

Indigenous Film Spotlight: The Grandfather of all Treaties

By Lindsay Monture

Free Grassy Narrows, and the National Day of Action, with contributing photography from Ben Powless for the Tar Sands Healing Walk are interlaced with wampum and

Nations treaties by the Canadian government.

As a filmmaker, Candace was fortunate enough to have received support from the Canada Council, Ontario Arts Council, Tyendinaga and the Dreamcatcher Fund just in time to allow her to participate in and cover a number of grassroots movements. The result is a beautifully crafted documentary four years in the making.

"I was very happy and people really enjoyed it so it conveyed the message that I wanted to get across as a filmmaker," says Candace. "We're all in this together, we are all equally culpable in the state of this planet right now, and it's our responsibility to do something. There's a very significant shift going on in our communities, and that's what I wanted to convey in these movements. All of the grassroots movements are almost like a character in my film. It's an important time for us."

Anybody who has experienced the energy and empowerment of Idle No More and the subsequent grassroots movements in the film would love to relive those moments that were so very integral to the consciousness of our First Nations people today. The film is sure to leave audiences with a greater sense of how our ancient teachings are still very relevant to all of us sharing this land, and inspires us to uphold our treaty rights. The film will have a second screening at Trent University in Peterborough on November 26, and will be made available by its distributor VTape, within the next few months.

Free Grassy Narrows, and the National Day of Action, with contributing photography from Ben Powless for the Tar Sands Healing Walk are interlaced with wampum and

treaty teachings from Six Nations' Rick Hill and other Indigenous knowledge keepers, anchoring their words to the current relationship between Canada and the First Nations. "I really wanted to do something on the wampum belts because I thought what a beautiful metaphor, each and every one of them is, just the spirit of intent behind every wampum belt was so meaningful and powerful to me," Candace explains, "I call it the grandfather of all treaties because its something we consider to be a foundational treaty and one of the most important diplomatic instruments in our First Nations history. You could apply it to so many political situations now. I think if more nations honored the central tenets represented in the Two Row wampum, we would be a lot more peaceful."

Initially challenged to pick up pitch support with her original film proposal, Candace went back to the writing board to tie the wampum teachings to the current situation in Canada, with Indigenous acts of resistance responding to the lack of honor to First

TYENDINAGA - Following the success of her first documentary, *The Creator's Game: The Quest for Gold and the Fight for Nation-*



hood in 2011, Tyendinaga Mohawk filmmaker and journalist Candace Maracle had the world premiere of her latest documentary, *The Grandfather of All Treaties*, at imagineNATIVE last month. The film attracted a large sold-out audience of many Onkwehón:we travelling into Toronto from Buffalo, Six Nations, and Tyendinaga to see it.

The 60 minute film expresses the significant meaning behind the original Rotinonhsyón:ni wampum belt treaties with the Settler governments, most specifically the Two Row wampum, while making a solid statement about how these treaties and many others have not been honored over the past 400 years. The result being the widespread acts of Indigenous grassroots resistance across North America, with the knowledge, awareness and empowerment needed in this generation to bring back the integrity of these treaties to the Onkwehón:we people and Canada.

Footage of the protests, marches and rallies of grassroots movements like Idle No More, The Two Row Renewal Campaign,