

Smoke Signals Radio Archive Episode 2000-05-06  
Segment 1  
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*Dan Smoke shares details about two recent events he attended with Mary Lou Smoke. First, the pair attended the March Against Racism held by Chief Larry Johnson and the Caldwell First Nations. The pair also attended the National Assembly of the Aboriginal Rights Coalition, a gathering of faith groups interested in eradicating racism across Canada.*

Host(s): Dan Smoke, Mary Lou Smoke  
Guest(s): Jessica Smith

**DAN SMOKE:** Aanii! Boozhoo! Koolamalsi. Shekoli! Aanii, waciye. And greetings to all of our listeners of Smoke Signals, First Nations radio here at CHRW 94.7 FM, radio with relevance just west of the dial. My name is Dan Smoke, Asayenes, of the **Seneca Nation**. And I'm in the studio this afternoon with Mary Lou Smoke, **Anishinaabe Nation**, cohost, and our volunteer Jessica Smith from CHRW. Our volunteer of longstanding for six years.

**MARY LOU SMOKE:** Boozhoo!

**JESSICA SMITH:** Sge:no!

**DS:** Yeah, it's just kind of like old times here when the three of us, I think it was for about three years, the three of us would be in here every Saturday. And so, this is kind of like a reunion of sorts as well as a kind of a farewell because Jessica is going to be moving on. She's going to be getting married and she's going to be finding residence elsewhere, so we just want to acknowledge with our gratitude for all the years of service that she has unconditionally provided for us. I mean, she has been there for us when we couldn't be here and when we needed somebody to come in and tech the show, and even to guest host the show solo on a couple of occasions. So, we're very grateful that Jessica has been able to help us and that we met through one of my ceremonial leaders, spiritual leaders, **Joe Couture**. In fact, I was just talking with Joe Couture on the telephone just prior to coming onto the show this afternoon. Joe is a **Cree** medicine man. He is also a clinical psychologist. And I believe it was six years ago, he was conducting a pipe ceremony at the Unitarian Fellowship when it was located on Victoria Ave., right near Gibbons Park. And Jessica, you came to that ceremony, and that's where we met. You expressed your desire to help out on our radio program and that was the making of history. So, that's really-

**JS:** Six long years.

**DS:** We've watched you enter university and then you graduating, you know. And you have your BA! Wow!

**JS:** And I'm getting my teaching certificate.

**DS:** And Jessica is getting a teaching-

**JS:** Teaching certificate. English as a second language.

**DS:** An Ontario Teaching Certificate. An OTC. I hear friends talk about how important an OTC is to have because it's something you can always fall back onto for employment, you know. You

need to have that before you can go and teach. You know, teach English as a second language. So, congratulations Jessica on all your hard work and I'm glad to see someone use their talents and gifts the Creator blessed them with in a good way to help our brothers and sisters. You've certainly done that for us.

**DS:** The show today. We were going to talk a little bit about the **March Against Racism** with **Chief Larry Johnson** and the **Caldwell First Nations**, which was just completed on April the 21<sup>st</sup>, two weeks ago, which Mary Lou and I had the pleasure of attending. We attended the end of it, the final leg, where there was a drum group from the **Stony Point First Nations**. The Stony Pointers, who are living in what they call **Aazhoodena**. Aazhoodena is *our home* in the **Ojibwe** language. The traditional territory of the Stony Point First Nations who have been displaced by the federal government and by the **Kettle Point First Nations**. And so, the Stony Point people are still living there. The true Stony Pointers, the people who have always lived in that territory. There's a number of them still living on what used to be called **Camp Ipperwash**. And they have formed a drum group, and they're going around to powwows, and they are learning songs and being given songs, and they perform songs. They sing. And so, they came to support the Caldwell marchers. There was about a hundred people as the marchers were completing their final leg of the March Against Racism, which began on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

They were walking through the town of Blenheim because the band office is just east of Blenheim, and the drum group was put on the back of a pickup truck. They drummed and they sang that whole final leg of the Walk Against Racism. They led the walkers on that final walk. And when the walk was completed, when it ended at the Caldwell band office, there was a huge barbecue. There was a drum social with the **Stony Point Drum** and Chief Larry Johnson joined in. Chief Larry Johnson, many people don't know, is a traditional singer. He was a lead singer for the **American Indian Movement Drum** in Toronto over 20 years ago when Mary Lou and I were living in Toronto. There was an AIM chapter in Toronto. They had their own drum where they drummed, and they sang, and they did opening ceremonies at different gatherings of First Nations people. And Larry Johnson was their lead singer. So, it was really good to see Larry singing again. I'm sure that he felt re-energized to be able to sing with these young men and to sing some old songs. Some of the old songs we don't hear anymore because our generation hasn't passed them on to the younger generation, so the younger generation don't know the songs. So, we have to, I guess that just tells us, reinforces the fact that we are an oral people, and we have an oral tradition, and we should be passing these songs on to the future generations, to the younger people.

**DS:** So, Larry, I know he did say he was very glad to be able to share with them these old songs. So, we got to talk with some of the walkers. Butch Young was one of the men who I was quite impressed with. Butch Young is an African Canadian who lives in Shrewsbury, which is next to Blenheim. And Shrewsbury has a number of African Canadian people living there who have formed a community within Shrewsbury, and they are very supportive of the **Caldwell First Nation** and their attempts to create a land base. And Butch was telling me, when I interviewed him, that he knows all about racism because he marched during the racial riots and the racial strife in Detroit back in the 60s. And he remembers signs going up around different suburbs of Detroit that were not very welcoming to Black people. And so, when he saw all the signs going up around the Caldwell territory in regard to the neighbours of the Caldwell's not wanting to sell their land, he saw that as a very racist statement. Because what he said that it really says is the "not for sale" signs are really saying "not for sale to Indians." And he says that's very racist, so that's why he was in the march. And he's 54 years old, and he marched every day, 22 kilometers per day, 100 kilometers total, from Windsor to the Caldwell band office just east of Blenheim. So that's why he went. And he was saying throughout the walk, he would

receive inspiration from the young people. There are a number of young people who were walking with the walkers, young people aged...Daniel Pole, Daniel Miranda, was what? He's about 12?

**MLS:** Yeah, 12.

**DS:** And Dan kept saying to Butch, "It aint so bad. It aint so bad." And that was inspiration to Butch. Butch said that whenever he heard that, he just kept thinking of that Rocky movie where someone would say to Sylvester Stallone, I guess I'm not sure if it was his son or maybe it was Rocky himself who said "It aint so bad!" Meanwhile, he's getting his head pounded in. But, you know, if you think about it, it's only the surface. If they don't touch your spirit, if they don't damage your spirit or violate your spirit, then it won't be so bad. It's just the physical surface that is being harmed and you can heal from that. You can heal that. Anyways, we were really glad to...we'll probably feature interviews with the Chief and with some of the walkers, including Butch Young, including Daniel Miranda, the young 12-year-old, his mother, Ann Pole, and the organizer, the wife of the Chief, Theresa Johnson. So, that will be coming up at some point in the next couple of weeks.

**DS:** One other thing that we went to this past weekend was we went to the **National Assembly of the Aboriginal Rights Coalition**. Now, the Aboriginal Rights Coalition is a national assembly of faith groups. Now, the faith groups are the Roman Catholics, the Anglicans, the United Church, Jewish, you know, all different faith groups who are interested in supporting Native issues and making sure that racism is not something that the Canadian public will tolerate. They want to see racism erased. Eradicated. Period. And so, that's why they're supportive of Native issues because the **United Nations Human Rights Commission** has released a report damning the federal government, Canada, for its treatment of First Nations. Now, the reason they do that is because according to the Human Rights Index, Canada is rated number one. Number one in the world. And, according to that same United Nations Human Rights Index, First Nations communities in Canada got a rating of 63. 63! Now, it wouldn't be so bad if you got a rating of 63 and the rest of the country also was 63 and there was poverty everywhere. Then you can accept that. It would be okay, that would be acceptable, and you would work toward improving the quality of life and you would work at trying to, you know, raise your level of human rights. But! This is the number one country! 63 in a country that is rated number one? There is something that is not reconciling here.

And so, this National Assembly of the Aboriginal Rights Coalition was an assembly to bring in speakers from across Canada. From the east coast they brought in **Mi'kmaq** people from Burnt Church, New Brunswick. Karen Somerville, she was a speaker, and she spoke about the racism that exists out on the Burnt Church community which was a scene of major violence and destruction of fishing traps and fishing boats last September. And another speaker was Tommy Munyes and his chief, **Chief John Miswagon** from the **Cross Lake, Manitoba First Nations**, and how their land was flooded by Manitoba Hydro, and the federal government and the provincial government have resisted the terms and the conditions of the Manitoba flood...I'm not exactly sure, do you remember what that was all about? That was kind of a complicated situation because there was some suggestion that...there were five communities that were flooded and that reported major, major, major damage. And of those five communities, four of them, four First Nations communities. I should qualify that. There were five First Nations communities, five reserves that suffered flood damage. Now, an agreement was signed, similar to the **James Bay Agreement** in Northern Quebec, with these five reserves. And of these five reserves, four of them opted out of the agreement, the **Manitoba Flood Agreement**, they opted

out and they received compensation from the federal government, the provincial government, and Manitoba Hydro.

Millions and millions of dollars. But the Cross Lake people have not opted out of that agreement because they are saying the provincial government, the federal government, and Manitoba Hydro have to live up to the spirits of the agreement. Similar to what's happening in James Bay, the Quebec government and the federal government have to live up to the terms of that agreement. Otherwise, it's the passing on of a tradition of breaking treaties that has taken place over the past 500 years. And so, the Cross Lake community, the Cross Lake First Nations, is making sure that the federal government, the provincial government, and Manitoba Hydro stick to the agreement and provide services to the Cross Lake community. So now, there's internal dissension with the other four communities because they realize that they could've received more services for their communities had they done what Cross Lake is doing, so there's kind of a conflict there. And we saw a little bit of that over the weekend. The other speaker was Art Manuel. Art Manuel, who is the son of **Chief George Manuel**. George Manuel was the founder of the **World Indigenous Council**. He was president of the **National Indian Brotherhood** during the 70s. Mary Lou and I, we met him in Toronto at a fundraiser for the Native Canadian Friendship Centre of Toronto, as they were about to purchase their new building which they're currently in today. But George Manuel was the keynote speaker. And I remember him being a very dynamic, very good, very eloquent speaker. A very good example of leadership, of First Nations people. Anyways, his son Art is walking in his footsteps, eh? What a great speaker. What a great speaker Art is, too. And Art is Chief of the **Neskonlith First Nations**, which is in the interior of British Columbia, a **Shuswap** community. He is Shuswap. He is also chairman of the Interior Alliance, which is a forestry, they're trying to work out forestry agreements in British Columbia. And he's also the co-chair of the **Assembly of First Nations Delgamuukw**, Delgamuukw, which is the Supreme Court decision that recognizes Aboriginal title. Delgamuukw. He is a Delgamuukw implementation coordinator. So, he wears many hats. We're going to listen to what he has to say, what Karen Somerville has to say, later on in the show today.

**DS:** Okay? So. Let's listen to some music. How about **Donna Bush**? **Donna Bush** is a group from **Six Nations**. Six Nations is commonly known as "The Bush." Jessica knows that because her father was a Baptist minister in **Ohswegen**, which is the main town on the Six Nations reserve, many years ago. Like in the 80s?

**JS:** 1970s.

**DS:** In the 70s! Oh, okay! When you were just small. Yep. And **Donna Bush** is the title of the CD. And this is, I think by **Faran John**, who's going to be performing down at the Other Side, corner of York and Talbot. "**If You Were My Lady**," here on Smoke Signals.