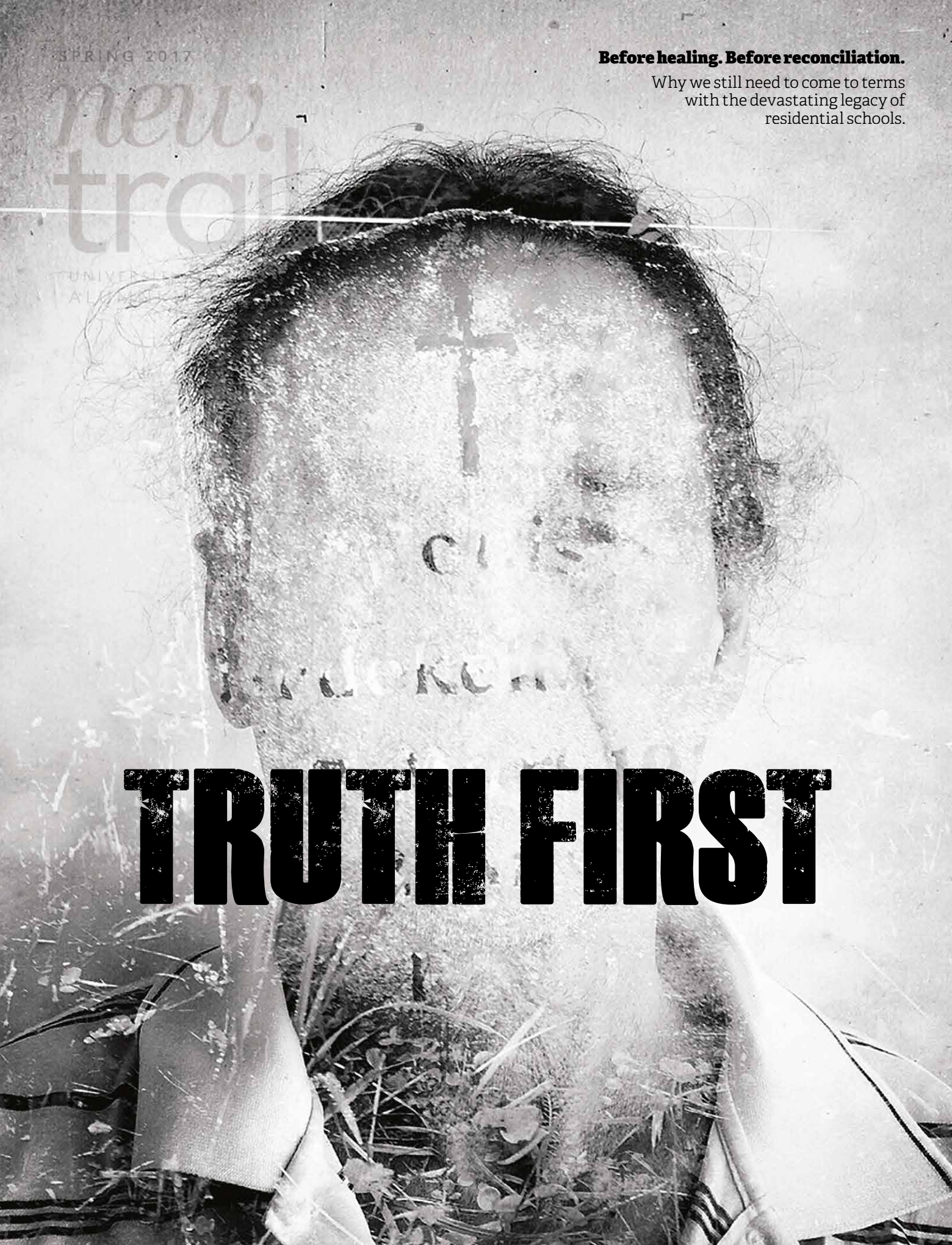
SPRING 2017

new trail

Before healing. Before reconciliation.

Why we still need to come to terms with the devastating legacy of residential schools.



TRUTH FIRST

SPRING 2017
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Elder Jimmy O'Chiese near his people's traditional lands in Jasper, Alta. *Photo by John Ulan*

features

ON THE COVER
The residential school system erased traditions, culture and identities. How do we move forward in a post-TRC world? Page 18. *Multiple exposure photo by Daniella Zalcman*

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Remote Electricity

By Karen Sherlock

IMAGINE NOT HAVING TO HUNT FOR AN OUTLET for your laptop because your café table charges it automatically. Or arriving in a disaster zone and tapping into the ground to provide electricity to an entire neighbourhood within minutes.

That's the future some University of Alberta researchers envision.

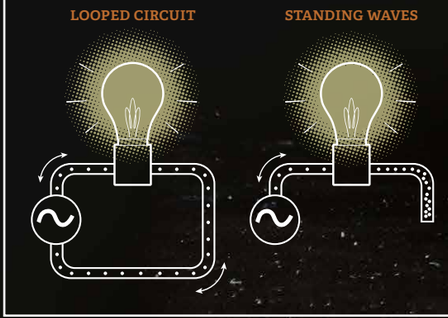
With a system they've dubbed QWiC power—short for quasi-wireless capacitive—the research team in the Faculty of Engineering has wirelessly powered everything from cellphones and lamps to motors and wheelchairs, simply by sitting them on tinfoil, desks and floors. Most recently, in a discovery published by Cambridge University Press, the team transmitted electricity through the ground, opening up a whole new area of potential.

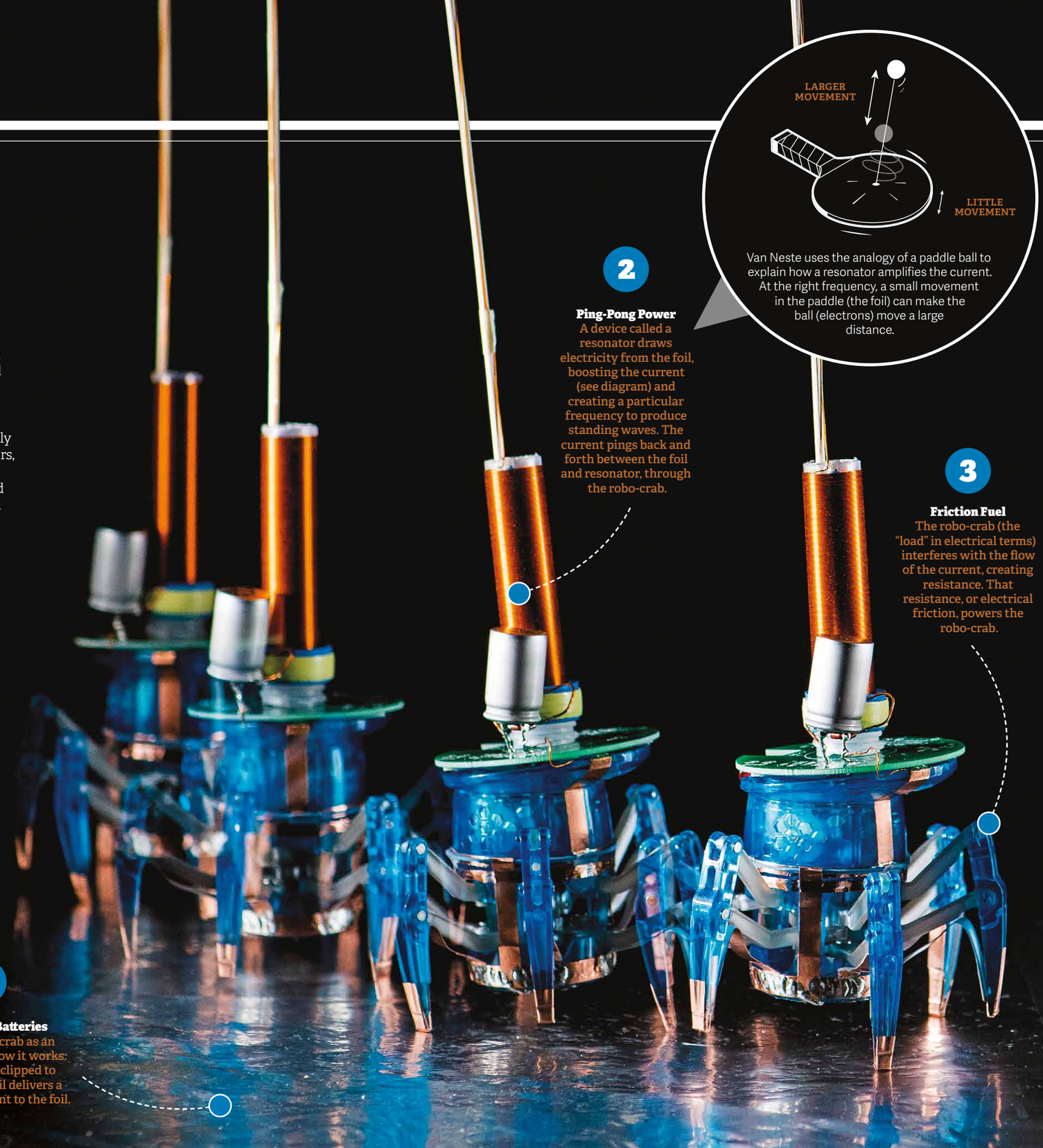
Real-world applications could be ready in as little as two years and the technology could eventually make electrical outlets and power lines obsolete, says Charles Van Neste, a member of the research team led by Canada Excellence Research Chair Thomas Thundat.

At a lab in the Department of Chemical and Materials Engineering, Van Neste explains how "remote electricity" works using a small robotic crab and an everyday piece of aluminum foil.

THE BIG DIFFERENCE (OR ALL YOU REALLY NEED TO KNOW)

If you're not into science and just want the basics, all you need to know is that while typical electrical systems are looped, meaning the electrons that carry the electrical charge travel around a circuit, remote electricity uses something called "standing waves." Standing waves are created by particular frequencies of electricity that cause the electrons to bounce back and forth along a single electrical wire rather than in a loop. This creates some cool advantages (see sidebar, facing page).





WHY IT'S EXCITING

Remote electricity has some big advantages over traditional electrical systems, Van Neste says.

➔ It's less wasteful. The energy is transmitted only when a "load" is present. (A load is the portion of a circuit, like an appliance or light bulb, that consumes electricity.)

➔ There's no risk of electrocution. A human body cannot complete a standing wave circuit, as it can with a traditional looped system.

➔ Energy is transferred at about 95 per cent efficiency, which is better than current wireless technologies.

➔ Remote electricity doesn't fill the air with electromagnetic fields.

CHARGING FORWARD

So what's the big deal? You can already charge cellphones by laying them on the surface of a charging device. The difference, Van Neste says, is that most wireless chargers today use "field coupling." Two transmitters generate a magnetic field between them, and your device must be within the field to access power. QWiC power doesn't generate a magnetic field, so its use is restricted only by the size of the charged surface.

PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN; ILLUSTRATIONS BY CARL WIENS

A DIFFERENT VIEW OF HISTORY: an elder talks about what the treaties mean to Indigenous peoples and what it means to teach and learn in a traditional way

As told to Lisa Cook

'WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER. THAT'S HOW IT WAS MEANT TO BE.'

LAST AUGUST, the U of A installed *The Sweetgrass Bear* sculpture in Quad on North Campus. As part of the installation, nearly 60 university leaders and Indigenous community members participated in a pipe ceremony, led by Elder Jimmy O'Chiese, who told the crowd that we have to move forward together. President David Turpin responded by formally requesting O'Chiese's advice and support.

We, too, sought the elder's wisdom for this issue of *New Trail*. O'Chiese, who was raised in a traditional Foothills Ojibway family, is an elder, eminent scholar and instructor with Yellowhead Tribal College in Edmonton.

O'Chiese spent four hours speaking with the *New Trail* team to share some of his teachings about Indigenous culture and history. The experience was miles from classroom learning—story-based and, unlike western-style teaching, there was no easy bullet-point list of take-aways. As listeners, we were challenged to delve into the stories and each pull out our own meaning—a first-hand demonstration of teaching and learning in an Indigenous way.

Below, we share some of the themes O'Chiese touched on. While it is impossible to translate this experience of the spoken word to the page, we hope it helps readers share in the experience of learning from an elder.

Please note: While we aimed to stay as true as possible to the elder's words, by necessity the conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

The Foothills Ojibway hid their children, so Jimmy O'Chiese was never taken to residential school. The knowledge he shares as an elder stems from traditional teachings.

PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

The Spirit and Intent of the Treaties

"There's the constitution from England; there's the constitution that was here. If you ever look at the wampum belt—the first treaty that was negotiated—it says it right there, 'Side by side.' Not integration, side by side. Because we had our own education; we had our own laws; we had our own governance. We had our way of life, and we shared that with the Europeans that came here. And you must share that—work together. That's what that treaty was. Two laws, not only one side. Things will never work if only one side of the treaty is interpreted, if only one law is interpreted.

"That is why we need to interpret the treaty from our side. The Queen has her own laws and we didn't decide what those laws are. She [can decide] what's good for her people, right? What about the other way? No, somebody decided what's good for the Indian, what kind of Aboriginal laws they should have. We didn't decide that—we didn't even decide how this land is going to be divided up and separated. Divide the land also to divide people.

"When the settlers came, we were already here. We already had our own laws, which were later on outlawed by the Indian Act. The Canadian government decided what kind of rights we should have as the original peoples of this land. What I see, where we need to start, is to really understand the agreement. Why we are meant to co-exist here and what that treaty means—then the education that comes with it."

Why the Treaties Are Unfinished Business

"We shared the land with the Crown. And the Crown has its own constitution and, ourselves, we have our own constitution. Our constitution is part of the four directions, which is our relationship to the land. As long as the sun rises, as long as water flows, as long as grass grows, as long as there's Native people. Which is why the mark of the X was acceptable when we signed the treaty.

"You can see the X symbol on the original treaty documents. You can see that X symbol on the four directions, too, which is yet to be interpreted from our side, from what that X means based on the spirit and intent of treaties. Among Indigenous people, we were already using treaties. We knew about treaties. [Speaks in Anishinaabe.] So, if we don't understand each other today, [are the treaties] finished? It's unfinished business because our interpretation of treaty was outlawed, our education was outlawed, our governance was outlawed."

What's a Pipe Ceremony and What Does It Have to do With the Treaties?

Sacred Ritual
A pipe ceremony is a sacred ritual that connects the physical and spiritual worlds and is akin to a binding agreement in western culture. Indigenous peoples believe the fire in the pipe represents the sun, the source of life, and the tobacco links the Earth and sky, as the plant's roots grow into the soil and the smoke carries prayers to the Creator. Before any important matters are addressed, the pipe is presented; only truth and commitment must follow.

Binding Agreements
When Indigenous peoples entered into 11 numbered post-Confederation treaties with the Crown between 1871 and 1921, they saw the pipe ceremonies and subsequent treaty signings as significant acts that bound the two sides into mutually beneficial agreements. These "numbered" treaties cover what is now northern Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and parts of the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and British Columbia. There are three treaty areas in Alberta—6, 7 and 8. The University of Alberta sits on Treaty 6 land.

Treaty 6
When Treaty 6 was signed in 1876, it involved 50 First Nations across what is now central Alberta and Saskatchewan. The Crown, wanting to open the land to settlement without conflict, offered First Nations reserve land and various other guarantees. First Nations, fearing intrusion on their land, starvation due to dwindling natural resources and disease such as smallpox, agreed to settlers' use of the land in exchange for assistance in the transition to a new lifestyle.

Two Perspectives
The written version of Treaty 6 includes such promises as: annual cash payments to band members; agricultural implements including livestock, twine and ammunition; a "medicine chest" for each reserve; a school; the right to hunt, trap and fish; and rations in times of famine and pestilence. From the Indigenous perspective, these were in addition to their existing rights, including their own governance system, laws, language, culture and traditional use of the land.

Education From Two Points of View

"To 'Indigenize education' is to put our native education into a box and teach from a European interpretation. It's another way of Europeans describing to us who we are according to their education. We shouldn't be trying to 'Indigenize education.' We should be recognizing our own Native education as it is, as it always has been, which is our own law—Creator's Law; some call it natural law. Creator gave us one air, one water, one world, one life. We were supposed to be learning from each other, according to the treaties; we were supposed to be teaching each other our education as it is. That's what it means to truly co-exist. Respecting each other's own education. Treaties are about agreeing to co-exist."

How Individuals Can Make a Difference

"Learn from one another. Learn about what it means to co-exist on this land now called Canada, but that we always called Turtle Island. Share with one another and learn what it truly means to share with one another. Education is part of the treaties. Learn about the education that we once had before Europeans arrived. Recognize the land-based education that was written on the land, and help bring it back the way it has always existed.

"We need to work together. That's how it was meant to be." ■

The child's voice rose with joy. Atayoh was playing with his grandpa, Eugene Makokis, whose wife, **Pat Makokis**, '79 BEd, had invited me to the sweat. Atayoh was running around near the sweat lodge, carrying a small piece of birch, waving it like a wand and laughing. My brain was beginning to process again and I began to consider what the future held for a child like Atayoh. He was only two years old, but even a single generation ago he might have had just a few more years at home before being placed in a residential school. Another few years of playing with his grandparents, bonding with his mother, delighting his community. And then he'd be gone. His parents and grandparents might never have seen him again.

It was this way for 150,000 Indigenous children and their families across the history of the Indian residential school system, part of a practice that lasted for more than a century. The 2015 final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, a seven-year undertaking, was the first real attempt to come to terms with how residential schools were used by the Canadian government as one tool among many to eradicate Indigenous culture, ceremony and identity. On the very first page of the TRC report, the authors note the residential school system is "difficult to accept as something that could have happened in a country such as Canada, which has long prided itself on being a bastion of democracy, peace and kindness throughout the world."

I saw that day, as clearly as I saw the perfect line of the prairie horizon, that non-Indigenous Canadians have a great many serious facts not just to acknowledge but to truly understand before there can be any talk of reconciling with Indigenous people in this country. Canada tried to erase Indigenous people by destroying their political and social institutions, seizing their land, moving populations forcibly, banning their languages, prohibiting their cultural practices, enforcing a foreign faith and attempting to dissolve their family customs and bonds at every turn. And that is on top of what took place at the residential schools.

I'd left the sweat lodge drained, an empty vessel. What stepped into that space was the truth. And there is no hiding from it anymore, for any of us.

MANIFOLD CRIMES have been committed against Indigenous peoples in Canada for centuries, but why? Why did Canada do these things?

At the time of first contact, European colonizers believed they had divine authority (under a papal bull, a kind of public decree from the pope) to conquer and convert. It was thereafter the duty of European superiority to promote man's continuous progress—meaning, civilize the savages when and where you find them. Since Confederation, but even more pointedly during the greater part of the 20th century, it became legislative practice to erase Indigenous peoples, primarily for economic interests. It would have been (and still would be) fiscally impossible for the Crown to fully meet its treaty obligations.

THE TRC BY THE NUMBERS

150,000
students who attended residential schools in Canada

37,951
claims for injuries resulting from physical and sexual abuse at residential schools

3,201
reported deaths at residential schools

6,000
a truer estimate of how many children died at residential schools, according to Sen. Murray Sinclair, chair of the TRC

6,750
statements from survivors of residential schools, members of their families and others who wanted to share information about the schools

4,000
pages in the final TRC report

Pat Makokis wants her grandson, Atayoh, to grow up in a different kind of world.

PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

It's important to understand that virtually everything that took place in a residential school, and many of the atrocities inflicted on Indigenous peoples since Canada's inception, have been the result of deliberate decisions at the highest levels of government. The crimes against Indigenous peoples cannot be dismissed as the actions of rogue priests or sociopathic schoolmasters. As the TRC states, "residential schooling was always more than simply an educational program: it was an integral part of a conscious policy of cultural genocide." (See Canada and Residential Schools, page 21.)

LAST SEPTEMBER, the University of Alberta hosted the second annual Building Reconciliation Forum, a two-day session that brought universities together with First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders to wrestle with the question of how to address the 94 calls to action set forth in the final TRC report, many of which involve education in one way or another. As the first morning was getting underway, I ran into young Atayoh's grandmother, Pat Makokis, and **Fay Fletcher**, '84 BPE, '94 MSc, '04 PhD.

Makokis, who is from Saddle Lake Cree Nation, went on to earn her doctorate in education from the University of San Diego and is currently on a three-year appointment with the University of Alberta to work in Indigenous relations. Fletcher, who is of white European descent, is associate dean in the Faculty of Extension and an associate professor focusing on education and Indigenous issues. They often work as a team to help the university, government and business find an ethical, intellectual and emotional space from which to begin thinking about how to make reconciliation possible. Typically, they lead discussions and offer presentations on history and current realities, and where each one of us fits into finding a way forward.

"It's possible," Makokis told me, when we met in Fletcher's office at Enterprise Square last fall, "that Fay and I are starting to have a bit of success because we've been doing this work together for so long. It's challenging, but it's exciting."

The first morning of the Building Reconciliation Forum demonstrated precisely how great the challenge is. We were reminded that Canada was, in large part, founded on the practice and profit of a process meant to erase a major roadblock to nation-building, namely Indigenous people and their treaty claims. Cultural genocide wasn't just something that happened in our country; it *made* our country.

From the words of Sir John A. Macdonald in 1883 when he told the House of Commons that "Indians" were "savages," to public works minister Hector Langevin telling Parliament, also in 1883, that if left in the family home, Indian children would "remain savages," to deputy minister of Indian affairs Duncan Campbell Scott telling a parliamentary committee in 1920 that "our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic,"

THE CRIMES AGAINST INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CANNOT BE DISMISSED AS THE ACTIONS OF ROGUE PRIESTS OR SOCIOPATHIC SCHOOLMASTERS.

we can easily see the pattern at work. The attempts at eradication continued unabated. The Canadian government used Indigenous peoples as lab rats for nutritional experiments in the mid-20th century. Even the 1996 federal royal commission, heralded at the time as a step forward, has had few, if any, of its recommendations met in full. But that's history, part of *back then*. We know better now, and we are smarter and more ethically inclined. Right?

Perhaps not. In 2008, then-prime minister Stephen Harper publicly apologized in Parliament to Indigenous peoples on behalf of the nation, but his government then proceeded to hinder the work of the TRC. In fact, the TRC had to sue the Canadian government in 2012 and 2013 to force it to produce documentation related to the history of residential schools. It took a judicial ruling to obtain much of the documentation that led to the TRC's final report, more than 900,000 documents in total.

Canada, meaning both the government and individual Canadians, has committed atrocities against Indigenous peoples under many covers. But through a process of cultural regeneration and spiritual preservation akin to keeping a single match alight in a hurricane, Indigenous peoples in Canada have somehow managed to survive. And now here we are. Thirty-five million treaty people—Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike—needing to heal from a dishonourable and

contemptible past. Which leads us to a rather vexing question.

Now what?

Back at the Building Reconciliation Forum, Wab Kinew — politician, broadcaster and advocate — offered one starting point. Non-Indigenous Canada must "recover" from the myth of cultural superiority. "It still persists," he said. "It's still with us. There is a spiritual and intellectual legacy to Indigenous culture. And it's not too much to ask that people learn about the nations where they live."

Indigenous scholar Steven Newcomb put it a different way. The shared history of the two peoples, he said, has been about domination and dehumanization. "And if we can't tell the truth about that, there is no point having a conversation about reconciliation."

If Canada wants to reconcile with Indigenous peoples, in other words, we first need to know, and then accept, the extent and depth of what it is we are reconciling *from*.

Despite the sobering cataloguing of truths about Canada's past, it was nevertheless the point of the forum to talk about reconciliation, particularly in the post-secondary setting. Wendy Rodgers, U of A deputy provost, told the assembly about her own awakening, which began as she confronted her ignorance around the damage done by our colonial heritage. "I see the world differently," said Rodgers, "recognizing that our university, like our country, has absorbed some of the colonial assumptions about the superiority of white, western ways and the inferiority of Indigenous peoples and their cultural practices. We have to work to unlearn these assumptions."

Rodgers was touching on something central, namely that many of us are still trying to acknowledge the corrosive influence of colonialism, the belief that white, Eurocentric culture is superior to Indigenous culture. That culture is *not* superior. Yet neither is it inferior. We have to unlearn that way of thinking. If we can, maybe the learning can begin. And as I found out a couple of weeks later, the process will be painful.

Number tags remain beside coat hooks in the downstairs mud rooms at Blue Quills university. Students at residential schools were assigned numbers and, for some, that became their only identity.

THE PASSAGEWAY was no more than 10 metres long, but in covering that haunted distance, the meaning of it all went through me like a spear to the chest. The TRC report became a living document when I was led through a former residential school a few kilometres west of St. Paul, Alta.

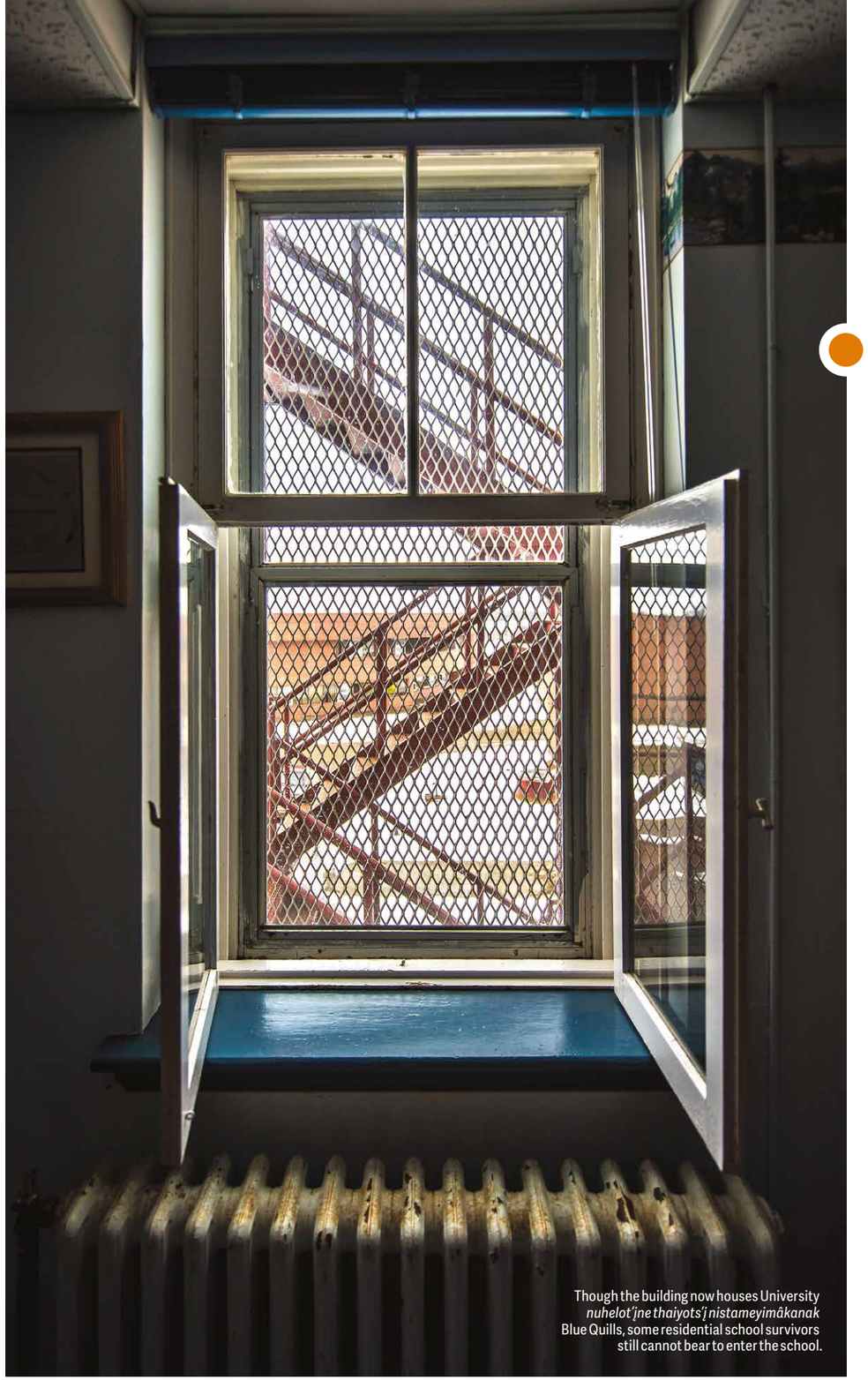
University *nuhelot'įne thaiyots'į nistameyimâkanak* Blue Quills has been an Indigenous-run educational institution since 1971, after a 1970 protest to demand the institution be turned over to a First Nations educational authority. In 2015, it became the first Indigenous-controlled university in Canada, owned and run by seven First Nations. But between 1931 and 1969, the facility was a residential school run by the Catholic Oblates.

I was being shown every room, office, hall, corner and closet by Corrine Jackson, the university's assistant registrar. She is a graduate of the university, but both of her parents and many other relatives and members of her community were placed there in the 1950s and 1960s. She has heard many of their stories.

The basement common room is a long, low space no longer in regular use, but for decades it was a dining hall. It brought to mind stories from the TRC report: example after example of children forced to eat rotting vegetables, rancid food or scraps left over from the meals of the priests and nuns, and then sometimes forced to eat the vomit from having to choke down that food.

The tour continued upstairs and on the third floor we paused beside a small storage room. It was once the infirmary. Jackson's mother, who is now 78, had broken her arm skating one winter, but the nuns wouldn't take her to the hospital. They left the break unset; it healed poorly and to this day her arm bends awkwardly. Jackson then told me another story.

"I never knew this until my mother told me recently, but I had an aunt, an elder aunt." It wasn't until Jackson's mother was able to visit Blue Quills with her daughter, after decades of avoiding the building, that Jackson found this out. "My mother had an older sister who was in residence with her. She was on her time, and she stained her petticoats and her underwear. As punishment, the nuns had her scrub clean her stuff and, after that was done, she was sweating. Then they



Though the building now houses University *nuhelot'įne thaiyots'į nistameyimâkanak* Blue Quills, some residential school survivors still cannot bear to enter the school.

Deaths at Residential Schools

The stories about children who died at residential schools are certainly the most difficult sections of the TRC findings. Here is some of what the commission discovered:

We Don't Know How Many Children Died

Many residential school records have been destroyed. Where there are records, principals often reported the number of children who died but didn't name them. Deaths were not always reported to federal and provincial authorities, meaning there is no way to know for sure how many children died. A 2015 statistical analysis by the TRC of existing records lists 3,201 reported deaths from 1867 to 2000. In nearly half the cases, no cause of death was listed.

Death Rates Were Much Higher Than for Other Children

From 1941 to 1945, children in residential schools were 4.9 times more likely to die than children attending other schools. Tuberculosis accounted for nearly half of recorded deaths. Even as late as the 1960s, the death rate was still double that of other children.

Many Bodies Never Made it Home

In many cases, schools denied parents' requests to send the bodies home because it was deemed too expensive. Many of the children who died in residential schools were buried in plots far from their homes and marked only by plain white crosses.

Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, pages 92-103

PHOTOS BY JOHN ULAN; ILLUSTRATION BY YUTA ONODA

threw her outside without a jacket for a few hours, and it was minus 30. She got double pneumonia and passed away. She would've been 13 or 14, my mom 10 or 11."

Jackson's mother was released from residential school not long after that because her own mother died. She was needed at home to raise her younger siblings and, at only 12 years old, help her aging grandparents. "I find my mom to be a true survivor," she told me.

Jackson paused before sharing yet another horrifying story — one that had been told to her — her voice faltering slightly. "Some sexual abuse happened on the third floor. My mother-in-law, she was five years old, her and her good friend used to hear this older girl who would cry at bedtime. A nun would come and get her and they would hear her screaming somewhere and then she would just come back and lay there. Anyway, they said they woke up one morning and the older girl just wasn't there. Her bed was empty. They asked where she was. The nuns got really irritated and said she went home ... these were five-year-old girls."

Physical and sexual abuses were well-documented in the TRC report; for some residential school survivors, the TRC's sharing panel was the first time their accounts were actually believed. The commission identified fewer than 50 convictions for abuse at residential schools — a shockingly low number when you realize that nearly 38,000 claims of physical and sexual abuse were submitted as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.

The commission also worked to uncover the truth about deaths in residential schools. Volume 4 of the TRC's report, Missing Children and Unmarked Burials, noted that fully half of the 3,200 children whose deaths were accounted for in the residential school system did not have a cause of death listed (tuberculosis accounted for roughly half of those who did have a cause listed). One-third of the deceased were not named. One-quarter were not identified by gender.

I couldn't help but think again of Atayoh's carefree laughter as the rest of us recovered from the sweat lodge and how, in a different era and just a few years older, he would have been forced into living conditions just like these.

We eventually made our way back downstairs to the rear exit and walked out toward a second building, the newer administrative and teaching centre of the university. I thanked Jackson for the tour. She shook my hand and we parted.

Blue Quills is now a university but being back outside felt as if I had escaped its past. The sun was shining, the sky was cloudless and the air was crisp. How would such a day have looked to a lonely little child 50 years ago, arriving here for the first time?

Teaching the next generation about ceremony, such as this smudge, is key to helping communities reconnect with tradition.

"PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW THE DISPARITY OF WHAT'S HAPPENING TO MY PEOPLE."

Pat Makokis, director of Indigenous programs, Faculty of Extension

"JUST KEEP WALKING," said Pat Makokis, half under her breath. "Walk at exactly the same pace. Don't slow down. And don't speed up. And whatever you do, don't start running."

The dog, a muscular animal, had trotted up and now followed us so closely it was almost on our heels. I could hear it panting. I turned around to look and could see the readiness in its heavy shoulder muscles. "Don't look back and don't stop," said Makokis.

We kept moving at the same pace, though trying to walk calmly is not at all calming. The animal followed us for about a hundred metres down the muddy, semi-gravelled road. Once we'd passed out of sight of its house, the dog stopped and stood in the middle of the road, watching us, almost daring us to come back that way.

We'd been walking around the townsite on the Saddle Lake Reserve for about half an hour. I had met Makokis at the hockey arena, from where we set out. She wanted to show me what was happening to the place where she lives, a place that had never been prosperous but that at least had once been safe.

In September 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Among other rights — self-determination, language, equality and land — Article 21 calls on governments to "take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions." In other words, Indigenous peoples have the right to live a safe and comfortable life with access to economic opportunities.

Yet to walk the roads of Saddle Lake is to understand that many of Canada's Indigenous peoples do not have these opportunities. The roads are in worse condition than many an off-road hunting trail. The housing is squalid. One of the roads is blocked by concrete barriers to deny drug dealers quick entry and exit in residential zones, though it doesn't seem to have worked — there are worn tire tracks through the long grass in the ditch beside the barriers. And then there are the dogs. "The people who live here have dogs for two reasons. Either they're drug dealers or they're scared of the drug dealers and their dogs," Makokis explained. We stopped so she could point out some signs in front of the local grade school. "You see that?" she said. "That sign has no graffiti. That's because they were made by students, and they're signs about hope and perseverance and staying clean and respecting family. The gang boys don't deface those because a lot of them are still kids."

Makokis knows that some people see all of this as proof of stereotypes — but those people don't understand the complex legacy of the residential schools, how generation after generation of Indigenous children were taken from their homes and taught to feel ashamed of their families and their culture.

"I've been teaching about historic trauma for years, and I look at our community and it's so heartbreaking to see people in disparity and poverty and family violence and all these things. And I look around and I can see generations, three at least in some of these families, where they're traumatized so badly that it's rolling out in the problems in their families. And it's just heartbreaking. It's so heartbreaking because I understand. It's all about unresolved grief."

"Intergenerational trauma" is the term psychologists use to describe why the effects of residential schools continue to manifest in Indigenous communities. First-generation survivors develop coping methods, lifestyles and even parenting styles rooted in the traumatic experiences of the past. The next generation adopts these lifestyles and parenting styles and then inevitably passes them along to the generation after that. Makokis knows finding a way to break that cycle is key to moving forward.

"I look at my own family and I think, 'Oh my God, if people only understood that hanging onto culture is part of the answer.' Because to me, when I look at my family, how the hell did I end up with [children who are] a doctor and a lawyer? You know? We were poor like everybody else but we hung onto that culture. We could see the strength and the beauty and the teachings in that, in how we have to live our lives."

That tradition and ceremony have been a part of young Atayoh's life since

'Why Can't You Just Get Over It?'

"Many people have said over the years that I've been involved in the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 'Why can't you just get over it and move on?' And my answer has always been: 'Why can't you always remember this?'

"Because this is about memorializing those people who have been victims of a great wrong. Why don't you tell the United States to 'get over' 9/11? Why don't you tell this country to 'get over' all of the veterans who died in the Second World War, instead of honouring them once a year?

"Why don't you tell your families to stop thinking about all of your ancestors who died? Why don't you turn down and burn down all of those headstones that you put up for all of your friends and relatives over the years? It's because it's important for us to remember. We learn from it.

"And until people show that they have learned from this, we will never forget. And we should never forget, even once they have learned from it, because this is a part of who we are. It's not just a part of who we are as survivors and children of survivors and relatives of survivors, but it's part of who we are as a nation. And this nation must never forget what it once did to its most vulnerable people."

Sen. Murray Sinclair, chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

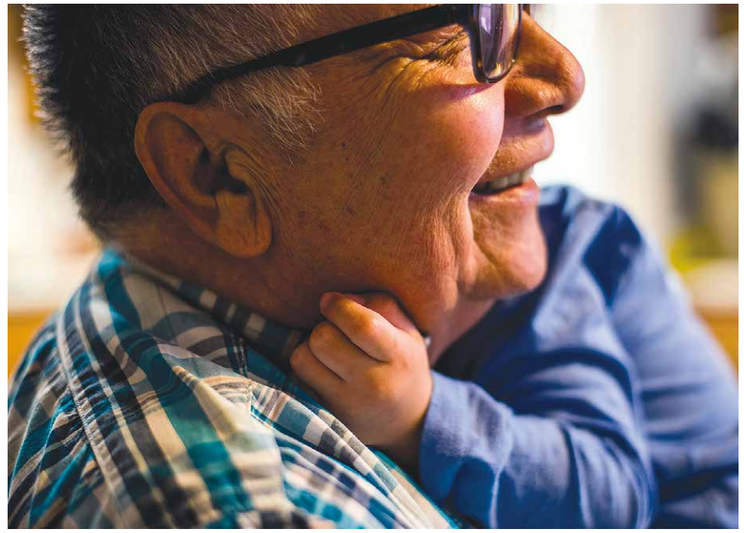
PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

Why Are Ceremony and Spirituality So Important?

"Sacred ceremony has always been at the heart of Indigenous cultures, law and political life. … Traditional knowledge keepers and elders have long dealt with conflicts and harms using spiritual ceremonies and peacemaking practices, and by retelling oral history stories that reveal how their ancestors restored harmony to families and communities. These traditions and practices are the foundation of Indigenous law; they contain wisdom and practical guidance for moving towards reconciliation.

"Many survivors told the [TRC] that reconnecting with traditional Indigenous spiritual teachings and practices has been essential to their healing. … Losing the connections to their languages and cultures in the residential schools had devastating impacts on survivors, their families and communities. Land, language, culture and identity are inseparable from spirituality; all are necessary elements of a whole way of being, of living on the land as Indigenous peoples."

Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, pages 16, 276 and 320



Eugene Makokis sang his grandson, Atayoh, into the world.

the beginning. Makokis likes to say that her husband, Eugene, sang their grandson into this world. Like pretty much every other toddler, he loves to play dinosaurs but he also loves the drum. He just picked it up one day, displaying an uncanny sense of rhythm alongside his childish enthusiasm. He is a healthy, happy child and he is being raised in tradition. Makokis doesn't believe this is a coincidence.

As we continued our walk, she stopped and waved a hand over the houses we could see in front of us. "You know, it's not just about teaching white people about what happened. It's about teaching our own people about what happened, so that they understand why they are the way they are, and how they can change."

When we got back to our cars, we paused with doors open. "People need to know the disparity of what's happening to my people," she said. "You can go to Cold Lake and see what they're doing there then you can go an hour and a half down the highway to here, to another reserve, where you can witness the direct effects of poverty and trauma, where we barely have drinkable running water. When you have economic opportunities, the community collectively can figure out its growth plan. If there were the same opportunities on every nation, you would probably see those communities thrive."

A cold wind was blowing across the parking lot. We said goodbye and I drove back through town on the kind of road the average Albertan would write outraged letters to elected officials about. I decided to take the back way through the reserve to the main highway, but wasn't sure how to get there. The road signs on the edge of town weren't much help; the information was obscured by graffiti.

A 90-MINUTE DRIVE northeast of Saddle Lake lies the Cold Lake First Nation. The reserve sits near the town of Cold Lake on the Alberta-Saskatchewan border. It also straddles huge swaths of the Cold Lake Air Force base, is home to numerous oilsands operations and has reached a land settlement agreement. All of this adds up to opportunity and, in 1999, leadership created Primco Dene, a company wholly owned by Cold Lake First Nation, with the express strategy of working with industry. On the same site is a casino and new Marriott hotel, both run by the band.

As we sat in the boardroom of their modern offices, natural light spilled in through floor-to-ceiling windows, all the better to admire the burnished wood table. A bottle of chilled spring water had been placed in front of me, and various members of the Primco executive team — some white, some Indigenous — sat around the table.

Commencing with 50 employees in the catering and janitorial businesses in 1999, Primco Dene now employs more than 800 people, mostly Indigenous, from 50 different communities in Western Canada. It operates 15 separate companies, which include security and emergency medical services as well as janitorial and catering services. Primco Dene has turned the Cold Lake First Nation into a financially sound body, an Indigenous success story operating on its own terms.

I asked what the biggest challenge was to working as an Indigenous company in a predominantly white industry, the oilpatch. "To me, the biggest challenge is education," said Larry Henderson, Primco's vice-president, commercial. "We need to get good information out to everyone but particularly people at the heads of companies — proper information, so that we change the perspective of things. There are so many prejudices out there, so many misperceptions."

"And really," said Mike Brown, Primco's security manager, "you can throw money at things, but I think the place you've really got to start with the education is at the kindergarten level. But you can't just start it and then leave it. You have to follow up. We have to teach Canadians that Indigenous people have fulfilled their part of the bargain, but we in no way have fulfilled ours." Not to mention, said Tammy Charland-McLaughlin, Primco's vice-president of operations, that there are many misconceptions around fiscal issues.

It's hardly surprising there are misconceptions. As I found, First Nations funding is complex and convoluted. Essentially, the federal government holds First Nations money in a trust. This money originates from a variety of sources, including the sale of what was originally First Nations land, and resources from reserve, treaty and traditional Indigenous land. As far back as 1911, Duncan Campbell Scott spoke to Parliament about "the Indian Trust Fund," which at the time held $56,592,988.99.

The details of what happened to this fund and whether it evolved into something else (the federal government refers in its financial documents to the "trust accounts" that it administers), how much has or has not been paid into these funds or trust accounts in the century since Campbell Scott's report, and even the process by which the federal government today disburses transfer payments, are all difficult to confirm. What is clear is that moneys currently transferred to First Nations communities are generated, in large part, from funds

ILLUSTRATION BY YUTA ONODA; PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

What Does the TRC Mean by 'Cultural Genocide'?

"*Physical genocide* is the mass killing of the members of a targeted group, and *biological genocide* is the destruction of the group's reproductive capacity. Cultural genocide is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. And, most significantly to the issue at hand, families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next. In its dealing with Aboriginal people, Canada did all these things."

Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, page 1

Steinhauer's office, the south education tower was unusually quiet. The halls were unoccupied, but it didn't feel peaceful.

THE FACULTY OF EXTENSION offers certificates in Indigenous Community-Industry Relations, and students must complete five non-credit courses on what you might call entry-level Indigenous issues primers. In late November 2016, I attended the four-day Indigenous Laws, Lands and Current Industry Government Relations course. About 20 per cent of the 30 attendees were Indigenous, the remainder white, most working for various government departments, local businesses, small accounting or law firms. A couple of the Indigenous attendees worked for their band councils. In the opening sharing circle, as person after person said a few words about why they were there, it became clear that "knowing more, understanding more" was at the heart of their attendance.

As a legal scholar, **Janice Makokis**, '05 BA(NativeStu), (Pat's daughter and Atayoh's mother) walked the group through the history of Canada's legal relationship with Indigenous people. Kurtis McAdam, a Cree knowledge keeper, also led sessions. After an early career working to develop Indigenous programs in the correctional system, he now spends his energy trying to locate elders to draw out and preserve the knowledge residing in them. As McAdam detailed the history of how Indigenous oral law developed over centuries, and how it gets interpreted today, the group was moved by a story he told: centuries ago the Blackfoot and Cree, tired of civil war, agreed that they had to cement peace between tribes and did so by sending their young children to live with each other, so that each tribe knew it could never attack the other because they would be killing their own children.

Over the course of the four days, there were a number of emotional moments, particularly when one or two of the Indigenous participants told the group that they had come to the course to learn about their own heritage, and that they themselves had been shocked to learn the details of what had happened to their people—not just in residential schools but over the course of the entire relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canada. More than once, a white participant would say something like, "But how could that happen?!" To which Makokis or McAdam would say, "Good question."

The most pointed moment of the class, however, came on the second day. McAdam was talking about the difficulty of trying to preserve knowledge when it is stored in oral tradition. "And it doesn't help, obviously, when your people are subjected to cultural genocide."

At that point one participant, Michael (not his real name), put up his hand. A curious and genial man who looked to be in his late 30s, he had told the group on Day 1 that he was an accountant working with a firm in St. Albert. He had enrolled in the course because he wanted to know the truth about things.

McAdam stopped when he saw Michael's hand up. "Yes?"

"I have a question," said Michael, choosing his words carefully. "You use the term 'cultural genocide.' That's a pretty big term, you know, genocide, the Jews, the Nazis. What exactly do you mean by it when you use that term in this context?"

A slight tension came over the room.

McAdam thought about it for a minute. "OK," he said. "Let me explain it like this." He took his collection of small handheld drums and a couple of pipes. He put them in the middle of our circle. "Imagine that all these things are your culture and your people. Take away your sense of family …" He picked up one of the drums, handed it to a participant and asked him to go stand alone in a corner. "Then you take away language …" He handed another drum to another participant and asked her to stand in a different corner. "Then you take away cultural practices …" Again, the same, this time with Michael, who went to the farthest corner away. "So, you do all that. And then you take all the little children, every single [child] in every family, and you take them away from their parents, and you strip them of everything they know and have. And you do that for the next decade with every child. And then you do it for a century and a half." He looked around the room and pointed to the people standing in the corners—culture, family, language—and then back to us. "And so, all of you, you're who is left. You have no children, you can't practise your culture, you forget how to parent, your language is against the law, you're not allowed to dance or sing or tell stories, you're forced off your land but not allowed to farm. Your money is stolen from you. Everything that you were, everything that your people were, is gone. And it's all been taken away from you under a system of law that you don't understand and didn't agree to and that has been designed to remove you. And now that's your life."

Vincent Steinhauer is president of Blue Quills, the first Indigenous-controlled university in Canada.

He stopped. The room was quiet. He asked people back to their seats.

"Does that help answer your question?" he said to Michael.

Michael was hunched forward in his chair. "… I guess so." He sounded unconvinced, but also a touch insulted, as if part of him was thinking, *But wait a minute, it wasn't* me *who did that to you.* After lunch, Michael did not return, and I assumed he was simply doing what most of Canada has been doing for decades: shutting out the truth because it's too painful to confront.

But then there he was the next morning, back in his chair sipping a coffee. We started the day with a sharing circle. There were many tears shed. There was outrage. But more than anything else, there was determination. A commitment to not go back to the same place we'd just come from. "I am going to go back to work tomorrow," said one woman who worked with the City of Edmonton, "and every person in my office is going to know what really happened. They're going to know because I'm going to tell them."

When Michael's turn came, he had things to say.

"For the past 15 years, every professional development course I ever took was about accounting. But this has been a little different." He paused and the group chuckled. "The more you learn the more frustrated you become. I just don't know how white people can't get it, can't get what this is about. Being here has been … well, it's been life-changing."

Makokis and McAdam thanked Michael. And then we kept moving around the circle.

MICHAEL'S EPIPHANY was something I understood and could relate to. When I had finished my tour of Blue Quills with Corinne Jackson, I had gone back to the office of the university's president, **Vincent Steinhauer**, '01 BPE, '04 MA. I went in and slumped in a chair. The view out his window was of the back of the old school.

"Enjoy the tour?" Vincent said, his eyes crinkling a bit with his own joke.

I told him that I was struggling. "I don't even know how to say it," I said. "I just feel … I feel so ashamed, so sorry." The emotion was thickening in my throat and my next words were hard to squeeze out. "I feel inadequate, not even qualified or that I have any right to even tell you what I'm feeling or what any of us should do …"

"That's the best place to start," he said quietly. "With the inner debate. To let people know how conflicted and inadequate you are. That you're searching for answers just like they are."

I nodded, glanced back out at the old building. "I understand how some people, survivors, just can't go in there."

"Yeah, there's some friction between the generations, actually, because some people are scarred by it and want to tear it down. Some of those people are so damaged that they walk the streets under the influence, and not just this town, but in many cities and towns in Canada. And people blame them for what Canada has done to them.

"But others see this place as a symbol of survival and education."

ILLUSTRATION BY YUTA ONODA; PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

It made me think of what Jackson had told me as we parted. "To me, this is actually a positive place, a place of success," she'd said. "I got two degrees here. I came for upgrading. I was a dropout. And I managed to pull up my socks and get things done. And now enrolment is growing. We're becoming more well-known. And all those things that were taken away — the ceremony, the identity — that's what students learn here, to grow, to come into the cultural identity that was lost during the residential school time."

The transformation of Blue Quills from a repository of shame and horror into a conduit for knowledge and hope is not just uplifting but symbolic. It's what needs to happen in the hearts and minds of Canadians. A few weeks later, I asked Janice Makokis over coffee what such a person would look and act like, a white person who has turned that corner.

"Well, I guess for starters, they'd understand their privilege. They would understand the privilege they carry as a non-Indigenous person. They would understand the history and issues of Indigenous peoples. They would know when to use their privilege in places and spaces to advocate for Indigenous peoples if there is not an Indigenous person there. And they would know how to work with Indigenous peoples in a respectful way where they don't try and control the agenda. And they would listen, respectfully, and genuinely want to learn our perspective and values."

"What's so hard about that?" I said, laughing.

She laughed, too. "You know, in this process of coming to understand the history and going through this decolonization process, I realized that the public education system plays a huge role in shaping the narrative of what this country is and the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. I remember a quote — someone was giving a talk about Indigenous ways of knowing, and how to incorporate that into a teaching curriculum. And the presenter put up a slide that said 'White privilege is having white history be required and Indigenous history be an option.' The public education system is responsible for a lot of the issues, so that trickles up to the universities, and then their role is to train teachers to understand it all from a different lens. Because then *they* go back in the education system and teach the students."

Atayoh Makokis plays among the dancers at the annual U of A round dance. The ceremony, traditionally held in the winter, is meant as a time for healing and remembrance for the community as a whole.

"THE PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM PLAYS A HUGE ROLE IN SHAPING THE NARRATIVE OF WHAT THIS COUNTRY IS."

Janice Makokis,
legal scholar

It's too much symbolic weight to place upon the head of one child, yet I couldn't help but think of Atayoh and the world he'll occupy by the time he gets to his post-secondary education. Will he follow his mother and grandmother to the U of A? Will he be going to a university that celebrates Indigenous culture? Will he find municipal, provincial and federal governments in which positions of actual power are held by Indigenous people? Will he be able to walk the roads of Saddle Lake and not be tracked by the pit bulls of drug dealers? Will he attend a political science class thinking that he might one day be Alberta's premier? Or will he be sitting in a classroom wondering why he's fighting the same fights as his mother and grandmother?

I thought back to those moments immediately after emerging from the sweat, when I'd first met Atayoh. I'd watched him as he scampered around the grassy circle, waving his little arms, his black hair flopping around in the breeze. He was whooping with delight as his grandpa pulled his stick away from him and gave it back, teasing him. Atayoh zipped here and there, waving his stick as if it were a magic wand. The simple joy of it all was visible on his face, the joy of imagining that one swoosh of a stick could change everything.

If only it were that simple. ■

PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

EDUCATION IS ESSENTIAL ON THE path to reconciliation, the TRC emphasizes. But implementing the wide-ranging calls to action is a slow and complex process, as many at the University of Alberta are beginning to realize.

By Karen Sherlock

MOVING FORWARD WITH THE CALLS TO ACTION

THE HOPE FOR HEALING is high, but so is the fear of hoping.

Since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its calls to action in June 2015, governments, institutions and individual Canadians — most of all, Indigenous peoples — have been coming to terms with what it means. And if, in the end, it will mean anything.

"The optimistic side of me sees how it can all work out. But the realities of how complex this is and the histories of trauma pull me back," says **Kelsey Dokis-Jansen**, '11 BSc(EnvSci), '15 MSc. As an environmental studies grad of Anishinaabe heritage whose master's research combined Indigenous and western knowledge, she's aware of the challenges of bridging the two cultures. She brings that awareness to the role she took on last April as manager of Indigenous initiatives in the University of Alberta provost's office.

"There's this knowledge that it takes time to build relationships. It's going to be slow and we have to be patient. But then there's also this sense of urgency, that we have this window of opportunity. ... That if we can't deliver, if we can't show that this can work, it's never going to happen."

For post-secondary institutions, the implications of the TRC's 94 calls to action are far-reaching, almost overwhelming. More than three-quarters touch on education, directly or indirectly. At the U of A, people are wrestling with the calls to action and what they mean — in their personal lives, in their professional lives and as an institution. It's a complicated, slow process. And an emotional one.

It's essential that the university tread carefully and respectfully, Dokis-Jansen says. "Indigenous communities are skeptical of ... non-Indigenous institutions proclaiming, 'We've solved the problem and we know how to move forward.' It's a very tricky balance: we know we have all this internal work to do [at the university] and we have systems that need to change, but we also need to do it in consultation with Indigenous communities."

The university's new strategic plan, shaped by consultations with faculty and staff, commits to developing "a thoughtful, meaningful and sustainable response" to the TRC report. "What we're trying to imagine in a pragmatic way is what do we need to put in place over the next three to five years that will have a lasting impact? How do we shift the way the institution operates?" asks Dokis-Jansen.

One challenge has been taking inventory of the many initiatives that already exist, ranging from long-term health research to Indigenous language preservation to course development. At the same time, the U of A is building the resources it needs to begin addressing the long-term calls to action, including hiring additional Indigenous employees and creating an Indigenous support team in the provost's office (see sidebar).

Marilyn Buffalo, from Samson Cree Nation, has a unique perspective on what's happening at the U of A. She served as adviser on Indigenous affairs to then-president Harry Gunning from 1975 to 1979 and was founding chair of the General Faculties Council Committee on Native Studies. As of November, she is back serving as cultural adviser in the university's new Indigenous advisory office. She and the elders and others she worked with in the '70s helped lay the groundwork for many of the Indigenous initiatives that exist today.

When she worked on campus in the '70s, there were 15 Indigenous students. This year, there are 1,100 self-declared Indigenous students. "Thousands of kids have graduated from here, and yes, we should celebrate that, but we have to remember that's not enough. There are 48 First Nations in Alberta, and every one of them should have an Indigenous doctor, nurse, economist, accountant, educator, writer, historian."

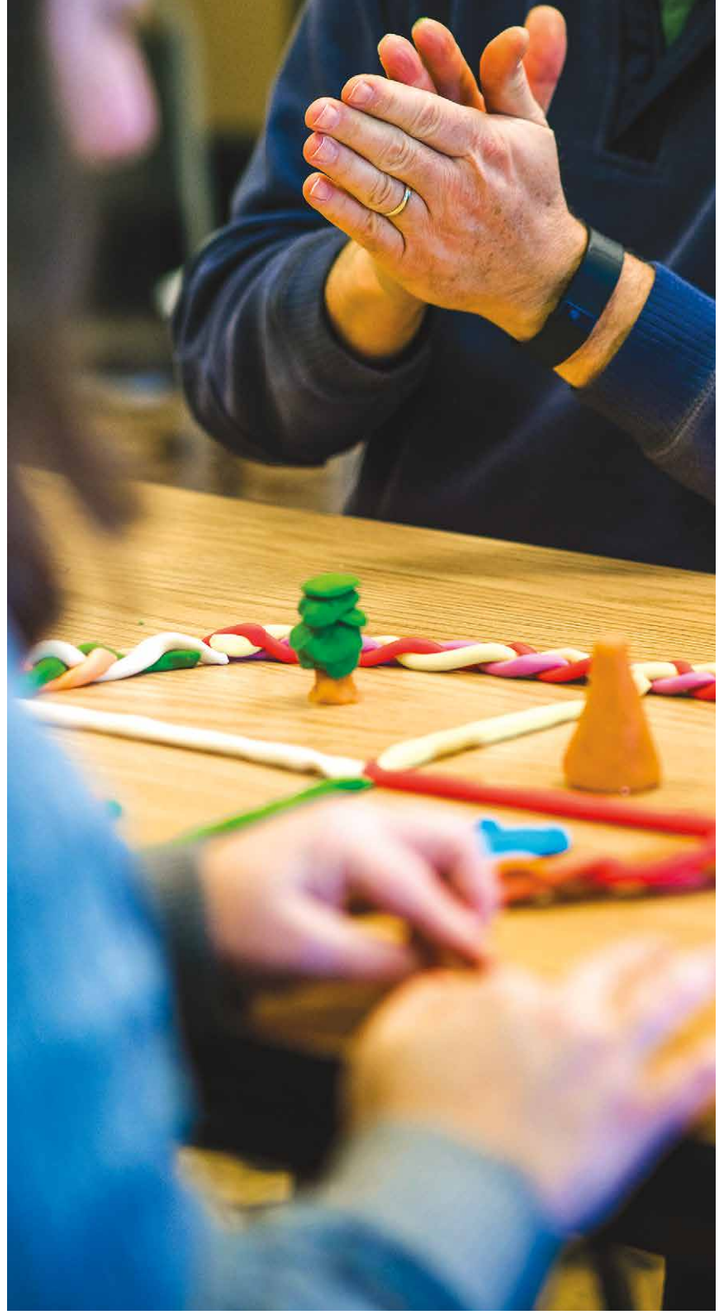
In an institution as large and diverse as the U of A, responding to the TRC is complex and disagreement is inevitable. Requiring students to take courses in Indigenous history, for example, as a number of faculties are doing, has led to some push-back. Another source of friction for every research institution is the question of how ceremony, Indigenous knowledge and oral tradition meld with academic rigour.

Chris Andersen, '05 PhD, interim dean of the Faculty of Native Studies, has been at the U of A for almost 20 years as a student, professor and senior administrator. In his eyes, a shift toward reconciliation would look like this: more Indigenous faculty, staff and senior leadership; more connections with Indigenous communities; greater Indigenous content throughout faculties and departments; and campuses on which, from an art and architecture perspective, "we can see ourselves."

Andersen is encouraged by the sheer volume of things going on across U of A campuses, he says, and that the university has committed symbolic and financial resources. "There's a long way to go in terms of the tough stuff ... but I'm really excited about what's happening."

The TRC's greatest value, he believes, has been in sparking public conversation both on and off campuses. "It's getting Canadians to think about what a reset relationship would look like. How do we move from where we are now, where Indigenous peoples are mostly seen as problems to be solved, to where Indigenous peoples are seen as partners to be engaged with?

"For me it's really important that you think about Indigenous peoples as partners that you want to engage with because you think we have good things to contribute to the conversation." ■



The TRC calls to action have implications for the U of A in its roles as educator, research institute and employer. Among them is the need to develop curriculum, workshops (above) and resources that address Indigenous history and contemporary issues.

PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

"EDUCATION IS WHAT GOT US INTO THIS MESS ... [BUT] EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO RECONCILIATION."

Murray Sinclair in an interview with CBC's Peter Mansbridge

Responding to the TRC at the University of Alberta

- An Indigenous advisory office has been created within the provost's office to support faculty and staff in working to fulfill the calls to action.
- The provost's office has funded the hiring of 22 additional Indigenous faculty and staff across eight faculties and units, increasing the number from 17 to 39 since June 2015.
- An Indigenous strategy is being created to act as a guiding document across the university.
- A university council of elders is being developed with representation from different Indigenous communities.
- A new Indigenous faculty and staff group is being created to support employees, particularly newcomers, and to advise the president and provost.
- Two working groups, created in direct response to feedback from Indigenous communities, are examining current U of A practices: one in research and community engagement and one in content development.
- The Centre for Teaching and Learning has hired an Indigenous content development adviser to help develop new course content specific to the needs of different faculties.
- An online Indigenous hub has been created to consolidate information about university resources, initiatives and events.
- Faculties, campuses and departments have hosted conferences and workshops, implemented courses and worked on numerous initiatives related to the TRC.
- Workshops and resources have been developed to educate U of A employees about Indigenous history and guide them in incorporating Indigenous knowledge and protocol.

The TRC findings are not easy to talk about, but talking about them is key to healing and reconciliation. Three groups of people get the conversations started.

Photos by John Ulan

Three educators discuss how Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can work as allies

HOW WE CAN WORK TOGETHER

From left: Fay Fletcher, Pat Makokis and Etienna Moostoos-Lafferty

Three students and one alumna talk about their university experiences

INDIGENOUS ON CAMPUS

From left: Shana Dion, Grant Bruno, Robin Howse and Tiffany Orenda Johnson

After seven years spent listening to residential school survivors, two TRC commissioners remain hopeful about the future

A CALL TO BEAR WITNESS

From left: Wilton Littlechild, Shelagh Rogers and Marie Wilson

question period

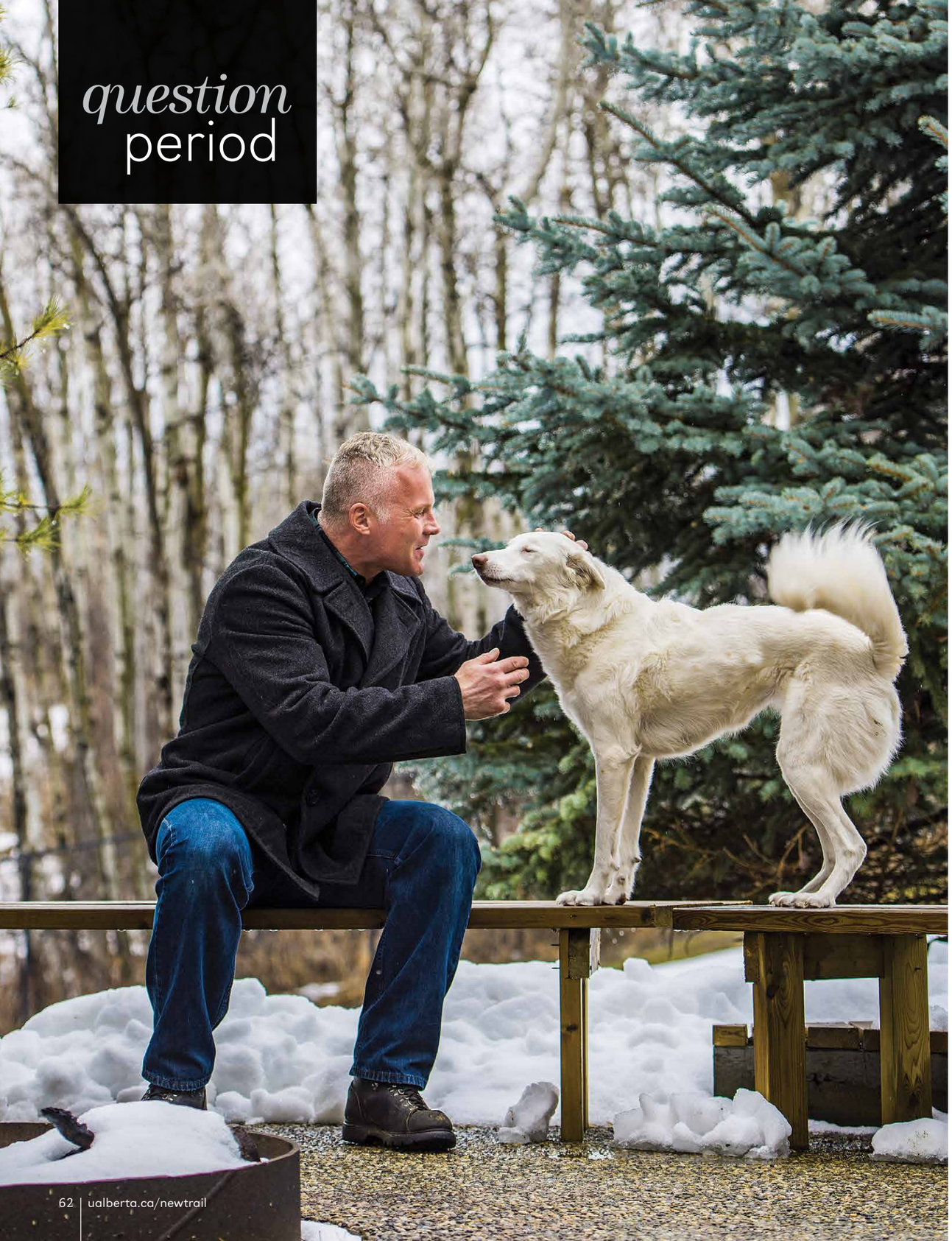


PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

Spencer Sekyer rescued Suzie Q from Afghanistan in 2010—one of seven dogs he has placed in homes across Canada.

by **FELICIA ZUNIGA**

Spencer Sekyer, ’91 BPE, ’92 BEd

A teacher explains how his world travels in search of classroom inspiration turned adventure into activism

Spencer Sekyer looks for teachable moments. Wanting to set an example for his students in Sherwood Park, Alta., the high school social studies teacher and former University of Alberta Golden Bears linebacker began travelling the world, particularly to developing and war-torn countries, to teach and volunteer during his vacations. He wanted to learn more about the world and to make a difference. Sekyer’s passion for helping children and animals grew with each trip. In 2010, he rescued seven dogs from the streets of Kabul, Afghanistan. Most recently, Sekyer rehomed a baby chimp named Manno from a zoo in northern Iraq.

You have a real passion for animals. What do they mean to you? My first two dogs, Mac and Chloe, warmed my heart to the animal kingdom. I think of the quote by Gandhi: “The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.” People around the world are in difficult situations, so animals aren’t always treated the best. But when I travelled, I had a soft spot and would care for animals I came across.

Like Manno the chimp. How did you meet him? In December 2013, I travelled to Kurdistan to volunteer at an animal rescue organization. The first time I met Manno, he was running loose at the [Duhok Zoo’s] candy store, ripping apart bags of sunflower seeds. [The zookeeper] let me hold him and I felt an incredible bond. Then I found out he was being kept in a small birdcage most of the time. I felt a little niggle, like a pebble in my shoe. Something just didn’t sit right with me. I emailed legal authorities, wildlife foundations and non-governmental organizations. Ultimately, one of those connections was the catalyst to Manno’s rescue.

You met primatologist Jane Goodall at an event in Edmonton. How did that change things? I showed her a picture of Manno, gave my spiel and her eyes lit up. She connected me to her team and they got me in touch with Sweetwaters Sanctuary in Kenya. In November 2016, Manno moved to the sanctuary. It’s the perfect place: he is fed every day, has access to vet care and acres of forest to roam in. He was released from quarantine in March and began the integration process into the chimpanzee group.

How did you go from teacher to activist? It’s funny how the world works. I was teaching phys-ed and coaching, but that had run its course. I wanted to teach social studies but speak from experience, like I could with athletics. I researched countries where I could teach during my summers off. The first place I heard from was a school in Freetown, Sierra Leone. I travelled there in the summer of 2008; it was an eye-opener and [that trip] started everything. I used all my holidays for the next five years teaching in developing countries.

How have your students reacted to stories of your adventures? One of my former students contacted me on Facebook to tell me he was travelling to the Central African Republic to volunteer at an orphanage. You never know how what you say, think or do can affect people and maybe plant a seed or inspire a student who will go on to do great things.

What advice do you have for people who want to make a difference? If you see something you don’t think is right, step up. Don’t think, ‘Somebody should do something.’ You’re somebody. It may seem like you can’t get something done, but if you set your mind to it and stick with it, it will happen. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed.

U of A alumni share their new books, including an Arctic adventure, an exploration of scientific conduct in the 1950s and an essay collection contextualizing Alberta's contentious Bill 6.

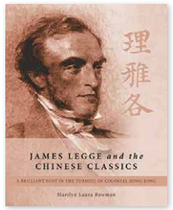
Compiled by **STEPHANIE BAILEY,** '10 BA(Hons)

BUSINESS/MANAGEMENT

PeopleShock: The Path to Profits When Customers Rule

by **Tema Frank**, '68 BA, '75 MSc, Essential Views Publishing, available on Amazon

PeopleShock combines original case studies, data and useful advice to help organizations succeed in a hyper-competitive, digitized economy.



BIOGRAPHY

James Legge and the Chinese Classics: A Brilliant Scot in the Turmoil of Colonial Hong Kong

by **Marilyn Laura Bowman**, '61 BA, FriesenPress, *friesenpress.com*

This biography recounts the life of James Legge (1815-97), a Scottish scholar and missionary, famous for translating the Chinese classics during a period of conflict between Britain and China.

HISTORY

People Migrations in Europe and America: Nation Building Prehistory to 1913

by **Myrtle Macdonald**, '44 Dip(Nu), '45 BScN, CreateSpace, available on Amazon

People Migrations shows how the movement of tribes and changing borders of nations contributed to the evolution of culture, languages, science, health care, music, art and architecture.

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

In My World

by **Jillian Ma**, '08 BA, '11 BEd, Future Horizons, *fhautism.com*

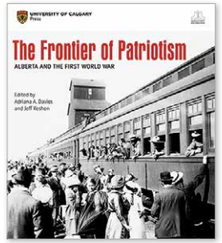
In My World follows an autistic child's imaginative journey to be accepted, loved and celebrated for his strengths and abilities.

TEXTBOOK

The Complete Canadian Book Editor

by **Leslie Vermeer**, '90 BA(Hons), '97 MA, '03 MEd, '12 PhD, Brush Education Inc., *brusheducation.ca*

This resource provides step-by-step guidelines for book editors, including how to build and manage author relationships, acquire and develop manuscripts, and edit and proof for print and ebooks.

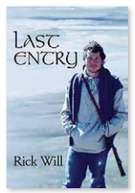


HISTORY

The Frontier of Patriotism: Alberta and the First World War

Edited by **Adriana A. Davies**, '65 BA, '67 MA, and Jeff Keshen, University of Calgary Press, *press.ucalgary.ca*

Drawing on primary accounts, these essays take an in-depth look at Alberta's involvement in the First World War, reflecting experiences both on the battlefield and on the home front.



FICTION

Last Entry

by **Rick Will**, '85 PhD, self-published, available on Amazon

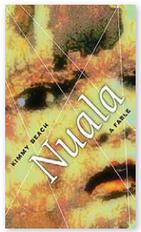
The Arctic quickly proves to be an unforgiving place for an archeology professor and his students, as they are confronted with animal attacks, sickness, dwindling food supplies and hypothermia.

HISTORY

Selling Science: Polio and the Promise of Gamma Globulin

by **Stephen E. Mawdsley**, '06 BA(Hons), '08 MA, Rutgers University Press, *rutgersuniversitypress.org*

Recounting the story of the first large clinical trial to control polio in the 1950s, Mawdsley explores the ethics of scientific conduct and the shaping of public opinion on medical experimentation.



FICTION

Nuala

by **Kimmy Beach**, '98 BA(Hons), University of Alberta Press, *uap.ualberta.ca*

A giant adolescent puppet becomes self-aware in a dystopian world of love and treachery in this original and inventive work reminiscent of Margaret Atwood, José Saramago and Kazuo Ishiguro.

Tell us about your recent publication. Mail your write-up and book to New Trail Books, Office of Advancement, Third Floor, Enterprise Square, 3-501, 10230 Jasper Ave. NW, Edmonton, AB, T5J 4P6. Or email a write-up with a high-resolution cover image to alumni@ualberta.ca. *Inclusion on this list does not denote endorsement by* New Trail.

PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

Behind the Bodice

A romance author takes us beyond happily-ever-afters

by **SARAH PRATT**

Romance might be the most hated genre of fiction. If you do a highly unscientific Google search of "why I hate romance novels," you will find a long list of blog posts disparaging the world of romantic escapism. Some say romance novels are formulaic fluff, while others are uncomfortable with what they say are perfect, image-obsessed characters. **Melanie MacGillivray**, '97 BSc, doesn't agree. Having written five romance novels under the pen name MJ Summers (which she originally adopted for privacy), MacGillivray says romantic fiction is more valuable than its stereotypes might suggest.

■ **Do you feel judged because you're a romance writer?** Some people think if you write romance, you're oversexed. Someone once said to me, in response to that, "Well, do people ever ask Stephen King how many people he kills?" Good point.

■ **Do you think some people misunderstand the genre?** Many [romance] readers are college-educated women who are professionals. At the annual Romance Writers of America conference, there are these highly educated, business-savvy, incredibly smart women who write books as their business. They are [at the conference] to improve their craft and make money.

■ **What about people who say romance novels are "just porn for women"?** I think the romance industry did itself a disservice with the bodice-rippers and alpha male-dominated novels that were popular in the 1980s. My books are about the characters: strong people who are better at talking and solving problems than most of us are in real life.

■ **We all find different kinds of escape and entertainment: reading fiction, watching TV, playing video games. Aren't romance novels just another kind of escape?** Absolutely. They give people a different world to disappear into. There are wonderful chemicals that your brain releases when you fall in love, and you have a mini version of that chemical release when you read romance. If someone can find that escape and it has benefits, they shouldn't feel silly about that ... although the covers [of romance novels] are often very cheesy.

■ **Is romantic fiction evolving? Such as featuring LGBTQ characters, for example?** For sure. I met Christopher Rice—author Anne Rice's son—and he writes gay romance. A lot of women read the male-male romance and they love it as a totally different escape.

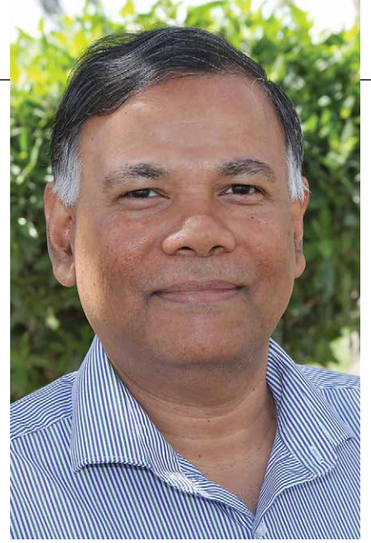
■ **Despite what critics of the genre say, what have you learned from writing romance?** I stopped worrying so much about what people think, and it's really liberating when you can shake that. Right now, my journey is to know there's value in what I do. One of my readers told me she read my books while sitting at her mother's hospital bedside and it helped her through that difficult time. I've had women say their love life was dead until they started reading my books. [Romantic fiction] helps people, and there is something important about it even though a lot of people think it's silly or wrong. And that's OK. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed.

CLASS NOTES

1990s

Hector Mayani-Viveros



Noor M. Anisur Rahman

'90 **Camille Hancock Friesen**, BMedSc, '92 MD, '97 MSc, was appointed full professor in the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University in May 2016. In September, she became the head of the Department of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery at the Dell Children's Medical Center in Austin, Texas, and was appointed full professor of cardiovascular and thoracic surgery at the University of Texas Southwestern.

'91 **Robert "Bob" Kinniburgh**, BSc(Dent), '93 DDS, '99 MSc, is the new president of the Canadian Association of Orthodontists. Bob maintains a private orthodontic practice in Calgary, has served on the executive of the Calgary and District Dental Society and the Alberta Society of Orthodontists, and currently sits on the Canadian Dental Specialties Association. Bob and his wife Shannon have three teenage children, who bring amazing busyness and joy to their lives.

'91 **Ron Labrie**, BEd, a teacher at Ponoka Secondary Campus in Ponoka, Alta., has been working with students on the Ponoka Cenotaph Project since 2009. Participating students research the personal biography of fallen soldiers listed on Ponoka's community cenotaph before travelling to the Canadian battlefields in Europe, where they orate the soldiers' life stories. Ron writes:

"Last year, two of my students researched Kenneth Gordon Fenske from Ponoka, who was killed while a member of the Royal Canadian Air Force during a secret mission in the Second World War. He was a U of A student in the Department of Engineering, and he also may have played for the Golden Bears hockey team. His name is engraved in bronze at Convocation Hall. In March 2016, we travelled to Choloy War Cemetery (near Nancy, France) to tell Kenneth's story at his gravesite. Interestingly, the two student researchers began their studies at the U of A in fall 2016."

'92 **Hector Mayani-Viveros**, PhD, recently published *Sangre Blanca (White Blood)*, which charts the history of leukemia. He writes:

"In 1994, I returned to my home country of Mexico to take a position as a research scientist at the Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social National Medical Center in Mexico City. My research interest has been stem cells and cancer, particularly leukemia. I was appointed head of the Oncology Research Unit at the same institution, I established the first public cord blood bank in Mexico, and I was the founding president of the Mexican Society for Stem Cell Research. I hope to come to Edmonton for a visit soon. I had wonderful teachers, made good friends and I survived five consecutive winters there—a significant achievement for someone coming from the country of tequila!"

Shari Clare

'96 **Juliet Williams**, BA, was named news editor in San Francisco for The Associated Press in November. After a decade of reporting for the AP from the state capitol, Juliet was the Sacramento correspondent who oversaw the 2016 California election coverage. She started with the AP in 2000 as a reporter in Milwaukee, Wis., after working at the *Calgary Herald*. Juliet earned a National Headliner Award in 2013 and has been recognized by the Associated Press Media Editors, CapitolBeat and the Society of Professional Journalists of Northern California.

'98 **Shari Clare**, BSc(Spec), '13 PhD, is director and co-founder of Fiera Biological Consulting, a firm specializing in ecological assessment, planning and policy. Her business partner, Joseph Litke, wrote to tell us about her: "While leading Fiera, Shari earned her PhD in conservation biology and was a key member of the Alberta Water Research Institute Wetland Health research team. She often speaks about environmental policy and planning at institutions and conferences around the world. She is also an adjunct professor at the U of A."

'98 **Noor M. Anisur Rahman**, PhD, has been awarded the 2016 Middle East Regional Reservoir Description and Dynamics Award from the Society of Petroleum Engineers. He is a petroleum engineering consultant at Saudi Aramco's Well Testing Division in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

Community Minded

Association president-elect looks to harness the time and talent of alumni

by **KATE BLACK**, '16 BA

PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

Family and faith instilled a sense of volunteerism in **Ayaz Bhanji**, '91 BSc(Pharm), early in life. He grew up serving meals to seniors, helping to prepare for prayer services and giving rides to families without cars. Today, the former pharmacist owns the largest Re/Max real estate office in Edmonton, and service to community continues to permeate his life—from past involvement with the Children's Miracle Network to sitting as president of the Aga Khan Council for Edmonton. It wasn't until he volunteered with the University of Alberta's Alumni Council, though, that he realized the potential of the alumni body. Now that he's poised to take over the association's presidency in June, we chatted with Bhanji about the benefits of giving back.

You graduated back in 1991; what made you want to stay connected to the U of A? I often tell my children that university will be the best time of their lives. I became the vice-president of the Ismaili Students Association in my third year of pharmacy school. Each year we would organize a camp for first-year students to help them get comfortable with their new environment and to network with peers—socializing, cooking together, singing songs around the fire. Now, as an alumnus, I realize that the warmth and passion I have for my university stems directly from the opportunity it gave me as a student to serve and meet the people who are now my best friends.

What led you to get involved with the Alumni Association? When I was still practising pharmacy, I was a clinical instructor at the U of A. I was also a guest speaker on entrepreneurship in the economics course taught to third- and fourth-year pharmacy students. Becoming a member on Alumni Council really opened my eyes to what the association does for alumni—from offering OneCard access to the campus libraries to events like Alumni Weekend. It also offers a lot of ways to give back to the university and community, such as volunteering or becoming a mentor to current students.

Volunteerism is a huge part of your life. What do you get from giving back? Without volunteering, my life would feel empty and without purpose, and to me it is a privilege and a blessing.

What excites you most about the future of the association? A lot of people want to make a difference to society once they graduate, and becoming involved with the association is a great vehicle for that. We have the opportunity to mobilize the time and knowledge of more than 275,000 alumni. I believe time and knowledge are the most valuable currency—if we can harness it, it's as precious as any other resource. ■—*with files from Niall McKenna*

This interview has been edited and condensed.

To learn more about the University of Alberta Alumni Association, visit *ualberta.ca/alumni*.

Cultural Connection

Student Charis Auger makes a tobacco offering to the Earth in prayer and thanks to the Creator. "I do this every so often to reconnect and remember those who came before me and those yet to come." Auger learned the importance of ceremony from the late Marge Friedel, who was an elder at the U of A's Aboriginal Student Services Centre.

PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN