

# BEST EDUCATION STORY

Quite a strong group of entries this year.

## Putting residential schools in textbooks is huge priority



The Foundation for the Compulsory Study of Genocide is working to get Quebec to do more to ensure residential schools are as much a part of high school curriculum as other historic subjects.

**DANIEL J. ROWE**  
The Eastern Door

Excuses are now hard to come by for Canadian teachers who avoid covering Canada's residential school policy when it comes to history in the country.

With the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) filed and a draft released last week, which recommends multiple times more education, and a growing number of high-ranking officials deriding residential schools as a venue for "cultural genocide," the Foundation for the Compulsory Study of Genocide in Schools is working to include residential schools and other genocides into Quebec's textbooks.

Members of the foundation met with Ministry of Education director of youth education Catherine Dupont last week to see if residential schools and genocide in general could be taught earlier.

"Basically we learned that it's not in the power of the minister of education to accomplish what our mission is," said foundation creator Heather Berger, the daughter of late Holocaust survivor Ann Kazimiri.

Dupont informed the foundation members that they would have to go to the various school boards, and that genocide studies should remain at the university level.

"It was quite disappointing," said Berger. "I thought they had more power than what they told us."

Kahnawake's students have often complained about their presence in high school curricula from the province.

"There was very little on that," said Maris Jacobs, who graduated from Sacred Heart School of Montreal, and is in her final semester at Marianopolis College.

Jacobs, like many local students in Quebec, studied First Peoples while learning about the history of Canada and Quebec in outside schools, but found the unit lacking.

"There wasn't much that we covered," she said. "It was more of how people lived in the past depending on where they were from; if they were Inuit or Algonquin or what kind of homes they lived in. It didn't really move past that. It was really basic information and it moved pretty quickly and that's the only year we did anything on that."

Quebec Liberal premier Philippe Couillard joined former Canadian prime minister Paul Martin and Supreme Court of Canada chief justice Beverley McLachlin in labelling the residential school policy as "cultural genocide."

Berger heard before the meeting that the levels of bureaucracy would make changing curriculum difficult, but hoped for more encouragement in exploring ways residential schools could be instituted in classes.

Since Couillard became premier in Quebec, Ontario's governments have waited to cash in on positive statements about improving relations between provincial and Native governments.

Mohawk Council of Kahnawake grand chief Michael Desile Jr. told The Eastern Door in April that he would like a little more action to back up the words.

One such action is revamping the province's textbooks to include the history between contact and the modern world also includes the residential school era.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission report recommends improving education a number of times.

"Canadians have been denied a full and proper education as to the nature of Aboriginal societies and the history of the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people," the report's conclusion reads.

Those from Kahnawake Survival School and other schools throughout the region that attended the TRC hearings in Montreal witnessed survivors' testimonies and the effect the system had on their lives.

Residential school survivor Kakaiiontha Deer said Quebec students "need to know" about the schools because "they know nothing." She attended the TRC hearings and witnessed the ignorance firsthand.

"After, they asked if they had any questions, and this young girl stood up and said, 'I learned about the Holocaust. I learned about what happened in Africa, the Rwandan genocide, and about South Africa and Mandela. I learned about all these things that have been here all these years and then at the end there's

## POLICE BLOTTER

CRIMESTOPPERS TIP LINE:  
450-632-2802



THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE SUBMITTED BY KAHNAWAKE PEACEKEEPERS:

**May 31, 2015; 16:19**  
A shed on the Clay Mountains was spray-painted and the local resident called the Peacekeepers. Officer Wahio Jacobs responded and spoke to the resident. There are no suspects, and those with information are asked to contact the PKs.

**June 1; 08:26**  
A 2005 Ford Mustang was parked outside the Goodleaf Auto and Scrapyard after a battery was replaced April 28. In the morning, workers discovered the car had been jacked up, and the wheels and rims were taken. PK Kelvin Phillips responded and spoke to the owner from Lituguj. The chrome and black rims with tires were valued at \$1,600. Those with info are asked to contact the PKs.

**June 1; 20:58**  
After a hit-and-run on Highway 138 eastbound, a non-local male called the PKs. Officer Jennifer Stacy responded and spoke with the man parked in his 2003 green Honda Civic at Goodleaf's gas bar, who was allegedly hit by a silver Jeep driven by a male that took off after

checking his vehicle. The Civic driver got a picture, but the plate was blurry. There was damage to the rear bumper, but the vehicle was drivable. There were no injuries.

**June 2; 05:39**  
A manager at Kanawake Golf Club called the PKs to report mischief that had taken place the night before. Officer Jimmy Jacco responded and noticed flags that had been donated at the Kater Memorial Foundation fundraiser were missing, toilet paper and paper cups were strewn on the golf course, and a potted plant was thrown through a window of the starter shack. Anyone with information is asked to contact the PKs.

**June 6; 17:09**  
A call via Chateaugay Police came into the station about a hit-and-run on Highway 138 heading west by the Bear Claw cigarette store. Officer Walter Montour responded and spoke to the non-local female, who was driving in the left lane and rear-ended by a black 2015 Jeep. There was minor damage to the vehicle and no injuries.

own backyard," said Deer. "They were shocked how come they didn't know."

Jacobs agreed.

"I don't know how many times I've learned about World War II in my years of high school and as a CEGEP student, but rarely did we ever speak about residential schools," said Jacobs.

"We did a whole big unit in grade six on the Holocaust, which is super important to a lot of people and we learn about it from a really young age, and everything that happened in World War II and post World War II."

The only time Jacobs studied residential schools was when she chose the subject as part of an elective course in grade nine.

The province has revised curriculum for four in relation to First Nations studies, according to Jacqueline Celermeni, education coordinator at the Montreal Holocaust Museum.

"The topic of genocide, historical or contemporary genocides, are not part of that curriculum," said Celermeni.

"They're not in the process of or not even debating the potential of revising the contemporary world program, which is a mandatory course for students in secondary five, which includes an emphasis of genocide in various themes, but there's no

discussion of modifying that program."

Foundation member Julien Feldman said to box the genocide against Indigenous peoples into a "history of Aboriginal people" context is to miss the ongoing genocide's effects on the waves of immigration from first contact to the present day.

"The Aboriginal genocide continues throughout all this time and continues today," said Feldman. "That's what we have to kind of change the mentality of teaching history. Genocide is a theme in the history of Canada, and the history of Quebec, and it affects everyone in the different waves of immigration."

The foundation submitted a resolution urging the inclusion of genocide studies to the Liberal Party of Quebec that is holding a party convention this weekend.

Understanding residential school's cultural genocide, for Deer, is to understand the ongoing issues that follow survivors home.

"That rage of that little girl who hit the boy inside of you comes out in violence against whoever's right near you," said Deer. "I call this a living death. It's the death of you."

## MERCIER BRIDGE THIS WEEKEND

TED STAFF

Work is scheduled on the Mercier Bridge for tonight, Friday, at 10 p.m. until Monday at 5 a.m. One of two lanes will be available in both directions.

132 up-ramp (from LaPrairie) will be completely closed tomorrow at 11:59 p.m. until Monday at 5 a.m. There will be a detour via Highway 138.

The closures are being done in preparation for the Mercier Bridge Blitz that begins next week (see story on page 13).

## DANIEL J. ROWE

### The Eastern Door

Mr. Rowe packed a lot into this tight little gem of a story: a good lede, a revealing nut graf, quotes from multiple sources, solid facts, great writing and a few keen observations. Best of all, this story flowed extremely well with its short grafs and solid transitions with quotes that moved the whole thing along splendidly.

The clear winner in this category—well done!

## TYLER DAWSON

### The Low Down to Hull & Back News

This story has some actual hard reporting in it, with sources that had to keep anonymous. By describing the events in question, the reporter called the school out on the carpet and forced them to review their procedures and evoke real change at a local institution. Journalism is sometimes about "comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable." This story was a good illustration of that philosophy.

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## FEATURES



Looking and learning: Iqaluit youngsters gather around a table to examine a cat that had been flattened, dissected and preserved at the Nunavut Research Institute in Iqaluit during the Actua science camp. (PHOTOS BY THOMAS ROHNER)

## EDUCATION

### Iqaluit youngsters do hands-on science

"It's becoming more important to be scientifically aware"

What happens if you send a group of Iqaluit kids aged seven to 12 years old and wearing over-sized lab coats, into a science lab with a tray full of "icky" and "cool" water bugs?

Well, for starters, they'll name some of those critters. "Mr. Johnny," the Ottawa-based educational not-for-profit organization, Actua, hosted a science camp in Iqaluit July 27 to 31, which attracted over 30 participants.

The free week-long camp, which aims to bring the fun and learning of science to underprivileged youth across Canada, involved collecting water samples from a local creek and then testing those samples at the Nunavut Research Institute laboratory for bacteria like E. coli.

The kids also waded with camp counselors through the shallow creek beside the Qikqigani General Hospital to scoop up whatever animal life they could find.

Their efforts on July 30, when Nunatsiq News accompanied the camp to the creek and then back to the lab, resulted in two trays full of all sorts of tiny swimming critters. One of the kids named a tiny bright red mite "Mr. Johnny," and the name caught on so fast we never found out who started it.

Soon, all the kids were chanting, "Mr. Johnny!" Sadly, Mr. Johnny didn't live long after being named. A councillor squished Mr. Johnny to death by sandvich-



At the Actua science camp held July 27 to July 31 in Iqaluit, children peered through microscopes at tiny creatures they gathered from a local creek.

Judge: Leonard Gervais, Professor/Department of Journalism, Concordia University, Montreal, QC • Number of entries in the Best Education Story category: 25