest in the ribs playfully.

"You're getting soft in the head. Or your head had too many white hairs, Ernest. Do you not listen to talk anymore or is it just you don't remember?"

Ernest shrugged and walked away.

"Boy, Geez. The old Minister was mean today. He really let the sheet fly," said one of the more outspoken men.

"Well," said Teresa James, "ask anyone here, they'll tell you no good comes from war-painted women. If you ask me, there's too many phoney women and the Minister is right. We ought'a leave city stuff where it belongs!"

"Eh heh!" agreed the old grannies.

Everyone left the church in a joyous mood. Everyone except Mary BadJay.

Most were happy, they hadn't been chosen for the example. Even Mary was kind a happy. She knew that her ordeal was over.

The Minister would move on to another topic next week. She took out a mirror, and there in plain view of everyone, she gloriously painted her lips.

As the weather got colder, the church became fuller on Sundays. Sure, the services were a sacrifice but the talk afterward was always interesting.

However, a few short Sundays after the Mary BadJay incident, a pattern seemed to be emerging.

The old Minister, Johnson, was up to something. Every Sunday, he focused on a topic. Then, he zoomed in on a chosen martyr.

It seemed he was like God, he had the goods on everyone who committed a public sin.

Throughout the reserve, a sickness was spreading wildfire like.

It got so you didn't want to talk about your neighbor. You couldn't pick an innocent fight to let off a bit of steam. Things were getting as taut as a rawhide drum!

Sundays, Emily Tobaccojuice sat serenely in the front pew. She didn't squirm when the services started. Her eyes looked angelically toward heaven.

In the back pews, Michael Thomas and Ernest Baptiste sat quietly. The cigarettes had been passed back and forth for weeks now. Who could keep track of who was winning?

The congregation, in general, was captivated. It was like a horror movie, the fear was there. But

One week before Christmas, the Minister came into the church sporting a red nose. He wheezed and he sniffled. Finally, when the services began, it was as if he had forgotten about goodwill.

"Scarlet Woman!" he began.

Down the front pew, Mary BadJay cringed. Like a replay of an old horror movie, it was a familiar scene.

"No, It couldn't be happening!" Mary thought.

The audiences' ears picked up. Those who were sleeping had their sides nudged. "Psst! C'mon he's going to start!"

That was when little Janet Maria Rabbit pulled out a branch.

pretensions!"

The small branch rose in the pew behind Emily Tobaccojuice's head.

Somehow, the branch got caught in the fine black veil around Emily Tobaccojuice's hat.

Janet Maria Rabbit pulled on the branch lightly.

Suddenly, little Janet pulled back and there came Emily Tobaccojuice's hat. But attached to the hat was the genuine \$10.99 model, a made-in-Taiwan wig.

There it flapped, like a glorious black raven perched on the branch.

Slowly everyone's eyes turned from the Minister's words. It was the biggest laugh they had in a long while!

"There, enough said," said the Minister.

Emily Tobaccojuice sat there. Proudly defiant, her head was held upright. Finally, she grabbed the wig and plunked it on her head.

When she got up, she marched right out of the church.

"Well, said Ernest Baptiste, I'll take those six cigarettes I gave you a few months back!"

Michael Thomas looked at him, "What d'you mean?"

"I mean, Ernest said with a smile, I knew that old woman could be just as proud as the younger one. Emily should have been the Scarlet Woman!"

Michael passed him the six cigarettes.

Something happened that day. Maybe it was one of those miracles. The old Minister guy, he stopped pointing the finger.

No one was the martyr and no cigarettes were passed. It was kind'a not as much exciting. It was kind of like going to the movies without popcorn.

Oh, yeh, old Emily came back one Sunday.

But she didn't wear a holier-than-thou attitude.

She kept her eyes on the Minister.

Something happened that day. Maybe it was one of those miracles. The old Minister guy, he stopped pointing the finger.

No one was the martyr and no cigarettes were passed. It was kind'a not as much exciting. It was kind of like going to the movies without popcorn.

staying away meant missing the experience. So they endured.

Some of the old ones tried to figure out what was happening. "He wants to be the big shot," they said. But no one could figure out what he was going to be promoted to.

When everyone had enough tension, eyes began to flit suspiciously around the room.

The plaster Jesus, looking down behind the Minister's pulpit sympathetically watched the goings-on.

As Christmas approached, the Minister mellowed somewhat. Christmas meant home-baked goodies. Maybe a turkey. Of course, it also meant goodwill toward men.

Then the fun began again. Michael Thomas and Ernest Baptiste began to bring extra cigarettes.

They place bets on the length of the services.

From the back, Michael Thomas noticed her waving it behind Emily Tobaccojuice's back.

Up came the branch, then down it disappeared behind the pew.

The old Minister was steaming. "Vanity thy name is woman!"

Michael Thomas wondered. "Jeez, I thin' the old guy has checked the wine out already!"

But all the eyes were front row centered. On one seemed to notice the small, scrawny branch move up and down. No one except Michael Thomas.

"We're nearing Christmas. Think of Mary, Mother of Jesus," the Minister offered.

All the women were silent.

"See how she was a simple woman. She didn't go around talking behind others' backs. Nor was her attitude put on. Think of it!" he shouted from the pulpit. "She had no false

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A Fireside Christmas



By Richard Wagamese
Windspeaker Correspondent

First of all you have to realize that the lake is like a reflector ok?

What I mean by a reflector is that come nighttime on these long calm nights we get around here, a voice can carry for miles.

We used to eavesdrop on conversations whenever we'd see Myron Fisher and Mabel Copence heading out in her auntie's canoe.

They'd be talking all lovey dovey across the bay and we kids would catch every line.

Boy, that Myron Fisher would be mad as hell and chase us all around the townsite when we'd repeat whatever we figured were the sweetest lines of the evening. Anyway, the lake is a reflector that can take a whisper clean across.

According to Mabel Conenace's auntie, not the one with the canoe, the other one who's older with a face kinda looks like a fresh scraped deer hide once the wet's all squeezed out, there was a time before the telephones when the lake was the only way to get a hold of someone camping or hunting on the other side.

People would just head on down to the dock and yell across. Not much is different these days sometimes.

Anyway, there's a bunch of us camped out on the other side one summer evening. Around here there's never much to do. Once in a long while the government will surprise the heck out of everybody and give us six or so weeks of work cutting scrub timber, but generally we fish and hunt and make like Indians.

So there we are. About ten of us young people sitting around with a few beers listening to Wally Bedsky singing all of his favorite country and western songs.

Wally's okay, I suppose, but we're all still trying to convince him that someone must have written a good tune or two after 1952. He's right in the middle of some sappy ballad about wide open spaces and long-haired gals with blue eyes when we hear it.

The open lake telephone system is kind of spooky, especially if you're not ready for it.

Voices just have a habit of floating right up at you out of nowhere. Connie Otter just about jumped right out of her skin when we heard this voice go, "HOO!"

That's all, just, "HOO!"

When my ma and I would head out picking blueberries at the tailend of the summers she'd always be hooing away whenever I'd pick my way out of her sight.

One good hoo can carry a long way by itself even without the benefit of a reflecting lake. Ma told me that hooing was the way the old people used to locate each other in the bush.

So we hear this hoo and the rest kind of gets lost in the laughter that follows Connie's Otter's impression of a white person.

All the color just sort of drained out of her face and she hightailed it into the bush so fast she ran clear out of her gumboots. We could hear her crashing through to the timber. Finally someone had the presence of mind to yell back over, "HOO!"

It generally takes awhile for a good hoo to travel across the lake so it was a second or two before we got a reply.

"Garnet. Garnet Raven. He there?" the voice said.

"Yeah." I yelled since Garnet Raven is my name.

"Kay then," said the voice, "keeper wants you."

"Keeper? Keeper wants me?"

"Yeah," said the voice, "Keeper."

Midewewin... Keeper Of The Water Drum

"Kay then," I said, "Be over."

"Kay then," said the voice.

Wally Redsky bumped up against me in the darkness. I could tell it was Wally because no one else on this reserve still uses Brylcreem. Or at least they don't use as much of it as Wally Redsky.

"Keeper's back? Wonder what he wants with you?"

"Don't know Wally," I said, "Maybe he just wants me to help him find one of his bottles."

This got quite a laugh because he went away for treatment in Thunder Bay Keeper was the local drunk. Actually we have a lot of local drunks but Keeper was the one everyone always about.

One of the things you could always count on from Keeper was to find him stumbling around early in the morning turning over rocks and logs and beating around bushes trying to remember which one he'd hidden his bottle under. I always wondered how you could call someone Keeper when that person had such a hard time keeping anything.

He surprised all of us when he went away. As long as I could remember Keeper was the only consistent thing

Around here there's never much to do. Once in a long while the government will surprise the heck out of everybody and give us six or so weeks of work cutting scrub timber, but generally we fish and hunt and make like Indians.

about this reserve. He was always drunk or drinking.

My ma said that he just up and decided one day that he'd had enough and asked chief and council to ship him off to the Smith Clinic. We didn't expect him to actually go.

It was an even bigger surprise when old Keeper decided to stay on an extra few weeks because he thought he needed it. Ma just nodded and smiled a strange kind of smile.

Keeper's boat-drinking buddies were wandering around pretty confused about it all. Uncle Buddy Raven wasn't buying any of it.

"Ahh, that old fart's just restin' up," he said, one day when I happened to meet him on my way to the store for some lard and flour.

Can't quit. You been drunk as long as Keeper'n me you stay drunk.

He should know I guess. My uncle Buddy says with

some kind of pride that when he'd whistled over as he puts it, they won't have to spend any money on embalming fluid because he's drunk enough in one lifetime to pickle him forever. There's those that agree.

Anyway, there was a lot of differing opinions on whether Keeper meant what he said about having enough. My ma and the older ladies were all cheering for Keeper and wanted him to get it right.

The drinking crew, of course, were as skeptical as their foggy minds allowed them to be. We young people were sort of floating around the edges of both camps thinking that it would be great if he quit as well as secretly hoping that old Keeper might just save up enough money during his treatment to throw a real good bash across the lake for all of us.

I thought about this all the way across the lake. I had to wonder what in the world Keeper would want to talk to me about. I couldn't exactly recall anytime before when we'd had anything to do with each other.

Sure, I'd been there to carry him out of the bush a few times when he'd pass out in there and I remember once seeing him slumped at the back of the Band Hall when I'd made some presentation about needing to find more employment possibilities but we weren't what you'd call buddies or anything.

Ma was sitting at the table when I got to our house. Ma's one of the best moccasin makers in this area and she was at work again.

People just naturally like my ma. She's one of those Indians that have seen it all. She was a pretty serious drunk herself back in the days when I was lost in the fostercare system but she one day decided she'd had enough and has been sober now almost twenty years. I guess that's why she's cheering for Keeper these days.

Anyway, she's sitting there all quiet, her hands stitching hide like they don't need any help from her and she's smiling.

"Ah," she says, "Got hold of you eh? Keeper wants to talk with you."

"What for?" I ask, "That old guy doesn't even hardly know me."

"Well, that old Keeper's got something to tell you might make you see things the way they really are," she says.

"You talk to him?"

"Hey - yah," she says. Hey-yah is sort of the slang way we Ojibways agree with each other. "Me'n Keeper been friends a long time."

"I didn't know that."

Con't page 13



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A Fireside Christmas

From pg. 12

"Oh yes," she says, "Keeper and me went to residential school together and even been drunk a few times."

"So what's he want with me? Probably just wants to tell me some nasty stories about you and him at school."

I like to tease my ma. She's got the kind of face that changes right in front of you. It's kind of like a road map of her feelings and I like to see the way her eyes get all scrunchy looking when she thinks someone's trying to get one around on her.

"Aren't no nasty stories?" she says kind of pouty, "Sides, that old guy's mem'ries all shot from drinkin'. Couldn't do any real good stories proper justice anyway."

She laughs. "So where is he?" "Member that old cabin I showed you 'round the bay?"

"Grampa's line shack you mean?"

"Hey - yah," she says, "He's waitin there for you."

"Kay then," I say, "Back soon."

"Kay then," she says, "Careful walkin' thru that bush."

"Kay then," I say and head out.

My grampa was the oldest person on this reserve when he died. He spent his entire life in the bush. The old folks still like to tell stories about Stanley Raven and how that man



knew his way around the country.

He was the last of the real traditional Ojibway around here. I've even heard that he was one of the last practising Midewewin.

Midewewin was a medicine society but no one around here talks much about them anymore. Grampa was the last person heard of that had any connection to it.

It's dark. Maybe dark isn't a strong enough word to describe the blackness that happens out here. It's like the trees and rocks and even the water all act together to soak up whatever light there might be.

It's a heavy darkness. Mysterious. While I'm walking I can't help think-

ing that that's why those old Midewewin were such a superstitious bunch.

I don't know all that much about them but I do know that they believed that everything in the universe had a spirit of its own and that for every good spirit there had to be a bad one to balance things. They had a lot of ritual to avoid bad spirits.

I can see light from the old cabin a long way off. Keeper. In a way I guess old Keeper's brought this reserve to life again. Funny how someone doing one thing out of the ordinary can make a whole lot of other people sit up and take notice and even start them talkin' to each other again even if that talk's mostly chatter and gossip.

He's sitting by the door when I get there.

"Ahnee Garnet," he says with a wave and a smile. I'm surprised. First that he remembers my name and second by the way he looks. This is a whole different Keeper than I'm used to seeing.

"Ahnee Keeper," I say. Ahnee is the way we Ojibways generally greet each other— means how are you and all that. "You look really good."

"Oh meegwetch, meegwetch," he says. Meegwetch is pretty close to thank you in our language but means a whole lot more too. "Feel pretty good now too."

As I sit down on the bench beside him I can't help but notice how much

weight he's gained and how his hands, as he lights up his pipe, don't shake like they used to.

"Pretty steady, eh?" he says and grins at my surprise. "First thing people notice is how us drunks shake around anymore."

"Must feel pretty good." There's a long silence as Keeper smokes and I stare out across the lake. There's a huge orange moon just starting to rise over the treetops and its eerie light throws shadows all around us.

"Spent lots of time here once," Keeper says finally. "The old man and I did a lot of talking here."

"The old man? You mean my Grampa?"

"Hey-yah," says

Keeper, "He was my teacher."

"Teacher?" I asked. "Yeah. You heard of Midewewin?"

"Not lots," I say, "Grampa was supposed to be the last one around here."

Keeper laughs. He blows a long, thin column of smoke across the space in front of us that we only see as shadows. It's quiet.

"Midewewin were the people's guardians," he says finally. "They used their knowledge and ceremonies to keep the people healthy. Knew all about plants and animals. Knew all about everything. Prayed lots. Not scary like everyone thinks now."

Con't page 14

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A Fireside Christmas

From pg. 13

"What happened to them?" I ask feeling a little spooked, but curious anyway.

"Times changed. People change too. Pretty soon work and money and TV and bingo mean more than ceremony. Teachers all die. No one comes to ask anymore and everything knew about is gone when they go."

"Everything? You mean there isn't anyone around anymore that knows anything?"

Keeper taps out his pipe in the darkness. The dull thunk against the cabin wall is like a heartbeat and like a powwow drum at the same time.

Somewhere out in the darkness we hear the soft snorting of some animal on its nightly hunt. Loons on the water, soft scurrying in the grass.

"Almost no one," he says softly.

He disappears into the cabin. The light thrown through the open door lights up everything around us and the scurrying in the grass is suddenly more frantic. I can hear him moving things around. He's carrying something when he returns.

"Know what this is?" he asks.

In his hands I see a tall round-looking object. He hands it to me. Its surface is rough and coarse like the trunk of a tree.

At one end I feel the tough almost plastic-like coating like the trunk of a tree. At one end I feel the tough almost plastic-like coating of old moosehide. It's hollow and heavy.

"It's a drum, isn't it?" I ask not really sure since the drums I've seen are mostly the converted bass drum type they use at powwows.

"It's a drum," he says. "Only this drum is maybe a thousand years old. It's called a water drum."

"A water drum? Where'd you get it?"

"Your Grampa. It was his or at least it was passed on to him," Keeper says.

"And what's it for?"

"Well," he says, and sits back down beside me with

the drum between his feet, it's for prayer mostly. The Midewewin used it in a lot of their ceremonies. If you fill the drum with different amounts of water you get different sounds.

They had a different sound they wanted for each ceremony and for each time of the year. The water drum was the most sacred drum our people had. Without it there could be no ceremony and without ceremony there could be no prayer. I don't need to tell you what happens to people when there is no prayer.

"No, I guess not," I say. "Nothin' to believe in, just living."

"Hey-yah," he says. "And not too good living either."

"So who does the drum belong to now that Grampa's gone?" I ask.

Keeper smiles. He looks

and the old ways. Took me on long walks through the bush and showed me the healing plants. Taught me the old prayer songs and what they men. About prayer and ceremony. I learned lots.

"When all the other boys were fishing and hunting I was with the old man. He told me of the bear medicine, the deer medicine, all the songs for the animals. He taught me as much as he could."

"So you're a Midewewin then," I interrupted. The idea shocked me.

"No," he said, "I walked away from it. I felt like I was losing all my friends and I walked away from it. But not before the old man gave me the responsibility for the drum. I walked away anyway."

"But I had all that knowledge inside me. All

Midewewin were the people's guardians," he says finally. "They used their knowledge and ceremonies to keep the people healthy. Knew all about plants and animals. Knew all about everything. Prayed lots. Not scary like everyone thinks now."

long at the moon getting higher over the lake. When he speaks again it's kind of sad sounding.

"Drum always belongs to the people. No one owns it. There's always just a Keeper."

"A what?" I asked, surprised. "A Keeper? That's not why they all call you..."

"Keeper? Yeah," he says. "But that's not really why."

"Well why then and who's the real Keeper?"

He takes his time loading up his pipe again. We're sitting in deep darkness crisscrossed with deep shadow and deep silence. The flare from the match in his cupped hands gives his face a kind of elegance and kindness I've never seen there before. He's changed.

"Your Grampa was my teacher," he says finally, "He picked me out of all the other young boys on this reserve. Said I had smarts and courage.

Used to bring me over here on nights like this and tell me about Midewewin

the time I was running around with my friends I had that knowledge but I ignored it. I tried to let it die. When the old man died I wasn't around. I was drinking in Winnipeg with your Uncle. When we heard we got even drunker. Least I did."

"Pretty soon I was feeling real guilty. I felt like a traitor. I knew that the responsibility for the drum was mine and I knew how important it was to the people but I felt too guilty for walkin' away. Drunk felt better. Reason they all took to callin' me Keeper of the water drum. They all took it as a joke and called me Keeper as a joke too."

"Couldn't sober up because I thought it was too late. That I wasn't worthy anymore. Too guilty and after awhile too drunk to care."

All these years and no one had ever suspected that he might have been telling the truth. No one ever knew how close we all were to the sacred

drum. The old drunk had kept the secret locked away a long long time.

"One day I got tired," Keeper said, "Got tired of being drunk, tired of being sick, tired of the guilt. Talked to your ma and went away. Now I have to take the responsibility I walked away from. That's why you're here."

"Me?" I asked. "What can I do?"

"There always has to be a Keeper. I want to teach you what the old man taught me. I want you to come with me when we take this drum into the townsite tomorrow. I want you to help me bring back the ceremonies. I want you to be the Keeper when I go."

"Can I? I don't know anything." I ask surprised and scared.

He laughs. "That's good," he says. "That's good. Means there's lots of room in there to fill up with teaching."

"You come here at night like I did. You come and we'll talk. In the daytime I'll show you what I was shown and you help me in the ceremonies 'til you understand what's right. We'll pray and we'll sing. You'll be the Keeper. Would you like that?"

I think for a long long time. I think of my Grampa and my ma. I think of the people on the reserve and how no one ever talks about the old ways, just complains about the new. I think about Keeper.

"Yeah," I say after a long time. "Yeah I'd like that a lot. When do we start?"

Keeper laughs. "Soon as that moon goes down behind us we'll sing the morning song and head back. We start then."

We sit in silence. All around us the land works its way through the motions of night. We watch the moon easing slowly across the sky. Its reflection in the dark water getting further and further away. An old man and a young a one joined together by something far more mysterious than a deep northern night.

We sit in silence. "Ever slow that moon eh?" he says and we laugh.

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President's Christmas Message

I would like to extend to you my very best wishes during this special holiday season

It is my hope that you and yours will enjoy a quiet moment of reflection and may you find personal peace upon which you can bring in the New Year.

It is my hope that you and your loved ones shall receive prosperity and happiness in the forthcoming year.

Fred Gladstone, President,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Staff of Alberta Indian Investment Corporation.

HOLIDAY CHEERS

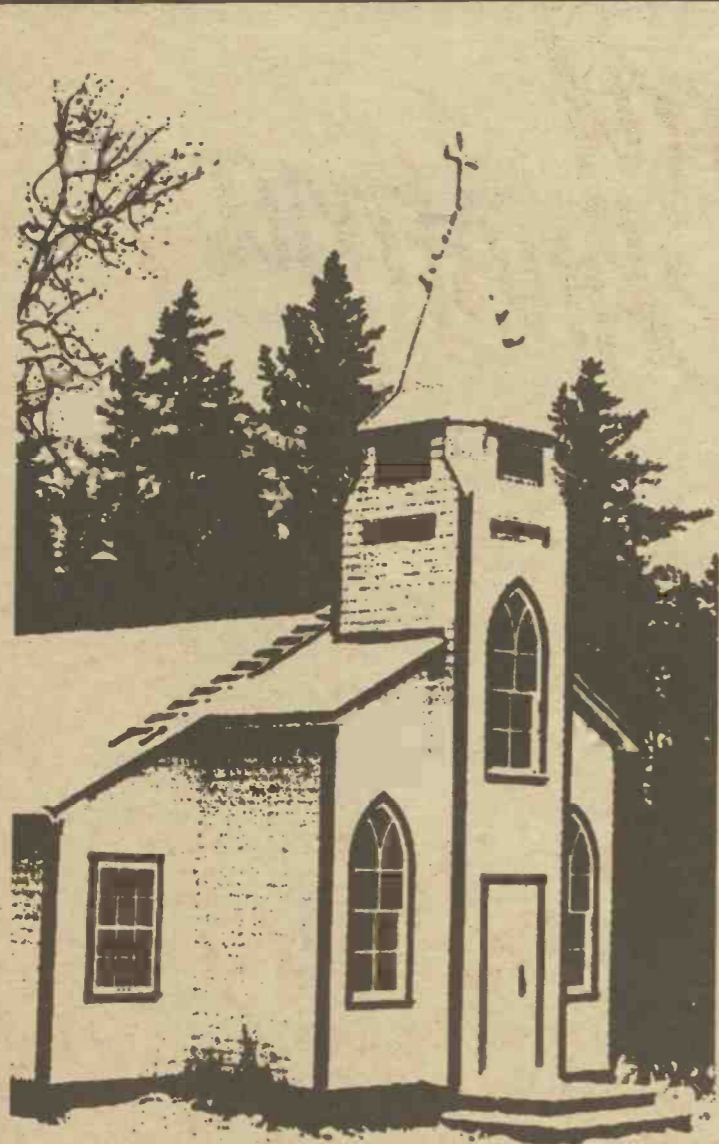
At this special time of year, may you and yours enjoy the true feeling of this happy holiday season.

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naxuníé

Drin Tsal ts'at Drin Choo gwizhít
nakhwa srugoonch'uu vili?

Tewe Yatí nahegha gonezò nídé máhsi.
Edáidzeného k'e chu nahegha légóot'é.

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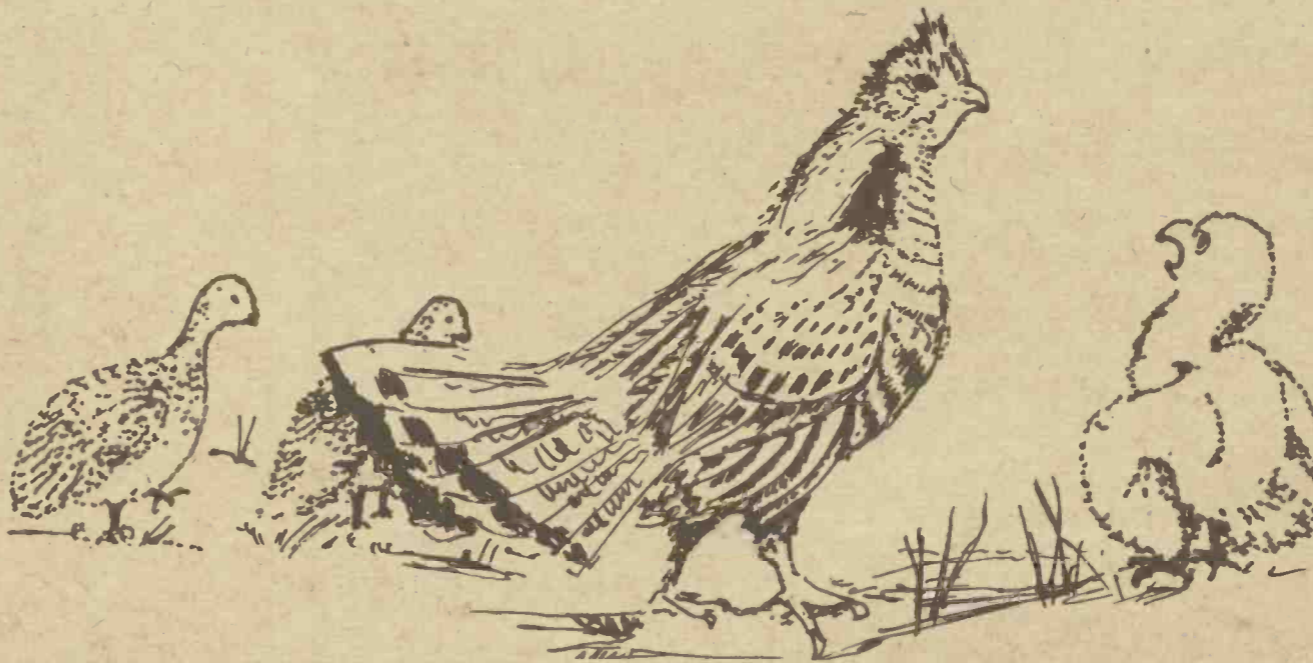
John Allard
DP 422 *Michael*

Edna *Donna*



A Fireside Christmas

Ernest Gladue



The outsider and the prairie chicken...

By Jane Ash Poitras
Windspeaker Correspondent

Once upon a time that may have been anytime...

In a place where the forest meets the prairie...

In a world where animals are much like people...

A prairie chicken family trekked through the forest single file, mother hen in the lead and chicks bobbing one by one behind.

A lost little bird saw them go by and joined the end of the line, running and flapping to keep up.

When the mother hen stopped and counted her chicks, she found one more in her brood than she expected.

But this newcomer wasn't like her other chicks. It was quite different. It was bigger and stronger. It had longer wings and a powerful beak dominated its proud head.

But mothers are mothers and they love unconditionally. And this little stranger obviously needed a mother, so it became part of the prairie chicken family.

As the weeks and months passed, he grew bigger and stronger, and he found it more and more difficult to stay with the prairie chickens and live their way.

Being a prairie chicken wasn't easy for the newcomer.

They ate seeds, and were disgusted when he ate a mouse.

They could only flutter short distances, but could fly fast and far.

And everytime he wanted to fly from near the nest to explore far off

places, mother hen would scold him and make him stay with his less adventurous siblings.

As the weeks and months passed, he grew bigger and stronger, and

he found it more and more difficult to stay with the prairie chickens and live their way.

One day he looked up and saw a bird gliding effortlessly high in the sky. Suddenly, it plummeted to earth and a moment later climbed into the sky on powerful wings, a struggling rabbit secure in

its claws.

The bird in the sky returned many times, to his watcher's wonder and delight.

Then one day it glided down to where he was.

"I am an eagle, come glide with me," the mighty bird said.

"But I am a prairie chicken; I can't fly the way you fly," the young bird answered.

"Then I have a gift for you," the eagle said.

And after much coaxing, he showed the young bird how to climb high in the sky on his powerful wings, then glide on the updrafts of air from the ground.

The young bird was thrilled.

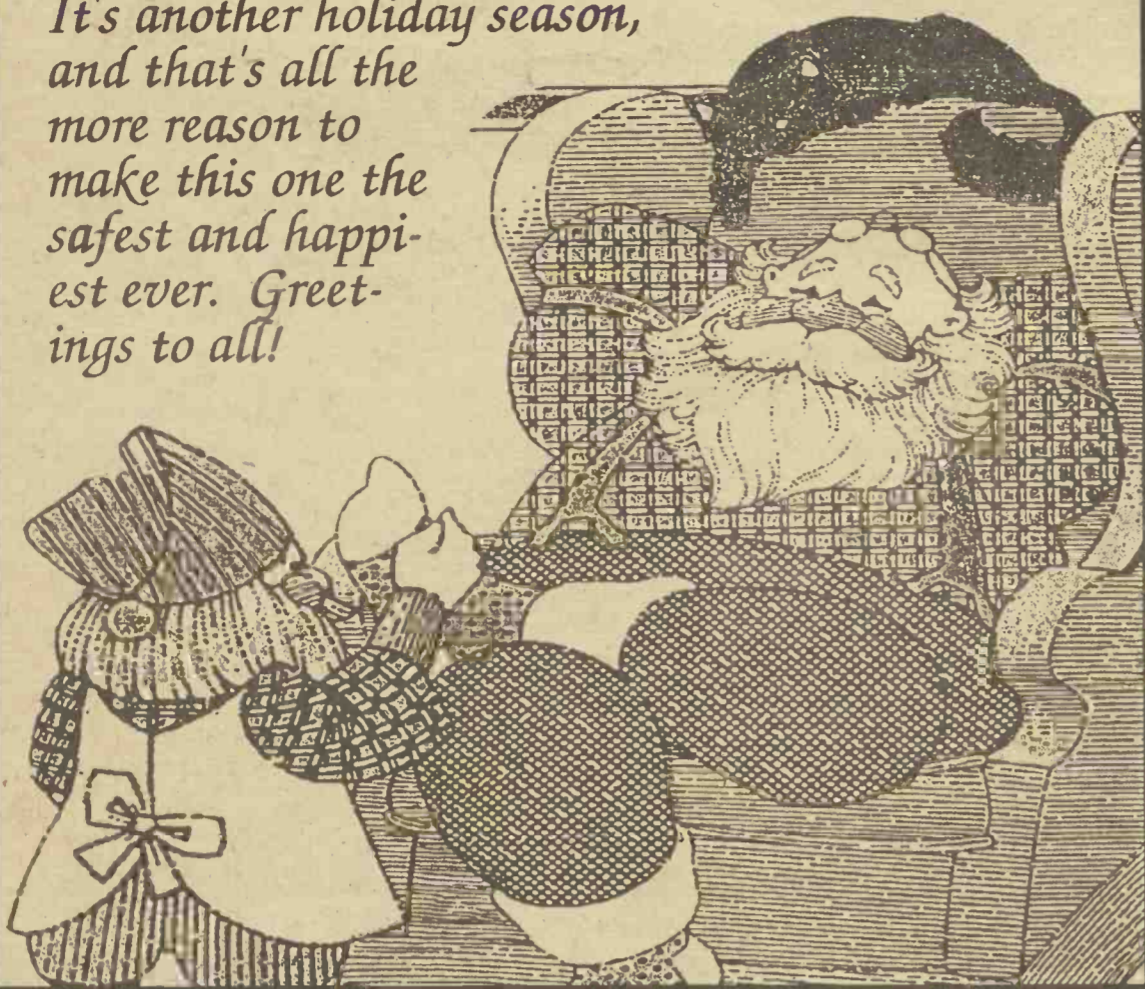
"Now," the eagle said, "you will believe me when I tell you that you are also an eagle, not a prairie chicken. That is my gift to you—that you know what you really are, for that is the greatest gift of all."

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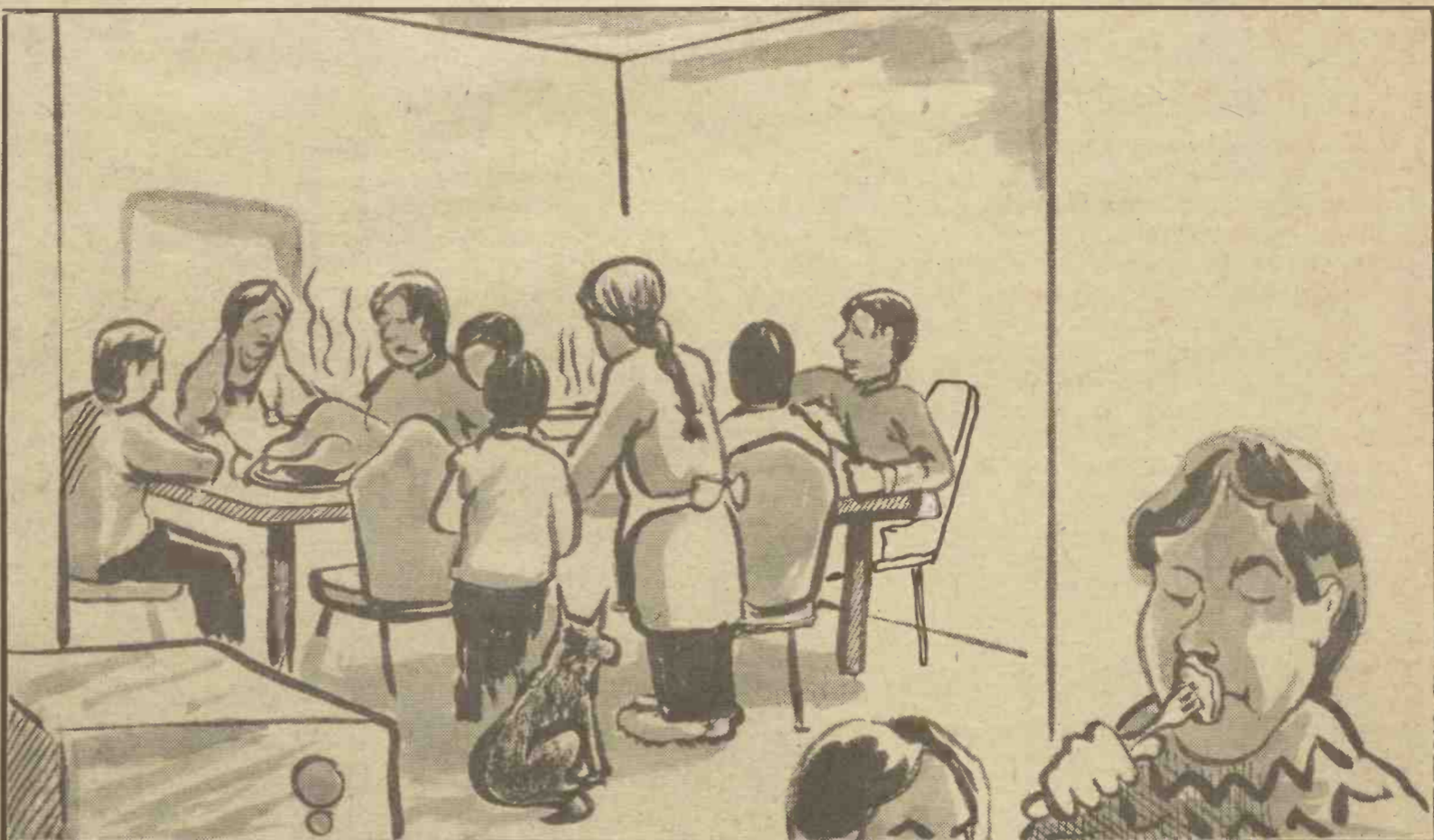


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A Fireside Christmas



**A
reserve
Christmas
for Jimmy**

By John Holman
Windspeaker Staff Writer

This story is for Dean and Thad.

It was snowing but I knew that somewhere behind those clouds was a full moon.

Lights were brightly lit in all the houses on the reserve.

It was the first time in a long time all the family

had gotten together for a Christmas dinner.

Everyone was over, Grandpa, Granny, my big sister Sheila and her two kids, Ernie and Robert, though we called him 'Burt' to tease him.

Uncle Jimmy and Aunt Molly were also here. So was Molly's ex-boyfriend, Edward.

Jimmy didn't know that, though. He thought Edward was just a friend

of the family, and he was, but Jimmy didn't know Eddie had grown up with Molly and had gone steady with her for the longest time until she left the reserve.

Molly moved to the city, looking for bigger and brighter things, but all she found was Jimmy, a teacher in a big white school — he always wanted us to call him 'James'.

Eddie didn't want to leave the reserve, he stayed here, helping out the family and doing odd jobs.

He seemed to have a soft spot for me, sometimes taking me out on his trapline. He made the trips more of a holiday when he brought me, but he trapped for real when he was alone.

We snowshoed around and pretended to stalk Hudson's Bay traders. We never did any real trapping, we half-heartedly set rabbit snares and skidoored on the lakes and old snowshoe trails until we had just enough fuel left to get home.

In the evenings, we thawed out the catch of the

day and made rabbit soup. We slurped that with hot bannock. Boy it was good. I noticed that there were piles and piles of books on the shelves at his cabin. He read about anything and everything — mechanics, cooking, carpentry. Sometimes he would read parts of novels he kept.

Anyway, everyone was there — me, my two kid sisters Ruby and Vallery, and my four brothers, Anthony, Bruce, Zachery and Toup-Toup, who was named after my grandpa. Toup-Toup was the oldest, about the same age as Eddie. I was the youngest.

My name is Alvin, but they call me 'Bannock' because that's the first word I learned.

I was sitting in front of the t.v. with my shabby mongrel dog, Bruce. I called her Bruce as a joke on my brother. Everyone else was blabbing in the kitchen. It was loud, it seemed everyone was in there. Finally Ma yelled, "Everybody! Get out! Go watch t.v. or something!"

She had been working

Con't page 19

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&
a joyous Noel**
from the Board and Staff of,
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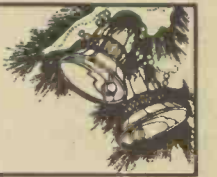
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A Fireside Christmas



From pg. 18

hard all day cooking and had been trying to set the table, squeezing by everyone. Ruby helped her.

All the adults sat at the table when it was set. Us kids had to sit around the coffee table, but it was good that way because we could watch t.v. Ruby served the kids and all the adults helped themselves.

Finally the house was quiet and everyone bowed their heads as Pa asked Toup-Toup to say Grace.

"Gwaith," whispered Anthony, who was born just before me. Us kids giggled. Ma glared.

Toup-Toup asked the "Great One" to bless this food, the people who will eat it, this warm house, the trees the house was made from, all our friends and neighbors.

I think he even asked the "Great Spirit" to bless my dog. Then he began a long speech thanking the "Holy One" for the earth that grew our food, for the sun to provide light, and the rivers to water it...but before he could finish Grandpa cleared his throat real loud.

"Uh, amen," Toup-Toup said. "Amen," everyone replied.

"Thank the Goddamn lord," someone said in a loud whisper.

"What did you say, Anthony?" demanded Ma.

"I thaid, uh, I thaid 'The food'th a godthend, lord.'"

"What?"

"The food'th a godthend, lord."

"What?"

"Godthend! Godthend! The food'th a godthend!"

"He said, 'The food's a godsend, lord' Ma," I explained.

"Oh."

Everyone giggled as they dug into their turkey. For awhile, the only sound was the smacking of lips and clink of silverware against the china plates bought especially for this dinner.

"So what do you do for a living, Jimmy?" Eddie asked.

Jimmy hesitated. "I teach," he said.

"Teach what?"

"English."

"He's the only Indian teacher in the whole school, and it's a big school, too," Molly said.

"And yourself, what do you do?" Jimmy questioned, just before he forked a tidy piece of turkey into his mouth. He chased it with some stuffing.

"Me? I'm an entrepreneur," Eddie replied.

Molly raised an eyebrow and a confused expression clouded her face.

"Are you self-taught or did you attend university?"

"Both, sort of. I got my bachelors of trapping at elders' university," Eddie said with a smile. "It's a 24-hour-a-day job."

"I should take you to my office someday. It's about 30 miles north of here. You'd like it a lot Jimmy."

"James."

"Whatever."

Dinner lapsed into an awkward silence. Then Bruce got up to get some more napkins for us. Ma called after him.

"Bruce. Bruce! Take the extra buns out of the oven, we're running out. Where'd this silly dog come from? Get out of here. Kick her out Bannock."

I led her out by the scruff of her neck, just like Ma does with us sometimes. I was much more gentle though, Bruce didn't land on her behind or go rolling like a tumbleweed. She wagged her tail and sat on the steps as I closed the door.

"I'll give ya some bones later," I promised her.

A conversation was building up at the table. They

As the family carried a groggy Jimmy back into the house, I could hear a skidoo in the distance. Something told me it was Edward's.

We waited all night for Molly to come back, but she didn't.

were talking about past Christmases. Jimmy would interrupt sometimes, correcting somebody's pronunciation.

The kids lined up for seconds. I felt sorry for Bruce. I could hear her scratching at the door. No one seemed to hear her. The conversation reached its full volume, or at least I hoped it had, everyone was babbling at each other and I wondered if they really understood each other.

I could see Molly and Edward looking at each other. Their eyes were locked in a tragic kind of communication. I felt strange, like an intruder because no one else seemed to notice them, except Jimmy. He regarded her warily, like she had chicken pox or something. He shifted his eyes to her once in a while. Her eyes never wavered from Ed's.

"Bruce. Bruce! Get some tea for us?" Ma yelled. "Son?"

My dog barked.

"I'm going to the bathroom. Gee, you alwayth get me to do thingth."

"You want to shut your dog up, Alvin?"

I put a bone and some potatoes in the pocket of my dress pants and brought them to Bruce. She shot inside and cavorted around the kids. I left the door open and looked for her plate, she usually took it under the steps.

"Get that Goddamn mongrel out of here! Alan you should have shot the damn thing when I told you! It'll be nothing but trouble, I said. But no Ma kept on ranting

while I put the bones and potatoes in the plate. I put it on the steps.

"Here Bruce. Here girl. Come on. That's a good girl." I patted her on the head as she crunched bones.

"Close the door! Where do you think you were born? A teepee?"

"Relaxth Mom, thith ith Chrithmath," Bruce pleaded as he brought in a pot of tea.

Dinner proceeded on to dessert and a formal grilling of Jimmy. Grandpa, Granny and my parents interrogated him of where he grew up, where he went to school, what tribe he came from and how much money he made.

Molly and Eddie still regarded each other intensely — Eddie was smiling faintly now.

Finally, Jimmy said he'd better head home, it was getting late.

It was only about ten. Everyone pleaded he should stay but he said he couldn't and would be back tomorrow anyhow. He left. The interrogation continued.

Molly kept looking around, like she didn't recognize the place. Then she got up. "I need a breath of fresh air," she said. She left the table, no one seemed to notice except Jimmy, who looked worried. Molly left.

The kids watched cartoons as the interrogation went on. Jimmy looked distracted and sometimes stuttered when he answered questions. Grandpa corrected him sometimes.

I let my dog in, who promptly laid down at my feet, making them feel cold. The tracks of snow she left melted on the floor.

Finally Jimmy said he had to go see Molly. He wiped his lips and pushed away from the table. He hurried to get his coat and slipped in some water. Bang! He fell. He cursed a bit, then got up to open the door.

"Be careful Jimmy," Granny told him.

"It's James," he replied, then slammed the door. I heard a muffled scream and another bang that shook the house. I guess Bruce didn't take her plate under the steps this time.

We all ran out to see what happened. My sisters were laughing.

Jimmy was covered in snow at the foot of the steps, out cold.

I saw two tracks, Eddie's and Molly's. They followed each other.

"You'll be all right Jimmy, just take it easy," Ma told him.

"It's James," he said like he was half-asleep.

As the family carried a groggy Jimmy back into the house, I could hear a skidoo in the distance. Something told me it was Edward's.

We waited all night for Molly to come back, but she didn't.

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A Fireside Christmas



Dr. Anne Anderson
... author of Native cookbook

ENJOY THE TASTES OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON

The Great Outdoor Kitchen

This fascinating little publication, by Dr. Anne Anderson of Edmonton's Native Heritage and Cultural Centre is not just a cookbook, it tells us of the ways our forefathers ate to survive over the years.

Dr. Anderson tells us that our people often lived to be a hundred or more and usually had teeth to the day they died. They were extremely hardy and roamed from place to place by walking. Mother Earth provided "lakes, rivers, forests and fish. This was our livelihood. From the comes our meat, berries, sap from the trees and herbs for the treating of our ills. We drink pure, fresh water from the lakes and streams. In the lakes are the fish, also part of our survival. We also have the father, the Greatest of all Spirits, up there in the heavens, which is the Sun. He provides for us the essential warm rays of light and tells us when the day begins and when it ends," writes Dr. Anderson.

Early people had a diet rich in protein, balanced with fruit for vitamin "C", sap from trees and herbal teas. Primitive people drank warm blood from freshly killed game. It was believed the raw blood added strength and enriched their own blood. In later years, the blood from animals was cooked, mixing in wild onions, herbs and some fats- the whole mess was placed in a large container with some grease and watched carefully as it cooked over a flame. When ovens were introduced the whole mixture was baked.

Some unique tidbits of information are found in this book. She tells us that gophers, which should be cooked on a stake or by boiling with salt pork, resemble roast piglet in taste. She also mentions that trapping season was a favorite time for children because they looked forward to tasty muskrat tails cooked over an open fire. These are prepared in the same manner as beaver tail, by holding the tail over the fire or flame, then peeling it and cooking as is.

In the north, during festival days there was no table without baked white fish (whole) or oven-cooked dried white fish. Boiled dried moose meat or huge moose roast were very popular. For desert there were stewed evaporated apples with raisins. Never were there plum puddings or mince pies, instead there was deep fried bannock or raisin biscuits. When molasses syrup was first introduced, it went well with fresh bannock or was poured over rice as a sauce.

Dr. Anderson has a fondness for dried fish. She'd had the stuff beaten into a pulp and mixed with lard and molasses or with wild onions. "I've tested these recipes and enjoyed every one," she writes.

Here's a sample of recipes included in The Great Outdoors Kitchen. If you want to check out the book, it's available from the Native Heritage and Cultural Centre, 10826-124 St., Edmonton, Alberta. Phone, 452-6296.

Bannock

4 cups of flour
6 tsp of baking powder
1 tsp of sugar
1/2 tsp of salt
1/2 cup of grease or lard
2 cups of water or milk

Mix all dry ingredients in bowl. Melt the grease in a frying pan and add the water. Pour into flour and mix, but if too dry you may add more water. Knead on board for three minutes. Success in bannock making is in the kneading, which is required to make it firm and all grease to be evened out through the dough. Pat out with hands to 3/4 inch thickness and prick with fork. It can be made oblong or round and baked in an oven or open fire, by placing the bannock in a frying pan, and slated towards the fire. The frying pan should be propped with a stick to hold in position. Your baking depends entirely on the hot coals that will provide enough heat for the cooking period. Therefore a good fire must be prepared ahead of time. You will notice the bread turning color, and when brown enough, turn the bannock and bake on the other side. You will soon learn just how far your frying pan should sit from the hot coals to be successful in outdoor baking.



Rabbit Stew

1 rabbit cut in pieces
4 slices of bacon, cut in pieces
2 diced carrots
2 slices of diced turnips
1 onion chopped
salt and pepper
potatoes cut in pieces
bannock buns

Fry bacon and rabbit pieces in dutch oven. Add all vegetables with the bacon and rabbit. Cook slowly for 1 hour or so. Thicken a bit when rabbit is done and serve with fresh bannock buns.



Deer Meat Stew (Serves Six)

2 lbs. of cubed meat (1 1/2 of 2 inch cubes)
2 carrots (cut in pieces)
1 cup of cubed turnips

1/2 cup sliced onion

Into a heavy skillet, add 1/4 cup of lard or bacon drippings. Roll cubed meat in 1/4 cup of flour and fry quickly in hot drippings. Add other vegetables and 2 cups of water with 3/4 tsp. of salt. Let cook slowly for 1 1/2 hours. If a thicker stew is needed, thicken with a bit more flour. Serve with mashed potatoes and bannock buns.



Wild Duck Soup

Cut duck into pieces and boil until done. Take out and add into broth 1/2 cup of diced turnips, carrots, onions and diced or cubed bacon meat. Cook until vegetables are done. Add 2 tbsp of quick oats to thicken or flour diluted with water. Serve when soup has thickened. Eat pieces of duck along with soup. The Indian way of eating meat was to drink broth along with the meat.



Moose Nose

Cut the heavy rounded part of the moose nose off. Hold over the flame and singe well. Scrape to make sure all hairs are burnt off. If not return to the flame for more singeing and more scraping. Cut open the nostrils to make sure all is clean. After all this process is over you will have an odd piece of brown scorched edible meat, but not really resembling meat. It is now ready to boil. Recipe to cook:

1 moose nose
1 cup of dried saskatoons
1 tsp of salt
6 cups of water or more

Put all together into a large kettle and cook until the meat is tender. Add more water if it boils away. Remove the meat out of the broth. Pour the berry broth into a dish to cool. When cold it will harden like jello and it is known to be the first aspic dish on the Native menu. Slice the meat and cut aspic in squares and serve. Some eat the meat and drink the broth while warm, which is equally as good. (After cleaning the moose nose, some smoke it for a while before boiling it a different flavor.)



Roast Goose

1 cup of bread crumbs
1 cup mashed potatoes
1 chopped onion
1/2 cup of chopped celery
1/4 cup of melted butter
1/2 cup milk
1 tsp of sage
salt and pepper to taste

Fry celery until partly done in butter. Add crumbs and milk and mix well. Add all other ingredients and stuff the bird. Put in roaster with lid and cook for two hours at 350 degrees. Take lid off the last half hour so it can render well, if it is fat.



Berries... Menisa

Most of the time berries were eaten fresh. However, when saskatoons were plentiful they were dried and stored. The berries were spread evenly in the sun to dry. They were covered to keep insects and flies off. Chokecherries and blueberries were also used.



Mint Teas

There are several kinds of mint plants that are found in Alberta. They all are medicinal and are known to cure many ills. Children should be allowed to drink these teas with nothing added and made according to ones' taste, mild or strong.



Wild Mint

Gather the mint at blooming time. Generally they grow in small bunches. Cut at base of plant and tie with a cord and hang up to dry. When dry crush mint into pieces and store in tins to use at a later date.



Wild Mint Tea

For 2 cups of tea use about one tsp. of mint leaves. Pour over the leaves 2 cups boiling water.



A Fireside Christmas



WINTER SEASON WITH THESE NATIVE RECIPES!

The Rural and Native Heritage Cookbook

Members of the Lovesick Lake Native Women's Association in Ontario, lived off the land and were raised on muskrat, beaver, venison, rabbit, fish, bear and waterfowl. Their parents also picked berries to preserve for the long winter months.

This ability and need to live off the land, according to the cookbook authors, is becoming more crucial as foodstore prices go up and budgets get tighter in tough economic times. What began as a cookbook for low income families, evolved into a volume of Canadian Native heritage, which will appeal to anyone interested in wild game, fish and indigenous edible plants.

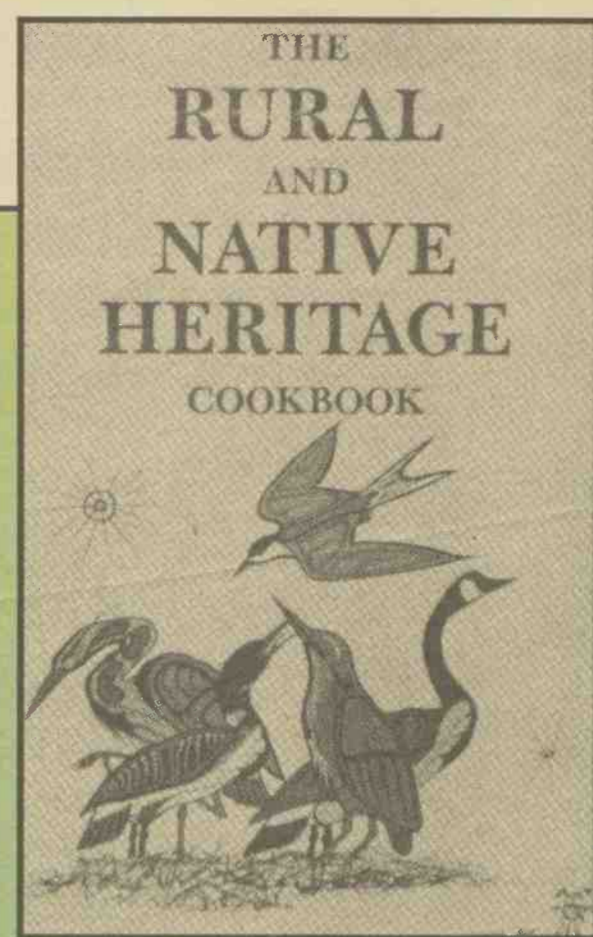
The book contains a fascinating collection of recipes chosen from over 2,000 gathered by the women's association. The ingredients used in the recipes range from the exotic to the unusual and result in such taste-tempting dishes as cattails on the cob, pheasant with wild rice stuffing and black walnut soufflé.

At the beginning of the cookbook, oven times and temperatures are given to cook game birds, big and

small game, and fish. The book also offers instructions to tan hides, herbal remedies, information about wild animals and even some homemade wine recipes.

Some of the "useful tips" also listed at the front of the book are worth mentioning. For example, did you know that a tablespoon of coffee added to the water will remove the gamey taste from beaver when it is being par-boiled? Or that a simmering pan of vinegar on the stove will help to dispel odors that may be released when strong-smelling food is cooked? Or that you should not touch the severed head of the snapping turtle you are cooking for at least 24 hours? This is because the nerves remain alive for at least that amount of time.

Just to whet your appetite we present some of the Rural and Native Heritage cookbook recipes for you to experiment with. They include ingredients that are more readily available in this western part of Canada. But if you ever find yourself with a snapping turtle on your hands and no idea how to cook it... this cookbook is the one to grab. It's published by Totem Books, 100 Lesmill Road, Don Mills, Ontario.



Native Heritage Cookbook
... published by a Native women's group

Let steep 10 minutes. If a stronger mint taste is desired more leaves can be added. Pour several cups of cool before drinking.



Rose Hips...Okineyak

Rose bud hips are a good source of Vitamin C. They were gathered by the natives and eaten as is or dried for future use. Tea was made from them by steeping in boiling water for ten minutes. They called it 'Okinewapoy'. Literal meaning was 'Rose Hip Liquid'.



Muskeg Tea...Muskeko-Pukwa

These plants are found only in boggy places. The tender leaves are picked and dried and stored in containers. The aroma from the leaves is different from other teas. One must find out for himself how strong a tea he likes. Add more leaves to boiling water and let steep.



Moose Steak with Mushroom Sauce

1 large moose steak
3 tbsp bacon drippings
1/2 cup bouillon or consomme
1 medium onion, chopped
1/2 tsp garlic powder
3 tbsp tomato paste
1/2 cup water or sherry
1 cup sliced mushrooms
2 tbsp flour
1/4 cup cream
dash of paprika

Heat bacon drippings in large skillet and brown steak on both sides thoroughly. Add broth, onion, garlic and tomato paste diluted in 1/2 cup of water or sherry. Cover pan and simmer for one hour or until meat is tender. Remove steak from pan and keep hot. Add mushrooms to pan liquid; cover and simmer for one minute. Thicken with flour and water mixture. dilute with cream. Heat thoroughly. Taste for seasoning. Pour over steak and sprinkle with paprika.



Rabbit Soup

leftover rabbit meat and bones
1 soup bone

1/4 lb. salt pork
1 onion, quartered
1 clove garlic
1/4 tsp parsley
1/4 tsp thyme
1 bay leaf
4 cups chicken broth
1 cup potatoes, diced
1/2 cup celery, diced
1/2 cup carrots, diced
salt and pepper

Remove all meat from rabbit bones and set aside. In a kettle, combine bones and soup bones and salt pork. Add carrots, onion, garlic, parsley, thyme and bay leaf. Cover with water and simmer until almost dry. Add chicken broth and simmer 15 minutes. Strain broth and adjust the seasoning to taste. Add potatoes and simmer until tender. Add celery and carrots and cook 20 minutes longer. Then, add rabbit meat. Heat thoroughly and serve.



Traditional Cranberry Sauce

1 1/2 lbs. wild high bush cranberries
or domestic cranberries
2 cups maple sugar
1 1/2 cups birch sap or spring water

Place all ingredients in a large saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer 25 to 30 minutes. Cool and serve with wild meat.



Cranberry and Raisin Stuffing

1/4 cup butter
5 cups fine stale bread crumbs
1 cup chopped fresh cranberries
1/4 cup sugar
1/4 cup raisins
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. grated rind

In a bowl, mix cranberries and sugar. Allow to set a few minutes. In a separate bowl mix melted butter and crumbs together. Then add combined sugared cranberries and all remaining ingredients, using just enough water to bind mixture. Makes enough for 5 to 6 pounds. Recipe can be doubled.



Wild Raspberry Bread Pudding

10 cups wild raspberries, cleaned, dried
2 cups sugar

12 slices homemade white bread
2 cups heavy cream

In a large bowl, sprinkle sugar over raspberries. Toss berries very lightly until all sugar has dissolved. Cover and set aside. Cut slice of bread to fit the bottom of a deep quart bowl. Trim 8 or 9 slices of bread into wedges about 4 inches at the top and 3 inches across the bottom. Line sides of bowl with wedges, overlapping each one by about a 1/2 inch. Pour fruit into the bowl and cover top completely with the rest of bread. Cover top of bowl with a flat plate and place a weight on top of plate. Place in refrigerator for at least 12 hours. Remove mold by quickly inverting it onto a chilled serving plate. The mold should slide out easily. Whip cream in a large chilled bowl until it holds its shape. With a spatula, cover mold on the outside and top. Serve chilled.



Wild Blueberry Cookies

2 cups flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
3/4 cup wild blueberries
1/2 cup shortening

1 cup sugar
1 1/2 tsp. lemon rind, grated
1 egg
1/4 cup milk

Combine flour, baking powder and salt; stir in blueberries. Cream shortening until soft, gradually beat in sugar, then lemon rind and egg. Add flour mixture alternately with milk, beating until smooth after each addition. Drop from teaspoon onto greased cookie sheet. Bake at 375 degrees from 8 to 12 minutes.

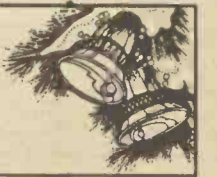
Fried Bread

5 cups all purpose flour
10 tsp baking powder
4 tbsp sugar
1/2 tsp salt
2 tbsp vegetable oil
2 eggs beaten
2 cups water

Sift together flour, baking powder, sugar and salt. In a separate bowl, combine vegetable oil, eggs and water. Make a well in center of flour mixture and stir in liquid, mixing it well. Put a clean towel over the bowl and let stand for 3 1/2 hours. Knead dough for about three minutes. turn out onto a floured surface and roll out to four inch thickness. Cut pieces in triangular shapes and fry in hot fat until golden brown.



A Fireside Christmas



By Rocky Woodward
Windspeaker Correspondent

Merry Christmas!

Which reminds me. I remember when I was a handsome little boy. I grew up with three older sisters... who were very mean to me. At Christmas time, it was always pleasant in our house. Pleasant I say, for my three sisters but not for me.

Back in the days of my handsome youth, few families could afford the luxury of owning a propane or oil stove. We had a wood stove and as you must of figured out by now, being a handsome (sweet) little boy, didn't help my standing any.

It was I, everyday and on Christmas Eve, who had to haul the water from a hole in the ice that I had chopped.

And it was I who sawed, chopped and hauled in the wood so my wicked stepmother (I forgot to tell you about her) and her three little princesses would be warm.

Then, while the four of them decorated the Christmas tree that I had cut for them two nights earlier, by candlelight, it was I who harnessed the dog to deliver their Christmas lists to Santa Claus four miles away at the post office in the old Hudson Bay store.

Handsome little boys never complained.

Anyway, this Christmas eve, I was outside as usual, this time shovelling snow in a blizzard to make the path wider to the outhouse for the big four when I looked in the window just to see what being warm actually looked like.

There they were, decorating the Christmas tree, busy laughing and enjoying with each other, the spirit of Christmas.

I looked at the tree with Christmas bulbs, tinsel and a big star on top and said, "Wow!"

Just then, my stepmother and sisters caught me spying on them and screamed for me to get away from the window. "Go cut more Christmas wood!" they all said in togetherness.

I was so suprised by them catching me that I jumped backwards quickly. It really hurt. I had forgot I was licking the window pane and ripped part of my tongue off!

As I picked myself up from where I had fell in the snow, I knew that I would remember this Christmas Eve, for days to come. The pain would help remind me.

It was dark when my stepmother called me into the house. I sat at the table, eating my porridge. I was told to sweep the floors and wash them with my handsome little hands.

A Christmas Wish...

It was very late when I finished. My sisters and stepmother were already snuggled up under their downfilled quilts.

Knowing I was probably safe, for now, I crept over to the Christmas tree and began rummaging through all the christmas presents.

I picked up the first one and it read, 'to sister.' The next one...'to sister.' I picked them all up and they were all to sister, to sister!

With a sigh I looked at all of the presents, none of them addressed to me and said, "well pretty boy, maybe next year."

I went over to the woodbox and threw another log on the fire. Then I laid myself down on my straw bed near the fire and began to sleep.

Just then I heard a strange noise. Jumping up from my bed, I hurried to the window to see what was the matter. Could it be Santa Claus?

Then I turned around and a strange glow lit up the room. Opening my eyes real cute and wide, I saw a beautiful lady surrounded by the glowing light. She had a wand in her hand.

Looking at me, she smiled and said, "Hi kid!"

"Whaaa...whaaa, what are you?" I stuttered.

"I'm your fairy godmother, cuddly," she said.

"Oh, oh!" I said. "Fairy what?"

"Godmother stupid. I've come to offer you anything you want this Christmas eve...for free!" she said.

"But...but..."

"Out with it, brown eyes!" she said.

"I thought that was Santa Claus's job on Christmas?"

I said looking up at this gorgeous woman, with (what she had already noticed) my handsome brown eyes.

"Spare me the history, kid! Just take it from me. I'm

here to grant you a Christmas wish. So, what will it be handsome?"

"I don't know. I wish I could think of something?" I said worried that I might not get a Christmas wish if I stalled much longer. I was right.

"Look kid. Come up with something, huh? Then call me, OK? I gotta run, bye!"

And just like that she was gone!

"But wait pretty lady, please wait!" I cried .

Now I was angry, and that was a mistake. I hollered loudly. It woke up my three sisters and stepmother who came running into the room to see if I had croaked.

My stepmother hollered. "What's the matter with you? My sisters also hollered. "He woke us up and just when we had the prince cornered in our dream, the creep!"

My punishment, I was told, would be to stand in the corner on Christmas day, and maybe, just maybe I would get a piece of Christmas turkey, my stepmother said into my cute little deaf ear. Now I was really mad. I looked at the four of them, opened my mouth in anger and...for the first time in my cute little life I realized how big they were.

Still, I mustered enough courage to blurt out. "I wish, I wish...I wish I was a hundred miles from here!"

And poof! I found myself in the cold tundra just outside of Assumption, Alberta.

Then all of a sudden I woke up in a cold sweat, a handsome cold sweat. It was all a dream! Just a dream. I looked over at the Christmas tree and there were a bunch of presents not only addressed to my sisters but also to me!

My dad was smiling at me, my sisters were laughing and telling me to join them, my stepmother screamed, "Merry Christmas boy!"

Hey! Not all fairy tales end in complete bliss, you know.

Everyone was so happy. My handsome face was so happy. That morning we all gathered around the Christmas tree to open presents. My sisters hugged me and passed me a present.

My dad hugged me and passed me a new sleigh, my stepmother hugged me and passed me a turkey leg. The whole scene was a real huggie experience.

With all this hugging going on, we all failed to see the beautiful woman flying away from the window of our house...muttering to herself, "the kid's got a great imagination...kinda cute too. Hmmm! Naw, to young...MERRY CHRISTMAS KID...MERRY CHRISTMAS!"

*May the warm winds of heaven
blow softly on your house,
and may the Great Spirit
bless all who enter there.
Indian blessing*



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Season's Greetings from your Progressive Conservative Representatives

Mike Cardinal, M.L.A.

**Athabasca/Lac La Biche
#605 Legislative Annex
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 1E4
(403) 427-1846**

Pearl Calahasen, M.L.A.

**Lesser Slave Lake
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*One of the real joys of the Holiday Season
is the opportunity to say Thank You and to
wish you the very best for the New Year*



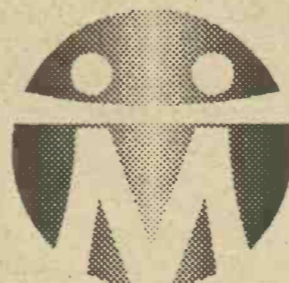
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Season's Greetings

*The Board of Directors, Executive and
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like to take this opportunity to wish
all Settlement members, friends, and
relatives a very Merry Christmas and
a happy and prosperous 1990.*



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A Fireside Christmas

A stranger in the night . . .

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By Rocky Woodward
Windspeaker Correspondent

It was Christmas eve. The flickering from the kerosene lamp on the wooden table casted ghostly shadows that danced up and down along the cabin wall.

A teapot on a pot-bellied stove bubbled gently. The fire inside the stove crackled and a small red-hot cinder shot out on the stove opening slowly burning out on the cabin's dirt floor.

George Spencer sat at his table sipping on a hot cup of tea he had prepared for himself. George was a trapper. For almost 50 years he trapped in this area, 30 kilometers from the nearest town.

George was known as a loner, usually only going to town to stock up on supplies he needed on his trapline. It was the way he wanted it, living alone and being left alone.

Christmas, to George, was simply just another day. His philosophy was that animals didn't take holidays, they are always out there, Christmas or not, and George, after all, was a trapper.

Still, George didn't see himself as a grumbling old man. He respected Christmas, and always did.

Taking a drink of tea, he peered out of his small cabin window. It was a cold night, at least 40 below. Looking outside, George could see right up to the timberline.

The moon was at its fullest and its light created a bluish glow on the snow and trees. The moonlight made the snow shimmer with thousands of golden little specks and the stars in

the midnight sky, reminded George of a beautiful Christmas card.

In the corner of his cabin George had placed a small Christmas tree he had cut earlier. He had decorated his tree with old Christmas cards and had used sewing thread to dangle acorns from the trees branches.

Now sipping his tea, he looked at his tree and smiled to himself. "This was not a bad Christmas at all," he chuckled.

Slowly, George got up

George would play the fiddle and everyone would gather around him and sing Christmas carols. They never had any children of their own, so memories of his wife and friends was something George always liked to reminisce about.

For some reason, this Christmas Eve George missed those good times even more.

Walking back to his chair by the table, George sat down and began to

himself, "Maybe it's not so good to be alone on Christmas Eve."

Just then, outside his dogs began to bark. George looked out his window but could see nothing. Still the dogs kept barking.

"Must be a fox or a wolf," George said out loud. Then just as sudden the dogs quit barking. There was a long moment of silence and suddenly there was a knock at George's cabin door.

"Huh!" George said in surprise.

The knocking persisted. "Who is it?" George said loudly, but no answer came.

Carefully, George walked to the door and opened it.

A man in winter dress and his early forties was standing there. George, still looking surprised, stared at the man. Before he could say anything, the stranger casually said, "May I come in from the cold?"

George was still having a time of it, trying to figure out who this person might be and what he was doing on his trapline on a cold night such as this.

George finally stuttered, "Yes, yes come on in."

"You must be frozen," George said as he opened the door wider.

"It is a cold night, however, a beautiful night," the stranger said walking into the cabin.

Closing the door, George said, "I don't understand. What are you doing out here? You're a long way from the highway."

"I came to visit

Con't page 26

Christmas, to George, was simply just another day. His philosophy was that animals didn't take holidays, they are always out there, Christmas or not and George, after all, was a trapper.

from his chair and walking over to his cabin wall. He reached up and took down a fiddle that was hanging.

Holding it in his hands, he caressed it gently. The fiddle brought back fond memories of another time, long ago.

A long time ago, George was once married. His wife Mary had died of cancer ten years ago. Looking back, George remembered the happy times they once shared together, like Christmas.

Every Christmas George and Mary would invite friends over and everyone would rejoice in the Christmas spirit.

play. While he played, he began to sing in a very low voice.

"Silent night, holy night," But suddenly he stopped.

For the first time in years, George was lonely. He put his fiddle down. Reaching back into his pants pocket, he took out a small, crumpled picture of his wife.

For a long moment he looked at it and then, with a tear in his eye, he put it back in his billfold and muttered to himself, "We sure had some good times together, didn't we."

Reaching for his cup of tea, George muttered to

Merry Christmas



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A Fireside Christmas

From pg. 25

came the stranger's simply reply.
"Visit me? I don't know you. Who are you?" asked George.

"I'm a friend," came the reply. "Some old-timers told me about you and where you were. Your cabin was not hard to find from the highway. I simply followed the path here," the stranger said.

"I've never seen you in my life. I have no family. I don't understand," George said, still surprised.

The stranger pointed to a chair and with a nod from George, he sat himself down.

"It's Christmas Eve, George. I've come to visit you, to keep you company, that's all."

"Well you must have a name. You have a name, don't you?" George asked, a little irritated by the stranger's nonchalant manner.

"Of course. My name is Gabriel," the stranger confessed.

"Gabriel? That's it? Just Gabriel," George asked feeling very confused.

"Yes, just Gabriel. I have many last names. None of them that I like, so it usually is Gabriel," smiled the stranger.

"Well that's the gall darndest thing I've ever heard," said George, looking at the stranger.

George then paused, shaking his head. "But if that's what you want, then just Gabriel, it will be. I'm not the kind of man to pry in another man's business," George said, still a little reluctantly.

"But why me? Why a social call on a night as cold as this?"

"It's Christmas Eve. No one should be alone on Christmas Eve," replied Gabriel.

When the stranger talked, George began to feel more comfortable about the man's visit. George noticed the man's eyes were kind and sincere, the way the man held himself comfortably, his calm and reassuring voice told George this man could be trusted.

"You have a very nice Christmas tree, George," said Gabriel with a pleased smile.

"Huh! Oh yeah, the tree. Well it wouldn't be the same without one, would it? Especially on Christmas eve," George said, while pouring his visitor a cup of tea.

"Thank you," the stranger said, then added "then you believe in Christmas, George?"

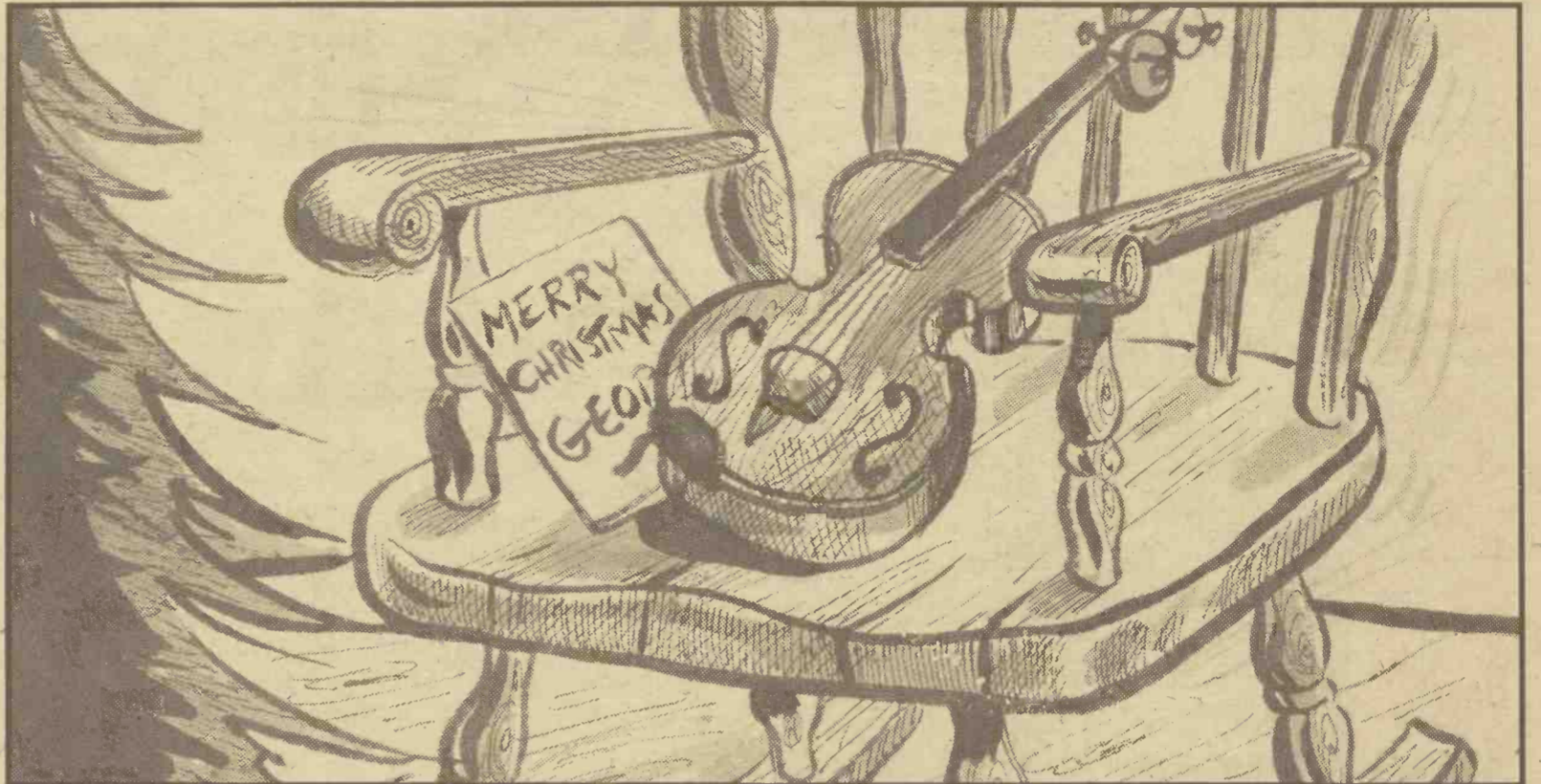
George looked at the stranger and replied "I suppose I do. I mean, it doesn't mean much to me anymore. Nothing real special. Life goes on. I have traps to check tomorrow. Nothing special."

"But Christmas is special, George. When was the last time you really enjoyed Christmas?" asked the stranger.

"Oh, I don't know. About ten years ago, when my wife was alive. We would have such good times. Turkey, presents, you know that stuff," George said, slipping back into memories from the past.

"Christmas is a time for sharing, like we are doing," the stranger said, interrupting George's thoughts.

"Christmas lives in all of us, like you George. You were kind enough to open your door to a complete



stranger. You offered me the warmth of your cabin and a hot cup of tea to warm myself with.

"Now you're sharing your thoughts with me. That's what Christmas is all about George. Friendship and sharing with others." The stranger paused, then said "You play the violin, George?"

"Yes," George replied, still thinking about what the stranger had said.

"Play me something," smiled Gabriel.

"What would you like to hear?" asked George.

"Oh, I don't know. How about Silent Night? You play it so well," smiled Gabriel.

"Now, how did you know that?" George asked.

"I heard you playing just as I came upon your cabin," Gabriel quickly answered.

"Play for me," he requested.

For some reason, George felt compelled to answer each request Gabriel asked of him.

Then for the first time George noticed every time Gabriel said something, it was as if his lips never moved. Yet, he wasn't afraid.

Instead, George felt at peace with himself, warm inside and giggled a little, not understanding why he wanted to please his visitor, nor why he felt so good.

George brought the fiddle up to his neck and with the bow and he began to play the stranger's request.

As George played, he felt he was floating away into a peaceful dream. He looked down at his fingers. He could not believe it. His fingers had never moved so smoothly, so fine over the strings of his fiddle before.

George continued to drift away. Suddenly he heard singing as if a thousand angels were joining in his music.

George looked up from his fiddle at Gabriel. His eyes fixed on Gabriel eyes. Gabriel was looking at George with the most gentle expression on his face.

"Play for me," Gabriel said.

George played and Gabriel watched.

"Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace."

George drifted away into the music. As if in a dream, he found himself surrounded by angels. From out of a glow of light, a woman came walking.

George could not believe his eyes when he saw that the woman was his wife Mary. He began to weep.

"Mary!" That was all George could say.

Holding her close, and with blurry eyes filled with tears, George saw the angels floating around her as they sang.

They were singing praises of the Lord and they were saying love and happiness and sang more of Christmas.

Then Gabriel came forward and took George's hand. George asked, "Where am I?"

"You're home, George," Gabriel answered, "With Mary and the angels in Heaven. You have finally come home, George."

The cabin was cold and the door was wide open when two men arrived. Inside the cabin they found George as if asleep on his bed. It was apparent that George had died from a heart attack while asleep.

Looking around the cabin, it was also apparent to the two men that George was not alone when he died.

On the table were two cups still half filled with tea.

"Some one was visiting him. Now who in heck would want to visit old George," said one of the men.

The second man lifted up George's fiddle from the table. As he did, he noticed a folded plain white card that had been hidden under George's fiddle.

Reading it, he said to his companion, "I don't know, but the guy brought George a card."

It just reads: "Merry Christmas George, Signed Gabriel."

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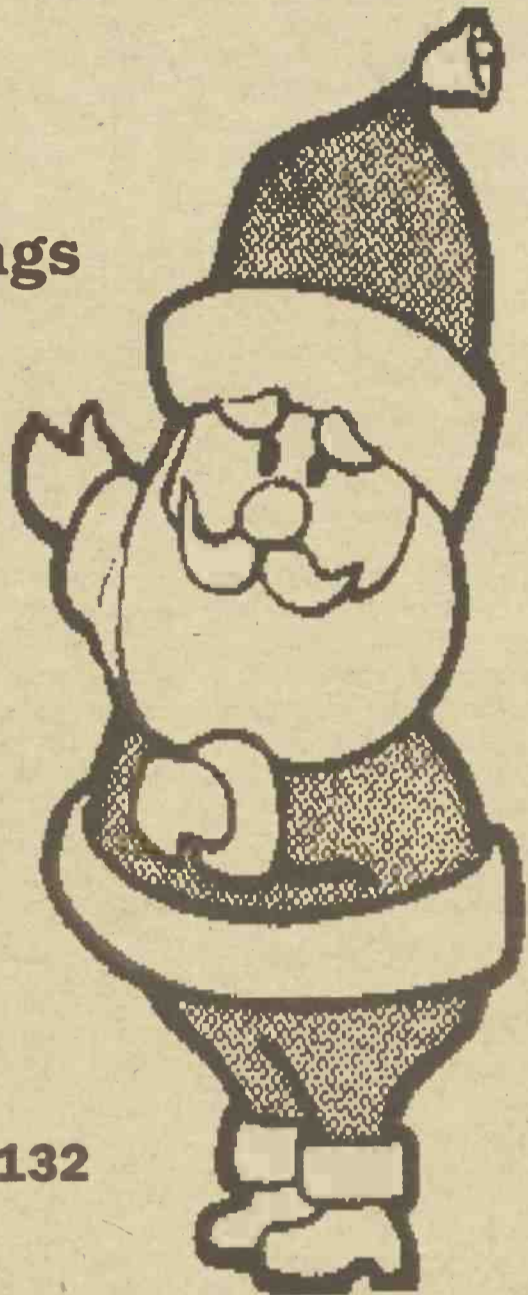
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MICHEL Indian Band #132

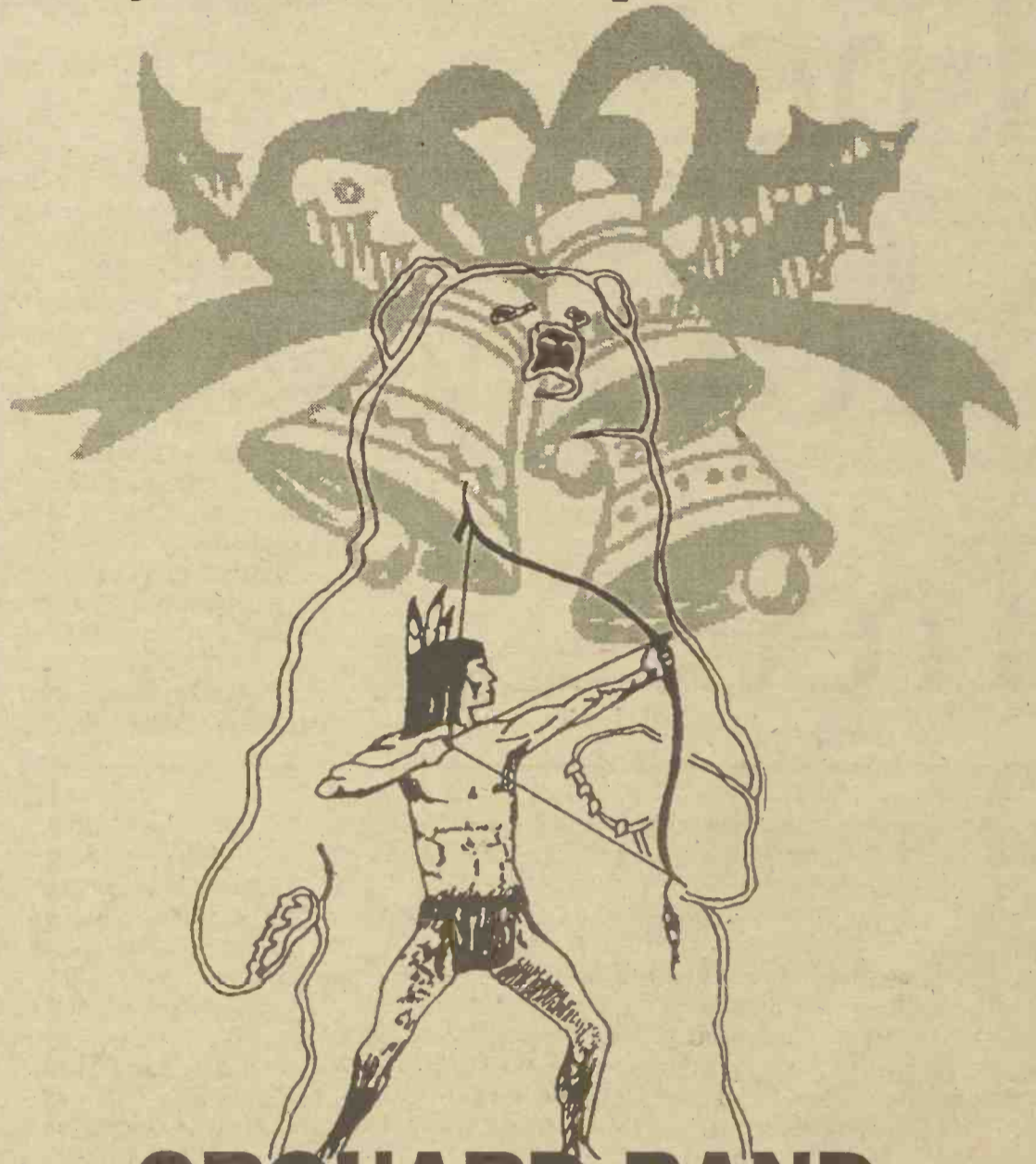
Season's Greetings

A special Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to the people of Michel Indian Band, all our friends and neighbors, and to those who seek peace and goodwill on Mother Earth.
From the Chiefs and Council Members of the Michel Indian Band #132.



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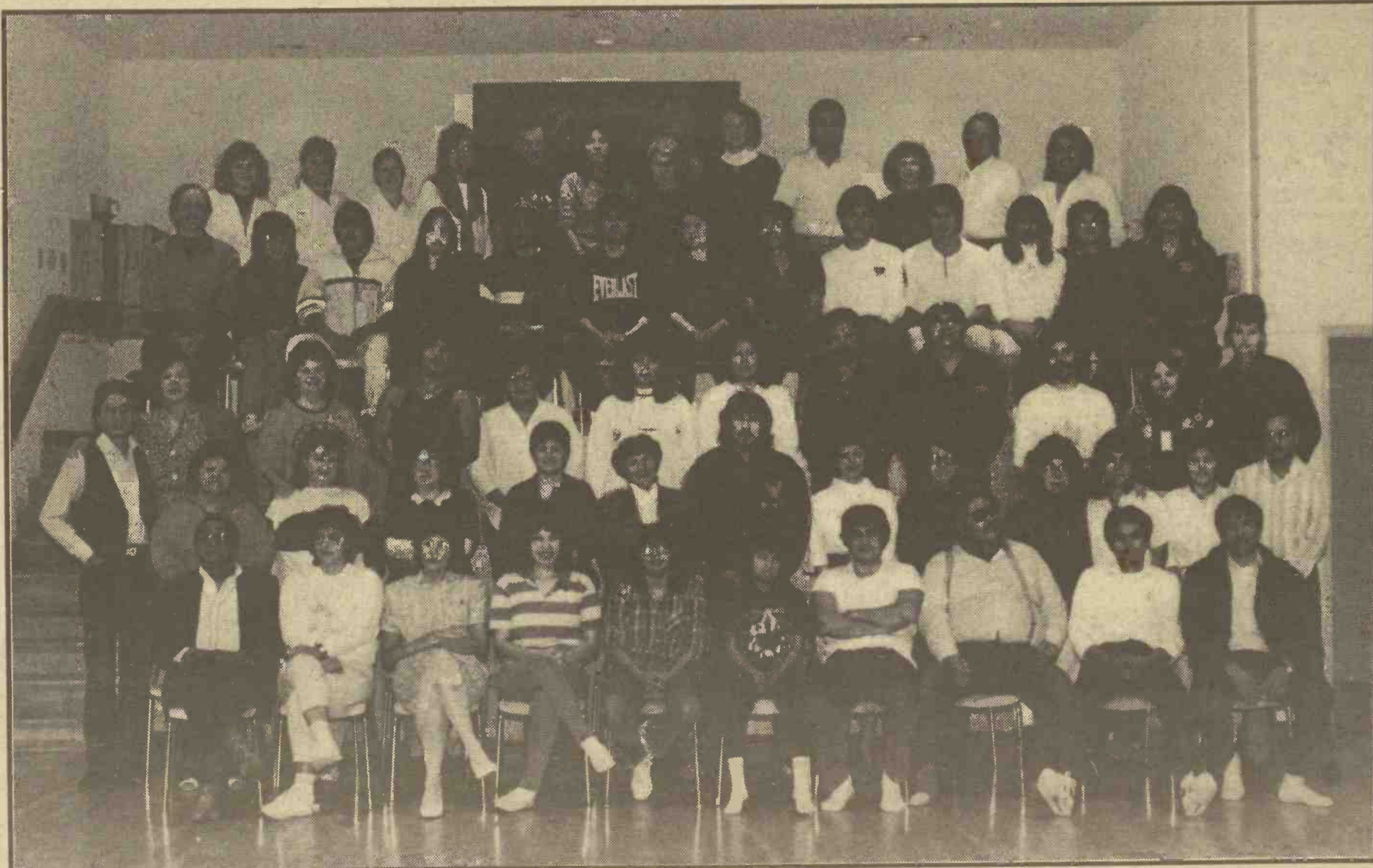


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FROM
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Board of Directors, Executive Directors and Staff
Trainees and Clients



A Fireside Christmas

The Money Tree...

By Gail Duiker
Windspeaker Correspondent

The old man had just asked for the part-time job of selling Christmas trees.

But the young employer didn't see the proud tilt of the once arrogant head.

"Old man, if you want the job it pays \$20 a day. The hours are three to ten p.m., Monday to Friday. This week we need the extra help. On Friday, you work till 5 p.m. You'll get your pay on that day."

He looked at the old man's battered clothes doubtfully.

"There ain't no drinking on the job. You want it, be here tomorrow at quarter to three, sharp."

The old man shrugged back his shoulders. "The

name's Mike. I don't ask for any handouts. I'll be here."

So the old man became a Christmas tree salesman. The hours seem long to him and the wind sometimes cut into the old bones.

His supper break was taken perched on a stack of car tires. Here, he munched on half-frozen sandwiches and drank tepid tea from a flask.

Four o'clock, weekdays, the children flocked home. They were like noisy, multi-colored birds but Mike enjoyed their chatter.

He smiled today. It had been a long while in between smiles.

One little fellow, like a lone bird walked up behind the other children. His hands were mittenless, red and chafed in the cold. Then at the corner, across from the tree lot, the boy entered a decrepit yellow house. Tattered plastic flapped from the windows of the house.

Across at the tree lot, Mike flinched. He wanted to be strong. He didn't want to notice things like that but he did.

Mike tried to dismiss the boy from his mind. The next few days were busy at the tree lot.

But there were times he noticed the boy. Sometimes, he stood across the street gazing at the trees with wistful eyes.

"Aw Heck, Darn it all!" Mike said to himself. "It isn't my responsibility. I'll be moving on in a couple of days. No use getting upset over a sad-eyed kid."

Finally, Friday arrived, pay day. Mike was looking forward to his check and the bottle it would buy.

"A person can buy peace, forgetfulness for a few hours, he thought. What use was it worrying about some kid that wasn't even his?"

Mike was bending over a stack of trees when he felt a small tug at this coat

sleeve.

"Say, mister, how much for this tree?" It was the boy and he was pointing at one of the smaller trees in the lot.

Mike pretended to kick the snow off of his boot.

"It's at least five dollars son."

But he knew that it might as well have been a hundred dollars to the boy and he couldn't bring himself to look at the boy's face.

The idea occurred to him that maybe he could strike a deal with the boss. Yeah, maybe the boss could see it in his mind to give him one tree now and dock it off his pay later.

"I'll be right back told the boy and shuffled away to find his employer. But when he turned around the boy was gone.

At five o'clock, Mike collected his pay. "Still want the tree, Mike?" His young boss asked.

"Hell, no. What am I going to do with a tree?" Mike replied, leaving the young man scratching his head. "But you asked ..." said the young man, puzzled.

Back in his spartan room, Mike packed all of his worldly goods into a time-worn sachel.

Fifteen Christmas seasons had found him on the road. He didn't want to think of Christmas nor the fire that had taken his family fifteen years back.

Now, he didn't want to think of the boy and his tiny, wind broken hands.

At his land lady's door, he threw the key in her mail box. Now he was free to go wherever the wind would take him.

As he walked downtown, one of the store windows caught his eye. He turned away quickly when he spotted the ugly pink tree.

"Geez, what an ugly tree!" No sooner had he thought that, the very thing he'd been trying not to think about, popped into his head.

Within minutes, he found himself in the store. The teller rung up a box of clothes, pins, a scarf, hat and mittens.

Across the many blocks to the tree lot, Mike's feet almost flew. "I'll take that tree now!" he said to his boss, smiling broadly.

"Geez, Mike, make up your mind. First you pay for it and don't want it! Now, you're back and want it. I sold that one just large trees left now."

"Take that one over there. I'll charge you the same. Be packing up soon. Merry Christmas!"

Mike stood in front of the yellow house. Under the light of the street lamp, Mike pinned twenty one-dollar bills onto the tree branches.

Then he draped the scarf and mittens on the tree.

With one raised hand, he held up the hat. Like the coat of David, it had numerous colors. He placed the hat on to the crown of the tree.

The lady who answered the door never knew what to make of the old man. She didn't know how to react when he handed her the tree.

From its boughs, the dollar bills dangled ridiculously. Draped around it were the scarfs and mittens.

The boy stood behind his mother. He didn't notice the money. With one small chapped hand, he reached up and touched the mittens.

But the old man was down the block already. He didn't see the boy try on the mittens. Ahead, loomed the highway and somewhere, another town.

The wind began to pick up, blowing bits of snow against the faded red plaid jacket.

But the old man struck out his thumb. He didn't feel the winds cutting bite.

For deep within him, he couldn't deny, the warmth that was spreading from his heart.



Bill MacKay, Windspeaker

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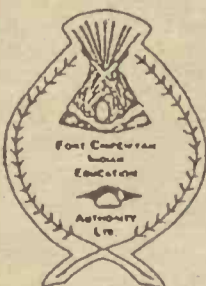
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★ *A Fireside Christmas* ★



Bill MacKay, Windspeake

An unexpected Christmas...

By Leta McNaughton
Windspeaker Staff Writer

In memory of old Joe Primo.

The whole gang was at the rink.

There were six of them, all of whom were Native except for one, Jack. They lived in a little southern Alberta town where mostly Natives lived.

There was George, the self-appointed leader;

Jack, who thought he knew almost everything;

Joe, who was constantly talking about Batman;

David, who everyone picked on; and the two girls — Jackie and Lisa — who secretly knew they were the real leaders of the group.

Jackie was the older of

the two and was always making suggestions to Lisa, the youngest in the group.

One day, Jackie and Lisa walked downtown to go Christmas shopping.

They went into the different department stores in the mall, eating at almost every fast food joint.

They were almost ready to go home when they saw an old Indian man sitting on a bench.

"I bet he's an Elder," said Lisa right away.

"Yeah, probably," Jackie said. "Don't stare!"

"Boy he sure looks lonely."

"Yeah he does. Are you ready to go home?"

Lisa hesitated then said, "yeah. Let's go see how the boys are doing first."

So they left the mall and

went to the skating rink where the boys had been playing a hockey game. When they got there, the boys were arguing.

"David yer such a wimp." It was Jack, yelling the loudest again.

"Stop picking on him," said George. "It wasn't his fault."

"But he ain't on your team man! If Joe scored a point for our team I bet ya wouldn't be sayin' that!"

Joe was laughing. Everyone just looked at him and he shut up right away. Joe was always in his own world. No one ever really knew what he was talking about.

"But it was just a fluke," David was pleading. "It could of happened to any-

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May the hope that was born that silent, holy night remain in your heart throughout the year.



 **Edmonton
Catholic
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Edmonton Catholic Schools close for the holiday season at 12:15 p.m. on December 22, 1989 and re-open on January 8, 1990 (regular time).

A Fireside Christmas

From pg. 29

one." He was looking at all their faces for reassurance.
 "Man, I oughta bust yer head open."
 Then Jackie cut in, "you guys can never finish a game like men. There's always got to be a fight."
 They all decided to go home and meet the next day.
 "I bet Batman wouldn't of scored a goal for his own team," said Joe.
 "Shut Up!" everyone said.
 The next day, they all met at the skating rink. It was Christmas holidays so they had nothing really to do.
 The girls put on their skates first and were showing off by doing figure skating spins and little jumps.
 Lisa was laughing hysterically. Then Jackie started to laugh. The boys never new half the time what Lisa was laughing about, so they just ignored her, except for David.

He was always staring at her like she was insane. Lisa just glared at him.

"You know, yesterday at the mall we saw an Elder," said Lisa skating around the group. "He looked pretty lonely."

"So what?" said George.

"Well, haven't you ever thought of all those people out there who have no one at Christmas? I mean, can you imagine what it would be like without your brothers and sisters, parents and Moosum and Kookum there?"

"Well, now that you say it that way. No, not really," said George.

"Anyways, I was thinking last night that it would be kind of neat if we had Christmas dinner with someone who had no one."

Lisa was always being the good Samaritan. One time she had even gotten grounded for a week for giving two winos her address and saying they could come over anytime. Unfortunately they did at 4:00 a.m. in the morning. Lisa's mother was not impressed.

"I think that's a good idea," said Jackie.

"Now that's all really nice. But where would we get the money?" said George. He was always bringing the dismal reality to every situation. "We don't have jobs, or money. My allowance personally has been cut off."

"Fer what?" asked Jack.

"None of your business," replied George. "And Joe, yours has been cut off too for trying to staple a Batman cape on your cat."

Joe nodded solemnly. Everyone went silent trying to think of alternatives.

"We could collect bottles in the ditch," said David.

"That's a great idea," said George, "but there is two feet of snow in the ditch and unless you want to dig..."

"We could sell fifty-fifty tickets," said Joe.

"Bonehead! Ya need money to have a fifty-fifty draw," said Jack. "Sheesh!"

"How about singing or selling cookies," said Jackie.

They all agreed that was the best idea and started to divide themselves into who would sing and who would bake.

When they had decided, Jackie, Lisa and David would do the baking and Jack, George and Joe would do the

singing.

They all decided to go home and plan out exactly what they would sing and how many cookies they would need.

The next day, outside the mall were Jack, Joe and George. George was playing a guitar and Jack was singing, while Joe sat perfectly still with sunglasses on, holding a tin cup. They were quite good despite the fact that George couldn't sing and play at the same time. In fact, he couldn't even play and Jack couldn't sing either.

Joe was waiting for his big moment when he would fling off his coat and start singing the Batman theme while shaking his cup of change.

Back at Lisa's house, the three of them were having a flour fight and had only managed to bake five huge cookies.

When Jackie got home she went straight to her dad.

"Dad, do you know of anyone who would need a Christmas dinner?"

He said "yes. There are many people who need food, not just at Christmas, but all the time."

She smiled and asked who. Her dad thought for a moment then replied.

"There's an old fella I know who doesn't have anyone at Christmas. It's just himself, he doesn't even know where his family is. He's pretty poor, but very proud. But I'm sure he'd love company for dinner."

Jackie was very excited and ran to the phone to call Lisa.

"We have somebody!" she screamed.

At the end of the day they all met at Lisa's, since she only lived one block away from the mall, to calculate their earnings.

"Well," said George, "we have \$9.16 and would of had more if we didn't have to leave when Joe smacked a lady when he was jumping up to sing."

They all smiled.

"Well," said David, "from the five cookies we made, we have \$5! You can all thank my Moosum."

"Ya mean he bought them all?" asked Jack, incredulously.

"Yes," said David quietly. "My Moosum loves me." He was almost in tears.

"That doesn't matter," said Jackie. "We sold them,

didn't we?"

They put all their earnings in a jar and decided to do the same thing the next day. They had some hot chocolate, watched a video and went home.

"Guess what?" said George the next day.

"What?" they all asked.

"My mother said if we make \$40, she'll give us \$20!" They all cheered and started to work right away.

At the end of the day they had \$13.65 from singing and \$10 from cookies. (They decided not to have a flour fight.)

"That makes our grand total...\$37.81!" said Joe.

They all groaned.

"We don't have enough!"

"Hey we could take all our bottles at home to the Happy Mart," said David.

They all agreed to do that.

The next day, after bringing all their bottle money to Lisa's they found they had \$2.81 left over and decided to spend that on macaroons in order to make it an even \$40.

Then they got George's mom to "fork over" the \$20. She was glad to and kept telling George how proud she was of him while the rest of them sat snickering at his red face.

They then went to the Safeways that was downtown, pulling Lisa's sled. Once in there, they checked their list and bought a turkey, cranberry sauce, oranges, cake, jello, fruit and everything else they could think of.

When they were finished they had \$15.75 left.

"We could git a present," said Jack.

"But we don't know who to buy it for yet," said Jackie. They decided to wait for the next day to decide. Everyone went home.

When Jackie got home she went straight to her dad.

"Dad, do you know of anyone who would need a Christmas dinner?"

He said "yes. There are many people who need food, not just at Christmas, but all the time."

She smiled and asked who. Her dad thought for a moment then replied.

"There's an old fella I know who doesn't have anyone at Christmas. It's just himself, he doesn't even know where his family is. He's pretty poor, but very proud. But I'm sure he'd love company for dinner."

Jackie was very excited and ran to the phone to call Lisa.

"We have somebody!" she screamed.

"Stop screaming! Your going to break my eardrum," said Lisa. Then she said, "really who?"

"Well I don't know who he is, but my dad does."

They talked for a little while longer then hung up.

The girls met the guys at the skating rink the next morning. It was only two more days until Christmas. They told the boys about having someone to have the dinner with. Then they all ran to the mall to spend the \$15.75 on a present.

It was finally Christmas Eve. The kids piled into Jackie's dad's car with their turkey and food and the

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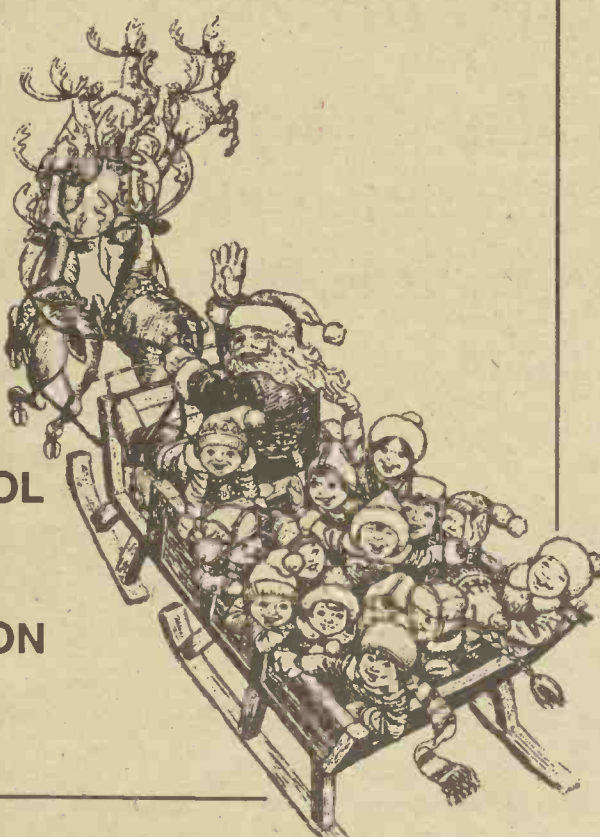
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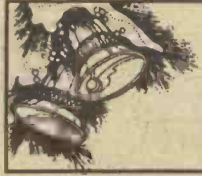
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A Fireside Christmas



From pg. 30

present.

The car pulled up in front of a little shabby house. The windows were dirty and covered with various blankets. The little fence was flattened. They walked up to the door which had a big hole in the center.

"Boy, this guy sure must be poor," said David.

Everyone shushed him and waited for the door to open.

When it did, Jackie's and Lisa's eyes went wide. It was the same old man they had seen in the mall.

His eyes went wide and started to sparkle. The kids all shouted "Merry Christmas" and walked in. They didn't even wait for the man to ask them in.

The house smelled of sweetgrass and wood. The t.v. was on and a cup of tea the old man was drinking was sitting on the table.

"Well what is this?" he asked laughing.

"Joe, these kids are going to spend the evening with you, if you don't mind," said Mr. Auger.

"Oh no, I don't mind at all. I was just watching a Christmas show on t.v.," the man said and hurried to shut it off.

"Kids," Mr. Auger said, "this is Joe Primo."

He said goodbye and left.

Joe was a small man with hardly any teeth. His

hair was short and grey. His face had so many wrinkles he looked like an apple head doll, and he had a big nose and twinkling eyes. The kids were all fascinated with him.

While Jack, Lisa and George made the supper, Joe, David and Jackie asked Joe every question they could think of.

Joe just laughed and started to tell them about himself.

"Well, let's see. I was born in 1901 on the little reserve in central Saskatchewan. I was the youngest of eight kids. There was only one girl in our family and she was the second youngest. She was so small, you couldn't help but want to protect her."

Joe lit a cigarette.

"We called her Half Moon. That's because she was only half the size of the rest of us and always bright like the moon."

"I remember her very well, as well as the rest of my brothers. She drowned when she was 15. I still miss her."

He took a long drag of his cigarette. "My brothers were all older than me. The oldest three joined the army."

"An officer told us later that they refused to be separated and died together when their camp was bombed."

"My brother, that was the fourth in line was my best friend. He looked af-

ter me and had patience. He taught me all about animals and the way they acted. Which ones were dangerous... like the badger! He died only two years ago."

"Anyway, my two brothers that just ahead of me married a couple of sisters from the neighboring reserve. I guess they are still happy. I haven't seen them both for about twenty years."

Joe, David and Jackie asked at the same time "why"

"Well, there was a fight about something and we never forgave each other," Joe gave a sad chuckle.

They asked him if he was ever married.

"No, I loved only one woman in my life and she was promised to someone else. I know she loved me too, but it doesn't matter now," he waved his hands like he was swatting a fly.

Joe wouldn't say anything more. He looked a little sad so the kids started telling all the jokes they could think of.

After about half-an-hour, supper was ready. Everything had been cooked before, so they didn't have to do much.

They ate until they were all groaning with agony and each of them saying they were going to burst. Joe pushed his chair away from the table, lit his half of a cigarette and sighed. He

then started to tell them a story.

"There was once this Indian princess. She was the most beautiful creature in the whole land. All the animals loved her and protected her. She had long raven black hair..."

He told stories for about an hour with the kids begging him to tell another as soon as he had finished one. Finally he said "no more! Your going to wear out my voice." But they could tell he was having a good time.

"Git the present!" yelled Jack.

Lisa sprang up and got the present from one of the bags. She handed it to him.

"What's this!" Joe asked surprised. "You already gave me all I could ask for."

He opened it and a tear came to his eye. Inside was an engraved picture that said 'Merry Christmas! Love Jack, George, David, Jackie, Joe and Lisa.' He gave a little chuckle as he looked at the picture.

In it were all six of them making faces and smiling. They were all crammed into a picture booth from the mall.

"We picked the best one," said David. "My brother works in the drug store and got it enlarged for us."

"It's the best looking bunch of kids I've ever

seen," said Joe. He got up and went down the hall.

He came back with a handful of little carvings.

"I carve these myself," he said as he handed one to each of the kids. There was a beaver, duck, woodpecker, rabbit, that he gave to the boys. To the girls, he gave two little carved women with clothes he had sewn.

"I've had these for years just waiting for the right owners."

They all thanked him and started to clean up.

They left all the food for

Joe although he argued against it. Jackie called her dad and they sat talking while they waited.

That night at Jackie's house they talked about the evening.

"I think we should do this every year," said George, in his adult voice.

They all agreed. They played games while they all waited for their parents to come.

As they left Jackie's house they wished each other a Merry Christmas and went home to wait for Santa.

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and a Great 1990*

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Season's Greetings

Chief Eddie Tallman, Council, Staff and Band Members would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous 1990. Happy New Year - may it be the best ever!

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A Fireside Christmas

Sometimes
miracles do happen
at Christmas...



Bill MacKay, Windspeaker

By Rocky Woodward
Windspeaker Correspondent

I don't recall if it was ever mentioned in any of the city's newspapers, but I do remember back in the mid-sixties, when prisoners at the Fort Saskatchewan Institution were involved in what could be classed as a "lock-up" riot on Christmas eve.

December 24 arrived like any other day in jail. The routine was the same. You wake up to the buzzer that tells you you have about 20 minutes to make your bed, wash and shave before you line up in front of your cell for the walk to the jail's dining hall.

This morning the small box fixed to the cell's concrete wall was playing Christmas carols. Pleasant enough to wake up to.

Outside snow flakes were slowly making their way to the ground and daylight was just appearing over the prison yard. It was the perfect Christmas morning if you were not looking at it from behind a prison window encased with wire mesh.

Jail is absolutely not the place to be at Christmas, especially if this was to be your first Christmas spent in jail.

I remember a young boy, only 16 years of age, who woke up to the sound of Christmas carols coming from the yellow box the day before Christmas.

His Christmas behind bars, so many years ago, is still with him today, and with no doubt, will remain with him forever.

Like many prisoners incarcerated at this time of year, this young boy would not receive any Christmas cards from home, and no friendly face would visit him.

It wasn't an extra punishment instituted by the prison. No, for him, like many other prisoners, he was either from a broken home, from a life filled with alcohol or an unwanted adopted child.

In fact, he was a forgotten child.

But forgotten children learn quickly how to survive, to flow within the boundaries of the harsher side of life, which made accepting the time this young boy had to serve somewhat easier for him.

He knew he had done wrong. He knew he had to pay back his debt to society for falling from the straight and narrow, and as each calendar day passed, slowly one by one, like many youth sent to prison — scared, abandoned and forgotten — he paid back his debt, ten-fold.

But miracles do happen in prison, maybe not big ones but small ones do take place.

It may be a friendly smile by a friendly guard or it may be a buddy informing you that lying on your bed and not coming out of your cell because you're filled with self-pity is, stupid man! You want to talk, then talk because lying there is crazy, man!"

Yes, miracles happen in jail.

On the day before Christmas this young prisoner remembers, two miracles happened for him.

The first was from a group of prisoners who would not allow Christmas to pass by those four grey walls.

They received permission, usually from the assistant warden, to decorate the prison chapel and to put on a Christmas concert for all the prisoners, guards and their wives.

It happened and this young lad saw a chance to escape. Escape that is, into the spirit of Christmas.

Picture Santa Claus on stage wearing a prison parka, black rubber boots, a black touque and a beard made from cotton.

Picture a prisoner laughing like crazy because he recognizes his friend behind the beard and saying: "Hey Santa! Only 14 months and a bit to go!"

Picture a group of prisoners on stage singing 'Jingle Bells', all of them out of key, totally destroying the song.

Then picture a young boy lost in the Christmas carols, the humor, the laughter, no bars, no lock up, no prison number, only the fondness of Christmas, and you will have witnessed a small miracle taken place.

The second miracle. The Salvation Army. Their card. "I don't know you but I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!"

With this most wonderful card and a small bag of Japanese oranges and Christmas candy, someone cared.

Another small miracle took place.

After the concert and after the television at 11 o'clock, it was time for lock up. Back to the reality of being confined to a cell in jail.

However, for this young teenager, on this Christmas Eve, night would be a lot easier. After all, he had the

Salvation Army card and fond memories of a Christmas concert to keep him company.

What happens next in "B" Block must of been brought on by loneliness. Being locked up at Christmas time, you don't need a whole lot of reasons to be angry in jail.

Suddenly from the top tier of the wing, a prisoner hollered, something like, "Merry Christmas."

Others joined in and soon it escalated into shouts, banging coffee mugs, and toilet paper ablaze with fire came shooting out of the one square opening in the cell door window, lighting up the main floor.

In less than 20 minutes and through the hazy wing, other uniforms (RCMP) joined the uniformed guards, who by this time were busy hosing down the smoldering toilet paper.

What went wrong? All prisoners incarcerated in B Block at that time, paid for their one moment of anger, in one way or another.

Some received 'hole time' (solitary confinement), others had to go up in front of the warden for one reason or another, and lock up was the order for Christmas day except for those prisoners needed to clean the debris scattered throughout the wing.

For many prisoners, it was a release. For this young prisoner, I write about, he doesn't know why it happened, only that he remembers it as vividly as if it took place only yesterday.

It took place over two decades ago, one Christmas Eve behind the walls of the Fort Saskatchewan Jail.

And through it all, the young prisoner today, remembering his first Christmas in jail, and the scary incident, accepts that even with the bad time in jail...there's still room for miracles to happen.

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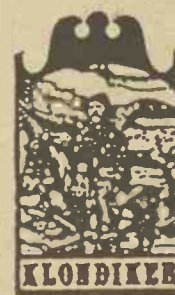
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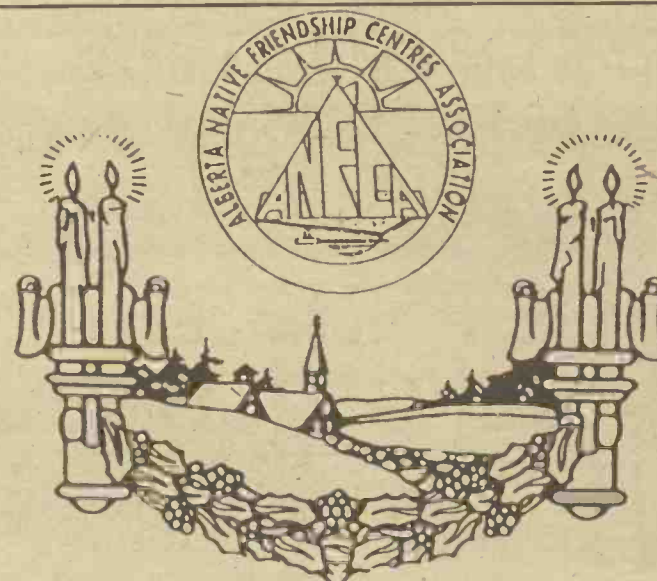
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A Fireside Christmas



By Kim McLain
Windspeaker Correspondent

Even though I am the biggest in the class, I am the smartest. Last time I went to school, I was 10 years old and in grade 5. That was two years ago.

Now I am 12 and in Grade 5 again. I might still be home but that school guy comes and picks me up and brings me here.

Teacher wants me to write about Christmas.

Funny, because me, my mom and my uncle were just sitting around smoking the other day talking about Christmas times.

But still I cannot write good, I will write our stories. Here it is.

To start off I must say who lives in my family because it is not like the families you see on TV. There are three of us.

My mom, Edna McBride, is really my auntie. But since she has raised me all my life I call her Mama. She is too old to be my real mom. I think she is 68 years old.

Every day, she does the same thing. In the morning, she makes fire for tea and soup. Then after she eats, she combs her hair and puts in a hair net.

All day she sits in her chair and talks to visitors. Many people visit her now that she is old. I understand most of the Cree talk but nobody taught me how to speak Chip.

She liked the phone but we do not have one because she does not like the bills. Her kids in the city get drunk and phoned her collect late, late at night.

Lots of nights, she plays bingo. She never watches TV. To me she is not only my mom, but the queen of the house.

My uncle Wayne Duck lives with us too. He is Mama's younger brother. Once when he was young he was going to be a priest but something happened to him and now he is strange.

He is quiet and washes his hands a lot. He wears the same pants everyday and they hang low on his hips. I picture him standing next to the wash basin, washing hands and looking up at the ceiling just thinking hard.

Usually there is a cigarette hanging from his lip, too. Most of the time he just drives Mama to town to play bingo. And he only watches Hockey Night in Canada. Oh, and his nickname is Fred.

So, anyway, us three are just sitting around smoking and talking. Principal says I can't smoke cigarettes but Mama lets me.

Most of the time, Mama's kids from the city come home. They all brings presents for Mama. When they have rich boyfriends Mama gets good presents.

One year she got an electronic frying pan. Mama uses the wood stove even though we have a electronic stove. She is scared to use it. People say the electronic stoves

Christmas at my house...



Bill MacKay, Windspeaker

start fires, so we just sit on it and put stuff in the oven. But Mama does use the electronic frying pan.

That same year she got a big thick blanket and a TV. Sometimes I think her kids try to see who can give Mama the most.

Mama likes the presents, but she doesn't like the drinking. Once everyone is together all of sudden these cases of beer and 26ers start appearing out of nowhere.

Things go good for awhile.

Auntie Hazel sings some songs on the guitar. Everyone likes her songs but me. I don't like the way she sings like her nose is plugged. But they say that is country and western, the old style.

When auntie Lucy gets half cut, she get generous. I always start asking her if I could get her a lighter or a blanket, anything.

Only I charge her anywhere from two-bits to a buck. By the end of the night, I'll make about three bucks.

My uncle Adophus is always crazy, but when he's drinking he's even crazier. He makes us all laugh. But I don't like it when he's trying to make me swear in Chip just so everyone in the house can have a good laugh.

And I don't know how he does it, every time I end up saying something dirty in Chip. And I don't know why all the adults think it is so funny. Anyway, Adophus is a real joker.

Even Fred gets happy even though he does not drink. For hours, everybody is happy to see each other again. All the cousins, all the aunties, all the uncles, and Mama.

But everytime, about three in the morning, somebody starts fighting somebody.

Once my cousin Birdy almost killed Fred with a frying pan. Mama seen Birdy raise the frying pan and grabbed her arm before she could swing.

Never have I seen an old lady move so fast as that time. Us kids watch the fights from under the kitchen table. The adults are so haywire they forget about us kids. It is like watching TV, only sometimes funnier.

But the next day, the adults all forget what happened the night before and are all nice again. Suddenly, they

remember the last and start right back where they left off.

The drinking only goes on for about three days. Then Christmas is over and everybody goes home.

But I don't think I'm mad. Our family has lots of special times.

And about two o'clock in the morning everybody starts crying and hugging each other. I think it is just drunk talk, but still it is nice.

Last Christmas, all the aunties put their money together and bought a VCR for Mama. Only me and Fred watch it though.

But auntie Lucy brought a bunch of videos about Christmas and us kids watched them. The movies were about Santa Claus and kids and times that were so happy that it hurt. The shows were nothing like the ones Vincent McDermott shows every weekend at his house.

Mama and my cousin Raymond Duck Head was born on December 26. She says that was a good Christmas. But I don't know because that was before I was born.

I remember that Christmas when Mama pulled that calf out of old Betsy the Cow. Me, Mama and Fred were in the barn with Betsy for house.

Finally, after Mama couldn't stand to hear Betsy cry no more she just dug in there and pulled the calf out. Fred had to help her too.

That calf was all bony and wet. After that, Mama fried up something that came out of the calf. It grossed me out, but it tasted sweet.

Once my uncle Adpohus cooked bull's balls. He said it was a delicacy. But that isn't a Christmas story so I will go on.

Mama says in the old days people would drive team and horses around the reserve and visit each other. And everybody would share their food and there would be a big feast.

I think it was a special time. I can picture the horse's breath and the sound of them grunting when they trotted. I can imagine I can hear the bells on them too. You probably could of heard people talking and laughing for miles. Snow does that.

Sometimes when I'm setting snares I stop and just listen. Everything is quiet. I can hear a dog bark from Fred Good String's house a mile and a half away.

But now everybody drives cars or trucks. And nobody shares their food. Still some people come to our house and just walk in and go straight for the bannock drawer. But it's not the same as what Mama remembers.

One Christmas, me and my cousin Sammy cooked a Christmas breakfast since we didn't buy anybody any presents. We stayed up til four o'clock, then we started to cook breakfast. We fried eggs, fried bacon, made toast, made tea.

Sammy cracked an egg open and dropped it into the frying pan from about two feet high. Grease splashed and hit my arm. I never swore so much in all my life.

Anyway, we fell asleep waiting for everybody to get up. Next thing me and Sammy knew, it was lunchtime. Turns out the eggs were too cold and rubbery to eat by the time everybody woke up. But I guess the toast and the bacon was okay.

Anyway, Mama say the reason we have Christmas is because of Jesus' birthday. She said we should be more like him, ten feet tall. Don't ask me why she thinks Jesus is ten feet tall. I think the bible losses some meaning in them Chipewyan bible books the priests wrote.

Oh, one more thing. Here is a Christmas joke. What do you call a Chipewyan priest? A chipmonk. I made that joke up myself.

Anyway, that's Christmas at my house.

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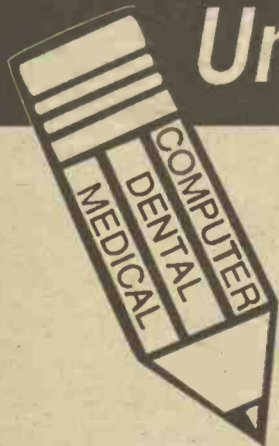
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A Fireside Christmas



The Richest Christmas . . .

By Gail Duiker
Windspeaker Correspondent

We didn't talk about buying gifts.

Working for other farmers, our father never spoke of the farm he had owned.

Our mother mentioned it at the supper table once. Father's pained expression never allowed her to bring up the subject again.

However, we had plenty of imagination. Isolation from the so-called pleasures of civilization develops this ability.

It also helps when you have no electricity. True, we had heard about television from the farmer. It, though, was so far away from our simple existence — we doubted its reality.

My sister Melissa and I Kyla, were aged ten and eight respectively. We were the children of two strangely diverse parents.

From our Cree mother we learned about the trickster. In contrast, our father taught us elegant Shakespearean sonnets. I guess he was proud that he, a farm boy, had managed to get his Grade 12 diploma.

But he never brought up his education to belittle our mother. We, all knew family illness had prevented her from even achieving grade four.

There were times though when mother's real feelings would show through.

Sometimes, when Melissa and I did our correspondence lessons, we'd sense our mother's eyes on us.

We'd turn to catch a wistful expression on her

face. And if when doing our homework during the day we had difficulty, then we would wait for father.

These tedious times were broken up by the little plays Melissa and I put on. In addition, they broke the monotony of the long evening hours.

Christmas was nearly here. Only three short weeks away. So we children discussed the possibility of putting on a play. It was obvious that the play should be a Nativity scene.

Melissa being the oldest, thought she should be Mary. "My hair is longer, prettier," she said. She patted her mousey locks.

I thought she should be Joseph. "Joseph is taller, you're taller," I argued.

But just because she was bigger (much bigger), she won the argument.

So every night, behind the closed curtain of our bedroom, we practised. Then we realized we were short of a cast of characters.

There would be no play if we both stared at baby Jesus adoringly. Incidentally, baby Jesus was being played by our cat Sylvester.

We hoped our parents wouldn't recognize him with a bonnet on. To fix the problem of a cast shortage, I would narrate the play too.

As Melissa and I discussed Christmas, a bigger problem surfaced. What would we give our parents for Christmas? Simple things were the best so we decided we would make something to suit both of our parents. Our mother liked flow-

ers and pretty things. But there were no flowers to be had in winter. Finally Melissa suggested a Christmas wreath. Willow branches were thick just behind the house.

"Your job," Melissa dictated, "is to make the berries out of bannock dough. You can sew them on a string."

"What are we going to make father?" I asked, changing the subject. I hoped perhaps I would be able to help in something more challenging.

"I don't know," Melissa said honestly.

I, myself, hoped we could get him a new book of Mark Twain. Every night lately he'd been reading excerpts out of the old battered green book.

But we had no money and it was miles and miles

I, myself, hoped we could get him a new book of Mark Twain. Every night lately he'd been reading excerpts out of the old battered green book.

But we had no money and it was miles and miles to the store.

to the store.

Last night when he read, Huckleberry Finn caught my imagination. I could imagine our father sailing down the river. Barefoot and a straw hat on his head, my father would have been grand.

Suddenly, the thought hit me. We could make our father a straw hat. He really liked Huck Finn!

When I told Melissa about my idea she laughed right in my face.

"Why that would take forever; It's a stupid idea. Especially, when we have all those willows round back," she smiled brilliantly.

"Why don't we make him a willow hat?" I nodded. I wanted her to see I knew things too.

"I once saw a willow basket at farmer Resley's place when we went to get eggs!"

So every day for the weeks after homework, we headed to the willow's thicket.

It didn't take Melissa long. She made a beautiful wreath of willow branches. This she hid under our bed.

Me, I hung around the kitchen whenever mother was making bannock. I asked for little bits of dough. These I rolled into little balls. When I had enough of them I would carefully sew them on to a string.

"What are you making?" our mother would ask.

"I'm going to make a necklace," I would say avoiding her eyes.

But while I was making progress Melissa was having difficulty with the willow hat. Matter-of-fact, it

Melissa's eyes widened, "Where is the rest of them? Is this all you have?"

I looked at my toes. "I got hungry, they made a good snack!"

Melissa sighed deeply and tied on the berries.

"It's beautiful," I exclaimed, watching her tie the big red ribbon on.

"Greedy Guts!" she said as she blew out the candle. Darkness spread across the room. Guilt enveloped me for eating those darn bannock balls.

On Christmas morning, we arose to the sounds of the wind blowing. But it didn't matter. There was a warm feeling in the house.

We had hot chocolate and one mandarin orange each.

I thought father would excuse us from that glob of oatmeal because it was Christmas.

It was obvious that Melissa and I needed some motivation.

"We'll open our presents after breakfast," father said.

"Will you receive ours first?" Melissa asked. Her eyes were shining.

When our father nodded, we both marched into our bedroom. We emerged carrying gifts as precious as if they were gifts from the Maggi.

"Oh my!" was all our mother could say. She touched the wreath. A big smile appeared on her face... "the dough balls!"

She hugged us both.

Our father in turn looked puzzled.

"Eh, this is nice" he commented. He twirled the hat around in his hand.

Then, he twirled it upside down. Finally, he let our hearty laugh. Well, I must say this is wonderful.

The truth of the matter is that he didn't know it was a hat. I could see that.

Finally, when Melissa said... "put it on," the truth dawned on him. "Eh, yes, I guess I'd better," he said, in a brave manner.

That hat looked so ridiculous that mother, Melissa and I all had to laugh.

"Well," father offered generously, "maybe, I'll just wear it at home."

Mother handed us our presents. Melissa and I each had a new frock.

Soft, like linen, each frock had once been stiff flour bags and we each had a new wool sweater. Mine was red like an apple. Melissa's sweater was a royal blue.

Finally, father went to get his presents. He held them both behind his back. First, he brought out the bat.

"I made this for you both. But what good is a bat without a ball?"

He brought out the other hand. "Here is the ball. Your mother sewed this out of rabbit skin."

Christmas day turned out to be a perfect day after all. The sun came out and a warm wind blew across the hills.

We even ventured out for a game of snow baseball. This was when we discovered that mother had made the ball with old rags.

A hat that wasn't like a hat, a ball that wasn't like a ball.

It seemed like that day should have been a disappointment for our family.

Now, I am older, I can usually afford to buy the trappings of a civilized Christmas.

But there is an unexplainable magic of that Christmas long ago.

It was Christmas.

When, through being poor, we became the richer.

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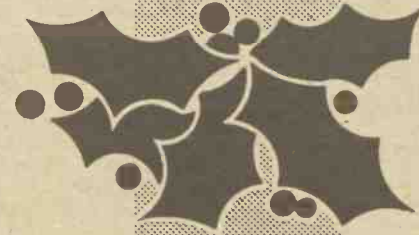
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A Fireside Christmas

Shining Eyes And The Grey Wolf



By Leta McNaughton
Windspeaker Staff Writer

"I will be back by nightfall," said Strong Wind. "But we are almost out of meat."

"Yes, you must go but take care. It looks like it will storm soon."

She packed half of the little bit of meat and dried berries they had left in a pouch for Strong Wind and brought him his snowshoes.

"Take care Shining Eyes. Keep the teepee shut tonight. There is enough wood to last the evening so you should be alright."

Strong Wind hugged his wife then left.

After Shining eyes had had a little to eat, she fed her baby. She didn't eat all of the food she had left because she had a feeling her husband would not return with food that night.

"I know she said he would be back but I don't feel it in my heart," she said to her baby. "Pray for your father Morning Star, I fear he will need it."

Shining Eyes went about her chores. She swept out the teepee and put more wood on the fire.

She looked outside at the sky. On one side there was clear blue sky and sunshine but on the other it was dark grey with large swirling clouds that looked as if they were slowly devouring the light blueness of the other side. But for the moment they were just dark and still.

Shining Eyes decided that while it was still sunny out she would try to hunt a rabbit or squirrel. She took one of her husband's tiny spears, and bundled Morning Star up in his moss bag.

She stepped outside and then started to laugh as she sunk up to her knees in snow. "Oh Morning Star, your mother sometimes forgets her head, and snowshoes!" She went back inside and put them on.

Shining Eyes and Morning Star sat by a rabbit hole to wait. Shining Eyes knew that there was a rabbit living there. "Okay my son, you must be very quiet or we will have no food tonight." Morning Star was very smart for his age and seemed to understand his mother's every word. He looked at his mother and smiled with his eyes bright and almost wise.

After sitting for about an hour the rabbit finally looked out. It had long white ears and big black eyes. Shining Eyes and Morning Star didn't move.

Then all of a sudden the rabbit jumped out. Shining Eyes sprang to her feet and threw the tiny spear. The rabbit tumbled and then laid still.

Shining Eyes was proud of herself but it always hurt her heart to have to kill an animal. She took the rabbit home to cook. "We will not go hungry tonight my son." Morning Star giggled.

That night the storm hit. Shining Eyes ate a little of the rabbit then fed Morning Star. She wasn't very hungry. The thought of Strong Wind out in the storm

put a chill in her bones.

They both sat, huddled in the warm teepee. Shining Eyes sewed on a pair of moccasins that were going to be a gift for Strong Wind.

Outside she could hear the wind howling. It shook the tent. Morning Star sat silently on the floor with his eyes wide. Neither of them made a sound.

The fire was low so Morning Star put more wood on it, then went back to her sewing.

Shining Eyes woke with a start. She and Morning Star had both fallen asleep. The fire was almost out. She quickly got it going again, then peeked outside the teepee.

The storm was still raging and Strong Wind still wasn't back. Then the howling came again. It was a long, lonely howl coming from the hills. Morning Star then woke up too and looked to his mother. There was fear in both their eyes.

Shining Eyes went back to her sewing. Neither of them could sleep. The howling stopped and they relaxed a bit.

They stayed up most the night, then fell asleep just as it was getting light out. The storm was still roaring outside.

Morning Star woke up first. He was hungry and gurgled to wake his mother. She immediately woke up.

Con't page 38

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A Fireside Christmas

From pg. 37

"Oh my son, you must be starved! You'll be fed in just a minute." She put more wood on the fire, then fed Morning Star.

"I don't know where your father is, but I'm sure he's safe," she said, as if to convince Morning Star, but more to convince herself. "He is strong and brave and will be home soon."

She began preparing breakfast for herself. She ate the rest of the berries and meat she had split with her husband but saved the rabbit.

She did her chores, but there wasn't really anything to do. She swept out the teepee again and went around it to see if the storm had caused any damage.

There was a small rip near the bottom of the teepee that she immediately sewed up. Then she went back inside to sew on the moccasins and wait.

Morning Star rolled around on the floor and gurgled to himself. Even though he was so young Shining Eyes felt safer with him than she would if she were by herself.

"Your going to be a great Warrior someday my son." He looked at her and smiled.

The day went on with the two of them keeping each other company. Morning Star played and Shining Eyes sewed. She was almost finished the moccasins and was pleased with how beautiful they were looking.

"Your father will love these, I know it."

They ate supper then Shining Eyes made them both go to sleep.

The waiting was too much for her.

Sometime in the middle of the night there was shuffling outside the teepee.

The storm was still raging and Strong Wind still wasn't back. Then the howling came again. It was a long lonely howl coming from the hills. Morning Star then woke up too and looked to his mother. There was fear in both their eyes.

Shining Eyes went back to her sewing. Neither of them could sleep. The howling stopped and they relaxed a bit.

They stayed up most the night then fell asleep just as it was getting light out. The storm was still roaring outside.

Shining Eyes woke up and looked to see a huge wolf head. It had big, wise, ice blue eyes. She should have been afraid but something in the wolf's eyes told her not to be.

The wolf entered the teepee. It was as big as a bear with a thick silver coat and Strong Wind on its back.

"Oh my!" she said. She helped Strong Wind off its back and to the fire.

"Are you hurt anywhere?"

"No my love. I'm just tired and hungry."

From the wolf's back, he lifted a deer. "This will feed us for the next week!"

Then Strong Wind began to tell of how he had got caught in the storm and

thought he would freeze to death. Then how the wolf had found him curled up with the dead deer.

"I thought he had come for the deer." But it didn't. The wolf had curled its body around Strong Wind to keep him warm and safe.

stone. The fire glistened through it and made dancing lights on the wall of the teepee. He gave it to Shining Eyes.

"For my beautiful, strong wife."

Her eyes shone as she took it. "Thank you. It's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen."

She then decided to give him the moccasins she had finished.

"I finished them while you were gone. I hope you like them."

He turned them over in his hand looking at them very carefully.

"I think they are the best moccasins I've ever seen. I will wear them with pride."

Shining Eyes was bursting with joy. She hugged Morning Star so hard he burped. They both laughed at him. Grey Wolf lay by the door half asleep.

Just as they were going to sleep, Shining Eyes thanked the Great Spirit for returning her husband safely. She held her crystal once more and looked at it in amazement.

Then she fell asleep.

"He saved my life," he said with warmth. "I call him Grey Wolf."

Shining Eyes quickly fed her husband the rabbit, then gave Grey Wolf some deer.

After they had eaten, Strong Wind pulled from under his cloak a shining

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Merry Christmas

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Chief Louis George,
Council, Staff and
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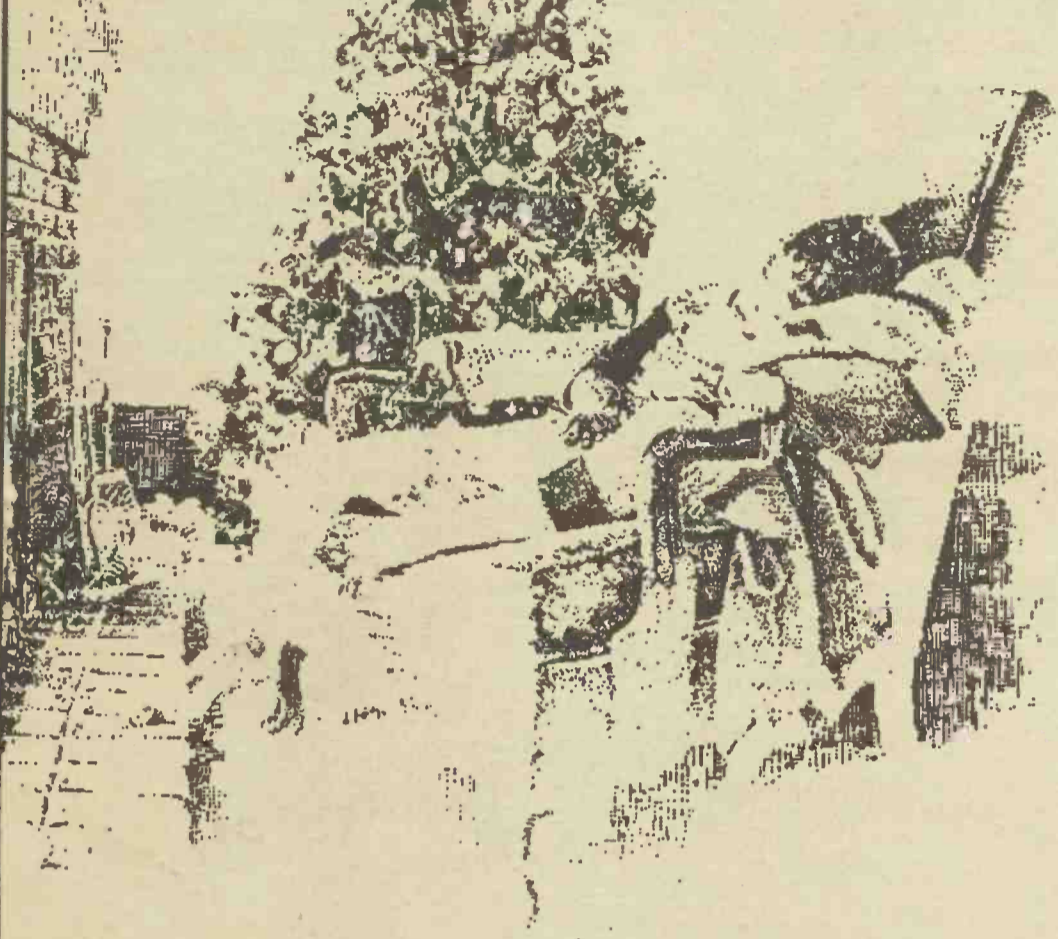
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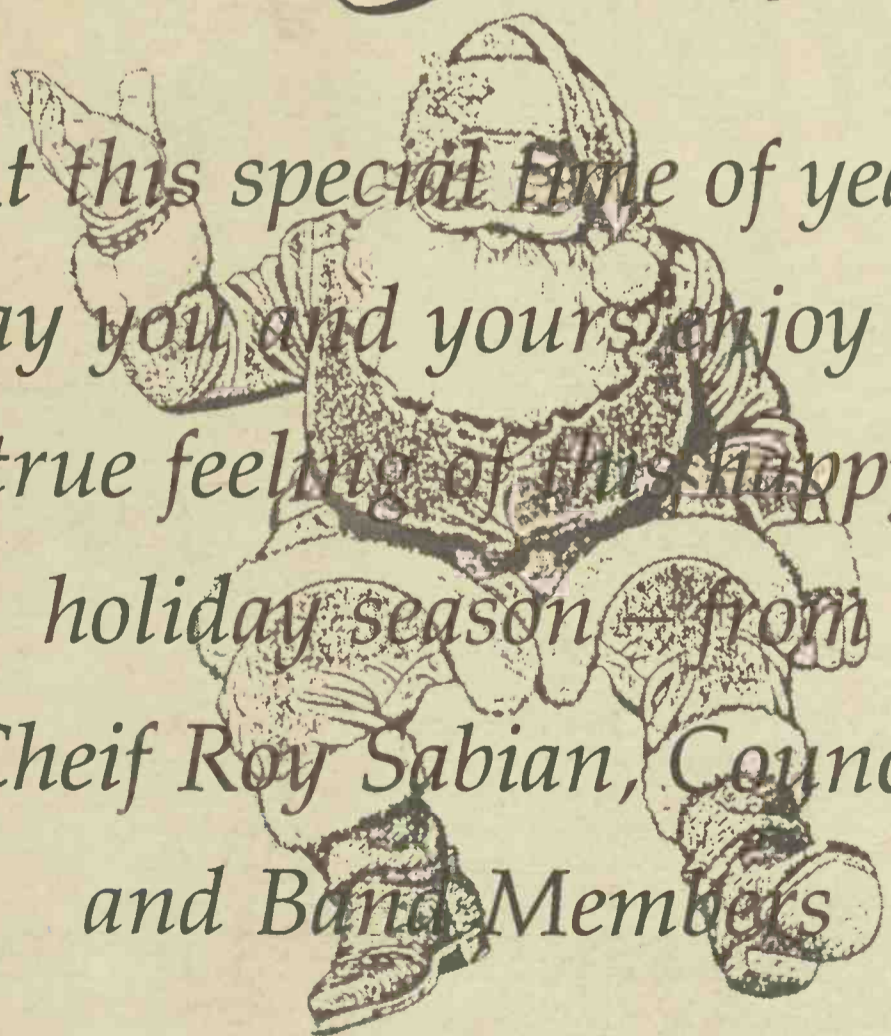


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Obituary

Paddle Prairie pioneer passes away

96 year-old Adolphus Ghostkeeper lived long life

By Josie Auger
Windspeaker Staff Writer

PADDLE PRAIRIE, ALTA

An early pioneer of the Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement, Adolphus Ghostkeeper, passed away in Peace River on Nov. 27, 1989 at the age of 96 years.

Family, friends and relatives all paid tribute to Mr. Ghostkeeper at a funeral service in Christ The King Roman Catholic Church in Paddle Prairie Nov. 30.

Mr. Ghostkeeper was pre-deceased by his two daughters Hazel Ghostkeeper and Anne House.

He is survived by his wife Elsie and daughters Ivy, Margaret, Mary, Yvonne, Myrtle and sons Al, Sully, Norman, Ralph, Don, Elmer, Joseph and Tom and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mr. Ghostkeeper, was born in Grouard, Alberta on July 1, 1893.

He had three children from a previous marriage.

He met his second wife, Elsie at the Grouard Mis-



Adolphus Ghostkeeper
sion and married shortly after.

In those early days, men would ask the girl's father or grandfather for a woman's hand in marriage.

The Ghostkeeper's lived on a farm seven miles from High Prairie and six children were born there.

From the spring of 1939, the Ghostkeeper's moved with a team of horses, some chickens, dogs, and cows, northward to Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement.

They were one of the first Metis families to come to the settlement.

When they arrived, three white men had settled in with Native women.

The men left the settlement with their Native

wives and children. One of those men was John Christien, whose wife had transferred their house over to the Ghostkeeper's.

All that year, Adolphus hunted moose and traded fresh meat for tea, flour and sugar.

"It was pretty rough making a living," says 77-year-old Elsie Ghostkeeper.

Mr. Ghostkeeper broke land for himself and other settlers. Adolphus and other settlers worked together to build the first school and church made of spruce logs.

"There was no money. We had to work together to start up," says his wife.

Mr. Ghostkeeper had a strong political mind, believing that land belonged to the Metis.

Part of his dream was realized when the Alberta Government agreed to transfer settlement lands over to Metis settlers through an agreement that was signed with the Federation of Metis Settlements.

Mr. Ghostkeeper provided for his family by growing a large garden of

vegetables and butchering his own beef while his wife Elsie worked hard caring for the house, garden and raising their 15 children.

In July 1988, the Ghostkeepers celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. They were honored by Pope John Paul, Premier Don Getty, Governor-General Jean Sauve and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.

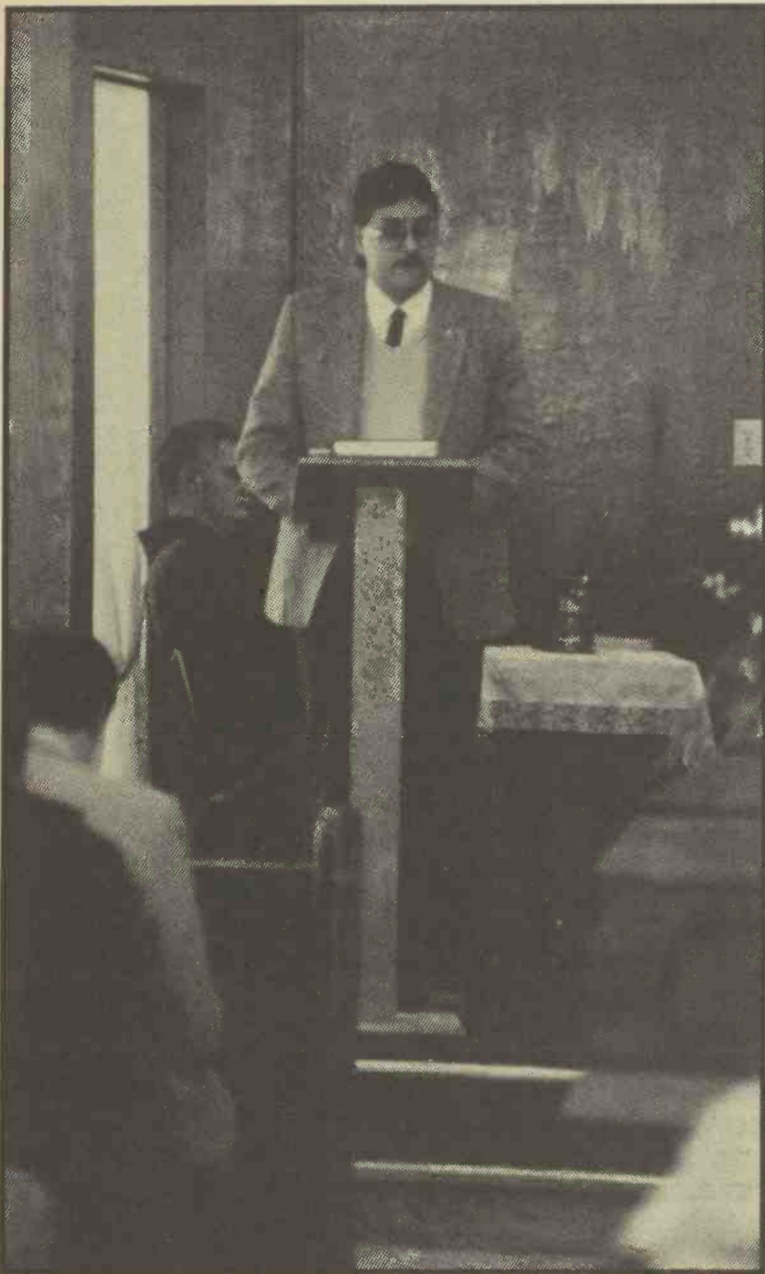
Every July 1st, Adolphus would bring together his family to help celebrate his birthday.

It will continue to be a family tradition to pay tribute to a great man who has left them with much wisdom and memories, say family members.

Mr. Ghostkeeper was a religious man who attended Church every Sunday.

He began singing in the church choir at the age of 12. His Cree and English hymns were also enjoyed by the Bishop.

In the earlier years he would hook up the team and wagon to load the family and make a trip to Eliske for an annual pilgrimage.



Tom Ghostkeeper, son of Adolphus Ghostkeeper, pays tribute to his father.

May the bright Star of Bethlehem Guide You along the Pathway of Hope and Love to a Deep and Abiding Peace.

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12:00 noon Poundmaker's Lodge (29 min.)
3:00 p.m. Incident at Restigouche
7:00 p.m. Cry of the Wild (88 min.)

Wednesday, Jan. 24
12:00 noon The Red Dress (28 min.)
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Community News

'Coffee always on' at Native Seniors' Drop-In Centre

By Heather Andrews
Windspeaker Correspondent

EDMONTON

A tiny house located at 11339-88 street in northeast Edmonton is a very busy place these days.

Since March, it has been the Native Seniors' Drop-in Centre.

"We have anywhere from 16 to 22 regular elders coming now, and the number is growing," says administrator Erin Perrault.

"A large number of seniors live in the area, so the location is perfect," she adds.

The Centre, which is a project operated by the Metis Women's Council, will be looking for bigger quarters next spring, but will be in the same area, says Perrault.

Coffee is always on at the centre. On a typical day, several folks will be found sitting in the living room, reminiscing about days gone by.

Meanwhile, in the kitchen, staff and guests are making bannock and tea.

Wednesdays are craft days. "Beadwork is pretty hard on the ladies eyes," Perrault notes, "but they do lots of beautiful crochet work and quilting."

Traditional crafts, such as a doll clothes made from moose hide, are also made. "Next year, we hope to get started early enough to make plenty of items and have a craft sale," adds Perrault.

Materials for crafts are desperately needed. Wool, any cloth materials, fur, and sewing supplies are all in short supply," the administrator laments.

Volunteers to help instruct some crafts would be most welcome too.

Seniors who can't walk over to the centre are picked up by staff.

Florence Giroux, who operates the Native Seniors Outreach Program out of the centre, is glad to



Windspeaker file photo

Rosalie Gelderman phones a cab for Florence Giroux

drive anyone needing the service. Giroux also visits the elders in their homes or in hospital, and takes them banking or shopping.

"There were a lot of folks pretty well confined to their homes," Giroux comments. "They couldn't get out on their own, and they were pretty lonely before they started coming here," she adds.

A third agency operating out of the little house is the Native Housing Registry. Frances Hegedus helps people who are moving into the city from rural areas find suitable accommodation. As well, she assists Edmontonians wishing to move to new locations within the city.

Last but not least, part-time employee Jackie Lemoine is the bookkeeper for all three projects, as well as being an active volunteer with the activities at the centre.

Funding is a problem, with the grant from FCSS to the Metis Women's Council never stretching quite far enough. "We could have so many more programmes with increased funding," Perrault laments.

One current fundraising venture is the sale of tickets for a beautiful hand-made quilt, currently being raffled off, featuring valuable second and third prizes as well.

For now, cards and crib-

bage on Tuesdays, crafts on Wednesdays, and occasional bingos are the usual events. Tea and bannock are made most days.

Special trips were arranged to attend Klondike Days last summer, and plans are being made to view Candy Cane Lane, and the Singing Christmas Tree in the next few weeks.

As well, a Christmas banquet with traditional potluck food will bring families together for a good meal on Dec. 12, and volunteers will be recognized.

Further information can be obtained by dropping in to the centre between 8:30 and 4:30 Monday to Friday, or by calling 471-5606

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The Child Welfare Amendment Act (1988), proclaimed September 1, 1989, established the Children's Advocate as a resource for children receiving child protection services, the Children's Advocate is appointed by the Lieutenant Governor and reports to the Minister of Family and Social Services. The office has a legislated mandate to safeguard the rights, interests and viewpoints of children receiving services when decisions are made. The Children's Advocate can also investigate complaints and concerns about individual children or the child welfare system as a whole; he is expected to provide advice and recommendations on such matters to the Minister and, by annual report, to the legislature.

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Competition No. SS89EM342-010-WDSP

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(Manager)
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Competition No. SS89EM341-019-WDSP

CHILDREN'S ADVOCATES

(Managers)
Northern/Southern Alberta
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CALGARY/EDMONTON - Seven individuals are required to provide case advocacy services to children across Alberta. Children Advocates report to the Director and investigate concerns, grievances, or complaints relating to the rights, interests and viewpoints of children who receive child protection services. A Children's Advocate must be able to listen to children and others, to problem solve, and to negotiate firmly and persistently, and above all must be genuine. Analytic ability and knowledge of the child welfare system and legislation, community services and resources for children, and child development are essential to the development and implementation of case advocacy strategies and action plans. In addition, strong organization and excellent verbal/written communication skills are required. An appreciation of and sensitivity to Native Culture, heritage and traditions is required. **QUALIFICATIONS:** University degree in a human services discipline plus considerable directly related experience. Management and advocacy experience preferred. Equivalencies considered. Travel and a valid Alberta driver's license required. Offices will be located in Edmonton and Calgary; please indicate location preference.

Competition No. SS89EM341-020-WDSP

Please send a separate resume/application quoting competition number for each position you are applying for.

Please send an application form or resume quoting competition number to:

Alberta Government Employment Office
4th Floor, Kensington Place
10011 - 109 Street, Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 3S8

U of A Native students mark Christmas with dinner

By Leta McNaughton
Windspeaker Staff Writer

EDMONTON

Aboriginal students at the University of Alberta held a Christmas potluck dinner on the last day of classes before Christmas break on Dec. 6.

The evening began with a prayer by Elder Maurice L'Hirondelle.

Then all present dug into a delicious meal of moose stew, moose ribs, casseroles, bannock, cabbage rolls, moose meat and macaroni.

Entertainment included a play put on by students Joe Redhead, Norman Caliou, Kathy McKinnon, Earle Luboucan,

Brad Janvier (narrator) and Rhonda Laboucan.

One part of the play gave everyone a laugh. Norman (Caliou) entered as a struggling University student with tattered clothes and no shoes saying, "I'm just a poor University student who's starved and cold."

Poetry readings were also recited by Stan Shank and Adrian Houle.

There was also a visit by a very "jolly" Santa who passed out treats to all the kids.

The Cree 101 class sang 'Jingle Bells' and 'Silent Night' in Cree.

There was also a gift exchange for the TYP (Transfer Year Program) students, and a draw for a food hamper.

Season's Greetings



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Merry Christmas & a Prosperous New Year



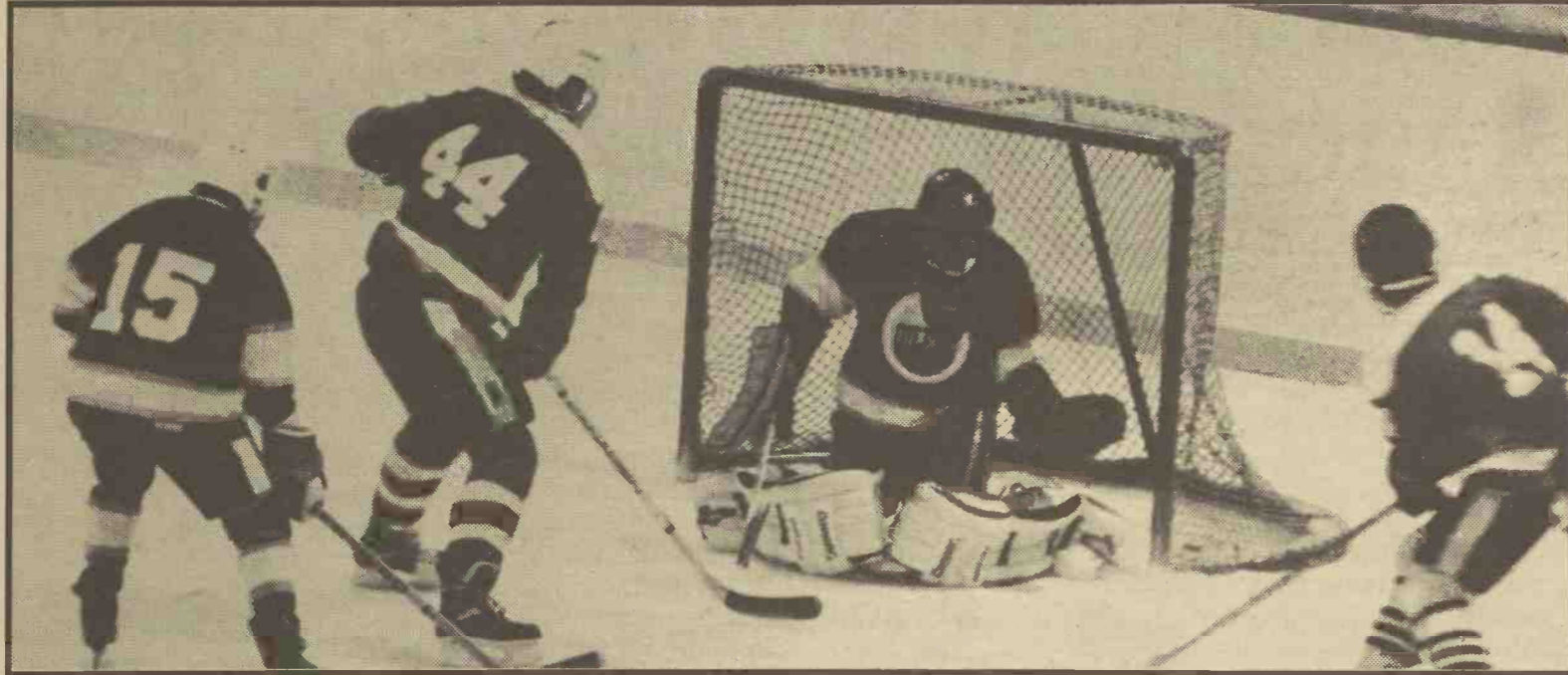
The Metis/Indian Town Alcohol Association (MITAA Centre) appreciate and support the community and area of High Prairie.

MITAA Detox Centre

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Sports



A big save by the goalie on the Hobbema Oilers as Hobbema went on to win the A side. Rocky Woodward, Windspeaker

Hobbema, Alexis win Indian Association hockey tourney

By Rocky Woodward
Windspeaker Correspondent

ENOCH, ALTA

Hockey and not politics were at the top of the Indian Association of Alberta's agenda as teams from across Alberta, met at the Enoch Reserve's Arena in a "Salute to Native Hockey Players" grand tournament, December 9-10.

According to IAA hockey coordinator for the tournament, Percy Potts, a tournament such as this was something he wanted to see happen for a long time.

"I wanted to see grassroots people come together, to get involved in a sports activity, and what better way than in a salute to native hockey players. I'm proud of the way everyone showed up to support the tournament," commented Potts.

Twelve teams in two tournament divisions offered a lot of excitement for the many spectators who came to watch them play over the two-day event.

In the "A" division, the Hobbema Oilers outshot the Alexis Arrows to win the division title and on the "B" side, The Alexis Braves defeated Sucker Creek to win the B division title.

Third place went to the Enoch Tomahawks and the Edmonton North Stars grabbed third place in the B division.

"A lot of credit must go to Robert Morin from Enoch. He set up the tournament format and without his knowledge of hockey, we would have had a problem," Potts said.

Because the tournament went so well, Potts is already thinking about a bigger and better hockey tournament.

"Right now I'm in the process of establishing a tournament for possibly sometime in January or February. I would like to include political organizations and native organizations such as Windspeaker.

"It's not official yet but yes I would like to see a classy tournament, with both a senior and junior division," Potts said.

Potts added that the Salute to Native Hockey players tournament was a big success.

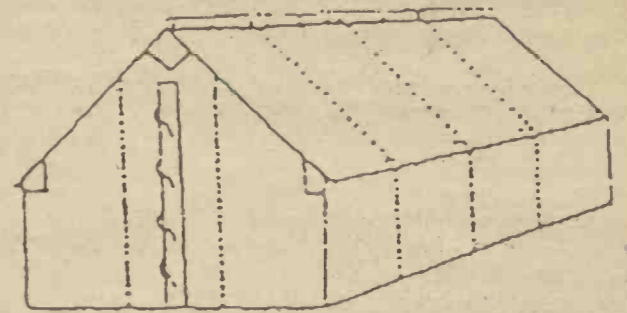
Although the IAA did not make money, they did break even.

"Breaking even is a sure sign the tournament was a success. And fun. You better believe everyone had fun," Potts said.

Asked if he had anything more to add to the tournament, Potts said, "I'd like to wish all the hockey players, referees and tournament workers who were involved with the tournament, a merry christmas and happy new year."



Checking out a call with the referee.



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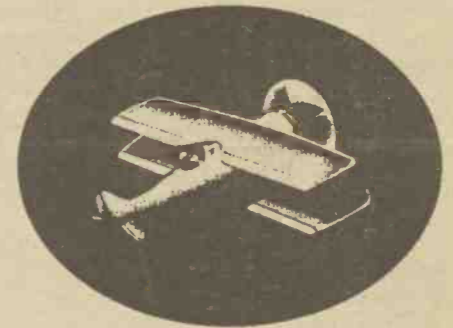
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Sports

Exciting boxing tourney in Lesser Slave Lake

Lesser Slave Lake: The big story up north this week is the boxing card on Dec. 17 in Slave Lake.

Up to eight clubs will hit the community to fight a local crop of fighters.

Coach Alex Courtorielle said his club has earned a good reputation since it began in 1984 as a program under the Slave Lake Friendship Centre.

Back then about nine kids joined. Now only two of the original group show up for the practices Mondays and Thursdays. The club is now 19 strong.

"We're at a disadvantage against other clubs," Courtorielle said, because most of the other provincial clubs have their own facilities and their fighters can practise seven days a week.

"We go to as many tourneys and fight cards as we can," the coach added. Some fighters have already competed this year.

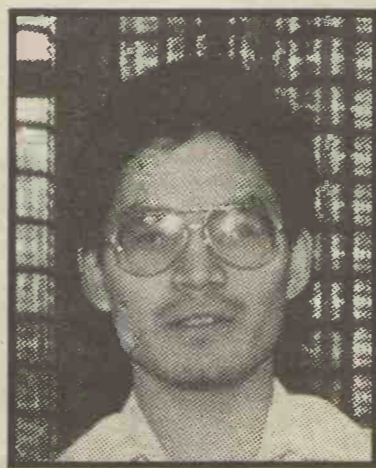
Three were sent to Edmonton at the Southside Legion, four to the Bronze Glove competition in Drayton Valley and three to the Silver Gloves tournament in Hobbema, five were sent to a card in Fort Saskatchewan.

Bronze Glove competitions are for fighters who have none to four fights under their belt. Silver Gloves are for fighters who have had at least ten fights. Cards are just tournaments hosted by clubs themselves, explained Courtorielle.

Golden gloves are "open country" — fighters do not need to have had any fights to compete. But "you can go there and fight with ten fights under your belt and fight someone who had 56 fights," Courtorielle says.

Ten Slave Lake guys will spar this Sunday. Five bucks will get you in the E.G. Walstrom School gym to see the entertainment. It will give residents a chance to see how their home boys are doing.

Kids mainly come to the club to box, but some want to



Sports Beat...

With John Holman

learn how to fight and take it out to the streets.

"We quickly eliminate that kind of talk," asserted the coach, a special constable with the Slave Lake RCMP. Boxing is a tough sport and those who stay love the sport. But they also love meeting good friends across the province, friends they come to respect in and outside the boxing ring, said Courtorielle.

Courtorielle used to box when he was younger but had to quit when he began work at a mill outside of the community, where he did ten years of shiftwork.

In 1984, he began the boxing club when he began work at the friendship centre as a director. He worked there for three-and-a-half years.

Another former boxer, Ronnie Thompson, helped him for a year. Other assistant coaches include Harvey Laboucan who began in 1986. Bob Olsen, who's son Paul just joined this year, began coaching last year. He's still learning, said Courtorielle.

He began training as an RCMP officer in Oct. 87 so he actually missed most of the '87-'88 boxing season. Laboucan took up all the responsibility.

Boxing season is from about Sept. to March unless

you're a champ at the provincial Golden Gloves, then you'll go on to the national championship.

Fighters Ricky Twinn (15) and Ronnie Ward (18) have been with the club since it began. Both are 125 pounds.

Twinn is "pretty quick" and a good defensive fighter. He jabs well and has good footwork but should work harder, Courtorielle says.

Ward, a hard-hitting fighter who wades in and out of the fights, has to work harder too. He has "good, quick left-right jabs," said Courtorielle.

By the way, if you want your sports happening to appear here, give me a call at (403) 455-2700. You can even give me the names of your favorite Indian or Metis athletes and we'll check them out!

Winnipeg: The all-Native hockey team, the Thunderbirds, have really shaped up this year — their second as a team, according to coach Wayne Babych.

Their abysmal record last year of one win and 47 losses in the Manitoba Junior Hockey League has improved this year with nine wins and 16 losses.

It was just a matter of gaining the experience, declared Babych. "Some didn't even know the stance at the face-off," he said.

A lot of these guys hadn't heard of a "pass" before, he added jokingly.

The team lacked the experience of back-checking, fore-checking and passing. Most of them are "excellent players" but didn't have the experience of working in a team setting against the high-calibre of competition.

Most of the players came from the small northern communities where all they did was play hockey. Ranging in age from 15 - 20 years old, the players had nothing to do since they came from economically depressed towns - no jobs - so they had no reason to go onto high school.

May your days be merry and bright.

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