

FEATURES

Nitassinan walkers deliver message

By LISA RUTLEDGE
The Herald

The Freedom for Nitassinan Peace Walkers passed through Halton Hills Tuesday and Wednesday to deliver a message; to end the silence allowing the federal government to suppress the rights of Innu natives.

Approximately 10 peace walkers visited Halton Hills, speaking at local schools and at a pot luck dinner hosted at St. John's United Church on Guelph Street in Georgetown.

As the walkers left Georgetown early Wednesday morning, en route to Brampton, they were joined by about 80 Brampton high school students, waving the Peace for Nitassinan banner.

The two-month journey from Windsor to Ottawa's Department of Defence for a Solidarity for Sovereignty Peace Rally on Nov. 10, involves both Innu and non-native Indian participants.

Organized over the past year, the walk was designed as a major non-violent resistance project and an educational vehicle to inform at least 50 communities about native struggles.

Thirty-five-year-old Ben Michel, a native of Natassinan, called the walk an education campaign, saying that people can't decide if they support the walkers or not if they don't understand the issue. "It's up to them to decide if they want to make a change and speak out," said Mr. Michel.

If people want to make a change and stop tactical training and bombing runs over Nitassinan they will have to refuse to let the government use their silence to continue the exercises, Mr. Michel said. "They must be informed," he said, "but once they are informed and con-

tinued to let it happen, then they are just as bad as the Canadian government."

Referring to the walk as an act of non-violent civil disobedience, the walkers want to see an end to the 18,000 low level flights of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bombers over the Nitassinan Innu homeland. The number of planes, which often fly at tree level, are expected to double in the next year. The British, Dutch and Germans are permitted to use a 100,000 sq. km area for bombing practice to drop shells filled with 500 kg of cement, smoke bombs and laser-guided dummy warheads.

The walkers want the thousands of flights stopped because they say the planes disrupt life for both humans and animals on the Nitassinan range. There have been reports of dead fish washing ashore from lakes contaminated with oil believed to have come from carbon monoxide from plane passes.

In an attempt to explain the effect of hearing a passing plane, Mr. Michel said, "your heart's up in your mouth and you're disoriented for a few minutes." Although the sound only lasts a few seconds it seems to last for several minutes because of the ringing in the ears," he added.

"It's a sonic boom, like thunder or even louder. You can feel the earth tremble under your feet."

The effect, often labelled the startle effect, has created physical and psychological damage including Innu miscarriages, explained Mr. Michel. Although he can't say how many miscarriages have been caused by the loud noise of the planes, Mr. Michel said they have been documented. Doctors are aware of this too, he said, but they are

afraid to speak up because they don't want to lose their licences, he said.

Innu children are suffering psychologically from the startle effect, Mr. Michel explained. "The children jump out of canoes in terror," he said. "They run frantically at the noise. Some are so frightened by the planes that they just faint."

"Is it necessary to practise this defence and offence when there is no longer any enemy?" Mr. Michel said.

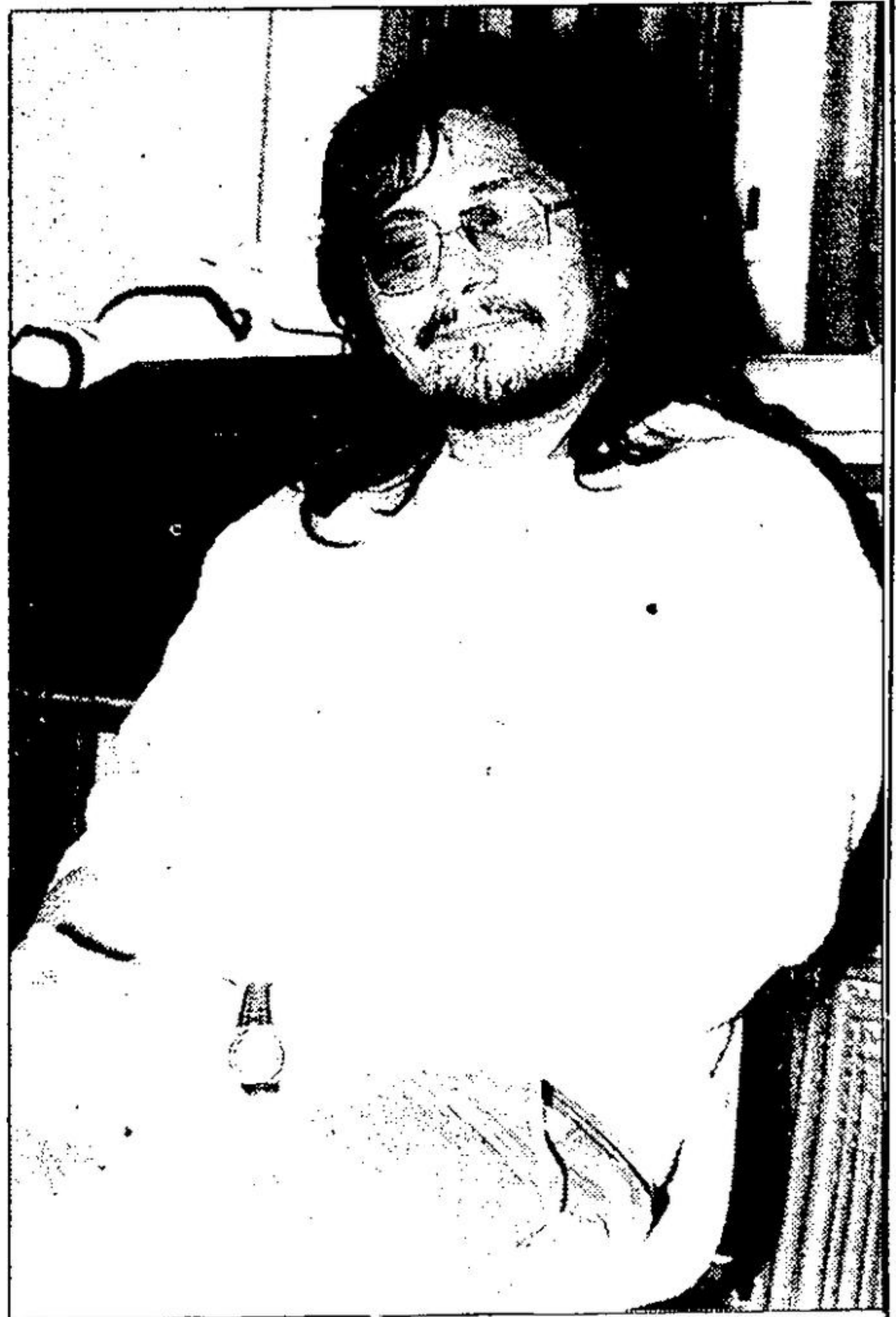
He sincerely believes that walking across the province will make a difference and that the people he meets in every community care about native struggles. Mr. Michel holds high regards for the people who have participated on the walk, full or part-time.

One participant took a leave of absence from university to join the walk, Mr. Michel added. "That takes a lot of courage," he said. It takes courage to face this "awakening" of a people who have suffered an injustice, Mr. Michel insisted.

Seeing the desire for change in the hearts of the peace walkers has given the 35-year-old Natassinan native new hope. "It gives me a new sense of hope," he said. "At least I've proved to my people that all Canadians aren't bad. I'm beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel."

Marc Brzustowski of Kitchener, a member of the Alliance for Non-Violent Action, worked to organize the peace walk over a year ago.

He said the walkers have appreciated the immediate support from communities who have donated food and shelter. People who buy pins and T-shirts are helping to fund the walk, he said.



Ben Michel, a 35-year-old native of Nitassinan, has been walking for two months across Ontario on a peace march to put an end to Indian oppression by the Canadian government. The Freedom for Nitassinan Peace Walk came through Halton Hills on Monday and Tuesday. (Herald photo)

CVCA to study water quality

The Credit River Valley Conservation Authority, (CVCA), has just embarked on a nine month-long study on finding ways to improve the water quality of the Credit River and its tributaries, confirmed Marilyn Eger, Manager of Resource Planning for the CVCA.

"The good fisheries in the Credit River, indicate the quality is good," said Ms. Eger. The authority, however, is concerned that if new protective policies are not developed, the river will be susceptible to pollution.

As the study pertains to the northern part of the river in and around Halton Hills, Ms. Eger said the authority is especially concern-

ed about the rural estate subdivision plans that are being proposed. Policies must be established that ensure rural estate developments built in the area of the river are not permitted to adversely affect the ground water, said Ms. Eger. More specifically, rural estate developments can disrupt natural infiltration systems found in the ground water. A natural infiltration system of sand and gravel cleans the ground water, she said.

Ms. Eger also said the CVCA is concerned that policies be implemented to ensure septic tanks hooked up to rural estate developments located near the river are placed in designated

areas to prevent pollution.

All along the river the CVCA's position is that the river is most susceptible to pollution in areas undergoing urban-type development, she said.

In doing the study, the CVCA will work with the province's ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, area municipalities and the public, said Ms. Eger.

The study is part of an ongoing initiative by the authority to coordinate the management of the water environment under CVCA jurisdiction.

Phase I of the study, which has already been completed, focused on protecting water quantity, said Ms. Eger.



Pumpkin tossing

Who says pumpkins are only useful to make pies or cut up into Halloween faces. Georgetown teenager Osian Morgan, 15, and Acton teenager Matthew Arnett, 17, show that with a little imagination pumpkins can come in handy to play a game of catch. The two

were among several teenagers who worked last Saturday on the Allison Farm on the Eighth Line in Halton Hills picking pumpkins for the upcoming trick or treat festivities. (Herald photo)



\$4,000⁰⁰

SHOPPING SPREE

VALUE STORE

RETRIEVE

A REBATE

Get \$75 or \$100 back on
RCA ColorTrak 2000" TV's.



RCA

The First Name
In Home Entertainment

On selected 19" 21" & 28" models. Offer ends October 31, 1990.
Thomson Consumer Electronics Canada, Inc.

Milliere
SALES and
T.V. SERVICE

GUARANTEED SERVICE
WITH ALL SALES

Phone 877-3405
14 WESLEYAN STREET
Just off Main Street