In Appreciation

We have mentioned briefly throughout the contents of this newsletter how important the participation of outside volunteers is to the mandate of the Drumheller Native Brotherhood Society. This year especially, the Native Brothers here at Drumheller have been fortunate in this area due to the generous response by a group of brothers and sisters from the nearby Siksika Nation.

The Buffalo Plains Drum Group has become a resource which has gained our unbounded gratitude and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the members who have travelled here from their homes in Gleichen to spend time with the Brothers confined here in Drumheller Institution.

It has been our pleasure, a pleasure we hope that will continue, to experience the good natured generosity of the brothers and sisters associated with the Buffalo Plains Group. We have learned the traditions of several cultural activities such as Hand Games, Drumming and Dancing, and Crafts. They have shared laughter and positive outlooks since first coming to participate at our Spring Round Dance and Crafts Exhibition in March of this year. We have enjoyed every function that they have attended and for this we offer our appreciation in the Spirit of Brotherhood.

As mentioned earlier in this issue, we will be including a special feature on the Buffalo Plains Group in our Special Powwow Edition of Arrows To Freedom... for now we'd like to make this effort to ensure that our appreciation is noted. May you all find the best that life has to offer, and may you experience Good Health and Happiness.

From the Chief and Council, Members, and Associate Members of the Drumheller Native Brotherhood Society...

Thank You!
A Dedication To The Warrior Spirit

The Warrior Spirit is alive and well. It's true, even while our struggles in real life continue, at times appearing to be "all consuming." The legacy of our ancestors keeps alive the will to endure, to contemplate, and maintain the resilience that has become a characteristic of our people.

Although our struggles on the inside may differ somewhat from those of our Brothers and Sisters in the free world, these prison walls do not alleviate the negative forces of alcoholism, poverty, or prejudice. It is here that we are allowed to recognize our problems, within these walls we gather strength to face the enemy once again. The Warrior Spirit is reborn through the teachings of our Elders and a renewed covenant with the Creator.

However, as unfortunate as it is natural, during the struggle we often lose Brothers and Sisters as they fall short of their life expectations. The death rate among ex-cons is a staggering statistic. Whether their deaths are due to an inability to overcome the grapples of addiction, or the unexpected act of suicide, their sacrifice gives credence to the realities of the world in which we live.

This issue of Arrows To Freedom is dedicated to all of the unselfish Warriors, who, in death provided those of us left behind with the understanding that we all live, or die by example. As a result we are given a choice...success or sacrifice. A Warrior knows no middle ground. There's not enough space to list all the Brothers and Sisters who have made this untimely transition, besides, we don't want to risk leaving someone out. However, they are alive in memory, their hopes and dreams are sustained as their voices echo in the words of each and every page that follows.

When the transition into the Spirit World occurs as a result of suicide or overdose, a distinct difference in culture is revealed. While dominant society prefers to relegate the memory of such people with eulogies tainted by dishonor and embarrassment, our people honor all deaths as preordained by the Creator. Pain and suffering becomes a learning process, we learn that losing is a part of learning, and the circle of life and death continues.

This issue is also dedicated to the Warriors who live by example. Brothers and Sisters like Elijah Harper and Leonard Peltier...Buffy St. Marie, and the people at Oka and Alcatraz Lake. Living examples of how the Warrior Spirit perseveres after years and years of struggle and hardship. We learn as we move around the circle that our Elders have much to teach us, and that we can learn from our children as well. We also learn that the meaning of true strength is kindness, and protecting what you believe in. As we struggle to gain our freedoms, it is comforting to know that the spirit of the Warrior is still alive and well.

May you succeed in protecting your freedom. All My Relations.

D.B. Pa'mis
# ARROWS TO FREEDOM
## 1996 Summer Edition

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## Voice of the Drumheller Native Brotherhood

"To Know...To Help...To Understand..."

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Editorial:

"THE POLITICS OF FREEDOM"
by Daniel Beatty Pawls

Ahneen;
Welcome to the 1996 Summer Edition of Arrows To Freedom, the voice of the Drumheller Native Brotherhood Society. My name is Daniel, I am Anishinabe from Shawanaga First Nations Ojibway Territory in Ontario. This issue of ATF has taken a long time to finally reach the printshop, however we had some other priorities that came first, and after some financial wizardry by our Chief and Council, the budget was able to handle the costs of this little mag that we've finally been able to put into your hands.

I would like to say that it's a pleasure to offer my greetings as Editor of this issue of Arrows To Freedom, but I can't. Saying that it's a pleasure to be confined here in Drumheller is like saying I hate Macaroni...it's just not true. I love Macaroni a lot, after all, how many people do you know that actually capitalize "Macaroni"? Anyway, Macaroni is part of my culture, just like watching North of 60, and going to Bingo. I sure wouldn't want readers to get the wrong impression of prison though, we still get Macaroni, but it's nothing like my home style Kraft Dinner with a side order of Valerie's bannock. We can also watch North of 60 on Thursday evenings too, but it's just not the same without having to wrestle for the remote, or arguing with the rest of the family who Sarah's baby actually looks like. I think it looks more like old Joe...now there's an episode!

However, we're a long ways from Lynx River out here in the badlands of Drumheller. Isolation is a word that we have learned to use regularly in our vocabulary. It's not just the distance that is a factor, it's the double enclosure of 20 foot fences crowned with razor wire, and rumours of some type of infra red motion detectors that add to the feeling of confinement. It's a prison in it's most basic definition, an obstacle that has come between you and your freedom. All the rumours about today's correctional facilities being posh and comfortable can be silenced by a single glance at the razor wire on top of that fence. Colour TVs do not provide a way out of here, and I'm sure that if there ever was a concise definition of the loss of freedom, those shiny cutting edges of razor wire would compliment it perfectly. If you don't believe me why not check it out yourself. For some reason, the situation takes on a much different appearance when you're on the "IN" side.

Freedom...half the time we don't realize what it means until we lose it. And of course, for some, prison is just a transition. Our lives on the streets are sometimes just a different type of isolation. Maybe you know what I mean...instead of being surrounded by fences and razor wire, your isolation could be the walls of a smoke filled bar room, or the harsh reality of poverty. There's a lot of things that effect our freedom while we are members of society. Just because you aren't surrounded by prison walls does not mean that you are free. For many of us, it took the ultimate journey into isolation to understand what freedom is all about. The biggest lesson about freedom is that regardless of how they try, they cannot take it all away from you. There's the freedom of our minds and spirits, freedom of
choice, and a number of other freedoms we can practice. The freedom of rights that are included in a particular charter are also part of the individual's freedom menu, but like most Government agreements, it changes in meaning depending on the colour of your skin or how much money you have in your bank account.

Freedom also means family and friends, and being there to support their needs. Whether it's with a regular pay cheque, or giving them the support of a simple hug, it's one of the things you come to miss the most in here. Resentments grow out of loneliness, and when your family can no longer bear the pain or helplessness that comes from your isolation, another statistic forms on the sheets that keep track of Family Breakdown. It's unfortunate, but the percentage of couples that make it through a penitentiary sentence with their relationship still intact are few.

Prison can be one of two things. It can be the end...or it can be the beginning. For most of us that are associated with the Drumheller Native Brotherhood, prison has become both the end and the beginning. Through our spiritual and cultural rebirth we are given another chance to find and maintain our freedom. Prison can be the end of a chapter in our lives that has brought misery and suffering to ourselves and the people around us. It can be the beginning of new relationships, with the Creator, with our families, and with the communities which we are still a part of regardless of how deep a gouge this isolation has cut into our lives. Prison can be the end of freedom as we knew it, and the beginning of freedom as it is supposed to be.

The theme of this issue of Arrows To Freedom is "A Vision Of The Future". With so much focus being placed on our pasts in this correctional process, it is easy to get lost in the desolation of yesterday. The document that is known as a criminal record becomes a thermometer that is used to determine your risk, and the probability of success once you return to Society. Think of it as a report card that can magnify the past to such a degree, that the things you did 12 or 15 years ago are still considered recent. One characteristic of the system that has followed us all the way from the days of the residential schools, is that we are rarely given a positive outlook by the people who are here to rehabilitate us. You're told you have a low level of self esteem in one breath, and in the next, you're told that you won't be considered for release because you've been a failure in the past and your record indicates you'll always be a failure. To break out of this negative cycle, we have to plainly accept yesterday for what it was, because the only thing we cannot do is change it. If we were to continuously reside in the past like this system dictates, there would be a lot more suicides and the alcoholism rate would escalate even higher. So we spend a lot of our time building today because it's the only real solution to creating opportunities for tomorrow. As one saying goes, and I saw it on a wall here somewhere, "Failing To Plan Is Planning To Fail." And while we can't change the future, we can envision some of the things that we'd like to accomplish. In the shadows of a prison wall, this can be a pretty tall order, but we've been finding that with the increased practices of our spirituality we have the tools that it takes to succeed.

Looking into the past is something that we need to do, but only in reference to today. If we can't learn from our errors and apply them to today, then what else could we use as a reference to success. The future is where it's at, it's where Freedom lies waiting. The thoughts we express in this newsletter are our "Arrows To Freedom." I hope you enjoy this issue, it may not be as good as Kraft Dinner or Bingo, but our writers will definitely give you something to chew on! Our next issue is due in September, in the meantime we'll be working on this thing called Freedom. Until then...Meegwitch.

Daniel Pretty Peewees

NOTE: There are a few people I would like to thank who contributed a great deal in the production of this issue of ATF. Wayne Carlson, for the use of his Computer and his timely WordPerfect advice, Kevin Stonechild, for proofreading. And of course, Gary Grimstdale and the gang at the Vocational Offset Printshop for the end result. Meegwitch.
Chief - Wayne Stonechild
Secretary/Treasurer - Rusty Noskey
Sergeant At Arms - Gabriel Cardinal
Cultural Coordinator - Dean Deschamps
Editor - Daniel Beatty Pawis
Sports Coordinator - Clarence Shorting
Peer Counsellor - Robbie Pelletier
NBH Cameraman - Alfred Cardinal
Drum Keeper - David Liberty
Native Lifers Chairman - Pat Tremblay
Blackfoot Awareness Group Chairman - Leon Good Dagger

"To Know...To Help...To Understand..."

Full Time Paid Native Brotherhood Positions:
Chief
Secretary-Treasurer
Peer Counsellor
Native Elder’s Helpers
Editor
Assistant Editor
NBH Cameraman
MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF
Wayne Stonechild

As Chief of the Brotherhood here in Drumheller pen, I must say that I enjoy working for the Brothers doing time. No, I don’t like prison either, but since I’m here and I have to pay for my crime, working for the NBH is something I have been doing ever since I started doing time.

After doing 18 months of my sentence in Edmonton Max I applied for a transfer to a lower security institution and was transferred to Drumheller November 17th, 1995. When I made the choice to become Chief of the NBH I was attending school in an effort to obtain a diploma or degree in Business Administration. Although I made the choice, I did so only after I was encouraged by a majority of the native population. I would not have accepted the nomination if I did not have the encouragement the bros gave me. I do not regret the decision and I have to say thanks to all the brothers who were able to regard me as a person who would work for their best interests.

I stated that I would perform my work as diplomatically as possible within the system to initiate programs and cultural activities. This is called our Annual Activities Calendar. I have been Chief now for only a short time and have been fortunate in my efforts to this point. Our activities are showing a positive increase in occurrence, and in participation by our active membership, along with an increase in the outside resource people who are responding to invitations.

I also coordinate a Healing Circle that has been established here in the Institution as a self help group. Weekly meetings are held in the West Chapel, the need for this type of group is indicated in the statistics that show that most of us are in here for crimes resulting from drug and alcohol abuse. The healing circle is based on the Native Spiritual teachings and helps us in dealing with all the negative aspects of prison life.

I have a good Tribal Council to work with, and they have given me the confidence to proceed. We have established an agenda for the rest of the year based on the fact that we have use of the Chapel area three nights per week. Mondays we have the Healing Circle, Tuesday nights are for our General Meetings of the Native Brotherhood, and Wednesdays are Cultural Awareness Nights.

As Chief, I have the responsibility of addressing the concerns of the brothers who are serving time here. We will attempt to meet with the Warden at least once per month. As we all, know, situations develop that can only be rectified by administrative order, and these concerns will always be placed on the agenda so we can address them collectively.

I have been making a consistent effort to contact various Native organizations in the communities around Alberta, and Saskatchewan. With all this talk about Self Government, we seem to be the forgotten Indians, except when it comes to time for these people to submit proposals for funding in the areas of justice. I realize I may isolate myself from them with this statement, but it can’t hurt much more because I am a homeless Indian, as many of us are. However I hope that we can provoke these people with words and make them realize that we are still a very real part of the First Nations. I know some of these people who are supposed to be out there addressing our concerns, but I can’t defend the way they seem to forget about us so quickly.

I will close this now my Brothers and Sisters, for those Brothers and Sisters of time who are seeking freedom, be strong and may the Creator walk with you.

Wayne Stonechild
VICE CHIEF'S MESSAGE
Malcolm L. Louis

As Native people, we must invest our determinations and talents together in order to accomplish what our Elders have envisioned for this generation and future generations. It has always been my contention that our Spirituality is the backbone to our strength of character, and lends to our resilient nature. It can also be aptly stated that "UNITY" is the one word that best describes our spirit. When we work together, we work as a common, equal unit, each with different roles. We have various talents, and our abilities and capacities may differ. When we pool our resources together we become effective in our striving. This is the foundation on which we should focus on in order to maintain our identities, and continue the wishes of our Elders.

Over the years, Native and Non Native people have become more aware of our distinct culture, along with the potential we have in this unique cultural landscape that is Canada. This has come about as a result of those determined people who have a great regard for our future generations. It is on that note that I would like say that the Brotherhood has a responsibility and a role to assume when we consider the generations that are to follow us. It is my personal conviction that we who have made mistakes can turn the negatives into positives for those that follow us. After all, our Elders were young at one time, and many of them refer to the mischief they once participated in. We have a responsibility to change, not only for ourselves, but for the families and communities which we are still a part of.

Aho.
Malcolm L. Louis
Samson First Nation
Tansi Nilotemuk; Rusty Noskey neya nisekason, kewetinok ochi Keg River, Alberta, sekatoo. Hello there Brothers and Sisters, and fellow cons. My name is Rusty Noskey and I'm a proud Metis from a small settlement up north called Keg River. I have been involved with the Native Brotherhood for a number of years now during my incarceration in prisons in the prairie provinces.

I am again honoured to be working with the Native Brotherhood Society here at Drumheller Institution working as the Assistant Editor, not to mention being able to work with our Editor Daniel Beatty Pawis. He's a great baseball player, the fastest man I've ever seen. Just the other day I seen him hit a grounder and the ball hit him in the ribs as he was rounding second base. Folks I'm telling you he's fast. Some people say he's been known to have left himself behind a few times he's so fast. But that's another story!

It's another one of those "you can't predict the weather" summers. We have a variety of events scheduled for the summer months though. So far we've been having a good turnout at all of our events. Our Spring Round Dance turned out pretty "meyawasin" (good). We also have an outside drum group from Siksika Nation who visits and supports us regularly. I'd like to thank The Buffalo Plains group for making some of our meetings quite interesting. They've taught us the skill of handgames, a long time traditional game that our grandparents used to play at their gatherings and powwows. It's a pretty lots of fun game. If you ever get the chance, check it out. You'll definitely enjoy yourself.

The Sweatlodge is happening quite regularly here too, every Wednesday for those who are willing to participate. It is open to the population unless otherwise posted. We're working towards getting the Healing Circle established so that everyone knows it is there for their personal struggles. We will keep you informed of the changes that the Chief and Council are working towards these days. I encourage everyone to get involved in the Brotherhood and see just what can happen. Ekomaka, yeah, ekoisi.
INSIDE AN OUTBREAK
Kevin L. Stonechild

INTRODUCTION

After hearing many Native/Metis peoples speak with indignation and frustration of the disparate treatment experienced within this prison whether it be with the case management process, the psychological assessment process, security personnel, the medical treatment process, or the National Parole Board release process, I am reminded of the words that a Metis lawyer and friend shared with me several years ago after I found myself in this part of the country.

She said, "Kevin, realize the geographical location that you are now in. Its the Bible-Belt of Alberta...."

Though she did not specify exactly what that meant, anyone with a degree of knowledge would swiftly realize that Bible-Belts and Badlands are notorious like South Dakota in their treatment of anyone with a darker hue of skin than white.

Today, almost 4 years later, after careful observation and firsthand experience, there is no doubt in my mind that many ‘holler-than-thou’ attitudes who occupy authoritative positions at this establishment would not know the meaning of the word ‘equality’ if it jumped up and bit them in the ass!

If I am generalizing in my opinion, I mean to say that generalization and categorization of the Native/Metis peoples imprisoned here is the rule of thumb among the staff, and yes, even among the prison population. But then again, it comes as no great surprise given the historical treatment of Native/Metis peoples as history, like a heartbeat, has a tendency to repeat itself.

I have observed favoritism amongst the many self-help groups in existence, favoritism in the internal disciplinary court process, favoritism in the private family visiting program, favoritism in medical/dental care, favoritism in the case management process, favoritism in the psychological assessment process, favoritism in the release process, favoritism in the telephone call process, favoritism in the available programming, and favoritism in the temporary absence program. Favoritism is simply a nice word for RACISM. I liken racism to the following excerpt:

"The three aims of the tyrant are, one, the humiliation of his subjects; he knows that a mean-spirited man will not conspire against anybody; two, the creation of mistrust among them; for a tyrant is not overthrown until men begin to have confidence in one another - and this is the reason why tyrants are at war with the good; they are under the idea that their power is endangered by them, not only because they will not be ruled despoticly, but also because they are too loyal to one another and to other men, and do not inform against one another or against other men - three, the tyrant desires that all his subjects shall be incapable of action, for no one attempts what is impossible, and they will not attempt to overthrow a tyranny if they are powerless."

-Aristotle, Politics, Book V, Chapter 11.

To me, a true tyrant rules the human mind and racism is simply a state-of-mind that rules and obscures otherwise clear situations. Either you are enslaved to a tunnel-vision perception of the world within and around you, or you are truly at peace with the vastness and endless possibilities that liberty of the human mind and soul provide. Your life is what your Creator and thought make it.

When you begin to mention the word "racism" around here, its like you've spoken something forbidden and taboo, especially amongst the racists themselves! An uncomfortable silence seems to descend upon the moment like napalm when that 'uglybird' word falls from your tongue. I smile inwardly to myself as I measure the reaction of the parties listening. Its like going into a roomful of Masons and mentioning Satanism.

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NATIVE ELDER'S PROFILE:
Honouring Chris And Susan Stranglingwolf

A few years ago, the idea of having a full time Elder in the Institution was something the Native Brotherhood considered insurmountable. However, in the past few years with the growth and success of the Native Spiritual program at Drumheller, the need for an Elder became very much apparent. Today we are fortunate to have Chris Stranglingwolf and his wife Susan as our advisors and resident Elders.

Chris and Susan are from the nearby Siksika Nation. They travel back and forth to the institution from the reserve at Gleichen the same as anyone else commutes to work. However, that’s where the comparison ends, because their work involves a very unique method of care-giving. For many of us here in the confines of Drumheller, our Grandparents are either many miles away, deceased, or we don’t know who they are. Although the Stranglingwolfs probably didn’t expect, or intend on adopting another 200 grandchildren, that’s pretty well what’s taken place. Either that or you could say that we just went ahead and adopted them as our Grandparents! The beauty of age and wisdom sparkles in their warm, caring eyes. Many of the brothers here offer gifts as a token of appreciation, so many gifts in fact, that there were institutional concerns about the proportion of crafts and artworks the Elder’s Office was receiving. Chris jokingly refers to his collection of arts and crafts as his own private museum. He deserves every bit of appreciation and then some.

Chris began working at Drumheller quite some time ago, after being involved with prisoners at the Calgary Correctional Centre known to most as Spy Hill, when the opening at Drumheller became available, he began the process of getting to know the native population here which is substantially larger than Spy Hill’s. Chris took over the position of Native Elder after Frank Daniels moved along. It has been a long road, and we sometimes overlook all the miles that our Elder puts on his truck just to be here with us. On one occasion last year, he was trying to make his way home in a storm and one of the ditches reached out and pulled him and his truck right into it! So we tease him about having had a vision of a Buffalo Crossing...as good natured about teasing as any of us, we always get that familiar laughter in response and the good feelings are once again restored. Laughter is an important part of healing, and there is an abundance of healing taking place in the Elders Office which is located in the West Chapel where NBH meetings are held.

Chris conducts Sweatlodges regularly, initiated the Native Fire Circles which are held quarterly, and he offers one on one counselling for any aboriginal prisoner who asks to speak with him. There are several non-natives here in the Institution who have taken a sincere interest in the native culture. One visitor here was surprised to see that, however, it’s been one of the Elder’s teachings that what we have is for everyone who wants to experience the teachings of our people.

He’s quick to talk about anything we are interested in, attending meetings and making our group prayers and offerings. Currently, there is talk of the administration contracting an Elder’s Assistant. With the expanding involvement of the Elders Office with Case Management reports and Parole Hearings, an assistant is needed because Chris is exceptionally busy as it is.

At one time in this institution, only 10 years ago, we could only see an Elder every couple of weeks, and usually that was for the duration of a Sweatlodge Ceremony. Today, we can take time out from our afternoon and sit down with Chris and talk about our problems, our dreams...he supports us all in many ways and it is showing in the number of brothers who apply their learnings to their lives. Sweatlodges held on Tuesdays or Wednesdays are often packed to the limit. We are very fortunate to have Chris as a member of our circle, he is considered a member of the Brotherhood in highest regards and the most popular question heard in the breezeway these days..."IS THE ELDER IN YET??" We take this time to extend our most heartfelt wishes for Good Health and Happiness to Chris and Susan Stranglingwolf. They fill an important part of our lives, while we are here, and after we leave. Chris receives phone calls all the time from brothers who have left here previously. It is also our wish that both Chris and Susan continue to enjoy their work here as long as possible. Many thanks to both of you. Hi Hi.
A Prison Prayer

Kitchi Manitou...Father of Creation...Hear Me
I give thanks today for a new beginning, for the sunrise and the four winds
I give thanks for the sweetgrass, the sage. The Eagle feather
I give thanks for all the things you have provided for your people
I am a grateful man today Manitou, but I am weak
I seek strength and courage so I can face my problems honestly
I pray for understanding and patience so I will not feel bitterness

Today I give thanks for many things...
The trees, the animals, the air and the water
All of the things that sacrifice themselves so that we may live
I pray for humility and a willingness to forgive myself and others
Smile with favour on my family and friends, show them good health and happiness
Shower my children with your love so they will grow and learn good things

I am a tired man Manitou, I’ve faced many hardships and failures
I ask that you forgive my weakness and show me new ways
I pray for other prisoners today...that they find hope and freedom
I give thanks for our Elders and all that they share with us
Please show them good health so they will know peace and live long
I give thanks for the Sweat lodge and the Sun dance...
I pray for the Pipecarriers who are so busy these days
helping and sharing their prayers so that we may find healing

I pray for the alcoholics and drug addicts who are lost in the cities
Last but not least Manitou...I pray for Freedom
Show me how to respect it so I do not take it for granted
Give me strength to grasp it firmly and never again lose it
for with it I lose the closeness of the family that needs me
Show me a vision of reality that will prepare me for the future
so I can walk this Sweetgrass Road and leave these cold walls behind me
Walk with me today so that I learn to recover from my stumbles
Guide me Manitou so that I continue to learn...

All My Relations.
BALLAD OF THE NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN

I'm the North American Indian and I struggle to be free in the middle of your politics and doomsday industries There are some who understand me and many more that don't and everyday I meet some more who say they will but won't

I'm the North American Indian and these wrinkles on my face have come from all the worries and the hardships of my race You say that we are pampered and we don't deserve our rights but maybe someday you'll come around and finally see the light

I'm the North American Indian and you see me everywhere from Whitehorse down to Tucson from Alberta to Lake St. Clair You point your fingers at Oka, Alcatraz and Wounded Knee and you try to say we're savages like you learned in history

I'm the North American Indian and I've learned to take a stand against all the things that take away the beauty of this land I've watched you from a distance and now I see just what you want you want everything for nothing while we get nothing for what you've got

I'm the North American Indian and I'm very proud to say that our circle is getting stronger each and every day as we search for ways to solve the problems that we face our struggle for survival is no longer such a race

I'm the North American Indian and if you look into my eyes you'll see 500 years of struggle in the midst of genocide I try to share the things I know and learn all that I can because our circle has a place for each and every colour on this land

I'm the North American Indian and I pray for harmony the Hollywood version of the wild, wild west has caused a lot of grief so remember when you see me that I'm not a savage like they say shake my hand in friendship and walk in sunshine everyday

D.B. Pawis
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THE ALLEY CAT

Yeah...
Darkness falls on the side street
but my eyes still glow
bright with conceit
Look at the way I walk
so smooth
and the pussies come running
when I make my moves
My coat is clean
my head is held high
and all the kittens purr
as I stroll by
But I walk right past
the jealous spit and hiss
cause I didn't give them a meow
or blow them a kiss
Because I got my kitty
she's home waiting for me
counting nothing but the time
cause true love is free
But it seems hard times
have fallen on this old alley cat
left all alone
no kitty to scratch my back
Picked up by the pound
and thrown in a cage
just counting the days
There was no funeral for me
so I can't be dead
What happened to my kitty?
And all the things she said?
And since I'm not around
showing my face
Another Tabby moves in
and takes my place
So what's an alley cat to do
when he can't decide
Should he let his kitten go
or just swallow his pride?

Decisions for cats are hard to make
in a world of canines
When you live in a sea of dogs
Alley cats get so lonely at times
But I think I'll pull through
Although hard times have arrived
The alley cat knows that things aren't so bad
when you have nine lives
And soon the days will pass
The cat comes out of the cage
Back on that same old side street
Strolling once again
Yeah... everyone will know
this alleycat's so cool
And the alley cat knows
This his kitten's a fool
But she doesn't see it that way
How can I make her believe?
She's going to regret losing the chance
To see the real feline in me

Evan Pelty
First Place - Poetry Contest
HANGMAN'S SONG

He stands there by the window
as if there's something he can see
through the cold steel bars and the razor wire
of Maximum Security
There's a guard up in the tower
there's a full moon in the sky
and still he stands there by the window
looking out into the night...
And he's trying to remember
just what freedom used to mean
before those steel doors slammed behind him
back in 1983
"and she said she'd wait forever"
but then she found somebody new
and the memories have all but faded
just like the ink in his tattoos
"yee she said she'd wait forever"
but forever is too long
when you're locked behind these cold grey walls
listenin' to the Hangman's Song...
One day the sun crept through the window
and he wasn't standing there
they found him hanging in his cell
and his blood was everywhere
he'd torn that tattoo out with a razor blade
he's left a note upon his bed
with an old photo of two lovers
and this is what it said...
"I've been trying to remember
just what freedom used to mean
before those steel doors slammed behind me
back in 1983
And she said she'd wait forever
but forever is too long
I've grown tired of these cold grey walls...
Tonight I sing the Hangman's Song."

D.B.Pawis
NORMAN PELLY

Our Grandfathers deserve respect
whether passed on or living
for the offerings of tobacco
the hanging of ribbons

For the countless prayers made
to the Creator above
in all four directions
for you and the ones you loved

The smell of sweetgrass burning
songs generations old
never forget my friend
the stories my grandfather told

As the world advances
we must never let our culture die
so rarely can you see great herds
or hear an eagle cry

In these days of clear cutting
and hydroelectric induced extinction
forget not our most important resource
our grandfathers and their visions

Listen you are the new generation
an Elder's words are wisdom
for one day you might hold the pipe
and teach your tribe's traditions

Evan Pelly

IN THE VALLEY BELOW

At times I feel like hunting buffalo
or standing on a hill
watching the children playing
in the valley below

I know this can never be
born into the world of the Whiteman
with the blood of my people covering the land
cultural genocide
stolen land and sterilization
this was part of your civilization
our pain and mistrust runs deep
our women and children left to weep
for 500 years we struggled to survive
our spirit was never defeated
it's still intact and alive
our children will continue the fight
until we get what is our right
your debt is due
it's time to pay
and self government
is the only way
then maybe my children's children
will be standing on a hill
watching the children playing
in the valley below.

Stone Bear
Here The Wind Comes
Lyman
THE DREAM CATCHER

There’s a candle by her bedside
that she lights up now and then
as it flickers in the darkness
she lets her thoughts drift off to him
It’s not that long until he comes back to her
but every night she spends alone
she prays that her dreamcatcher
will finally bring him home.

And the dreamcatcher he gave her
it still hangs there by their bed
beside a photograph of yesterday
and the memories of all they said
She still sees him in the candlelight
and as her tears begin to flow
She prays that her dreamcatcher
will finally bring him home.

She thinks of all the changes
that have come in the last year
She wonders if he’ll notice
all she’s done since he was here
There’s new curtains in the window
their new baby’s down the hall
and she’s got her own little dreamcatcher
hanging on her wall.

And every night she lights a candle
hoping somehow that he’ll know
she’s kept their dreams for love alive
for the day that he comes home.

And the dreamcatcher that he gave her
it still hangs there by their bed
beside a photograph of yesterday
and the memories of all they said
She still sees him in the candlelight
and as her tears begin to flow
She prays that her dreamcatcher
will finally bring him home.

D.B. Pawis
O1996

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

When she flashes her smile across the room
like a flash of lightning touching the moon
you knew since forever that she would come
Like a messiah rising to greet the morning sun
when she laughs your life becomes sane
Like gentle thunder comforting troubled rain
she walks towards you with passionate grace
like rays of sunlight striking your face
you knew that long before your lives converged
that a rainbow and blue sky melt and merge
when she touches your arm with a sigh
like rose petals caressing a butterfly
when sudden deja vu spoons your mind
like meeting a familiar shadow of another time.
When you know that dreams do come true
like a wizard’s spell embracing her and you
when your soul leaves to soar upon the sky
like a Pegasus racing the heaven’s up high
When you discover the meaning of destiny
like moonlight was meant to caress the timeless sea
you realize that vision is but a genetic memory
like a unicorn sharing it’s awe and mystery.
You realize that your lives of long before
are like ships meeting at night by the seashore
and your lives of today were meant to be
like haunted memories of the past finally set free
As another soul blossoms within and eventually arrives
another angel will bless the world and your lives.
The future of your family will travel you afar
like a messiah guided by the light of the morning star

K.L. Stonechild
THE GLORY OF LAURIE

The way you glance into dance slides me into a trance
As the groove when you move blows a fuse
The wildness of your style makes me smile
As untamed motion is without denial worthwhile

The sensual look when you slide into overdrive
Makes the floor blast alive as you glide into size
The electric grace of your pace make eyes race
As the beat to the feet of your heat dazzles the meet

The magic displayed of your grade cannot be remade
As your body is the shade where dreams are made
The commotion of your motion are waves of the ocean
As your heart sears at the encore of the floor

The territory you own has grown and is shown
As you defy stillness with new rage at the cage
The gift when you lift and shift into a rift
Makes the crowd loud and me proud

The challenge to Madonna...do you wanna?
As you glance out of dance and send me into that trance
"Madonna?" you say "she can't play...fat chance!"
As you prance and blast
Back into dance...

K.L. Stonechild

JAIL

Jail sucks my life
Are you tough enough
Thunder, Rain, Lightning
Lightning Horse
I ride the Lightning Horse

Sun shines in the thunder of my soul
Smiling in the rain, walking chains on my feet
In the belly of the beast
Laughter of children
Weddings, Funerals
are only pictures in my mind

A prisoner of the system?
Where will I be free?
Respect your dreams
Know your freedom
We are only captured in a physical sense.

Wayne Stonechild

ALWAYS

Gone are the days we used to share
but in my heart you are always there
the gates of memory will never close
I miss you more than anyone knows
Life goes on we know that is true
but it's just not the same without you

Remembering you is easy I do it everyday
Missing you is a heartache that never goes away
Your smile I will always remember
Your voice I will always hear
Laura I will always love you
For you I will always shed a tear
My heart will belong to you
Always.

Clarence Shorting
Inside an Outbreak Con't from page 9

In 1990, while imprisoned at Edmonton Institution, on behalf of the Native Brotherhood Peoples Society, I co-authored a 50 page submission to the CAWSY COMMISSION, which investigated the criminal justice system (the police, the courts, the prisons) and its impact on the Indian and Métis people of Alberta. In March of 1991, several volumes of that task force were published entitled "JUSTICE ON TRIAL." What I admired about the Cawsey task force in contrast to other past studies is that it addressed what others failed to, it addressed racism.

I distinctly recall the Solicitor General of Alberta at that time - Dick Fowler - announce on the news after the Cawsey Commission courageously delineated racism as the main cause behind the high number of Native/Métis peoples imprisoned in Alberta; he said, no, racism does not exist in the criminal justice system. And the next day, the same Dick Fowler on the same television news station suddenly retracted his statement of the previous day and replaced it with, yes, SOME racism does exist within the criminal justice system. Why I recall this vividly is because I almost split a gut in laughter at both statements Mr. Fowler released. Why? I could not believe that he would actually try deny the existence of racism within the criminal justice system at the expense of embarrassment to his department and then lend further embarrassment by retracting his initial statement.

To give some history to the Cawsey Commission, it was formed at the urgings of the Métis Nation of Alberta and the Indian Association of Alberta. The provincial government mandated the Commission with a general objective to investigate the criminal justice system and identify any problems and propose solutions to ensure the Indian and Métis people receive fair, just and equitable treatment at all stages of the criminal justice system in Alberta. In March of 1991, the findings and recommendations were published and were recognized by many Alberta prisons both provincially and federally. However, this prison proved to be the exception.

In early 1992, I was elected as the leader of the Drumheller Native Brotherhood of Indian and Métis. One of the long-term objectives that Council and I agreed upon was to gain recognition of the Cawsey Commission recommendations at this prison, which was easier said than done. We initiated a letter-writing campaign that included media coverage, many outside political organizations and the Commissioner of Corrections.

Finally, after 4 months of political pressure, the Drumheller prison administration verbally recognized the Cawsey Commission recommendations on July 13, 1992. We soon discovered, however, like night and day, that recognition and implementation are two separate entities. In retrospect, sensitization to distribution and management of programming dollars was the underlying basis of contention.

We received some concessions that amounted to nothing more than throwing some loose change at the Cawsey Commission recommendations which was designed to mitigate the calls for change rather than induce change. Explaining that these recommendations did not require dollars to implement but rather required a state-of-mind was like delivering a final testament to the 7th Cavalry right before Wounded Knee wearing a red headband.

Today, the date, the season, the dust accumulation on the Cawsey report and the direction of the wind has changed regarding the Cawsey Commission recommendations. Nothing more. Racism, like a diseased hand clawing from the grave and the living, is still prevalent.

The Native/Métis prison population is approximately 250 of a total prison population of 600, which is almost 50%. Native programming can be definitely improved upon as well as the need for the employment of two (2) full-time Native Elders. Again, however, "programming dollars" is the perpetual and incontrovertible suppressant that we face while there remains a multitude of non-native/métis programming that fails to address our needs effectively.

RACISM IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM:

The Cawsey task force viewed racism as comprised of "racial prejudice," which is a pre-disposed attitude to react in a given way and "racial discrimination," which is the act of prejudice itself. When racial prejudice results with individual or "systemic discrimination," racism becomes evident. Traditionally, racism has always been a problem for the legal system as raised during the Marshall Inquiry. The inquiry stated:

Discrimination is a paradoxical phenomenon; it may be obvious, but it can very difficult to prove. (Justice on Trial - Report of the Task Force on the Criminal Justice System and its Impact on the Indian and Métis People of Alberta. Volume I Main Report. March 1988, p8-20. Discrimination takes two (2) forms: 1. overt and intended. 2. indirect or systemic and unintended.
Though science distinguishes the two, we do not. The following statements were made by the Dana Tha Band of Assumption, Alberta: How many of the people serving in the criminal justice system at all levels are Native? The answer to that question will indicate the degree of racism in the criminal justice system. Lawyers, crown prosecutors and police are not discreet. People's past criminal records are discussed with others in front of community members. It's like they're just a bunch of stupid Indians. They mimic the broken English of the Natives or tell jokes with a racial slur. A joke going around town this winter: What did the Creator tell his Indian children? Answer: Don't do anything until I get back. If we are looking at the whole system, we need to look at this. (Ibid at p8-21).

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate Justice and Peace Committee addressed racism in their Brief: Through our relationships with Native people we are very aware of the extent to which racism is alive in our society. The roots of this racism extend back to the first encounters between Europeans and Native people. It continues in the assumption of the superiority of a criminal justice system based on British common law; in the resistance to the acceptance of Native traditions and spirituality; in the attitude that, 'it is their problem' when addressing alcoholism, suicide, unemployment on reserves or among urban Natives. It is our position that until racism among us is recognized and diminished then the statistics of over-representation in the criminal justice system will not be changed appreciably. A focus on having Native peoples becoming a part of the system as police, correctional officers, lawyers, etc. can be a form of racism. For one expression of racism is to make the traditions and systems of the dominant society determinent for all. (Ibid at p8-21). A Manitoba Native provincial court judge - Murray Sinclair - and co-chair of the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry stated:

Systemic discrimination is not a particularly well understood phenomenon - its utility and application has so far been confined to the field of employment law and practices. But even drawing upon the various legal analogies which arise from the field of employment law, one can come to some small understanding of what is meant by systemic discrimination. Simply put, systemic discrimination is discrimination which arises from the adverse impact upon an identifiable group within society by the systematic application of supposedly neutral criteria. Discrimination is by definition, adverse selection. (Ibid at p8-21).

The Marshall Inquiry concluded that racism is difficult to prove. To make it visible, additional statistical analysis is required. Murray Sinclair stated:

Within the administration of justice the statistical evidence of over-representation by aboriginal people in our institutions is a fair indication that the system's use of its criteria for client selection and method of treatment warrant review. Simply put, evidence of adverse impact in the absence of any reasonable and proven alternative explanation is proof of systemic discrimination. (Ibid at p8-21). Discrimination is both intangible and subtle. However, conclusions are drawn via statistical analysis about systemic discrimination. The task force concluded that racism is widespread in society. They further concluded that the criminal justice system is simply a smaller unity of the larger society. Therefore, any racism that exists in society will exist in the criminal justice system.

Though Native/Metis offenders are over-represented in the criminal justice system, Native/Metis peoples are under-represented as employees. In their Brief, the Canadian Human Rights Commission observed that:

The need for public service institutions adequately to reflect the composition of the community they serve is an elementary proposition for a society that values human rights. Since 1988, it has become federal law under Canada's Employment Equity Act. Statistics show that aboriginal peoples remain the single most under-represented group in the federal workforce at large, and the justice system is no exception. (Ibid at p8-22).

Recommendations made:

6.74 That correction staff members who work or have contact with or make decisions about Metis and Indian inmates receive Aboriginal awareness training when they begin employment, and on a regular basis thereafter. All staff members, from front-line staff to the most senior administrators, should be included. (Ibid at p6-39).

8.12 That Aboriginal awareness seminars and programs be provided to sensitize all criminal justice personnel to Aboriginal culture and the issues and problems faced by Aboriginal people. Public education of society at large about these matters is also needed. (Ibid at p8-22).

8.14 That criminal justice agencies in Alberta establish a firm position to discourage and penalizeddiscriminatory or racist actions or expressions at any level of the criminal justice system. (Ibid at p8-22).
b). RACISM IN THE RELEASE PROCESS:

To further examine the existence of racism within the scope of release, the following statistical information provides:

i) From 1985-1989 Inclusive, 40.2% OF ALL ABORIGINAL FEDERAL ADMISSIONS TO PENITENTIARIES THROUGHOUT CANADA CAME FROM ALBERTA. (Ibid at p6-8).

ii) Native/Métis peoples imprisoned at federal facilities throughout the Prairie Region (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba) have a lower rate for successful day and full parole grants: Native/Métis Day Parole: 48%; Native Full Parole: 19%. Non Native Day Parole: 52%, Non Native Full Parole: 25%. (Ibid at p6-8).

iii) The supervision statistics reflect the effect of this difference; At the end of June 1990 a total of 657 federal offenders under supervision on Alberta Community Corrections caseloads. Of those 657 offenders, 17.4% (114) were Native and 82.6% (543) were non-native. (Ibid at p6-8).

As these figures are further examined, the additional differences emerge:

Native/Métis Day Parole: 21%, Full Parole: 31.6%, Mandatory (Statutory) Release: 47.4% compared to NON NATIVE Day Parole: 17.1%, Full Parole: 54%, Mandatory (Statutory) Release: 28.9%. (Ibid at p6-8).

The least favored release (Mandatory Release or now called Statutory Release) reflects a higher number of Native/Métis peoples than non-native/métis, while the most desired release (full-parole) favors non-native/métis in proportion to Native/Métis peoples.

Another issue brought to the task force's attention was detention hearing referral. Statistics provided by the National Parole Board to the task force showed that for every 5% of non-native/métis referred for detention review, 10% of Native/Métis peoples are referred at the SAME TIME. Due to the higher rate of referral, Native/Métis peoples are detained in greater number.

To explain the terms "mandatory release" or "statutory release," "detention" and "warrant expiry date," I will personify "Luke Warmwater." According to the police report, Luke and an acquaintance were walking home from town to the reserve after a fruitless night of bingo-playing. The road was dark and deserted. Suddenly, like a bat out of hell, a big, shiny cadillac with steerhorns mounted on the hood came screaming out of the night. Subsequently, Luke was knocked 80 feet into the ditch and his acquaintance went through the windshield.

Consequently, Luke was charged for leaving the scene of an accident. The charge of break and enter against his acquaintance was dropped in exchange for Luke's guilty plea. Luke was sentenced to 4 years on May 17, 1990. His computed statutory release date is 32 months from May 17, 1990 (or two-thirds of 4 years). His warrant expiry date is May 17, 1994. If the National Parole Board feel that Luke may cause the death or serious bodily harm to someone before his warrant expiry date, they can make a detention order, which would mean that Luke would not be released after serving 32 months but rather after he has served the entire 4 years. With the recent Royal Assent that was given on December 15, 1995, amendments to Bill C-45 (CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT) may come into effect as early as January 1996. These amendments include a call for automatic detention review. Thus, we will see a greater number of ourselves paraded before the National Parole Board like sheep to slaughter and a greater number of ourselves being detained until warrant expiry date. There are indications that Native/Métis peoples do not fare well even after release: When a post-release decision is required of the Parole Board - Natives receive negative decisions more often than non-natives. When they are under mandatory supervision, there is no difference. (Ibid at p6-9). Which simply means, that Native/Métis Peoples on day, full or statutory release parole are more likely to be returned to prison if referral is made to the National Parole Board.

Recommendations made:

6.22 That more Aboriginal individuals be appointed to the National Parole Board (Ibid at p6-19).

6.23 That hearings of the National Parole Board be held in public. (Ibid at p6-19).

6.26 That National Parole Board members receive initial and regularly recurring cross-cultural training relating to Aboriginal culture and society. (Ibid at p6-20).

6.29 That Aboriginal spirituality be formally recognized as one of the criteria in the release policies of the National Parole Board. (Ibid at p6-20).

6.35 That the National Parole Board and temporary absence committee's view an Aboriginal's participation in Aboriginal cultural and spiritual activities as an important contributor to change. (Ibid at p6-20).
c) RACISM IN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS:

The Ceousy Commission heard from several Native/Metis peoples that in order to become eligible for any type of early release, psychological assessments (based on Euro-Canadian traditions) are required. The existing psychometric tools used have no Native/Metis content even when they profess to be culture-fair or culture-free. The assessors are non-native/metis. The standards of contrast against which judgements are made are virtually devoid of Native/Metis content. We have claimed this process acts to our detriment and operates as a source of systemic discrimination, which leads to fewer releases among ourselves. Statistics support our claim. The Native Brotherhood of Edmonton Institution stated:

The overall deficiencies and invalidity of the 'professional assessment' made at the Regional Psychiatric Centre (RPC) is the cultural and racial clash of non-native professionals 'assessing' the mental processes of a Native person with non-native means. The cultural beliefs and values of a Native differ sharply in contrast to a non-native and an inevitable outcome is that the non-native professional will diagnose a certain behavior as 'abnormal' while the behavior itself is perfectly normal in Native culture. The cultural and racial contradiction can reflect negatively upon the Native person when appearing before the National Parole Board. (Ibid at p6-13, 6-14).

Recommendations made:

6.16 That the provincial Solicitor General's Department and the Correctional Service of Canada make a concerted effort to ensure that assessment opportunities with Aboriginal cultural content or reflecting an Aboriginal world view (both Indian and Metis) are available to Aboriginal inmates who wish to undergo Aboriginal culturally appropriate assessments, and that these assessments be conducted by Aboriginal assessors. (Ibid at p6-14).

6.17 That the National Parole Board and temporary absence committee's review criteria for release and discuss the practical implications of these criteria with respect to Aboriginal lifestyles and culture. (Ibid at p6-14).

d) RACISM IN THE CASE MANAGEMENT PROCESS:

With regard to case management techniques, Native Counselling Services of Alberta submitted:

At the time of admittance to any correctional institution, the offender is incapable of developing any type of case plan. Yet this is normally when the inmate is required to make choices about his future in the institution. The concept of working towards a long-range plan may also be foreign to the Native inmate, since much of his life experiences may have been based on day to day living. Another barrier experienced by Native inmates is their limited academic skills, and as a result often have a poor understanding of the intricacies of release programs such as day or full parole...Native offenders require a better orientation to institutional expectations that are placed on he offender while incarcerated. (Ibid at p6-14).

Native Brotherhood's have expressed that the case management procedure is simply but a game where the prison sets the rules. Either you 'play-along' or you surrender any type of early release. If your 'game' is to satisfy the rule-setters, then you will not be affected in a constructive way. This was described by the residents of Stan Daniels Centre in their submission:

Consistently, institutional programs are the means used to assess or discredit individual participation. The inability to articulate feelings does not mean they are not learning. A.A. is being used as a carrot rather than remaining anonymous. Positive programs are being run on a point system, again advancing the realization and need to manipulate the system. Not a good quality or attitude to hit the street with. The development of negative attitudes increases with these types of programs that institutions see as desirable in rehabilitation and integration into society. Thus, undermining the spiritual and cultural efforts of Native participation. (Ibid at p6-14).

The task force concluded from this and other observations that Native/Metis peoples are aware that in order to gain "recognition" from the case management process, one must participate in non-native/metis programs, while appreciating the value of the Native programming which has no "recognition."

Effective programming without both recognition from the Native/Metis peoples and case management is useless. Effective programming with recognition from case management just because Native/Metis peoples 'have to' is equally useless.

The case management process is suppose to be guided by instructions found in case management directives and manuats. These instructions are derived from a non-native/metis point of view. Thus, any relevant information from Native/Metis sources, such as Elders, are non-existent in these instructions. As a result, incomplete documentation of information is
nevitable, which further leads to decision-making based on incomplete information. Bias results.

Recommendations made:

6.18 That documents used in the case management process be examined for cultural sensitivity and amended where necessary. (Ibid at p6-15).

6.19 That the case management procedure be reviewed to give Aboriginal inmates more time and effective participation. (Ibid at p6-15).

6.40 That correctional facilities provide culturally sensitive programming including programming such as alcohol and substance abuse treatment, employment readiness, physical and sexual abuse survival, life-skills and other relevant training. (Ibid at p6-25).

6.42 That the federal and provincial government's establish funding for programming as a priority and direct its attention to community release programs and prevention programs (Ibid at p6-25).

6.48 That every institution in the province which houses Aboriginal people, including remand and young offender facilities, should have the services of at least one full-time equivalent Elder. WHERE NUMBERS WARRANT, THERE SHOULD BE TWO ELDERS WITH PAY. (Ibid at p6-28).

6.52 That a budget be allocated within the corrections budget, specifically for Aboriginal activities and programs. It is desirable that Native Brotherhood's be actively involved in the process of developing institutional priorities for Aboriginal programming and that they have input into the expenditure of resources allocated for these programs. (Ibid at p6-29).

9) A NATIVE/METIS JUSTICE SYSTEM:

To deal with Native/Metis peoples effectively in light of the current criminal justice system's failure to do so, calls for a separate Native/Metis Justice System are logical and reasonable. The Canadian Human Rights Commission addressed this issue: In the face of substantial evidence that the mainstream justice system has failed Canada's Aboriginal peoples in matters of judicial fairness, correctional and rehabilitation treatment, decent policing standards, and so on, many legal experts, human rights advocates and Native spokespeople have called for a degree of autonomy for Native justice. This is also consistent with growing demands for Aboriginal self-government, including the devolution of powers through the government's 'community self-government' policy. (Ibid at p8-22). Exposure to racism in society for Native/Metis peoples is common and daily as outlined by the task force. The issues and problems faced by Native/Metis peoples and ignorance thereof by mainstream society is the main causative factor with the problem of racism. A separate justice system would enable the elimination of racism that affects just decision-making.

CONCLUSION:

I have presented a condensed overview of significant inequities inherent within the criminal justice system that impact our people adversely. I have omitted the racism also evident within the policing and sentencing process as the criminal justice system is simply a force of 'decision-makers' that possess individualized and personal values that intrude upon the deliberations of any human being. In other words, there is no judgement of another without subjectivity. What exists, therefore, in certain divisions of the criminal justice system will exist in others.

I have listed some Cawsey Commission recommendations that would, if implemented, address equality within this prison. A part of my vision is to see the legislative enactment of the Cawsey Commission recommendations. For it was the inspiration that initially sparked my participation in the submission made on behalf of the Native Brotherhood of Edmonton Institution in 1990. If legislated, it would become law to ensure our people receive fair, just and equitable treatment at all stages of the criminal justice system. Our politicians, however, are gradually addressing these areas in the political spectrum.

Considering that Canada's imprisonment rate among western democracies is second-highest next to the U.S., the criminal justice system has emerged into a financial and social crisis. Thus, a high-powered federal committee (THE SENTENCING AND CORRECTIONS REVIEW GROUP), recently formed, will focus on two areas in the short-term - strict, forceful penalties for violent offenders and new, cheaper measures to deal with low-risk lawbreakers. The design hopes to create an effective and sustainable system of policing, sentencing, corrections and parole to ease the financial and social strain and lessen the national prison population. How this proposed design will play-out and affect our people should be interesting to view.

There are some positive adjustments that are being acted-upon that will affect us in the years ahead. Recently, Indian Affairs Minister - Ron Irwin - gave support at a Native gathering led by Liberal MP Elijah Harper. Irwin agreed to immediate action to follow through on promises made in the Liberal Red Book in the last election that include: - Provision of resources to allow Aboriginal self-
government, Job Creation and better housing in Aboriginal communities, Formation of an Aboriginal Development Bank and Trade Commission, Creation of an Aboriginal Justice System. However, what was absent and noticeable in Ron Irwin's delivery was a government apology for past injustices that our people have endured. Until the symptoms of powerlessness are addressed that reflect in the socio-economic conditions of poor health, poverty, alcoholism, poor education, high unemployment and poor housing, the disproportionate number of Native/Metis peoples will continue to escalate within the prison system. Adverse social conditions are created by racial oppression of the powers-that-be in order for capitalism to sustain itself. Thus, greed and arrogance give life to racial oppression and racism. Mahatma Gandhi wisely said, that there is enough for everyone's need. But not enough for everyone's greed.

Until our people assume jurisdiction of self-government and a separate, operable justice system therein, racism will dictate the next Donald Marshall's, Willie Nepoose's, and Leonard Pelletier entering the criminal justice system. Our people have always been at the mercy of a foreign criminal justice system while the rich man has the means to provide a defence. The disproportionate number of Native/Metis peoples imprisoned throughout the land is a rational outcome of a basically irrational system. The disorder of racism has existed, like an evil, since man differed in cultural characteristics and skin color. The delusory belief of superiority is a learned behavior based on the premise that "whiter-is-better." Teach your children differently and better in that some of us are more equal than others.

I identify myself as a North American Cree Native not because of my skin color but rather because of the difference intrinsic in my belief and value system - my culture. My Teachers have instilled in me to see the Good in everyone despite the arrogance and deliberate ignorance that I may encounter. I do my best to live that teaching. To conclude, in this day and age, I am reminded that globally and internally, there are poor and rich people and the good and bad affect everyone therein. The gift of life should be coveted like a spring day and not be clouded with the evil of hate. I stand proud in who I am.

I Remain,

Kah-Peet-Way-Turn
(Cone-Thunder Coming)
Kevin Leslie Stonechild
37 year old Freedom Fighter
Muscowpetung Nation via Rocky Boy, Montana
DRUMHELLER
NATIVE
BROTHERHOOD
SOCIETY

PROGRAM SUMMARY

FOUR DIRECTIONS HEALING CIRCLE

Presently, this program is conducted on Monday evenings between 6pm and 9pm. The Native Brotherhood realized quite some time ago that a separate program was needed in order to give our members the opportunity to talk about problems. Initially, we had the Free Spirit AA Group, and The Sacred Circle Group. Since both of these groups have a similar purpose, it was decided that combining them would result in a much better environment for healing. The Four Directions Healing Circle is modelled after the Healing Circles used by our people at Drug and Alcohol Treatment Centres, and at various workshops and community self help programs.

The Healing Circle relies on the honesty of the participants, and the Spiritual teachings of our Elders and Spiritual Leaders. We also have invited professional counsellors and role models from the Native Community to participate as a part of the Four Directions Healing Process. It is our plan to have Resource People attend this function twice per month. Individuals fitting the prerequisites of this program reside at the Siksika Nation at Gleichen, the T’su Tina Nation at Sarcee Reserve outside of Calgary, and in the urban center of Calgary, although others from the surrounding area may be interested in visiting with our group. It is our ultimate goal to recruit a few people who will see that this group is a worthwhile effort and we can see some consistent support on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

NATIVE BROTHERHOOD
GENERAL MEETINGS

Tuesday Evening NBH Meetings have been happening in this Institution for many, many years. It has been from this gathering that so much of our past success has originated. It is here that new members learn of the activities and potential activities in which they may become involved, it is also where the NBH Council receives it’s direction for further project activity. The General Meeting covers a variety of areas related to our current status as prisoners. We have had resource people visit who have represented educational centres, Native Friendship Centres, Community Service Organizations, and Political Leaders, just to mention a few. The transition from institution to community is something which we place great concern upon. It sometimes appears to the native prisoner that the community is not willing to accept his past or allow the opportunity for change. Once we have heard the presentations, and the help that is available in the community, it becomes evident that this need for awareness plays a vital role in the release process. Another area which benefits from this exchange between the outside community and the Native Brotherhood is that the representative returns to his or her community with a clearer understanding of our needs, and the positive nature that exists within our circle. Occupational and Employment Counsellors, Educators, and members of the community leadership would prove to be excellent resources. We would like to have this occur twice monthly as well.
NBH CULTURAL NIGHT

The Native Brotherhood Cultural Night is held every second Wednesday evening. This is the night which we devote to the cultural aspect of our first nations people. There is a wide spectrum of activities which fall under the Cultural part of our program. It should also be noted that while our Spirituality is often noted as being separate, our Spirituality is a part of everything that we do. Therefore, we rely on Elders, Spiritual Leaders and Translators to provide us with the teachings of our ancestors. To date, we have had some very interesting and entertaining evenings which have included Powwow Drumming and Dancing, Traditional Story Telling, Hand Game Instruction and participation, and a Talent Night Contest which involved both Native and Non Native participants.

This program requires the attendance of individuals who can share their traditional and cultural knowledge, the Siksika Nation has a number of individuals and groups, who can provide us with consistent support in the Cultural awareness which we seek. However, since the Native Brotherhood consists of many tribal backgrounds, we must also consider the traditions of other tribes including the uniqueness of the Metis.

FIRE CIRCLE

The Fire Circle is a quarterly event which involves the teachings of our Elders. The focus of the Fire Circle is directed towards the Family, the responsibilities of the man and woman in a traditional based relationship, and the role of parents, children, and the community as a whole in regards to the dysfunction that results in incarceration. The Fire Circle is open to Native Brotherhood Members with Families, with a limited number of Associate Members. This promotes the possible representation of the four colours of man, something the Elders consider as a vital element in all Fire Circles. It is an all day event, and includes the sharing of different opinions, the cultural beliefs of those involved, and a general sense of understanding between nations. The Fire Circle has generated a great deal of interest within the Institution since it’s inception. Further development will be required.

TRADITIONAL FEAST

We plan to hold a Traditional Feast annually in October or November which is comparable to the celebration of Thanksgiving. This will be open to the population and invited guests. The Elder will conduct a Pipe Ceremony and give thanks for the things which the Creator has provided for all the people of earth. The Host Drum Singers will perform Honour Songs. The NBH will make arrangements for Traditional Food which is also a component of the feast. This function involves several resource people from the community.

NBH ANNUAL INVITATIONAL POW WOW

The main cultural event for the year that has remained consistent for the Drumheller Native Brotherhood is the Annual Pow wow. This celebration is usually always held in September. This coming September will mark the 28th Annual Pow wow. It is open to the General Population and participants are invited to take part in the cultural festivities common to the Pow wows that take place over the period between July and October. Drum Groups will be invited from the surrounding communities, along with Dancers from the outside, and a number of dancers from the Native Brotherhood. The Sweetgrass Road Drum Group, which consists of Native Brotherhood members who practice regularly, will also perform at the event. The Annual Pow wow usually makes the native newspapers in Alberta as we invite representatives of the Native press, and is generally a very positive tool for public relations.

OTHER NBH ACTIVITIES

NBH Sponsored Sports Tournaments
Floor Hockey
Golf
Baseball
Volleyball
Annual Fundraising Drive
Native Brotherhood Talent Nights
Arts & Crafts Projects
Tipi Project
Emergency Tobacco Distribution
Visiting Area Vending Service
INSIDE THE IRON TIDI
by Daniel Beatty Davis

I remember when I was transferred to Collins Bay pen in Kingston, Ontario. I was 19 years old and just starting to serve the first part of a sentence that seemed to continue forever. The brothers there referred to the prison as an iron tipi, a term that stuck in my mind, and a state of being that I am still struggling with today. Collins Bay is one of Canada's older prisons, there's quite a bit of iron in that place for sure. "The Bay" as it is affectionately known to those who have been there is also called "Disneyland" because of the towers and steeple fashion of its construction. In it's own way it resembles the castle that appeared at the start of every World of Disney show on Sunday night television. Disneyland doesn't have those cold stone walls reaching toward the sky on all four sides though. When you walk around the yard in the bay, you find yourself wondering how many times during your yard time that you were scoped in the cross-hairs of a .303.

Collins Bay got tagged as being the most violent prison in Canada in 1983. The media always made that sound like some kind of achievement award, the year before Archambault took the honours. Bad guys get a lot of media coverage in Kingston town. 8 federal institutions in one city makes for a lot of news, especially during the hot summer months. Media coverage wasn't nearly as accurate as the announcers wanted their listeners to believe, and sometimes it was comical. One time a Robbery took place in the Education area inside the walls. A local DJ described how one of the prison staff had been robbed by two men wearing balaclavas, and the police report stated "that they have 375 suspects in custody". There was more tension in that place than I have experienced anywhere else. I hated it.

Over the years I've spent in prison, I've learned a lot of things. They obviously weren't the things that kept me from returning to the iron tipi though, otherwise I wouldn't be here now. I am finally learning to look at my past and see what went wrong. And it's not your fault after all! Yes, it's likely that I don't even know you, you're just a reader of this little prison rag we call Arrows To Freedom. However, if you're there on the other side of the big black fence that surrounds us here, then at one time or another, I blamed "you" for me being "here." All you cops and counsellors, cab drivers, Christians...whatever. Taxpayers in general. It never used to matter, my prejudice towards society was well balanced, because I blamed everybody. After all, taxpayers keep this place going, and that means that my cell door slammed shut every night, where I would lay in the darkness and think about how cruel this old world was towards me...and wah wah wahah and so on and so on. I could pretty well justify anything.

Someone who knew me well once told me that I "had a lid for every can." Of course I took that as a compliment and continued to develop my abilities for covering the real truth and making everyone else responsible for my situation. I picked up a lot of distorted values along the way, and after a few years I began to look at the truth. It was then that I started to accept the fact that I was making an above average number of mistakes...but after all, I was just a human being, and that was normal. So I tried that for awhile...you know, continuing to make all my mistakes and blaming it on the human condition. Not a very good recipe for freedom I'm afraid.

In 1990, I took a trip to Poundmakers Lodge, which was a major happening in my life at the time, because it was the very first time I entered a treatment program without being forced into it by a Judge's Order or as a requirement of my Parole. I had been free for quite some time and I had started to realize that if I continued living the way I had been, I'd be back in this iron tipi. That's when I first started to admit that I may have had a problem
with drugs and alcohol. Actually, I should say that it was about that time that I started to "believe" I had a problem. I'd been giving alcohol and drug abuse a lot of attention but only to appease the people who made decisions on my freedom. For some reason though, I began to experience a change in thinking. I dove into Sobriety and it wasn't long after that I began to feel like maybe the world wasn't out to get me after all. I secured a good job in the Native Community, and I started to feel positive about things. It didn't last all that long though because in the city there's so many things to do, and after being in prison, I felt that I simply had to try it all out. I began to encounter problems and instead of dealing with them, I let them pile up. In the iron tipi, one of the skills we learn is how to forget all the things that are important to us. "Forget all the things you enjoy Man...because it's gone." After you get out you soon find that forgetting comes back to you like a slap in the face with a frozen rabbit, what once was a survival skill turned into just another problem to deal with. All the things I forgot were right there in front of me and I had no idea how to deal with them. This time I realized that there was only one person I could blame and that was me.

They say that attitudes and beliefs are the hardest things to change in a man. When I look back at the 19 year old who used to hate society with a passion, I realize that I have changed a lot. The main reason being that I started to walk what the Elders call The Sweetgrass Road. When I began to participate in Elder's workshops, Sweat Lodges and Pipe Ceremonies, I began to work on something I had struggled with all my life...my identity. The conflict I experienced in my adolescence as a result of my adoption began to heal. Through the wisdom of the men and women who volunteered their time to come and visit us at Native Brotherhood meetings, I learned that I wasn't the only one who had been dealt a lousy hand, a lot of my problems were shared by the brothers who sat there in all those circle gatherings.

In 1983, Aboriginal Spiritual rights were finally recognized as being the foundation of our attempts to rebuild our lives. Native Spirituality became the answer for a lot of brothers who had been searching so long for answers to their inner turmoil. Due to the access we have had to our Elders and Medicine Men, and Cultural translators, I have been fortunate to extract a thing called "pride" out of a past that is full of shadows and resentments. Instead of blaming...I learned how to pray. The lessons continue today, and instead of expressing anger and bitterness, I've been shown how to take a different approach whenever I have to deal with my past. I no longer forget all the things I once enjoyed...I remember...and I learn from my mistakes. Most importantly, I no longer find cause to blame...instead of looking outside I look inside. I am far from being humble though, and although this causes problems at times, I am willing to work on the more serious problems in this life of mine. The obstacles that I once thought would always be around to bother me, are disappearing and I owe all of that to the lessons I've learned from our people.

I've learned to express gratitude, and today, I have many to thank. Somehow, even in the darkness of this iron tipi I was able to see where my mistakes gained their origin. I owe a lot of gratitude to the wisdom and advice of our Elders. It was the efforts of the various Native Brotherhood groups and outside supporters over many years that brought about these opportunities. A lot of Native Prisoners suffered so that the spiritual and cultural rights of their people would be recognized in the land on the iron tipi. There were fasts, protests, and struggles that cost many brothers their good time, time in segregation, even death. Some of us here were a part of that. Others have found freedom road, or they have passed on to the Spirit World. We honoured those brothers and sisters in our Dedication to The Warrior Spirit at the beginning of this issue. On August 10th, we will honour their memory once again with a fast on Prison Justice Day. This memorial for those who have perished within the prison system, or as a result of it is taken pretty seriously by most of the people serving time in a federal prison. Of course there are some who don't comprehend the meaning of respect, but respect is something we have to learn, for some the lesson comes a little later in life. Like this lesson I've been learning about respecting my freedom. If you don't give respect, you don't get it in return. That's about as humble as I can get these days, but I'm learning. The things that got me here are all part of a cycle that repeated itself over and over for many years. I've been able to learn about dependance cycles and how they affect our people, how they affect me. Many of the hardships we've experienced are due to concepts that have been introduced to our culture from the outside. Residential Schools, alcohol and drugs, even a dependence on the welfare system. The situation of aboriginal prisoners is only an extension of the problems our communities are dealing with today. And while the Elders teach us that we have been given all the tools to deal with our personal problems, given some spiritual direction, we also have the tools to deal with these cycles of dependance we face as a
nation. The lessons learned here in the iron tipi could very well be applied to our problems on the outside.

It's unfortunate that we have to experience prison to learn, but that's a perspective that can be applied to many things. Some of our nation's most acclaimed addictions counsellors and pipecarvers have been on skidrow, and in prison. Struggle makes a nation strong, and we continue to apply our ancestor's resilience time and time again.

The bottom line is, that I may still be a prisoner in this iron tipi, but I no longer have to submit to the belief that I will never change, because I've learned about the cycle of life as our grandfathers have lived it. Hardship creates wisdom, and wisdom when obtained through experience is the foundation of change. To all of my brothers who have struggled for change, I extend my deepest gratitude. Ch' Meegwetch.

Daniel Beatty Pawis
THE AWAKENING
YOUTH PROGRAM:
An Introduction

Clarence Boucher is a former member of the Drumheller Native Brotherhood who has left the confinement of this institution to embark on a new project in the city of Edmonton. The Awakening Youth Group Project is currently being established in a joint effort between Clarence and the Edmonton Native Healing Centre at 11435-107 Avenue. John Stellingwerff, Director of the Healing Centre offered the opportunity to Clarence and since his release, a lot of support and activity has been taking place.

The concept of The Awakening Youth Group is based on the holistic concepts of our aboriginal culture, and the involvement of Elders, a Spiritual Retreat, and an open door to the youth of Edmonton. The main foundation of the program is based on Mind, Body, and Spirit. Youth participants will have the opportunity to grasp the spiritual and cultural awareness which is often missing in their lives. Artsand Crafts, Pow wow Dancing and Recreation activities are also included in the plan for offering an alternative to the "streetlife."

The Drumheller Native Brotherhood Society has agreed to participate with this project, members of the Brotherhood are looking forward to acting as Resource Speakers for the youth group, and possibly an interaction of Craft ideas and other activities involving the Drum and Dance Groups. We expect to hear more of Clarence's endeavors in the near future, and Arrows To Freedom will update the information in our next issue. Our combined wishes for success are extended to both Clarence and The Awakening organizers.

To contact The Awakening Youth Group
Phone 424-8885.
11435-107 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta.
A Message To Our Youth
by NBH Chief Wayne Stonechild

As an Oji-Cree, and Chief of the Native Brotherhood here on this reserve in Drumheller Institution, I feel I must get a message of healing across to the youth of the First Nations of North America. For those of you who are not aware of who, or where I am, I am presently incarcerated at the pen in Drumheller for doing a crime to satisfy my drug addiction. This had been my lifestyle since I started doing drugs. My choice but a very bad choice, and a destructive one.

Although I was forced to live like I did, due to the social and economic treatment of Native people, the opportunities to make a better life for myself were not as accessible to people like myself as they are today. I have no hesitation criticizing the system, but at this time we must all grasp the good things that we can learn using our culture. The only good criticism is constructive criticism. In fact I encourage that kind of criticism. All I ask is that you don't exercise this in anger or hate. This will only lead to self-destruction. It is not wrong to show expressions of concern. With all the concern certain people are supposed to have for our young people, some are only in these positions for money.

Usually people start with all the best intentions to deliver programs that will help young people, however, in the process they forget who they are and they lose all the good intentions they had. This is where you are justified to express how these people's attitudes and non-professional actions are detrimental to you. I am greatly concerned about this. Have no fear about talking diplomatically and respectfully as possible about your situation as you see it. In the past I tried this but since some so-called leaders were groveling at the feet of this beast, they decided to capitalize on my expressions by calling me a radical, communist, criminal Indian. This was all done so they could turn to their masters and say "Lock, we will help you get rich off the poverty of the First Nations People." I was not listened to, yet today the very concerns I talked about are now well established practices. What I am saying is that is up to you to grab life by the horns and get the best ride possible. First Nations people are replacing many of the European systems now that help our native youth live better lives. Never let them forget that you are First Nations People. It would be very unwise of me if I didn't take the time to tell you what is involved in becoming a strong and healthy First Nations person. In order to be able to express yourself in an intelligent and respectful manner you
must first learn and practice the sacred ways of our people. I speak from experience.

The sacred ways of the four directions are what put my life back in the proper perspective. I say the four directions because I have been taught and participated in many sacred ceremonies with people from all four directions. The Tribal Alliance which is respected by all our Elders.

I started with the Sweetgrass ways, I have fasted and I go into the Sweatlodge with our Elder here in prison. For this I am very grateful and I say Meegwetch. My heart hurts when I know that some of you out there are asking in your own secret way how and where can you find this. It is especially more bothersome when we know that some of these people in charge are able to see that you get these teachings, yet they do nothing. I find it as difficult as some of you to accept this, but this type of person will fall to the ground and like a bad storm will go away. I can only hope and pray that all the pain and suffering that you face will be taken as a sign that regardless of your circumstances you are entitled to be heard, respected and understood. After I went through the ridicule of certain people, I did in fact become a radical, I was still not an addict. I feel I made valid points by my actions, but I did not practice the sacred ways of our people. Due to this I started doing drugs. As a result my life has been spent in prison learning some very hard lessons.

I close now with hope and prayer that you are able to find the strength and the ways to follow the sacred path and teachings of so many of our Elders. If you feel the need, or think that I may be able to help put some positive direction in your life, please feel free to get in touch with me through the address of this paper.

May the Creator be your strength.

Wayne Stonechild
NBH Chief
28TH ANNUAL SWEETGRASS ROAD INVITATIONAL POW WOW

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 21ST, 1996
One of the most important facets of the Native Brotherhood movement at any prison is the availability and interest of outside volunteers. 1996 has been a very positive year for the Drumheller Native Brotherhood in terms of Volunteer participation due to two reasons. First of all, we were fortunate enough to open a line of communication with several groups of the outside of the prison fence. These efforts were initiated by Wayne Stonechild through a number of letters and phonecalls. The result has been an above average number of guests participating in our activities. People from the nearby Siksika Nation have been attending our Cultural Nights regularly, as well as representatives from Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump, Calgary Native Friendship Centre, the new Healing Lodge at Hobbema, and a few others who are scheduled to attend in the future. The positive impact that volunteers have on our program and activities is something that we all appreciate and look forward to continue seeing. There is always room for visitors at our meetings, and as long as our budget allows, we will continue to offer our invitations like the upcoming Powwow in September.

HOW DO YOU BECOME A NBH VOLUNTEER???

First of all you have to get past some of the negative stereotypes that we have been tagged with. In our next issue we are going to feature some of the comments and personal viewpoints of the guests that we have had attending our meetings. They found that their discomfts disappeared not long after joining our circle. It has been our experience that we pretty well ALWAYS hear comments which compliment our efforts to make our guests comfortable. More than once have we heard the statement "Well, this is sure a surprise because we weren't sure what to expect...we'll be back again soon!"

It's true...many of our outside guests find our functions surprising. From the opening prayers and sweetgrass offerings, to the closing remarks and farewells, new guests find solid reasons to discard old ways of thinking. In order to check out our Volunteer Program, you must first make an application that is part of the procedures enforced by the Correctional Service of Canada. They're the ones who make the gates open and close. The security check is to determine whether our guests have outstanding charges themselves. The Native Brotherhood Society is not prejudiced towards anyone with a record, naturally, however it is part of the prison experience to go through these applications and photographs, and we regret that this has to be a part of the volunteer experience as well. It's something that will not change, even our personal visitors have the same procedure to follow if they want to visit.

Since there are sometimes funds available for Volunteer travel expense, it is suggested that we discuss what area of the NBH program you may be interested in contributing to. Through the Native Liaison Office you will receive an application form which will go through the clearance process which takes up to four weeks. Once that is completed, all that remains is for you to decide which date you would like to attend our meeting or function and it will be your turn to experience Drumheller.
28th Annual Powwow

There is a considerable amount of time before September 21st, however we like to get our invitations out ahead of time so we can initiate the visiting clearance procedure. We encourage all readers to consider this humble invitation. We will be having a giveaway dance quite similar to those held at previous Round Dances and Powwows. We will also serve a good meal for everyone, and we guarantee a day full of First Nation pride and the celebration of our ancestor's struggles to preserve Tradition and Cultural practices. We hope to see you here in September. Feel free to contact us anytime through the mail or by phone, Maegwawt!!