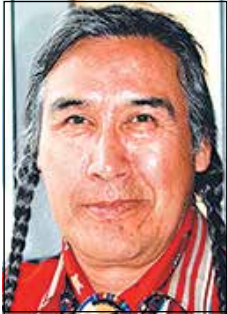


School, community collaboration are important steps in learning

Northern News Services

Friends, after writing my regular column a couple of weeks ago, about the effects of the food forced on us at residential schools, it is good to note the many activities now linking our places of learning with community.



MOUNTAIN View

Antoine Mountain is a Dene artist and writer originally from Radlilh Koe/Fort Good Hope. He can be reached at: amountainarts.com.

In this case I was pleasantly surprised to read of the moose-harvesting going on at East Three Secondary School in Inuvik.

One of my more traumatic memories of Grollier Hall, which I attended through primary grades, was years later seeing that horrid place still up and standing. The empty space it and the Sir Alexander Mackenzie School stood on still remind me of those

times which took place only a few generations ago.

The two-page *News/North* story, by Stewart Burnett, with its many photos of students cutting up the meat also brings to mind an important statement by principal Gene Jents that, "We are on Gwich'in and Inuvialuit land ... and on-the-land activities are a huge part of the culture."

The reason this is so relevant is that one of the main features of my present PhD research in Indigenous Studies is to find ways to link



Jesse Israel, left, Joel MacNabb-Lennie, Kaleb Picek and Kolsen Church dig into the moose ribs. The East Three Secondary School students took part in a school harvest program in September.

academia, places of education, with the community.

My school, Trent University, has seen its way to expand my own work to include more observation, and less of the traditional data-based study.

The students at East Three got their own taste of this. Getting to actually be there when the moose got harvested by local Jimmy Kalinek, and having it brought right into their school.

The fact that they even got to cut up the moose themselves and bring their share home

points to the way the institution sees itself as a part of this vital process.

Another thing to consider is that it does take time for things to change and to turn around.

In my time at Grollier Hall there was no tie whatsoever with the town. The only time we got to see the people was at the weekly

service in the Igloo Church. Even then we got seated separate from the adults.

It must have been really hard for the parents, especially parents of the children from Inuvik.

For the time being, though, good to know of what goes on at East Three.

Mahsi, thank you.

Reflections on the mid-term review

Northern News Services

According to British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, a week is a long time in politics. That makes the two years since the 18th Legislative Assembly was elected an eternity.

During the campaign, accountability and transparency were much-discussed issues, and voters made good their desire for change by electing an unprecedented 11 new MLAs, including me. One of the ways all Members decided to increase accountability was to hold a mid-term review on the performance of the premier and cabinet. The review would be the first in 20 years.

The rules and procedures committee worked hard to create a process that was open and fair. For me, it was important to create a process that was evidence-based and removed from the self-serving "let's make a deal" process that leads up the election of the premier and cabinet by the territorial leadership committee.

The mid-term review took place on Thursday, Oct. 5. The first sign of trouble came right at the start when the MLA for Hay River North asked cabinet if they would honour the results of the confidence motions that would be passed after the question and answer session. Each cabinet minister said no, not unless they were forced to by motion in the house during a regular sitting.

Their position reflects the minority report filed by the cabinet minister – Justice Minister Louis Sebert – who is on the rules and procedures committee about the mid-term review. The report notes that confidence motions are not binding unless they are passed in the house. It goes on to say, "the recommendation proposed here can be interpreted as one meant to embarrass or shame a minister into resigning without having the knowledge of which of their colleagues lack faith in their abilities."

It's important to note that members are elected to executive council by a secret ballot and then confirmed by a motion in the house. But in the reverse, rather than leaving when

asked, cabinet ministers want to be thrown out the door. This approach is not compatible with the accountability all members made a big deal about at the beginning. It reveals that arrogance comes with power. It turns out that consensus government has nothing special to offer when it comes to accountability.

Why does any of this matter? It's easy to write Oct. 5 off simply as a day of political drama. But what's at stake is the quality of services government provides to NWT residents. It's about whether there is an effective program for men who want to learn how to respond to anger without violence; whether schools are adequately funded for their

multiplying jobs; or whether cutting spending to create a surplus of funds for road construction is a vision shared by most members.

The job of a minister is an important one. Ministers are held responsible for their leadership and the work of their departments in the assembly. If the members of the legislative assembly believe ministers are not effective in his/her role after a fact-based process members have agreed to respect, then it is clear that minister's leadership is no longer wanted. Having every member of cabinet say they don't care what the members think about their performance is not only disrespectful of the will of the majority of the assembly, it defends bad performance and poor public service using the kind of tactics that give politics a bad name.

I'm disappointed that the mid-term review didn't produce the change I wanted to see for constituents and for the territory as a whole. We tried to do politics differently and we failed. Was it worth a try? Yes. Would I do it again? Probably not.



GUEST Comment

Julie Green is MLA for Yellowknife Centre.

BENEFICIARIES SCHOLARSHIPS AKAITCHO TREATY 8

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Deadline for the scholarship application is November 10, 2017.

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