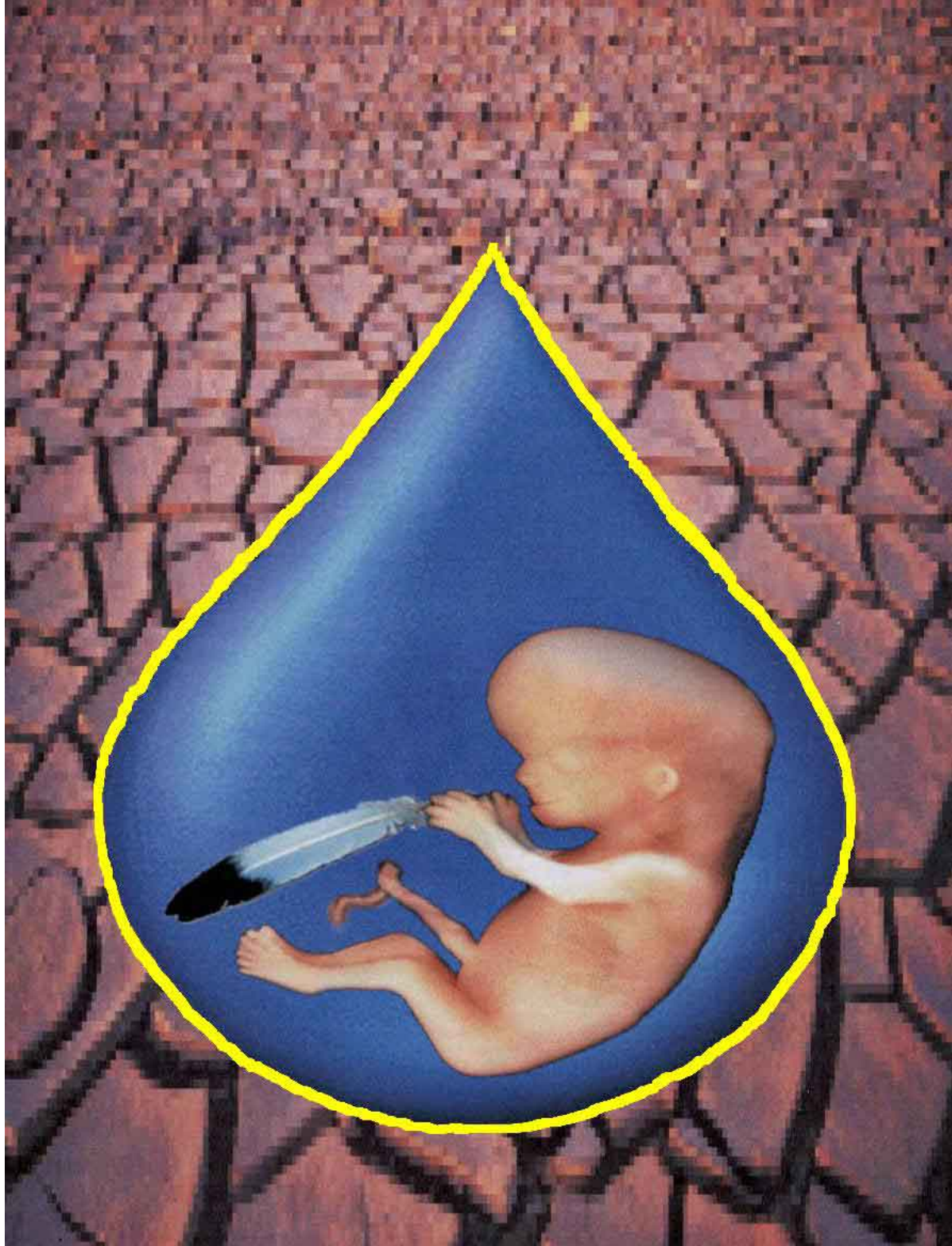


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Enjoy! Pat Paul



WITHOUT WATER THERE IS NO LIFE.

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Newsletter now called "Wulustuk Times"

Each month we try to gather and publish the latest, most relevant native news stories for our readership. Proceeding with this forma, we feel that a well informed reader is better able to see, relate with, analyze and grasp a situation more effectively when equipped with the right tools. Through the stories we present our aim is to provide our readers easy comprehension and a well-informed background behind a story.

Web access:

While providing a reliable, up to date news service for local clientele, we extend our comprehensive news coverage to the world through the Internet access. Upon that aspect, a talented and seemingly tireless news provider, Sharon Green, from Ontario helps us to reach an audience around the world by putting up our Wulustuk Times publication on her web site each month. To access her site and reach us, just click on Gathering Place First Nations, and in there our newsletter appears, - The Wulustuk Times.

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WITHOUT WATER THERE IS NO LIFE

p.paul

Water is the basic commodity for sustaining life. All things on earth, in the earth, even those things above the earth (atmosphere and clouds) depend on water.

Without a doubt, Water is as vital for our survival as the air we breathe and the food we eat.

The air, the food, our landscape, the fields, meadows, the plants, the trees and everything in the rolling hills and valleys all need water for their existence as well. Without water there can be no life.

We can easily forget, without realizing, that water is essential to our living, to our surroundings, to our planet that without it nothing would survive. Our earth would be as barren as the moon and other spacial bodies in the universe.

Our cover this month highlights the need for clean, fresh water for our survival, starting right from our conception to our last day. The illustration on the cover shows the protected environment we live in for the first nine months of life, completely encased and protected within a safe water home in the womb.

In contrast the to the safe haven of the womb is the opposite environment we could find ourselves in, if clean water disappears. Needless to say therefore, that we need to protect and preserve clean water forever, from this generation to the next who will undoubtedly be more hard-pressed to conserve.

Thank the Creator for the wonderful gift of water.

ON WORLD WATER DAY, MANY NATIVE COMMUNITIES LACK SAFE, CLEAN WATER

Article from Maliseet/Micmac News

World Water Day is being observed worldwide today with official ceremonies marking with theme of "Coping with Water Scarcity." However, many First Nations mark another year of living with out access to safe and adequate water.

"In Canada the scarcity of water is not the critical issue- it's the lack of access and sufficient drinking water for our people living in our First Nation communities," said National Chief Phil Fontaine. "In today's society, it's simply unacceptable to have 114 First Nation water systems to be considered to be in a high risk status and over 80 communities with Boil Water Advisories."

The National Water Strategy specifically includes \$186 million investments in clean-up, enforcement and in fractures, yet the only mention for First Nation is the imposition of a "a tough new regulatory system." Regulation, without investment, will not address the deplorable situation of First Nations. Government's own research clearly shows this to be true.

"The Minister of Finance has stated that the new long-term plan for infrastructure funded from Budget 2006 and Budget 2007 will provide a total of \$33 billion over the next seven years to support investments by provinces, territories and municipalities, some of which will be used for water and wastewater projects," notes the National Chief. "Yet again, First Nations are not included."

The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights declared that "the human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic use," and The Human Development Report 2006 argues that the roots of the crisis in water can be traced to property, inequality and unequal power relationships, as well as flawed water management policies that exacerbate scarcity.

"When we look at the immense wealth being generated from this country's natural resources surrounding our communities - and then we see the appalling property of our First Nations living within it - it is utterly inexcusable for these third world conditions to be present in Canada," said National Chief Fontaine. "We look forward to future World Water Days with the hope that First Nations will soon celebrate when boil water advisories, insufficient or non-existent sources of water, and dependence on bottled water become a distant memory."

The Assembly of First Nations is the national organization representing First Nations citizens in Canada.

MERCURY DUMPED IN DRINKING WATER IMPERILS TWO ONTARIO RESERVES

p. paul, TFN, NB, Canada

Some fifty or sixty years ago, native people across the country were reported to have contacted mysterious illnesses from ingesting water drawn from their community wells and water systems. These health problems continue to plague native communities to this day, many still with no relief or remedy in sight.

Although the problem was national in scope when first brought to light, it was generally worse in two native communities of White Dog and Grassy Narrows in Ontario. Both

reserves are located on the English-Wabigon River system near Kenora, Ontario where internationally -owned pulp/paper mills had been operating and dumping industrial wastes into the river systems for years.

Since time immemorial, native people have used these same watersheds for catching fish and for hunting or trapping other air/water game animals that live in them. Most significant and directly damaging of all, however, was the constant use of the river water for domestic purposes

Much of the effluent materials contained a deadly substance, mercury, an element that stays and builds up in the body forever whereby once ingested can render a victim helpless or dead.

For years the contamination continued while a large percentage of the five thousand members of the two communities were virtually unaware of the hazards involved or were deliberately misled or left uninformed of the dangers in mercury contamination.

Technically, once mercury is ingested into the system it concentrates mainly in the central nervous system and causes the person to begin losing their sense of smell, taste, feel, sight and hearing. Additionally, in advanced stages, the person's balance or equilibrium can be affected progressively, leaving them to have lesser control of their body movements which, in effect, can be taken as bizarre behavior or mannerism often misinterpreted as one being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

The governments and the companies responsible for contamination preferred to look the other way and ignore the escalation of social and economic chaos and disorder happening in the native communities. In time conditions on the reserves began major deterioration while the owners of the international paper companies grew richer and generated record earnings for their own interests and for their stockholders.

Meanwhile, as the situation got worse, thousands of natives cried out for help that never came. Many suffered and died from massive mercury intake resulting from bathing, ingesting and even cooking with mercury-infected waters drawn from their once pristine water sources.

It seemed the authorities were saying, "Who gives a damn anyway, they are only Indians".

The mercury poisoning spread like wildfire to affect everyone and everything in sight. Even the wildlife that drank and swam in the same river systems became poisoned. To compound the negative effects, wildlife that was trapped or hunted on or near the contaminated waters was eventually eaten by the natives which added the spreading of the disease.

Without help or intervention from outside the situation locally grew steadily worse at a fast pace, while the toll on life and health in the community mounted dramatically.

News about the growing disaster caught international attention somehow informing the outside world that hundreds or thousands of Indians in Canada whose main food staple

was fish, were dying from some unknown cause and very little help or concern was being raised to assist them.

Fortunately medical experts in Japan caught wind of this alarming situation in Ontario and quickly related it to a situation they knew too well from their past and personal experience with mercury contamination..

Historically, at the turn of the 20th century, a Japanese community of Minamata Bay, Japan, had a tragic outbreak of mysterious disease that killed many in their fishing community over a period of time. In their situation they learned from extensive study and research that the killer disease came from eating mercury contaminated fish.

Subsequently as the cause and effect of the disease was precisely identified and diagnosed correctly, preventive measures were taken to check further escalation of the disease and head off a total calamity.

After the mysterious illness in Japan, was conquered and a relative normalcy in re-establishing 'liveable' conditions was achieved, and the killer disease was thereafter labeled, the Minatama Disease.

In their synopsis, Japanese researchers linked the cause of deaths at Minatama Bay to be from massive consumption of contaminated fish that abounded the waters where industrial mercury wastes had been dumped for years. As a result of eating poisoned fish taken from the mercury infested waters off or near Minatama Bay the evidence was absolutely clear and definite that the mercury was the cause of the mysterious deaths.

Armed with expert knowledge and having experienced the devastating results of the disease, Japanese officials quickly organized humanitarian assistance for Grassy Narrows and White Dog Reserves to combat the escalating problem in Ontario.

They first began with a comprehensive analysis and investigation in the affected communities to examine and determine the extent and depth of the problem. Later they would design and recommend corrective measures to treat and lessen the disabling effects.

With analytical facts and proven data behind them, the Japanese experts found Minatama Disease to be running rampant in the two native communities. And from this definite discovery, appropriate help and treatment was eventually organized and brought to the two Ontario reserves.

But surprisingly, that help came with reserved reluctance and some red tape, plus delays in dealing with top level protocol procedures.

The long and the short of this tragic story entails a tug-of-war that went on for years while poisoned native victims were left fending for themselves against huge odds and rich corporations, while at the same time many of them were dying from their illnesses.

Even after a half century of designing and remaking pragmatic alternatives, residual effects of Minatama Disease lingers in the two stricken reserves.

In the meantime Japanese researchers continue seeking renewed and viable ways and means for natives to reasonably come to terms with the residual effects of the poisoning. And hopefully, one day, the two communities will only recall the times of their mercury poisoning as as distant memory.

The unfortunate saga of Grassy Narrows and White Dog Reserves holds powerful lessons to be remembered, 1) That water is an absolute finite commodity that needs full-time protection, 2) That clean water cannot be wasted or be taken for granted, ever, 3) That water is a vital link to good health and well-being of a nation, and 4) Irresponsible introduction of untested industrial projects or products, or establishing resource-robbing complexes within a pristine community can be harmful, destructive, if not fatal.

Remember always that everything runs by clean water, and running too much of anything can rob a nation of its vital source of life.

EARTH'S DWINDLING WATER SUPPLY

It has been estimated that around 90% of disasters—hurricanes, floods, tsunamis, etc.—are water-related. Could the world be headed for a major water crisis? Is any part of the earth immune to water supply problems?

BY M. WAYNE ICENHOWER

When someone in the Western world is asked his opinion about water scarcity, he might respond with some concern for those starving in Africa, or perhaps India. He will probably assume regional droughts in his own rich country to be temporary inconveniences that can be addressed by rationing and conservation.

Crisis? What crisis?" says the archetypical, self-assured Westerner. "It will never happen here."

Or can it?

In the West, droughts and floods are largely attributed to weather cycles and global warming. Not much serious consideration is given to the *real* underlying causes of present "inconveniences." And, while water problems in the English-speaking countries of the world are intensifying, it is obvious that they have not reached a crisis stage—yet.

However, this is not the case in numerous regions throughout the planet. Many areas are already under stress from lack of water and a growing population. With expanding deserts, deforestation and growing droughts, everyone should be concerned about potential worldwide calamity caused by a diminished water supply.

WHERE IS THE WATER?

BY M. WAYNE ICENHOWER

When viewed from space, Earth is a magnificent blue planetary gem that appears to have a limitless supply of water. Indeed, at least 70% of its surface is covered by water.

But most is salt water, located largely in the oceans and seas. Only 3% of all the water is freshwater, safe for drinking—and most of this is unavailable for human use. Roughly a full three quarters of all freshwater is part of the frozen and largely uninhabited ice caps and glaciers. What remains for our use is about 1% of the total. (North America's Great Lakes and Russia's Lake Baikal make up about two-fifths of this volume.)

The hydrological cycle acts as a huge desalination unit as the sun's energy transports freshwater in the form of vapor from the oceans over land. Rainwater and snow are distributed throughout the earth's continents, but not equally.

Approximately 75% of annual rain falls in areas inhabited by only one-third of the earth's population. For example, 20% of all rainfall descends upon the dense jungles of the Amazon River basin in South America each year. Yet this vast region is inhabited by less than 10 million people.

Across the Atlantic Ocean, roughly 30% of Africa's annual rainfall is deposited along the Congo River and its tributaries—an area that is inhabited by only about 10% of the continent's total population.

Also consider that, although Asia experiences around 31% of the earth's annual rainfall, the per capita availability is just over 4,700 cubic meters per year, per person. In contrast, per-capita availability in North America stands at over 19,000 cubic meters.

MISUSE AND POLLUTION OF WATER

Let's take a look at civilization's critical need for water. The basic need to feed the earth's people requires incredible amounts of water. For example, a one-acre cornfield loses over 4,000 gallons of water per day just in evaporation. A single pound of potatoes requires 1,000 pounds of water for its production. Or, generally, one ton of produce requires around 1,000 tons of water. Astonishing!

Perhaps more astonishing is a breakdown of water totals required for some other common foods:

- Apple: 16 gallons
- Orange: 22 gallons
- Egg: 85 gallons
- Loaf of bread: 150 gallons

- Pound of beef: 3,000 gallons

Agriculture is also the biggest polluter of freshwater resources—accounting for more than 70% of water pollution in the United States. In America alone, agricultural chemicals (including pesticides) have eroded sediment and, combined with animal waste, have seriously degraded 173,000 miles of waterways.

The problem is no less serious in other countries. In India, for example, more than 4 million hectares of agricultural land have been abandoned because of salt deposits and water logging caused by irrigation.

Whether pumped from an aquifer or distributed to crops from surface reservoirs, water eventually makes its way back to the sea as runoff. What returns to rivers and streams after agricultural use contains harmful toxins, salts, sediments and pathogens.

Industrial pollution also contributes to compromised water quality. At least 70,000 different chemicals are used regularly throughout the world, and there are between 200 and 400 toxic chemicals that contaminate the world's waterways. It is also estimated that at least 1,000 new chemicals are introduced every year! When these industrial wastes are combined with agricultural runoff, the problem of freshwater pollution becomes mountainous.

While it is true that advances in water chemistry as it relates to water treatment have done much to clean up the rivers and lakes in the industrialized world, over 90% of Europe's rivers have nitrate levels that exceed established health thresholds, and one-half of the continent's lakes are low in oxygen. The process, called *eutrophication*, occurs when excess nutrients stimulate the growth of algae in the water, which in turn rob the lake of oxygen necessary for animal life.

Wastewater treatment is big business today, processing millions of gallons of water while sending tons of the refuse taken from the water to landfills. However, in the third world, 90 to 95% of all domestic sewage and 75% of all industrial waste are discharged into surface waters without any treatment at all.

Here are just a few of the more serious developments:

- The fertile Nile Delta region has contracted radically due to water diversion and sediment buildup. About 30 species of fish (out of 47) have become extinct or endangered. Delta fisheries that could once feed a million people have been wiped out.
- The Rhine River in Europe has lost 8 of its 44 species of fish; another 25 of those are rare or endangered.
- Colombia's Magdalena River has seen fish production drop from 72,000 metric tons in 1977 to only 23,000 metric tons in 1992.
- In the United States, California has lost more than 90% of its wetlands, causing about two-thirds of native fish to become extinct or endangered.

FIRST NATIONS CONSENT SHOULD BE REQUIRED FOR DEVELOPMENT

The secretary general for Amnesty International in Canada, Alex Neve, said First Nations should not only be consulted, but they should give consent before future projects in their territories are approved.

By Mike Aiken
Miner and News
Friday April 20, 2007

The secretary general for Amnesty International in Canada, Alex Neve, said First Nations should not only be consulted, but they should give consent before future projects in their territories are approved. Neve made his remarks Thursday morning in Kenora, during his four-day trip to Northwestern Ontario. "It's one of the most universal human rights stories there is," he said, during a short interview. Neve referred to international law, when he said it was a fundamental right for indigenous peoples to have a relationship with the land. He then described what he thought were the consequences for society, when the relationship was broken. The impacts can include poverty, disputes between aboriginal peoples and the justice system, as well as disagreements with policy makers and corporations. "The consequence of that can be so severe," he said. Neve went a step further, when he said Canada's federal government had abdicated its role in trying to address these issues, by referring the matter to provincial ministries. "That federal voice should also be at the table," he said.

Neve said the human rights group had 80,000 members in Canada, and 2 million world-wide.

At Queen's Park, the premier's office has acknowledged a request from Amnesty International for a meeting on the issue. Spokesman Jane Almeida said Thursday staff were reviewing the letter they received in March, but had not yet taken any further action. During a brief interview Thursday afternoon, Natural Resources Minister David Ramsay acknowledged the province's obligation to consult with First Nations and accommodate them. He added the ministry has been meeting with Grassy Narrows representatives in an effort to better understand their concerns, noting the federal government has also been a part of the talks.

The minister went further, when he said he recognized Treaty 3's Resource Law, and he'd met several times with Grand Chief Arnold Gardner on the subject. On Wednesday, Treaty 9 announced the signing of a political agreement with the province regarding a wide range of related issues, including revenue sharing, treaty rights and land use planning.

Under the agreement, Nishnawbe Aski Nations and the government of Ontario will have 90 days to finalize what the parties described as "exploratory discussions." In recent weeks, Treaty 3 has been holding talks with Natural Resources concerning the "certainty of supply" for the \$30-million expansion plans at Kenora Forest Products.

The relationship between aboriginal people and traditional lands was also listed as an important issue in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People in 1996.

OUR MEDICINE, THE WATER

Our bodies are 75% made of water. We need water everyday for our sustenance. Water purifies us, cleanses us and allows our bodies to stay alive. We can not live without clean water and neither can our mother, the earth.

Water is the life blood of our mother, the earth. Without clean water running through her veins, the life supported by her will die. We need clean water and we need to protect the medicine of water from pollution, contaminants, exploitation and further disruption and threat to its natural flow.

I have been taught that we need to include water in our ceremonies. We do so to respect that medicine and to pray and give thanks for that medicine. Water is the balance to the fire and respecting life in balance is what our ceremonies serve to represent. As a woman, I have been taught that as a co-creator of life, I must honor the water. Without water, new life would not come and water protects new life before that life is born. Water is in me and I am in her. As women, we carry that water in respect of our connection and out of love for our children. As women, we teach our children the importance of water and how sacred the water is to our people. For the Wolustukwieg, People of the Beautiful River, the river sustained our entire lives. The river provided our drinking source, our source for cleansing our bodies, the source of our salmon and other fish life, kept our animals healthy and provided our transportation system that kept our economy and social relations healthy. We did our ceremonies at and by the water. She provided for us and we respected her greatness. Our culture, our language and our way of life reflected the importance of the water and our connection to the river and the land sustained by her. We were not separate from the water and we did not live our lives separate from her. We knew the importance of the water and we lived by that knowledge.

Now is a different story. Many of us have not been reminded of how important the water is to us. We do not pay attention or respect to the water and the fundamental role it plays in our lives. We need to be reminded and remember that our ancestors loved our rivers, our lakes, our streams and brooks for they had given a name to each one and a name for every plant, tree, medicine found there. Our ancestors did not pollute the water because they knew how important it was and would be for us. Out of respect for those ancestors and our selves, we need to remember the water every day and to be grateful for the life it gives us.

When Nokomis is full and shining bright in our night sky, we can feel her pull and strength within us. The moon effects the water like a grandmother to a mother: a strong connection to be remembered and a relationship to be respected. When the moon is full, the tides rise higher and our body chemistry is affected. Some people get emotionally or mentally affected. Law enforcement has noticed that more activity is reported when a full moon is present. Our grandmother, Nokomis, the moon is the balance to the sun. We respect that balance and women have their own ways to follow when the full moon time is here. I encourage all of the women to come together with other women and celebrate our special connection to our grandmother and mother at the full moon time. I ask our men to support our women to do this for our common sake.

In the spirit of asking women to gather, the Wabanaki Women's Gathering will be taking place at the Aroostook Band of Micmac in Spruce Haven, ME on June 1-3, 2007. The Gathering invites all Wabanaki women to come and share and learn from each other. We will be doing a full moon ceremony and other ways to honor our role as women. If you would like more information on this gathering, please contact Gail Nicholas at (506)273-4029 or email her at mahsos@yahoo.com. This is a donation-based event and we are asking for a \$25.00 donation to cover the cost of food for the event from those participating.

Our gathering in Micmac territory is important since our ability to gather across the imposed border may be hindered after this year. I encourage our women to pray for our people that we may be able to continue to gather as we have done so since time immemorial.

Woliwon, Patty Saulis, Tobique FN

THOUGHTS ON THE WATER ISSUE

All water is in continual motion, changing its form and location, rising to form clouds and falling back to the earth in some new location, making lakes and streams and waterfalls, as it winds its way among the hills and valleys down to the ocean. Each drop makes this journey. We know not where each drop we drink originated, nor where it has travelled. A new born baby is made up of 78% water, for adults about 60%. By this we can understand that we are the streams, the oceans, the mists and the dewdrops on wildflowers. They are in us, and we in them. If the water we take into our bodies is polluted, so are we. Mother Earth filters the water that falls from Father Sky through her plants and trees and soils, so that it is made pure for us to drink and to bathe in, and also for all the other creatures with whom we share this planet. Water is sacred - without it there is no life.

There is an old saying that warns, "Never drink down stream from the herd". How many of us are downstream today? I watched a TV documentary a few years ago (I forget the title), and it described one method being used to make companies stop polluting the river by making a bylaw that forced them to have their intake pipes down stream from their discharge pipes.

Each of us is responsible for our brothers' and sisters' health all over the earth by how we use and respect the waters where we live. Above and below the ground, water in all its forms, flows or drifts past municipal and national boundary lines, and challenges the laws of property ownership and usage rights. Who can own water, the perpetually moving and changing life giving source? I remember seeing an old property deed in Prince Edward Island one time that had in its boundary description these words, "Beginning at the hole in the ice". That is the closest I have ever seen of someone trying to put a property boundary on water. Water has no boundaries, it is universal in the cycle of Nature. Even the glaciers move and melt and become the sea and the clouds.

Perhaps the situations of most of the First Nations in regards to contaminated and limited water supplies is a wakeup call to the world. In ancient times they had larger numbers than they do today, yet they had no sickness from water pollution. Early explorers and fur traders found these people to be very healthy and free of disease. These people lived with wisdom, keeping in tune with the cycles of Mother Earth. For example, the Wolastoqiyik would move about from summer locations to winter locations, and from one hunting and fishing area to another. In the summers they might live along the river and fish trout and salmon, and perhaps grow corn, but in the winters they would move inland and hunt caribou and small game like rabbits and partridge. This community rotation was healthy for the land just as we understand today that crop rotation makes the best use of the land. You take from the land in one season, but you give back to it in another season by planting a different crop, or spreading manure or compost, or just allowing it to lie fallow and recover on its own for several seasons. By forcing these First Peoples to live for centuries within confined borders (reserves), ignoring their time proven ancient traditions, they have been made to experience the white man's own sins, the illnesses from polluted waters and a sick land. This tragic situation is a sad model for predicting what will be happening all over the earth as we pack all people permanently together into large cities and show no respect for the laws of the Earth Mother.

"The time will soon be here when my grandchild will long for the cry of a loon, the flash of a salmon, the whisper of spruce needles, or the screech of an eagle. But he will not make friends with any of these creatures and when his heart aches with longing he will curse me. Have I done all to keep the air fresh? Have I cared enough about the water? Have I left the eagle to soar in freedom? Have I done everything I could to earn my grandchild's fondness?" ---- Chief Dan George

(This article submitted by Daryl Hunter)

WATER TESTING BY GRADE FIVE CLASS

Operation Water Drop Makes a "Splash" in Grade 5

PERTH-ANDOVER, NB - A class of grade 5 students from Andover Elementary is learning about the importance of clean water. After learning about the water cycle, Mrs. Canney's grade 5 students began testing their school's water supply using a free "Operation Water Drop" testing kit supplied by the *Safe Drinking Water Foundation*.

In all there are 7 tests that the students will be conducting: heterotrophic plate count, alkalinity, sulphate, pH, colour, free chlorine, and total hardness. Five of the tests have been conducted thus far, and the school's water has proven to be clean with those tests.

The students are not only learning the importance of clean water and the effects of unsafe water on the body, but they are also learning about the careful steps that must be taken when a scientific test is conducted. By working in groups, they have learned the importance of staying on task, cooperating, and following directions. Once the

testing is complete, the students will summarize their results and send them to the Safe Drinking Water Foundation.

"It is my hope that the student's will realize how important it is to ensure their water is safe to drink and that they will also understand how fortunate they are to live in an area with clean water," says their classroom teacher. After this section in Science is completed, the students will get to explore the properties of water.

DAVE CADOGAN'S BROAD "TAKE" ON WATER

Yes, I have a copy of "An Inconvenient Truth," and watched it with Michelle last night.

In line with what Gore said about the opposition depending on being able to manufacture doubt, I see that there is a movement staging protests at showings of the film. They have a film of their own contradicting Gore's. They're also suing several school districts trying to prevent teachers from showing "An Inconvenient Truth" to students without showing their film too.

To be honest, at my age, I've heard and seen one dire warning after another about the doom of society.

At one time Strontium 90, a radioactive substance in milk, was going to kill us all.

More recently, Radon was radiating up through our basements and was going to kill us all.

There seems to be a new threat every decade.

However, there does not seem to be much doubt that global warming is a threat. Even if it were not, all of the things we would do to combat it are things we should be doing anyway. Also, if we are going to be wrong, it is so much better to be wrong on the side of safety.

If we play Russian Roulette, the pessimist who thinks, against the odds, that there is a bullet in that chamber is probably wrong. The odds are five to one it is just an empty chamber.

Still, damn few of us play.

Even if the odds were five to one that global warming is a hoax, and, of course, that is not at all the case, wouldn't we be better off to play it safe and not go there?

As I watch "An Inconvenient Truth," I am struck by an idea that had never occurred to me before.

It seems that people who occupy the conservative side of the political and economic spectrum always oppose conservation and preservation. Doesn't that seem odd? Shouldn't conservative mean conserve?

Mind you, they also seem to tend to belong to "right to life" groups who enthusiastically believe in capital punishment.

Most of my thoughts regarding water are that humans have treated it with our usual obvious insanity.

The lack of clean drinking water is the second highest item in our hierarchy of needs. The lack of air will kill us more quickly than anything else.

The lack of drinking water will kill us second most quickly.

We do so many obviously nuts things with water.

We use the oceans and lakes for sewage and toxic waste disposal.

We mine the oceans and lakes. How insane a species do you have to be to mine the wealth of the cod stocks to extinction? We hear the story of the killing of the golden goose and know that was crazy. Yet we do it over and over. When Nicholas Denys wrote about visiting the Miramichi some 350 years ago, he said he could not sleep at night for the noise the salmon made heading up the river to spawn. He said that, in the moonlight, the surface of the river looked as though it were boiling.

Imagine how wealthy and secure the Mi'kmaq were in such an environment.

Another thing we humans do is destroy the tidal estuaries.

Besides using them as sewage disposal sites, we have drained thousands of them for development or just to eliminate insects.

My father often said that the tidal estuaries were the most important part of the planet. He said they were the primordial soup where life began and the link between water life and land life.

Stories of how we battle nature instead of working with it regarding water abound.

Take Florida, for example. The Everglades have been destroyed by irrigation and fertilizers. The water table has been horrendously depleted and flushed to the surface. Now the US Corps of Engineers is attempting to create a huge subterranean reservoir to solve the pollution and flushing problem.

Many such projects have created larger problems in the past. Fighting the Mississippi River with levees, for example, creates flooding in Ohio and allows vulnerable development such as the delta parishes destroyed by Katrina.

As you saw in "An Inconvenient Truth," the Russians have drained the river that fed the Ural Sea. What wasn't mentioned in the picture was that that sea is the home of the sturgeon which are the source of the best caviar in the world.

Combined with insane over-fishing, that has led to the virtual extinction of the species for practical purposes. I believe it is even illegal to produce, distribute or buy caviar from there now, even if you could get it or afford it.

I could go on and on. So could you.

One thing Gore said that is demonstrably true is that protecting the planet need not harm the economy or our quality of life.

I was at an investment seminar a couple of months ago. The speaker manages a fund with several billions of dollars.

One of the things he said with regard to concerns about the price of oil and the stock market was ""The cure for high prices is high prices.""

What he meant was that, while high oil prices threaten profitability for Western world industry, high prices also lead to exploration and innovation.

He was talking purely about the stock market but his point is, in my opinion, far more relevant to the economic value of protecting our ability to live on the planet.

I built my house in 1985 during a time of what was then seen as high oil prices.

As a result, a new heating system had come on the market. I installed a water-to-air heat pump. Water below the frost line is always above freezing unlike the air. Water to air is far more efficient than air-to-air.

Now, my son Tyson, working in the heating and refrigeration industry tells me there is a better system.

My system pumps water out of the ground, compresses heat out of it and puts it back into a second well. In my case that is a small one that was already on the property when I bought what had been an old homestead property.

That isn't practical or legal, now, in a municipality with a water and sewer system.

However, Tyson tells me the new system is called geo-thermal heating. Instead of using ground water, it uses glycol, I think, some kind of refrigerant chemical. The contractor digs a series of out-and-back trenches below the frost line of the property. He puts coils of plastic pipe in the trenches and fills them in.

The liquid goes from the house out to the end of one coil, across to the next trench and back toward the house and then out again and back until it finally comes back into the house warmed up.

The only energy consumed is what is required to run a pump and a compressor.

That is a fraction of what is required for oil or electric heating.

It also provides air conditioning.

In Spring Hill, Nova Scotia, they filled the abandoned coal mines with water and circulate that to run a power plant that produces very cheap energy. How is that bad for the economy?

High oil prices lead to innovation. Innovation is wonderful for the economy.

My father also used to quote someone who said that with the opening of every mine commences the death of the local economy.

What that means is that every mine will eventually run out of ore. The day it opens is the day its end begins.

The same applies to Alberta's oil. Alberta uses more energy, in the form of natural gas, to refine the oil sands oil than it gets from the gasoline produced.

In the meantime, the economy is overheated and wages are far higher than elsewhere. What business, other than the oil business, could afford Alberta wages?

If and when, oil royalty income stabilizes or begins to decline how can the province afford the services it provides?

In my opinion, all governments have to do to reduce oil dependency, is announce that gasoline taxes will rise a few percentage every year for the next X number of years.

That will spur research, innovation and development of alternative energy sources.

It would also have the spectacular political benefit of making the Western World independent of the Middle East oil nations.

We could leave them to sort out their own political, economic, social and religious futures without freezing to death or not being able to get to town.

One last point in this sermon and I'll let you go.

When we are in Greece or Italy or France for six weeks at a time, we don't eat much beef and we don't miss it. Poultry, lamb, goat, pork and even wild boar, are the main meats there.

In North America we grow jillions of bushels of wheat to feed to cattle so we can eat the cattle. That consumes a huge amount of energy to produce the wheat adding to the green-house gas problem.

It also creates a huge amount of cattle flatulence (farts) which is one of the main causes of greenhouse warming.

We can easily reduce greenhouse gas production and actually improve the economy with some leadership.

The question is, are we as citizens prepared to enlist for the battle? I don't agree with the whine that we have no leaders. We choose our leaders so it is up to us. We have to make our voices heard over the voices (and money) of the vested interests.

When we have the desire and guts to follow, the leaders will emerge. They always do.

On we go! -DAC

FIRST NATIONS NEED OWN MILITARY BASE, LIBERAL M.P. SAYS

DALHOUSIE, N.B. (CP) — Liberal defence critic Denis Coderre is calling on the federal government to build a Canadian Forces base for native soldiers.

"I think that we have to show sensitivity since Canada is also composed of First Nations," Coderre said. "The Canadian Forces have always reflected what Canada is."

The base, which would be a first in Canada, would be built in the Restigouche area of northern New Brunswick.

The idea was first floated by Serge Noel, a local resident who noticed that many natives from the area were crossing the border to join armed forces in the U.S.

"The Canadian Forces have taken steps in the past to attract more aboriginals to their ranks and have achieved a certain level of success, but not as much as they would have hoped for," Noel said.

Noel added that Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor has already rejected his idea. But Coderre said the issue could resurface during the next election campaign.

"I promise to speak about this project with our leader, Stephane Dion, and I hope that it can become a campaign promise," Coderre said.

Coderre also said he plans to meet aboriginal leaders to gauge their support for the native base.

SLOWING THE WATER' TO PREVENT CRISIS

Simon Mitchell

The theme for this month's newsletter is a timely and all-important one – water. Without it ecosystems fail, social networks collapse and life as we know it, no matter where we live changes forever. The idea of water scarcity is foreign to most of us in New Brunswick. Sitting at my kitchen table overlooking the St. John River, I have a hard time conceptualizing water scarcity as a real issue. And, it is raining to boot!!

Water scarcity can occur as a result of imbalances between availability and demand, the degradation of groundwater and surface water quality, competition, and interregional and international conflicts. With droughts becoming a more common occurrence – the past year has been particularly dry for parts of Australia, the United States, and many arid and semi-arid parts of Africa and South East Asia. Unfortunately this is not an issue that is going to disappear. With a growing World population, increasing demand for water, and the unknowns of climate change, now is the time to take a greater responsibility for this life sustaining resource. It should no longer be acceptable to discharge effluents into our rivers. Industrial and municipal users must go beyond existing provincial and federal regulations. Individuals need to better understand the impact we have on our water resources. Decreasing water usage and being aware of the impact we have on surface and ground water supplies as a result of our activities is

paramount. Of course this is much easier said than done – the interaction between the water cycle, the surrounding natural environment and ourselves is a complex one.

"Slowing the water" is a basic tenant that we can all live by. Simply put, it means that activities we undertake on the land should "slow" the flow of water. By doing this, water is given the chance to infiltrate soils, evaporate into the atmosphere, provide habitat, all the while decreasing the probability of eroding soils, scouring hillsides, and creating sedimentation.

The St. John River has been used since early times as a transportation route, a source of sustenance and as a link between the many communities that have sprung up along its banks. Some of these communities have long disappeared, while others continue to grow. A large part of this growth is linked to the serene and pastoral nature of the St. John River Valley. And, the good drinking water. Drinking water for many communities along the river and many rural residents in-between comes from aquifers that run below the St. John River. We are learning more about the physical and chemical properties of the river all the time, including pollution sources, both point and non-point source. Information on the aquifer is slowly emerging. Recent efforts have been made to establish protection zones in some of the more urbanized areas.

Unfortunately it is only a matter of time before water scarcity issues take centre stage. The negative impacts of water scarcity issues on our well-being, functionality of ecosystems and the socio-economic aspects of the St. John River valley would be staggering. Now is the time to have a serious discussion about water, our drinking water supplies and what needs to be done tomorrow to ensure the long-term well-being of this resource. Until we do so, we will continue to deny the impact we have on the water resource for future generations, as well as the stewardship role we must assume.

Simon J. Mitchell

Dumfries, N.B.

DAN'S CORNER - Creator's Gift of the Special Gifted Children

Through our Traditional Teachings our people are taught to look at all things from the positive point of view. Our teachings also say that all of Great Creator's creation is perfect just as it is. We are taught that Great Creator created only perfection and that she did not create junk. We are also taught that all of Great Creator's creation is sacred and that we all should respect her perfect creation.

Human beings as creations of Great Creator have no business in labeling nor changing nor "improving" her creation. Our original instructions teach us that our Sacred Earth Mother and all that lives upon her is Great Creator's perfect creation and all should be honored, nurtured, loved and respected. Also our original instructions teach us that our Sacred Earth Mother and all that lives upon her are both teachers and learners. That each of us have things to teach and learn from fellow human beings.

Another teaching of our Traditional Teachings is that within every experience that humans experience there is a gift, there is a teaching. It is up to human beings to

discover and/or uncover that gift of teaching and to begin living that teaching.

All children are gifts from Great Creator and should be recognized, acknowledged and accepted in that manner. They should also be recognized, acknowledged and accepted as our teachers.

As they begin their Earthwalk they still carry within their hearts the original instructions from Great Creator. They have a very strong connection to the other side, to the sacred, the ancestors, the life-force energy and all the teachings that make us whole human beings.

This is how our Ancestors viewed children and it is how the present generation must continue to view their children. We must not allow ourselves to take on the negative, arrogant, hurtful and disrespectful traits of our white oppressors. Traits that have brought human beings to the brink of destruction.

To our people a specially gifted child is one with any physically, mentally and/or emotionally extraordinary power or gift. These children, who are labeled by our white brothers as disabled and/or handicapped, are viewed by our people as ones with the power to help the ordinary and/or "normal" people to grow and develop as human beings.

For our people it is the same for the Two Spirited ones or, in white man's vernacular, gays. We view them as specially gifted and as possessing extraordinary powers. This is the subject of a future essay however.

We viewed any human being who did not fall into the category of "normal" and/or ordinary as being extraordinary in a positive sense as opposed to a negative sense. Gifted with extraordinary visionary powers, extraordinary healing powers and/or extraordinary leadership powers.

Most of our great leaders such as Massassoit, Tadodaho, Pontiac, Geronimo, Big Foot, Crazy Horse along with others were great leaders and all were born with an extraordinary power/gift. Specially Gifted Children teach us about unconditional love, about patience, inner resilience, about inner strength, about inner peace and about living in the present on a moment by moment basis.

DEAN'S DEN - Lifeblood

Like the lost one in the desert

Burning up beneath the sky

The mirage may be our mirror

And "Water!" be our cry!

Global-warming is the danger

While pollution is the ink
Water, water, everywhere
And not a drop to drink,
Just a finger dipped in water
Touched gently to the tongue
Will it be the legacy
To generations of our young!
If they're to have this priceless store
To sprinkle, splash, and spray
Then we must make the covenant
To conserve and spare today,
To save our watersheds and rivers
In pride ... pristine and pure
For the future of our people
As "the Others" did before!
Water, fire, air and earth
Dew and clouds and rain
Fine fountains for the firmament
To ease a planet's pain,
Lifeblood - and we - the "keepers"
Of this force, the spirit, soul
From the mountains to the deep blue sea
Let us pledge ... to hold it whole!
D.C. Butterfield

THE SACRED GIFT OF WATER

p.paul

The sacred gift of Water is from the Almighty Creator for the benefit of all creation

No one man, no one country, no one conglomeration of nations, agencies or humankind

Can claim to own Water or hope to reap personal or monetary gains from it.

Water, like other Creator's gifts, is not ours to own, master, defile or destroy