

DEHCHO NEWS



Deh Gha Got'ie drummers

photo courtesy of Sheldon Minoza

**MAY THE LIGHT SHINE ON YOU THIS CHRISTMAS
AND THROUGHOUT THE NEW YEAR**



Chief Kele Antoine, Michael Nadli, Georges Erasmus, Grand Chief Herb Norwegian and Metis President Shane Kwasney at the Legislative Assembly in Yellowknife

Christmas Greetings from Grand Chief Herb Norwegian

I want to wish all Dehchonians a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Take care of each other, especially the children and elders. I hope you enjoy the warmth, happiness and good food of home in the company of your loved ones this Christmas and throughout the new year.

Dehcho Leaders Meet With GNWT Premier Simpson

Dehcho Leaders met with GNWT Premier RJ Simpson on December 16th at the Legislative Assembly in Yellowknife. Attending the meeting were Grand Chief Herb Norwegian, Chief Kele Antoine, Chief Jamie Moses, Metis President Shane Kwasney, Chief Negotiator Georges Erasmus and Negotiator Michael M. Nadli. Premier RJ Simpson, Kyla Kakfwi-Scott and Rene Kalgukar attended for the GNWT.

Grand Chief Norwegian felt the DFN had established a good relationship with the Premier and the meeting overall was positive. Jurisdiction on Dehcho lands and access were key issues discussed with the Premier. The leaders stressed the need for the Dehcho people to have the primary authority in these areas. The present situation with southern hunters and fishers arriving in large numbers is unacceptable. Moose populations are in decline as a result. Proper management is needed and the people of the Dehcho are in the best position to do that. Authority must be given to the Dehcho Government. The leaders presented a number of options and measures that could be put in place to maintain proper management.

The situation at Lindbergh Landing was also discussed. Dehcho leaders pointed out that the Interim Measures Agreement (IMA) signed by the GNWT was not being followed and asked the Premier to take all necessary steps to correct the situation. Following complaints made by the DFN, the GNWT had conducted a visit of the site on November 25th during which accumulated garbage was cleared up.

This action was part of a Court Order issued on October 31, 2025. The government is currently assessing their findings to determine what steps to take next.

A second meeting on Education was also held and Dehcho MLA Sheryl Yakeleya joined the discussion. The current education system in the Dehcho is in chaos. Parents are removing their children from school and changes need to be made across the board.

Dehcho Process Negotiations Ottawa November 24th - 27th

A marathon Negotiations Session was held in Ottawa November 24-27. Several Dehcho leaders travelled to the capital to participate in person. In attendance were Grand Chief Herb Norwegian, Chief Kele Antoine, Chief Melanie Norwegian, Chief Jesse Moses, Metis President Albert Lafferty, Georges Erasmus, Michael Nadli, Chris Reid and Gavin Cazon-Wilkes. Several chapters of the AIP were discussed during the four-day session including:

- Migratory birds – Chapter 29
- Parks – Chapter 37
- Ratification and Eligibility – Chapter 48
- Child and Family Services – Chapter 16
- Taxation – Chapter 27
- Fiscal Relations – Chapter 43
- Land Use Planning – Chapter 36
- Heritage Resources – Chapter 25
- Fish Harvesting – Chapter 30
- Jurisdiction on Dehcho Ndehe
- Language and Culture – Chapter 23

A detailed report on the session is posted on the Dehcho First Nations website at: www.dehcho.org

Dehcho Leadership Meets Virtually

A Dehcho Leadership Teleconference was held on December 8th. The following leaders attended: Chief Kele Antoine, Chief Jamie Moses, Chief Devon Felker, Chief Norwegian-Menacho, Chief Dolphus Jumbo, Chief Steve Vital and Albert Lafferty and James Christie for the Metis. From the Negotiations team, Georges Erasmus and Michael M. Nadli.

Grand Chief Herb Norwegian opened the meeting and presented the agenda for discussion. Chief Negotiator Georges Erasmus briefed leaders on the upcoming one-day virtual Negotiations Session that was subsequently held on December 17th and outlined the negotiations schedule into the new year.

The next negotiations session will be held January 26-29 in Fort Providence. That session will be preceded by a DFN Leadership meeting which will be held at the West Point First Nation. January 13th was agreed as the best date to hold that meeting. Discussion will focus on the 2018 Joint Offer. The decision to accept or reject the offer will be tabled at the January Negotiations Session.

Following that the next Negotiations Session will be held Mar 2-5 and that session will be followed by another session March 31-April 1 in Fort Simpson.

Several DFN program reports were presented including Health and Wellness, Education, Edehzhie, Lands and Resources and Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management (AAROM). Leaders were also given an update on the progress of community fieldwork and Chief Norwegian requested that the fieldworkers visit her community of Jean Marie River in January.

Employment Opportunity

Dehcho First Nations Negotiations Team is looking to hire a Negotiations Coordinator.

For more information or to submit an application please email or call Lisa Lafferty at lisa_lafferty@dehcho.org (867 695 2610)



**The Investment Management Board sends Christmas greetings to everyone.
Have a safe and happy holiday!**



From left to right: Debbie Watsyk - vice chair, Jodi Dulmadge - CIBC, Joseph Nayally - board member, Devin Cli - board member/treasurer, Natani Leech - CIBC, Ron Hardisty - board member, Lorraine Whiteman - board member, Sylvia Scow - chair, Jane Arychuk - administrative assistant



Virtual Town Hall



January 20, 2026

6:30-9:00 PM.

If you are interested in attending
please contact Lisa Lafferty

Negotiations Administrator

lisa_lafferty@dehcho.org

Dehcho First Nations

Negotiations Team

Chief Negotiator Georges Erasmus

Assist Neg Michael Nadli

Assist Neg Ramona Pearson

Dehcho Process Update

DFN Membership Outside the Dehcho Territory

Between now and January 20th we will be updating our contact information for all members who reside outside the Dehcho. We will be doing Information Sessions and home visits in the South during the New Year. Dates have yet to be scheduled.

Once the sessions are scheduled, posters will be posted and emails sent out.

Please send your contact information - name, address, phone number, email, and DFN community you are from to:

Rosa Wright rosa_wright@dehcho.org (text 867 688 6740)

Lisa Lafferty lisa_lafferty@dehcho.org (867 695 2355)

Digging Through the Past

Dené Idea Unites Native Groups

December, 1974



President Rick Hardy
N.W.T. Metis Association

"Dené" meaning the people is not just a word. It could be the symbol of unity, to represent the solid front of both the Indian Brotherhood and the Metis Association. The Dené concept was the main item of discussion at the meeting of the Board of Directors held in Yellowknife November 30 to December 2, 1974.

Resolutions to use the word "dené" instead of "joint" for all future dealings concerning both the Indian and Metis organizations and to figure out an official "Dené" letterhead was also passed at the meeting.

A management team was set up to view the two organizations structure and administrations and to recommend necessary changes. The team will look at these

changes in the turnover and a time frame set up for when these changes occur. Legal difficulties relating to money and administration was explained by the legal consultant for the Brotherhood, Gerry Sutton.

It was decided that fieldworkers for both organizations will go to the communities and discuss "Dené" unity. The views of the people and their opinions for changes in the constitution will be brought before the general assembly of the Metis Association and Indian Brotherhood to be held in February and the final decision will be made.

The land claims process, how it ap-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8.



President James Wah-shee
N.W.T. Indian Brotherhood

First N.W.T. Conference on Alcohol

by Joan Goldi

July, 1980

The first N.W.T. conference on alcohol abuse was held in Snowdrift June 23 - June 30. Delegates came from every Dene community and from the Keewatin and Baffin regions as well.

A person from each community told what alcohol had done to their community, and what the community had tried to do about it. No matter where the people came from, their voices were filled with the same pain and anguish as they told of the family breakdown, the emotional upsets of their children, the fights, the beatings, and the deaths that have resulted from alcohol abuse in northern communities.

Vital Bonnetrouge from Fort Providence spoke of a trapper who left the bar in Providence and headed down-river in a loaded canoe. When the canoe overturned in the current, "the man sank like a rock." He spoke of an old lady who had burned to death in her own house, and of a man who went home with a case of beer and fifteen minutes later, committed suicide.

Adeline Hardisty of Fort Simpson told of a young man who beat up an old lady, stole her pension cheque, then went to Yellowknife to buy liquor. She spoke of children who, when their parents are drinking, turn to vandalism to get the attention they can't get from their parents.

"Not long ago," she said, "I even saw a five-year old drunk."

She spoke of a person close to her who choked to death while drinking, and of a fifteen-year old boy who had gone through the ice after he left the bar; his feet were so badly frozen that they had to be amputated (taken off).

She also spoke about a young woman who drank hair spray and went blind, and of a young person who is now lying in hospital so sick from drugs and alcohol that she can hardly move.

Adeline complained that people are served in the bars even when they are drunk, and then, when they are so drunk that they can hardly move, they are kicked out of the bars, but are still allowed to buy a case of beer to take home.

"The North is our land," Adeline said, "and we should deal with our problems. We should organize alcohol committees for the whole North and deal with this problem together. With this many people we'd be strong."

Then she turned and looked around the hall. "I'm saying this because I know I'm not the only one here who was made an orphan by this problem," she said. "There's lots of other people here who lost parents or family to liquor." There were many nods of sympathy and understanding.

10th Anniversary Issue, June 19, 1981, Page 8



Conference delegates listening to community reports.

Nick Sibbeston First Native Lawyer

Nick Sibbeston, former territorial councillor for Mackenzie-Liard, will be starting to work for Brand & Company, a law office in Yellowknife in August.

Nick, a northern born Metis, graduated from the University of Alberta, Faculty of Law, last May. He is presently working for the Metis Association as a legal adviser.

Nick's new job with Brand & Co. in August will involve light cases. Every new lawyer must work for a law office for at least 1 year. Just as doctors must intern in a hospital for a year before they become doctors, lawyers must article in a law office before becoming full fledged lawyers.

Nick was born in Fort Simpson in 1943. He left his home and family at the age of 4 to attend school at Fort Providence. Luckily he was able to return home every summer. After much travelling to different hostels to receive his education, he finally graduated from Sir John Franklin School in Yellowknife in 1964.

Nick was adopted by an old Indian woman known as "Embe", otherwise known as Margaret Nintse Hope. Her strong Indian ways and influence stayed with him while he was attending school and today he can still speak the Slavey language.

Nick received his B.A. at the University of Alberta in 1970. He returned home to Fort Simpson to serve as Secretary-Manager to that hamlet. The fall of that year he ran for councillor for the Mackenzie-Liard area and won.

His interest in law came after two years of being a councillor. He felt at that time that if he were to receive a law degree, he would be fully pre-



pared to help the native people and also could contribute more.

When asked about his views on the proposed pipeline, he stated strongly, "There must not be one inch or shovelful of dirt, ice or muskeg moved before there is a land claims settlement, signed, sealed and delivered by the government." He went on to say that from his research, Metis people have as much right as Indian and Inuit people to take part in land settlements.

Nick was married to Karen Benoit of Lloydminster, Alberta in 1968. His family consists of 3 boys and one girl - Glen, Randy, Murry & Janice. When asked how his wife felt about all the traveling during his council years, he stated that if it were not for her strong support he never would have made it this far.

July, 1975

DFN Welcomes New Team Member



Lisa Lafferty

Dehcho First Nations is pleased to welcome Lisa Lafferty of Fort Simpson to the position of Negotiations Administrator. Lisa is Metis from Fort Simpson and she comes to her new position highly qualified with years of experience. Her education and training includes a Management Studies Diploma from Aurora College in addition to a Community Finance/Community Management Diploma from the MACA School of Community Government. She previously spent 12 years working with the Fort Simpson Metis during which time she attended numerous leadership meetings, assemblies, and other sessions. Her experience has made her familiar with many of the people, places, leaders and elders of the Dehcho. Lisa says she is looking forward to her new position working with the membership. You can contact her at: lisa_lafferty@dehcho.org

Looking ahead... 2026

- Leadership Meeting -
West Point First Nation
Jan 13-14
 - Virtual Town Hall -
Jan 20
 - Dehcho Process Negotiations -
Ft. Providence
Jan 26-29
 - Dehcho Process Negotiations -
Mar 2-5
 - Dehcho Process Negotiations -
Ft. Simpson
Mar 31-Apr 1
 - Field Worker home visits will
continue in January
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