

# Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba, Inc. Newsletter



January 2013

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## 'Idle No More' – the beginnings of a grassroots indigenous movement

– Marilyn McGonigal



The burgeoning Canada-wide *Idle No More* movement was started in the social media by native women in Saskatchewan, mostly lawyers and academics, in November, 2012, and has rapidly grown into a national indigenous movement. The goals of this movement have yet to be properly understood by non-aboriginal Canadians, but momentum is building. The reason *Idle No More* came to be was briefly stated by

Waubgeshig Rice, a video journalist and writer on December 21, 2012, on the CBC Web site:

"Frustrated with a lack of consultation on treaty problems and seemingly unilateral federal government decisions on natural resources and the environment, indigenous peoples are suddenly saying they will no longer sit idly by while these things are being pushed through."

The movement says, on its Facebook page, it wants to "stop the Harper government from passing more laws and legislation that will further erode treaty and indigenous rights and the rights of all Canadians." "The grassroots movement has taken issue specifically with omnibus Bill C-45, which they say erodes the rights of native people. They also argue there has been a lack of consultation on changes to environmental protection regulations."

Meanwhile, and coincidentally, Theresa Spence, elected Chief of Attawapiskat Reserve in Northern Ontario in mid-2010, began a hunger strike December 11, 2012 in order to force a meeting with the Prime Minister and the Governor General (representing the Queen) to discuss issues facing her people and others. Chief Spence is considered to be a hero for standing up to Prime Minister Harper. She is not directly connected to *Idle No More*, but supports the initiative and *Idle No More* supports hers. Prime Minister Harper did not respond to Chief Spence's hunger strike but announced a meeting with the AFN Chiefs in January as a follow-up to a consultation a year ago. He advanced the date to January 11 and invited Chief Spence to attend, apparently to accommodate her state of health. The troubled history of the Attawapiskat Reserve has been in the news a lot in recent

years, and to the PM's great discredit, in my opinion, the auditor's report by Deloitte and Touche Accountants, which was delivered to Chief Spence and Attawapiskat last August, was deliberately leaked to the CBC, January 7, prior to the January 16 deadline for its release to the public. This 'leak' clearly was meant to colour the attitude toward Chief Spence and the *Idle No More* initiatives by association, before the Prime Minister and AFN Chiefs meeting January 11 and to put our indigenous citizens on the defensive. Chief Spence agreed to attend, and then cancelled her acceptance, apparently because the Governor General was not invited, but also, no doubt, because the report's release signalled something other than a respectful engagement in the important issues which her hunger strike is about. (<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2013/01/09/f-attawapiskat-finances-faq.html>) It should be noted that Theresa Spence was not the chief for most of the six years covered by the critical report, and the band has in fact been subject to third-party management since she drew national attention to housing shortages on Attawapiskat after her election.

The planned meeting is over, with some chiefs boycotting it, and has resulted in 'some movement' according to Grand Chief Atleo. The *Idle No More* protests all over Canada, at the same time, portray its grassroots nature and that it is not taking direction from the elected band chiefs and councils although many chiefs have joined in or support the aims of

(Continued on page 2)

### In this newsletter

'Idle No More'	1
Semi-Annual Meeting Report	2
PCWM Members Receive Diamond Jubilee Medals	3
Manitoba Women's Institute Day	4
Rural Women's Leadership Learning Opportunity	5
PCWM Calendar of Events	6
Community Information	6
Celebrating Women Gala	7
Nomination Form	8

*Idle No More.* *Idle No More* supported Chief Spence who ended her 44-day hunger strike on January 24 when the Assembly of First Nations Chiefs, NDP and Liberal Opposition parties, signed a 13-point declaration of priority issues. The meeting with the Prime Minister and Governor General was not achieved but to her credit, her time in the spotlight has drawn unprecedented attention to long-neglected issues on First Nations Reserves in Canada.

With Mothers and Grandmothers at the forefront, *Idle No More* is a cultural movement to restore rights and dignity to the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada who have been wronged by many attempts to integrate and assimilate them rather than live up to agreements to respect their culture and practices. The settlor culture has willfully failed to share the use and bounty of the land with the same respect Aboriginal people have for it – which they have protected for at least ten thousand years. In 500 years the same land has been ravaged by an interloping culture of greed and conquest that has shown no respect for nature. The failure to consult indigenous peoples about plans to make environmental changes affecting their lands is a serious breach of treaty rights and may be a significant obstacle to the government's plans. As more and more reports come out proving the detrimental effects of the tar sands development on the environment and near-by aboriginal communities and downstream, it is becoming clear that there are dire consequences for human life on the planet if we continue to ignore the warning signs. Our Aboriginal communities dotting the

Canadian wilderness landscapes are like canaries in the mine shafts and we ignore their plight at our peril.

Watching the media's and the Canadian Government's reactions, it is evident that the establishment is bent on derailing the goals of this spontaneous phenomena before it is well understood by too many Canadians. With it's narrow focus on the 'economy' and support of the exploitation of non-renewable oil and our rich natural resources, our Canadian government prefers to engage in a high stakes game to neutralize all opposition by any means necessary. *Idle No More* is protesting for all Canadians and has planned many more rallies and protests and is showing no signs of fading away at this time. If many other Canadians join *Idle No More* – particularly women – and the movement succeeds in mobilizing on mutual concerns, environment, equity, human rights, and the need for consultation with Canadians regarding the erosion of democracy in Canada, the unilateral actions of the Harper government could spell trouble for the re-election plans of the Conservative Party in 2015. People and the economy can be manipulated. The environment cannot!

I attended the *Idle No More* Winnipeg rally downtown among rallies across Canada during the high level meeting January 11. We should all be out there with *Idle No More* supporting the need for consultation and the consent of the people when changes are contemplated that could destroy the environment or threaten our democracy as we know it.

## PCWM Semi-Annual Meeting held on November 17, 2012 – Marilyn McGonigal

### Just Housing: Available, Affordable Accessible for All

Thirty-two PCWM members and guests met at Wolseley Family Place in the lounge from 9 am to 2:30 pm November 17, 2012, for the Semi-Annual Meeting. The morning program was followed by lunch catered by the



Wolseley Family Place Catering Service and the Business Meeting.

PCWM President, Sharon Taylor, introduced the program, "Just Housing: Available, Affordable Accessible for all". Social Housing is not just about numbers but must be viewed through an equity lens. Margerit Roger introduced Alberta Johnson, as a student in the Summer Intern Program at the U of M. She had interviewed 14 federate members to determine their issues. Over half considered housing a top priority issue. Her report will be available in the New Year and we will be following up on her findings at that time.

Christina Maes Nino from the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg and Coalition on Housing presented a Power Point summary of developments since the Federal Government abandoned social housing in 1995 leaving a void that has since become a crisis with a 1% vacancy rate for the past ten years and growing demand, and little or no low-cost housing coming on-stream. The only

(Continued on page 3)

## PCWM Members Recipients of the Diamond Jubilee Medals



Sharon Taylor, PCWM President, and Sally Thomas both were honoured this fall with Diamond Jubilee medals. Sharon was presented her medal by Senator Maria Chaput at a reception on September 27, 2012 at Government House. Sally received her medal from Cheryl Baldwin, national chair of Osteoporosis Canada, on November 1, 2012 at an Osteoporosis Public Forum. The medal was created to commemorate celebration of the 60th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's ascension to the throne. The medal recipients join an impressive group of Canadians who were recognized for their contributions and achievements.



### PCWM Semi-Annual Meeting (from page 2)

alternative for many is homelessness and women are affected more adversely by having to stay in violent relationships or by being assaulted on the streets. Aboriginal women are even more at risk due to discrimination. Women try to pretend they are not homeless and some even go to the airport at night. Recommendations include reducing poverty, challenging governments to do more and better, increasing rent allowance, (a single woman receives \$285.00), addressing root causes, restoring OAS at 65 (Federal Government), and addressing the issue of condominium conversions.

Jill Parron, Acting Director, Strategic initiatives, Manitoba Housing and Community Development, presented the Manitoba Government's action plan and distributed the booklet, *Strong Communities: An Action Plan*, which captures the highlights of the presentation. *The Multi-Year Action Plan Goals and Recent Achievements are 1. Promote and Support Community Development, 2. Build Greater Community Capacity, 3. Sustain Existing Social and Affordable Housing Stock, 4. Address Affordability and Increase Supply of Quality Affordable Housing, 5. Enhance Client Opportunities and Services and 6. Build Capacity of Manitoba Housing and Community development.* The Government's programs are numerous and demonstrate progress in many areas with a focus on encouraging self-reliance by providing a variety of supports. However, in answer to questions, it is not in the plan to increase the EIA housing allowance which has not been substantially increased for decades or to supply

more low-cost housing units than were promised under the all Aboard Poverty Reduction Program, at this time.

The final speaker was Grace Karpinski speaking for *Habitat for Housing Women Building*. Habitat is a well-known program that addresses home-ownership as a solution for low income employed people. Women raise funds for homes and build them. Funds raised go directly into building. Houses are not free as the recipients work for them. There is no down payment and no interest and payments fluctuate with income. Mortgage payments are recycled to buy new land for more houses. Candidates put in 350-500 hours of volunteered sweat-equity. The Women Build Committee has eight members who raise funds and receive training in construction, household budgeting and home maintenance. There is a selection process. In Manitoba 15,000 people could qualify. Only one family has defaulted in Manitoba.

Following lunch, the Business meeting was held and adjourned at 2:30 pm.



Thanks to Sally Thomas for the photographs in this report.



### Violence Against Women and Girls

The Commission on the Status of Women will be meeting at the United Nations in New York in early March, with the theme The Elimination and Prevention of Violence Against Girls. The recent rape and death of the young woman from India has brought this back to the world's attention, but violence against women and girls occurs in all parts of the globe, including Canada.

The National Council of Women of Canada will be at the CSW, and you can participate! A Blog has been set up at <http://csw57.blogspot.ca/>. Guest bloggers are welcome. Consider writing something on this topic, from a personal, organization, research or community perspective, and I'll see that it is posted. You and your organization will be credited. The Blog has already had 839 views.

Send to Mary Scott at [mary\\_scott@shaw.ca](mailto:mary_scott@shaw.ca).



Join us for high tea at The Fort Garry Hotel  
in celebration of International Women's Day

On Sunday, March 3rd  
3:00 to 5:00 pm

Door prizes  
Prize given for the best hat

Tickets \$50  
(Contact PCWM for table discount)

Hosted by  
Provincial Council of Women  
of Manitoba

Tickets available at:  
McNally Robinson at Grant Park  
Phone 204.475.0483  
(toll free 1.800.561.1833)

Or by contacting:  
PCWM office 204.992.2751 / email [pcwm@mts.net](mailto:pcwm@mts.net)

## Signing the Proclamation declaring February 19th, 2013 as Manitoba Women's Institute Day

Manitoba Women's Institute was pleased to have the opportunity to dialogue with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Ron Kostyshyn regarding areas of concern to rural women, children and families and to learn about issues pertinent to MAFRI and to sign the WI Day proclamation which is February 19th each year.

Manitoba Women's Institute expressed its appreciation for support it receives from MAFRI for Board Governance Training, assistance with updating of the Constitution and Bylaws, as well as office and staff support. At the same time MWI expressed its desire to work co-operatively with MAFRI on Sleepless in Manitoba, Capacity Building of

women through governance training and through workshops such as the Dale Carnegie Program.

During our meeting MWI raised questions related to farmer protection when feed companies suffer business shut down, Bipole 111, food safety concerns, understanding the new role of MAFRI in rural communities, issues related to the hardships for provincial nominee persons vis a vis the location of writing the ILEC exam held in Winnipeg and the need to co-operate with other agencies such as volunteer MB in presenting training for rural residents.

Minister Kostyshyn was very forthright in his response to MWI questions and concerns and reiterated the desire of



*(Seated) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Ron Kostyshyn and Joan Clement, MWI President (Standing from left to right) Patricia Dyck, MWI EAO, Mona Cornock, Director Economy and Rural Development Knowledge Centre Brandon, Donna Young, MWI President Elect, and Provincial Board Members, Enid Clark, Lynne Hopley, Diane Hrychuk*

## PathMakers: Rural Women's Leadership Learning Opportunity – Robin Neustaeter

What are rural women doing this winter? If they live in Winkler, Morden, Carmen or surrounding areas they have the opportunity to participate in the third PathMakers Program – a learning, mentoring and networking opportunity for rural women active in their workplaces, communities and/or churches as organisers and leaders. The program focuses on leadership, decision-making, conflict resolution, communication, networking, mentoring and working with allies. Each program also includes specific topics and concerns raised by participants. This is a unique opportunity for rural women from various communities to come together to focus on building better communities and along the way there will be learning and laughter.

UNPAC is inviting women from the Winkler, Morden, Carmen and surrounding communities north, south, east and west to apply. Further information and applications are available from the UNPAC website [www.unpac.ca](http://www.unpac.ca) or by calling 204-772-7876.

The free sessions will run from 4:30 to 8:30, one evening a week, every second week, February to May in Winkler/Morden. Meals are provided. Financial assistance is available for mileage and childcare costs.

UNPAC is an association of Manitoba women supporting women's equality and empowerment – locally and globally. Currently a PathMakers program is running in Pinawa and in 2012 a program ran in the Altona area.

## PCWM Calendar of Events | February to June 2013

### Board Meetings

Begin at 5:30 pm, Room 212 (Kitchen) at SMD unless otherwise indicated

Thursdays – February 7, March 7, April 4, May 2, June 6

### General Council Meetings

Friday, **February 22** | 11:00 am – 2:00 pm | PCWM Federate Round table – Strategic Planning Session | Westminster United Church, Maryland Street and Westminster Avenue

Thursday, **March 21** | 6:30 pm – 202-3 SMD | PCWM Resolutions Meeting

**April or May** | PCWM AGM - TBA

### High Tea Fundraiser (see advertisement on page 4)

Sunday, March 3 | 3:00 – 5:00 pm | Fort Garry Hotel

## Community Information

### Council of Women of Winnipeg | Special Presentation with Manitoba Status of Women and Winnipeg Blue Bombers

February 27th, 7:30 pm | St. James Legion | 1755 Portage Avenue | Winnipeg

"Break the Silence...Dealing with Domestic Violence or Family Violence" | Free Admission | All welcome

For more information contact: cww@mts.net or Lori Blande 204.488.1336

### Council of Women of Winnipeg | Annual General Meeting

April 20th, noon | Canad Inn | Polo Park | Winnipeg

Keynote speaker: Michael Champagne | Tickets \$25 (includes lunch)

### Islamic Social Services Association | Fundraising Dinner

April 11th, 5:30 pm Reception, 6:30 pm Dinner | Hilton Suites Hotel Winnipeg Airport

Honouring Muslim Women of Manitoba and three outstanding journalists

Contact 204.944.1560 or email info@mail.issaservices.com for tickets | \$150 each or \$1,100 for table of 8

Tax receipts for part of the ticket will be issued.

### MATCH Manitoba | Fundraising Luncheon recognizing International Development Week: I am Making a Difference

February 3rd, 1:00 – 3:00 pm | Kokeb Restaurant, 266 Edmonton Street | Winnipeg

Topic: Rape as a Weapon of War | Presenter: Catherine Biaya | Tickets \$40 (Tax receipt \$20)

For tickets and more information contact: Helen 204.895.8108 or whettles@mts.net

### Soroptimist International of Winnipeg with The Salvation Army and DOVE Self-Esteem Fund

March 9th, 9:30 am – 3:00 pm | Weston Community Church, Family Services Centre | 1390 Roy Avenue | Winnipeg

Self-Esteem Play Date for Girls and their Mentors | Fun and Free Interactive Workshop for girls 8-13 and women who

care about them. For information or to register email siofwpg@soroptimist.net or call Doreen 204.452.4314

### UNPAC | Special Meeting of the Members about changes to the By-Laws

February 6th, 7:00 pm | Main Floor, 60 Maryland Street | Winnipeg

To obtain Charitable Status, Canada Revenue Agency requires a change in the Objects. Changes to the Objects can only be made by the full membership. To register (not required but appreciated) for the meeting, and to obtain a copy of the new Objects in advance, contact info@unpac.ca

## Celebrating Women Gala – 2013

- Do you know a woman in your federate organization who has a history of volunteer work in our community?
- Would you like to see her recognized at the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba's 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebrating Women Gala Wednesday, July 9, 2013 to be held at the Viscount Gort Hotel?

The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba is seeking nominations from its federate members for women to be honoured in the individual category. Members of Federates are eligible. The PCWM Board is responsible for selection of Federate groups for recognition.

Here is what we need:

- Permission from the individual for their name to be nominated.
- The person's name, address, phone number and email.
- Contact person and address, phone number and email from the nominating group.
- A short biography (no more than half a page - approximately 250 words) outlining the work of the nominee in the community. Honourees will have a history of paid or unpaid work in the community that has not generally been recognized in a formal way. Their work will demonstrate the difference women make in the quality of life in Manitoba.

Selection will look at the diversity of the nominees, as well as rural representation. There will be special recognition for work through the Council structure at the local, National and International level.

Celebrating Women Gala and Fundraiser is a special event of the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba that features recognition of the award recipients, wonderful entertainment, refreshments, door prizes and a rainbow auction. Funds raised go towards our work in research, advocacy and initiatives to improve the quality of life for women, their families and their community.

A nomination form is available on the next page

Or to obtain a copy contact:  
Celebrating Women 2013  
Provincial Council of Women  
204-825 Sherbrook St.,  
Winnipeg, MB R3A 1M5  
Or e-mail to: [pcwm@mts.net](mailto:pcwm@mts.net)



**Nomination Deadline:**  
**April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

## Celebrating Women 2013 Nomination Form

The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba is seeking nominations from its federate members for women to be honoured in the individual category. Members of Federates are eligible. Honourees selected will have:

- a history of paid or unpaid work in the community that has not generally been recognized in a formal way.
- their work should demonstrate the difference women make in the quality of life in Manitoba.
- selection will consider the diversity of the nominees, as well as rural representation and
- special recognition for work through the Council structure at the local, National and International level.
- only four persons will be selected.

The PCWM Board is responsible for selection of Federate group honourees.

Name of nominee:.....

Address:.....

.....

Phone:..... Email:.....

Permission to allow name to stand: Yes.....

Nominator (Federate group):.....

Name of Contact person:.....

Address:.....

.....

Phone:..... Email:.....

Please attach a short biography (no more than half a page - approximately 250 words) outlining the work of the nominee in the community. If selected, the honouree will need to provide a photo for the program.

Send completed form to:

Celebrating Women Gala 2013  
c/o Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba (PCWM)  
204 – 825 Sherbrook St.,  
Winnipeg MB R3A 1M5 or Email: [pcwm@mts.net](mailto:pcwm@mts.net)