

Perspectives

Times are changing

When Premier Christy Clark travelled to the Nemiah Valley in the Chilcotin to meet with the leaders of the Tsilhqot'in people on Sept. 10, it marked the second historical event for the First Nation in the past four months.

The Sept. 10 visit was the first time a B.C. premier has met with a First Nation on its traditional land.

It was also the beginning of a new chapter in the relationship between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in British Columbia.

Clark signed a Letter of Understanding (LOU) with the Tsilhqot'in people showing the government's commitment to work together with the First Nation to achieve a "just and lasting reconciliation" and setting the stage for long-term negotiations.

Discussion focused on the first historic achievement for the Tsilhqot'in – the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in June stating the First Nation had Aboriginal title to its traditional territory.

The premier said the Supreme Court of Canada had provided the province with clarity, direction, and a profound opportunity to build a more positive relationship between the province and the Tsilhqot'in Nation.

"The way forward starts with a renewed and strengthened vision of First Nations as partners in the economic, political and social future of this province."

The LOU outlines the steps that need to be taken to achieve this common goal between the province and the Tsilhqot'in people.

It has been a long journey for the Tsilhqot'in to achieve Aboriginal title to their land, starting with the Chilcotin War in 1864/65 when the First Nation's chiefs were hung for attempting to stop non-Aboriginals from crossing their lands to get to the gold fields in the Cariboo.

On Sept. 11, First Nations leaders from across the province met with cabinet members.

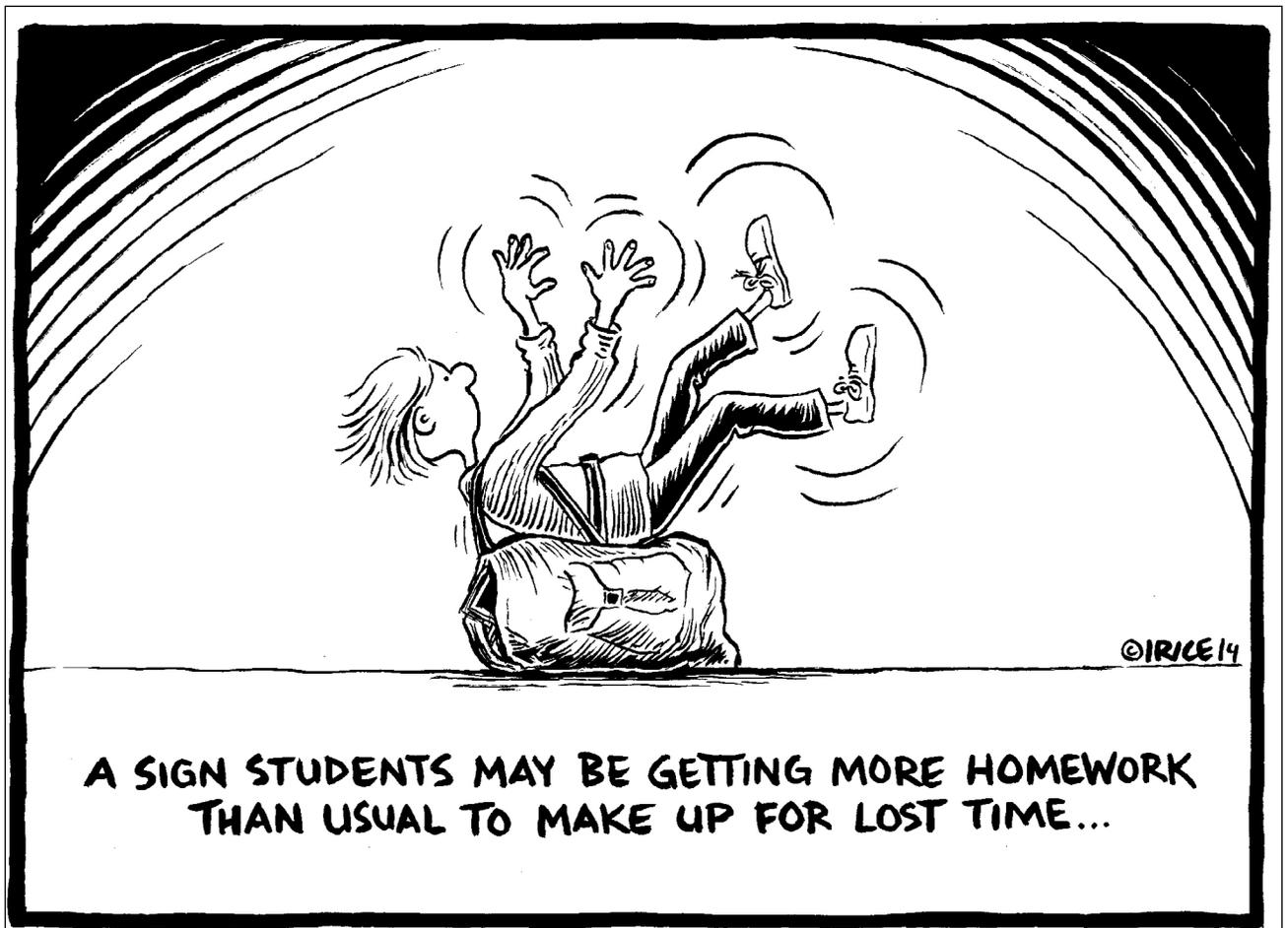
They said the Supreme Court decision established a new reality and legal landscape for our transformed relationship.

It's clear the Aboriginal people of the province believe they deserve to be equal partners with the Crown in the development of B.C.

They also believe it is time to start down the path to making this partnership a productive reality.

We can only hope Premier Clark and her B.C. Liberal government are up to the task, and this isn't a political Band Aid.

All British Columbians will have to show the patience, understanding and resolve to carve out this new partnership.



Domestic violence taking its toll

So far this year, British Columbia has stood witness to a brutal outbreak of domestic violence murders, attempted murders and suicides that have left 20 people dead, just since January.

Among the deceased are 13 women, six men and one child. All the women and the child were victims of senseless homicides, and among the men, five committed suicide after killing their spouses and one was a new boyfriend killed by an ex-spouse.

Another 11 people were seriously injured and hundreds of family, friends and co-workers are left devastated by the loss of someone they loved.

Domestic violence deaths alone though don't tell the whole story. With every death, there are thousands more women living right now in B.C. trying to cope and find ways to maintain their safety in a province

that is leaving them vulnerable.

Sept. 4 marked the seventh anniversary of the domestic violence related tragedy in Victoria that resulted in the deaths of Sunny Park and her entire family. That tragedy sparked a number of reports and many recommendations – 156 to be exact – all calling for more investment to increase the safety of those suffering from this violence.

The province government has made efforts to implement some of the recommended changes, primarily at the policy level, but as we look at the 60,000 cases of domestic and sexual violence in B.C. each year, it is clear that much more needs to be done.

A key step government

could take now is to invest more in community-based anti-violence services. These programs have proven their worth and cost effectiveness for decades in B.C.

EVA BC's research into domestic violence deaths has found that not one woman killed in B.C. over the past 15 years was receiving community-based victim services at the time of the murders. These programs are key supports

for victims and their families, helping with the many complex systems victims have to deal with, creating safety plans and ensuring that cross sector co-ordinated risk assessments and responses are in place.

B.C. has seen consistent spending increases, in the

billions, for police, health and education over the last 10 years, but increases to anti-violence services have been close to zero. We need to understand that both lives and money are saved when early intervention programs like community victim assistance, outreach and counselling are in place. Numerous reports have identified that these services save lives and save tax payers billions of dollars by intervening before violence becomes deadly and much more costly.

The premier has been calling for a violence-free B.C. and we support this call. However, we cannot do this without money. Policy alone doesn't save lives; people and services save lives.

Tracy Porteous is the executive director of the Ending Violence Association of BC. She has worked tirelessly for over 30 years to end violence against women and children.



Tracy Porteous

GUEST SHOT

100 Mile House Free Press

Published and printed by

Black Press
COMMUNITY NEWS MEDIA

every Wednesday at 100 Mile House
Box 459, 100 Mile House, B.C., V0K 2E0

Subscriptions

Local: \$65.65/yr Out of area: \$75/yr
No cash refunds Prices include GST

(Second class Mail Reg. 1809) ISSN 0843-0403



Chris Nickless
Publisher



Ken Alexander
Editor



Jennifer Boden
Office Manager

Phone: (250) 395-2219
Fax: (250) 395-3939

email for newsroom
newsroom@100milefreepress.net

email for advertising
mail@100milefreepress.net

Office hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Friday

"We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canadian Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage."

Canada

The 100 Mile House Free Press is a member of the British Columbia Press Council, a self-regulatory body governing the province's newspaper industry. The council considers complaints from the public about the conduct of member newspapers. Directors oversee the mediation of complaints, with input from both the newspaper and the complainant holder. If talking with the editor or publisher does not resolve your complaint about coverage or story treatment, you may contact the B.C. Press Council. Your written concern, with documentation, should be sent within 45 days to: B.C. Press Council, PO Box 1356, Ladysmith, B.C. V9G 1A9.
For information, phone 888-687-2213 or go to www.bcpresscouncil.org.



2012 WINNER