

# Idle No More fast continued at Hamilton city hall through storm



**He Carries the Strength of Two Buffalo outside his teepee on the front lawn of Hamilton City Hall during his four-day fast. (Photo by Donna Durie)**

By Donna Durie,  
Writer

HAMILTON - Although Idle No More seems to be quieting down, one Mohawk man from Hamilton took it upon himself to keep the momentum going.

He Carries the Strength of Two Buffalo, as he's known, completed a four-day fast Tuesday afternoon with a drumming ceremony on the front lawn of Hamilton City Hall where he had pitched a teepee and consumed only liquids during the endeavor. Amid frigid temperatures and the worst blizzard to hit Hamilton in years, Strength and his supporters set up a teepee just as last Friday's monster snow storm began closing in on the city.

Strength said the peaceful fast was meant to educate people about Idle No More in a non-confrontational way.

"I found out about what Harper was doing and all the damage that's going on and I was like, what am I going to do? I noticed people started getting angry with the people trying to get the message across with stopping trains and stopping this and that. They were putting people out to try to get the message across but

the people that are being put out are only coming away with anger. I want them to understand this is about them, too (non-natives)."

The idea, which he said was in conjunction with Idle No More, came to him three weeks ago in a vision while he was standing on his front porch.

"When I thought of fasting, at that moment I saw a wall of ancestors walking towards me. That's when I decided to do this four-day fast."

Hamilton Police were cooperative and accommodating by providing him with a direct phone line to contact them if he was harassed, he said.

The four-day fast remained peaceful, with no taunts or harassment from anyone, said Strength.

He had spoken with City Hall officials, including Mayor Bob Bratina, who he said supported the action.

"We let them know what we were doing. They were perfectly fine with it."

He greeted a steady stream of visitors during the fast, including various members from all sectors of Hamilton's faith community. Muslim, Jewish and Christian faith leaders came by and

offered words of support, prayers and encouragement throughout the fast.

"It's been an awesome turnout. This area has been constantly full, always movement, always conversation."

Strength drank only cedar tea and other medicinal liquids during the endeavor. Strength has participated in many Idle No More rallies and flash mobs throughout the area in the past two months. He drummed at a flash mob and march during the January Art Crawl on James St. North in Hamilton, and he also drummed at a rally at the Cayuga courthouse last month.

Strength said to him, the Idle No More movement is about the environment and wildlife, which he believes will be harmed with the Conservatives' passing of legislation that strips away protection of Canadian rivers, lakes and waterways. He said he hoped that message was delivered in the peaceful way he intended during the four-day fast.

"The message that I've always grown up with is to do no harm. When you can do no harm there's no way for someone to be upset and the message can get across."