

SPECTRUM

First Nations' view

Many people know very little about the Native ways

MISUNDERSTANDINGS/ Many "whites" only know Natives as people who "illegally" fish and "illegally" sell cigarettes.

by Cline Gideon

To be Native is not easy in today's world. It seems that for years upon so many years the past that is so important to we Natives, to all society as a whole, is filled with tragedies and ironies that would surely place the current generation of peoples at odds with their environment they find themselves living in. History is the most important part of any people. In having history, you know where you come from, who you are today, and what your place should be in the future. Because of this, though, we are at odds as to who we are today, at our place in society, and our place in the society of tomorrow. To me as a Native person, this proves an interesting challenge.

As a Native student here at UNB, I am very fortunate and am aware that I am to find myself actually surviving this incredibly gruelling process and to be soon graduating from the aforementioned fine institution. I can tell you it is very, very tough, but through it all, I have learned things that I will carry for the rest of my life. This learning process was not just in the classroom as it was more within the university environment itself. One of the most important things to have learned is knowing how little I truly do know. Unfortunately, what I've learned is that I know very little about myself, of who I am, of my people.

I certainly hope that I am not the only Native young person that goes through this questioning. Overall, though, university experience has allowed me to become aware of this void, and I have become well aware of this. In questioning this strange phenomenon, it has helped me in getting to know more of who I am, and as a result, brought some confidence and pride in being a Native Aboriginal. I still could remember my early years of university when sitting in class the mention of Native people or the other word, Indian, I would sort of put my head down and pretend not to notice, or more so, hope not to be noticed. A futile attempt that was. Today, that is not the case, as a few of my friends are already aware!

Yes, believe it or not, to this very day I still do experience prejudice, within class and outside of it. A lot of my non-native friends are very surprised by this revelation. To them, they see me as just another person and they accept me as who I am, but just as a person who seems to keep his summer tan a bit longer than the rest of them. To others, they see me differently. I have come to terms in dealing with this, in part by the education that I have received here at university which has helped prepare me in dealing with such misunderstandings, the good and the not so good.

Through the good and bad that I have experienced and learned of

my people, I truly have gained a strong and invaluable perspective on what it is like to be a Native Aboriginal of Turtle Island (Canada).

Throughout the university process (the education process as a whole), I have come to know what it is like to live within the "white" people's community. I have come to know your ways. I have walked a mile in your shoes (and then some). Through this at times demanding process, you do learn much about the community, and become aware of the Native's place within this society.

I have learned of the confusion that is keeping us from truly knowing each other. For most of you, you know very little of the Native ways. Because of this, there will always be a gap, unfortunately, and unless things do change, you will know us only as people who "illegally" fish, "illegally" sell cigarettes and are of other perceived vices. Misunderstandings.

To we the Native peoples, this confusion is a double-edged sword. We do not know how you truly feel about us. I guess more so perhaps we

truly do not want to know, based on past experiences. But again, this is because of misunderstanding between we the Native Aboriginals of the great Nation, and you. This is something that can be looked at and be addressed.

On the other hand, the second confusion we Natives have is the confusion of who we truly are. We have lived by your side for approximately four hundred and fifty six years. Through this experience, we have indeed lost part of who we are. We are confused because of this. Our past is who we are. We are confused because of this. Our past is phased. Within my generation alone, the concept of being Native is lost by most of my Native friends. Sad but true.

My university experience has helped me quite a lot, as mentioned. I have come to know you. I have come to know of the prejudices you have of us, and I am very well aware of you who do know and are trying to know who we, the Native people, really are. Such understandings and friendships

thus created will do many wonders in bridging this gap between our peoples.

University life has enlightened me of who we were, who we are today and our role that we can provide in the future. Previously I held a very pessimistic outlook on my way of life, the life of a Native Aboriginal of Canada. After nearly four and a half centuries, I realize that, though some of our ways of life has been "ignored," or "become unused", it has not been lost, and through some research and sharing of this way of life with fellow Natives, the future is something to look forward to.

To my non-Native friends who are learning or becoming to truly know who we are (future lawyers, etc., ... and I know who you are!!), I look forward to the day when you will walk a mile in my moccasins.

To you the gap I hope to bridge. Appreciation goes out to these fine non-Native friends of mine, D.M., S.C., and of course C.M., who had brought forward the idea for this week's column.

To all, please keep this in mind:

University life has enlightened me of who we were, who we are today and our role that we can provide in the future.

"Do not walk forward, for I will not follow;

Do not walk behind, for I will not lead;

But walk by my side, and be my friend".

On one final note... unconditioned sympathy is sent to the Big Cove Indian Reservation, located near Moncton, as the inquiry concerning the rash of tragedy that they had experienced during the summer, begins (30.11.92). Unfortunately, and most tragically, again this weekend another young Native life was lost.

Let only good spirits guide you.

The Black Triangle

The Lesbian Christmas wish list

by Tristis Baird

It's getting darn close to that time of year when a whole bunch of people scamper to and fro, getting progressively nasty toward the rest of their herd as they paw and claw through sales bins for the last remaining unbroken items which are to become tokens of love and respect for the near and dear who, it is assumed, are doling out just as much loot and running their plastic cards just as high in an effort to say "I love you" back.

Not that I want to knock North American Christian tradition, but most of it isn't. Everyone knows (and states on many local-angle, spot-news television casts) that what Christmas ends up becoming every year is the reason for competing with everyone you know to see who can seem to have spent the most on gifts without having paid full price. It serves a secondary function of making you feel guilty if you forget someone who shows up on your stoop 5:45 PM Christmas eve with a darn nice token, or if you go hog wild with one gift, and run out of money before the last is bought forcing you to tear desperately through discount stores and take second looks at what gumball machines are offering these days. On top of all this there is always somebody on your list that you just plain can NOT figure out what to give.

Well, I might be able to help you save face with that special lesbian on your list. Presenting the lesbian -

Sears ain't got this - wish list:

1. Anything purple. It can be as silly and impersonal as you want, if it's purple she will exclaim "Oh It's gorgeous!"
2. A book on... how to fix your Harley...how to do your own plumbing and grouting...what to say to a car dealer so they'll be

ing: an "IM I R U" tee shirt, dyke field guide book, dyke habitat map and hormonal imbalance compass and a "junior dyke spotter" button.

5. A "Joy Of" book. Don't jump to conclusions. This can be anything from the Joy Of Gardening to the Joy Of Long Haul Trucking to the Joy Of Scarf Tying for your favourite femme.

... what Christmas ends up becoming every year is the reason for competing with everyone you know to see who can seem to have spent the most on gifts without having paid full price.

scared of you...developing deeper relationships with your cat

3. A reversible poster of an adorable animal above an inane saying (Like "I hate Mondays") on one side and a "So Much Alike, So Different" twentyphoto breast comparison on the other.
4. A Spot The Dyke kit, includ-

- 6.. A rigged spin-the-bottle game that she can take to mixed parties which mysteriously keeps pointing to women whenever she takes a turn.

7. A compilation CD of androgynous songs, you know, the tunes where the female singer doesn't mention "he" or "him" or uses names that could be women's like

"Bobby McGee", or men who sing high enough so that you can't tell (or could easily pretend) they're women.

8. Something unidentifiable, but vaguely erotic, that you give her with a wink. She'll take it thinking that (as a culturally aware lezzie) she ought to know what it is and either display it as art or hide it under her bed while trying all next year to find out what it is in lesbian Etiquette books.

9. A "Lesbian and proud of it!" bumper sticker for out of town trips. Make sure it has velcro backing, because she has to come home to Fredericton sometime.

10. A closet organizer with a built in desk for those busy women in your life.

These few things you should maybe not get:

1. A lifetime pass to the Cosmo with a little pink triangle hologram on it.
2. An application form for Big Brothers Big Sisters.
3. An escape weekend in Denver Colorado, USA.
4. A "Cucumbers Are Better Than Men" book (like those are the only choices)
5. A copy of Basic Instinct