



In This Issue:

- ❖ The Quilt of Belonging Blackfoot
- ❖ Aboriginal Travels Bolivia
- ❖ What's in a Name?
- ❖ Praise for Buffy
- ❖ Pow Wows
- ❖ We're Evolving
- ❖ New Bursary
- ❖ National Aboriginals Day
- ❖ The Ripple Effects Newsletter
- ❖ Labrador Interpretation Centre

The Quilt of Belonging – Blackfoot (Nitsitapii)

Copied from: <http://www.invitationproject.ca/listing.php?Listing=1240>



The symmetrical floral design on the Blackfoot block was traditionally used to decorate side-seam moccasins for special occasions. The beadwork was done with glass seed beads on deer-hide by Diane (Msewebek) Nadon Mackenzie. Originally such decoration was made with naturally dyed porcupine quills; a skill once considered so sacred that women underwent an initiation ceremony before learning the art. With the arrival of white traders in the 1840s, using glass seed beads became a popular alternative to porcupine quills, thereby spawning more intricate designs.

The Blackfoot First Nation, proudly call themselves *Nitsitapii*, meaning “The Real People.” The Blackfoot are actually a confederacy of the Siksika/Blackfoot, Peigan/Pikuni, Kainai/Blood and North Peigan/Pikuni tribes. Their native language is *Nitsipussin*, or the “Real Language.” They migrated to the plains of Canada’s western provinces from the Great Lakes region, often relocating to take advantage of buffalo migrations. At one time, their territory extended from Edmonton, Alberta to the Yellowstone River, south into North Dakota and as far west as the Rocky Mountains. They shared religious, ceremonial and social practices, creating strong connections between the tribes, and together formed a cohesive unit, the Blackfoot Confederacy. Their military strength earned them the title “the Lords of the Great Plains.”

The buffalo was sacred to the Blackfoot, providing much of what they needed for survival, and they had several techniques for hunting these magnificent creatures. The 7,000 year-old Head-Smashed-In site, located on a hill, provides evidence that the *Nitsitapii* drove herds of buffalo over cliffs in order to kill many at once. The Blackfoot, who were known as expert hunters and fierce warriors, were introduced to the horse in 1730. They easily integrated the animal into their plains culture and became excellent horseback riders. (CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)



The Quilt of Belonging Blackfoot (Nitsitapii)

Buffalo and deer hides were scraped, cleaned, smoked and tanned, and then used to make clothing and tepee coverings. Women learned this extensive and exhaustive process at a very young age and each was judged on the quantity and quality of her workmanship. The fact that women made the tepees gave them ownership. Young girls were also trained by their elders in the art of decorating clothing with beads and other more traditional paraphernalia.

The decimation of buffalo herds by the 20th Century resulted in starvation for many Blackfoot and the loss of a major part of their culture. Despite drastic lifestyle changes and the Canadian-U.S. border cutting across their traditional territory, the Blackfoot have survived. They maintain strong connections to their heritage and nurture a vibrant and dynamic cultural life within their communities.

Aboriginal Travels - Bolivia

Copied from

<http://www.invitationproject.ca/region.php>

Landlocked Bolivia, named after Simón Bolívar, is the highest and most isolated country in the Americas.



Located in the west-central part of South America, its landscape consists of complex ecosystems and stunning

scenery, including the Andes Mountains, the world's highest navigable lake, Lake Titicaca, and highest ski resort, Mount Chacaltaya. Bolivia is also home to the largest indigenous population in the Americas, over half of whom maintain traditional lifestyles and beliefs. Spanish is the official language, although only 60 to 70 percent of the people speak it. Quechua and Aymara are the preferred languages.

What's in a Name?



Our friend Paul Allaire recently sent us this article:

Subject: Anishinabek Grand Council Chief: We are not aboriginal - 'Aboriginal affairs' name change 'disrespectful,' says Anishinabek Nation
“We are not aboriginal – we are Anishinabek,” said the Grand Council Chief on behalf of 39 member First Nations, after learning that cabinet member John Duncan will carry the new title of Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. “Trying to lump First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples together might save space on the minister’s business card, but it is disrespectful of the truly distinct nature of the communities with whom he needs to establish better relationships. Here’s my opinion: With all due respect to the Anishinabel Nation, you are aboriginal, to say otherwise is ludicrous. The name Indian originated when Columbus thought he had reached India and called the native peoples of North America Indians. Why anyone would want to perpetuate this joke instead of accepting the more appropriate term of aboriginal is beyond my understanding. First Nations are aboriginal in accordance with both the dictionary and the Canadian Constitution. The fact that Métis and Inuit are also aboriginal doesn’t lessen the identity or distinctness of First Nations. Native peoples face many serious problems; being called aboriginal isn’t one of them.

Art Haines



Praise for Buffy



Buffy Ste Marie in Ottawa May 7

She came out onto the stage, strapped on a guitar, and began a perfect evening with the perfect song. Not just my favourite Buffy song, but my favourite song of all songs. And I guess it's my favourite because

the lyrics take me back every time. They take me to a place and time when I was small, and my world was the woods, and nature and its abundance. We didn't have a lot of money, but we had riches just the same.

I sat and listened, and watched, thinking how magical this woman is, and yet how real she is.

"... I was raised on a song there
and I done right, I done wrong there
and it's true I belong there
and it's true it's my home..."

She reminds me so much of my mom with her guitar, and I thought about how I was raised on her songs, and I thought about how many Métis know this truth, that "we belong there", and yet have been told to hide this fact for so long, and how it's true that it is our home.

"... And I'll return to the woodlands
I'll return to the snow
I'll return to the hills
and the valley below..."

And I thought about my childhood, and how confusing the world seemed sometimes. Buffy gave me a place in the world. She validated my identity. She made me proud of who I was.

"... Maybe someday I'll find
someone who will
love as I love
my piney wood hills..."

And I thought about the pines in Oka, and how Ellen Gabriel was so instrumental in letting the world

know what those pines meant to her and her people. And I wondered if maybe she could be the gal Buffy was referring to in the song "Starwalker" when she sings

"Wolfrider she's a friend of yours,
you've seen her opening doors
she's a history turner
she's a sweetgrass burner and a
a dog soldier
he ya heya he"

though Buffy herself did not say this to be true. She only says of this song, that it is about those that came before us, and those that will come after us. But in my mind I see images of Ellen.

And so the evening was, as Buffy rocked the house with the stamina, grace, and youth of a teenager. And I thought about the book she is singing about, "Bury my Heart at Wounded Knee" and remembered the truths I learned while reading it,

and how very depressing it was to instinctively know there will always be those who will deny it happened,

and there will always be those who will not understand what the problems of the past have been. And that alone is enough to cause such a huge sadness. But truth is that everyone has been denied something because of the oppression of aboriginal people.

I'm anticipating the ending of the song, and I'm filled with the spiritual emotion of the chant, and I'm left amazed at this woman who at 70 is as old as my mother, and I wondered how she could have the courage to continue in the quest she started before I was born.

As she takes us to a new place, a place that reminds me of Detroit city rap, I find the message is a new way to say the same thing. "No, no, keshagesh, you can't do that no more".

And she is as powerful as ever, this "gal with a guitar". The question is, Is the world ready to hear the message? And an even bigger question is, "What will they do about it even if they get the message?"

And then these fluidly perfect musicians, rockers (guitarist) Jesse Green, (drummer) Mike Bruyere,



and (bassist) Donny Ducharme suddenly shed away their instruments and show us their skill in traditional dancing and it's simply beautiful and powerful. And this completes the magic of Buffy. She takes us up and down, from movie theme songs, to ballads, to rockabilly, to rock. But it's not the lyric that makes the song. It's the nuance that makes us feel something that makes the song. It's the knowing that the message feels right.

"...the one who taught my lesson well was the south wind through the pines, and I'm gonna be a country girl again..."

And so I am reminded of a long time ago, in the early 70s, when I was in grade 2, with my mom's 25-dollar Kmart guitar, my sister there with me, on stage singing "Country Girl Again" for the first time in front of the whole school. And my strumming sounded like the banging of a tin can. Then Buffy pulls out her mouthbow, and gets the crowd laughing, "...oh, the girls out at cripple creek about half-grown jump on a boy like a dog on a bone..."

ANNE AND HER SISTER, GRADE 2

And I'm remembering my daughter, back in 1995 when she was only three, and I was driving the car while faking the mouthbow twanging parts, and she was singing Cripple Creek and laughing her little head off. And so many years ago, when mom was at the piano teaching us Uncle Joe and Gotta Quit Kickin my Dawg Around. And all the neighbour kids learned the song, me with my little juice harp doing the twanging parts. And I'm so glad I did not let the world and its demands make me too busy to teach my own daughter the Buffy songs.

And just when I think it's over, and I tell my guy beside me that boohoo, she can't possibly leave without doing "Indian Cowboy in the Rodeo", Buffy reappears for an encore and I once again am pulled into memories of some of the men in my community, and how beautiful and wonderful and special aboriginal men are:

"Sun is up, day is on
but for me, mama I'll be gone
cause today's the day, I'm gonna see him again...
...Once I he stopped, and talked to me
found out how dreams can be
with a big wide smile, and a big white hat...
He's an Indian cowboy in the rodeo
and I'm just another little girl who loves him so..."



I sat there in the darkness beside my girl, and put my arm around her, as she gives me a look of knowing and tells me how wonderfully lucky we are to be here tonight. To see this Canadian icon who we may never have the chance to see again, at least not together. And we talk about what we've been a part of. I tell her that now that she will be entering university, something I was not able to do at her age, that she will be learning the important skill of critical thinking, and that someday she will feel the need to give something back. And she knows that like Buffy and her guitar, my girl can use her talents to bring about change, even if

it is to make this world a better place for even one person, or to cause some kind of understanding to occur. And we both know what a special mother's day this is. Probably the best mother's day either of us will ever have.

Anne Anderson

Pow Wows



Experience your culture and support the First Nations in your area. Do a Google search for powwow, Ontario powwow, Manitoba powwow, Canada powwow, etc. to find powwows in your area this summer. You may find listings under either powwow or pow wow.



We're Evolving

The continuing growth of the OMFRC made it obvious that changes were needed. We have a wonderful consultant rebuilding the OMFRC from the ground up. Our procedures and business practices have been reviewed and streamlined. A great deal of manual work has been eliminated, as was duplication of work. In January we initiated use of the first of our new computer systems. Our files are now accessible by our staff from anywhere in the world through the Internet. We hope to eventually offer the same type of access to other files for our researchers and other volunteers. The work is ongoing and further changes will be implemented in planned stages. Art Haines, Director

National Aboriginal Day



National Aboriginal Day was first proclaimed by the Governor General of Canada on June 13, 1996. June 21st of every year has become a day that presents Aboriginal peoples with the opportunity to express their pride in their rich diverse cultures with their

neighbours. Why not plan to participate in the activities in your area. A Google search will quickly identify events in your area.



The Ripple Effects newsletter is an excellent source of aboriginal news. We highly recommend it to our members. To subscribe, go to:

<http://www.ripplefx.ca/newsletterRippleEffect.html>

New Bursary



This is part of an email from one of our members: Here's the link for the "NEW! Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training (PSET) Bursary" offered for enrolled students at St. Lawrence College, Kingston. Note: This is the 1st year for this Bursary.

<http://www.stlawrencecollege.ca/index.aspx?iPageID=131&iMenuID=9&iCurrID=112>

Labrador Interpretation Centre

located in North West River

http://www.therooms.ca/museum/labrador_interpretation.asp

At the Labrador Interpretation Centre you'll discover the founding peoples of Labrador – Innu, Inuit, Metis



and Settlers. In the permanent exhibition *The Past is Where We Come From*, you'll hear the voices and see

works of art and artifacts from each of our cultures. You'll also explore our ancient Aboriginal history and see how we live our lives today. The exhibition is presented in Inuktitut, Innu-aimun and English.

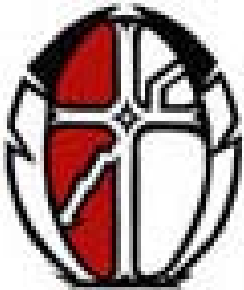


OMFRC
1314 Hybla Road RR 5
Bancroft, ON
K0L 1C0

Phone: 1-613-332-4789
or toll free 1-877-737-0770

E-MAIL:

info@omfrc.org



We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.omfrc.org

www.aboriginalstatus.org

Is Your Membership Coming Up for Renewal?



If it is, call 1-613-332-4789 and you can do it right over the phone in just a couple of minutes.

New Submissions!

We are always looking for new interesting submissions to add to upcoming issues of the OMFRC Newsletter. If you have something you would like to add to the newsletter please call or email us! We'd be happy to consider it for an upcoming issue.