

"Information is the hallmark of democracy"

A giant step in right direction

NOT LONG AGO this newspaper indicated editorially a desire for all factions in the so-called Penetanguishene French high school issue to work together even if it meant compromise in resolving differences that have arisen since this subject first saw the light of day more than two years ago.

A recent meeting of Concerned Citizens for Bilingual Unity, staged at Penetanguishene Legion, even though emotion-packed, managed to bring most sides in this issue together.

The discussion was frank. Misconceptions corrected. And in many instances those who participated were afforded a better understanding of what is prompting this confused, chaotic crisis to

continue.

It would seem to us, from our vantage point, as long as people continue to talk to one another, as long as there continues to be some give and take and as long as this travesty will be eventually resolved, hopefully this year, then such meetings as the above serve a real purpose.

We are equally hopeful similar information meetings can be conducted in the future.

Such sessions should never be designed to annoy, badger, bait or heckle participants but on the contrary as CCBU's most recent meeting achieved to provide a forum where all sides in this on-going saga can share their honest concerns and where alternatives can be proposed without fear of being persecuted or thwarted.

Courage shouldn't go unnoticed...

MARTIN BEAUSOLEIL of Victoria Harbour is alive today thanks to his clear thinking and the cool heads (no pun intended) of two young men, one from Penetanguishene and the other from Midland, who fished him out of Penetang harbour not long ago.

Beausoleil had been driving a piece of heavy equipment on the ice at the foot of Main Street when it crashed through the ice and sank taking Beausoleil along.

In a recent newspaper account the Victoria Harbour resident described his near drowning and how he had been saved from the freezing water by Walter Mroz of Penetanguishene and Kevin Merritt of Midland who were

nearby when the mishap occurred.

The two men who saved Beausoleil and who later urged him to walk for fear of him suffering exposure and falling dead are to be praised for not only their courage but for their expedience in taking charge of what otherwise would have been a real tragedy.

It is our hope the pair will be properly acknowledged for their bravery by not only the Town of Penetanguishene but provincial and federal organizations dedicated to saluting such individuals who put their lives on the line for their fellow man.

Their courage should not go unnoticed.

Down Memory Lane



Letters

Our readers say...

Wants co-management of wildlife

Open letter to:
Mr. D.A. Ogston
President
Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters
c/o Box 1541
Peterborough,, K9J 7H7

Dear Mr. Ogston:
Recently you circulated an open letter to the provincial Minister of Natural Resources, in which you state that things are "constantly becoming easier for Ontario Indians who want to take Ontario's fish and wildlife."

That is simply not true, and there is no justification for trying to take away more of the traditional and legal hunting and fishing rights which Indian people have.

Sometimes it seems that you have forgotten completely the fact that before the arrival of the white man, the game and fish were abundant beyond belief in Ontario. There were many more Indian people then than the present 70,000 status Indians, but our forefathers had respect for the land, water and air, and nature's creatures were conserved very well.

Non-Indian society, however, has had an absolutely devastating impact upon wildlife in Ontario. First there were the overkills of game and fish which threatened our people with starvation. Then we became aware of the effects of your industrial society and government with the destruction of the wilderness and the poisoning of many lakes and rivers.

Now there is spreading damage from acid rain. This is a very poor record of conservation.

You should remember that when our forefathers welcomed and assisted the settlers in Ontario, they reserved for Indian people the perpetual right to hunt, fish, trap and gather. As Indian people we cherish our special relationship with the land and nature's creatures, and no non-Indian government has the right to interfere with this.

The Imperial Crown recognized that we are distinct Indian nations when King George issued the Royal Proclamation in 1763. In the case of the 9,000 Indian people living in Northwestern Ontario, our forefathers negotiated on behalf of our nation a solemn treaty with the Crown in 1873.

As a condition of allowing the Crown to hold title to most of the 55,000 square miles of land, we were assured that we could hunt, fish, trap and gather Wild Rice "as long as the sun shines and the water runs that is to say forever." These same rights apply for all Indian people in Ontario because we are the aboriginal people of this land.

The great injustice is that these basic legal rights for Indian people have not been respected

by the federal government, in its application of the Migratory Birds Convention for example, nor by the provincial government in the Game and Fish Act and the Ontario fishery regulations. This is why our hunting and fishing rights must be guaranteed clearly in the new Canadian constitution.

Regarding the Province's responsibility for wildlife, Section 88 of the B.N.A. Act firmly states that the Province must respect Indian treaties and it cannot legislate for Indians.

As a result, provincial conservation officers have no right to enter Indian lands nor to charge any Indians for supposedly breaking provincial game laws.

It is wrong for you to believe that Ontario's natural resources can be conserved by further denying Indian hunting and fishing rights. On the contrary, we have indicated to the provincial government that we are willing to enter into arrangements for the co-management of fish and game stocks.

Indian people have much to offer to greatly improve Ontario's conservation efforts, if the Province recognizes our fundamental rights. The Province, however, has refused to respond to us for the last seven months regarding this matter.

We urge you and all citizens of Ontario to press the provincial and federal governments to respect Indian hunting and fishing rights, and to cooperate with Indian people for co-management and better conservation of wildlife in Ontario.

Yours sincerely,
Robin Greene
Grand Chief
Grand Council Treaty No. 3

The Midland Times

Second Class Mail Registration Number 3194

The Penetanguishene Citizen

Second Class Mail Registration Number 2327

The Elmvale Lance

Second Class Mail Registration Number 0991

— Published every Wednesday by Douglas Parker Publishing Ltd
— 309 King Street, Midland, Ontario. 526-2283.

Publisher - Douglas Parker

J. Douglas Reed, managing editor
Christine Mackey, Elmvale editor



One Year Subscriptions (carrier delivered) \$13.00
One Year Subscriptions (by mail) \$14.00
U.S.A. and Foreign \$30.00 per year
Member, Ontario Weekly Newspaper Association
and Canadian Weekly Newspaper Association
Member of Audit Bureau of Circulations



What's Your Opinion?

The Midland Times, The Penetanguishene Citizen and Elmvale Lance welcome Letters to the Editor. They must be legible, signed, (by hand) and carry the writer's address and telephone number for verification purposes. Pen names are not allowed and anonymous letters will not be published. All letters are subject to editing for length, clarity, good taste and libel. It should be noted letters that are typewritten and brief have the best chance of being published.

• More letters on page 6