

INDIAN TIME

Began in July of 1983, the Indian Times is a news journal dedicated to reporting on what is happening in Akwesasne and our Sister Iroquois communities. The news policy at Indian Time insists we try to give our readers as truthful reporting as we can. We encourage and invite opinions different than ours. We are committed to a free and open press at Akwesasne. We believe in the unrestricted flow of information to our people. By this means, we have the ability to make intelligent, informed decisions about our collective future.

Indian Time is a product of the people of Akwesasne. It is your newspaper printing stories about you. Please feel free to contact our Kanatakon offices in the Akwesasne Communications Society Building if you have concerns, compliments or plain old curiosity about the material printed in Indian Time.

Niawenkowa, Akwesasne for your support.

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Indian Time

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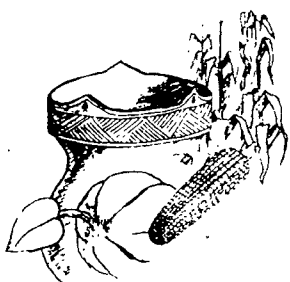
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Letters to the Editor

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chief Lawrence Francis
Chief Marshall Oakes
Chief Rose Marie Sunday
Chief Wallace Mitchell
Chief Wallace Oakes
Chief Debbie Thomas
Chief Brian David
Chief Angie Barnes
Chief Lynn Roundpoint
Chief Johanne Jackson
Chief Lloyd Benedict
Chief Hilda King

FROM: Grand Chief Mike Mitchell

DATE: May 28, 1992

RE: Resignation

As you may have heard by now, the constitutional hearings in Toronto has run into some snags where some provincial governments are changing their positions on aboriginal issues. I have been requested to participate until the deadline, which is Sunday night, to hammer out whatever difficulties may arise. The degree of how much of our rights will be protected in the constitution depends on whether our message as Native leaders has gotten across. This, of course, includes our treaty rights, tax exemption, self-government initiatives, etc.

As important as these issues are, I find it most regrettable that some members of this Council see only one matter of immediate concern and that is my resignation as Grand Chief of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne.

I will categorically state that in my capacity as the Grand Chief my foremost concerns and efforts have been towards the betterment of conditions for Native people in general and for the people of Akwesasne specifically. With this in mind, I cannot leave the constitutional meetings until they conclude and consequently, I am not available to meet with you this Friday afternoon. I am prepared to offer the matter of my resignation as a subject for mediation. My conditions are clearly spelled out in this letter and I will expect your acceptance or rejection of the said conditions by no later than 4 o'clock Monday, June 1st.

I want to say that only repeated attempts to force my resignation has kept me from previously offering it.

During my tenure as the Grand Chief, Akwesasne has undergone drastic changes. I am proud to state that the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne is on stable financial footing. In addition, we are witnessing the growth of our community amenities such as "Iakhihsoktha", the new St. Regis Village School, the Kawehnoke Community Centre and other facilities currently in the planning stage.

On the administrative side, we now have a high degree of expertise with skilled Mohawk technicians performing the tasks required of a competent government. Moreover, the changes incorporated into the framework of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne has enabled our community to be more knowledgeable of our programs and the state of our finances. The establishment of community institutions such as the Police Commission, school and membership boards, has broadened the base of authority and responsibility throughout the community, thereby assuring continued strength and democracy. The idea of a one man rule is gone and will never be acceptable in this community again.

We also cannot sit in our offices and wait for Indian Affairs officials to bring "in the money". We have had to learn how to lobby, fight for our share, compete when we had to. Giving more responsibilities to Council members under the portfolio system has allowed me to spend more time lobbying for program dollars, as well as, addressing our

interests and concerns at the provincial and federal levels.

The \$25 million Federal/Provincial/Akwesasne Agreement is a perfect example of this, which will allow Akwesasne to have what it has been seeking for the last 50 years by way of nursing home, schools, arena, justice buildings and so on. This is only a small example of how much Akwesasne has changed over the last 10 years, not to mention what challenge we must face in the future.

So where do we want to take Akwesasne? I am just as interested as anyone in the community to find out. My preference would be to give you the opportunity to show us. The only difficulty is that I need some time, one month to convince your critics that you should be given that chance.

During the last few months, I've had the opportunity to meet with various factions of not only our community, but in Kahnawake and Oneida as well. These groups included traditional leaders, elected, anti's, as well as, warriors of all these communities. We agreed that we should stop fighting each other, that the enemy is not among us, further that we should start a healing process amongst ourselves and communities to come back together.

During the past year I advocated that we, as a Council, should be given an opportunity to govern and show that we can work for the common good of all our people, that all of our interests are represented around the table. I now feel that this is not the case and that there are people on this Council who have an open dislike for traditional people which brings me to the most critical issue. We have all committed ourselves to work together to agree on a process of an inquiry which would look into the violence and death during the crisis two years ago. Our Council lawyer will be making her recommendation in a few weeks. This report must address the multi-jurisdictional nightmare we, as Mohawk people, have to live under. The fact that we have faced unresolved murders and deaths in past years also has to be looked into as well. The final objective is that the inquiry be fair and impartial to allow all of our community members to be involved.

We also have issues at the Council level that need to be resolved. Chief Marshall Oakes' request to be reimbursed for the time his position was under appeal up to the time of the by-election and the fact that some of the Chiefs want a raise in salary and where that money will come from.

I want these issues, as well as other issues identified by Council, resolved by way of mediation by a third party neutral. Your groups would name a person of your choice and the same offer to the other Chiefs would have to be made. The third party would have to be someone representing Canada (Indian Affairs) because part of the answer by way of money would have to be provided them.

I believe this covers most of my concerns. If you agree to the above, I would need your indication that this is acceptable. Should you not agree, I will force the issue of resolving the differences that appear to be deadlocked.

I will give you until Monday, June 1st to review the above. If you accept my offer as being acceptable, please inform my office and we can begin the mediation process.

Kanesatake Elections

How to Make A Responsible Choice

How do I chose the Grand Chief that I think is best for Kanesatake?

That is not an easy question for many Kanesatakeronon. On June 13, 1992, we will be choosing six Chief (councillors) and one Grand Chief. What makes this out of the ordinary for us that we are doing so through general elections for only the second time in the last twenty four years. It is not a process with which Kanesatakeronon have a lot of experience. Between 1969 and 1991, Council leaders were chosen by so-called clan mothers who had little to do with the real traditionalists who maintained the ceremonies and lived according to the Kaienerekowa.

The ideal way to chose a leader is according to the principles of ancient traditions but we have not yet arrived at that point in the circle of life. Therefore the question is; what is the ideal way to chose our Council under the elections system?

The answer to that may be of little importance since family ties, personal friendships and feuds have more to do with the way many people make their choice than does a person's individual qualities and track record. But here goes anyway.

I will chose the candidates who best represent the following qualities: honesty; experience; accessibility to the people; humbleness; puts priority on the people least able to help themselves; negotiating ability; knowledge of the issues; ability to draw together the best people around him or her to do the job; ability to communicate in as many local languages as possible; network of local, regional and national contacts to draw from; demonstration of life long commitment to the community - puts the community ahead of himself; responsible spender of community money; ready to make tough decisions against disruptive minority elements in the community; has best chance to bring peace, order, prosperity and jobs while enhancing Mohawk distinctive culture; makes all Council processes and information open and available to the people without being asked to do so; doesn't rush important matters on the people, gives them time to review the information carefully, doesn't shove things down peoples' throats; does his or her homework carefully and thoroughly; and, is prepared to use all reasonable means to protect lands, rights and Treaties.

The next step I take is to compare the candidates against the above list. If I don't have enough information, I'll ask for it, either directly from the candidate at meetings, or I'll call him or her, or I'll examine the documents which should already have been made public, or I'll ask people I trust for their opinion.

It is not a decision that should be taken lightly or easily. Kanesatake will have three years of whoever is chosen on June 13. It is a heavy responsibility that will affect the lives of every Kanesatakeronon and their children for many years to come. The land question is not resolved and negotiations will surely come to a head. We have no dependable police force to ensure the security of peace loving people or one which is not hostile to the people. Many major economic opportunities exist and will come apparent in the coming years.

Who will be the best to manage files? Who will lead us with dignity and strength without making damaging threats of violence? Who puts the community ahead of his personal ambitions.

It is not a tough question for me to answer. Having been on Council form June 27, 1991, to the present, I am in a position to answer most of the questions I have posed above. There is no question in my mind that Clarence Simon is the best choice for Grand Chief. If anyone wants my

Message Of The Four Beings

The messengers spoke to Skanientario and through him relayed the messages of Sonkwaiatison. They spoke about the present happenings as well as the future. They spoke about the things that we had left behind and the things that we have picked up which were not meant for our people.

The messengers told Skanientario that they would come to him from time to time to speak of him of events that need to be told to the people. They said that there were four of them but the fourth messenger would meet him later. At this time the fourth messenger is back in Sonkwaiatison's land to report to him that we have found a person here on earth who is willing to give a message to the people.

The messengers reminded Skanientario that other people before him were given this message but did not relate it to the people on earth. He was taken to a valley between two hills and asked to look between the sunrise and the moon and what he saw was a deep hole where smoke and steam were rising as if a hot place was beneath. The messengers told Skanientario that beneath this place lies a man who was buried, as he lays beneath the two hills in the hollow in the valley and a great message is buried with him. We went to him first but he refused to relate this message to the Onkwewonwe. Now he will never rise from that spot. His spirit will be confined to this area until the time that the earth shall be destroyed by fire.

So now we will offer the message to you and you will tell it truly before all the people. No matter how wicked your life has been, you have now put all this aside. We will be guiding you. It is through you that we will speak to the people. We will uncover the evil upon the earth and show how people have gone astray from the laws that Sonkwaiatison had laid down for the Onkwewonwe. All this is now prepared for you to truthfully tell to all the people.

Next week, The Articles of Karjwio, The Four Major Wrongs.

Flowers In Memory of Deceased Veterans

The American Legion Auxiliary are soliciting for the flower pledge in memory of a deceased veteran in the family, one carnation will be placed in a vase at the Memorial Mass on May 30th. The mass starts at 8:30 a.m. at the St. Regis Catholic Church. Killed in action - Red Carnation; Civil War, World War I, World War 2 - White Carnation; Korean Conflict and Vietnam Conflict - Blue Carnation. For more info, call Jenny Tarbell at 575-2435 or Laura Cree at 358-2211. Auxiliary members are asked to attend in full dress.

opinion on my choices for the other members of Council, it is easy to contact me.

I urge all Kanesatakeronon to use the power of the good mind to reflect carefully on their choices for Council, to take their responsibility seriously and to do their homework. Onen.

Dan Gaspe
Council Member,
Mohawk Council of
Kanesatake
May 27, 1992

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