



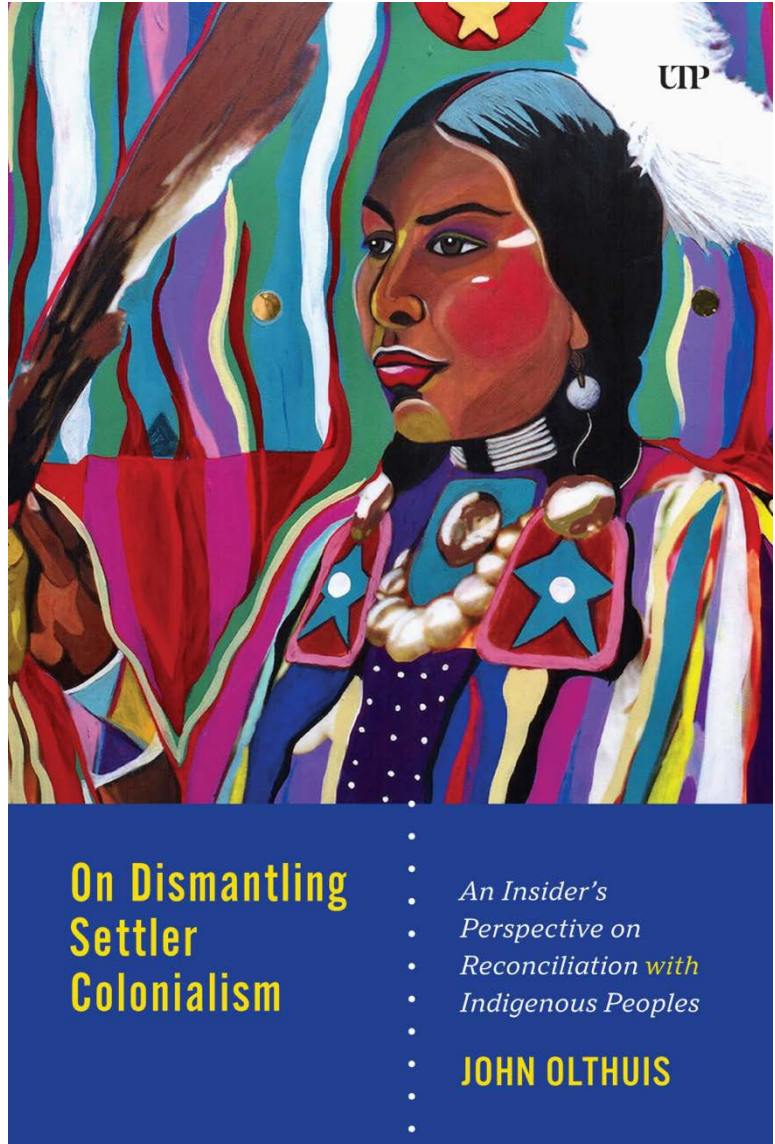
News and Resources: Summer 2026 Joint Truth and Reconciliation Action Group



Beyond Land Acknowledgements: JTRAG hosts John Olthuis from September 24-29 to help us prepare for the 2026 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

HOLD THESE DATES: You may be aware of John Olthuis' extraordinary work on treaty rights and land claims over many years and of his new book *On Dismantling Settler Colonialism*. It advocates for a true reconciliation: one that fosters the creation of political, economic, social, and cultural spaces where Indigenous nations can self-govern, restore their traditional lands, and live in harmony with the earth according to their own values and beliefs.

Through deeply personal reflections on over five decades of activism in the communities of the Dene Nation, Grassy Narrows First Nation, Temagami First Nation and the Innu Nation of Labrador, John shares his powerful journey of working to dismantle settler colonialism. He brings to light the many neglected blueprints for true reconciliation, including discussions of over 700 recommendations for systemic change put forth by the *Penner Report*, The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. John's book offers a powerful exploration of how the challenging work of dismantling settler colonialism can be a transformative and deeply healing process for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples alike.



JTRAG has invited John to spend the week leading up to the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation with us in the Kingston area and to help us reflect on the theme “Beyond Land Acknowledgements: How Can I Act?” Here’s an early glimpse of John’s program:

- Thurs Sept 24: noon hour lecture at the School of Policy Studies at Queen’s
- Fri Sept 25: a full day with students and staff at the Limestone District School Board
- Fri Sept 25 at 4:30: a talking circle at Kanhiote Library on the Tyendinaga Reserve
- Sat Sept 26: a gathering at All Our Relations Land Trust
- Sun Sept 27 AM: a joint service with JTRAG congregations at Sydenham Street United Church
- Sun Sept 27 PM: a public lecture/discussion at The Spire. John will engage in an animated dialogue with participants, led by Dr. Lindsay Borrows, Assistant Professor at Queen’s University, Faculty of Law and inaugural holder of the Queen's Law Professorship in Indigenous Law & Governance in 2025. Prior to joining Queen's, she worked as a lawyer at the Indigenous Law Research Unit (University of Victoria) and as a staff lawyer at West Coast Environmental Law. In both positions she provided legal support to Indigenous communities and organizations engaged in the revitalization of their own laws for application in contemporary contexts. Lindsay is Anishinaabe and a member of the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation.
- Mon Sept 28: a full day with the students and staff of St. Lawrence College
- Tues Sept 29: in-class lectures in law and economics at Queen’s

Please share this information in your networks and encourage people to seize these opportunities to consider how we move beyond land acknowledgements.



Indigenous groups urge Canadians to rethink their relationship with water

See this article in the June issue of Broadview magazine. It provides an account of a June 6 gathering of Elders — organized by St. Matthew’s Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Group and Noojimo’iwewin Gitigaan National Healing Forest Project. Speakers made the case that the debate is about more than infrastructure and regulation; it is also about how Canadians understand their relationship with water itself. See the full article here:

https://broadview.org/indigenous-groups-water-protection/?utm_source=Broadview&utm_campaign=2d19afc190-newsletter_BTW_Jun19_2026_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_392a696a06-2d19afc190-231463289



New Pow-Wow Calendar

The Pow Wow Calendar from PowWows.com features hundreds of Native American Pow Wow listing from across North America. Find Pow Wows near you, browse for upcoming events, or add your event to our calendar! See [Pow Wow Calendar](#) and subscribe to the newsletter.



KIMRI hosts Indigenous/non-Indigenous Dialogue Event (June 14, 2026)

The Kingston Institute for Multiracial Inclusion (KIMRI) hosted a rich dialogue among a keen group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants at the Kingston Community Health Centre on June 14/26. The discussion brought together participants from diverse backgrounds to engage in meaningful conversations about reconciliation, Indigenous cultures, relationships, and allyship. The event began with icebreaker discussions focused on gratitude, curiosity, and reflections on the connections between family histories, colonial legacies, and the ongoing process of reconciliation.

Participants shared what motivated them to attend, with many expressing a desire to build relationships, learn from Indigenous perspectives, hear Indigenous voices, and explore ways to support reconciliation efforts. A common theme was the importance of connection, education, collaboration, and creating momentum for meaningful action beyond the event itself.

The conversation then explored Indigenous culture and what participants hoped others would understand about it. Topics included peace and friendship, the significance of treaties, storytelling, community, resilience, stewardship of the land, language revitalization, and the importance of relationships. Speakers emphasized that culture is deeply connected to identity, history, land, and community. Several participants reflected on reconnecting with family, learning from Elders, and understanding Indigenous ways of knowing and living.

A significant portion of the discussion focused on what makes a good ally. Participants highlighted humility, empathy, compassion, respect, active listening, self-reflection, and a willingness to learn. They emphasized the importance of showing up consistently, taking a genuine interest in people's stories, recognizing one's own positionality, and understanding that allyship is an ongoing process rather than a destination.

Overall, the event reinforced the importance of relationship-building, reciprocity, openness, and continuous learning. Participants left with a deeper appreciation for the value of listening, fostering meaningful connections, and contributing to reconciliation through respectful and informed engagement.



A Three-Part Portrait of John Olthuis: The Settler Lawyer Who Was Told to Dismantle

by Kip Ip kip.ip@queensu.ca

Kip Ip, our regular contributor and coordinator of our digital library has prepared a three-part portrait of John Olthuis to help readers prepare for his visit to the region in September. We are including the first portrait in this issue and will include the other two in our August and September issues.

1. Triple Portrait of John A. Olthuis: *The Settler Lawyer Who Was Told to Dismantle* (**attached**)
2. Triple Portrait of John A. Olthuis: *Fifty Years of Change on the Land*
3. Triple Portrait of John A. Olthuis: *The Bigger Fight and the Road Ahead*

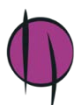
Part one follows on the next page

John A. Olthuis has spent about fifty years in a struggle that was not his by birth. He is not Indigenous. He is a settler Canadian, a lawyer, an advocate, and a long-time ally of Indigenous peoples and nations. His book, *On Dismantling Settler Colonialism*, is the main source for this portrait. It shows a life shaped by law, faith, humility, and long service beside Indigenous communities (Olthuis, 2025).

Many Canadians now speak about reconciliation. Most of the strongest voices belong to Indigenous people, and that is right. Olthuis stands in a different place. He writes as a settler who was taught by Indigenous leaders. He then used his legal training in support of their struggles. That choice shaped the rest of his life (Olthuis, 2025). His path began in the early 1970s. He travelled to the North as a young lawyer and activist. He met Dene leaders who faced a huge gas pipeline planned across their homeland. Industry and government saw the project as energy development. The Dene saw a threat to land, law, culture, animals, water, and future generations (Olthuis, 2025). One encounter set his direction. Georges Erasmus, a Dene leader, did not ask him to act as a rescuer. He challenged him to help take apart the structures built by settler society.

Olthuis received that challenge as a life instruction. It pushed him past charity, toward changing the system itself (Olthuis, 2025). That beginning matters. Olthuis does not place himself at the centre of Indigenous struggle. In his book, Indigenous leaders, Elders, chiefs, women, and families carry the deepest authority. His own role is more modest. He helps carry Indigenous claims into law, public debate, and negotiation (Olthuis, 2025). For Olthuis, reconciliation is not only an apology. It is not only a ceremony. It is not late consultation after a government has already chosen its path. It means changing the systems that keep Indigenous peoples under settler control. It means making real room for Indigenous law, land, culture, economy, and self-government (Olthuis, 2025).

The Dene also taught him about nationhood. They were not a local interest group. They were a people with their own history, laws, and political future. Olthuis took that claim seriously when many Canadian authorities did not. That lesson shaped his later work with other nations (Olthuis, 2025).



Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) Launch “*From Land Acknowledgements to Action*” Campaign

CPJ is inviting you to be a part of something intentional: its new Indigenous rights campaign, *From Land Acknowledgements to Action*. By supporting *From Land Acknowledgements to Action*, you’ll be joining a growing movement of people who believe reconciliation must go beyond words. Together, we will push this work beyond symbolic gestures and toward the kind of structural change Indigenous communities have long called for. And this work is already moving forward.

That’s why CPJ is investing in ensuring these ideas take root in communities, churches, and public life across Canada. With your support, we are working to fund a dedicated *From Land Acknowledgements to Action Coordinator*, someone whose role will be to bring this work to life.

[Learn more about From Land Acknowledgements to Action](#)

The campaign will:

- Engage Christian communities in meaningful conversations about reconciliation in their local context
- Equip people with practical tools for advocacy action
- Help build sustained public pressure for governments to move from promises to measurable change

Grounded in Indigenous leadership and priorities, this work will connect education, advocacy, and policy engagement in a way that drives real impact. Thanks to two generous donors, **every gift to this campaign will be tripled up to a total of \$60,000**—accelerating this work at a critical moment and helping build the sustained advocacy needed to push for systemic change. Order [*On Dismantling Settler Colonialism*](#).



JTRAG's Online Reading and Audio Resource List

JTRAG has replaced its physical library with an annotated reading and audio resource list. The list includes a wide range of reading and audio resources to support your self-education efforts. Our goal is to provide practical, widely available resources that support learning, reflection, and group discussion. The list is updated monthly. Where available, it includes links that you can use to access the resources. Thanks to JTRAG's volunteer Library Coordinator, Kip Ip. You can access this month's list here ("[May 2026 Book List Link URL](#)") If you have any questions about this book list, please get in touch with Kip at (kip.ip@queensu.ca).

We invite you to share this information in your networks so that it is available to a wide range of interested individuals and groups. Kip also welcomes your suggestions of other print or audio resources that should be added to the list.

Let us know what you think

We invite/need your comments and suggestions. We welcome material from our readers and are pleased to include comments and reflection pieces here as catalysts for more reflection and dialogue. The submissions we include do not represent any official position by JTRAG members or our readers.