

Local News

Akwesasne-Bound Liquor Shipment Seized In Vermont

By Doug Buchanan

MIDDLESEX, VT - Following a routine traffic stop by the Vermont State Police on Interstate 89 in Middlesex on Friday, April 12, 1996, the Vermont Liquor Control Department seized a tractor-trailer loaded with liquor bound for the St. Regis Mohawk Reservation.

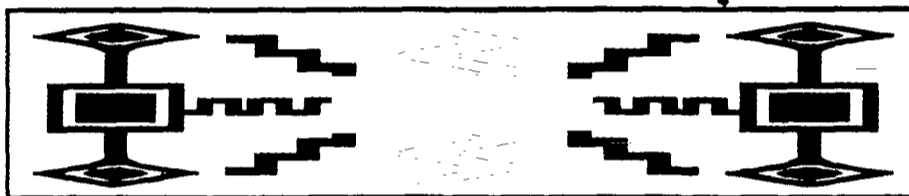
According to Vermont Commissioner of Liquor Control Norris Hoyt, a petition has been filed to require forfeiture of the liquor. According to the driver's manifest, the 9,900 gallons of vodka and whiskey were headed for California. The driver, however, was headed north on the interstate and had already delivered a 20-ton load of liquor to Akwesasne earlier in the day.

State Trooper John Robison originally stopped the vehicle for a

minor traffic infraction, but called in the Liquor Control Department when it was revealed that there were some improprieties in the driver's logbook.

According to Hoyt, the truck was bound for "Warehouse number 5," which is believed to be owned by the Tribe. Apparently the driver told investigators his true destination despite the bogus manifest which claimed he was going to California.

According to an article in the *Burlington Free Press*, the contraband is believed to have been purchased in New Hampshire and has an estimated value of \$100,000. The April 12 seizure is the single biggest of its kind ever in the state of Vermont.



Seven Stars To Resume Construction

by Doug Buchanan

AKWESASNE — St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Chief Norman Tarbell recently announced that the Tribe has formally entered into an agreement with Soaring Eagle, LLC, a partnership comprised of Fabian Hart and Stanley Dru, for up to \$20 million in financing to finish construction of the Seven Stars Casino.

Construction on the casino, located near the twin bridges on land owned by Buck White, was started some time ago, but ground to a dead halt not long after groundbreaking ceremonies when the Tribe's financing for the project fell through. "We have waited a long time for a final agreement which [would] lead to our first casino later this year," Chief Tarbell and Chairman [Phil] Tarbell said, "This is exciting news for the Tribe and our Mohawk Community."

According to the terms of the agreement, the Tribe may borrow up to \$20 million for the facility, which could be as large as 65,000 square feet. The money will be repaid to Soaring Eagle over a six-year period at a twelve percent interest rate. In addition, Soaring Eagle will receive a flat fee of \$2 million annually for six years.

Another term of the agreement stipulates that if the Tribe elects to

install electronic gaming machines similar to slot machines in the casino, Soaring Eagle will receive ten percent of the machines' net profits. Tribal spokesman Joe Gray explained that this agreement is not a management contract, as the facility will be managed by the Tribe. Soaring Eagle, a Limited Liability Corporation, will not be consultants on the project, although they will be allowed to make suggestions and recommendations.

According to a press release issued by Gray, "it is expected that the agreements will receive speedy review and approval by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the National Indian Gaming Commission."

Accordingly, the construction of the project is expected to commence in approximately 45 days with a completion date later this year. The press release further projected that 200 jobs would be created during the construction of the facility and that "at least 250 people" will be employed full-time once the casino is in operation. In full swing, the casino will be open 24 hours a day.

The agreements, according to Gray, are the culmination of five weeks of negotiation between the Tribe, Stanley Dru, and Fabian Hart.

Who Is Henry Flood?

by Doug Buchanan

AKWESASNE - Henry Flood, a development specialist currently under contract with the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, has come under close scrutiny by some community members recently. While many people seem to hear his name a lot, no one really knows who he is.

Henry Flood, according to Tribal spokesman Joe Gray, is one of the nation's foremost experts in Native American law. He has been under contract with the Tribe for almost two years. Flood's original salary was \$40,000 annually, but according to Gray, he voluntarily took a \$10,000 per year pay cut last year.

Operating out of his home in Florida, Flood aids the Tribe with technical details associated with Tribal documents.

"He puts pen to paper on legislation," explains Gray. "Anything he generates, he is asked to generate by the people here [in the Tribal offices]."

Flood has a hand in "a great deal of legislation," says Gray, but generally his involvement is limited to "checking for structure and technical things."

Flood also worked closely with the Constitution Committee in the drafting of the recently instituted St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Constitution. Gray points out, however, that Flood handles technical aspects of the constitution and legislation passed by the Tribal Council. He is not responsible for the content of any of these documents.

With a Master's Degree in legal studies from Antioch University, Flood is not a lawyer but he has extensive experience helping Native American Tribes around the country to "build capacity." He has worked with the Administration For Native American Affairs and is widely recognized for his expertise in field of Indian law.

MOHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE

"TSIONKW ANI KON RA IENT TA"

(WE UNDERSTAND)

COMMUNITY LAW WORKSHOP

The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne through the coordinating efforts of Victoria Day, Louise Thompson, Sheila Ransom and Chief's Ray Mitchell and Lynn Roundpoint, hosted a Community Law Workshop on April 10 - 11, 1996.

The workshop was targeted for the education awareness of internal staff and Council in the area of community law. The day and a half workshop extensively covered the following areas:

- Evolution of Government as presented by Salli Benedict;
- St. Regis Band Council resuming jurisdiction as presented by Chief Mike Mitchell;
- Applicable Laws in Akwesasne: Community/Federal/Provincial and Definition of Codes, Regulations and Community Law as presented by Micha Menczer, MCA Lawyer;
- Current Law Enactment Process and Justice Organization Structure as presented by Vuk Kovinich, MCA Lawyer; Future

Community Law Endeavors as presented by Chief Ray Mitchell with a panel consisting of Chief's Ray Mitchell, Vincenette Cook, Mike Mitchell and Micha Menczer.

Overall, this workshop was deemed a success with the participants engaging in discussions and putting forth many recommendations. Due to the success of this workshop, we are now in discussion concerning hosting another Community Law workshop in the near future which will be geared for the community.

At this time, I would like to thank the Coordinating Team, Sherri's Catering, Students from Kanatakon School, and all others whom I may not have mentioned for a job well done. The success of this workshop could not have been possible without you, it is team work such as this that makes a difference. Niawen:kowa

Submitted by Chief
Lynn Roundpoint
April 16, 1996.

