Honour the Treaties tour launch

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

Please see story on page 11.
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Features

Firebrand Terrance Nelson elected southern Manitoba’s grand chief

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

Leader pleased government looking to root causes in deaths

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

Lubicon appeal six-month Penn West fracking protest ban

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

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

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

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

Windspeaker is published by the Aboriginal Multi-Media Society (AMMSA) Canada’s largest publisher of Aboriginal news and information.

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Flaherty will fail to deliver, again

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

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty is preparing the country for austerity, as evidenced in his comments on the upcoming budget, which will be tabled Feb. 11. The Assembly of First Nations is also preparing the ground for disappointment, sending out a bulletin in January discussing its advocacy in advance of the budget, having submitted its recommendations for investment to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance. The AFN has communicated that the federal government’s priorities are new fiscal arrangements and investments in education, skills and training, infrastructure, water, housing, preventing violence, policing, justice and healing programs. But very specifically, the chiefs are looking for some significant movement in addressing shortfalls in funding for First Nations schools and support for culturally-grounded education and language programming.

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

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

This is no small thing. The party has put a lot of weight in their support of the military, so cuts to their services and the recent mismanagement of veterans affairs is an immensely sensitive issue for the government, of course, because veterans and the military are so central to the Conservative brand, and because the government is so bent on portraying itself as the soldiers’ friend.” Still, the Conservatives seem prepared to knock this group about a bit now to grab the bigger prize in 2015. Because, let’s face it, the Conservatives have problems; a lot of problems

to clear up before Canadians go back to the polls.

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

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

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

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

"The time is now to invest in First Nations to build a stronger country for all of us," reads the AFN bulletin, and while we argue the time is long past, the government has so far "not moved in that direction, nor at times of austerity, the investment First Nations leaders want in education may be but a faint hope."

Year after year this same message is delivered to government and year after year the message falls on deaf ears. How many times have you been on this door? At the December 2013 Special Chiefs Assembly, chiefs unanimously decided to put children at the centre of their efforts. If that’s the case, then the chiefs better have ready to answer the inevitable “What now?”

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

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

Flaherty will fail to deliver, again

Native Americans are protesting a Michigan Republican official for offensive comments he made in an article in The New Yorker Magazine, "Detroit无油". This is the language for Detroit by The Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson, referring to the historical treatment of Native Americans at the hands of non-Natives of the past, said the financially-tumbled city should be turned into a reservation-style detention centre for the largely African American population. "What we’re gonna do is turn Detroit into an Indian reservation, where we herd all the indians into the dead zone, the area between the dead zone and the blanked in the corn."

On Jan. 27, the Native community in Michigan reacted by holding a Circle Dance outside the county courthouse. "What we’re trying to do is to move the responsibilities over to the real government..." said representatives of the civil rights organization the National Action Network founded by the Rev. Al Sharpton. "The comments that he made... are insensitive, they’re unprofessional and they are disrespectful," said Brian Moore in an article on MLive, a Michigan news website. "I’m a little confused by it. I think he was trying to relate an atrocity that happened a long time ago with Native people... and it sounded like he was trying to interpret that into what Detroit could be like.” Some protesters merely demanded an apology from Patterson, while others called for his resignation. What’s more, he wanted to kill the white city, anybody in Detroit, because he’s modeling after what they did on Indian reservations when they threw those blankets and poisoned corn; didn’t nothing but kill us," said Andrea Pierce, an Idle No More activist, on MLive. "We were hoping for an apology from L. Brooks but his refusal haunts this," he said. "At this point, L. Brooks has got to go."

A hashtag tweet about by the pro-indian group Ethical Oil has been deleted recent by many Aboriginal people and caused the group into damage-control mode. In its attempts to discredit singer/songwriter Neil Young’s public views on the environment and the tar sands, the pro-oil Conservatives launched its pro-oil. Young tweet the hashtag ifindianorangeman while sharing a story from the Sun News Network. Response was swift, with one tweet calling the hashtag contemptible... Young, who was speaking personally at a fundraiser and posted the tweet, which she described as careless. She said the hashtag was intended to describe Neil Young as being uninformed about Canadian oil. Although Young still identified as a vegan and a Native American, the Vancouver Observer, Achtman said "As sometimes happens with on-the-fly tweeting, the phrase could be taken out of context or misinterpreted, so it was deleted."

Nuu-chah-nulth territory on the west coast of Vancouver Island is being plagued by elk poaching so the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council and its 14 member nations, with some help from the BC Guide Outfitters Association and local businesses, have committed a $31,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person responsible for the illegal elk killings. It is one of the largest conservation rewards in Canadian history. The Roosevelt Elk population has just been reduced by 40% and the government is to harvest the elk... and the local communities are at risk. The Uchucklesaht First Nation has been fighting for many years to harvest elk for ceremonial purposes for our people and the poachers responsible for this slaughter ‘leave the meat in the bush to rot.”

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

Criticalism or praise?

E-mail us at: letters@amnsa.com

[tweets and ravels]
An Indian of a different colour

THE URBANE INDIAN
Drew Hayden Taylor

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

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

The reason I have broached this topic is the result of my recent trip to India. There, my whole perception of this skin tinted issue has been turned on its head. And quite severely. India, which is awash in a broad hue of people, has its own fixation with whitening more than just their teeth. And it's part of a national cosmetic industry. It seems there's a lot of money in decolourizing. During my sojourn, primarily along the eastern coast of the country -- Gujarat, Kerala and Goa -- I couldn't help but notice incentives and opportunities in the media and in the hotel room lobbies the virtues of a snowly complexion.

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

Men are not exempt. They are part of the white's rights' movement too. One commercial promised its moisturizer would make dark-skin 'shine lighter'. Another was called, simply, 'Fair and Handsome'. What more needed to be said? In some of the hotel bathrooms, right next to the complementary shampoo and conditioner, I found a face cream stating its virtues as a 'flawless lightening agent'. Meanwhile, I was trying to get a darker tan. So for enlightened and aesthetic reasons, I opted not to make use of the cream. Heavy forbid I come back from tropical India with a more pinker version of Canada. Things got worse. People in the spas here, when getting a facial, are routinely asked if they want bleaching with that. It also seems you can bleach your whole body here if you want, and fairly cheaply too. For a facial bleaching, practically pocket change. A measly thousand rupees. Your arms, a little more.

Storytellers can make a life-changing difference

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

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

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

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

I am not that. I am only an ordinary person. I am only someone who came to realize the nature of the gift Creator granted me with and began to use it. I am only someone fortunate enough to have had my eyes and ears open to heed the call to my future when it came. But I am also someone who would have still laid off to marshal the scope and the extent of that gift.

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

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

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

We are all storytellers. We are all capable of changing our own stories. But it takes the willingness and the courage to shine a light into the darkest corners to see what huddles there.

It takes a desire to want to free from a legacy of misery. It takes the belief that we were always meant for more than just tales of being survivors because we are more than that. As writers and storytellers that is the nature of the stories we need to be telling.

I had no idea how long I spoke. I only knew that when I finished to long sustained applause and many tears and hugs that I had told a story that had impact and resonance. People were changed. They left the room having reached the seeds of new stories. Paradise may have moved a little closer to being.
Firebrand Terrance Nelson elected southern Manitoba's grand chief

By David P. Ball
Windspoke Contributor

ST. JAMES, Man.

Outspoken American Indian Movement vice-chair Terrence Nelson has stunned observers with his election as grand chief of Manitoba's southern chiefs, representing more than half of the First Nations in the province with the highest concentration of aboriginal people in Canada. Nelson, who unsuccessfully campaigned against Thaddeus Ado in the Assembly of First Nations (AFN)'s most recent elections, was chosen to lead the Southern Chiefs Organization on a pledge to make it financially independent from Canada. "It always has been dogged by controversies since he was chief of Roseau River First Nation in an area represented by him, a fact, caused a flurry of consternation almost every time he speaks, whether for his widely denounced visit last year to Iran, or telling reporters in 2006 that the only way to "deal with white people" is through the "economic disruption -- or guns. "I had an idea I would make it," he told Windspoke. "But I didn't think it would be that done."

"There was enough frustration and anger amongst the chiefs to change a decision which was made in the arc, to my knowledge, of movement among the people. They want change, they want to do something. They're not prepared to sit by with a 60-95 per cent unemployment rate."

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

two votes.

He added that the Idle No More movement has been widely impugned with the status quo -- and that "either the chiefs are going to deliver, or people will take action economically themselves."

The head of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) -- another leader who has publicly criticized the government-funded AFN's moderate approach to the Conservatives -- expressed his enthusiasm to work with Nelson, particularly in his promise to "restructure financially" to back up participating First Nations. Nelson cited the success of similar initiatives by Westbank First Nation in B.C. and English River in Saskatchewan.

"I congratulate the Southern Chiefs Organization on a successful and well-organized election," said Manitoba Grand Chief Derek Nepinak in a statement the day of the election.

"I have begun the Terrence Nelson in his successful campaign and I look forward to seeing his approach to developing urban communities and economic development."

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

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

"The direction that the AFN is involved in right now -- trying to maintain some of its government funding -- is not a direction that can solve the problems we have with resource extraction in this country."

But Nelson insisted he would work constructively with any level of government and business. However, allegations of financial mismanagement and undermining hand governance at Roseau River continue to dog Nelson as he hopes to stay up to industry's expectations from a community at home and abroad in search of hundreds of millions in resource extraction.

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

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

Asked by Windspoke about the judge's ruling and ongoing allegations of mismanagement as chief, Nelson insisted "there was never any mishandled money."

"It has yet to be proven by any old anthropologists."

"The audit was done by his former colleague."

"I've been unfairly tarnished by a political smear because of his outspoken criticisms of Canada."

Nelson has faced some negative comments from protesters, saying "We're not going to be taken down for our vision."

"I think we need to have some constructive dialogue."

"I wonder if they believe the First Nations are going to continue living peacefully under 60-95 per cent unemployment. People are tired of it."

Oral tradition becoming a hard sell in the Canadian courts

By Barb Nawehaghob
Windspoke Contributor

TORONTO

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

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

Indigenous people face enormous obstacles using oral traditions in court to prove facts, owing to the basis of which is the huge divide between Aboriginal cultures, values, languages and norms, and the European worldview that is the foundation of Canada's court system.

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

The courts have been steadily placing standards and conditions on oral tradition, Williams said. In the Temagami case in the 1980s, Chief Gary Potts testified about the oral tradition of the community. The judge did not accept Potts' evidence, said Williams, for a number of reasons. Potts, who was in his early forties, was too young to be a custodian of oral tradition. His work was white. He didn't speak Ojibway fluently and there were older people available. He also testified that a court that "I know of in Canada set a series of qualifications on who can produce oral tradition evidence, and I'm surprised it's still a problem.

In the 1980s, the Benoit case, when it went to the court of appeal, "saddled new wrinkles to oral tradition testimony," Williams said. To be part of oral tradition, the information can't be transmitted privately, the court ruled.

"It has to be transmitted in a public manner because that way it can't be scrutinized," said Williams, presumably by mainstream experts like anthropologists.

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

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

"Make sure the knowledge gets passed on, Williams said, and it might be worth starting a tradition of public performance to do this. There is some knowledge, however, that is none of the court's business, for example, knowledge that belongs to secret societies and medicine societies."

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

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

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

"It's up to the things Williams learned from working with traditional chiefs, he told the audience, is their understanding that the relationship between First Nations and the Crown has three fundamental elements -- respect, trust and friendship.

Respect comes first, he said. It's a prerequisite. He thinks there ought to be standards of conduct for the Crown in dealing with cases where people are struggling to prevent their history and their traditions in front of a judge in a way that the judge can accept. The judge is already having problems crossing that bridge into the recking of former AFN head-turned-ool-company lobbyist Phil Fontaine in Western Canada.

"The judge Fontaine has a 'right' to speak and advocate for industry."

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

February, 2014
Leader pleased government looking to root causes in deaths
By Shari Narine
Windspreader Contributor

EDMONTON

Cheryl Whiskeyjack would like to be shocked by recently-released figures that 741 children or teens, who had been brought to the attention of child welfare services in Alberta, died between the Algoma and the Lakeland from 1999 to June 2013. "They're new numbers to the puzzle, but we've been working in this system for a while and whenever there's a death in care, especially when it effects our community, we always hear about it anyway, even if there's a publication ban," said Whiskeyjack, chair of the Standing Committee of Aboriginals and Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society. How many of these children are Aboriginal, she is not known. However, Aboriginal children presently account for 60 per cent of those in government care. According to figures from the provincial Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, four times as many Aboriginal children are being served by child intervention services compared to their non-Aboriginal counterparts; six times as many are in emergency care and eight times as many are in permanent care. Aboriginal children are also demonstrating diseases than non-Aboriginal children.

The death-figure released by the province refers to children who had a sibling or parent previously involved in the system (66); children whose files were not located (150); Village of First Nations (341); children who were involved in an ongoing investigation (101); children who were receiving the support of the provincial office (84); or children who were in legal care at some time (149). Of the 149 children legally living in provincial care, 94 had their ethnoculture recorded and 74 were Aboriginal.

The release of these overall figures is one of the first moves made by newly-appointed Human Services Minister Marnie S. Bhullar. It also addresses a concern that is to be discussed as a roundtable scheduled for the end of January: what information should be shared with the public regarding serious injuries and deaths in care and who is to make that decision. The roundtable was a commitment of the former Premier of Alberta, Ralph E. Notley's predecessor David Hancock, who now serves as deputy premier. Hancock turned down the push for a public inquiry, a move supported by Bhullar. "Experts tell me that what we don't know is worse than what we do know," he said. We need to accelerate action on recommendations that have been made before, he added.

A feature series jointly run by the Edmonton Journal and

Cheryl Whiskeyjack, executive director with Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, made at the Assembly of First Nations, Ottawa. Metatawabin said he was inspired to do the trek by the Cree walkers who completed a three-month walk last March called the Journey of Hope. They were travelling from their community in Quebec to Ottawa. Metatawabin said he wants to raise awareness that a year has gone by since the hunger strike and Idle No More protests and despite assurances from government he's been encouraged that the problems for First Nations people, nothing has changed. "A year went by and nothing really happened. There was no follow up or reports released or policy changes that came," he said. Ontario Regional Chief Stan Brandly has asked for the public's support of the walk by donating to the cause. "It is with great strength and commitment that these walkers are continuing their pledge to bring an awareness of the chronic underfunding in our communities for basic human needs such as clean water, proper housing and healthcare needs," said Brandly. "As leaders we feel their frustration in dealing with a government that doesn't listen to our concerns and with the widening poverty gap between mainstream society and the First Nations, as the time to listen to their words and prayers are with them on every step of their trek to Ottawa.

On Feb. 4, the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business will honour the 2014 inductee into the Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame, William MacLeod, former president and CEO of Cree Broadcasting, for his contributions to the development of the National Youth Aboriginal Entrepreneur of the Year Award will be presented to Savannah Olsen, owner of the Old Faithful Shop in Vancouver. This new award recognizes an up-and-coming Aboriginal young entrepreneur, and provides a $10,000 financial prize to the recipient. "We see recognition of our lifetime achievers and our outstanding youth as a vital part of building a prosperous future for Aboriginal peoples in Canada. I believe our gala provides a shining moment of optimism when we recognize their achievements," said Dr. Stephen Bird, Co-Chair of the Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame. "It provides us with an important opportunity to celebrate our entrepreneurial spirit," said JP Gladu, CCAB president and CEO.

Former national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Phil Fontaine, was heckled off a stage at the University of Winnipeg Jan. 22. He was scheduled to lecture on First Nations issues, but protesters booted him for taking a job with the TransCanada Pipeline in December. TransCanada Pipeline proposes building the Energy East project, a 4,500-kilometre pipeline that will carry 1.1-million barrels of crude oil per day from Alberta and Saskatchewan to refineries in Eastern Canada. It also owns the line that exploded in Southeast Michigan in 2010. Fontaine released a statement condemning the oil and gas industry, saying that people want clean energy, not oil sands and beauforts as Fontaine tried to deliver his speech, but organizers ended up cancelling the event. "How can you say yes to this, Phil?" one of the protesters shouted. "You're working for the Free Press. "How dare you sell us out to work for the energy that's destroying this earth?" In response, Fontaine said though he works for the pipeline company, he is not satisfied with all that the industry does and said he has expressed as much to TransCanada Pipeline. University officials say the event will be rescheduled.

Current National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Shawn Atleo, said he stands with all First Nations in rejecting the Site C Dam proposal on the Peace River in northeast British Columbia. "We acknowledge the rights of First Nations, but we are alarmed by the damaging and adverse effects from development, they have told the joint review panel holding hearings into the project, and the Site C Dam proposal will further harm their lands, waters and territories, including their traditional fishing grounds. "First Nations along the Peace River are demonstrating how understanding, partnership and self-determination not only bring prosperity, but also the respect for their responsibilities to their traditional territories," said Atleo. "There are real and serious concerns about the effects of this project on First Nations' treaty and aboriginal rights and the industry must respect the inherent Aboriginal and treaty rights of First Nations, including their right to a say on any developments that could affect their lands, their lives or their future. The dam is being built on the Traditional Territories of Peace Athabasca and Mackenzie watersheds." West Moberly First Nations Chief Roland Wilson informed the panel about the registration of a new concern in light of the many large oil and gas development projects that are already leaching pollutants into the river. His submission referenced 17 rivers that have been polluted by mercury, methyl mercury, selenium and other contaminants from resource development activities.
Lubicon appeal six-month Penn West fracking protest ban

By David P. Ball
Windspaker Contributor

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

That was his reaction to a sweeping six-month court order issued Dec. 16 against a community blockade camp set up on an oil and gas drilling site in Calgary, which has a large Indian community.

Community members complained the order prevented them from exercising their treaty rights of their hunting and trapping territories.

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

Lubicon Lake Nation Chief Bernard Ominayak issued a statement that "We, the Lubicon, are not going to be intimidated." Lubicon Lake Band Chief Billy Joe Laboucan said his band would not "drill down on our homelands without a fight."

But carrying the only government-approved mandate, Chief Laboucan approved Penn West's operations following the elections, while Ominayak's faction maintained their longstanding opposition to oil and gas operations they say lack Lubicon support. Lubicon's elected band council had filed a Notice of Appeal with Alberta's Court of Appeal to overturn the ruling. Refusing an interview request with Windspaker, the company has in the past argued that it had extensively consulted with the Lubicon band, and that its drilling is legally permitted and therefore should not be impeded by protest.

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

"The Lubicon are no strangers to the courts, nor to contentious resource disputes. The band was for years not recognized by Canada under the Indian Act, nor did it ever sign a treaty when negotiators swept through Indian Country in the late 19th century. Unlike most other communities Lubicon bands covered by Treaty 8, the Lubicon nation has long argued they never ceded title to their traditional lands."

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

In the decades since, several factions in the community have attempted to gain recognition from the government, and twice new rival bands have been formed with overlapping jurisdictions. Tomlinson claimed the "divide-and-conquer" tactic used by government every time the Lubicon gain wider attention for their land title disputes. "I do think it's retaliation," he alleged.

Every time the government tries these tactics, it follows a pattern of putting the Lubicon public attention and people are beginning to notice... This is no different.

"Lubicon Lake Nation has been to court before. We've seen how the courts in Calgary react to First Nations issues: it's always an uphill battle."

"Tomlinson said it is "very common. It's a sad reality. We don't allow what he termed a "very poor legal decision" to grant a six-month protest ban to the company for other resource disputes."

"We need to try to protect not only ourselves, but other First Nations," he said. "We must make sure this doesn't become case law in the future that can be drawn upon."

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

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

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

Bittersweet victory for St. Anne's Survivors

By Barb Nahwegahbow
Windspaker Contributor

TORONTO
Sixty survivors of St. Anne's Residential School took the federal government to court to gain access to documents to support their claims for compensation under the residential schools settlement agreement. This year, the survivors won their battle.

An Ontario Superior Court ordered Canada to release documents from a five-year-long Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) investigation into the physical and sexual abuse of children at St. Anne's. The investigation took place in the 1990s and resulted in the conviction of several former school employees. The school operated in Fort Albany, Ont., for more than 70 years.

"This is good for the survivors," said Andrew Wesley, chair of the Fort Albany Residential School Survivors Association. "They can go ahead with their applications to the IAP [Independent Assessment Program] and work towards getting compensation."

The IAP is a claimant-centred process for the resolution of claims of sexual abuse, serious physical abuse, and other軟體s at Indian residential schools. Abuse recordings at St. Anne's included children being forced to eat their own vomit and some as young as six strapped into an electric chair fashioned by the staff. Students were given electric shocks for such infractions as speaking their own language.

"We believe this will also open the door on the issue of the children who went missing from St. Anne's," Wesley said.

"I know of at least four who went missing and were never found," Wesley said.

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

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

"But it goes beyond that. We are protecting history. The mandate of the TRC is to document the utter tragedy that occurred in order to protect history. If it's not protected, we are just going to do it over to our hearts," he said. "The survivors were stripped of their childhood. How do you measure that in dollars? How much is that worth?"

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

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

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

"There are no short cuts to reconciliation," Knayapwsow said.

Julian Falconer, legal counsel for the TRC, said this is a very important step towards creating reasonable compensation levels for the survivors. There are 7,000 OPP documents that are central to the claimant survivors, he said, "documenting the atrocities, the horrific activities" committed against the children at St. Anne's.

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

By David P. Ball
Windspeaker Contributor

TORONTO

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

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

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

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

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

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

The After the Gold Rush singer's Hiroshima claim, and description of the project's impacts as "atrocity," garnered a fierce reaction from conservatives across the country, with broadcaster Ezra Levant's industry lobby group EthicalOil.org launching a website and Twitter campaign "Neil Young Lies" to debunk his allegations.

Even the Prime Minister's Office reacted bluntly, arguing that oil sands revenues are "fundamental" to Canada's economy and are environmentally friendly.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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BRINGING TECHNOLOGY TO FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

February 2014
Tsawwassen Mills, Tsawwassen

Tsawwassen First Nation began construction in January on two malls after two years of planning and site preparation. Tsawwassen Mills and Tsawwassen Commons are destination retail developments being constructed in partnership with Ivanhoé Cambridge and Property Development Group, respectively, on the First Nation’s lands. Bass Pro Shops is the first of several major marquee retailers that will be featured at Tsawwassen Mills. Walmart will be an anchor retailer for the Commons mall. “This development partnership is a major step towards achieving our community’s vision under our Treaty,” said Tsawwassen First Nation’s Chief Bryce Williams.

“We are delighted to partner with world-class developers to realize the commercial retail element of our land use plan. Combined with our complementary agricultural, residential, and industrial activities, this development is a significant move forward in creating a truly sustainable community for our members.”

The Wet’suwet’en First Nation has sent a warning to Premier Christy Clark to begin Crown consultation immediately on the establishment of the new LNG export industry. “Time is running out,” said Chief Karen Ogen. “If Wet’suwet’en is to participate meaningfully in the LNG industry choices and plans for our Aboriginal title lands, the BC government must provide us with the necessary information to begin Crown consultation on the new LNG industry.” Ogen said First Nations’ support should not be taken for granted and consultation should not be considered an inconvenient afterthought. In August 2013, the Wet’suwet’en First Nation wrote to Clark requesting a meeting to begin Crown consultation. To date, the BC government has not responded to the Wet’suwet’en request, a press release notes. “It is completely unacceptable to wait five months for a reply to a letter sent in good faith regarding this important matter,” said Ogen. “While Wet’suwet’en has been forced to wait for Crown consultation to begin, government and industry have been meeting behind closed doors to finalize high level decisions, fiscal arrangements and strategic plans for the new LNG export industry. It is widely expected that taxation, royalty, and regulatory legislation and initiatives for the new LNG industry will be introduced during the 2014 spring session of the Legislature.” Ogen cites the Wet’suwet’en people’s Supreme Court of Canada Delgamuukw case, in which the court held that Aboriginal title has an “inescapable economic component.” Choices about the use of title lands are for the community to make, said Chief Karen Ogen. “By proceeding unilaterally to develop a new industry on the backbone of our territory, the province is running roughshod over those constitutional guarantees.” Ogen said Clark has until Jan. 31 to provide information requested. After that time, the nation will pursue next steps to ensure the province fulfills its constitutional obligations.

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

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**FOR GENERATIONS**

February 2014
Application to Participate in National Energy Board Public Hearing for
Trans Mountain Pipeline ULC
Trans Mountain Expansion Project

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

Description of The Project

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

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

The application can be found on the
NEB website.

Participation in NEB Hearing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONTACTS

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

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

Ms. Reny Chakkalakal
Process Advisor, NEB
E-mail: TransMountainPipeline.Hearing@neb-one.gc.ca
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Ms. Sarah Kiley
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Hoodie slogan leads to Day of Action

The banning of a hoodie worn to school by a 13-year-old First Nations girl has resulted in a Day of Action to take place Jan. 28 organized by Idle No More and Defenders of the Land. Grade 8 student Tenelle Starr, a 13-year-old in Balcornes, wore a hoodie to school with the words, “Got Land?” on the front and “Thank an Indian” on the back. School officials initially asked her to remove her shirt. When Starr wore the hoodie another day, she was instructed by school officials to wear it inside out. After school officials met with Starr’s mother and representatives from the nearby Star Blanket First Nation, school authorities relented and the girl was able to wear her hoodie.

Starr said the hoodie was meant to signal her support of First Nations treaty and land rights. Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Chief Allan Adam wore the slogan on his recent tour with folk singer Neil Young in a fundraising effort for legal costs to fight the tar sands. Day of Action organizers are asking people to wear the slogan leading up to Jan. 28, which is also a day of teach-ins to raise awareness about the First Nations Education Act and other controversial action being taken by the Harper government.

Test results required before cause of death declared

The determination of what led to the deaths of twin baby boys from Makwa Sahgiehcan First Nation cannot be made until results of a toxicology test, a microscopic examination, microbiology cultures and a neuropathology have been received by the coroner’s office. Autopsies were conducted in Saskatoon. The seven-month-old brothers were taken by ambulance on Dec. 9, 2013 to a health centre in Loon Lake after a family member at their home made a 911 call. The RCMP say the caller told police that the two children were not breathing. A doctor observed the infants before pronouncing them dead. Despite the involvement of an RCMP major crimes unit, police say the investigation has not immediately been considered a crime.

Residential fire claims two young boys

A fire claiming the life of two boys on the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation has renewed calls for better firefighting services. The boys, nine and 10, were killed in the morning of Jan. 18 when a fire broke out in the home of relatives in Pelican Narrows. The homeowners’ 10-year-old daughter suffered second- and third-degree burns and was taken to a Winnipeg hospital for treatment. Three people escaped unharmed. Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation Chief Peter Beatty said he’s been after Aboriginal Affairs Canada for years about improved firefighting on reserves. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

Bear sentenced to nine years for stabbing retired RCMP officer

Ryan Dalton Kelly Bear of the Dakota Whitecap First Nation has been sentenced to nine years in prison. Bear was convicted of stabbing retired RCMP officer Robert Laidlaw at a landing development north of Outlook in May 2012. Laidlaw had stopped to see if Bear needed help with a flat tire and started asking questions when he suspected Bear’s vehicle may have been stolen. Court heard at Bear’s trial that Bear became angry, threatened to slit Laidlaw’s throat and stabbed Laidlaw twice near the heart and lungs.
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Applications are being accepted for the purpose of establishing an eligibility list. All applicants must hold a valid driver’s licence. Typically the length of employment is April to August.

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Closing date for application is February 28, 2014

saskatchewan.ca/careers  1-888-953-2965

Audit underway at Big Island Lake Cree Nation

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

FNUniv recognized for science camps

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

Compiled by Shari Marine

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P a g e  ( 1 5 )
ONTARIO BIRCHBARK

Ontario Birchbark: Special Section providing news from Ontario

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

Upgrades to Chippewas of the Thames water treatment plant
The Chippewas of the Thames First Nation will be awarding a contract to begin upgrading its water treatment facilities. The water treatment upgrades, funded by the federal government, will be designed to provide a safe and reliable source of water for residents in the community. Additional upgrades will include installing a pre-treatment system that will remove the manganese and iron. Upon completion, the upgrades will bring the plant up to provincial standards. The work is expected to go to tender soon and to be completed by 2014. The Northern Development Council has also provided support for a feasibility study for a new water treatment plant to be considered as part of future community improvements.

Community sessions scheduled for proposed Marathon mine
The joint panel reviewing the proposed Marathon Platinum Group Metals and Copper Mine project has revised the start date to Feb. 18 for the public hearing, following requests from various participants. The primary purpose for the hearing, which is expected to take four weeks, is for the panel to receive information to complete its environmental assessment of the project. First Nations will get an opportunity to present community hearing sessions which are expected to take place in 2014, Aboriginal Affairs and Parks Pay. Community sessions will also be held for Métis organizations. Presentations on Aboriginal traditional knowledge will be accepted without an accompanying written submission. The proposed project is to be located 10 km north of the town of Marathon and involves the establishment and operation of an open pit mine and mill for extracting and processing copper and platinum group metals.

Exploration agreement signed for Cayenne-Chill property
Flying Post First Nation and Red Pine Exploration Inc. have signed an agreement for the exploration and development of Red Pine's Cayenne-Chill property located about 110 km south-west of Timmins and which falls entirely within Flying Post's traditional territory. The agreement outlines the working relationship, which includes a responsible approach to exploration activities, outlines environmental protection, employment, training and business opportunities and mitigation of impacts on the traditional pursuits of Flying Post First Nation members. Red Pine Exploration is a gold and base-metals exploration company headquartered in Toronto. The Cayenne-Chill property consists of 57 contiguous mining claims totaling 3,704 hectares.

Lower Mattagami Project starts operating
A new 67 MW-unit at Little Long Generating Station, part of the Lower Mattagami Project, is now generating clean, renewable, emissions-free electricity ahead of schedule and on budget. The project is a unique partnership between the Moose Cree First Nation and Ontario Power Generation, in which the First Nation has 25 per cent equity interest. "This project has enabled our First Nation to establish a strong economic foundation to build on in the years ahead," said Moose Cree First Nation Chief Norm Hardy Jr. in a news release. The entire Lower Mattagami Project is tracking on schedule and on budget. By the time work is completed in 2015, the capacity of the Lower Mattagami plants will have increased to 924 MW from 486 MW. At peak construction, the project employed about 1,600 workers, including more than 250 First Nation and Métis individuals.

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

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

Complied by Shari Narine

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

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

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

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

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

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

Who can use Personal Credits? CEP recipients can use the full amount themselves or give part or all of their Personal Credits to certain family members such as a spouse, child, grandchild or sibling, as defined in the terms and conditions. Personal Credits of multiple CEP recipients can be combined to support a group learning activity.

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

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

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

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

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

1-866-343-1858 • www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca
AFN tackling the dwindling benefits of NIHBI

By Shari Narine
Winship Correspondent

TORONTO

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

"I don't know how many resolutions we've had at the AFN chiefs assemblies calling for improvements to the program, but we've yet to see any real change," said Doig.

"It's a fault of the system that people who have been on the program longest are those who have had the least access to other services."
Aboriginals represent on Canada's Olympic teams

By Sam Laskaris

Windspeaker Contributor

The Canadian contingent at the Sochi Winter Olympics will include four Native athletes. Among those who will be looking for something hardware at the Games, which are scheduled for Feb. 7 to Feb. 23 in Russia, will be Carey Price, Jesse Cockney, Caroline Calve and Spencer O'Brien.

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

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

A down day at all four of the Canadian Native Olympians follows.

Carey Price

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

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

His stellar junior play convinced the Canadians’ brass to select him in the first round, fifth overall, in the 2005 NHL Entry Draft.

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

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

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

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

Jesse Cockney

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

Though he was born in the Northwest Territories, Cockney now lives in Canmore, Alta. He is one of 11 members that have been named to the Canadian cross-country skiing team.

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

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

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

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

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

Caroline Calve

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

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

As for this year, Calve, who has some Algonquin ancestry, will have two chances at capturing an Olympic medal. Besides the parallel giant slalom race she also competes in the parallel slalom event, which has been added to the Olympic program.

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

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

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

Spencer O’Brien

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

The slopestyle event will make in Olympic debut in Sochi. O’Brien, who has Haida/Kwakw’wakw heritage, started snowboarding at the age of 11.

In the early portions of her snowboarding career she competed in the halfpipe events. Later on she fell in love with the slopestyle event. But it’s not as if she’s aspiring to become an Olympian in that discipline for numerous years.

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

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

Canadian Olympic Spencer O’Brien competes at a Cup event at Copper Mountain
New education dollars a good first step

By Shari Narine
WindSpeaker Contributor

SASKATOON

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

"In the new fiscal year 2014 there will be a new $3 million in place ... certainly recognizing that the joint task force talked about an ongoing response and that will absolutely be part of the discussions moving forward," said Greg Miller, assistant deputy minister with Saskatchewan Education.

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

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

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

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

First Nations organizations have long claimed that the federal government funds on-reserve students at a much lower rate than their provincial counterparts. Miller sees the money his government gives to on-reserve students as a way to support all Saskatchewan students.

"The federal government is still responsible for funding on-reserve schools. What we're doing here is to continue to develop partnership between provincial schools and First Nations to offer programming and support for Saskatchewan students," he said.

"We're really trying to take this from a student-first perspective." Miller adds that the province will continue its dialogue with its federal counterparts to address the "support of students in federal schools." He also says the province will not be putting money into capital projects on reserve.

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

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

FSIN is lobbying for an equalization payment once every six years to be included in the agreement.

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New education dollars a good first step

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

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

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

Late last year, the province began taking action in response to the task force’s recommendations, which included increasing Adult Basic Education spaces, expanding child care and pre-kindergarten spaces, and ensuring driver education is available to on-reserve high school students. The government is also working with the FSIN to support the costs for First Nations’ schools to access the provincial pre-kindergarten to Grade 12 Microsoft Licensing Agreement.

Moving forward the allocation of the new $3 million will be determined in partnership with First Nations organizations and provincial schools, said Miller. "This is just the tip of the iceberg and we’re certainly pushing for more action in terms of program dollars being committed to our First Nation students and reserves across Saskatchewan," said Cameron.

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

[ careers & training ]

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First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv) is Canada’s first, and premier Indigenous institution of higher learning. It was built by First Nations people for First Nations people. It offers a wide variety of programs grounded in Indigenous knowledge and tradition and accredited by its federated partner, the University of Regina. Its largest campus, with its iconic building, is in Regina and it also has campuses in Saskatoon and Prince Albert.

The President of First Nations University of Canada will bring an impressive record of success as an educator and administrator. She/He will understand First Nations knowledge and ways, will have a passion for student success, for working in communities and for making FNUniv a world leader in Indigenous education. As the University’s senior administrator, the President will work with the Board of Governors and the senior administrative team to lead FNUniv to realize its full potential. The University is seeking a forward-thinking, dynamic individual to take it to a new level of achievement and recognition. For more information about FNUniv please visit www.fnuniv.ca.

All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply. The First Nations University of Canada relies on section 46 of The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code to give preference in employment for that position; therefore, please indicate your status in the cover letter.

Should you want to learn more about this unique leadership opportunity, please call Robin Fisher or Maureen MacLean at (604) 926-8665 or forward your CV, a letter of introduction and the names of three referees in confidence, to mmsales@thegeldartgroup.com.

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

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

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

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

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

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

As a kid growing up in Oneida, Wisconsin, Hill wrote down the jokes of classic television comedians like Jackie Gleason and Red Skelton. Hitching Los Angeles in the mid-seventies, he watched other stand-ups perform before eventually stepping onto the stage himself. He impressed Richard Pryor enough to be invited to guest on the top entertainer's show in 1977. In iconic footage from The Richard Pryor Show, a slight, intelligent-looking Hill with long, wavy hair, slaps zingers like "I'm Oneida ... we're originally from New York but there was a real estate problem and I know for a long time you white people didn't think Indians had a sense of humour. Well, we didn't think you were too funny either."

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

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

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

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

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

"We honour Charlie's memory ... he was always there for us, taking us to a better, happier place, interrupting the mundane and historical bitterness through his comedy. He taught us how to heal our generational trauma through the medicine of smiles, belly laughs and humourous insights," Stevens' letter read.

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

The funny man called Winnipeg his second home, according to Winnipeg Free Press columnist Don Marks. Marks, who was the producer of the CTV variety show Indian Time, which featured Hill and the likes of Buddy Sainte Marie, Kashtin, and Tom Jackson, recalled Charlie's parting words when it was time to leave. "I'm off to New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, and if I can't find work there, I'll be back here. "Charlie's gift of laughter to Winnipeg ... had healing powers," Marks wrote. When humour is combined with insight and enlightenment, it "allows us to laugh at ourselves and others in a spirit of camaraderie and friendship that breaks down barriers. With the way things are between First Nations people and many Canadians, we could use Charlie Hill more than ever."

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

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

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

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