

Chiefswood group seeks star attraction

OHSWEKEN — At our last Chiefswood Restoration Committee meeting a sub-committee was formed to investigate the possibility of having a concert featuring Buffy St. Marie. She will be in Toronto in August and a concert could be held at Chiefswood to kick off the fund-raising drive.

Many young people will know a lot about Buffy St. Marie but some of us old fogies may need to be reminded.

Buffy St. Marie is a world-class talent as a singer and songwriter. Five years ago she won an Oscar (Academy Award) for the song Up Where We Belong. She and her husband, Jack Nitzche, also co-wrote the theme music for the movie An Officer and a Gentleman, which featured this song. An earlier song she wrote, Until It's Time For Me To Go, has been recorded by over 200 artists, including the very best, such as Elvis Presley, Bobby Darrin and Barbra Streisand. Over the years, she has written several hundred songs.

Buffy was born on the Piapot Cree Reserve, near Craven, Sask. She was adopted and raised by a family in Wakefield, Mass. She was an honors graduate in philosophy from the University of Massachusetts and starting singing with her guitar for \$5 a gig while going to school there.

While still in her twenties, she wrote The Universal Soldier. It became the anthem of the protesters who were against American involve-

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ment in the Viet Nam war. Buffy has always had a strong social conscience. As an Indian who really looks like an Indian, she has faced racial prejudice. She was once refused service in South Carolina and was served on paper plates in Oklahoma, while everyone else ate off of "white man's china" dishes.

Her Indian roots show up in songs such as, Now That The Buffalo's Gone and more recently, Indian Cowboy in the Rodeo. In her 1976 album, Sweet America, she used "Acid Rock Pow Wow" music in four of her songs. They are, Qu'Appelle Valley Saskatchewan, Starwalker, Honey Can You Hang Around? and I Been Down. It is a form which perhaps more Indian performers should pick up on. If other cultures can contribute to North American music, why not pow wow music?

For 5½ years, Buffy and her son, Dakota Starblanket Wolfchild, appeared on Sesame Street. Dakota or Cody, 11, is from a former marriage. Buffy tried to teach American and

Canadian youngsters not to discriminate against Indians. As she said: "If a kid watches Sesame Street and then goes out to play and some other kid says, 'Indians are no good,' he knows it can't be true because Big Bird says Indians are good."

Buffy has recorded some 14 albums and will continue working on new ones. Her pro-Indian stance has probably cost her a lot in time, effort and money. She has founded several organizations to aid Indian causes and has helped to send some young Indians to university.

In late 1987, she was back from her home in Hawaii to help the Lubicon Lake Crees in their fight for justice. Her concert in B.C. was well received and raised some badly needed funds for them. Perhaps she can do the same for Chiefswood. In many ways her life and outlook are very much like that of our poet, Pauline Johnson. She was also a travelling entertainer with a social conscience.

Like Pauline Johnson, Buffy St. Marie has also expressed outrage at the heartless treatment of North America's original people. "The government just throws the Indian treaties away," she said. "It terrifies you as an educated person."