



Congress of Aboriginal Peoples

Voice

National Youth Council

November 2008

Issue 1

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Points of Interest:

***Youth Awards - Who Won?**

***What is Se'to Skatowin?**

*** Wet'suwet'en Society**

“THE YOUTH OF A NATION ARE THE TRUSTEES OF POSTERITY”

By Patrick Brazeau

These words written above were spoken well over a century ago by Benjamin Disraeli, former Prime Minister of Great Britain and a world leader in his day. They ring as true in the twenty-first century as they did when they first uttered.

Some might find such words old fashioned and irrelevant. But I don't. I believe them with all my heart. Whom will the world look to for tomorrow's leaders? Who is there better equipped to lead the charge towards tomorrow and carry the momentum and dreams of today into a prosperous future?

In today's cynical, sometimes overly negative society the real and sincere encouragement offered to youth often gets dismissed or considered as nice words that might not really get you anywhere.

But there's so much hope you as Youth can offer, and just as much opportunity for the prosperity you so richly deserve. There are so many ideas yet to be realized in your young minds. There's so much promise and so much energy that you can apply to yourselves and your communities.

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Of youth, there's perhaps no more precious attribute than your open-mindedness and eagerness to "do something".

As Canada's youngest national Aboriginal leader, I know more than just a little about this. There's nothing I'd like to do more than shake up the status quo, wake up the "Establishment" and do everything I can to make the world, our communities and our own lives more prosperous, less difficult and filled with hope.

This is sometimes a big task in an environment that doesn't always bring adequate funding, the facility for dealing with a system that sometimes seemed programmed to offer continued challenge to the off-reserve Aboriginal community.

But it's at time like these when we seem to deal with seemingly unyielding obstacles that we can overcome with the best and the brightest of our talents. Yet it's also at times like these that we must be as alert as we can be, and always on our game.

The reality is that effecting change is all about dealing with Aboriginal politics. In many ways, in a free and democratic society, leadership has much to do with politics too – and as we all know, politics is a tough game.

The truth is that there are some who would seek to have us fail; there are those playing a political game at the expense of the organization who fail to consider the human cost, the people cost of such politics.

"We continue to face twists and turns on the road before us."

But I sincerely believe that there is a sincerity and an optimism in our youth that is able to move beyond the politics and work to the benefit of the people.

I see this as I read the submissions that many of you have provided for this bulletin. I know this as I meet many of you in my travels across the country. I read about this first hand in messages I receive on my blog. I know this to be true from the hundreds of messages I view on my FACEBOOK address.

In light of this overwhelming positivity, I'd like to offer a piece of advice that I've learned in the four-plus years I've been involved in Aboriginal politics – and that is that it can't be about personal power; It has to be about the power one can offer to persons.

As the old adage says, it is better to give than to receive. If through an open, honest, transparent and accountable process one receives power, the best you can do is to give share the power with those committed to helping the people – the real grassroots people -- young, mature or elderly – to help them achieve their dreams, live healthy productive lives and share in the fortunes of this bountiful land.

Again this year, I salute our youth and I encourage your successes. Together there is much we can do and much we can achieve. We continue to face twists and turns on the road before us. But I truly believe that as the fastest growing segment of Canadian society we are truly unstoppable together.

Our Aboriginal youth are indeed the trustess of prosperity – I'd say that means things are in pretty good hands. Our future togetehr is as bright as you want to make it. And as I always say, "fulfilling your dreams is all about being willing to work for them!"



CAP NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

RECOGNIZING ACHIEVEMENT - ESTABLISHING ROLE MODELS

By: Carmen Trask

Going into its third year, the CAP National Youth Council has established a National Youth Achievement Awards program, which awards one recipient annually in the following six categories:



Arts & Dance – Recognizes those who use their creative & artistic talents to promote positive change in their community and environment.

Community - Recognizes a person who has made impact in their community, by doing something that has created positive change.

Culture & Heritage – Recognizes an applicant who demonstrates involvement in their traditional ways and shares this with others.

Award Picture

Education – Recognizes the achievement of obtaining an education while overcoming an obstacle in the process.

Leadership – Recognizes our enthusiastic, young Aboriginal leaders who have helped us become the people we are today, or in turn, have followed our leadership to become one of their own.

Sports – Recognizes a person who excels in sports at any level, but does not necessarily have to be at the front off the line or the top of the team

In 2007, based on input from the delegates from the CAP Annual General Assembly, we created and introduced the category of Arts and Dance to highlight out talented, creative, and artistic outstanding youth.

Any Aboriginal Youth in Canada is eligible to win, whether they belong to a CAP affiliate or not. Nominations are open to those between ages 15 and 29. Potential recipients must be nominated by two people (who are not family members). Two letters of recommendation must also be provided, along with their resume, and a photo. They must also demonstrate an overall positive attitude towards life. In the event of a tie in a category, members of a CAP affiliate will be given priority.

Each recipient is chosen based on their level of personal success -- for example, not necessarily a youth who plays basketball and earns the title of MVP but is not the star player on the team; or a young mother who drops out of school but returns back to receive her high school diploma.

The winners each receive \$500 cash, an award with their name on it, and national recognition at CAP's Annual General Assembly, normally held in the Fall of each year .

2007 Awards Recipients

Education - Josee Cousineau
Culture and Heritage - Cree-Lyn Blacksmith
Community Award - Sarah Samantha Wells
Arts and Dance - Jasyn Lucas
Leadership - Derek Smith
Sports - Emory Wells

2006 Awards Recipients

Education - Natasha Wawrykow
Culture and Heritage - Tony Joshua Liske
Community Award - Nicole Marie Homer
Leadership - Courtney Elisa Yenson
Sports - Tristan Stephan Parr

For more information on the awards, check out:

<http://www.abo-peoples.org/youth/awards.html>



SE'TO SKATOWIN - Empowering Ourselves & Others



By: Carmen Trask


In February 2008, CAP established its first annual Health Youth Conference, held in Winnipeg, Manitoba and focusing on youth interested in health careers.

With 100 participants, from Labrador, all the way to British Columbia, it was a fun-filled weekend, with many success stories shared. Some youth were from rural, isolated areas and others from urban centers. Some of the participants were still attending high school living at home, and others were young mothers and fathers interested in making career changes in their lives.

Panellists and speakers came in throughout the three-day conference to enlighten the youth about careers in the health field, and many other professions - aside from doctors and nurses whom we typically think of first - were highlighted as well. Our panellists and speakers were all aboriginal, proving to be "real role models" to our youth.

The first night of the conference we had a traditional gathering to open - including drummers, dancers, and a smudging ceremony. Following the opening we had the Juno awarding winning band "*Eagle and Hawk*" perform for us, with a truly touching performance of their song "*Sisters in Spirit*". We also had the opportunity for a hypnotist show, performed by Scott Ward - an Aboriginal hypnotist. The final night of the conference we experienced *Festival de Voyageurs* - a winter celebration held in Winnipeg annually. The Festival has been mentioned in books as one of the things you MUST experience before you die, which was exciting to share such a wonderful, cold, yet fun experience with all the participants.

Among the Youth, we had Elders in attendance representing the four directions of Canada. Their kind words, prayers, and guidance contributed to the success of Se'to Skatowin.

After accomplishing so much that weekend and seeing not only my own dreams come true at Se'to Skatowin, but the many dreams of others, I felt honoured to have attended. Before getting on her bus to the airport, one participant came up to me with her agenda and asked me to sign it - like a yearbook. It made me feel complete - knowing that we had a positive effect on just one youth after the meeting. Another girl from Nova Scotia studying sciences at university in Ottawa informed me that she was undecided on what path to take with her career and had decided by Sunday she would be a general practitioner. The sense of success from this conference is unlike any I have ever attended, and I am hoping we will have funding continued for next year to hold the 2nd Annual Se'to Skatowin Health Careers Conference to open more doors for Aboriginal Youth 



Group Photo at Se'to Skatowin



Cultural Corner

By Jessica Lafond

A Brief write-up of where my family is from and what my culture, the Wet'suwet'en, is all about.

Initially the Wet'suwet'en Nation had joined with the Gitksan Nation to form the Gitksan Carrier Tribal Council, to help aid the Wet'suwet'en and Gitksan Chiefs seeking a declaration of ownership and jurisdiction over the traditional territories. A while later the organization changed its name from Gitksan Carrier tribal Council to the office of the Gitksan Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Tribal Council, to reflect the Wet'suwet'en Nations distinct role in the work that faced the respective nations.

In 1994 the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary chiefs decided to establish an office of their own, based out of Moricetown. In 1995 the office had expanded into an office attached to the Moricetown Band administration office, on office that held a lot more staff as to accommodate this growing organization. During the early winter of 1997 the whole Nation office was lost in a tragic fire; the oral history of our elders, many community members which are no longer with us, as a significant amount of information was just recently catalogued in a newly developed library, this was all lost as well.

From the very beginning the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs have endeavored to have the governments recognize our ownership and jurisdiction over our traditional territories. The office has grown from a joint initiative with the Gitksan Nation to the office with its own programs and employing anywhere from 30 to 75 peoples, summer being the busiest time. The office of the Wet'suwet'en established the Wet'suwet'en Treaty Office Society for incorporation in 1985. The incorporation was much needed in order to receive funding from the various forms of government.

Going into leadership, as show within the organization, the office is lead by and responsible to the hereditary chiefs.

"...This was all lost as well."

The clan system is a group of people belonging to a particular tribe or house identifying families and territories.

The clans work out as listed: Laksilyu–Small Frog Clan, Gilseyhu – Big Frog Clan, Gitdedum –Bear/Wolf Clan, Tsayu – Beaver Clan, and Laksamshu – Fireweed Clan.

In the feast they operate as four (4) with the Laksamshu and Tsayu clans working together.

With matrilineage, (following the mother's side of the family) places every Wet'suwet'en person within a house and clan, as a member of a group the action of each person representing a clan affect the house to which they belong. The second highest titles are these of the 13 sub chiefs, who all have very important responsibilities for the administration of discreet parts of their house and territory. The highest hereditary titles in the Wet'suwet'en Nation are those of the 12 house chiefs, they take care of the fishing sites around the summer village and distinct tracts of the territory for their own clan members.

Becoming a hereditary chief is a long road and well worth the time it takes the time to get there. An heir of the Wet'suwet'en began their journey way before their birth; it actually starts in the womb of the womb of their mother. Elders, Shamans and chiefs would touch the belly of a the woman, and they could determine if the child would be born as a chief or shaman, this child would be groomed and tutored to be a wise, strong and responsible leader.

This child would start off with the following feasts of names: ☀Birth name, ☀baby name, ☀child's name, ☀adolescent name, ☀adult name, ☀sub chief, ☀wing name, and ☀head chief.

Before any person could receive a high ranking chief name, they would have to travel into the wilderness and live off the land and learn from the animals an extended amount of time. When they returned from their journey they would have to show what they learned from their journey before assuming a chief name.

The laws of the land were always abided by. Trespassing was only allowed to certain people, people married into or directly related to clans, were permitted to travel into their territories. Common trails that went throughout the territories were allowed to be traveled upon by all, but if you were hunting on those trails you were only allowed to hunt small game, like rabbits or grouse. If you wandered off the common trail or decided to hunt larger game it was then considered trespassing. Trespassers were given one warning that came in the form of a feather, if they were caught going off trail or hunting large game after the warning, it was punishable by death.

A very important Wet'suwet'en law is that you are never to marry into your own clan, this was because if you married into your own clan your children would become poor and your family would only be able to hunt in one territory, you would also lose the importance of the Father clan when it is needed. The Father clan is the clan group of the birth father of the parties.

The feasts draw together the members of the house and clan, all who live in the house, as well as the husbands houses. Just as it is still done today, the community hall, with people separated by house and clan before conducting business. Unfortunately none of these physical houses are standing today, but the same concept they stood for still exists, mostly because the matrilineal exist also because each house still holds their titles and territories.

The feast is at the core of the Wet'suwet'en society, despite the concerted post efforts of missionaries and government agents trying to remove the feast from the life of the people. The feast still remains a large part of the Wet'suwet'en government, law, social structure and worldview. It is in the feast that people are given their titles, robes and their crests, and also their authority over the territories associated with those titles. The Wet'suwet'en and the neighboring peoples, the Babine, Nutseni and the Gitksan, witness all this. The Wet'suwet'en word for feast is "denii na'aas" which means "people coming together" even though they use the words potlatch, the Chinook or trade language term when speaking English and Wet'suwet'en.

A funeral feast takes place every time a Wet'suwet'en dies, to mark this passing on and also to repay the people who have helped bury the deceased. Approximately one year later the deceased's clan hold a headstone feast to erect a memorial to the deceased, at the gravesite. If the deceased had a title it would be officially conferred on the successor at the headstone feast. The shame feast "wiping away the blood" within the tradition of feasts are held to settle disputes and offer compensation. The following is how the feast goes as done by procedure: ♦ guests are seated, ♦ they are welcomed, ♦ they are fed, ♦ business is done (once all chiefs are present, ♦ statements are made by host and responses are offered by the guest chiefs, ♦ gifts passed out and thanks rendered, ♦ all feasts are conducted with due deliberation and ♦ all feasts end in prayer.

Seating, within either side of the hall, the chiefs are seated with the head chiefs of the clan in the middle of the back row and the heir to these chiefs sit in front of them and the lesser chiefs are ranged to the right and to the left on either side. The types of feasts are as follows: ☀ Smoke Feast, ☀ Funeral Feast, ☀ Headstone Feast, ☀ Name Feast, ☀ Shame Feast, ☀ Adoption Feast, ☀ Pay-back feast, ☀ Public acknowledgement e.g. Graduation, sobriety or heroism, and ☀ Marriage/divorce feast.

A series of community discussions with a facilitator establish this vision and strategic goals, which provide the foundational roots for the existence of our office and the governance of our Nation.

Here is the vision statement that was made in 1994 when the Wet'suwet'en Chiefs when they chose to establish their own office:

"We are proud progressive Wet'suwet'en dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of our culture, traditions, working as one, for the betterment of all."



PTO Updates

Labrador Metis Nations Youth

By Julie Bull




Even though the Labrador Metis Nation doesn't have a formal Youth Group and doesn't receive dedicated funding to carry out Youth initiatives, that doesn't stop us from having Youth very involved in our communities.

Through our Learning for Life ~ Preventing Diabetes Project, many of our activities are targeted for Youth. Our Health Promotion Assistant is a youth and really gets involved in many community initiatives. In Central Labrador, Inuit-Metis, Innu and Inuit youth, along with the Community Youth Network came together to form a Labrador Youth Leaders group. This group meets very regularly and plans activities, which are carried out at least once or twice a week. It's been so great to see how many youth continue to participate. Most activities have 20 or 30 people and sometimes there has been 60 youth involved.

Some of those planned activities over the past several months has been Christmas Karaoke, jazz dancing, traditional cooking classes, swimming, snow shoeing, traditional craft making and much more.



Many of our youth attended the SE`TO SKATOWIN (empowering ourselves and others) National Youth Health Careers Conference in Winnipeg last February and some of our youth traveled to BC for the 6th Annual National Aboriginal Youth, "Violence & Changing Times" training conference. The Labrador Metis Nation also carried out a youth suicide prevention workshop, "Life Happens... Get Educated!", which was attended by youth across Labrador. It was a weekend of sessions on healthy relationships, drugs & alcohol, respect & attitude, and much, much more. Sadly, earlier this year we lost one of our LMN Youth Directors. David James Burden passed away in March 2008 and has left a void, not only with his family and friends, but with the community at large. David was so active in his school and community for many years and is sadly missed by everyone 



LMN Youth participating in various activities



Fun Stuff



Where I Belong

By Julie R. Bull

My heart belongs to Labrador, a connection I cannot explain
a feeling from within, nothing to take in vain
though miles away, my heart is here in this beautiful Land
a sense of community, always a helping hand
We have adopted and adjusted to modern-day life
through years of struggle, challenge and strife
on our pathway to change, we will fight
we continue to move forward, we will unite
Governments come and governments go
promises broken, make friend over foe
despite circumstance and because of them we grow
...as proud, strong, Labrador Métis Peoples
We will not be silenced
we will not be forgotten
Right here is where I belong
I will continue to sing the song
my home, my life, my Labrador
it is the air I breathe, my life forever more
Constantly and continually, securing my identity
Generations before me, fighting for my liberty
I know where I came from and I know where I am going
My roots firmly planted, continuously growing



Though miles away, my heart is here to stay
The road not taken – we're creating our own
“we've always been here – this is our home”

Any one wishing to submit a
story poetry, artwork, etc. Please
forward submissions
To:
carmen.rebecca@gmail.com



Thank You:

We would like to send out a special thank-
you to the CAP Executive, Staff, and to
everyone who has helped in making our
first addition of VOICE a success!

The CAP NYC



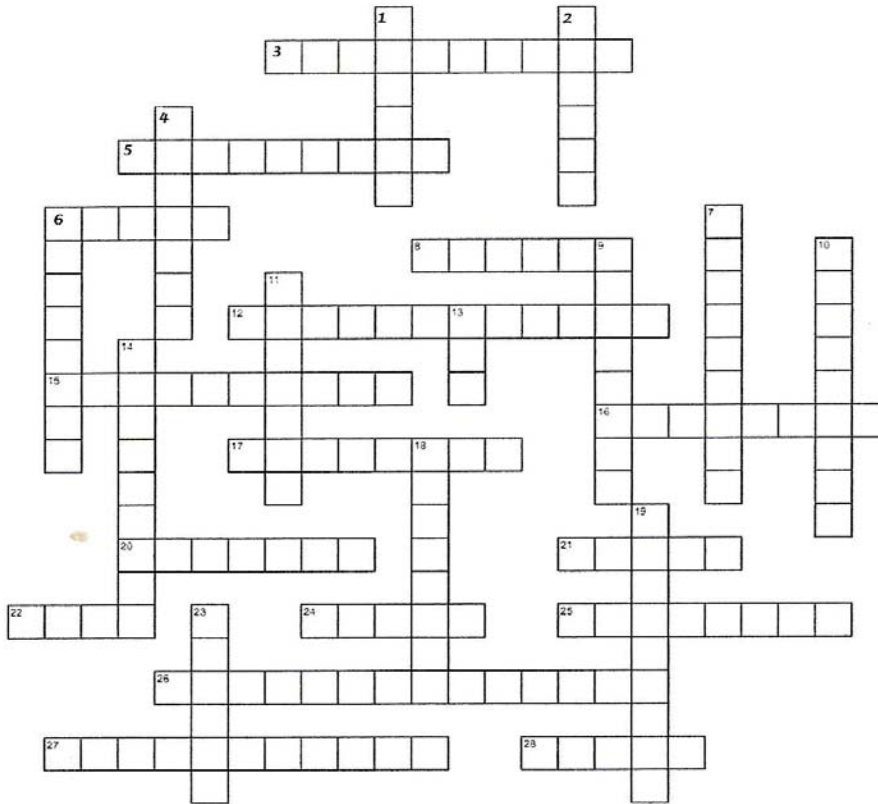
We can be found on
the web!
www.abo-peoples.org

Crossword – Irene Goodwin



CAP NYC CHALLENGER - ABOUT CAP AND THE NYC

CAP National Youth Council



Across

3. New Brunswick ___ Peoples Council
5. CAP Newsletter: "The ___ Peoples"
6. Labrador ___ Nation
8. Last Name of New CAP NYC National Youth Representative
12. Federation of ___ Indians
15. CAP NYC FACEBOOK group: "Aboriginal Youth ___"
16. CAP Report: "Justice is ___"
17. NAO: ___ Aboriginal Organization
20. Aboriginal ___ Coalition of Saskatchewan
21. CAP Report: "Where does the ___ Go?"
22. CAP is one of ___ federally recognized national Aboriginal organizations
24. Acronym for Native Council Prince Edward Island
25. "S": CAP NYC SC
26. "R": CAP NYC NYR
27. CAP NYC Annual Youth ___ Awards
28. The "Y" in CAP NYC

Down

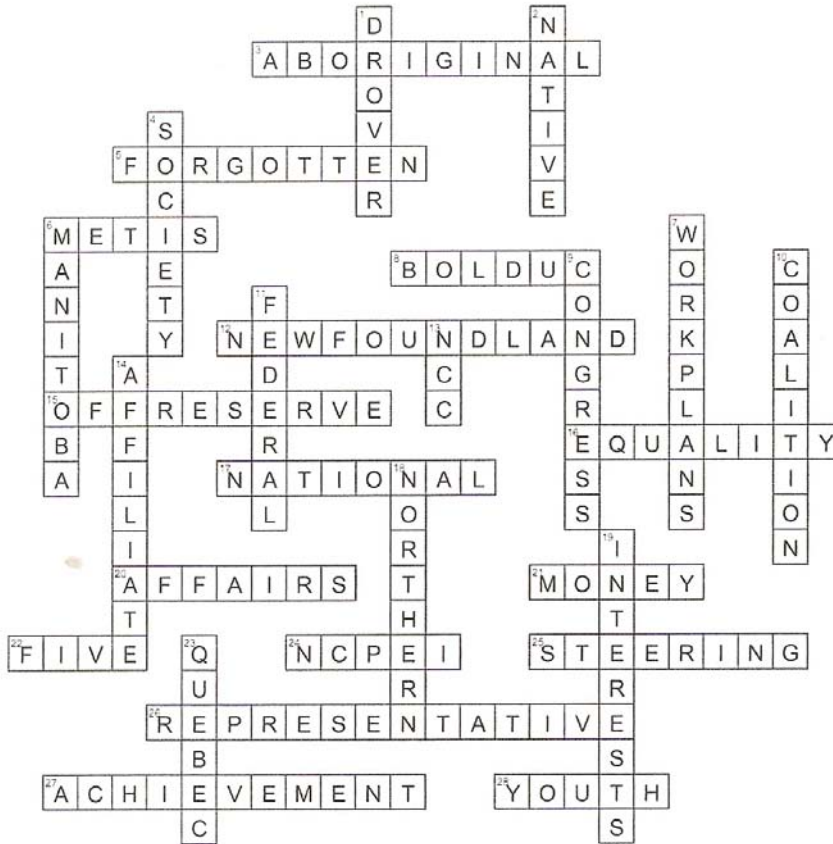
1. Recently retired National Youth Representative: Randy ___
2. ___ Council Nova Scotia
4. United Nation Nations ___
6. Aboriginal Council of ___
7. CAP NYC ___: Communications, Capacity and Policy
9. ___ of Aboriginal Peoples
10. Ontario ___ of Aboriginal Peoples
11. OFI: Office of the ___ Interlocutor for Metis and Non-Status Indians
13. CAP was formally the ___
14. CAP NYC is composed of one youth from each CAP ___
18. Department of Indian and ___ Affairs
19. Representing the rights and ___ of off-reserve Aboriginal People in Canada
23. Native Alliance of ___

Answers on Page 10

Crossword Answers

CAP NYC CHALLENGER - ABOUT CAP AND THE NYC

CAP National Youth Council



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