

Tobique First Nation, NB MAY 2011

Wulustuk Times

Wulustuk - Indigenous name for St. John River

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TALKING CIRCLE, A PLACE FOR PEACE, HARMONY AND REFLECTION

p.paul, TFN, NB

The Talking Circle is a traditional instrument for dealing with the things that interfere with the normal everyday concerns of a person or their community whether the concern is trivial or serious in nature. The Circle may be applied safely and confidentially to resolve conflicts, misconceptions, disagreements or deeper problems.

It can be taken as both, an opening or a closing of a door, depending on the individual's circumstances or the objective in mind.

A Talking Circle is a place of comfort, wisdom, security and redress. It is where people come in search for new directions, abandoning the old, making amends, righting the wrongs and establishing new pathways for tomorrow.

It is a sacred place that is usually directed by a Circle leader, (Nikonee Gloswen) a mentor or a person of distinct nature and attachment to the spirit realm who intervenes and directs the flow of collective energies in the Circle.

The Talking Circle consists of a number of people, ranging from a few to around twenty for the best results, gathered together in a circular formation to share ideas, hopes, dreams, cares and energies in total unity and in a sacred connection to one another.

It is also a place where individuals come to seek help, support, healing, comfort, warmth and understanding for any particular distress, discomfort or instability they may have, or has been with them for some time.

The Circle is a protective shield of honesty, trust and comfort.

Confidentiality:

The material brought to the Circle is usually private, personal and/or confidential. As a general rule therefore, all material heard in the Circle stays in the Circle, unless a waiver or consent has been rendered beforehand.

JOIN US AT OUR NEXT TALKING CIRCLE , MAY 28 (at Mt. Carleton Park, Rt. 385 N).

The next Wulustukie Talking Circle will be held Saturday noon, May 28, at the Mount Carleton Park lakeside, The Park is located about 60 miles north of Plaster Rock, NB on Rt. 385 N.

Everyone is welcome to attend. Bring a baggie and a beverage to share and enjoy during a 15-minute lunch break in the ceremony. Closing session will be at around 3:00 P.M.

For more information or any questions on travel to the park, contact our hostess, Diana at (506) 356-2337, Riley Brook, NB.

Current plans are to gather with other Circle participants at the main gate around 11:00 to 11:30 A.M. to enter the park grounds as a collective mobile unit. See you there!!

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Wulustuk Times:

Each month we gather and publish the latest, most current and relevant native information for our readers. Proceeding with this concept, we feel that a well informed person is better able to see, relate with, and assess a situation more accurately when equipped with the right tools. Our aim is to provide you with the precise tools and the best information possible.

Contact:

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TOBIQUE HOMES TESTED FOR RADON GAS

p,paul

In early April 2011, radon gas testing began at Tobique First Nation. The initial procedure was to place two glass vessels or 'test beakers' in each home for 48 hours to determine if any gas can be detected in the home.

As advised, the homeowners would be notified by mid-May whether radon is present in the home, and if indeed tested positive, follow-up action would be taken 1) to find the radon leak and 2) to close the leakage permanently, which in effect, would prevent damaging good health of individuals in the home.

Incidentally, and somewhat related to the tests at Tobique, there were stories circulating around the province at one time that similar testing was carried out during the late 1980's in certain areas of New Brunswick. But for some unknown reason the results of those tests were never made public which, curiously, might cause one to question why those results were never reported.

Whatever be the case however, the big question today is, to determine whether radon gas is present in Tobique homes, because if proved positive, the results could produce serious health effects in the community if not corrected on time. The Tobique population is approximately 1500 persons living in 500 homes on the First Nation.

Radon gas can produce deadly results when it enters the body. It can deteriorate and destroy vital body tissue and create mass disorder in a person's health within a short period.

The lung system is one of the more vulnerable areas where radon attacks the body. The lungs are the prime purifiers of the air we intake under normal circumstances before entering other vital parts of the body. For more information on the effects of radon, see below.

Radon is a natural but dangerous substance. The tasteless, odorless, colorless gas poses major health risks and causes the highest amount of lung cancer deaths annually, after smoking. Fortunately, it can be easily detected and addressed.

What Is Radon Gas?

Radon is the result of a natural, radioactive breakdown of uranium in water, rock, and soil. Once released, radon then enters a building through weak points in the foundation, becoming trapped inside and inhaled by occupants. Radon is a nationwide problem and is not confined to any one area or region. The gas can permeate any building, such as a school or office, but is most likely to affect people in their own homes.

How Does Radon Cause Illness?

Radon gas decays, forming radioactive particles, which can become trapped in the lungs. As they continue to break down, the particles release tiny burst of energy, which can damage the lungs and lead to cancer. Not everyone who is exposed to radon will develop cancer, and the onset of disease can occur many years after exposure.

FIRST NATIONS IN ATLANTIC CANADA DISAPPOINTED WITH TORY NON-RESPONSE

The Canadian Press

HALIFAX — The head of a group that represents 35,000 aboriginals in Atlantic Canada says he's disappointed that not one of the region's Conservative candidates responded to a list of policy questions sent to would-be MPs in all 32 ridings.

The Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs, based in the Halifax area, also represents First Nations in parts of Maine and eastern Quebec, but the bulk of its membership is spread across Canada's East Coast.

"We're disappointed because the survey provided a real opportunity for the Conservatives to highlight what the road map is in the future," executive director John Paul said in an interview Friday. A call to Conservative campaign headquarters in Ottawa was not returned.

Paul said he couldn't explain why the Tories ignored the seven-question survey considering they had offered responses to a similar questionnaire before the 2008 election.

"I can only wonder in my mind why they didn't respond," he said. "I had hoped that they would have and then our communities could have gotten a clearer picture from all the parties. I think it's important in this democratic process that we know the views of all the parties."

He said the group's relationship with the federal government has been positive in the last few years. "We've had many discussions about very important issues in our communities," he said. "All the issues we raised (in the survey) are not new. They're not coming out of the air. ... I think it's a missed opportunity."

Early in the campaign, Prime Minister Stephen Harper was accused of evading public scrutiny during tightly scripted events that left little time for questions or interaction with voters.

At one point, Harper apologized for several incidents in which people linked to rival parties were kicked out of Tory campaign events.

Paul said the goal of the questionnaire was to make sure the candidates were aware of the important issues facing First Nations people, both on- and off-reserve.

"Some of our large communities do have enough voters in those communities to tip the balance one way or another," he added.

Paul declined to say what he thought of the answers provided by the other parties, noting that his group is non-partisan.

The survey included general questions about economic development, federal support programs, health care, job training and electoral reform. None of the questions courted controversy.

In an letter to newspaper editors, to be published Saturday, Paul notes that the Liberals, New Democrats and Greens responded to the questionnaire.

"Three-quarters of these candidates have told us that First Nations issues are important to them and a number of the candidates offered encouraging comments on various issues," he wrote.

"It's unfortunate that nowhere in Atlantic Canada did a Conservative candidate choose to respond to our questionnaire."

MOHAWK RESERVE IS A NO-VOTE ZONE

The Gazette

MONTREAL - Unlike other radio talk-show hosts in Canada, Lori Jacobs hasn't been spending much time talking about the federal election campaign.

Jacobs is a host of an open-line talk show on K103.7 FM, a radio station in Kahnawake, a Mohawk reserve of 9,000 across the St. Lawrence River from LaSalle, and a no-election zone.

Although aboriginals have had the right to vote in federal elections since 1960, Kahnawake, like other Mohawk communities, has a policy of not participating in federal or provincial elections.

As a result, the May 2 election hasn't figured much into Jacobs's daily programming.

"Nobody votes in Kahnawake," she said.

The one exception was when Jacobs interviewed Roméo Saganash, the New Democratic Party's star candidate in the northern Quebec riding of Abitibi-Baie James-Nunavik-Eeyou, this month.

After Yvon Lévesque, the Bloc Québécois candidate in the northern riding, suggested voters were unlikely to support Saganash because he is a Cree, Jacobs tracked down Saganash for an on-air interview.

"We wanted to hear why he was running," Jacobs said. "Why he was doing it?"

What Saganash told her audience, Jacobs said, was that he felt he could do more for his people as a member of Parliament. "He wanted to be part of making decisions that would affect his people," she said.

"Choose to make a difference" is the message of the federal government public service announcements now being aired on K103.7 FM and printed in the Eastern Door, the reserve's weekly paper. Elections Canada pamphlets have been delivered door-to-door in Kahnawake instructing Mohawks on how to get on the voters' list.

More than 20 aboriginal candidates are running in ridings across Canada and a growing number of aboriginal groups, including the Grand Council of Cree and the Assembly of First Nations, are advocating their members vote. The AFN is issuing regular updates on the federal parties and their platforms.

Gilles Paquin, a Montreal-based spokesperson for Elections Canada, said advertising material aimed at aboriginal voters, like the television, radio and print public service announcements, including ones on APTN, the aboriginal television network, is costing the federal elections overseer more than \$350,000 in this campaign.

But still, Quebec's Mohawks maintain non-participation serves them better.

"In the end, voting would undermine us," said Ellen Gabriel, a spokesperson for the Mohawk community of Kanesatake during the 1990 Oka Crisis. Gabriel is 52 and living back in Kanesatake after doing other things, including heading up the provincial organization Quebec Native Women.

Gabriel explained that Mohawks, unlike other aboriginals, don't consider themselves to be Canadian citizens. If they were to participate in federal and provincial elections now, it would weaken their claim of being a separate nation and their demand to deal "nation to nation" with Canada.

"It's not that Mohawks are uninterested in federal politics," said Joe Delaronde, a spokesperson for the Kahnawake band council. "It's not a rule written down somewhere. We've been courted before and we know we could sway the vote."

But Delaronde said the Mohawk community takes its direction from the Two Row Wampum, a historic treaty that dictates one nation not interfere in another's governance. "We're in the same river, going in the same direction but in different canoes."

Over the years, there have been times when the community has supported one of the national political parties from the sidelines - for example, the Liberals after they negotiated the Kelowna Accord, a landmark agreement between Canada and aboriginal peoples that was later struck down by the Conservative government.

"It's better to have a one-on-one relationship with Canada," said Kenneth Deer, a former publisher of the Eastern Door and now an international advocate for the rights of indigenous people. A political junkie who has worked on several elections for the Kahnawake band council, Jacobs said she saw first-hand how few Mohawks vote when she volunteered as a clerk in the 2006 federal elections "out of curiosity" about the Canadian system.

At that time, she said, she counted about five or six people from Kahnawake at the polling station in Châteauguay. They included the Roman Catholic priest from Kahnawake and some non-native women married to Mohawks.

"There was not one native person," she said.

GERMANY ABANDONS NUCLEAR POWER

in Environmental Legislation, Policies & Politics, International, Nuclear

Germany will shut down all its nuclear power stations by 2020, according to the government's Secretary of State for the Environment and Nuclear Safety, Jürgen Becker.

His comments were made earlier today to Reuters during a meeting of the International Renewable Energy Association (IREA) in the United Arab Emirates.

Herr Becker said:

"A decision has been taken to shut down eight plants before the end of this year and they definitely won't be reactivated. And the remaining nine will be shut down by the end of the decade."

The news will stun Germany's main energy suppliers as it will cost them hundred of millions of dollars in expected revenues. It will also have a huge impact on the rest of the European energy sector as several are international players.

The comments fly in the face of public German Government policy, which is that no decision has yet been made about the nuclear power stations' future following the Fukushima disaster.

It also raises huge questions about the future of Germany's energy supply. The same IREA meeting heard that Germany had become a net importer of energy from France for the first time this year, and France is considered the most nuclear friendly country in the EU.

Surely it would be daft to simply turn off your own nuclear power in order to import it from another country?

However there is another solution. Back in January, Greenpeace published a report which claimed that 90 percent of European coal and nuclear power could be phased out by 2030.

Maybe, just maybe, the German government is swinging behind it. If not, there could be news of some sackings very soon.

NO NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE FACILITY FOR SASKATCHEWAN: PREMIER WALL

Negative public opinion makes option unlikely
Saskatoon StarPhoenix

Premier Brad Wall says Saskatchewan residents haven't warmed to the idea of storing nuclear waste in the province and it is highly unlikely the government would allow such a facility to be built.

Wall made the comments Thursday after a petition with more than 4,500 signatures opposing a nuclear waste facility was presented in the provincial legislature.

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization is eyeing Saskatchewan as a potential site for underground storage of nuclear waste, although a decision is likely a decade away. Three northern communities have expressed interest as a possible host.

While Wall's Saskatchewan Party government has been bullish on "adding value" to the province's large reserves of uranium, it has said in the past negative public opinion has ruled out a nuclear waste facility.

"I don't sense the mood of the province has changed and frankly, what's happened in Japan has got people thinking, just generally speaking, about the issue," Wall told reporters.

"This would be very much a provincial issue and while we would respect the fact that different communities do want this, there should be a sense that the province in general is supportive and I don't have that sense," he added.

The petition by the Coalition for a Clean Green Saskatchewan calls for a halt to any further expansion of the nuclear industry in Saskatchewan and legislation banning interim or permanent storage of nuclear waste.

Wall said it is not something the government has contemplated but he would not rule out such a law on nuclear waste in Saskatchewan.

The government has embarked on a new nuclear agenda that includes a focus on nuclear medicine and research into the feasibility of small reactors for power production.

In 2009 it rejected a proposal from Bruce Power to develop two, 1,000 megawatt reactors as too large and expensive for Saskatchewan.

The Coalition for a Clean Green Saskatchewan news release said beyond the reactor decision, the Sask. Party has ignored concerns around the expansion of the nuclear industry in the province.

"Strong opposition to the uranium industry exists in the province. Active citizens successfully halted a proposed uranium refinery at Warman in 1979 and more recently, were instrumental in killing the proposal by Bruce Power to build a nuclear power plant here. Today, we fight to keep Saskatchewan from becoming the nuclear waste dump for North America," the release reads in part.

NDP MLA Pat Atkinson presented the group's petition to the legislature.

The NDP is officially opposed to the storage of nuclear waste in Saskatchewan and its transportation through the province.

The previous NDP government was opposed to a nuclear waste facility but had sought the expansion of the nuclear industry in areas such as uranium mining and refining.

The full petition is at variance with some parts of NDP policy, acknowledged Atkinson, but "in terms of democracy all voices in the province need to be heard by members of the legislature."

Meanwhile, Jerry Grandey, CEO of uranium miner Cameco Corp., told reporters in Saskatoon Thursday that it's a good thing some provincial communities are wanting to study the idea of nuclear waste storage, which he called a "tremendous opportunity."

THE CHALLENGE TO IMPROVE FIRST NATIONS' EDUCATION

Vancouver Sun

Economic development is the horse that pulls the social cart," says Chief Clarence Louie of the Osoyoos band in the southern part of the Okanagan Valley. And with Chief Louie, it's not just talk. Louie took a band that had been declared bankrupt and taken over by Indian Affairs and has turned it into an inspiration for other bands.

In 2000, the Osoyoos band set a goal of becoming self-sufficient in five years. They're there now, and have more businesses per capita, including a winery, a hotel and a golf course, than any other first nation in Canada. A large part of that success has been the chief's personal commitment to education both on and off reserve. And that is where the story gets interesting.

Nor has Chief Louie ignored the importance of cultural identity and tradition. "You're going to lose your language and culture faster in poverty than you will in economic development," he said recently while speaking to a large and receptive aboriginal conference in Fort McMurray.

There are about 75 Osoyoos Band students attending Southern Okanagan secondary school in Oliver. There are, according to principal Catherine Turner, very few who will not graduate. The school provides two academic support workers and after-school tutoring.

The recent Fraser Institute Report Card on Aboriginal Education in British Columbia 2011 states that "aboriginal students continue to lag behind their non-aboriginal classmates and there is little apparent improvement since 2005."

It goes on to say that "in both Grade 4 and 7 writing, the achievement gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal students appears to have widened."

The report, much of which is devoted to the methodology used, is sound as far as it goes and the supportive data academically defensible. But the report does not discuss non-school factors affecting failing attempts to improve first nations' academic results - or anybody's academic results.

Most other serious analyses of student success, aboriginal and nonaboriginal, include the role played by non-school factors, those major aspects of a child's life that send him or her off to school each day for five hours, ready to participate and learn. No mention is made of this in the Fraser Institute's analysis. Student success is seen as the sole responsibility of the school.

However, Peter Cowley of the Fraser Institute is quite correct when he said in response to a question about the results: "If aboriginal leaders don't care about declining results, there is not much anyone else can do about it."

As far back as 1972, a policy paper delivered to the minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development by the National Indian Brotherhood/ Assembly of First Nations spoke to the issue of economic independence, saying: "If we are to avoid the conflict of values . . . what we want for our children can be summarized very briefly:

". To reinforce their Indian identity.

". To provide the training necessary for making a good living in modern society."

These are undeniably worthy aspirations, but difficult to align with the realities that inhibit aboriginal school performance -the dropout rate and lack of support for learning outside the school. Many first nations children, starting with the significant number who do not make it past Grade 10, will find economic independence in a modern world a difficult goal to achieve.

And like it or not, the Fraser Institute Report tells a troubling story in amongst all those graphs and numbers. Public education faces enormous challenges on behalf of B.C.'s first nations' children, but public education is going to need the support and cooperation of visionary leaders like Chief Louie, leaders who see their children answering not just the demands of cultural heritage and identity, but the educational expectations of the 21st century.

Geoff Johnson is a retired superintendent of schools.

REPORT WARNS OF DIABETES EPIDEMIC

Group calls for action to deal with disease

ONE in three Canadians will be living with diabetes or at high risk of developing the disease by the end of the decade unless governments do more to stem the epidemic, a national report released Monday warns.

"Canadians recognize that diabetes is at epidemic proportions and will impact future generations yet governments are not responding in equal measure," Michael Cloutier, president of the Canadian Diabetes Association, said from Toronto.

The association's report, *Diabetes: Canada at the Tipping Point -- Charting a New Path*, warns Canada is not adequately prepared to manage the burden of diabetes, the country's fastest-growing chronic disease.

The health and economic crisis stems from an explosion in Type 2 diabetes, the most common form of the disease, affecting nine out of 10 Canadian diabetics.

Blamed largely on an aging population and rising obesity rates, diabetes is already exacting a staggering human toll. It is the leading cause of blindness, amputations and kidney failure, and can lead to heart attacks and strokes.

The report states the number of confirmed diabetics in Canada is expected to rise from 2.7 million cases (7.6 per cent of the population) to 4.2 million cases (10.8 per cent of the population) by 2020. An additional one million Canadians are believed to have undiagnosed diabetes. After factoring in the number of pre-diabetics, whose blood sugar is higher than normal but not high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes, 11.7 million people, one in three Canadians, are expected to be impacted by the disease by 2020. One in four Canadians live with diabetes, undiagnosed diabetes, or pre-diabetes.

The association's figures show as many as 50 per cent of those with pre-diabetes will develop the disease, and long-term complications often begin before the disease is diagnosed.

In Manitoba, the number of diabetics is forecast to rise 48 per cent by 2020, to over 139,000 cases from 94,000. Manitoba, which has the highest rate of diabetes on the Prairies, is at risk partly because of higher rates of obesity, and partly because it has the highest concentration of Aboriginal Canadians, 15.47 per cent, in Canada.

Aboriginal Canadians are three to five times more likely than the general population to acquire Type 2 diabetes.

In issuing the report, the association called on the federal and provincial governments to do more to stem the tide of diabetes and provide more support for those already living with the disease. A full 80 per cent of the costs associated with diabetes stem from the downstream complications, not the disease itself.

The diabetes advocacy group agrees governments have made some progress, but those steps have been dwarfed by the growing burden of the disease and its effects, which lead to the deaths of an estimated 72,000 Canadians annually.

Manitoba earned praise, for example, for providing the most extensive coverage for diabetes medications in Canada. Of the 23 medications recommended by Health Canada, the cost of 10 is covered in Manitoba.

An opinion poll released with the report suggests Canadians are gravely concerned about the threat posed by Type 2 diabetes, traditionally considered an adult disease but which is being diagnosed in a growing number of children.

The online poll found 72 per cent of respondents want governments to spend more on programs and services to prevent and manage diabetes.

It was conducted Jan. 25-31 by Environics Research among 1,004 Canadians who have never been diagnosed with diabetes or pre-diabetes, as well as 881 people living with diabetes and 128 with pre-diabetes.

DAN'S CORNER: RE: NB ENERGY COMMISSION SEEKING PUBLIC INPUT

I would like to offer a different perspective about the N.B. energy commission seeking public input.

In the announcement commission member Bill Thompson mentions three key components that interact and overlap. I would like to remind Bill Thompson and all other New Brunswickers of a very critical fourth component. That being the ownership of the land that is known as New Brunswick.

Our people, the Maliseet, have always known it as Skigineewekog or Indian homeland and we have never ceded, signed away or otherwise relinquished ownership of our homeland.

At some point the question that needs to be addressed in a serious and truthful manner is this: how did our homeland become someone else's country? Until that happens nothing good can result from the lie and the denial game that the transplanted Europeans continue to play with respect to our homeland. All in the name of white greed.

As a child I was incarcerated at a white Christian residential school for the first five years of my schooling. At that time I was told that to be considered a good Christian that I must live by the whiteman's bible at its ten commandments. Two of those ten are thou shall not kill and thou shall not steal. Given all of the killing of Indians by whites in order to steal our land I would have to say that our white brothers do not practice what they preach.

White greed is what killed off the Beothuk and white greed is what will eventually kill off humankind.

One final thought, there is presently a complaint against Canada filed with the U.N. The complaint is regarding the genocide which is being perpetrated against our people. These are the words of a child of genocide.

All My Relations, - Dan Ennis

DEAN'S DEN - LIFE'S POND / TOMORROW

Life's Pond

Like the fiddlehead - I come unwound
When I get my head above the ground
And only then I spread my frond
To share with all - around life's pond!

Tomorrow

Today - tomorrow is the day that comes after
Bringing grief, or sun, or laughter
Today, tomorrow will only come
If today is ever done ...
Yesterday - tomorrow was, well, today
And today was, well, tomorrow,
Yesterday then went away
To let tomorrow become today,
Bringing gain, or rain, or sorrow,
Tomorrow - if it comes, becomes today
And today becomes, well, yesterday
Yesterday becomes the day before today
Tomorrow becomes - the day before tomorrow
Which ... is today!

- D.C. Butterfield