



# Office of the Treaty Commissioner

## NEWSLETTER

The Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) is mandated to advance the Treaty goal of establishing good relations among all people of Saskatchewan. The OTC continues to work with First Nations, provincial school systems, other educational institutions and the rest of Saskatchewan to raise the awareness and understanding of Treaties in Saskatchewan.

A Quarterly Newsletter

Also available on our website: [www.otc.ca](http://www.otc.ca)

Issue 7 January 2016

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### *Upcoming and New Events!*

### **UPCOMING EVENTS...**

**January 27, February 17 and March 2** – Opening Our Hearts: Responding to the Issue of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls

**February 3 – 5** Gordon Oakes Redbear Student Centre Grand Opening U of S

**February 8 – 12** Aboriginal Achievement Week – U of S – OTC will discuss Traditions and check out the OTC display in the Gordon Oakes Tunnel.

**February 19 – 21** – The Way Forward: Envisioning Treaty Rights in Modern Resource Management. Contact: [Melanie.daniels@kisik.net](mailto:Melanie.daniels@kisik.net)

**March 22 and 23** – Treaty Table Meeting

**April 28 and 29** – AWÂSIS Education Conference  
Acceptance of Difference: Incorporating Aboriginal Content in Education

**August 2016** – World Indigenous Business Forum. Visit [www.wibf.ca](http://www.wibf.ca)

**Happy New  
Year!**



### Race Against Racism

The Race against Racism started in 2011 with one goal; to provide a positive environment for people of all ages, cultures, religions and ethnic backgrounds to gather and promote an active healthy lifestyle, while encouraging positive police-community relations. To continue on with last year's success, they held the "Cram the Cruiser" event. In the last few years the organizers asked all Race entrants to bring a non-perishable food item to the race and help Cram the Police Car. This has always gone over really well and in the past few years they have been able to donate a ton(literally) of food and over \$2000 to the Saskatoon Food Bank. Along with "Cram the Cruiser" for the Food Bank, proceeds of the Race fees were given to the Canadian Red Cross. The Race benefits our community in two ways. Our fees and non-perishable food will help our community and the people within our community. It is also important because it brings together individuals from all over the city from all different communities, with all different backgrounds, with different religions, cultures, sexual orientations, ages and ethnicities. Everyone comes for a common goal to provide a positive, safe environment to live in. That's what everyone wants...That's our Saskatoon!



Constable Derek Chesney – Saskatoon City Police with Emory Laliberte – participant  
Photo Courtesy: Rhonda Gordon

### Walrus Talks

On Monday, September 28, RBC Foundation presented The Walrus Talks Resilience in Saskatoon, featuring a line-up of speakers discussing how cities and communities build themselves to thrive through difficult times. Walrus Talks were given by Saskatchewan Treaty Commissioner George E. Lafond; award-winning author Guy Vanderhaeghe; Canadian Commission for UNESCO's Danika Littlechild; Toderian UrbanWORKS' Brent Toderian; Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce's Steve McLellan; WWF-Canada's David Miller; Canadian Centre for Policy Alternative's Trish Hennessy; On Purpose Leadership's Nowshad Ali; and Build Strong Cities' Kadie Ward.

The event was completely sold-out and a great success, with an engaged audience both attending in Saskatoon and following the discussion online across Canada. The goal of The Walrus Talks series is to stretch the national conversation into new areas, and to engage Canadians in the constructive dialogue critical to big issues, and the first Walrus Talks event in Saskatoon fostered a fruitful conversation about resilience in Canada.



### Sean Lessard Earns the Pat Clifford Award

OTC congratulates Dr. Sean Lessard – Assistant Professor of Indigenous Education and Core Studies at the University of Regina's Faculty of Education – as the recipient of its 2015 Pat Clifford Award for Early Career Research in Education for his work in redefining the ways in which Indigenous learners and their teachers can engage in traditional and non-traditional educational spaces. Congrats Dr. Lessard!



On October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the Treaty Commissioner presented to a delegation of Treaty Six Chief's and Councils, Elders, ASETS Agreement Holders and Technicians, representatives of industry and provincial and municipal government. The presentation captured the importance of trust in relationships, which in effect is the true intent of the Treaty relationship. Our forefathers foresaw the needs of the people to co-exist in the future, and placed importance on education, health care and economic



Treaty Commissioner George E. Lafond speaking at the October 5<sup>th</sup> A.S.E.T.S

### **Canadian Armed Forces Seminar**

As an important public institution, The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) must reflect the diversity of cultures, values, and peoples that make it a credible organization to all Canadians across the country. As important members of the armed services, Aboriginal people have a critical role to play in serving and defending Canada, including its democratic values, multicultural traditions, and the principles of human rights. As one of the founding peoples of Canada, a protected group within the Constitution, and as a designated group within the Employment Equity Act, Aboriginal people should be afforded every opportunity to serve in the CAF, either at home or abroad, and enjoy all the benefits of camaraderie, morale/welfare support, career development, and 'selfless-service' that an honourable career in the military offers. To do so otherwise, not only undermines the military's operational effectiveness, but besmirches the reputation of the CAF and strikes at the heart of what it means to be Canadian.

In support of the CAF's collective efforts to promote Aboriginal people and their cultural perspective within the military, the military's Directorate of Human Rights and Diversity hosted a one-day executive level seminar on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015 for senior leaders entitled 'Aboriginal People and the Military'. The aim of the seminar was to provide an educational opportunity to foster a better understanding of Aboriginal People in Canada and their service in the CAF with a view to support the ongoing efforts to ensure a respectful and inclusive work environment, (Continued on Page 5...)

### **ITEP Homecoming Honours Orest Murawsky**

The first ever ITEP Homecoming "A Night to Honour Orest Murawsky" was held on October 17, 2015. During Orest's 30 years of leadership, ITEP became the premier First Nation teacher education program in North America. His vision and dedication to Indian education has given hope to First Nation people, as he personally mentored over 1,500 graduates. Master of Ceremonies for the event was Sharon Meyer and George E. Lafond. Gary Merasty and Chancellor Blaine Favel provided tributes to Orest Murawsky. On behalf of the College of Education, Dean Michelle Prytula announced a new scholarship that will be presented to future ITEP students in the name of Orest Murawsky. This was a special event that brought together the ITEP and College of Education community.



Orest Murawsky  
Photo Courtesy: U of S





From October 27 to November 24, 2015, OTC worked with the Mennonite Central Committee to lead a series of sessions exploring the historical and current relationship between the First Nations communities and the Mennonites. From presentations on cultural practices in family relations, colonialism, community dynamics and the way forward under reconciliation, the Academy of Discipleship hosted a group of twenty people for six Tuesday evenings. The focus on dialogue encouraged the participants to share their stories. The final session asked the participants to speak to their personal commitment for improved relations with First Nations peoples.



### Allen Sapp's Art: Through the Eyes of the Cree and Beyond

While many continue to grieve the loss of Saskatchewan artist Allen Sapp, who died Dec. 29, his legacy lives on through his contribution to reconciliation.

In 2005 his work triggered an exhibition *Through the Eyes of the Cree and Beyond*, which in turn led to a partnership between the Office of the Treaty Commissioner and The Allen Sapp Gallery in North Battleford.

"I see Allen Sapp's legacy in part through that project as a real key opportunity to use to build the reconciliation we need," said Judge David Arnot, who was the treaty commissioner from 1997 to April 2007.

The partnership developed a teacher guide that is part of the *Teaching Treaties in the Classroom*, a resource material that has been accepted into the Saskatchewan curriculum and been adopted by both Alberta and Manitoba Learning, said Leah Garven, curator/manager of galleries for the City of North Battleford.

"Definitely Allen's work speaks directly to the treaty relationship ... and what it means to his people," she said.

"Allen's art and the projects that resulted, incorporating Allen's art gave a visual to educating people about the treaty relationship and it allows us to explain treaties better to people.

"Allen's art is really about reconciliation."

Arnot agrees. The place to start reconciliation is understanding, he said.

"Understanding can be created in the schools and the classroom and it can build empathy. Once that empathy and that understanding exist, you have a much better opportunity to respect everyone."

It is in that respect for everyone where reconciliation begins, Arnot said.

"I think there is a legacy that he has and certainly it's well known throughout Canada and the respect that he has is the kind of respect we should all have for everyone."

Garven has seen the understanding in the reactions people have to Sapp's work – while she travelled with the exhibit. She said the connectedness comes from subjects that bridged all cultures.

"He documented a time in history that was very difficult in Saskatchewan in the 1930s and 40s during depression and post-depression. People, all sorts of people, were hungry, starving and poor, regardless of their background," she said.

"So because of that, his images were something that people of any culture could relate to that remembered Saskatchewan at that time."

For more on Allen Sapp's Art: *Through the Eyes of the Cree and Beyond*, teachers guide visit [otc.ca](http://otc.ca)





*Jennifer Heimbecker, Director of Speakers Bureau*

Reflecting on this past year and the direction of the Speaker's Bureau, I wanted to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of the Speakers that I have been so fortunate to work with. The Speakers truly are the Treaty Warriors in this department of OTC. They take time from their families, schedules, work and lives to travel Saskatchewan teaching, explaining, leading and empowering the Saskatchewan public to recognize treaties and learn our Saskatchewan history which was built on nations coming together via Treaty. I also want to acknowledge all the teachers, principals, students, churches, businesses, organizations, the RCMP (both Saskatchewan and Alberta), the Ministry of Justice, Provincial Libraries and the numerous newcomer associations for the endless requests for Treaty speakers, presentations and/or resource materials. Hundreds of requests have come across my desk for every year that I have been working at this post. It's uplifting, motivating and inspiring to have come into this work so passionate about Treaties and then to see for myself the efforts by the Saskatchewan public to learn what treaties are, to learn how to be a treaty leader or how to be a good teacher, neighbor, friend, co-worker or boss.

In the time I have been the Director of the Speakers Bureau, I have witnessed Treaty flag-raising across Saskatchewan, Treaty ArtSmart projects, Treaties between First Nation and non-First Nations Schools. I have witnessed the emotions of a speaker telling their residential school story and I have witnessed the emotion in the audience as they listened to those stories. I have watched the speakers take the audience through a few steps in their moccasins and then with talent and grace, take that audience into a comedy-filled story to lighten the room as if they are saying "acknowledge it but don't live in that moment – let's move forward together". The speakers truly are the most talented, knowledgeable and resilient people I have ever had the opportunity to meet and they are out there working on a reconciliation path of building relationships among the people of Saskatchewan. So, to the Speakers Bureau members, with gratitude, appreciation and respect – **thank you, thank you, thank you for the hard work you do!**

**2015 Speakers –  
Treaty  
presentations,  
conferences,  
workshops, dance,  
music and more!**

**Annie Battiste**

**Dr. Jim Miller**

**Eugene Arcand**

**Gladys Wapass-  
Greyeyes**

**Joe Naytowhow**

**Lamarr  
Oksasikewiyin**

**Lyndon Linklater**

**Noel Starblanket**

**Ruth Cameron**

**Continued from page 3...Canadian Armed Forces**

and improve the effectiveness of the various initiatives as part of the CAF Employment Equity Plan. Facilitated by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, the discussions combined a mix of history, current affairs, and other issues that directly affect the relationship between the CAF and Aboriginal communities across the country. Guest speakers included The Honourable W.H. (Bill) McKnight, former Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development; Mr George E. Lafond, former Tribal Chief of the Saskatoon Tribal Council and current Treaty Commissioner in Saskatchewan; and Craig Nyirfa, a former police officer and current President of Birchwood Consulting.

Overall, the one-day seminar proved to be a tour de force for all participants, mostly enabled by the outstanding contributions and tutelage of the three guest speakers. Thoughtful and engaging, attendees left the seminar with a better appreciation of Aboriginal history, heritage, and their perspective on indigenous issues within Canada. The support from the Office of the Treaty Commission proved decisive in the success of this seminar and could be used as a model for other government departments when considering executive training on Canadian Indigenous issues. As emphasized by the recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, it's important for all Canadians to "appreciate the rich history and knowledge of Indigenous nations who continue to make such a strong contribution to Canada, including our very name and collective identity as a country." Seminars such as the one outlined above represents one small step in the long journey of better supporting Aboriginal people and their unique and sizeable contributions to national defence.



## Prosperity SHARING DIALOGUE

*Sharing and benefitting from the bounty or the land was understood by treaty elders as a fundamental component of the treaty making process. The understanding was not included in the final written version of the treaties and has not informed subsequent policies and legislation imposed by the federal, territorial and provincial governments. First Nations argue that they were never consulted about the long-term development of their lands.*

*The idea of First Nations benefitting appropriately for a secure economic base from the bounty of the land and the natural resource sector has been documented in numerous reports, such as the Penner Report (1983) and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People report (1996). Most provincial and territorial governments outside of Saskatchewan have a form of prosperity sharing agreements; others are in the process of creating such arrangements.*

*The OTC and the MacDonald Laurier Institute's Dr. Ken Coates embarked on a series of working luncheons focussed on the issue of prosperity sharing as a matter of public policy. The methodology consists for a brief overview of the changing national environment on Aboriginal rights, interspersed with audience participation (in the form of clicker surveys) and open discussion. This system ensures that participants have a foundation of knowledge on the topics under discussion and that we receive a confidential survey of opinions and attitudes within the group. The survey and presentation have been modified after each event but the core questions have been kept standard throughout.*

*There have been six (6) working luncheons to date. The attendees have been selected from a diverse group representing First Nations, Metis, industry, SME's, municipal, fire and police, government, education, religious, social service agencies, and anti-poverty groups. About one hundred (100) leaders have attended the working luncheons as of Dec. 15, 2015. They've been held in Prince Albert, Lloydminster, Nipawin, Saskatoon and Regina. Several sessions are planned for the Q1-2016.*

*The purpose of the project is to present the final report and recommendations to the Treaty Table for deeper discussion on prosperity sharing policy development in Saskatchewan. The findings in this regional research will also be used to change the narrative, for broader debates and national research as it impacts public policy across Canada.*

*What we've heard to date:*

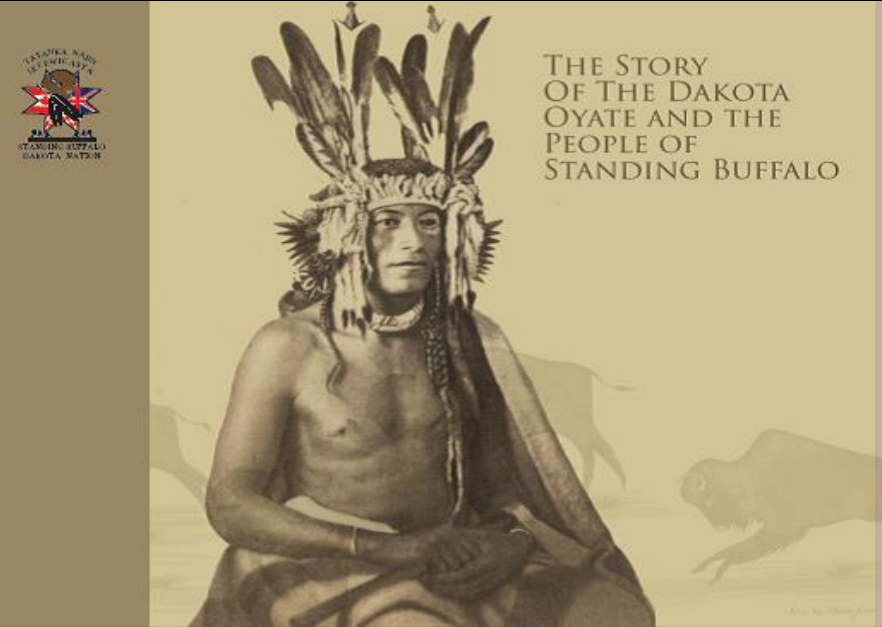
- *There is growing, but not yet a deep, understanding of the issues;*
- *Participants are motivated more by a desire for justice for Indigenous people than a widespread acceptance of legal right;*
- *People appreciate that everyone - and not just governments - have to contribute to creating sustainable solutions;*
- *The conversations show growing optimism about the future of Indigenous peoples;*
- *Participants are eager to see greater prosperity for Aboriginal peoples;*
- *There is a surprising level of support for some form of resource revenue sharing and a strong consensus on the need for prosperity sharing.*
- *It is clear that people appreciate the chance to discuss this issue in a Chatham House Rules environment. Many people have unanswered questions. Other meetings and knowledge sharing settings are seen as too partisan and not supportive of open discussion.*







*Brenda Ahenakew, Director of Education*



*This book is intended to tell the story of the people of Standing Buffalo, their history prior to contact with the newcomers, their contribution to the formation of Canada, and add value to the Saskatchewan culture and economy.*

*The idea for this document arose because of the 200th Anniversary of the War of 1812 and the little known contribution of the Dakota Oyate to support the British in the defense of Canada. As much of Canada celebrates its history, it is important for everyone to realize there may not have been a Canada if the Dakota Oyate and other First Nations had not fought side by side with the British a number of years ago.*

*The intent of this book is to provide a greater understanding of the circumstances of this situation. We all know that Canada is a diverse country, may we all gain a more complete and deeper meaning of the diversity in Canada, in Saskatchewan and among First Nations people.*

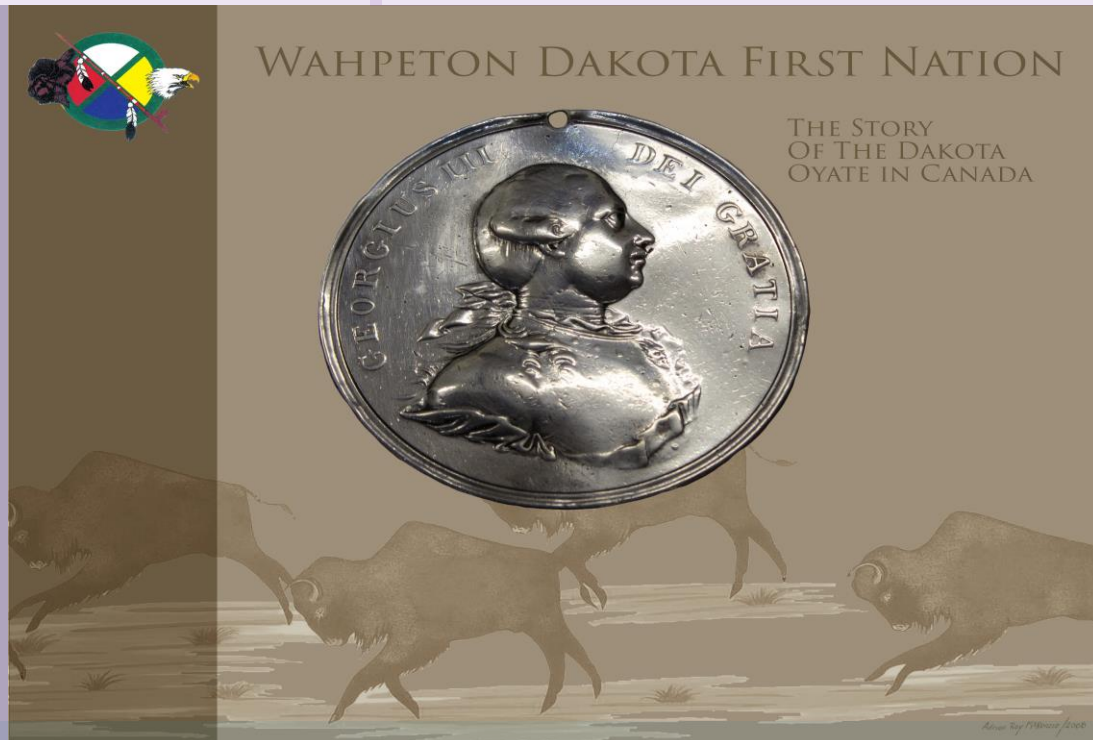
**The Story Of The Dakota Oyate And The People Of Standing**

*November 11, 2015, Standing Buffalo Chief Roger Redman, his Council, students and staff honoured the veterans, past and present with the unveiling of The Story of the Dakota Oyate and the People of Standing Buffalo.*

**Wahpeton Dakota Nation –  
The Story Of The Dakota  
Oyate In Canada**

*This book tells the story of the people of the Wahpeton Dakota Nation. It is written for students so they will understand and appreciate the history and contributions of the Wahpeton people.*

*Dakota Elders, traditional Knowledge Keepers and the Chief of the Wahpeton Dakota Nation have guided the work in this book.*



*This book is dedicated to those Knowledge Keepers, past and present. It is through these Knowledge Keepers that the Oral Tradition of the Dakota has survived through the generations. It is the wisdom of the Knowledge Keepers that the community members hope will be passed on to future generations.*



### **A Message from the West Kelowna Daybreak Rotary Club**

*George Lafond the Treaty Commissioner for the Province of Saskatchewan addressed the West Kelowna Daybreak Rotary Club on November 26, 2015. Mr Lafond presented a very enlightening and engaging talk around various First Nations and Treaty issues in Canada.*

*Of particular interest to members of the Rotary Club was his perspective on what the recent Supreme Court decision in favour of some BC First Nations may mean to future interaction amongst the stakeholders whether they be government, First Nations or companies regarding future developments in Canada.*

### **National Treaty Gathering October 17<sup>th</sup>**

*A National Treaty meeting was held in Regina on October 16, 17 and 18, 2015. The objective was to define some actions toward addressing traditional laws, practices and a framework for renewed Treaty relationships.*

October 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>, OTC participated on a panel and facilitation of sessions at the Restorative Justice Conference here in Saskatoon. Then later in the month, OTC was invited by Justice Georgina Jackson and Marilyn Poitras to attend and assist in engaging First Nation Elders to participate in the Canadian Administrators of Justice Conference. The highlight in the Conference was the strong message from TRC Commissioner Sinclair's presentation on the need for justice departments, and in consequence Canadian society, to take seriously the body of laws inherent in First Nations cultures. The TRC Commissioner's message regarding the incarceration rates and inequitable treatment of Aboriginal peoples could only improve in a reconciliation strategy that recognizes the merging of multiple law systems in Canada.

### **Reconciliation: What does it mean to you?**

*The OTC has been working with numerous partners to provide the people of Saskatchewan with an opportunity to learn and share their views about reconciliation. Over the past six months we have gathered input from over 400 citizens representing over 75 different organizations, groups and businesses. We plan to pull those sentiments together to use as a basis for further consultation and public discussion.*

*The objective of our work is to build a shared understanding of reconciliation, and to connect and encourage a diverse coalition of citizens willing to walk together toward our common goals. Join the conversation! Send us an email or check out our website: [www.otc.ca](http://www.otc.ca).*

### **FSIN Elders and Youth Gathering**

*Treaty Commissioner George Lafond has always been a great supporter of the reclamation of First Nation culture, especially as it relates to the Treaties and Treaty implementation. On October 6, 2015, he demonstrated this commitment once again by regaling over 40 students at the recent Elders and Youth Gathering on the Environment with his knowledge. Commissioner Lafond delivered the final keynote presentation at the event, staged in the beautiful Cypress Hills. In this presentation, he gave several insightful anecdotes aimed at revealing the circumstances of the Treaty making era and its relevance today regarding reconciliation and resilience. The youth were engaged and from their feedback appreciative of his style and manner. The FSIN and conference organizers are very appreciative of the Commissioner's time and efforts to support these worthy Gatherings. His interactive seminar was the perfect end to the Gathering.*