

Editorial THE SUMMER OF OUR DISCONTENT

by Marko Peric

Some issues appear from nowhere and dominate the news for several weeks or months, only to disappear and never be heard from again. Others resurface time and time again, and never really seem to go away. Native treaty rights is one of the latter. This past summer saw the most volatile clashes over native issues since the Oka standoff -- marijuana on the Kanasatake Reserve, land claims in Ipperwash Park and at Gusafasen Lake in BC, fishing disputes on the Miramichi River. Even on Lennox Island there was a fight about lobster.

It's understandable that this problem is a continual plague in almost all regions of Canada. The issue goes back centuries to the time when England and France were busy fighting over the

North America. The treaties signed so many years ago between colonial governments and various Indian tribes are often the basis for these conflicts.

This writer does not have a magical solution to any or all of the Native issues. It should be apparent that violence is not the answer. Stand-offs and barricades such as we have seen the past few years are poor ways to draw attention to problems. A violent altercation may draw a host of media attention, but it also results in increased tension and hard feelings on all sides. In the worst cases, people have been injured and lives have been needlessly lost. It's sad that sometimes Native groups find that the only way they can gain any attention is to resort to blockades and such dangerous tactics.

On the other hand, the federal and provincial governments seem to sweep these issues under the rug until something serious happens. Obviously few governments really want to deal with this and other tough issues, but the "if it ain't broken, don't fix it" mentality just delays the inevitable. Hopefully, once the Quebec referendum is over the federal government will try to settle some of these disputes.

In reality, both sides are at fault in this on-going battle. Neither side has demonstrated enough willingness to talk instead of fight. Perhaps the time has come for real negotiation to settle some of these questions once and for all. Otherwise, as money gets tighter the problems will only get worse. And the last thing anyone needs is another repeat of the Oka crisis.

Letter To The Editor

Dear AL. R. G. Sufferer,

Thank you very much for your recent comments on the new carpeting in foyer of the Robertson Library. I am sorry that you find it ugly. Much planning went into the conception and placing of that carpet. Your concern, however, raises a couple of issues to which I would like to respond. One is noise and the other is air quality.

The new carpet has not been placed in the foyer for frivolous reasons. We have located it there as just the beginning of attempts to address longstanding concerns on the part of Robertson Library users about the noise level in the foyer. The placing of the carpet there is an attempt to create soft surfaces in that area in order to muffle

noise. Can you imagine the noise level in a library without carpets that would result from all the hard surfaces? It would be unbearable! We would have only the noisemakers left.

The other issue raised by your concerns is the Robertson Library's longstanding air quality problems. Our old carpet is probably a greater contributor to poor air quality than is the new clean carpet. We are continuing to grapple with the air quality problems, however, there are no easy, cheap solutions. In October, work will begin in the basement on the installation of additional humidification equipment. This should serve to address some of the con-

cerns by increasing humidity levels in the winter months. This will not only solve some of our winter dry-air problems, but it will also allow us to bring in more fresh air from outside without decreasing humidity at the same time. The chiller is also scheduled to be deacidified over the next six months, which should further improve air quality during the spring, summer, and fall months of next year.

Thank you very much once again for taking the time to express your concerns. They are always welcome.

Dan Savage
University Librarian

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- For legal reasons, all submissions must contain a name and phone number. Names will be withheld upon request.
- All submissions are property of the Panther Prints.
- Submissions may be dropped off at the newspaper office (room 06 Main) at your own risk. Submissions are processed more quickly if submitted on disc in Wordperfect 5.1 format. Discs may be picked up on the following Monday. Discs left for one year become the property of the Panther Prints.
- The deadline for submissions is Thursday at 4:00 without exception. Any late submissions will be considered for the following issue.
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