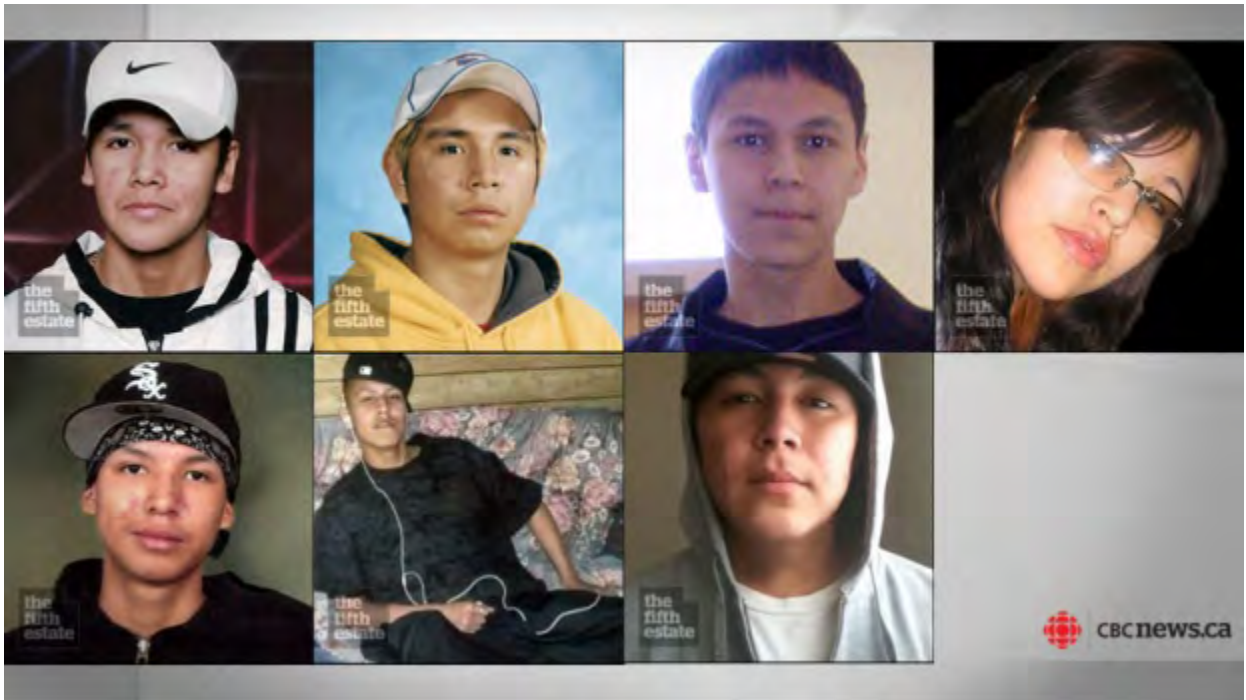


Wulustuk Times

Wulustuk - Indigenous name for St John River

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The seven students who have died in Thunder Bay, Ont., since 2000 are, from top left, Jethro Anderson, 15, Curran Strang, 18, Paul Panacheese, 17, Robyn Harper, 18, Reggie Bushie, 15, Kyle Morriseau, 17, and Jordan Wabasse, 15. (CBC)

Some of the young Aboriginal students killed/murdered in Thunder Bay in recent years

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Wulustuk Times:

Each month we gather and publish the latest, most 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 right data. Our aim is to provide you with the precise tools and information possible.

FIRST NATIONS STUDENT DEATHS IN THUNDER BAY INQUEST RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT RACISM

Inquest into death of 7 First Nations students in Thunder Bay, Ont., resumes Monday

CBC News

A "swirling storm" of racism and discrimination is killing indigenous people in Thunder Bay, Ont., says Patty Hajdu, an MP for the northwestern Ontario city and minister for the status of women.

Hajdu said her experience running a homeless shelter in Thunder Bay, before becoming a Liberal cabinet minister last year, showed her the deadly consequences of racism.

"There's a swirling storm of racism and discrimination against people who use substances and people who are in poverty, and it all comes together in a perfect storm where people are actually dying, because they can't access the services they need," she said.

Several friends and classmates of the students who died have testified at the inquest about experiences of racism in Thunder Bay after they moved from their remote First Nations to attend high school in the city. 'It's very scary'

Skye Kakegamic testified in October, telling the inquest that several times food was thrown at her from passing vehicles, and people made a war-whooping noise and yelled things such as "stupid savage, go back home."

"It's very scary," Kakegamic told jurors. "To them, we are just savages, they think it's funny. Like some people when they pick on a dog, or torture it, they think it's funny. They treat us like that."

The racism experienced by First Nations students in the city can stop them from taking part in more positive aspects of city life, said Christa Big Canoe, a lawyer representing families of the students who died.

"There's opportunities in the city and events and places and venues where kids could be participating in recreation activities and otherwise engaging," Big Canoe said. "But if they're made to feel unwelcome, if they feel like outsiders and they're treated in a racist fashion, it makes it very difficult to build those bridges." 'Overtly racist'

Hajdu said individuals come to believe it is OK to behave in a racist fashion when they see institutions employing racist policies.

"I think that's the challenge that when we have systems and structures that are overtly racist in the way that they offer services, that is an endorsement to the everyday citizen that in fact they must be more important than the person beside them," Hajdu said.

First Nations leaders hope the inquest can move from hearing individual stories of racist experiences to policy and institutional changes that will save lives.

Many chiefs believe First Nations education is significantly underfunded.

"We need to hear from the government of Canada [about] the policies they have imposed on our communities and how that's impacting our communities and in some cases jeopardizing the health and well-being of our students," said Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler said.

January is the final month of testimony at the inquest about the details of each student's death. In February, jurors will hear evidence expected to provide more context about why First Nations teens in northern Ontario have to leave their remote reserves to attend high school.

FIRST NATIONS STUDENT DEATH INQUEST: 'BUILD SCHOOLS ON RESERVES,' PARENTS SAY

-CBC News

Parents of Jordan Wabasse say they won't allow other sons to come to city for high school

The parents of a First Nations teenager who died in Thunder Bay, Ont., say they won't allow any of their other children to leave home for high school, despite the lack of opportunities at home in Webequie First Nation.

Bernice and Derek Jacob testified on Monday at an inquest into the deaths of seven First Nations students in Thunder Bay, including their son Jordan Wabasse, 15, who died in 2011.

All of the students are from remote First Nations in northern Ontario where formal classroom education doesn't go beyond Grade 10.

Wabasse "had more options in Thunder Bay," Bernice Jacob told the inquest about her decision to let her son move 600 kilometres south to the city. "He was anxious to come, he wanted to try a hockey league."

There is only an outdoor rink, shoveled by hand, in the remote community, and Wabasse loved hockey, she said. He played net for the Current River Comets after he moved to Thunder Bay.

His teammates were among those who helped search for Wabasse after he disappeared on February 7, 2011. His body was found in the Kaministiquia River on May 10, 2011. There has been little evidence about how he came to be in the water. 'I won't allow it'

Jacob said her 17-year-old son Devon is trying to complete high school in Webequie, but it is challenging because so few courses are offered in the community of about 800 people.

"Will Devon come to school in Thunder Bay?" Jacob's lawyer, Christa Big Canoe, asked her at the inquest.

"No, I won't allow it...because of the loss of Jordan," she said.

Currently no students are being sent from Webequie First Nation to Thunder Bay for high school, Derek Jacob told jurors. Jacob is an education counsellor in the First Nation.

When asked how best to keep First Nations students safe in Thunder Bay without their parents, Derek Jacob didn't answer directly.

"You'd probably have to have high schools in the reserves," Derek Jacob said. "And to have better facilities too."

Jacob said there are about 50 high school students in Webequie and one high school teacher. After Grade 9, they take distance education courses in portables that are "falling apart," he said.

He admitted not allowing Jordan's three brothers to attend high school in the city may limit their opportunities.

MANITOBA AUDITOR SAYS GOVT. HAS NOT STOPPED INDIGENOUS EDUCATION GAP

The graduation gap between indigenous and non-aboriginal students is worsening: Manitoba's auditor general -The C P

Manitoba's auditor general says despite government efforts, the graduation gap between indigenous and non-aboriginal students is worsening.

The report from Norm Ricard says only 55 per cent of aboriginal students are graduating from high school, compared to 96 per cent of non-aboriginal students.

It says the gap has grown since 2010, when the government started measuring the results of its efforts to help aboriginal students complete high school.

The report says the government has not given school divisions and other partners directions on how to improve the graduation rate for aboriginal students.

It also says the department hasn't set hard targets for what the graduation rate should be.

The government says it accepts the report's findings and is working on improvements such as a greater focus on literacy skills earlier in student lives.

ABORIGINAL LAWYERS HOPEFUL ABOUT THE FUTURE OF INDIGENOUS LAW IN CANADA

"No relationship is more important to me and to Canada than the one with First Nations, the Métis and Inuit peoples."

- Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

When it comes to Canada's First Nations and the courts, there are a few signs to suggest this is the beginning of a new era. Take for instance, the milestone 2014 Supreme Court Tsilhqot'in ruling, affirming aboriginal title to traditional territory in B.C. - a case that's sure to have ripple effects across the country.

And then there's the appointment of Jody Wilson-Raybould as Canada's first ever aboriginal Justice Minister and Attorney General.

It's all part of the Trudeau Liberal government's promise to forge a nation-to-nation relationship with First Nations.

Today, we're asking whether there is in fact cause for optimism. And we convened three aboriginal lawyers, who are themselves at the forefront of pushing for change.

Karen Drake is a citizen of the Metis nation and an assistant professor at Lakehead University's Bora Laskin Faculty of Law in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Promise Holmes Skinner is Anishnaabe, and a senior manager with Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto. She's also the Aboriginal Law Program Coordinator at the University of Toronto.

Kris Statnyk is ch'ichya`a from the Gwich'in community of Old Crow, Yukon, and an Associate with the Mandell Pinder law firm in Vancouver.

This segment was produced by The Current's Idella Sturino.

EAGLE FEATHERS NOW ON HAND FOR OATHS AT OTTAWA COURTHOUSE

Including indigenous symbols 'validating the importance of our culture, our spirituality,' says elder. -CBC News

People testifying at the Ottawa courthouse will now have the option of swearing an oath with their hand on an eagle feather to affirm they're telling the truth.

Indigenous elders and justice workers presented court staff with two eagle feathers for use in legal proceedings during a special ceremony today at the Odawa Native Friendship Centre.

Greg Meekis, Odawa's aboriginal community justice coordinator, first reached out to court staff last summer when he heard of an indigenous client who requested to swear on a feather instead of a bible before testifying, only to be told there was none.

"I was gifted with feathers during the course of my life as well," said Meekis. "I've had these two, and following the teachings that we are just carriers of these sacred items, the keepers, until such time that there's an opportunity to pass them on, I saw this opportunity to pass these two eagle feathers on to the courthouse. That way they'll be available to our people when the time comes."

The eagle is a significant spiritual figure in many indigenous cultures, and eagle feathers are considered sacred items that are used in ceremonies.

In recent years, courts across Ontario have introduced them to make the legal process more inclusive and culturally relevant to indigenous people.

"I think it's gonna be based on trust," added Meekis. "I think that's the big thing, where the court is willing to entrust some of our culture, in terms of their process in the system. I think that will be a good start. And any person that would request that feather, we can assume that they carry those teachings." "It's validating the importance of our culture"

Algonquin elder and lawyer Claudette Commanda handed over the feathers to courthouse representatives following traditional teachings on their significance.

"It's validating the importance of our culture, our spirituality," said Commanda, after the ceremony. "It's also validating or acknowledging that we also had our own processes of reconciliation, our processes of healing. And for me, I think it's important that our aboriginal clients have access to reconciliation elements, to elements of healing, but also to our own indigenous legal traditions."

Both Meekis and Commanda have offered to liaise with courthouse staff going forward on how to keep and care for the feathers.

Commanda feels encouraged by what she calls a "tremendous" move by local justice officials and the indigenous community.

"This is a beginning, and the door's open," said Commanda. "Look at the justice system that's opening a door to provide room and space for our ancestral knowledge."

SURVIVAL KNOWLEDGE - YESTERDAY AND TODAY

This month on January 18th Oxfam reported that the richest 62 people in the entire world are as wealthy as half of the world's population, that is, more than 3.5 billion people. Stated in other words, the 62 richest billionaires own as much wealth as the poorer half of the entire world population. Also stated is that 1 percent of people in the world own more wealth than the other 99 percent. The report goes on to urge that a crackdown is needed on these rich people and companies that dodge paying taxes by hiding their money offshore and thereby deprive governments of essential resources.

The daily news is full of articles about the turmoil in the financial markets and a worry about economic collapse. Interest rates are at an all-time low. The stock markets seem to have no relationship to the world's economic realities. News headings are concerned about some guy named Dow Jones crashing. Perhaps he's one of the aging baby-boomers who is old and weak with a heart condition, too old to be driving, and becoming a burden on "the system." <tongue in cheek> People, including seniors who are trying to live off their savings and money invested in stock markets are seeing it erode. In Canada we worry about the declining value of our dollar against the US dollar and other currencies. We worry about oil prices going down and the tar sands in the west laying off thousands of employees. We worry about rising costs of basic necessities of food and clothing that are imported since we don't produce our own. Farmed Atlantic salmon is being imported from Chile, Norway, Scotland, Iceland, Ireland, and New Zealand. Yet, here in their traditional spawning territory the native Atlantic salmon are disappearing. We can buy "genuine" deerskin moccasins from L. L. Bean, or "Tipi moccasins" with rabbit fur cuffs from Manitobah Mukluks', but these products carry a tag "made in China." Yet we worry about rising unemployment here at home.

Central banks are responsible for keeping inflation in check. However, they are struggling with trying desperate strategies such as "quantitative easing" and printing more money to stimulate the economy. But these strategies aren't working. It is being called an "economic winter."

My grandparents and some older relatives and friends, some who are still living, have told me that they never experienced much difference in the quality of life during the "Great Depression" of the 1930s. So how is it that they didn't seem to struggle to make ends meet like many others?

Today the majority of us are "employees". We work to get money so we can go to stores to buy our food and clothing imported from other countries. We work to get money to pay for our expensive vehicles, smart phones, cable TV services, and for our electricity, sewage and water services. We must buy expensive imported sports gear for our children that are

enrolled in organized sports and travel great distances to compete with other teams. In fact most families have by necessity both parents working away from home in offices or retail sales type of environments so we can have luxuries that we really don't need, but "the system" has us trapped. After we meet all our demands and expenses we pay extra for memberships to gyms to get the essential exercise we need to stay healthy. We are not self-sufficient. We cannot meet the most basic of needs by ourselves, clothing, food, and shelter. We buy them. It is all about having enough money to "buy" our survival.

The older generation who lived in rural areas outside the city grew their own food and hunted and fished for it. They made their own clothing including socks, mittens, belts, and even their shoes (my grandfather had cobbler's tools). They had no water bill to pay because a hand-dug deep well with a long handled water pump, or a nearby cold spring gave them free water and free exercise carrying the pail full of heavy water. Firewood, especially maples and beech, from the woodlot heated the home and cooked the meals. In winter fir boughs around the outside of the house kept the cold winds out and the cellar just cool enough to store produce from the garden like carrots, onions and potatoes. Many people had a few chickens for eggs and meat, and maybe a couple of pigs and a milk cow, even if they weren't farmers. My grandmother saved the ashes from the wood stove and put them in a potato barrel (when cold), then poured water over it to get the lye and make soap from animal tallow. Nature provided much of the food supply, fiddleheads, raspberries, strawberries, blackberries, gooseberries and butternuts. Salmon, trout, rabbits, partridges, foxes, deer, and moose provided food, fur and leather. For many women there was no specific time to set the alarm early to get up and get on the road to rush off to work as they do today. Their valuable and essential work was right at home. They didn't have to get their children to a day care early in the morning for someone else to care for them. The children played outside building snowmen, snow forts, sliding, snowshoeing, or skating on the frozen frog pond with neighbouring kids, all for free.

In the olden days self-sufficiency and self-reliance in the rural areas gave protection from the great depression. I remember some of those days too, the tail end of them, before the world got too commercialized, and it doesn't seem that long ago. Going back even further to the pre-contact days, the Maliseets got all their food, clothing and shelter from this river country, their Wolastoq land. In fact they traveled the river highways in beautiful vehicles that they made themselves completely from the forest. They had a different economy and more beneficial types of riches for the mind, body and spirit. But today's modern society has discontinued taking advantage of all those "free" foods, clothes and spinoff physical exercise, and has become completely dependent on the capitalist system that holds it hostage. Worse still, our society pollutes and destroys all those free and renewable resources, and we cannot return to them for survival even if we should have to.

Knowledge for survival today requires knowing how to manage money that you earn which is seldom tangible and probably gets deposited directly into a bank account from your employer's computer to your bank over telephone lines or satellite communications. This is not an age of bartering. You can't pay income tax or sales tax with beaver pelts or a sack full of fiddleheads (mahsusiyil). It requires putting away money in the most profitable bank accounts and investing it wisely in stocks and bonds in hopes that your stash will grow bigger all by itself as it sits there. You might even need to hire a financial advisor or broker to manage your investments if you aren't too knowledgeable. This is a different kind of

survival knowledge than knowing the signs for when the shad will be running in the streams, and when the fiddleheads will be emerging from their winter's sleep. Today 62 people have mastered this capitalist system, found its loopholes, and have become super-rich. But is any one man or woman who claims that amount of monetary wealth, more wealth than 99 percent of the rest of the people in the world, capable of measuring up to that exorbitant value? What will be their carbon footprint as they try to spend their wealth and consume the resources of this earth? It is very obvious that they have not shared any of their excess over what a basic human being needs to survive. The same sentiments apply to people who buy lottery tickets in hopes they can win a billion or more dollars without expending any labour. It is the ultimate example of greed.

A little over a decade ago I visited an Emberá (or Chocó) Indian village in the Panama jungle. Most of the rainforest is roadless so the village was reached by dugout boat up a river. Historically the Emberá lived along the river systems of Panamá and Colombia, similar to the Wolastoqiyik "river country people" but in a much different tropical environment. The Emberá fished in the river from dugout boats not birchbark canoes (the waters abound with over 800 species of fish), and they used poison darts to shoot monkeys for food. Their homes were raised thatched huts about 12 feet off the ground. The village I visited had about 80 people, men, women and children. The Emberá live a long distance from any urbanized areas and live completely off the forests and rivers. They had a medicine man that tended to an herbal medicine garden. They continued to practice much of their traditional culture, but the government had recently discovered it could make money from tourism by arranging tours for people to visit one of the villages, and the Emberá could sell their beautiful crafts for MONEY. Crafts that they sold for \$2 to \$6 dollars (CAN \$) would sell for \$40 to \$200 back here. Interestingly they had no place to spend their money so they made jewelry from the shiny coins such as fancy necklaces, arm bands, and attractive bibs for the women to cover their breasts (the women often went bare chested). Money had absolutely no value for them. Seeing this surprizing use of money as a decoration made me stop and think about the value of money and our society that centres on a currency based culture.

Today all of North America will feel the effects of an economic collapse when it hits, even in the back-lands of rural New Brunswick. When our intangible cache of money shrinks to a negative value in our banking statements it might be for our own good, bringing us back from an artificial world to reality. We might reconnect with the real life sustaining world of Mother Earth and be forced to strive for the sacred balance. Don't think it could never happen. History repeats itself. We might someday wish we hadn't destroyed and polluted the forests, wildlife, lakes and streams that are survival gifts to us.

If the reader hasn't seen it, there is a movie that was released in 2003 called The Snow Walker that illustrates the difference between the values of the First Nations' traditional world and culture and the world of the capitalism and its waste and pollution.

.. all my relations, Nugee-Kadoonkut

DAN'S CORNER ... THE COLONIZATION OF OUR PEOPLE BY THE WHITE EUROPEAN TERRORISTS

When the white european invaders arrived in our homeland in 1604 our people were the freest, healthiest, happiest, purest people in all the world. Our people had lived in our homeland, or as we knew it Oskigineeweekog for some twenty-five thousand years.

We had all of those societal institutions that whites claim are required to be considered a civilization. We had our own government, religious, health and economic institutions. And thanks to our traditional teachings, world view, values and beliefs we had no need for standing armies, police, prisons, courts, judges, lawyers or law books.

The colonized people are the ones who have always known what has come to be known as Canada, as our homeland.

The colonizers are the white european invaders who stole our homeland through genocide.

Our people greeted the white european invaders as brothers and with open, peaceful and loving arms.

But once the white european invaders gained the upper hand through their vast numbers and weapons they began to kill off the homelander or Indians in great numbers through warfare including germ warfare.

In a span of fifty years they managed to wipe out all of the Beothuk in the name of white imperialism, white supremacy and white capitalism.

While the white european terrorists were busy killing off the Indians, or as I refer to them the homelander, they also had their religious ones, the black robes, out working at converting the homelander to accept the european terrorist's religion - christianity.

The black robes used lies, trickery, threats and intimidation in their religious goal to convert more and more homelander to the foreign religion.

After reducing our population to just a fraction of what it once was the white terrorists began rounding up the remaining homelander and locking them up in those concentration camps that the european terrorists call Indian reservations.

In time the european terrorists decided that they would create a nation state upon the stolen land and call it Canada. Then the european terrorists began enacting official sounding legislation and laws as a means of confining, isolating, controlling, intimidating, terrorizing and colonizing the Indian.

Some of the laws enacted by the european terrorists specifically for Indians and Indians only are: The Indian Scalp Act, The Indian Reservation Act, The Indian Act, The Indian Pass Act, The Indian Women Sterilization Act, The Canadian Indian Citizenship Act and on and on into the present.

In the present day the Harper government has a plethora of laws and regulations either enacted or in the process of being enacted which are all designed for one people and one thing... to continue the reign of terror and control of the Indian.

What's been written to this day is the colonization process of our people over the last 400 years.

As colonized Indian Peoples we must pose some questions on the reality of our people being a colonized people. The first is what is colonization? The second is what is decolonization? The third is to question the legitimacy of colonization for any Peoples.

According to two prominent decolonization activists, Albert Memmi and Paulo Freire, colonization refers to both formal and informal methods (behaviour, ideologies, institutions, policies, legislation and economies) which maintain the subjugation or exploitation of Indian Peoples, lands and resources. Colonizers engage in their colonization process because it allows them to maintain and/or expand their social, political and economic power.

Colonization is detrimental to Indians because the colonizer's power comes at the expense of Indian lands, resources, lives and self-determination. Not only has colonization resulted in the loss of major rights such as land and self-determination but of all of our contemporary daily struggles (poverty, family violence, chemical dependency, suicide and the deterioration of health) are also the direct consequence of colonization. Colonization is an all-encompassing presence in our lives.

Again from Albert Memmi, first and foremost decolonization must begin in our own minds. He stated that in order for the colonizer to be the complete master, it is not enough for him to be so in actual fact, he must also believe in its legitimacy. And in order for that legitimacy to be complete, it is not enough for the colonized to be a slave, the Indian must also accept his role as a slave.

So the first step towards our decolonization is to then question the legitimacy of colonization. Once we recognize the truth of this injustice we can then think about ways to resist and challenge white colonial institutions and ideologies. This is the means by which we turn from being subjugated human beings to being free human beings.

In accepting the premise of the injustice of colonization and working towards decolonization we are not relegating ourselves to the status of victim. Instead we are actively working toward our own freedom to transform our lives and the world around us. This effort which begins within our minds, therefore, has revolutionary potential.

In the words of the great Lakota Medicine Elder: There is only one thing worse than knowing that we were once free, and that is forgetting that we once were free.

This is where the Indian is today. We have forgotten that once we were free, because most of us no longer know our spirituality, nor our traditional teachings, nor our sacred ceremonies, nor our language, nor our cultural ways, nor our beliefs and values, nor our identity as human beings. Instead what we do know are our white oppressors' religion, their language, their culture, their warped values and beliefs, as well as all things white.

All My Relations -Dan Ennis

DEAN'S DEN 1) FUTURE PATH 2) MY MINI SNOWMAN

Future Path

The beaver - Kwapit

And the bear - Muwin

Say treat the earth

As if you care,

The wild cat - Puso

And the mink - Tchiakes

Say we must re-do

The way we think,

The porcupine - Matuwes

And wolverine - Laks

Say show respect

For everything,

The bull moose - Musiap

And the forest deer - Huttokiap

Say time for change

Is now - is here,

And the skunk - Apiktchilu

And sable too - Nimakwsues

Say there's something

You can do,
Then, the fisher - Pukumk
With the fox - Kwokwsus
Both are nature's
Building blocks,
So the weasel - Sukwes
And the otter - Kinuik
Each have spirits
Deep as water,
The lone wolf - Malsum
And the squirrel - Ktchimiko
Each Creator's
Chosen pearl,
So remember
It's so true
The future path
Is ... up to you! - D.C. Butterfield.....

BENEFIT BINGO AT TOBIQUE FIRST NATION FOR PATIENCE NIGHTINGALE

Benefit Bingo is scheduled 6 to 10 P.M. on Thursday, Feb. 18, at the Tobique First Nations Casino Bldg. The sole beneficiary in this Benefit Bingo will be Patience Nightingale, 13, granddaughter of Pat and Abby Paul, Tobique First Nation, NB. CANADA.

Patience was originally stricken with spinal cancer in the spring of 2015. The cancerous tumor eventually moved into the brain area which is still progressing deeper and further requiring more intense and precise diagnostic care and treatment.

Due to the extensive exploration for easing pain and trauma, Patience's family is required to expend more time and finances in coping with her medical care and treatment, which thereby requires fund raising and relying on public at large to help in meeting their growing financial needs.

The date for the Benefit Bingo will be Thursday, February 18th, 6-10 PM at the Tobique First Nations Casino. The prime Benefit organizers, Gerald and Tina Bear and their supporters are asking for any kind of support and generous assistance from the public who may live in nearby areas or points abroad.

Anyone wishing to help, contribute or donate to this worthy cause may send donation to: Patience Donation PO Box 1984, Tobique First Nation, NB.

US contributions can be sent to PO Box 603, Fort Fairfield, ME 04742 Thank you. G. Bear