News and Resources: December 2024
Joint Truth and Reconciliation Working Group

My people will sleep for one hundred years, but when they awake, it will be the artists who give them their spirit back" is a quote attributed to Métis leader Louis Riel. Riel is said to have made this prophecy in 1885.

Learn About Treaties: *The Yellowhead Treaty Map* is an accessible introduction to Indigenous perspectives on treaties in Canada. It describes the context, negotiation process and terms of treaties – as well as the implications of failing to honor them. https://treatymap.yellowheadinstitute.org/

LodgePole Arts Alliance (LPAA) is a not-for-profit organization whose mandate is to build an Indigenous owned, operated, programmed, and animated land-based cultural creative center on the eastern edge of the Dish with One Spoon territories (Frontenac biosphere). The group is working actively with Save Lemoine Point Farm https://savelemoinepointfarm.org/ to protect this land from development and use it to advance Indigenous culture and practices and to be a concrete expression of reconciliation and learning Indigenous ways of knowing and being. This conceptual space will be inclusive, grounded in Eastern Woodland (Onkwe'honwe [Haudenosaunee] and Anishinaabe) cultural practices, knowledge and teachings, performances, exhibitions, and celebrations. It will be the first of its kind in Canada on non-First Nation's treaty/territory lands. Read more about how you can be involved at https://lodgepolearts.ca/

Spirit Bear Reconciliation Calendar. Still looking for the perfect holiday gift? Full of actions that you can take to advance reconciliation throughout the year, Spirit Bear's Guide to Reconciliation 2025 calendar is the gift that keeps on giving! Available in French and English. Proceeds go toward supporting the work of the Caring Society to advance equity for First Nations kids and families. Order here: https://fncaringsociety.com/shop

Margaret Kenequanash has been dreaming of bringing reliable power to First Nations across northwestern Ontario since 2007. After nearly two decades of effort, that dream finally flickered into reality.

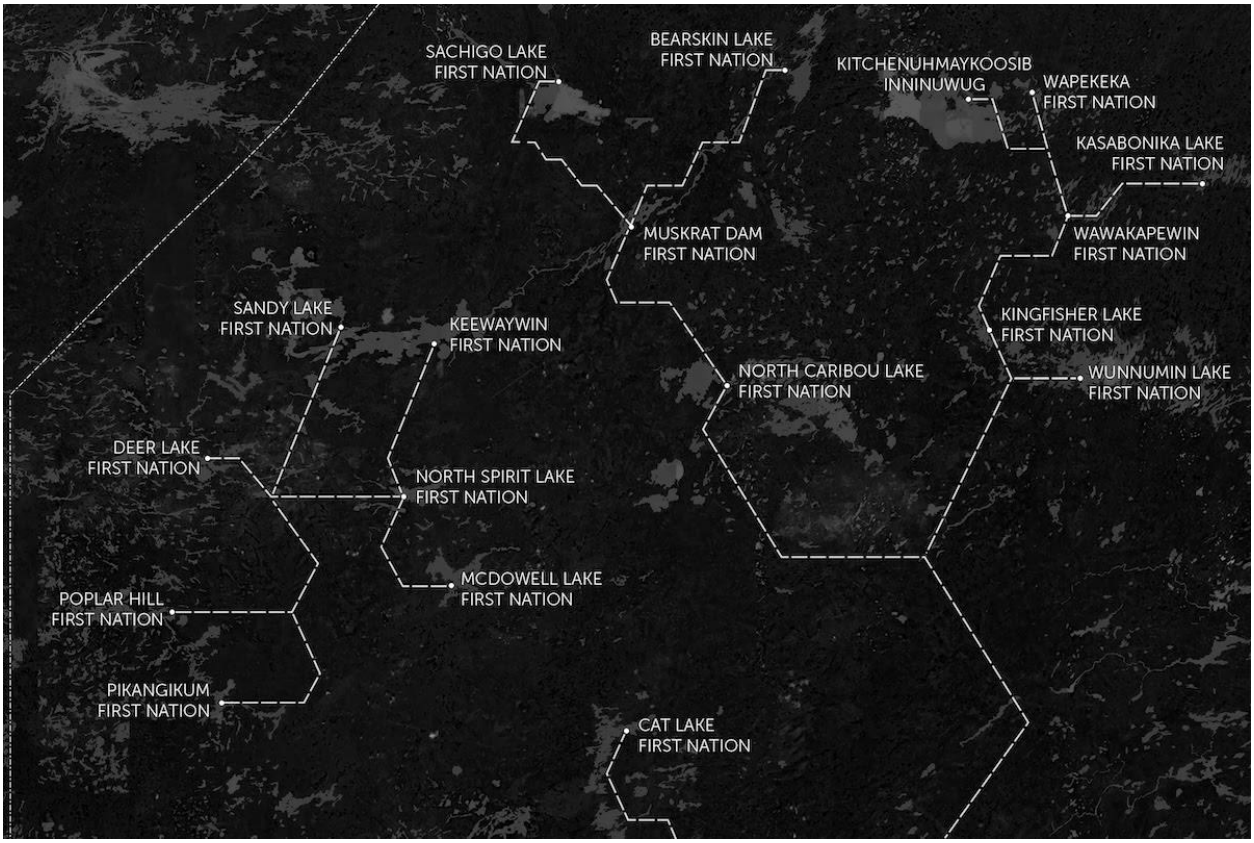
"Sometimes, it doesn't feel real," the CEO of Watay Power told reporter Fatima Syed at a celebration in Sachigo Lake First Nation, north of Thunder Bay, near the Manitoba border. A transformer and transmission lines stretching off in the distance have fired up in the small community, and 23 others in the remote region.

In 2009, the nations across northwestern Ontario realized they were being left out of the provincial government's plans to expand the hydroelectric grid.

Diesel generators had long hummed in these communities, the fuel trucked in on ice roads, and they were looking for a better way to keep the lights on.

Fatima has been "obsessed" with Watay Power since she first heard about the project two years ago. A month ago, she hopped on a plane (and then another plane and a bus) to visit Sachigo Lake, to see the transformer and transmission lines that now keep the lights on — and to learn about the hard work it took to get there.

There were blessings and speeches and a lot of chances to see just how big the impact of this electrification system will be, not least in the path the initiative charts for future energy projects.



The result of Fatima's trip is this captivating feature, which draws you in right from the jump with maps by art and design fellow Kevin Ilango.

Across Canada, Indigenous communities are sparking clean energy projects with benefits extending far beyond providing power.

In B.C., a battery storage project in the works by Malahat Nation on south Vancouver Island could help shore up the province's electricity grid while helping the nation grow its economy, secure its energy future and welcome people home.

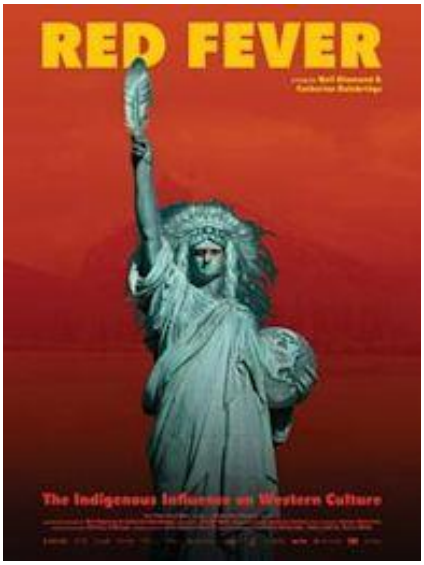
Righting Relations Oath: *In recognition of the importance of acknowledging that we gather on stolen land, Righting Relations has collaboratively developed an Oath to Turtle Island that outlines our commitment to this land and the peoples who have been its caretakers and defenders for generations.*

Why the Oath to Turtle Island? In their performance at the Righting Relations Ignite Change conference in Edmonton August 2017, a theatre group collective, directed by Mirtha Rivera, refused to swear allegiance to the Queen. Instead, in honour of Treaty 6's 140th anniversary, this Righting Relations team made a commitment to renew our Treaty relations. The closing of the Gathering was marked by drafting the Oath to Turtle Island, as a revision of Canada's Citizenship Oath.

The Oath: We commit to protect, respect and honour Mother Earth and the natural laws of the creator, that we will be respectful and bear true covenant to the First Peoples of this land. We will seek their guidance and place the grandmothers at the centre of our circle of humanity and wisdom. I fully acknowledge that I am stepping into covenant as a treaty person of Turtle Island.I accept my responsibilities to steward the land and waters and to ensure there is enough for all of life and for generations to come.

Righting Relations hass chosen to share its Oath to Turtle Island in place of the customary land acknowledgement, and asks allies to answer the question, what does "land acknowledgement" mean to you? Visit our Contact Us page to send us your thoughts. See more at: https://rightingrelations.org/

***Red Fever*: A witty and entertaining feature documentary** which reveals the profound — yet hidden — Indigenous influence on Western culture and identity. The film follows Cree co-director Neil Diamond as he asks, "Why do they love us so much?!" and sets out on a journey to find out why the world is so fascinated with the stereotypical imagery of Native people that is all over pop culture.



Why have Indigenous cultures been revered, romanticized, and appropriated for so long, and to this day? *Red Fever* uncovers the surprising truths behind the imagery — so buried in history that even most Native people don`t know about them.
An in-depth look at the ways Indigenous cultures have been reduced to stereotypes, appropriated by mainstream popular culture, and the impact on Indigenous peoples. Watch for the film in repertory theatres. Hopefully, it will be available for streaming in the new year.

Indigenous people must be the central voices in reparation efforts
(from The Globe and Mail Ontario Edition 23 Nov 2024 by Kathleen DuVal)

The Mau-Tame Club, whose name means 'Showing the Way' in Kiowa, was established in 1921 by the U.S. Office of Indian Affairs to encourage Kiowa women to learn how to keep house like white women. It soon evolved to showing a more Kiowa way, promoting the sale of Native art by its members and women from nearby Native nations in Oklahoma. The photo above was taken some time in the 1930s, in Gallup, N.M. Indigenous people and their nations must be the central voices in reparation efforts, Kathleen DuVal writes.

In October, U.S. President Joe Biden issued a formal apology for "one of the most horrific chapters in American history," the government-funded residential schools that tore Indigenous children from their homes and subjected them to abuse, resulting in the deaths of thousands of children and traumatic disruptions for countless families. Two Canadian prime ministers, Stephen Harper and Justin Trudeau, had already issued similar apologies, and Pope Francis has apologized for the Catholic Church's role in the residential schools.

It is essential that North America's non-Indigenous people learn about the residential schools and their tragedy and destruction; it is equally important that we recognize that Native nations survived genocide. Generations upon generations of Indigenous people suffered intense efforts to destroy them. Residential schools are the most poignant example, but the U.S., Canadian and Mexican governments also banned self-government and Indigenous religious ceremonies and language and stripped away land and the right to hold land communally through policies of allotment and termination in the 19th and 20th centuries. Native nations truly might have disappeared if not for their people's absolute determination to remain not only Indigenous people but distinct nations.

After all, it is Native nations who have pushed for these formal acknowledgments and apologies as well as Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the U.S. Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative. As boarding-school survivors and other Indigenous leaders have pointed out, apologies are empty without action. The Department of the Interior report that led to Mr. Biden's apology includes calls for government funding for community-driven healing, family preservation and reunification, violence prevention, K-12 and college education, and language revitalization. Because of both the evil of residential schools and the heroic survival of Native nations, citizens of the countries that tried to destroy them owe the recompense and rebuilding they demand.

Sometime in the 1930s, members of the Mau-Tame Club posed for a picture. They arranged themselves so that each woman's buckskin dress and headband, with their distinctive beadwork, were visible. Like most Kiowas, these women lived on what was left of their reservation in Oklahoma, but the picture was taken in Gallup, N.M. Mau-Tame means "Showing the Way" in Kiowa, and the club had been started in 1921 by the U.S. Office of Indian Affairs to encourage Kiowa women to learn how to keep house like white women, one of countless assimilation efforts. But by the 1930s the Mau-Tame Club was showing a more Kiowa way, promoting the sale of Native art by its Kiowa members and women from nearby Native nations in Oklahoma. Club members such as the ones in the picture travelled to the annual Gallup Intertribal Ceremonial to dance and to sell their beadwork purses, moccasins and cradleboards.

The Kiowa art historian Jenny Tone-Pah-Hote explains that when women wore their own beadwork in intertribal gatherings such as the Gallup ceremonial, non-Native customers and observers might have assumed they were displaying a generic Indianness. But in fact, a woman's beadwork reflected her individual and family Kiowa style. In Oklahoma, when Kiowas gave a pair of beaded moccasins away or traded them for a horse to another Kiowa or someone from a different Native nation, they confirmed networks of community. They established a distinct southern Plains identity within Indian Territory with their long-time allies, the Comanches and Plains Apaches, and also the Cheyennes, Arapahos, Wichitas and Caddos, based on parallel histories as well as artistic traditions, including beadwork and silverwork. Along with Native peoples throughout the continent, they worked for Native rights. And at the same time, they resolutely remained Kiowa, even as the United States continued to try to destroy them.

Jenny Tone-Pah-Hote recalls puzzling as she looked at the photograph of the Mau-Tame Club and held a silver cup made by her grandfather, etched all around with a warrior on horseback chasing a bison: "Was this part of how Kiowa people remained, well, Kiowa people?"

Residential schools were a major assault on Native nations. Assimilationists targeted the children. They took them away from the supposedly terrible reservations and placed them in boarding schools, often purposefully far from home. Richard Pratt, the founder of Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, declared that his school's purpose was to "kill the Indian in him, and save the man." Reformers separated children as young as 5 from their parents and grandparents and made them take new names and wear strange clothes. They forbade them from speaking their own languages or practising their own religions. As boarding-school survivors remember and later investigations and hearings have exposed, many children were taken by force and, once in schools, faced horrific mental and physical abuse at the hands of people with far too much unregulated power. Former students recalled being starved and beaten. Thousands of children died at school, never to return home.

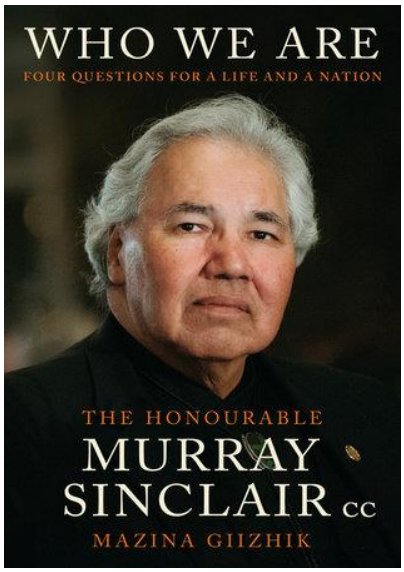
But Native communities had always educated their children, and they continued to do so as best they could. Boarding schools tried to make children non-Indigenous, but, as Ojibwe historian Brenda J. Child explains, their families and communities "refused to allow government boarding schools to supplant their essential roles in child rearing." Many families of boarding school survivors spent every summer trying to un-teach the lessons of the white school. A Shawnee survivor recalled his grandmother's summer teachings: "She said that we are to prepare ourselves to live in the white world, to be like the white people. 'But don't believe their words. You are Shawnee. Your heart will always be Shawnee,' she said."

Indigenous families and communities lobbied for day schools and boarding schools on reservations rather than far away and were eventually able to influence school conditions and curriculums. Some graduates became teachers and staff in the schools, gradually and quietly changing their emphases. They reversed policies that forbade students from visiting their families often and started such initiatives as the Seneca Indian School's Grandmother and Grandfather Program, in which education by tribal elders became part of students' school-sanctioned learning.

Under damaging and demoralizing circumstances, Native nations retained their sense of themselves as sovereign communities. Native women and men quietly continued older ways of speaking, healing, working, eating and making art, preserving the seeds of the coming resurgence of sovereignty and renaissance in language and culture that would begin in the 1930s and is accelerating today. Despite the tremendous losses of the past two centuries, Native nations have survived, not only as the descendants of once-powerful peoples but as nations within the nation-states of the United States, Mexico and Canada. As Comanche scholar Paul Chaat Smith notes, "Our survival against desperate odds is worthy of a celebration, one that embraces every aspect of our bizarre and fantastic lives, the tremendous sacrifices made on our behalf by our parents and grandparents and their parents."

Recognizing the tremendous work and determination that went into preserving Indigenous cultures, identities and structures through those generations should be an essential part of acknowledging the residential school era. Indigenous families and communities did heroic work. They prevented assimilationists from winning. And recognizing that work should also remind us today that Indigenous people and their nations must be the central voices in reparation efforts. Behind Mr. Biden's apology was the years-long work of U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, a citizen of Laguna Pueblo, and her staff, many of whom are Indigenous, as well as the hundreds of boarding-school survivors who spoke during her "Road to Healing" tour. Indigenous people's concerns and demands must lead the way as we move beyond apology. As the U.S. report recommends, "actions should be rooted in what we have learned and set forth in this report, as well as in consultation with Indian Tribes and the people impacted by these schools."

Who We Are by Murray Sinclair



This is Murray Sinclair's story—and the story of a nation—in his own words, an oral history that forgoes the trappings of the traditional written memoir to center Indigenous ways of knowledge and storytelling. As Canada moves forward into the future of reconciliation, one of its greatest leaders guides us to ask the most important and difficult question we can ask of ourselves: Who are we?

For decades, Senator Sinclair educated Canadians about the painful truths of our history. He was the first Indigenous judge in Manitoba, and only the second Indigenous judge in Canadian history. He was the Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and remains one of the foremost voices on Reconciliation.

Structured around the four questions that have long shaped Senator Sinclair's thinking and worldview—Where do I come from? Where am I going? Why am I here? Who am I?—Who We Are will take readers into the story of his remarkable life as never before, while challenging them to embrace an inclusive vision for our shared future. *(From McClelland & Stewart)*.

Who We Are: The Members of the Joint Truth and Reconciliation Action Group

From left to right: Back Row: Lynn Freeman (Sydenham Street UC), Michael Cooke (Sydenham Street UC), Ruth Pettis (Edith Rankin Memorial UC), Anya Hageman (St Mark's LC), Juliet Huntly (Sydenham Street UC), Pat Roebuck (Faith UC), Bill Egnatoff, Brett Balllinger (St. Mark's LC). Front Row: Bill Spencer (Edith Rankin Memorial UC), Jim Leake (Sydenham Street UC), Monika Holzschuh (Chalmers UC) Joan Egnatoff, Bruce Elliott (Chalmers UC) Missing: Susanne Savard who took the photo.