



OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL CHIEF

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“As the seasons change, one thing that’s always constant is my commitment to truth, transparency, and accountability. Fall is a season of transition, of harvest, and of gathering. It’s also a time to reflect on the summer just gone and look to the weeks and months ahead.”

Powwow Trail

Summer is powwow season across Turtle Island, and I was happy to participate in several ceremonies along the powwow trail including stops in Tk’emlúps, Kehewin and Pikwàkanagàn. I was also humbled and honoured to be part of grand entry at the Kettle & Stony Point 50th Powwow with host drum Northern Cree. Our songs, drums, and dance are healing; and these events are a revitalization of our culture and traditions.



Interacting with Chiefs at the Kamloopa Powwow



Greeting Pope Francis at the Official Welcome Event in Edmonton

Making Connections

Driving cross-country twice this summer was a great reminder of connections – yours and mine, to the land, and to each other. I was so humbled to meet our grassroots people along my path and to hold in my heart your triumphs as well as your grief. This was never more poignant than in Red Earth, Saskatchewan at the wake of little Frank Young. We are all deeply connected through our grief for Frank, his family, and communities.

COVID-19

I tested positive for COVID-19 for the very first time while visiting Newfoundland at the end of August. My symptoms were mild which I attribute to being fully vaccinated – as well as the love and care shown to me by the Mi'kmaq families throughout my self-isolation period. As we anticipate and navigate the unknown seasonal patterns of coronavirus, I'm encouraging First Nations to exercise caution, get boosted once eligible, and continue to keep our most vulnerable in our hearts and our minds.



Papal Visit

I made a promise that I would participate in welcoming Pope Francis when he arrived on Turtle Island and on July 24 in Edmonton and July 25 in Maskwacis, I kept my promise—not for the Pope but for Survivors and Intergenerational Trauma Survivors. As I said at the time, reactions to the papal visit and the words “I am deeply sorry” are all individual, powerful, and valid. As National Chief, I remain cautious and critical of the Church while also committed to the Healing Path Forward. Meegwetich Ermineskin First Nation for hosting the apology event and NWT Regional Chief Gerald Antoine as AFN lead on the papal visit.



Weengushk founder Shirley Cheechoo and Order of Canada recipient Dr. Jeanette Corbiere Lavell join National Chief Archibald on the red carpet

Lifelong Learning

My leadership journey began with protests of First Nations post-secondary funding cuts/caps in 1989 and this summer, I was proud to join many educators, advocates, and Youth at AFN's National Education Forum, working toward a positive vision and healing in education. While in Alberta, Dr. Marilyn Buffalo offered me a tour of Nechi, the center of Indigenous learning AFN pledged to support by way of Special Resolution in 2019. I was also humbled to attend the annual Indspire gala, broadcast in June, and accept a humanitarian award from the Weengushk Film Institute in July.

Fisheries

Early this summer, we established separate East Coast / West Coast Fisheries portfolios and I was honoured for invitations to attend a We'koma'q steelhead trout fish farm and First Fish Ceremony in Spuzzum, on each coast, respectively. Fishing is medicine, it's sacred, and essential to our culture, traditions, and peoples. I support its protection today and for future generations.



Boat ride to We'koma'q steelhead trout fish farm with Chief Annie Bernard-Daisley and Councillor Jason Bernard

Walking the Healing Path

The theme of AFN's 43rd AGA was Walking the Healing Path and what we heard from Chiefs both on the assembly floor and in the Resolutions they passed is that the healing path includes Truth, Transparency, and Accountability. While many view the AGA as a "victory" for those concepts, I see it as a strong mandate to continue the work of transformative change, always with a deep and abiding love and care for all people. The authority of the FNIA (Chiefs) to drive the agenda of the AFN was affirmed which will result in the positive evolution of the organization. As I said in my speech, I am a warrior of peace and will spend the months and years ahead ensuring peace and harmony is restored to all relationships.





National Chief addresses AFN's 43rd AGA.

Conclusion

The events of this summer show the serious intergenerational trauma that lingers within First Nations peoples and the organizations that we have created, particularly lateral violence against women. As the very first woman National Chief, I know firsthand how far we've come and how far we have yet to go. My primary goal at the AFN this past year has been to create space for the diversity of voices who have been left out of the Assembly of First Nations. We have much work to do. I am prepared to do that work.

Increasing Women in Leadership

- Carol McBride, NWAC president
- Michelle O'Bonsawin, Supreme Court Justice
- Nicole Aunapu Mann, first Indigenous woman in space
- Rachel Maniowabi, new Ogimaa Kwe for Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory
- Mary Peltola, first Alaska Native in Congress
- Angela Levasseur, first female Chief elected in Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation

Highlighted meetings

- Grand Chief George Arcand, Confederacy of the Treaty Six First Nations
- Chief Annie Bernard-Daisley, We'koqma'q First Nation
- Dr. Marilyn Buffalo, CEO of the Nechi Institute
- Kúkpi7 Rosanne Casimir, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc
- Chiefs of Ontario Annual General Assembly
- Chief Randy Ermineskin, Maskwacis Cree Nation
- Chief Jason Henry, Kettle & Stony Point First Nation
- Chief James Hobart, Spuzzum First Nation
- Chief Wendy Jocko, Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation
- Chief Trevor John, Kehewin Cree Nation
- Minister David Lametti, Justice
- Chief Brendan Mitchell, Qalipu First Nation
- OFNYPC (Youth) Meeting
- Jagmeet Singh, Federal NDP Leader
- Grand Chief Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer, Mohawk Council of Kahnawake
- Chief Leonard Standingontheroad, Montana First Nation
- UBCIC Chiefs Council Meeting
- Kúkpi7 Judy Wilson, Secretary-Treasurer of UBCIC
- Yukon Chiefs Meeting

For a full meeting list see attached or visit www.afn.ca/national-chief/

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