

The Government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the Aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly.

– Prime Minister Stephen Harper.
Statement of apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools.
June 11, 2008

Editorial

This issue of *Just in Time* focuses on the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) in its investigation into First Nations, Inuit and Métis experiences at residential schools. The Commission heard from more than 6,000 school survivors.

As a Canadian I find it difficult to hear the facts of the report without wanting to look away in shame. As many of us were raised to believe in multiculturalism and that all Canadians are equal under the law and should be treated fairly in all circumstances, discovering that our government did not live by those ideals is upsetting, frustrating and embarrassing. However, our history is not something we can avoid because we are doomed to repeat those mistakes if we refuse to learn from them.

In the introduction of its final report, the TRC does not mince words about the purpose of the schools. The report states that operation of residential schools was an attempt at “cultural genocide” started by the government of John A MacDonal and carried on by successive Canadian governments.

Cultural genocide is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. And, most significantly to the issue at hand, families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next.

In its dealing with Aboriginal people, Canada did all these things. (TRC 2015)

At the time, it was not seen as immoral but rather inevitable that First Nations people would give up

their cultural identities and be subsumed entirely into white culture, but another factor also motivated the government to kidnap generations of children from their parents. Due to the large geographic area and sparse population of Canada, the government feared the uprising of Aboriginal people against its authority. As Aboriginal parents deeply valued their children, as all parents do, the most direct way to remove the threat of rebellion was to hold First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) children hostage at distant schools so that their parents could not access them (Episkenew 2009).

The treatment of these hostages was generally awful. FNMI children were often abused, overworked, undereducated and underfed while in residential schools. In the course of the Commission’s investigation, it has come to light that in the 1940s, the government allowed medical researchers to conduct experiments on the children without their parents’ knowledge or consent. Canadian researchers gave some children vitamins and withheld vitamins and certain foods from others to understand the role of malnutrition on overall health. This experimentation was done despite researchers being aware of the Nuremberg Code of 1947¹ and knowing that their research did not meet those ethical guidelines.

In investigating the residential schools, it also has to be noted that not every school was run with cruelty. Some former students report that their experiences were generally positive and that kind staff engaged them in valuable learning activities and supported their development as leaders. This kind of experience, unfortunately, is a rare exception for the more than 100,000 children who attended the schools over the course of more than 100 years.

The removal of so many children from their families over the course of more than a century has had a profound social effect on Aboriginal peoples. Multiple generations within each family had little contact with their parents and therefore did not learn traditional parenting skills to use with their own children. Sexual, physical and mental abuse at the schools has damaged the

psyche of generations and led many survivors to self-medicate with drugs and alcohol as a coping mechanism.

But now that we know how bad things were, what do we do about it? How can we heal from what was done in the past and move forward together, Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals? Finding the truth was only half of the Commission's purpose; suggesting how we can reconcile these two groups was the other half. Part of reconciliation is apologizing for the role that all Canadians played in residential schools and making reparations where possible, but it is also listening and reflecting on what is heard. Reconciliation is not always what you think. A recurring thread in discussions of reconciliation between us is that we must also reconcile with the natural world. "If human beings resolve problems between themselves but continue to destroy the natural world, then reconciliation remains incomplete." Healing our country must include a new way of approaching our environment.

The Commission has made 94 calls for action to facilitate reconciliation. If these actions are carried out, they will affect every Canadian and all aspects of life: child welfare, education, health care, justice,

culture, commemoration of residential schools and the oath of citizenship. Much of this work involves various levels of government, and the Commission has called for the creation and funding of a National Council on Reconciliation to ensure that reconciliation continues to move forward. But the calls to action do not focus only on government; the calls are to all Canadians to take action in their own lives to bring about reconciliation.

Note

1. A body of generally agreed-on ethical principals in medical research on humans that were drawn up in response to the trials of German doctors at the end of World War II.

References

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). 2016. *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Montreal, Que: McGill-Queen's University Press, p 1.
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Sandra Anderson

Alberta Pride Events 2016

Mar 5–13	University of Alberta Pride Week (www.prideweek.ualberta.ca)
Mar 17–20	Jasper Pride Festival (http://jasperpride.ca)
June 3–12	Edmonton Pride Festival (www.edmontonpride.ca)
June 11	St Albert Pride (http://stalbertpride.ca/)
July 1–3	Alberta Rockies Gay Rodeo and Festival (www.argra.org/#homepage)
June 24–July 2	Lethbridge Pride Fest (http://lethbridgepridefest.com)
Aug 26–Sept 5	Calgary Pride (http://pridecalgary.ca/events/festival)
Sept 17	Medicine Hat Pride Festival (www.medicinehatpride.ca)
Oct 1	Banff PRIDE (www.facebook.com/BanffPRIDE)

The residential school experience is one of the darkest, most troubling chapters in our collective history.

—Justice Murray Sinclair, TRC Chair

How Are We Walking the Path to Reconciliation Now?

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) has challenged non-Aboriginal Canadians to take action so that the reconciliation process can begin. It is only the abuser who has the power in a relationship to initiate a new beginning. This role is difficult for non-Aboriginal Canadians because in this case the abuser is an amnesiac with little idea that any abuse occurred, but that does not mean we abdicate our responsibility. So what has happened since the TRC issued its abbreviated report in June 2015 and its final report in December 2015?

The calls to action appear to have found resonance in many organizations within Canadian society. Here are some of the new initiatives that have been reported recently:

Federal

The federal government has accepted the final report of the TRC and has promised to act on all of the calls to action.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has promised a national public inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

The federal government began a dialogue with residential school survivors from Newfoundland and Labrador who were not previously included in the federal government's apology or settlement with residential school survivors from the rest of Canada.

Canada Human Rights Tribunal has ruled that the federal government has discriminated against Aboriginal children by providing a lower level of child welfare services to them than to non-Aboriginal service.

Provincial

The University of Manitoba now requires all students to take one course on Aboriginal issues.

Royal Winnipeg Ballet is on tour with *Going Home Star*, a ballet that tells a story of First Nations youth.

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley delivered an emotional apology for the Alberta government's failure to take action against the residential school system.

Angelique EagleWoman is appointed as the head of the law faculty at Lakeland University and is the first Aboriginal woman to head a Canadian law school.

The Faculty of Law at the University of Manitoba, which teaches mandatory units on Aboriginal law, commits to reviewing its curriculum to include more Aboriginal perspectives and issues in mandatory courses and introducing a mandatory Aboriginal legal traditions course.

The University of Saskatchewan commits to ensuring that all degrees contain Aboriginal coursework.

Municipal

Winnipeg Mayor Brian Bowman hosts a two-day National Summit on Racial Inclusion at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights and declares 2016 as the Year of Reconciliation in Winnipeg.

The Vancouver Park Board voted to implement 11 of the calls to action within its organization, including training staff on Aboriginal issues, working with local First Nations on stewardship of lands, supporting Aboriginal children and elders, and acknowledging Aboriginal language rights.

During the TRC hearings, Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton declared 2014 to be a Year of Reconciliation in each city.

In Edmonton, city hall announced the renaming of a roadway. A portion of 23rd Avenue is now called Maskêkosihk Trail. The new Cree name means "people of the land of medicine."

Mount Royal University in Calgary presents the 2016 Peace Prize to the members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Laurie Calkins, a Métis artist, created an outdoor art exhibition in Edmonton of 40 red dresses that represent missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

Get to Know Your DEHR Committee

Hello! Because this newsletter will coincide with the DEHR Conference where you will see many of our friendly faces, we would like to let you know a little bit about ourselves and why we're involved with the DEHR Committee.

Andrea Berg



I have had the privilege of being involved with the ATA's provincial DEHR Committee since 2009. The DEHR Committee has the important work of studying, advising and making recommendations on

Association policies that reflect respect for diversity; providing information and resources to teachers; and supporting the work of diversity committees in local associations.

As you might imagine, the scope of this committee's work has continued to expand exponentially over the years as the demographics of Alberta's student population has been shifting. For example, the recent influx of new immigrant and refugee families into Alberta communities has created an increased need to support teachers in meeting the needs of their increasingly complex classrooms. The important task of celebrating differences while meeting the unique needs of individual students within a common educational structure can indeed be tricky and often messy, but it is the most rewarding and valuable area on which we can focus our efforts in schools.

The DEHR Committee members include elected Provincial Executive Council (PEC) members, practising teachers, university liaisons and Association staff. The commitment and passion demonstrated by each committee member is inspiring and instrumental in advocating successfully for policies and practices that reflect the values of the committee. I am personally grateful for the lessons, insights and dedication that all committee members share generously with me and for the enthusiasm demonstrated by teachers across the province, who foster understanding, empathy and compassion in their classrooms every day. I am excited to follow the important work and growth of this committee into the coming years.

Barb Bossert



I was thrilled to be appointed as the administrative secretary to the Association's DEHR Committee three years ago. The mandate of the committee aligns with my own personal values and beliefs, and the topics discussed are as varied as

they are interesting. My brothers and I were raised to "treat people the way you would like to be treated," and I am proud to be part of such an action-oriented committee that addresses such issues as bullying, racism and homophobia. We also celebrate multiculturalism and diversity of all kinds, and advise PEC on matters related to diversity, equity and human rights. Working to provide a safe, nurturing, equitable and inclusive environment for the children and teachers of Alberta is one of the most valuable goals there can be to ensure a brighter future for all.

Odette Ingabire



As the clerical support for the DEHR Committee, one of my responsibilities is the distribution of the many helpful resources and publications the Association has available for teachers and students as well as the public. I have a young daughter, so

the work the committee does to provide a safe and caring environment for children in schools is very important to me.

Andrew Boylan



Being on the DEHR Committee is an honour, and I look forward to every meeting as we discuss so many important issues that affect our daily lives and, more important, the lives of our

students. It's awesome to be a link to my Tri-Local Peace Country DEHR Committee. They truly are amazing to work with and we have accomplished so much over the past years. Thank you, folks!

If there is a particular issue that I am currently entrenched in, it would be that of gender equality in sport and how we can promote self-esteem and confidence in our young female athletes. As the cochair of the Health and Physical Education Conference (HPEC), I direct my energy to promoting such endeavours in this field.

I started teaching in Valleyview, where I met my lovely wife, Lee. I am the proud father of two rug rats, named Bretton and Ella Claire. I am an avid outdoor enthusiast, and I try to teach my children the values of protecting the environment and cherishing what has been provided for us. Learn from our past mistakes and make the world a better place for all peoples. Parting thought: Always practise catch and release, too. I am presently graced with teaching at Maude Clifford Elementary School in Grande Prairie.

Markiana Cyncar-Hryschuk



Being a member of the DEHR Committee is an honour and a privilege for me. With an interest in global issues and peace education, I am passionate about human rights, speaking out against injustice and peaceful advocacy. I

believe strongly in this quote by Mahatma Ghandi: “Be the change you want to see in the world.”

I am a learning coach (100 Voices through Grade 2) and the First Nations, Métis and Inuit curricular lead at St Richard School in Edmonton. I’ve become a seasoned teacher with the wonderful good fortune of having taught students in a variety of settings from kindergarten to high school. As a member of PEC, I am thrilled to represent the teachers of Edmonton and Fort McMurray.

William Hanson



I’ve been involved in diversity education and training for 25 years, and I’ve focused mostly on multicultural awareness, knowledge, skills and relationship building. I’ve also focused on the skills gap, diversity-oriented outreach and

advocacy, and outcome assessment and evaluation, so the DEHR Committee is a natural fit for me.

I’ve been particularly interested in (and involved with) the committee’s three-year strategic plan and ATA’s annual opinion survey. All in all, it’s a great group of highly talented people doing critically important work. I love everyone’s enthusiasm and unwavering dedication. I am an associate professor and program coordinator in counselling psychology at the University of Alberta.

Steven Kaplan



The values of fairness and justice have always been a deep part of me, and the road that brought me to the DEHR Committee started very early in my life. In fact, I remember a time when I was in Grade 1 and ended up

in the principal’s office for an incident on the playground where I was sticking up for someone I didn’t know but thought was being picked on. Despite being in trouble, it didn’t curb my desire to help people and groups who are marginalized and vulnerable. In addition to my childhood experiences, I recently had another encounter that also broadened my view on gender diversity, and while it was very stressful, I learned so much more about the significance of gender diversity and now look forward to supporting communities in their own growth and learning about this issue.

Now I work as a principal at a secondary school in that same community where I hope to support students, staff and the community to ensure that all people have the opportunity to grow, learn and work in a safe, caring and respectful place. I am very fortunate to help form, support and nurture a climate that supports all people. I also serve on this DEHR Committee to continue to grow in these issues and support others in their own journey. I look forward to hearing your story and will do what I can to help you.

Shelley Kofluk



I joined the DEHR Committee as a field representative this year and am looking forward to helping shape communities to be more inclusive and welcoming!

As department head for student leadership

at M E LaZerte School with Edmonton Public Schools, I built a student leadership program using principles of diversity, equity and human rights to engage students in shaping the school culture. As a candidate school in the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), I use the resources within the ASPnet to develop action-based projects with students. In eight years, the leadership program has grown from 37 students to over 700 students involved in creating an inclusive and safe high school where diversity is celebrated, welcomed and accepted. In addition to being a 2011 Excellence in Teaching semifinalist, I was most recently recognized as a Paul Harris Fellow by Rotary International in appreciation of tangible and significant assistance given for the furtherance of better understanding and friendly relations among peoples of the world.

Paul MacLeod



I have served the system as a teacher and administrator for 18 years and had the honour of working with students from north, central and southern Alberta while employed with Fort

Vermilion, Edmonton Catholic, Sundance Catholic and the Holy Spirit Catholic School Divisions. I returned to the University of New Brunswick in 2000 to complete my master's degree in educational foundations—leadership. I joined the teacher development and certification branch of Alberta Education in 2008, and since that time have had the pleasure of serving Alberta Education in several roles, which include my current role as registrar/executive director of teaching and leadership excellence sector.

Robert Mazzotta



I am proud to sit on the Association's DEHR Committee, which has accomplished so much in such a short time. One of my principal areas of interest is social justice, so my position on the DEHR Committee fits well with my position as the

provincial coordinator for Alberta on the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet). In Canada ASPnet has over 70

candidate and member schools in seven provinces. Canadian schools that join the network commit to supporting the ideals of UNESCO through four pillars of learning and four themes of study in order to contribute to a local, national and global culture of peace.

The UNESCO Associated Schools are examples of social justice in action. Students in the network strive to better understand how their actions can affect the people around them. This makes them think about what they do and why and how they do it. For these students, social justice means doing the right thing, not the popular thing. Likewise, the notions of social justice and doing the right thing underlie the activities of the DEHR Committee. The committee strives to engage schools and locals in a deeper discussion about the actions schools take and why they take them. Do schools understand the difference between charity and social justice? When schools raise money for a cause, do they explain to students why they are doing so? Do they explain the root causes of why there is such a discrepancy between our country and a country in need? This is what we strive to achieve—a clear understanding of what needs to be done to effect real change. This is what social justice is all about.

I am an executive staff officer in the Member Services program area at the ATA and secretary to the DEHR Committee.

Diane Sellars-Myshchyshyn



One of my favourite assignments as a PEC district representative is chairing the Association's DEHR Committee. As a youth, I always had a keen interest in social justice, and when I became a teacher I knew that I wanted to

work with children who faced difficulties either because of a disability or because they were disadvantaged. As a civilized and democratic society we must not allow inequity and intolerance to exist, and when we find it, we must work to eradicate it. I am very excited about the important work the Association has done on LGBTQ issues and the progress we are making as a province. With the release of the Truth and Reconciliation report, I hope that we can embrace the recommendations to create a more equitable, inclusive and hopeful space for Indigenous students and their teachers. The Association is also

working hard to provide professional development for teachers working with immigrant students. I also have the privilege of sitting on the Canadian Teachers' Federation Advisory Committee on the Status of Women. While advocacy work is difficult, it is important work because it shapes our culture.

I serve as a member of PEC as the district representative for the Calgary District. I am celebrating my 25th year of teaching and am currently a learning support teacher at Manachaban Middle School.

Everett Tetz

My name is Everett Tetz, and I have been a member of the provincial DEHR Committee for three years. I began my career in education six years ago, and I am currently vice-principal of

École Oriole Park School in Red Deer. As I complete my master of education through the University of Calgary, I continue to focus on creative development and the promotion of mental health for both students and staff. I am an active member of our local DEHR Committee and work to develop policies and a framework for supporting marginalized populations within our district.

As a teacher, administrator, coach, presenter and advocate, I believe that equity must be placed at the very centre of education. It is a human right to be given the opportunity to succeed and it is my professional responsibility to create a platform that allows all to do so.

Other valued members of our committee are **Patrick Loyer, John Nedd and Nicole Shupe.**

I wanted to be white so bad, and the worst thing I ever did was I was ashamed of my mother, that honourable woman, because she couldn't speak English.

—A residential school survivor quoted in the TRC Final Report

We have described for you a mountain. We have shown you the path to the top. We call upon you to do the climbing.

—Justice Murray Sinclair, TRC Chairman

Road to Reconciliation

a timeline



2008

The Canadian Government announces the creation of a commission to investigate events at residential schools

Prime Minister Harper apologizes to former students of residential schools

2009

Governor-General Jean relaunches the commission at a ceremony at Rideau Hall



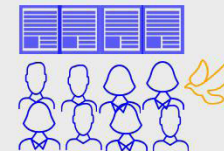
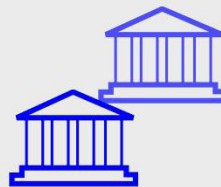
2011

The TRC releases its interim report which focuses on education:
They Came for the Children

The TRC holds the first of seven national events

2010

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's headquarters officially open in Winnipeg



2012

The TRC criticizes the federal government for not releasing requested documents to the commission

2013 & 2014

Two courts rule that the government must release requested documents to the TRC

2015

The TRC holds its closing ceremony and releases reports. Prime Minister Trudeau accepts the report and calls for a reconciliation



2016

A new chapter in reconciliation begins

Indigenous or Aboriginal: Which Is Correct?

Posted by Bob Joseph on the Working Effectively with Aboriginal Peoples Blog, January 5, 2016 (www.ictinc.ca/blog). Reprinted with permission. Minor changes have been made in accordance with ATA style.

Which is correct: Indigenous or Aboriginal? is a frequently asked question for us at Indigenous Corporate Training. The federal government's move to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, while a very positive move for Indigenous Peoples in Canada, has people asking the question. We really appreciate the question and the motive behind the question—to respect Indigenous peoples by using the correct terminology.

A collective noun for the original inhabitants of Canada has been a challenge ever since Christopher Columbus arrived in 1492. Believing he had landed in India, it followed that the existing population would be referred to as *Indians*. Despite it being blatantly incorrect, it became the de facto collective noun. Initially *Indians* included First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Usage of the word *Indian* in Canada is decreasing due to its incorrect origin and connections to colonizer policies and departments such as the *Indian Act*, the Indian Department (precursor to INAC), Indian agent, Indian residential schools and so on. Some communities continue to use Indian in their tribal name; Osoyoos Indian Band is an example. Some individuals still refer to themselves as Indians, but in terms of a collective noun it is rarely used. *Native* was also formerly a common term but is considered uncivil and rarely used in respectful conversations.

Aboriginal peoples moved into popularity as the correct collective noun for First Nations, Inuit and Métis, and was widely adopted by government and many national groups. This distinction was made legal in 1982 when the *Constitution Act* came into being. Section 35 (2) of the Act states: "In this

Act, 'aboriginal peoples of Canada' includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada."

Aboriginal peoples was a fresh step, although there was resistance to its usage from some groups as discussed in "Indigenous vs. Aboriginal."

And now the federal government has moved to embrace Indigenous and all of its legal ramifications. By recognizing First Nations, Inuit and Métis as Indigenous peoples, the government is acknowledging their internationally legal right to offer or withhold consent to development under the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which Canada endorsed with conditions under then Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

For some more information on the significance of the government embracing Indigenous, please read "Back to the Future: PM-designate Justin Trudeau evokes the Royal Proclamation."

On a personal note, we (the original blog writers) are following suit. Over the next few months we will be renaming our courses to Indigenous Awareness, editing our content and ebooks, and changing our website URL. It's a big job and it will take some time, so please bear with us as we make the change.

On the topic of correct terminology, here's a tip—avoid using the possessive phrase "Canada's Indigenous Peoples (or First Nations, Inuit and Métis)" as that implies ownership of Indigenous peoples. A better approach would be "Indigenous Peoples in Canada."

We also receive questions on whether it is correct to use upper or lower case for Indigenous and so on. You may have picked up on the lower case aboriginal in the quote from Section 35 (2) whereas elsewhere in this article it is capitalized. Government and mainstream media lean toward lower case, but we use capital letters as a show of respect just as French, English and European are capitalized. If we are including a quote with a lower case, we honour the source's editorial style.

***National Indian Residential School Crisis Line
for former residential school students:
1-866-925-4419***

The Relationship Between Indigenous Peoples and Place Names

Posted by Bob Joseph on the Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples Blog, February 16, 2016 (www.ictinc.ca/blog). Reprinted with permission. Minor changes have been made in accordance with ATA style.

What is the relationship between Indigenous peoples and place names? Indigenous place names carry knowledge that has been passed from generation to generation. They are the story maps that connected Indigenous people to places and guided Indigenous people from place to place. This people and place connection has remained strong despite the era of assimilation and the impacts on culture and community.

The colonial practice of using European place names rather than local Indigenous names speaks to the view that the land was empty or terra nullius when waves of European explorers followed the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Notice I use *arrived* rather than the time-honoured belief that he discovered the Americas. Hard to fathom how one discovers a world that had an existing population of approximately 100 million people or a fifth of the world's population at that time. Here's a link to a short video I shot on this topic: www.youtube.com/watch?v=M07QciWX8jg.



Located in W.SÁNEĆ territory and on the border of Lekwungen territory, this has been and remains an important meeting place for many nations. The reclamation of PKOLS to replace the colonial name Mount Douglas recognizes the nation-to-nation agreements negotiated here and supports ongoing efforts of Indigenous and settler people to restore balanced relationships to the lands they call home. Currently, the park is known both as PKOLS and Mount Doug Park.

The initial explorers tended to use names from their homelands. However, fur traders and the explorers who travelled across the country relied on Indigenous guides, so they were more inclined to use the Indigenous names for prominent natural features, although they did use European names for trading posts. When the European settlers arrived, some of Indigenous names were Europeanized, but, more often than not, places or sites were named after the homeland or influential people of that particular group of settlers. Whatever the reason, the colonial habit of dismissing the Indigenous names was another attempt to erase the identity of the First Peoples, which supported the assimilation policies of the colonizers.

It's important to reclaim the names, because names are symbolic of the attitudes and ideas people bring—of their relationship to the land and each other. If all indigenous names are erased, and never respected, it shows the white society's view of indigenous people: that we no longer exist; we've been erased. It's about respect in a fundamental way. The future of this country is going to be one of peaceful coexistence based on mutual respect.

During a recent walk along the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail, Dena'ina historian Aaron Leggett pointed to an area that was devastated during the massive Good Friday earthquake in 1964. Trees and houses on a mile-wide stretch of earth had come tumbling down.

Had Anchorage consulted Dena'ina geography, he said, the bluffs facing Cook Inlet may not have seemed like such a good location for a neighborhood. The Dena'ina name for that area is Nen Ghilgedi, which he translates literally as "rotten land." (Shalev 2015)

The above quote is an explicit example of the value of Indigenous place names. Place names are mnemonic devices for Indigenous peoples. As an oral society, the names chosen for geographical sites carry history, traditional environmental and ecological knowledge, navigational information, teachings—using Indigenous names keeps all of that information alive. Names also embody a sense of belonging to a place, coexistence with the natural world and the longstanding relationship between a people and their place; they anchor the past to the present.

So, if you look at place names as navigational aids, there's no better example than the Inuit. Their traditional lifestyle had them moving around their territories; they were dependent upon their ability to move freely in order to follow migratory patterns of wildlife and sea mammals. They relied heavily on landmarks for safe navigation and successful hunting. This quote from Dominique Tunglik, a Pelly Bay hunter, is illustrative:

All the lakes where you can find fish or caribou have names. That is the only way we can travel. The one way we can recognize lakes is by their names.... The names of places, of camps and of lakes are all important to us, for that is the way we travel—with names. Most of the names you come across when travelling are very old. Our ancestors named them because that is where they traveled. (ICC 2008)

There is a growing interest in and support of renaming places. In BC, Haida Gwaii, the archipelago formerly known as the Queen Charlotte Islands (in 1787 Captain George Dixon, under orders to claim new lands and to investigate trade opportunities for Britain, named them after his ship the Queen Charlotte) was officially returned to its original name under British Columbia's 2010 *Haida Gwaii Reconciliation Act*. In the name-returning ceremony two bentwood boxes, symbolically representing Queen and Charlotte were handed to government representatives.

Guujaaw, president of Council of Haida Nation, said:

We received our life and our culture from Haida Gwaii. Over countless generations, our bodies are reclaimed by the lands we call Haida Gwaii. Haida Gwaii is not only where we are, this is who we are. While we cannot unwind history, we will leave colonialism behind us, as we have

laid the foundation for a respectful relationship into the future. (Pemberton 2010)

But it's not just places that have been stripped of their history. Indigenous peoples themselves were renamed by Indian agents, under direction from the *Indian Act*, with names chosen at random.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls-to-Action includes:

17. We call upon all levels of government to enable residential school survivors and their families to reclaim names changed by the residential school system by waiving administrative costs for a period of five years for the name-change process and the revision of official identity documents, such as birth certificates, passports, driver's licenses, health cards, status cards and social insurance numbers.

We think an additional Call-to-Action would be for governments to support the accelerated return to Indigenous place names.

It's not hard to spot the place names that have Indigenous roots; for example, Squamish (sk xwu7mesh), Coquitlam (Kwikwetlem) and Comox (K'ómoks). Take a look around you and see how many names there are that have Indigenous roots.

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***Those schools were a war on Aboriginal children,
and they took away our identity. First of all,
they gave us numbers, we had no names,
we were numbers and they cut our hair. They
took away our clothes, and gave us clothes ...
we all looked alike.***

**—A residential school survivor quoted in the
TRC Final Report**

Truth and Reconciliation Websites

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

www.trc.ca

This is the official website of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which was a component of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. It has a five-year mandate to investigate what happened in Indian residential schools and to inform the Canadian public of these events. The final report of the TRC was issued on December 15, 2015.

CBC Digital Archives: A Lost Heritage—Canada’s Residential Schools

www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/society/education/a-lost-heritage-canadas-residential-schools/

An archive of news broadcasts by the CBC about the residential school system.

Legacy of Hope Foundation

www.legacyofhope.ca/

The Legacy of Hope Foundation is a national Aboriginal charitable organization. Its purposes are to educate and raise awareness and understanding of the legacy of residential schools, including the effects and intergenerational impacts on First Nations, Inuit and Métis, and to support the ongoing healing process of residential school survivors. Fulfilling this mandate contributes toward reconciliation among generations of Aboriginal peoples and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada.

Project of Heart

<http://projectofheart.ca>

Project of Heart is an inquiry-based, hands-on, collaborative, intergenerational, artistic journey of seeking truth about the history of Aboriginal people in Canada. Its purpose is to examine the history and legacy of Indian residential schools in Canada and to seek the truth about that history, leading to the acknowledgement of the extent of loss to former students, their families and communities and to Canadians to take action, through social justice endeavours, to change our present and future history collectively.

We Were So Far Away: The Inuit Experience of Residential Schools

<http://weweresofaraway.ca>

This website was created through a partnership of the Legacy of Hope Foundation, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, and Library and Archives Canada. This website documents the experience of eight Inuit who are residential school survivors.

To learn a little more about Aboriginal culture, education and world views, we encourage you to visit the ATA library’s web resources page for First Nations, Métis and Inuit resources: www.teachers.ab.ca/For%20Members/Programs%20and%20Services/ATA%20Library/Pages/FNMI.aspx.

Too many Canadians know little or nothing about the deep historical roots of these conflicts. This lack of knowledge has serious consequences for First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and for Canada.

—From the TRC Final Report

Events

April

April 1–May 12, “Renewal Is”

Main Gallery, Centre for the Arts, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge

This exhibition showcases local and emerging Indigenous artists in southern Alberta. Renewal is the birth of new life, the change of seasons, a cultural (re)awakening and (re)connection to the land, life and a set of relationships.

www.uleth.ca/notice/events/renewal#.VuGa4k32Z9A

April 8, “(Re)Thinking Reconciliation—Roundtable Panel”

Southwest Room Y224, Mount Royal University, Calgary

Speakers: Marie Wilson, Erica Lee, Sean Carlton and Chelsea Vowel

www.eventbrite.ca/e/rethinking-reconciliation-roundtable-panel-tickets-21014468842

April 8–9, “Inspiration into Action—Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Conference”

Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA), Barnett House, Edmonton

Keynote speakers: Raheel Raza, Pauline Théoret and Wilton Littlechild. Two delegates per local are eligible to attend. Please contact your local president for registration information.

<http://tinyurl.com/hqunl2m>

April 8–9, “Inclusion Alberta Family Conference”

Fantasyland Hotel, Edmonton

<http://inclusionalberta.org/events/2016/04/08/conference/inclusion-alberta-family-conference>

April 14–15, Public Interest Alberta’s 10th Annual Conference: “Advocacy in a Time of Opportunity”

Chateau Louis Conference Centre, Edmonton
Join Larry Brown, president of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and Elaine Bernard, executive director of the Labor and Worklife Program at Harvard Law School and many other leading activists and thinkers as we discuss how we can have a lasting impact on our province and our country.

<https://pialberta.org/2016conference>

April 18–20, Alberta Council of Disability Services Conference—“Pushing the Envelope: Stretching Boundaries and Strengthening Communities”

Radisson Hotel South, Edmonton

<http://tinyurl.com/zbum37z>

April 19, “Challenging Stereotypes About Newcomers and Indigenous Peoples: Stereotypes and Xenophobia”

Edmonton Public Library, Sprucewood Branch, 11555 95 Street, Edmonton

Sponsored by the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights

<http://tinyurl.com/jqkna38>

April 20, “Fostering Resiliency and Success within the Classroom in FNMI Students”

Medicine Hat Catholic Education Center, Medicine Hat

This workshop is designed to help teachers better understand First Nations, Métis and Inuit histories, cultures and worldviews. This background will help teachers not only ensure that Aboriginal students succeed in school and meet the prescribed learning outcomes but also deal with prejudice and discrimination.

<http://tinyurl.com/hayl5rs>

April 20–22, Miyopimatisowin First Nations, Métis and Inuit Cultural Camp

Palisades Centre, Jasper National Park

Educators are invited to immerse themselves in two days of experiential activities designed to deepen their understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit ways of knowing, histories and perspectives.

www.erlc.ca/programs/details.php?id=6053

April 25, “First Nations, Métis and Inuit Resources: Discovering and Using These in Area Classrooms”

St Paul Centre, 124 24 Avenue NE, Calgary

Wanting to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action in your school, yet uncertain about what authentic resources are available to support you? Join us for this supper session.

<https://crcpd.ab.ca/programs/month/april/2016>

April 28, Hate Hurts

RCMP Detachment, 4602 51 Avenue, Red Deer

The Hate Hurts program, organized by the Alberta Hate Crimes Committee, focuses on raising awareness for hate and bias incidents and crimes that occur in schools and communities along with methods that can be used to prevent such incidents from happening. www.jhcentre.org/news-blog

April 30, Deadline to Apply for Grants Supporting Diversity, Equity and Human Rights

The ATA offers grants of up to \$2,000 to help fund innovative projects designed to build inclusive learning communities. An inclusive learning community is based on the principles of respect for diversity, equity and human rights.

<http://tinyurl.com/jomsd2y>

April 30–May 1, “Fostering Diverse Communities Through Awareness, Advocacy and Action”
Stonebridge Hotel, Grande Prairie
The Fostering Diverse Communities Conference will focus on topics related to building welcoming and inclusive communities in Alberta.
www.cityofgp.com/index.aspx?page=21&recordid=7285

May

May 1, Deadline to Apply for the ATA Local Diversity, Equity and Human Rights (DEHR) Award

The purpose of this award is to recognize projects, programs, events or activities organized by a local association to promote diversity, equity and human rights. For more information, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/z39z126>.

May 6–7, “Indigenous Pathways to Language”

Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops, BC
Guest speakers include five Māori language leaders from the University of Auckland, New Zealand, as well as the talented staff of Chief Atahm School.

www.chiefatahm.com/cas_site_2013/conference_pages/conference.html

May 11–13, Lighting the Fire 2016 Conference and Trade Show

Victoria Inn Hotel and Convention Centre, Winnipeg
The Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC) is proud to host its 18th annual Lighting the Fire, “A New Era: Cultural Renaissance in Indigenous Education.” The conference and tradeshow will bring together chiefs and councillors, school boards, education directors, principals, aspiring administrators, teachers, parents and all First Nations education stakeholders.
http://files.aboriginalink.ca/201603221148070.WEB_MFNERC_Campaign4.pdf

May 13, “Seven Grandfather Teachings, Grades 1–8”

Room 17/18, 16325 83 Avenue, Edmonton
This learning opportunity reviews the seven (Anishnabe/Ojibwe) Grandfather Teachings. Throughout the day, we’ll discuss the animals that have been associated with each of the teachings and how these animals use the gifts given to them by the Creator.
www.erlc.ca/programs/details.php?id=6102

May 16–17, High Risk Youth Conference
Robbins Health Learning Centre, MacEwan University, Edmonton

This conference will bring together service providers, researchers, experts and the youth to focus on the growing population of young people (12+) with increasingly complex needs.
www.eventbrite.ca/e/high-risk-youth-conference-2016-building-connections-tickets-21344097771?aff=ebrowse

May 18 and 26, Canadian Institute of Diversity and Inclusion Webinar: “Measuring Diversity with a Scorecard”

Online www.ccdi.ca/whats-happening/events/cidi-educational-webinars

May 24–26, Indigenous Culture Awareness Camp for Educators

Hills of Peace Campground, Cadogan, Alberta
This camp will focus on beginning a personal and professional reconciliation process by examining powerful sources of cultural resilience.
www.learning-network.org/programs/register/1356

June

June 23 and 28, Canadian Institute of Diversity and Inclusion Webinar: LGBT+ Inclusion and Self-Identification

Online www.ccdi.ca/whats-happening/events/cidi-educational-webinars

There was no effort to record the number of students who died. It will be critical for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to obtain all records related to the deaths of residential school students.

—From the TRC Final Report

Upcoming Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Dates

April 9, Vimy Ridge Day

Canada observes Vimy Ridge Day as a remembrance for the 33,000 Canadian soldiers who participated in the battle of Vimy Ridge on April 9, 1917, and the 11,000 who were injured or died in the battle (www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/history/first-world-war/vimy-ridge). Teachers may wish to discuss the Aboriginal soldiers who fought for Canada during this conflict (www.warmuseum.ca/firstworldwar/history/people/in-uniform/first-nations-soldiers).

April 17, Equality Day

This marks the day when one of the equality provisions (section 15) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms came into force. The section states that every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, sex, age or mental or physical disability. www.canadianwomen.org/node/1945

May 3, World Press Freedom Day

Freedom of the Press is enshrined as a basic human right in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” World Press Freedom Day marks the sacrifices made by journalists throughout the world to inform the public of events and occurrences that others would prefer to hide. www.un.org/en/events/pressfreedomday/index.shtml

May 15, International Day of Families

This International Day provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families and to increase knowledge of the social, economic and demographic processes affecting families. www.un.org/en/events/familyday

May 17, International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia

This day draws the attention of policy-makers, opinion leaders, social movements, the public and the media to the violence and discrimination experienced by LGBTI people internationally (<http://dayagainsthomophobia.org>). Teachers may choose to discuss two-spirit people and their suppression under colonialism (www.dancingtoeaglespiritsociety.org/twospirit.php).

May 21, World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

Irina Bokova, director-general of UNESCO has said that “in a diverse world, the destruction of cultures is a crime, and uniformity is a dead-end: our aim must be to enhance, in one movement, the diversity that enriches us and the human rights that bring us together.” On this date the UN challenges members of the public to do some action that will promote diversity (www.un.org/en/events/culturaldiversityday). Teachers may choose to act on one of the calls to action from the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf).

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May 29, International Day of UN Peacekeepers

In 1956, Lester B Pearson, Canada's ambassador to the UN and later the prime minister of Canada, proposed that a multinational force flying the flag of the United Nations be sent to cope with the Suez Crisis. This proposal resulted in the first UN peacekeeping mission and the creation of the UN peacekeepers. The UN remembers the 3,300 men and women who have died while serving on peacekeeping missions since 1956. www.un.org/en/events/peacekeepersday

June 1, Global Day of Parents

The United Nations honours parents for their selfless commitment to nurturing and teaching their children on this date. www.un.org/en/events/parentsday/index.shtml

June 4, International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression

The purpose of the day is to acknowledge the pain suffered by children throughout the world who are the victims of physical, mental and emotional abuse. This day affirms the UN's commitment to protect the rights of children. www.un.org/en/events/childvictimday

June 12, World Day Against Child Labour

In 2002, the International Labour Organization designated June 12 as World Day Against Child Labour to focus attention on the global extent of child labour and the action and efforts needed to eliminate it. www.un.org/en/events/childlabourday

June 13, International Albinism Awareness Day

People with albinism face multiple forms of discrimination worldwide because the physical appearance of persons with albinism is often the object of erroneous beliefs and myths influenced by superstition that foster their marginalization and social exclusion. The UN calls for the prevention of attacks and discrimination against persons with albinism. www.un.org/en/events/albinismday

June 20, World Refugee Day

Every minute eight people leave everything behind to escape war, persecution or terror. By mid-2015, the number of refugees in the world was estimated to be 15.1 million—the highest number in 20 years. On this World Refugee Day, the UN asks that we recall our common humanity, celebrate tolerance and diversity and open our hearts to refugees everywhere. www.un.org/en/events/refugeeday/index.shtml

June 21, National Aboriginal Day

On this date, Canadians celebrate the unique heritage, diverse cultures and outstanding achievements of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada (www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100013248/1100100013249). On this date, teachers may choose to discuss some of the 94 Calls to Action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) (www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf).

June 26, International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

Torture seeks to annihilate the victim's personality and denies the inherent dignity of the human being. The United Nations has condemned torture from the outset as one of the vilest acts perpetrated by human beings on their fellow human beings. The UN marks this date with a view to the total eradication of torture. www.un.org/en/events/torturevictimsday

June 27, Multiculturalism Day

On this day, Canada celebrates its diversity and the contributions of the many cultures that coexist in this country. www.loppar.gc.ca/content/lop/ResearchPublications/2014-25-e.html