

The Editor

Indian Time/Akwesasne Notes
Apparently the "Mohawk Nation News Service" believes that freedom of speech is a right best exercised by them alone. At the risk of detracting from a discussion of the real issues, I will address some of their points directly in an effort to focus the dialogue again on the issues.

1. The Iroquois Confederacy is the tradition/original government of the Six Nations. Its history is legitimate and unbroken.

2. Oren Lyons was condoled in 1967. He is a Faithkeeper for the Turtle Clan which means, according to the Onondaga structure, he carried the dual burdens of Faithkeeper, as well as Sub-Chief. Oren works hard for his nation and the Confederacy. Our protocol allows Council to place certain burdens on the shoulders of its citizens, especially if they have the necessary mindset to represent the mind of the people on a given issue. These duties usually involve acting as runners, speakers, etc. Oren brings a good mind to all he does, and those who listen with a good mind — whether they agree with him or not — give him the respect he richly deserves.

3. I told the truth at the Coroner's Inquest. I "sided" with the truth and the Great Law. I did not lie to protect myself, or anyone else. In fact, the first person I identified with respect to the presence of arms in the Pines on May 1, 1990, was myself. If the warriors truly believed in the legitimacy of the cause, why did they choose to act with dishonour when the time came to tell the story? No, they sought to mislead and evade. In so doing, they showed their true colours. An objective reading of the coroner's report clearly demonstrates that both sides acted in bad faith, each pursuing their own hidden

agenda.

4. As for 1990, there is much that remains untold. But, for the record, I was one of those who were involved in the occupation of the Pines in March, 1990 — in keeping with the principles of the Kaswentah and the Great Law. I distanced myself from the group in the Pines when I felt a good mind was not being used by all there, and that there was a hidden agenda involved. I worked with the Confederacy to bring a good peace, and my '86 Jetta is not even referred to as a limo by my kids.

As for the "Mohawk Nation News Service", I find it odd that a self-described "independent news service" would be so defensive of the so-called "warrior society" and the First Nations Business League. They are persistent in issuing personal attacks, disguised as news releases, directed against citizens of the Mohawk Nation, and the Iroquois Confederacy, who do not toe their line. These news releases are consistently long on innuendo and rumour, and short on a substantive investigation or analysis of the issues.

The individual(s) running the MNNS are anonymous. They seek to misinform, and draw attention away from any attempt to shatter the myths they carefully crafted in 1990. They enjoy the new image the media gave them after they were exposed in Akwesasne. It made them look clean, shiny and noble. They are no more separate from the warrior society than Sinn Fein is from the IRA.

What they are is invisible as individuals, hiding behind the name of an organization. Perhaps they're afraid to stand on their own records as individuals, and accept responsibility for their statements and actions. I am not.

Kanatiio,
Kanesatake

No Healing Without Justice

by Doug George-Kanentiio

For too many years the criminal element at Akwesasne has had a free reign with regards to the smuggling of weapons, narcotics, aliens, liquor and tobacco across the St. Lawrence. Their activities have tainted the entire community and fostered a culture of violence which in turn is fueled by unparalleled greed.

Only now, with the recent arrests by the RCMP and US federal agents, are these outlaws being held responsible for the corruption they have fostered among the Mohawk people. Yet the true ringleaders of the multi-million dollar operations have not been brought to justice and remain free to continue their operations.

For all the money they have made, however, this small group is rather miserable. They had convinced themselves some years ago that if they were to be powerful they must first become rich. By controlling the economic lives of the Mohawk people they felt they would then be in a position to dictate who would reign supreme at Akwesasne, Kahnawake, Kanehsatake and all the other Iroquois communities.

This small group was articulate. They had traveled extensively over the years and knew which phrases to use when it came time to recruit others to their evil ways. Such key words as "sovereignty", "security", "Prosperity", "jobs" and "profits" were thrown out like so much bait to hungry fish. They neglected to warn the recruits the tragic consequences of their actions including, as we now see, imprisonment and disgrace.

This group has become wealthy only to find their blood money has not bought them the respect they so desperately desire. They have elected to form their own shadow council and even conduct traditional style rituals in a dwelling constructed on disputed land and built with tainted money.

Now some of them have indicated they would like to return to the legitimate longhouse community. They want to forgive and forget, to pretend the pain they have caused to the Mohawk people never happened, or at least was not of their doing. They want to be protected from the various police agencies now hunting them down, one by one.

Should the people accept them back? I believe so, under certain conditions.

First, those who left the people must demonstrate they have the good conscience necessary to take part in the sacred rituals. If they have

this then they should have no difficulty in coming before the longhouse, taking hold of the wampum and admitting to their mistakes.

If they refuse to do this then surely they have failed to make the distinction between right and wrong; without this ability they cannot be of good mind and their presence will only contaminate the people. It is impossible to honor the Creator and give thanks while this moral obstruction remains in place.

If they have the courage to admit to their mistakes they must also come before their clans and acknowledge what those errors were. There can be no true healing unless the disease which is causing the suffering is remedied. To be cured means one has to admit there is a problem then determine which is the best way to restore good health.

Illicit gambling, thieving, smuggling, adultery, assault and lying are wrongful acts in any society which, if allowed to flourish, lead to the inevitable decay of a community. To engage in these activities is to breach communal standards, the violation of which demands justice. Without equity and balance the people will become lost and thrust into despair and hopelessness, as many are now.

Justice requires those found in violation of the society's rules must acknowledge guilt and accept the judgment of the clans. To take a wayward group into the longhouse without this type of ethical cleansing is to bring great calamity to the people.

When the Peacemaker walked among the Iroquois converting them from their violent ways he used certain methods to heal the wounds of the people. He offered compensation for certain losses, public contrition for criminal acts, ceremonies to mark the conversion from evil to good and assurances to the people those seeking forgiveness would never again act against the laws of the nation.

It would be impossible to do anything less given the degree to which the residents of Akwesasne have been made to suffer. We cannot forget the trauma of 1989-90 so long as those who created those days of terror arrogantly walk among us. It would be foolish to expect to be "welcomed back" while the killings of May 1, 1990 remain unsolved. Surely someone has the courage to reveal to the people who the guilty persons are and thereby let peace return to the Mohawk Nation.

