

# Turtle Island News publisher awarded Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal...but the medal goes missing at band office

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Writer

Turtle Island News Publisher Lynda Powless has been awarded a Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for her service to her community.

At least she was supposed to be. The problem is the medal is missing.

After a bizarre series of events, Turtle Island News has learned that elected Chief Bill Montour was supposed to present editor and Publisher Lynda Powless with the medal but chose not to.

Powless learned of the medal when a brown envelope from the band office arrived at the Turtle Island News last week.

Inside was a letter from Ontario dated November 23, 2012 informing Powless she'd been awarded the medal.

But there is no medal inside the package and strangely, the package had been in the

hands of band council for almost a month before reaching her. Powless received the package Feb. 13 (last Wednesday) to find a certificate, a letter from the Premier's office and a decorative lapel pin inside indicating she is a recipient of the award.

Even more bizarre is that the letter informing her she'd been selected for a medal is smeared with a red substance in what almost appears to be dried blood and the name of elected Chief Bill Montour is written in ink at the top of the letter.

The letter is dated Nov. 22, 2012 and is signed by both former Premier Dalton McGuinty and Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Michael Chan. On both the certificate and letter, however, are band council stamps indicating the band office had received the package on Jan. 22 – two days

before Montour headed to Toronto to quietly accept his own medal, which he later says he returned.

Brant MPP Dave Levac's office confirmed they had received the package from the Premier's office and sent it to band council with the belief that Montour would present the medal to Powless. Montour had presented medals to a number of Six Nations people at a special awards ceremony in October last year.

Constituency assistant Shawn Ogborne said he is not sure when Levac's office received the package, but he confirmed there was indeed a medal inside when the package was sent to band council.

"We deemed it best to send it to Bill Montour and have him present it to her," said Ogborne.

Laura Sylvis, media relations officer for the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigra-



Lynda Powless

tion, said they are looking into the mixup.

When contacted by Turtle Island News, elected Chief Bill Montour admitted he found the package on his desk and directed it to be mailed to Turtle Island News.

He denies further knowledge of why it spent almost a month there before making its way to the paper.

"I don't know much about it - it was left on my desk and I directed it to be sent there," said Montour in an e-mail. "I do not know the path it takes."

He refused to respond to

further calls and e-mails asking why the package arrived at the paper without the medal, why he did not present Powless with the medal, or where the medal is?

A recipient of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal who wished to remain anonymous told The Turtle Island News that he received an invitation to accept the medal at a special ceremony. It was at the ceremony that the recipient was presented with both the pin and the medal, which came in a box.

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal program was created in 2012 to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne. Awarded by the Governor General, the medals aim to recognize 60,000 Canadians who have made "significant contributions" to the country or their communities. The

medal is composed of nickel and silver and was manufactured by The Canadian Mint.

According to the Governor General's Web site, recipients are supposed to be invited to attend a ceremony to receive their medals.

All medals must be handed out by Feb. 28, according to the Web site.

The awards have been fraught with controversy. Numerous people have made headlines with respect to the awards, either for returning them in protest, or, for even receiving them.

Montour himself returned his medal because he found out Binbrook agitator Gary McHale also received one.

Sylvis did not know at press time if Powless would be presented with a second medal.

In the meantime Powless has reported the medal as stolen.