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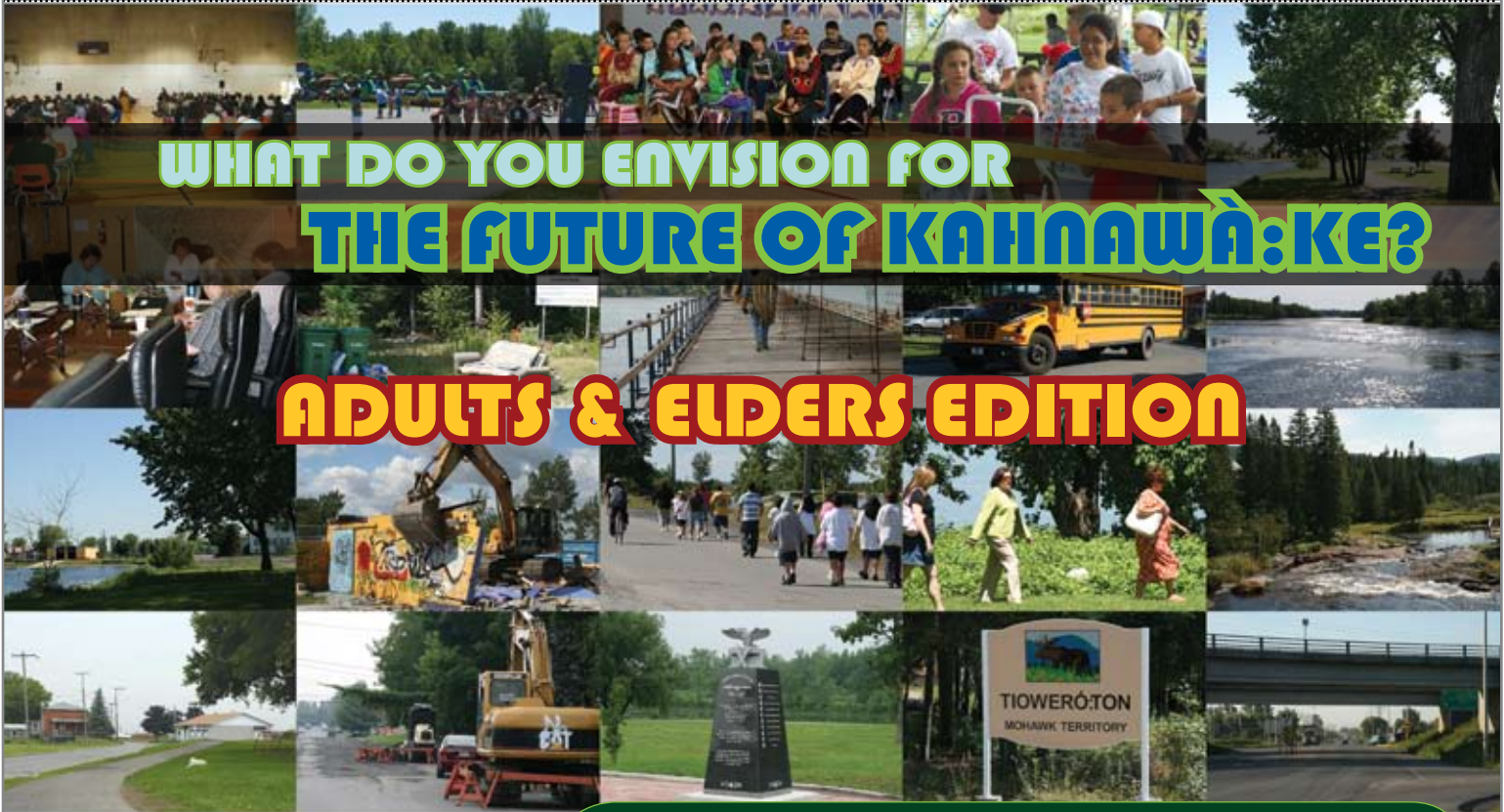


VISIONING SPECIAL III

NEWSLETTER OF THE MOHAWK COUNCIL OF KAHNAWÀ:KE

WHAT DO YOU ENVISION FOR THE FUTURE OF KAHNAWÀ:KE?

ADULTS & ELDERS EDITION



FEATURED ESSAYS

From Adults and Elders

The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke is pleased to present the final group of essays from the “Visions of Kahnawà:ke” project, by adult and elderly authors of Kahnawà:ke.

If you missed the first two editions, featuring essays from Grade 6 students from Kateri and Karonhianonhna School and high school students from the Kahnawake Survival School and Lakeside Academy, you can still pick up a copy from the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke, or online at Kahnawake.com.

These collections of essays seemed to have created quite a buzz in the community and this issue is sure to cause more.

Once again, we invite you to grab a seat and enjoy the read of this third and final edition of the Kahnawa'kehró:non 'Visions of Kahnawà:ke'.

VISION OF KAHNAWÀ:KE ALEX M. MCCOMBER



My vision is an expansion of the community vision that was developed by community members through the Kahnawake Schools Diabetes Prevention Project in 1995.

I see a future when our grandchildren and future generations live healthy lives. The rate of diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, asthma, and obesity among Kahnawa'kehró:non are all greatly reduced. This has come about as the people realized that they were responsible individually and collectively for their personal and communal health.

Kahnawa'kehró:non eat healthy and balanced meals with foods that come from family and community gardens, from the local food distributors and from the natural environment. Foods and beverages high in carbohydrates, salt, sugar and fats have been pushed out of the regular Kahnawà:ke diet. Traditional foods like corn, beans and squash have become plentiful. Meats and fish come from the natural lands and waters, and domesticated animals are locally raised, hormone and chemical free.

Physical activity has become the norm for Kahnawa'kehró:non. Automated machinery and electric and fuel operated vehicles and machinery have gone by the wayside as people walk and ride bicycles to get to most places. There are sports and recreational activities for people of all ages. Water and land sites in Kahnawà:ke are set aside for activities; a network of local cycling paths, pools, gymnasias, and indoor and outdoor hockey rinks. People have returned to the water for recreation – the shorelines are clean and people canoe, kayak and swim at local beaches. Kahnawà:ke is noticeably

quieter as all-terrain vehicles, motorcycles and other vehicles are rarely used. The air is cleaner.

The previous generations of Kahnawa'kehró:non have worked to heal from the multi-generational trauma of our collective and personal histories. There is a restoration of traditional Kanien'kehá:ka and Hotinonsooni values of Skén:nen, Ka'nikonhrí:io and Ka'shatsténhsera in their fullest sense. People engage in respectful discussion and debate on issues. Money and the inter-related values of materialism and selfishness are gone. If there is still money, it is something that has become "handy", not the necessity of life of the start of the 21st century. People readily volunteer to help one another in the community; to keep it clean, to protect one another.

“ **...There is a restoration of traditional Kanien'kehá:ka and Hotinonsooni values of Skén:nen, Ka'nikonhrí:io and Ka'shatsténhsera in their fullest sense...** ”

The Seigneurial land claim has been settled. The majority of residents in the surrounding communities have moved out; all the environmentally un-friendly industry is gone. Environmental hot spots have been cleaned and allowed to return to good health. The St. Lawrence Seaway no longer operates and time and nature erode the wall that separated Kahnawà:ke

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from the St. Lawrence River, now environmentally healthier than in 2008. Indigenous marine-life, both flora and fauna have reappeared in strong numbers throughout the territory. The Quebec highways, train lines and hydro towers are a thing of the past.

The clan system has grown in strength as the people have come together as Hotinonsonni, Kanien'keha:ka and Kahnawa'kehró:non. People participate in the local governance of organizations; longhouses and band council work together for the benefit of the community and for the future generations. Kahnawà:ke politics and organizations are noted for the respectful language used in discussion and debate of issues.

Kanien'keha has become the working language of Kahnawà:ke. It is spoken openly throughout the community - at homes, schools and work places. Local radio and television broadcast the majority of programming in the language.

Values of respect, peace, power, righteousness, consensus and traditionalism are strong among the people. The term "I" has been replaced with "we" in regular conversation and people work together to further improve upon what has become a healthy community lifestyle. The words and actions of Kahnawa'kehró:non that have a positive impact on the "faces yet to come" are now real and sincere.

MY FUTURE VISION OF KAHNAWÀ:KE AUDRA SIMPSON



My future vision of Kahnawà:ke does not deviate from the strivings and hard work of the present community. Nor does it stray from the ways in which people have worked in the past to imagine a future for their families or their home. However,

I am so deeply honored by this invitation to contribute my thoughts that I will risk seeming redundant or unoriginal and so will offer this modest account of the way in which I would like to see things for us all further down the line.

I imagine a community that continues to behave as a nation (in spite of what others may say) and in this, a community that is healthy in its culture, its conduct, its productivity, is committed to independence, to the dignity and well being of its families and has

a membership that relates to each other according to one of our most important principles, that of a good mind. In this, I imagine families and friends that continue to cultivate in each others minds that are unencumbered by grief and pathos, minds that are healthy, so that we may think and act clearly in relation to each other, the natural world, to the other Indigenous nations around us. This is in accordance with deep philosophical tradition that we inherit and proceed with (whether we see it or not).

I think this is hard work, but I also think that people already do this work in spite of how hard it is. They do this because it is right, but also because everything about our legal status of Indian Act wardship is about being treated as a child, being contained into one space and as such, having minds and bodies that are inert, minds that are twisted into judgmental, vicious and backbiting postures. And I think we know this is

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not who we once were, who we are now or who we want to be for the future. This legal containment reflects what is expected of us by a settler regime, and our rights (most awfully) are scripted by these legal expectations of being a proto-citizen not of the Mohawk nation, but of the settler society of Canada.

I am in no way “against” rights, we certainly need them in the world that we now live within. However, what I find most encouraging and most touching and frankly most important for everyone else on the planet to understand about Kahnawà:ke is the way in which this community has tried to resist at every turn what was expected of it. In this, Kahnawà:ke has worked also at every turn to maintain a sense of independence while working with and against the notion of rights within a nation-state that continues to occupy our space as if it were just, as if it were right and as if we fully and robustly consented to this occupation.

The nation-state of Canada and its first cousin, the United States owe everything they have to the expropriation of Indian lands, as they could not exist without these spaces to occupy and to regulate. As well, south of the border they owe their flourishing to the labour of Africans who toiled without compensation in a chattel slavery system upon Indian lands. The growth then of these political regimes, many scholars have argued, rests upon the pain, the suffering and the displacement of peoples. I now want to put our own struggles within this larger picture so that we can think about the two ongoing historical issues

within our community that are still with us and will be with us, I think for a bit.

So finally and most specifically, my hope is that our lands be restored to us, and/or that just compensation be rendered to us for its loss. With that, my hope is that the membership issue continue to be worked out and worked upon. These two issues hold hands with each other, as the scarcity of land makes membership urgent and greatly

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winnows the possibilities that we might imagine for extending membership to others who rightfully belong here when there is so little land to exercise our rights upon in the present. However, I think that when we think about these issues we also must place them into the larger context in which they occur (land expropriation and the strengthening of settler societies at the expense of Indian societies). Also, we might continue to think with and about our own philosophical tradition, one that rests upon a clarity of thought, of purpose and fairness.

MY FUTURE VISION OF KAHNAWÀ:KE BOBBY KENNEDY

In ages past, our ancestors sought to build a mighty empire as the Five Nations expanded their borders, with each war of conquest bringing in a new wave of converted people from the defeated nations. The survivors were systematically adopted into our nations and indoctrinated into our great culture, making these people into full citizens of the Confederacy. In time, these conquered people forgot what nations they came from, and considered themselves full Iroquois citizens.

This process helped our ancestors replace the people who had died in the wars, and because of this our genetic ancestry became mixed, as the Five Nations swelled with new converts inducted from the Algonquin, Huron, and other tribes we were at war with, including the Neutral, Erie, and Susquehannocks, who were completely annihilated as nations, but whose only surviving people became incorporated into the Iroquois Nations. Another nation was later added, making our Confederacy into the Six Nations (presumably, those conquered didn't add to the number of nations since they became citizens of the existing five).

The same took place when our ancestors came into contact with Europeans, as any defeated colonist settlement would have its survivors rounded up and converted in the mass adoption campaigns. In fact, many European women, when faced with the prospect of returning to their old civilization, preferred to stay among the Confederacy, as we treated women as equals at a time when the Europeans treated them as second class citizens. Our indoctrination of conquered people not only made the Six Nations strong, but also saved them from destruction on multiple occasions.

However, even though our Confederacy is made up of people from multiple native tribes, as well as people of non native descent, there has always

been one unifying factor: our glorious culture. Throughout our history, spreading our culture has always been of great importance to our ancestors, and it is why I have brought this topic up. In honor of our history, we as a community should make it a top priority to ensure that our culture remains a dominant force among our people. Unfortunately, too often I see flags waving throughout the town, the flags of Canada and the United States of America, our rival nations.

Now, I, in no way hate Canadian or American people, however, I feel as though we, as Mohawk people, who proudly consider ourselves to be an independent sovereign nation, should see ourselves as citizens of the Mohawk Nation (or Kanien'kehaka in our own language) first and foremost. Therefore, I believe it is of the utmost

“ ...I feel as though we, as Mohawk People, who proudly consider ourselves to be an independent sovereign nation, should see ourselves as citizens of the Mohawk Nation (or Kanien'kehaka)... ”

importance that our people feel patriotic towards our country, and maintain loyalty to it, since we are not Canadians or Americans, and as a matter of fact, we take it as a point of pride that we do not have to pay tax to the federal government, at least on our reservations.

Every July fourth, I hear fireworks and gunshots going off into the air, apparently in celebration of

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the American Independence day. However, this is rather ironic as our ancestors in fact fought against the American revolution, as we were allied to the British and the Americans were actively stealing our land (and after we worked so hard to conquer it from other tribes, too).

Therefore, I propose a resolution; July fourth shall hereby be considered Confederation Day, where we celebrate our history and culture with backyard barbecues, fireworks, basically you can still do what you were doing before, but instead of the red, white and blue American flag, salute our purple and white Confederacy flag in its place. Hopefully, in time this festival will completely overlap the American celebration and indoctrinate our people into their own native culture, just as our ancestors would have wanted. In time, we can create cultural festivals to repatriate all outside cultural holidays.

Now, I know that a lot of people in our community have served in the American or Canadian militaries, and so some of this outside influence may spring from that source. I understand that our nation has fallen on hard times recently, and as a result, we no longer have a mighty force of conquering warriors as we once had, so a young Mohawk who wants to learn the ways of war must now join the military of an outside nation. That's fine, however I would request that you steel your mind and not be assimilated into believing that you are an American or Canadian citizen, and should always remember the many battles our ancestors fought to keep our culture alive and prosperous.

If you must pledge allegiance to their flag, you can just mumble something under your breath so it sounds like you're doing it, or just say it out loud for show but lie and retain loyalty to your own country. Instead of one of their citizens, you can

consider yourself a Mohawk citizen who is taking on a job as a mercenary for a foreign nation for a short time, but don't buy into their propaganda, buy into our propaganda. Remember, our people had invented democracy centuries before Europeans showed up on these shores, and not only that, but we allowed women the vote from our inception, while Canada and the United States only achieved women's suffrage in the 1900s.

Let us also reclaim our symbol of the noble Eagle, grasping a bundle of arrows, the bastion of the Confederacy long before the Americans stole it to use as their country's symbol. Our culture has survived to this modern age not just because our ancestors assimilated the nations they conquered into it by force, but also because it is, in fact, a great culture by merit of its beliefs. For example, in many ways it is superior to western culture, which is only in the last few decades catching up to us in the realms of political and civil rights. Many nations are incorporated into our empire, and we have survived as a political entity for centuries, but as we move on into the future, let us make sure that our culture reigns supreme; so that all our citizens will be proud to call themselves Mohawks, and not fall prey to believing that we are Canadians, Americans or any other outside nation. If anything, we should be influencing outsiders with our culture.

Remember, your brave forefathers fought countless battles to give you your freedom and the right to call yourself a Mohawk person. Don't let them have died in vain, as we had to adopt a lot of people to replace them. On the blood of our fathers, this nation was great once, and if we continue their noble tradition, we will be great once more.

MY VISION OF KAHNAWÀ:KE CALLIE MONTOUR



Today there are many mixed views on who is to blame for our faults and what direction Kahnawà:ke should take. Everyone passively disagrees over who deserves to be in charge - the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke, the longhouse or emerging community members. I don't think we need to criticize any authorities because it is not them who make up Kahnawà:ke- it is us. We can hire the most intelligent organization to lead us but they will not succeed if we do not lead ourselves first. It is easy to demand change from others and tell them how they "should" be, but we must first begin with ourselves. Our traditional culture valued healthy behavior, respect and a clear mind.

My first observation is that our town, specifically youth, has begun to neglect their health to the point of becoming jaded with what damages we are doing to ourselves. Drugs, alcohol, violence and unsafe sex are now part of a routine. Doing drugs on the weekends is seen as "fun or relaxing", someone who drinks to the point of passing out is "funny", beating someone up is "cool," and having an unexpected pregnancy at 16 years old is "just how town is." We blindly accept this as okay, but this shouldn't be what is considered normal. Drinking is not a way of life, it's not something to look forward to all week and afterwards to brag about or share stories of hangovers. If you are someone who drinks every weekend, try not to do it for a month and then you will see how alcohol actually plays an important role in your life. It can affect where you go, who you hang out with and what you do together. If your friends are always at bars, then where will you be? Will you just watch them drink? Will you still tolerate your friends when they are drunk, stumbling and yelling? Will you be

as confident to talk to as much people as you used to? A drink should not influence your life so much, nor drugs. Violence shouldn't be embraced because it reinforces an idea of getting what one wants by pain or fear. We would not want someone to hurt us if we could just discuss something and come to a simple agreement. Hating on and fighting with non-natives doesn't make us strong or tough; anyone can be a big baby and lose their temper. Besides, it doesn't make anyone respect us, it just teaches them to call us down behind our backs and give them more reason to gossip about us. Acting like a bunch of savages only reinforces the Indian stereotypes that we hate so much. How about putting up a positive image? I am proud of the old stereotype of a Native person: the one before settlers brought over alcohol, guns and hurt our heritage. The traditional Native person was one who was clear-minded, gentle and kind. They solved their disputes by seeking to understand and be understood. They valued peace and unity in the form of treaties. The traditional Native person had a family that they loved and protected. They watched out for the others in the village and treated outsiders with hospitality. When can we go back to that way instead of our self-destructive route?

My second observation lies in the loss of respect we have for ourselves, others and our surroundings. As Native people we valued our men, women, elders, youth and Mother Earth. Nowadays we think more about our cell phones, cars and clothes before we care about other things like the fact that our language is at risk of dying out. Gossip, jealousy and anger run wild in our town as everyone seems to be running on rivalry instead of unity. We no longer respect the Earth; we pollute the air with our big cars, we toss garbage on the ground and displace many trees/ animals to put up cigarette stores. We have a false sense of respect face-to-

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face, and behind backs our elders are made fun of, women are belittled and men are compared to apes. Teens obviously don't take pride in or respect Kahnawà:ke if they are destroying buildings, fences and schools that are meant to be for them. Parks that were built for our own children are burned to the ground, benches set up for our elders to sit are broken and trees we plant to make our community look nice are pulled out. All this costs our town thousands of dollars to repair when that money could be used in a better place. I would like to see a Native person who has respect for everything and everyone. They can respect others who may disagree with them or have different values; they can understand different points of view or accept why people may do questionable things. They can remain neutral when someone else tries to push their buttons. They keep up to date on the state of our environment and try to keep our community clean. They make an effort to learn the language and encourage others. They value animals and take care of their pets. They are not jealous, but proud of others and look out for everyone else. They pay attention to the issues our town has and actively speak up. They value learning and what they can offer to the community with this knowledge. Most of all, they have respect for themselves and do not give in to bad choices.

My third observation lies in the idea of what it is to have a clear mind. It is easy to feel lost and sad when you don't know where you stand as a

person. What vision of yourself do you have? What does it mean to be Native? What makes you different from everyone else? What are your goals, priorities and talents? What have you learned from your family? What are you good at and what needs work? It's easy to settle for a job, a spouse and a house but that is just stability. You are more than a spouse, house and cashier. You have interests, dedication, potential and worth. It is important to find out what it is and to learn from all the different things you try. Maybe you have a talent for hockey, painting or acting but you'll never know until you try. Knowledge comes from experience, activities, sports, classes, hobbies, music, traveling, creating, building and reading. It helps you find out who you are as a person, what you believe in and how far you'll go for something you love. There is a sense of hopelessness in town that everything

outside is too hard, too far away or too daring, but it isn't. Many community members have done it and achieved recognition and spectacular goals. I have learned many things from all the things I've tried, whether I succeeded or failed at them. I've tried gymnastics, skating, Sunday school, drawing, softball, acting, singing, archery, Rosetta Stone Language CD, rock climbing, taking care of children, skydiving, kickboxing, etc. They all

have lessons to learn and it's great to be recognized for hard work. Once you feel fulfilled as a person and know who you are, you will be happy and able to bring happiness onto others.

“ ... What vision of yourself do you have? What does it mean to be Native? What makes you different from everyone else? What are your goals, priorities and talents? What have you learned from your family? What are you good at and what needs work?... ”

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That is my idea of a Native person: a healthy behavior, respect and a clear mind. I believe we can return to our traditional ways because as a people we are strong and dedicated. We are not bad, selfish or careless... we have slowly steered off the path and all we need is a kick to get us back on track. Once we find out who we are as people, we will not be lost, angry or hopeless. We can achieve anything we want and being Native will not hold us back. Various areas I described are getting better -

more youth are attending CEGEP and university, more people are relearning the language and there are responsible young adults who do not drink. As long as we encourage each other and unite as the tribal people we once were, we will be happy. When we are happy, and know what we want and value, then we can appoint others to lead us into how we “should” be because now we can actually know and agree on what that is.

MY VISION OF KAHNAWÀ:KE CAROL BOYER JACOBS

What will Kahnawà:ke be like in 20 years from now? Kahnawà:ke, Mohawk Territory 2028

I have a vision for my community. As I close my eyes I can see that our community is strong. The people who live here and work here and do their business here is what gives our town its strength.

My role of a caring mother and teacher was to instill a sense of who they were and how they could contribute to the betterment of Kahnawà:ke's future.

My role has changed, in the last 20 years, to that of an Elder. My children are all grown up and I have been blessed with beautiful grandchildren. Former students of mine also have their own families and are now our community's leaders. Our youth are well educated.

Our Kahnawà:ke Education School system has provided our children with quality education based upon Kanien'keha:ka beliefs, values, language and traditions. Our people are fluent in three languages Mohawk, English and French. We have outstanding professionals such as doctors, lawyers, architects, engineers, and teachers to name but a few.

We live in a healthy environment. Every one is living healthier life styles. Young and old are seen walking, biking, roller-blading, paddling and traditional dancing. Gone are the days of driving to the corner store. People have gone back to planting, harvesting and eating our traditional foods. Fast food is a thing of the past and has been replaced by juice bars, traditional and organic cuisine.



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Our young have made their mark in life by furthering their education. Kahnawà:ke has its own Post Secondary Institution with an active student body. Students from other aboriginal communities study here under the tutelage of Kahnawa'kehró:non.

There is no more conflict about cigarettes and land; this has all been resolved. Everyone is supportive of one another. Economic ventures are community driven and supported by Chief and Council.

There is a sense of security and solidarity in the community. Spirituality is once again strong. Some community members opt to go to the Longhouses where others congregate at the Churches. Kateri Tekakwitha has been canonized and is now known as Saint Kateri Tekakwitha. People are flocking to Kahnawà:ke for healings and to retrace her footsteps.

Kahnawà:ke has once again become an attraction for visitors. There are economic benefits from all that tourism brings. All community organizations are benefiting from these endeavours.

There is also a great deal of cultural and artistic diversity in Kahnawà:ke. Kahnawà:ke boasts a wealth of fine artists and performers. Just walking around in Kahnawà:ke you will wander into one of our beautiful art galleries or performing arts centre. Even better, one can run into one of our many artists. All very inspiring!

As for the environment the land is flourishing once again and it is free from contaminants. The trees that were cut down 20 years ago have all been replenished and stand tall purifying and beautifying our surroundings.

Our longstanding land claims have also been resolved. Scarcity is no longer an issue because of the vast amount of land. Kahnawà:ke is self-sufficient. There is no more reliance on external government although there is still good relationships with the Federal, Provincial and neighbouring municipalities. Kanien'kéha is the official language spoken.

Our hospital now has a maternity ward, a dialysis unit, and an x-ray department and has state of the art medical equipment. More medical services are accessible to meet the needs of the community. In addition many of our youth have chosen careers in the medical and health fields.

The appeal to me of KAHNAWÀ:KE is that it just is what it is and everything is great here. It soothes me to know that my husband and I have raised our children in a town where people care about other people. Kahnawà:ke is the kind of place I always envisioned where I would raise a family and that vision is fortunately a reality.

“ Kahnawà:ke is the kind of place I always envisioned where I would raise a family... ”

Kahnawà:ke is charming, pretty and inviting. I love the fact that when I meet up with anyone people stop to say “Kwe Kwe! Sken:nen ko:wa ken?” and chat. We are a large caring community! The camaraderie alone is comforting. Even with inevitable change I can imagine that I will forever, no matter where I am in this world, call Kahnawà:ke home.

MY VISION OF KAHNAWÀ:KE CHERIE OHSENNENAWI JACOBS



The Haudenosaunee Confederacy was one of the most revered confederacies on Turtle Island, which includes both North and South America. According to oral tradition, at one point, some 300+ nations had awaited the decisions of the Confederacy.

Having highly sophisticated levels of organization, governing philosophies and principles, a little known fact is the U.S. based its constitution on our Great Law, and this was re-affirmed in the U.S. House of the Senate in 1987. The Peacemaker came to the Mohawks first, and Wampum number six can be interpreted as that the Mohawks were to be the leaders of the Confederacy, and our organizational skills were highly effective. The Six Nations' traditional knowledge of plants and animals had the late Vine Deloria Jr. commenting that it was 'basically religious,' and that we never received the credit that was ours by right. He also observed that it was not until the last century when western science discovered the nitrogen cycle in the growing of corn, beans and squash. The three sisters, he wrote, provided a natural nitrogen cycle so that the fields were never worn out from farming.

Kahnawà:ke is one of the most progressive indigenous communities in Canada. With a strategic location, a strong economy, stable governance, family ties and traditions, these have helped elevate our standard of living. In the age of information, economic development within a knowledge-based economy necessarily involves the gathering, sharing and transferring of knowledge. Economic development is the most critical area for development, and the time to forge a new economy, and era of self-reliance is upon us.

Local economies in general are threatened by economic globalization. From industrial hog farms to outdated, environmentally destructive forms of energy, to global warming, our political path beckons us to develop and nurture an economy that strategically counters our circumstances, strengthens our culture and renders us self-sufficient. Our opportunities to invest our time and money for self-sufficiency and a renewed pride were never better, and worker-owned businesses such as co-ops are ideal and customary within our traditional ways, and are a great platform to nurture a green, eco-driven market.

“ Our opportunities to invest our time and money for self-sufficiency and a renewed pride have never been better...”

Self-sufficiency means perhaps independence forged through self-determination measures. Whether a people grow, fish or hunt for their food, and/or raise their own livestock; sell goods and/or services, the opportunities for Kahnawà:kehró:non abound. In the U.S., industrial-scale, corporate-run agribusiness have replaced many family farms, but are dependent on toxic chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides. This means that organic farming is the next big thing, and where people are willing to pay. Concerning energy, a Forbes article commented that “the cost of generating electricity from conventional sources, has been rising [as well as environmentally], along with the price of natural gas...while state regulations are aiming to limit greenhouse gas emissions and the need to build more power plants to keep up with growing demand, could push the cost of conventional electricity higher.” This suggests that solar energy, like herbal remedies, is definitely in the cards for the future.

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A business district for Kahnawà:ke that stakes out our backyard near highway 30, would be optimal, given the traffic flow. Imagine a unique green belt with a large beautiful maze hosting fish ponds, apple and maple orchards; where horses, horse riding/ bike paths are; greenhouse nurseries specializing in medicinal herbs and flowers; micro-farms; animal breeders and rare breed hatcheries; an exotic foods' restaurant; a bed and breakfast which hosts brought in speakers for afternoon lectures/talks on issues of interest; a drama theater; an outdoor Lacrosse field, a bakery; a butcher; an all natural juice bar; specialty coffees and teas; a hemp retailer selling recycled-fiber clothing; an all natural household cleaners retailer;

a windmill and/ or solar panel distributor or roofs initiative;

an environmentally-friendly car dealership, such as Motor Trend's 2004 car of the year, the hybrid Toyota Prius; and a furniture retailer consisting of local works, all in one area.

Admittedly, even the Canadian Executive Services Organization is seeking volunteer advisors for agriculture, but for a few of the above, we have knowledgeable individuals, it's just a matter of bringing them together for it. Community strategic planning sessions have proven successful for our blueprint for education, as well as that for our hospital. I don't know of any past economic development planning sessions, and aside from Tawatohnhi'saktha, our local bank has funds available for community development too.

At present, the World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (www.wwoof.org) offers student placement from which to learn/volunteer on organic farming, anywhere in the world for free! Additionally, for environmentally-

friendly businesses or initiatives, the GLS Gemeinschaftsbank in Germany extends credit and financing to social, ecological or cultural enterprises, and Germans are fond of indigenous peoples. Some fund our language program at Karihwanoron, and even speak our language! As for the medicinal herbs and flowers - only 10% of all herbs used in the U.S. are grown there, which means another great opportunity. For a car dealership, I'm not sure the Toyota Prius is available in North America at all, but if it isn't, this is another golden opportunity to be further looked into, and where investors could be sought. Rare breed hatcheries can be found

online and those interested can be trained. As for solar energy, in 2007, some \$3.2

billion was spent in the U.S., and that figure is climbing; and Forbes commented that companies will be moving production to low cost countries too. Quebec does not yet have any specific solar incentives, but the Crees could be interested in partnerships or co-ventures with us for alternative energy.

And last, but certainly not least, worth mentioning is that in 2005, the Membertou First Nation in the Maritimes won the prestigious International Edison Award for their excellence in providing a much-needed transmission line spanning a distance of more than 200 miles; and they had engaged all interested stakeholders from the start...

At present, these are merely ideas, but hopefully this will add to the roster for stimulating discussion. Hope you enjoyed the reading.

Nia:wen'ko:wa.

“ **Kahnawà:ke is one of the most progressive indigenous communities in Canada..** ”

MY FUTURE VISION OF KAHNAWÀ:KE DAVE CANADIAN



Before I can start to write about my vision of the future in Kahnawà:ke, I have to write about some of my experiences in the past. In the early 1970s a group of young people (Kenneth and Glenda Deer, Joe Curotte, Brenda Rice, Randy Peterson,) got together because they wanted to start a paddling club. They wanted the youth of Kahnawà:ke to have something to do in the summertime. The club they started was the Onake Paddling Club and it started off with a few small boats and a war canoe.

Over the years the Club grew in participation and the number of boats - they now had kayaks, better small boats and a boathouse with locker rooms for the athletes.

During the first years it was evident that our youth were very good at this new sport. The Onake Paddling Club was very dominant in the war canoe and became very strong in the smaller boats and kayaks.

This eventually led to the start of a future National Champion and Olympic Gold Medallist. It was at the Onake Paddling Club that Alwyn Morris was introduced to the sport of canoeing; this was all possible because a group of people wanted to give something back to the community who were willing to sacrifice plenty of their free time to make it all happen.

When I look back on those years, I remember that there were certain people who stood out in my memories, people like Harley Delaronde who took the time to show me how to paddle properly.

There were many others who did similar things for the rest of the athletes.

Over the years many people have participated at the Onake Paddling Club and have a lot of great memories of their younger years and made lifelong lasting friendships as a result.

When I was a young wrestler in high school, I was very fortunate to be surrounded by very good coaches and people, many of them were All-Americans who had a lot of great things to share with the kids they coached. When I became a wrestling coach I was lucky to land a coaching position at a high school that was very dominant in the sport of wrestling, we had a great coaching staff and the team had a storied history, for me it was a great experience.

“ ...the Onake Paddling Club, it started off with a few small boats and a war canoe. ”

I often think back about my early coaching days and about how I made the decision to return home to Kahnawà:ke to coach our youth. It was some of my friends from the paddling club who said that I should be coaching our kids, guys like Russell Curotte, Danny Stacey and Joe Curotte, they convinced me to coach at the Kahnawà:ke Survival School.

At first I was a little apprehensive but with time the Team became used to my methods and techniques and with every year the Team became stronger and eventually would become a team that was known on the National level. I never regretted coaching at KSS; I coached a lot of great kids who became very successful in life.

Many past wrestlers are now giving back to the community by coaching the Team: Peter Montour is now the Head Coach and he has Garrett Jacobs and Wathias Hemlock as his Assistants. When you watch them work with the kids you see what they are doing for these kids is not just coaching wrestling but giving these kids life learning experiences that they will remember for the rest of their lives.

With that being said, I can now say a few words about what I would like to envision in the future for Kahnawà:ke. In the future I would like to see our youth continue with their education beyond their years in high school, as we will need experienced and qualified people in all fields. Kahnawà:ke will need Doctors, Nurses, Dentists, Lawyers, Engineers, Mechanics, Teachers, Peace Keepers, etc. The list would cover everything and then some, as we have to prepare for the future and the changes that come with it.

I would like to see our youth, who will become the future leaders of our community, have the best possible education; they have the availability to do it.

Every effort should be made to help keep our youth in school and to continue after graduation from high school. Now I know that a lot of our youth want to enter the work field right away, as always, we need qualified people in these fields also. Kahnawà:ke has always been the best at what they chose to do: Fur Traders, Loggers, High Steel Workers, Carpenters, Mechanics, etc. The point being that they took pride in what they did and in doing so became the best at what they did. I know this will continue in the future as our

young people continue to go to school or work as they will learn and gain experience in their fields of endeavour.

Kahnawà:ke has been very fortunate in the past by having people who were willing to share with the community their past experiences and what they learned when they went to school and work. It is this willingness to share that will help keep Kahnawà:ke in the forefront.

As an Athlete and Coach I know the effects of helping people, but it is not only in sports that people can make a difference in other peoples' lives. We all have teachers who we remember as

“ **...help our youth stay on the right path in life and lead healthy active lives.** ”

going all out of their way to help you in school, or certain individuals who taught you how to do something you didn't know how to before. If you think back you can remember

many people through your life that have done this. For many people it will be their immediate family members: Mothers, Fathers, Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles come to mind.

As a member of our community I was asked to write this essay about my experience in my chosen field. My field is sports, that is how I was able to give back to the community and I am very proud of what I have done.

In the future, I would hope that our people continue to give back and share what they have learned so that we continue to help our youth stay on the right path in life and lead healthy active lives. I believe that through sports people go on to lead successful lives, it is when they give back to the community that Kahnawà:ke will remain strong and help to mold our future leaders.

MY FUTURE VISION OF KAHNAWÀ:KE DORRIS MONTOUR



A comparison may be necessary for people to understand the differences of yesteryear and the present. As a senior person growing up in the late twenties and thirties, when depression was rampant all over the world – our corner

of this little native village, although extremely poor, managed rather happily. Since we had no electricity, oil or running water, our men and teens busied themselves fetching and cutting wood for heating our iron stoves. Young ladies were seen with wooden yokes on their shoulders carrying large pails of water from wells or the St. Lawrence River for household chores. Mothers and grandmas sewed and knitted clothes for the household since it was almost impossible to purchase store-bought items. Women beaded beautiful handicraft.

All helped in the garden, feeding chickens, pigs and cows for meat supply. If you had horses to do plowing and help with transportation, you were lucky indeed!

On our street, we had a dozen children who would pile into a farmer's truck at six o'clock in the morning when we were hired as berry-pickers. Strawberries grew first then raspberries. We earned a penny for a litre basket. We grabbed our lunch and straw hat. We enjoyed the hot day. We knew when we got home, we could jump into the river for a refreshing swim! Our moms were eager to accept our pay to buy extra goodies. Everyone ate whatever was prepared. There were no restaurants!

Children walked to and from school rain or shine, even in snow blizzards. School was never closed! The snowfall of 2008 was nothing compared to blizzards in the thirties.

One of the events I miss is the dog races the teenage boys had. They started from the tunnel to the hospital. It was great fun to watch the mutts of all breeds, tongues hanging out and pulling with all their might. Homemade sleighs were decorated with bells, the runners of the sleigh hissing on icy roads.

It seems our men used to like to trade horses with neighbours from St. Isidore and Chateauguy. Ours understood Kanien'keha, theirs the French language. It took time for the poor animals to become familiar to their new owners!

“ It is said we Kahnawa'kehró:non are role models across reserves in Canada. ”

It is said we Kahnawa'kehró:non are role models across reserves in Canada. Lucky for us the Kahnawake Shakotiatekehnhas Community Services was organized through the Mohawk Council. They have lived up to their mandate of health promotion, prevention programs, intervention and post prevention. We know this by their reports, newsletters Aionkwatarí:teke, Onkwariwa'shon:'a, Tewatohnhi'saktha Reviews as well as from Caisse Populaire. These are full of interesting information by our own workers and student trainees. It is more interesting when we see their pictures so we can relate to their thoughts and ideas.

Our buildings are beautiful and well kept. Our

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hospital, schools, band and post office, Council building, Youth Center, radio station, t.v. station, library, the White House for MAD Group, Golden Age, Turtle Island Theatre, Onake Club, The Eastern Door – our local newspaper, arena, parks, sports baseball fields, Elders Lodge, Centre for Disabled Adults, Environment, Court, Community Services Complex, Indian Way School, Kariwanó:ron and Survival High School.

Our spiritual needs are met by the many houses of worship in our village.

The establishment of Kanien'keha Onkwawén:na Raotitiohkwa has been a great medium to enhance our language, beliefs, customs and traditions, through displaying of native art and having guest speakers from our sister reserves. Classes for young adults, Kanien'keha Ratiwennahní:rats, decided to extend classes for two years to further the goal of creating fluent speakers. Since our former teachers are retiring, it behooves the younger ones to carry on so we do not lose our precious heritage.

At Christmas and Easter, the elders have time on our local radio, guests are invited from sister reserves, school children in their native dress sing their little hearts out! Refreshments are served and happy fellowship follows, renewing friendships.

In February a variety concert is held where skits and songs are presented by young and old. Again

school children participate. This event held at the Knights of Columbus hall is always well attended in spite of the cold weather!

We are proud that our students are taking advantage of continuing their education and can choose whatever interests them in their work in life. It is wonderful to see our people in high positions in all walks of life.

Our grateful thanks to the Fire Brigade and Ambulance crew, to volunteers and all workers who keep our town in top shape!

We need to be grateful to all people in Kahnawà:ke who work diligently and are willing to give long hours to various activities that are required to make our territory a proud and happy place.

To the Coordinators of the Quebec Bridge Disaster of 1907, their commitment to install a monument, plant trees and beautify an area that will always remind us of our thirty-three ironworkers who lost their lives.

To the Coordinators of our yearly Pow Wow that draws so many visitors that puts Kahnawà:ke on the map!

My vision for Kahnawà:ke is very hopeful indeed. If everyone continues to be helpful and living on this Creator given territory, we can all move forward and earn the right to be, "role models across the reserves in Canada".

“ We are proud that our students are taking advantage of continuing their education... ”

MY FUTURE VISION OF KAHNAWÀ:KE GERALD TAIAlAKE ALFRED

I asked my son what he thinks needs to be done to make Kahnawà:ke a better place. His answer was straightforward, “I don’t know, Kahnawà:ke’s pretty good the way it is.” He’s right, of course. By all measures, and considering the way things are in the world these days, especially among our Native brothers and sisters across Turtle Island, Kahnawà:ke is a proud and solid community.



There are some things about our community today that are offences against a true Mohawk way of life. They are mostly related to the culture of money and hard-core capitalist mentalities that have taken the place of the spiritual worldview and a culture rooted in the natural world that defined and sustained our ancestors, both traditional and Christian. And beyond the obvious,

too many of us have forgotten, or have never taught ourselves, the crucial connections and responsibilities we have as people living in our natural environment. This is truly a disconnection that we have to repair if we are to recover our full strength and potential as a community.

We complain and criticize a lot, and for us Mohawks, politics is a contact sport sometimes, but we have to admit that in spite of the problems we face, compared to elsewhere, our leaders are relatively sincere, honest and competent. Kahnawà:ke is safe, our standard of living is pretty good, we have strong families, and we stick together and help each other when times are tough. Most important, we’ve held on to our pride in being Onkwehonwe and are still committed to being independent and self-sufficient, knowing that this is what gives us freedom. We don’t always get it right, and we don’t win every battle we get into. But we never give up, we fight smart and hard, we never sell ourselves short and our spirit is unconquerable.

Making Kahnawà:ke stronger means challenging ourselves to live up to an even higher standard of thought and action than the ones we have set for ourselves and which have taken us this far.

“**...our standard of living is pretty good, we have strong families, and we stick together and help each other when times are tough.**”

There is something missing in the life of our community, however. Kahnawà:ke, “in the rapids”... the very name of our community invokes a relationship to the river. Four generations of Kahnawa’kehró:non are living dispossessed and disconnected from the “majestic and magnificent river”, Kaniatarowanenneh, that defines our people’s existence. The construction of the Seaway in the 1950s was a major blow to our people, and though some, like my own family, suffered the physical destruction of their homes, every family has been affected in many different ways by the forced separation of our community from the river.

There are very few people who use the land and river in traditional ways today. We drive over

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it on the Mercier Bridge almost every day, but how many of us can say that we know that river? The Seaway, and of course the pollution of the water that followed the industrialization of areas upstream towards the Great Lakes, eroded the collective connection between our people and the natural environment, and effectively put an end to the land and river based culture our people had enjoyed for thousands of years. Aside from the injustice of the process by which the land was stolen and the Seaway built through the heart of our community, our people endured other losses. The disruption of our social and physical space, and the tragic decline in language and cultural knowledge that resulted from the rapid and forced assimilation to other forms of work once Kahnawà:ke's riverfront was cut off and prime agricultural lands seized, were devastating blows to our people.

In my mind the most serious and lasting effect of our disconnection from the river has been on our physical health. We as a community no longer rely on or even know how to provide healthy foods for ourselves from our own natural environment. It used to be, in the time of our grandparents, that Kahnawà'kehró:non used all kinds of river fish, animals from trapping, vegetables from gardens, and wild fruits to feed their families. They had to work physically for their food, they had to have a great degree of knowledge of the natural environment in order to get it, and they had to live in a very close and cooperative social

system in order to prepare the food for their families to eat. By all accounts, living this close to nature was a hard life, but one which we now recognize as having the benefit of making people strong and healthy. We are a resilient people, and we've adapted to change in many ways. But we have not been able to resist being assimilated and becoming dependent on the market system when it comes to the foods we put into our mouths and which we depend on for our survival. In a sense, we are ingesting capitalism and it is doing great harm to our bodies and psyches, its excessive calories and harmful chemicals making too many of us fat, weak, and sick.

“
...we need to learn to appreciate our place in the natural world, to restore our traditional land and river-based culture, and to decolonize our diet so that our community has food security in the future.”

This is the problem I see that affects me with sadness when I cast an honest eye over our community. So, what's my future vision to make Kahnawà:ke a better place? With all this in mind, the answer is clear: we need to learn to appreciate our place in the natural world, to restore our traditional land and river-based culture, and to decolonize our diet so that our community has food security in the future.

The only obstacles to realizing this vision are psychological. Our separation from the natural environment and traditional foods has changed our tastes and our attitudes. How does eating a boiled eel for supper sound to you? People in Kahnawà:ke used to eat that all the time! I guess even more than re-adapting our tastes, fear is an issue. We've all been told for so long that the river and the land are polluted and that eating

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fish and things grown in the soil in this area are not good for you. Yet we trust and eat just about everything that's on the supermarket shelves or on the menu in restaurants. Do we really believe that eating a meal of sturgeon from the river is worse for our long term well-being than a plate of deep fried hormone laced chicken wings doused in salt and chemical flavourers?

I would risk taking this beyond a "vision" into dream land if I were to say that I want the Seaway to be filled in with earth and the land and the waters around Kahnawà:ke to be made as clean as they were in 1950. Even so, I do believe that we owe it to the future generations to do

all we can to restore our natural environment; even if it may not happen for a long, long time. In the meantime, I don't think it's too much to hope for that our future generations will restore themselves as Onkwehonwe by resurrecting our ancestors' land and river-based culture. I can see them strong and healthy, working hard and eating natural foods that were grown or caught locally by people in their own families. It's not too much to envision our great-grandchildren enjoying a respectful relationship to the land and the river, reconnecting to the true sources of our Mohawk identity and the strength of our nation.

Taneh toh. Niawenkowa.

MY FUTURE VISION OF KAHNAWÀ:KE JOSIE HORNE



My future vision of Kahnawà:ke is, at this point in time, we are all concerned about our environment and are aware of what is happening to Mother Earth, which is the source of life. We have been mistreating Mother Earth by contaminating the air, water and soil. I think it's time we paid more attention to our surroundings and our wasteful ways, and pay more respect to Mother nature, and also improve our recycling habits. Another thing we could do is turn the lights off when we leave the room. Also, not to waste water by leaving the tap running when not in use. It would be nice to plant flowers and keep our yards clean.

My vision for the future environment is to have a clean healthy living community. Free of drugs, litter and graffiti. I know this is wishful thinking, but I am an optimist and believe that miracles do happen.

With the world food crisis and the price of food escalating, I think it would be a good idea for us to think about going back to planting gardens with a variety of vegetables, also planting fruit trees. The way it was when I was growing up everyone in the community had large gardens to enjoy, as the vegetables and fruits

“
...when I was growing
up everyone in the
community had large
gardens to enjoy...”
”

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became ready to eat fresh from the garden with no additives. And when autumn came, all the veggies and fruits were brought in and stored in the cellar to enjoy all winter long.

As for the Mohawk language, it would be wonderful if the community would or could devote more time to learn our language. The language that our Creator gave to us as our very own Kanien'ké:ha language. Because our language is who we are, once we lose it, we lose 75% of our culture. My vision is to hear the Mohawk language in public places like it was when I was growing up, when all you heard was Mohawk spoken everywhere.

However, it's up to the individual to make the difference to put their priority in the right place. In the 70's when I became the pioneer in teaching the Mohawk language, I was like a voice crying in the wilderness. People were just not interested in learning their language. Some even said to me, "what's the use of learning the language, I won't use it anyway". At one time I thought that maybe 35 to 40 years from now, people would say Mohawk is now a dead language. As it is, most of our language is now in our cemeteries. However, I now think our language will survive, because I have noticed a lot of our children and the younger generation speaking Mohawk which is pleasant to hear. Our schools, the media, our radio and television stations and the Eastern Door are all doing their part in promoting the language which is very encouraging because after my generation of fluent Mohawk speakers have all passed on, this present generation will carry on to bring our language back to where it should be.

To our students who are our future leaders, who are smart and intelligent and have a lot of talent, who can also take advantage of all the modern

technology out there – education is the key to success. So students aim high, learn everything you can, give yourself time to get your bearings. Make wise decisions, make a difference.

We need young people to go into the field of medicine. We need more of our very own native doctors, nurses, dentists and other professionals.

Know who your friends are. Live a clean life, avoid drugs and cigarettes, set a good example. Think positive. Honour your father and mother, respect God, who created you and thank him for your blessings. Be proud of your community and your community will be proud of you.

“ I noticed a lot of our children and the younger generation speaking Mohawk... ”

One more thing, I would like to see in the future for our community is having our own undertaker – funeral director and not have to go on the outside for services. When I was growing up, we had our own undertaker. His name was Shakoiatén:tah Goodleaf. He was capable and very professional, he had a display of coffins. He had two beautiful carriages to carry the coffins, a black one for adults with two black horses, with a black crochet shawl with tassels thrown over their backs. A white carriage for children with two white horses and white shawls over the horses' backs. Maybe one of our young people would like to take the challenge to go into that business. It would be a very profitable business.

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To those of you who are guilty of defacing individual and public property, breaking windows and fences, I'm wondering what pleasure you get out of doing this obnoxious thing. One day you will be adults and have your own property and home. How would you feel if someone defaced

what is yours. The saying goes, "what goes around, comes around". So think twice before you think about destroying other people's property and say to yourself, would I like this if someone did this to my property or something I own.

MY FUTURE VISION OF KAHNAWÀ:KE KAHSENNENHAWE SKY-DEER



We live in a small community, moreover a reservation, where all our people can reside and enjoy the benefits of being Mohawk, but there are still many individuals who do not take advantage of these privileges. Having good relationships with family, learning about our language and culture, being proud to be Onkwehonwe, and the desire to see positive change for our future are important attributes that everyone should possess. I am very proud of our community to say that I am a member of Kahnawà:ke. We are very advanced in all that we have achieved and established on our land, and I have high hopes for our future if we can continue to progress and use the resources we have available to us.

Growing up in Kahnawà:ke gave me the opportunity to build solid relationships with my immediate and extended family members. It is the foundation of any individual's life, having positive influences from parents and being able to learn valuable life lessons and stories from our grandparents. However, there are many families in

the community that are broken. This is because we are a stubborn people and find it hard to forgive and forget when we are betrayed or someone does not agree with our point of view. I'm sure many of us know of families where there is anger, jealousy, lack

“ ...having positive influences from parents and being able to learn valuable life lessons and stories from our grandparents. ”

of communication or worst yet hatred. We don't realize how lucky we are to have almost all of our family living in the same area and that we can get to know them. It is important that we find it within ourselves to forgive and forget and come from a place of love in dealing with our family members. Life can end at any moment, do you really want to lose a beloved family member one day and wish that you would have been able to make amends and reestablish a relationship with them before it got to that point? Don't wait. Show your children how to be a bigger person in matters and at least try to work on the relationships that we have no choice

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in having, but we have the choice to make them positive.

I left Kahnawà:ke when I was twenty with hopes and dreams of playing my favorite sport at the highest level possible, women's tackle football. I had a successful run over the last seven seasons, as I maintained the starting quarterback position on many teams in central Florida in leagues that were recognized at a national level. Would I have been able to accomplish this goal if I wasn't encouraged to participate in sports starting at an early age? Our community is very fortunate to have the resources and dedicated individuals who organize lacrosse, softball, football, hockey, golf and various other programs for our children. It is a given that those who stick with what they are talented and born to do, can take it to greater levels, if their skills are fostered and encouraged.

It's a given that not all children are athletically inclined, but they are talented in other areas such as the arts, cultural knowledge, or book smart. As I have lived off the reservation for nearly eight years, it is truly upsetting to see young people that are struggling to pay and get through school, as I have been fortunate year after year by taking advantage of the financial assistance we are all entitled to in being Native American. I haven't had to pay out of pocket for my classes or books, and I was also given allowances to help pay for rent, bills, food and gas. Basically I was paid to get an education, and as of this August I will have a Bachelor's degree in Psychology which can open many doors for me as well as continue to put money in my pocket.

“ ...so many areas in our community that require highly skilled and educated people to work in to keep our community running...” ”

I know that many people in our community have it made right now with the cigarette trade, but when the government puts the squeeze on that one day, are we really going to have to outsource and bring in non-Native people to hold positions in our community because our own are not qualified? There are so many areas in our community that require highly skilled and educated people to work in to keep our community running and self sufficient, but in the next twenty years who will hold those positions? My fear is that the benefit of government funding for education may be decreased or worse abolished completely, and our people will have to pay out of pocket for school. The point here is that we need to take advantage of it now before it is too late.

Living away from home also gave me a different perspective on life and enabled me to establish my own identity and be comfortable with the person I have become.

I encourage all young people to try and live away for a few years, travel, go to school in the States or a different province, take your skills in arts or athletics to higher levels. All you have to do is dream, and take advantage of the resources that are there for you. Having strong family ties, growing up in a community where teamwork as well as individuality is encouraged, having financial resources for school, starting a business, owning land and a home. We have a golden egg given to us at birth, but not everyone can really appreciate it until they see how other people have it off the reservation.

I am excited to be moving back home to Kahnawà:ke this August. It has been an interesting journey abroad and has helped me realize what it

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is that I truly value as an individual, as a member of both my immediate families and as a member of this community. I want to help others to see that there are endless possibilities available to us. We as Onkwehonwe people are capable of achieving so many things because of the support that exists all around us in being a part of this community. All we have to do is dream, envision change, and put forth some thought and action and anything is possible. I wish you all the best in your journey, and hope that my words inspire you to really look at your life and ask yourself if

you are truly happy, because life is fluid, we can change and do things differently at any moment. There is no telling how much time we have here, but you will want to be remembered by the actions and way you live your life now. What stories are you going to have for your grandchildren? I know who I am and I am proud of all facets of my being. I can only hope that more Kahnawà:kehro:non can feel as fulfilled and determined as I do and to want to see our community continue to build and grow in positive ways for the next seven generations.

MY FUTURE VISION OF KAHNAWÀ:KE KAIA'TITÁHKHE JACOBS

I would like to begin this essay by saying that in spite of the periodic trials and tribulations, there is no where in the world I would rather live than in Kahnawà:ke. There is a unique spirit and a “joie de vivre” that cannot be duplicated anywhere. There is a feeling of being safe and a strong sense of community that we take for granted. There is a lot of good happening here, but we sometimes cannot see the forest for the trees. Take a visitor on a tour through the community and see our town through their eyes. It makes one proud. The organizations that might service a person throughout their lifetime are indeed impressive. From the “Ken'nithotíien:se Raotitíóhkwa” Boys & Girls Club, to the “Thotí:ien's Rontientáhkwa”



Elder's Lodge, and everything in between, is evidence that Kahnawà:ke takes care of its own. However, I would be remiss if I did not state that these organizations are successful mainly due to the diligence and vision of the Kanien'kehá:ka.

An excellent example of the resourcefulness of the Kanien'kehá:ka is the way our Kanien'keha language and culture has been brought back to the forefront. Thanks in part to the Immersion schools, the MCK Language Law, plus the endeavors of the Cultural Center, there has been a definite positive attitude shift toward language and culture that I have been privileged to experience. Many young people have taken on the personal

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challenge of learning our beautiful language to the point that they are using it naturally in the community and in their homes with their children. This is a life long commitment these young people have made, and my hat is off to them! Kanien'kéha is a challenging language to learn and indeed a rich and powerful language. It is a tribute to the high intelligence of the minds that originally devised the intricate connections of morphemes to be able to express all things abstract. The variety of compounds that can discriminate action, time, space, gender, number and motion is immense. Max Muller, a professor at Oxford, writes of it in emphatic terms, as is quoted in an article from the Iroquois Book of Rites: Chapter X: The Iroquois Language; "To my mind the structure of such a language as the Mohawk is quite sufficient evidence that those who worked out such a work of art were powerful reasoners; and accurate classifiers." This is our proud legacy as Kanien'kehá:ka and we have a responsibility to continue to maintain and promote it in our homes, our organizations, our schools and our businesses.

One of the goals of the first immersion group in the late 70's, was to re-instill a sense of value and pride in our language and culture that had been slowly eroding in spite of the numbers of people still speaking fluently. The sense at the time was one of denial. Due to mainstream society's devaluation of us as a people, it was thought that our language and culture was not necessary to our succeeding as a people. To be self-confident in all areas of life, it is crucial that you know who you are, and where you come from. It has taken thirty years, and it is a tribute to the resiliency of the Kanien'kehá:ke that we now have a core

“ One of the goals of the first immersion group in the late 70's, was to re-instill a sense of value and pride in our language and culture... ”

group of people that have taken it as a personal commitment to ensure our language and culture will continue to flourish. Thirty years ago, I never expected I would hear and see Kanien'kéha being spoken so fluently and eloquently on radio or television! And by young adults and puppets no less!

From the immersion classes at Karonhianónhna and Karihwanó:ron Schools, to the Ratiwennahní:rats Adult Immersion and the MCK Language & Cultural Training project, or listening to the "Joe & Leo" show, there is now a continuum of opportunities that one may participate in to become proficient in Kanien'kéha with a number of these students. I am personally

very much encouraged by the endeavors of the organizations that continue to struggle to promote language and culture programs and the people who volunteer to learn. My hope is that the community continues to support and nurture these kinds of opportunities. "Language and Culture", you cannot have one without the other!

My future vision of Kahnawà:ke is one of a truly Kanien'kéha community where our language is no longer taking place in isolated institutions. It is happening; in our homes, at the store, at the arena, at places of business, on the street, at social clubs. Everyone is fluently bilingual, Kanien'kéha and English. Everyone supports the idea that the two can co-exist, one for the purpose of securing who we are, and the other for economic advancement.

There is true respect for one another, and for

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those around us. We have worked through our issues and have risen above the practice of lateral violence. We can be happy for, and sincerely celebrate each other's successes.

We are environmentally aware, and demonstrate it by taking care of our Mother Earth, in that way ensuring the generations coming will enjoy a clean and healthy world.

We are a proud nation, we know our history and we are happy to share it. Kanien'kéha values are nurtured and maintained by all. Culture and traditions are practiced and healthy living is part of our daily lives. We have resolved our political differences and have established a viable economic

development initiative. Through the efforts of our leaders we continue to prove to those around us that we are a force to be reckoned with.

To some, this may seem like a tall order. However, conventions and practices are already in place, in every aspect, for us to reach this ideal. It's been my experience that, in important issues, we eventually do come together and make the right decisions. All we need is the will and the desire of the people.

In closing, I wish to thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my views, my dream and my vision.

Niawenhkó:wa tánon ó:nen ki'wáhi!

MY VISION OF KAHNAWÀ:KE KANIATARÍ:IO GILBERT



Wa'tkwanonhwerá:ton
Kahnawa'kehró:non,

There are many different objectives that I would like for Kahnawà:ke to achieve. In order to synthesize that vision and make this essay most productive, I shall

focus on only one facet of that vision: judicial development, which of course is my area of study. I am by no means an "expert." I have had occasion to study the American judicial system – in particular the state, federal, and tribal courts, and how each function and complement one another. My vision for Kahnawà:ke's future includes a strong and independent judiciary, free of political influence and popular coercion.

My current understanding from following press

releases, Eastern Door issues, and K-103 web-broadcasts, while living in Arizona is that the Kahnawa'kehró:non Ratitsénhaienhs currently has judicial development on its immediate horizon – specifically as agenda item number one for the Interim Legislative Coordinating Committee. While I applaud judicial development as the priority for Ratitsénhaienhs, I must express some degree of hesitancy or caution at the process for judicial development. My view of the I.L.C.C. is that of a step in the right direction, but the I.L.C.C. cannot substitute traditional law-making functions of the clan system that is so innate to our identity. Unfortunately, the traditional law-making institutions have – in my view – remained dormant for far too long. It is my hope that these pillars of our political culture step forward and reclaim the proper place within Kahnawà:ke's political life, sooner rather than later. I do not want to dwell

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upon the I.L.C.C. v. Traditional Government. I mention it in passing as a basis for my real concern regarding judicial development.

While in law school, I studied various tribal constitutions from the various nations throughout the United States, and drafted statutes for one of those nations in Michigan. My studies revealed two types of judicial systems in “Indian Country”: constitutionally-created court systems, and statutorily-created court systems.

Constitutionally-Created Court Systems:

A constitutionally-created system is created in a constitution. It forms part of the bedrock of a nation’s political, economic, and social fabric. It cannot be easily changed or influenced, and is the most independent form of a judiciary known. Its independence can be found in the fact that the court system cannot be dissolved simply because its rulings are unpopular, or because its rulings are contra to the desires of the political sphere of a government. Article III of the United States Constitution vests all judicial power in “one Supreme Court, and in such inferior courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish.” By its very language, Article III speaks of both a constitutionally-created court (U.S. Supreme Court), as well as statutorily-created courts (such inferior courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish).

The Supreme Court of the United States, theoretically, is independent because it cannot be dissolved by either Congress or the President; and because its justices are appointed for life, making them free of political or personal influence. Thus, as long as there is a United States government, there shall always be a Supreme Court and its justices shall serve for life.

“ **It is my hope that these pillars of our political culture step forward and reclaim proper place within Kahnawà:ke’s political life...** ”

Likewise, no matter how unpopular freedom of choice for women may be and no matter how many protesters may crowd the streets around the Court when abortion-related cases are argued, the Court is free from such personal, political and social influence. In theory. The Court could be dissolved if the constitution was amended, but the process to amend the constitution makes that scenario unlikely and further contributes to the strength and independence of the Court. The constitution does not, however, specify the number of justices that sit upon the Court – which over the centuries has varied from 7 to 11, and eventually settled on the current 9. Congress can change the law and “stack the Court,” which President Roosevelt considered in the 1930’s when the Court was ruling against his New Deal programs until its 1937 decision in *West Coast Hotel Co. v. Parrish*.

Statutorily-Created Court Systems:

A statutorily-created court system is a judiciary created by law, not by constitution. As previously mentioned, amending a constitution is difficult – but repealing or modifying a law can be accomplished by simple popular vote. A statutorily-created court system can be modified at the will of the politicians, which makes the judges of the courts subject to the graces of the political sphere. In other words, the judges end

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up being more concerned with making decisions based on the popular will, and not by independent and objective deliberations based on the rule of law.

The United States has a judiciary act, which created the various United States District Courts throughout the country, as well as various other judiciary act type statutes creating other courts – circuit courts of appeals, bankruptcy courts, tax courts, military tribunals, etc. But at any point, if Congress wished to change or modify the jurisdictions of the various courts, the Congress need only modify the corresponding judiciary act to accomplish its goal. Such a change need only require 50% plus one in the House, 50% plus one in the Senate, and the signature of the President. Such a change would not require the additional safeguard of securing the agreement of two-thirds of the 50 states.

I do not place as great an amount of faith in statutorily-created courts as constitutionally-created courts because of the risk that statutorily-created courts have judges that constantly preoccupy themselves with popular opinion. Judges should be preoccupied with adjudications based upon the facts and law, and facilitation of fair procedures in the cases over which they preside. Judges should not be concerned that their jobs would be placed in jeopardy if they rule based upon the law and facts, but that the ruling would be contra to the desires of the politicians - or worse, what is more popular to voters.

There is, however, a flip side: the concern that a life-tenured judge poses the chance of abusing their authority simply because they have a life-tenure. Such concerns can be easily overcome by subjecting judges to impeachment provisions, as well as establishing other limitations on judicial

service.

The Supreme Court of Arizona is a unique and interesting study in limitations upon judges. Consisting of five justices, the Supreme Court of Arizona's justices are limited by mandatory retirement at the age of 70. Justices of the Supreme Court are nominated by the governor, and confirmed by the state senate; but throughout their tenure on the state supreme court, the justices each serve terms of six years. Every six years, the electorate has an opportunity to weigh-in on the job performance of a justice. On the election ballot would appear the name of one or two justices and a question of whether the voter believed that the justice's job performance was satisfactory or unsatisfactory. If the total number of unsatisfactory votes amounts to at least 25% of the votes cast, then the Commission on Judicial Performance Review - consisting of lawyers, lower-court judges, law professors and other non-attorney appointees - convenes to study the written opinions of the justice, interview the justice, and determine whether there are actual grounds for removing the justice from their post or whether the vote is a result of simple unpopularity. Unpopularity is not sufficient grounds to remove a justice. The commission determines, based on the established standards for judicial performance, whether the justice meets the qualifications. If the commission votes to remove the justice, based on an objective investigation of the established standards, then the justice could lose their seat.

Judicial Development in Kahnawà:ke:

My vision for Kahnawà:ke's judiciary is to have a strong and independent court system, and in order to accomplish that goal – judicial development should be a part of a greater constitutional development. There may be those reading this that are now thinking “we already have a constitution

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– the Kaianerenhsera’kó:wa.” I do not disagree with that, but I have read several written versions of the Kaianerenhsera’kó:wa, and it is insufficient for the needs of Kahnawa’kehró:non. The Kaianerenhsera’kó:wa is the constitution of the Confederacy, but the plain language of the document sheds no light upon how a single community, or even the Kanien’kehá:ka Nation for that matter, shall govern itself. By “how,” I mean the actual procedures and administrative mechanisms that function as part of governance; I do not dispute that the principles and values of the Rotinohsonnión:we Confederacy, the Kanien’kehá:ka Nation and the community of Kahnawà:ke are all embedded in the Kaianerenhsera’kó:wa. Nor do I dispute that the document contains some procedures for the Confederacy, but it does not go far enough for progressive development purposes in Kahnawà:ke. I believe that constitutional development for Kahnawà:ke, and for the Kanien’kehá:ka Nation as a whole, is an important task that should be undertaken with all deliberate speed. Such development need not, and should not, upset the Kaianerenhsera’kó:wa, but rather should act as a supplement and be “added to the rafters.”

The constitution and laws of the State of Arizona prescribe how the Arizona government functions. The constitution and laws of the State of New York prescribe how the New York government functions. The constitution and laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts prescribe how the Massachusetts government functions. Each is not the exact same as the other; each of those governments cannot supersede the Constitution of the United States, and the functions of each can be rendered unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By analogy: there is no reason why Kahnawà:ke

cannot develop its own Constitution and laws, which could be different from the Constitution and laws of Kanehsatá:ke or Akwesáhsne – yet all of our laws can be held to scrutiny under a Kanien’kehá:ka national government and court system – and even further – under the Rotinohsonnión:we confederate government and court system. My hope is that one day such a graduated development at the community, national, and confederate level shall become reality, but this essay is specific to my vision for Kahnawà:ke.

Returning, now, to the I.L.C.C. and the use of that process for developing a Kahnawà:ke court system - my concern is that the I.L.C.C. cannot accomplish developing a constitutionally-created court system. If the I.L.C.C. process is used to create a judiciary in Kahnawà:ke, then the I.L.C.C. process can be used to change the judiciary in Kahnawà:ke just as easily. This would result in a statutorily-created court system and lends itself to instability. We should, instead, focus on actual constitutional development in Kahnawà:ke that would see an actual balance of authority between an administrative branch, legislative branch, and judicial branch of government. The actual constitution of the United States was drafted in less than 100 days. If the Americans were capable of such a task, the Kanien’kehá:ka of Kahnawà:ke can accomplish the same, and probably in less time.

Criminal Justice in Kahnawà:ke:

The rule of law is important to me, but so is fairness. One major demonstration of unfairness that I have come across - particularly in the last year - has been an absence of legal representation for indigent defendants in tribal courts. Under the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968, Congress said that an “Indian” being prosecuted in tribal

court has the right to an attorney at their “own expense.” 25 U.S.C § 1302(6). My first assignment in my last job was to conduct research for one Dine (Navajo) client who is currently on death row. The Dine Nation knew, because of the nature of the crime, that the federal government was going to step in and prosecute the offenders, so the Nation never moved forward with prosecuting him in Dine court. What partly led to a conviction and sentence of death was the fact that the F.B.I. understood that there is no right to an attorney while in “tribal custody,” and while he was in tribal custody for three weeks, the F.B.I. was free to visit him as many times as they pleased and ask him questions and elicit confessions. The Nation knew the F.B.I. was building a federal case and just kept him in tribal custody and allowed the F.B.I.’s continual returns for more interrogations. The F.B.I. exploited this weakness in the system, under the pretext of “respecting tribal sovereignty.” They went to him and told him about how much more they could do for him if he only cooperated more, and after they had enough – the United States Attorney’s Office in Phoenix sought the death penalty. If our client had been represented, his counsel could have instructed him on the consequences of answering certain questions, and could possibly have negotiated a plea for him. But he was not entitled to counsel. That should not have been allowed to happen.

I think Kahnawà:ke could and should prosecute its own offenses. I think Kahnawà:ke could and should rehabilitate its own offenders. I bring up this matter of public defenders because I believe it is important. Indigent defendants in a Kahnawà:ke criminal justice system should be entitled to effective assistance of counsel. The words “own expense,” in my view, is a war on impoverished individuals and impoverished nations throughout the United States, waged by

Congress in 1968. Nowadays, the richer nations are able to have public defender offices, but many of those offices are more often than not staffed by individuals who have undergone minimal education and training programs, if any; few have graduated from law school, less have passed a bar exam and are licensed.

I want to add, however, that a public defender is not simply a free lawyer to anyone who wants one. A public defender is a lawyer who helps someone who has been charged with a crime – who faces stiff fines and/or imprisonment – but who cannot afford to hire an attorney because of a limited income. A public defender is not someone who defends a person being sued for breaching a contract, or being sued for assault, or theft, etc. A public defender does not become involved in private litigious matters, but instead stands up to assist a poor person when their liberty is at stake. An office of public defender, to provide effective assistance of counsel to indigent defendants, should be a part of judicial development in Kahnawà:ke.

Other Thoughts:

There is one additional benefit that a strong and independent judiciary brings to Kahnawà:ke that I want to stress: economic development. Recently, I was listening to a lecture given by Justice Stephen Breyer of the U.S. Supreme Court at my alma mater. Justice Breyer told a story about Alan Greenspan, former Chairman of the Federal Reserve System, who testified before Congress on how third-world countries could better develop economically. Justice Breyer quoted Greenspan’s testimony that third-world countries should develop strong and independent judiciaries so that contracts can be enforced. Any company wishing to do business in a third-world country wants to know that its investments are protected and the only way for that to occur is if there is a strong and independent

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judiciary that could adjudicate the matter based on the principles of the rule of law, and the facts of the case before it – instead of being concerned with popular or political will. A company does not want to invest \$1 billion into a country, and when a breach of a contract occurs, the court rules against the company simply because the local party is popular and the company is not. The court has to rule based on whether there was a breach, and whether the breach entitles the plaintiff to a remedy. Were Kahnawà:ke to have a strong and independent judiciary, it could open the door for greater investment from outside companies and assist in the development of our own economy.

Prior to concluding, I would like to highlight the court system within the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska. Under their constitution, the qualification for trial judges requires graduation from law school and admission into the bar of

in the civil context, a law suit for a breach of contract would ensure that the trial was conducted according to the proper rules of procedure and evidence, but if the losing party feels that the award was unfair - they could appeal, and the appellate court could make the decision to reduce the award.

Conclusion:

My vision for the future development in Kahnawà:ke includes a strong and independent judiciary, capable of fairly adjudicating both civil and criminal matters. There are other “sub-topics” that require further discussion in order to accomplish that basic goal: qualifications for judges and attorneys/advocates, civil and criminal rules of procedure, rules of evidence, rules of appellate procedure, standards of review, how to establish a jury pool, qualifications for jurors, establishing and maintaining rehabilitative institutions/prisons, parole standards and

“ My vision for the future development in Kahnawà:ke includes a strong and independent judiciary, capable of fairly adjudicating both civil and criminal matters. ”

any jurisdiction. However, the appellate judge qualifications in Winnebago requires only a high school diploma. I found such a dynamic perplexing, and one of my professors explained the philosophy to me: in Winnebago, the nation is concerned that parties receive a “valid trial” under the rule of law - thus requiring that the trial be conducted by a legal expert who has been educated on the rules of procedure and evidence, but at the appellate level, the Winnebago are concerned with “fairness.” Thus, for example,

conditions, statutory guidelines for sentencing, statutory guidelines for personal claims, statutes of limitation, etc. Each of these topics, and more, deserve further discussion, exploration, and development. We need a strong and independent judiciary in Kahnawà:ke, but the best way to accomplish that is to engage in broader constitutional development.

Kahnawà:ke is ready, let the work begin.
Thók niowén:nake niáhkwe, Niawenhkó:wa.

FUTURE VISION OF KAHNAWÀ:KE LAUREN PAUL



My vision for the future is optimistic. I believe that with all of the good minds, intelligence and resilience existing in Kahnawà:ke today, we will improve our present day conditions.

Upon reading the essays of the grade school and high school students, I am in agreement with all of their wishes and suggestions for improvement. These young people are showing depth of insight and a high degree of promise for our future.

Unfortunately, with budget restraints getting tighter and tighter, we must always find ways to carry on current programs. We have many young people pursuing business and management degrees; their input and creativity are sure to yield financial solutions to our current financial woes.

The following ideas could generate legal, long term solid sources of employment on every level for our people. A community co-op owned grocery store, big box store and, finally, some specialty shops that would carry high end merchandise designer lines such as Fendi, Louis Vuitton, Coco Chanel, etc. All of these enterprises would serve the community and serve as a drawing venue to outside consumers. That would solve the dilemma of our lack of a town swimming pool. Just think, our future - our young people could have amenities available to them so maybe the destructive faction of youth would stop the tagging, loitering and destroying property.

I am for tougher penalties for reckless driving,

drunken driving, drug possession, and any kind of crime which involves trafficking in anything that is even remotely illegal. The drunken and reckless driving laws are too lax and the community has already suffered a severe blow to our reputation due to the drug busts. Regarding these negative aspects that presently plague us, I think we need to stop being so apathetic and develop a pro-active stance towards criminal activities. We need to pressure our leadership to enforce tougher penalties.

Make parents responsible for knowing the

“ **...I think we need to stop being so apathetic and develop a pro-active stance towards criminal activities.** ”

whereabouts of their minor children. When I was a child, my father told me that if I destroyed anyone's property, he'd have to pay for the repairs. How about making parents financially responsible for their youths' damages? There are times when I cannot sleep and go outdoors to smoke as I do not smoke indoors. At 3:00 a.m., there are young kids walking around, going who knows where, and doing who knows what. Very seldom during these early hours do I see Peacekeeper patrols.

As a child, I used to play with grasshoppers that could be found in the hundreds in my backyard. Now there are none. However, I still have hopes for our environment. If we all make a concerted effort to stop polluting our land, air and water; all of the life forms will once again thrive. We need to encourage our kids and each other to continue

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with the pursuit of a good education. No matter what is going on in a person's life or has gone on - a person is never too old to go back to school. Our children, especially, need to be encouraged to empower their self-worth through education. Even if they are not honor students, they can all make something of themselves with an academic or technical education.

Empowering each other through building each other up instead of pushing each other down is another issue we need to improve upon. Peoples' personal issues are exactly that: their personal business only. The outside communities and press especially, love to go on about our short comings and internal negative issues.

We are First Nations: Onkwehonwe, it is our responsibility to set the example for the outside communities and, more importantly, for the world. As people with good minds geared for the greater good, we can do this.

Ultimately, our young people are gifted and aware of the world today. They truly care about where we are headed as a People and their commitment to helping us get there is extraordinary. This is why my view of the future is optimistic. The answers to our quandaries are found in the minds and attitudes of our young people and amongst ourselves.

MY VISION OF KAHNAWÀ:KE RON ABRAIRA



My vision of Kahnawà:ke is a community that achieves economic independence. Kahnawà:ke as an economically independent community means that it is financially self-sufficient and can self sustain based on the generation and management of collective wealth. In more specific

terms, economic self-sufficiency to me means that the government institutions of the community will self-generate more in annual revenue in any fiscal year than they will receive from the external governments of Canada and Quebec.

I sincerely believe that this achievement will actually improve the socio-economic conditions in Kahnawà:ke and will go to great lengths to

“ ... I sincerely believe that this achievement [self-sufficiency] will actually improve the socio-economic conditions in Kahnawà:ke and will go to great lengths to contribute to a sense of greater unity for the community... ”

contribute to a sense of greater unity for the community. It will also manifest more support for the governing institutions that currently manage our collective wealth.

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In round numbers, the community currently receives somewhere in the range of \$50 million dollars per year in funding from external governments, we should be thinking of self-generating roughly half that amount as a start, or about \$25 million per year.

There is nothing wrong with receiving funding at the current level, or negotiating with external governments to continue receiving this funding. But, keep in mind that funding from external governments is always based on their limits, and they will always attempt to provide the minimum. Also, they will always attempt to place controls on the use of these funds.

From an economic perspective, there really is nothing wrong with the status quo in Kahnawà:ke, in fact, it is readily apparent that the community is doing quite well. Casual observation can validate this reality; there is considerable wealth in the community. This wealth can be explained by hard effort and work of many people, certain tax exemptions, and certain areas where we enjoy lower living costs; this all translates into disposable income, which is then spent on many things as can be easily seen in the community.

However, from a collective perspective, there never seems to be enough funding to accomplish many things, and fund raising itself occurs all the time.

The roughly \$50 million in government transfer payments that makes its way into Kahnawà:ke

each year is essentially our wealth that is managed by the collective. We have a very well developed and effective public sector. They manage our public sector activities and projects through the numerous institutions controlled by boards and committees made up of community members. It is difficult to pinpoint how much money comes into

the community from the cigarette trade, but clearly it is significant, this wealth is in the hands of individuals. It is also spent in the purchase of goods and services for individuals, but does not fund any public sector activities or projects. In some ways, these two sources

of revenue seem to polarize the perceptions of wealth generation in the community, and the entire collective is less unified.

My vision is to shift this balance more towards collective wealth management; I believe this will be best for the community in the long run.

How can collective wealth be generated, or better managed to address this challenge? Collective wealth can be generated based on some form of a taxation system, but it would appear unanimous that people would be opposed to this method. Or, it can be built on economic development strategies that allow for the collective development and management of certain industries and projects.

Native American communities in North America are moving towards economic self-sufficiency based on three models for community economic development:

“ ...from a collective perspective, there never seems to be enough funding to accomplish many things, and fund raising itself occurs all the time... ”

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- Development of natural resources on their territories;
- Management of land claim based revenues;
- Creation and collective management of gaming based enterprises.

Kahnawà:ke does not really possess any significant natural resources, with the possible exception of water flowing through the river, and any major economic development project based on that resource would likely be an environmental nightmare.

The Seigneurie of Sault Saint Louis “land claim” is certainly an interesting development for Kahnawà:ke, and should contribute to our collective wealth in the future. This may come in the form of lump sum payments and /or continued annual revenues.

The development of collective based gaming enterprises is by far the best option for Kahnawà:ke. In fact, it is by far the most successful economic development strategy ever in Native communities. Yet, the attempted creation of collective based gaming in Kahnawà:ke remains a controversial topic. Surprisingly, gaming itself already exists in many forms in the community, and continues to thrive.

The two previous referendum results regarding gaming still remain puzzling? It is almost as if many people prefer the status quo? After many years, it is difficult to see any collective

“Kahnawà:ke does not possess any significant natural resources, with the possible exception of water flowing through the river...”

benefits derived from the current structure of the gaming industry in Kahnawà:ke. In addition, consider the fact that Loto-Quebec games are available at many places in Kahnawà:ke. Make no mistake about it, when you purchase products from Loto-Quebec you are essentially paying a “voluntary tax” to the Quebec government, that is the same government that invaded Mohawk territory just eighteen years ago; when you visit and play at the casino in Montreal, you are doing the same. How is it that we allow Loto-Quebec to profit on gaming in Kahnawà:ke more than any other entity? To my knowledge, they have never made any donation to any Kahnawà:ke activity or organization.

Critics of the past attempts by the previous economic development institutions (and indirectly the MCK) to develop a “community owned” gaming project seemed to point to three areas of contention:

1. They did not trust the individuals who were leading the project;
2. They claimed it would bring more problems to the community;
3. They claimed it is not our way to profit on the bad habits of others.

What do you think?

In reverse order, what about the idea of profiting from the weakness of others? While I am not opposed to the cigarette industry from an

economic development perspective, as it clearly brings certain economic benefits, let's be realistic. The cigarette industry is the industry that really profits from the weakness of other human beings; it is an industry of death and disease, as several hundreds of thousands of people in North America die from smoking related disease every year. In contrast, the vast majority of people who enjoy gaming do it for social recreational purposes.

Secondly, what about bringing more problems to the community? Well, on what can we blame any problem of the past fifteen years on? Life is challenging, there will always be problems. Is the community better off with significant wealth placed in the hands of individuals, or in the hands of community institutions? There will always be a mix anyway; and community institutions provide a large salary base for the community that is greatly dispersed to many individuals.

The first point is driven by a lack of trust and most acceptable as a position. My view is that the only reason we are not able to achieve broad based approval for a community owned gaming project in Kahnawà:ke is that we cannot agree on what "community owned" means. Opponents of the project put forward arguments against the people involved, and could not agree that any type of collective body or organization could be set up to manage the profits. This is where the project development comes to disagreements, not necessarily on the project, but on who controls the profits. At least this position is understandable; critics put forward this position as there continues to be a lack of trust in governing institutions.

They have a point; however, continued thinking along this line will not benefit the community in

the future. Financial resources are critical in the world we now live in; this is a reality. Collective financial wealth is necessary to ensure a quality of life for the citizens of any jurisdiction, Kahnawà:ke included, unless we are comfortable with continued dependence on the Canadian government.

“ ... Life is challenging, there will always be problems...”

This historical lack of trust should not take away from a vision of the future. Also, when examining our reality it becomes questionable as significant wealth is already managed by the collective institutions from the community. This is in the form of government funding, the MCK pension fund, and even the assets on deposit at the Caisse Populaire Kahnawake. In addition, much of the funding that flows through the MCK is actually dispersed to other Kahnawà:ke institutions that basically function on their own.

So, what about gaming as an economic development strategy?

According to The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, gaming works as an economic development strategy because:

- Community governments develop the projects themselves rather than having them imposed upon them;
- Gaming empowers the community to exercise its independence as a development resource;
- Gaming (when collectively managed) creates a tax base, allowing community governments to fully fund their social programs;

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- Gaming supports “nation building” activities, further encouraging the creation of strong institutions of self-governance.

It is difficult to find anything wrong with that.

Their research goes on to say that community governments can build culturally-appropriate institutions of self government to support their gaming facilities and facilitate further economic diversification.

“ **Are you in favor of a community owned casino?** ”

Kahnawà:ke has already developed several institutions to support economic development and further to support gaming. Why is there a lack of trust in them? They are fully governed and managed by community members and assist many in their development ideas and projects. They also publish annual reports that include audited statements and are public information, handed out to everyone in the community.

Yet, when the economic development institutions put forward the idea of collective owned gaming, these ideas were voted down. The interesting result is to examine what happened instead, and then to observe what is the current state of some key industries.

Place your self back fourteen years ago; the community narrowly defeated the casino proposal that asked the question:

Are you in favor of a community owned casino?

Look at what is now happening; the community does not have any collective owned gaming enterprise, yet is seeing the growth of private gaming facilities. Kahnawà:ke may be the only

Native American community in all of North America that has privately held gaming facilities, with little benefits going to the collective, yet twice the community voted down a community owned gaming facility, worried about who would control the profits? Well, who will?

Perhaps a little more abstract, but consider placing yourself back twenty five years or so ago. Imagine the MCK/ economic development institution had developed a proposal and presented it to the community for

a collective run cigarette industry (this could have been formed by one factory and four or five stores at strategic locations in the territory). In support of this concept there would have been the creation of a community organization with the responsibility to manage and distribute profits towards community projects. Would this concept have been rejected based on the same point of “who controls it?” Yet look at the reality of what happened, many factories, way too many stores, and employees without any form of benefits. Who controls this industry?

I truly admire the entrepreneurial drive of individuals to create private businesses and profit from them. However, my vision is that the collective needs to play a larger role in managing some key industries so that the collective can benefit more from them. There are considerable spin-off opportunities from gaming for the private sector to build on.

Once a gaming facility develops, Native communities expand through diversification into many other areas. Most commonly in the USA are expansions into businesses that directly support the gaming facility such as hotels, restaurants, and

shops. Afterwards, they can establish businesses that build upon tourists but not necessarily gaming customers; these are usually gas stations, golf courses, water based attractions, museums, and even outlet malls. In the case of Kahnawà:ke, many of these businesses already exist and are run by the private sector, that's fine. They can continue to grow and prosper.

People may ask why we can't generate significant wealth based on another industry or economic development strategy. There are other economic development concepts / strategies to consider, yet after analysis, they do not hold up, here are examples:

The light assembly "factory" in a clean industry that causes no form of pollution, creates 300 or so jobs, which will be mostly held by Kahnawà'kehró:non, and makes a bunch of money and profit? Unfortunately, no such project exists. Most manufacturing jobs are moving to low-cost producing countries, we really cannot compete on labour costs with these jurisdictions.

Tourism as an economic development strategy built on itself? It is a break-even proposition at best and could be a significant money loser. However, it can be successful when supported by a gaming facility. In fact, it can be done in a more interesting way and offer plenty of spin-offs when supported by a gaming facility. The usual spin-offs are projects like a world class cultural center/museum, generally a hotel conference center, permanent pow-wow facilities, support for our golf course industry, etc. Tourism on its own for Kahnawà:ke is interesting, but provides minimal benefit to the collective. Remember that external jurisdictions make money on their tax systems which benefit from large numbers of tourists; Kahnawà:ke has no such system to make collective wealth on tourists visiting the community.

What about other conventional development ideas such as an industrial park along route 132, including warehousing and shipping? The main points against this type of development are that we would have to compete with everywhere around us based on no real advantage. Also, these ideas would use enormous amounts of land in relation to the number of jobs they would create, and any industrial type shipping would cause tremendous pollution.

Also, gaming is in no way a temporary fad, the numbers are truly impressive, 223 "tribes" in the USA in 28 different states, and also four Canadian provinces have some form of Native gaming. In the USA alone, it is a \$26 billion industry on an annual basis, creating 700,000 jobs (both for Native people and non-Natives). As noted earlier, gaming is by far the most successful economic development strategy ever for Native American communities, by far.

For Kahnawà:ke, a moderate sized gaming facility somewhere along auto route 30, nowhere near the village, along with a small hotel conference center, some exhibition grounds, without a golf

“
**... Kahnawà:ke has no such system
to make collective wealth on tourists
visiting the community.**”

course, as it would only support our existing ones. Profits controlled and managed by a collective type organization. Many community members have probably visited Native gaming operations in the USA by now, the sites are truly impressive, and why shouldn't we have one?

Does it sound too easy? It isn't, and will require hard work, effort and some compromise in creating an organization to be "community owned." We can see that we essentially have a community "owned"

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financial institution based on the cooperative model and it works, I support this concept. The caisse populaire Kahnawà:ke is a highly successful development for the community, creating many jobs and providing a needed service. Unfortunately, in terms of collective revenue generation it paid roughly \$677,000 in income taxes last year (to an external government(s) I assume), and nothing directly to any Kahnawà:ke government. Mohawk Internet Technologies (MIT) is a “community owned” business and managed indirectly through Tawatohnhi’saktha (this has evolved into the community ownership of Onkwawista and investment in Continent 8). This investment contributes to the collective wealth to the tune of several millions of dollars over the past years. These are examples of success that illustrate two key concepts:

“ **What about the Canadian and Quebec governments? They preach economic development and self-sufficiency, but always based on their models....funding provided by the government of Canada and Quebec is always subject to their limits.** ”

- A collective ownership structure; and,
- A business model that allows for profits to be transferred to governing institutions in Kahnawà:ke.

What about the Canadian and Quebec governments? They preach economic

development and self-sufficiency, but always based on their models. Funding comes with ever increasing accountability requirements which reduce flexibility for us. Also, funding provided by the government of Canada and Quebec is always subject to their limits.

In the short term, remember that the community is well funded, but certain projects will continue to slip through the maze of funding parameters or policy of the external governments that provide the funds. Self generated revenue derived from gaming can provide additional revenues that can fund anything, without having to conform to policies and agreements. As a start, just consider these projects:

- New cultural centre (usually the premier project in Native communities);
- Library;
- Enhanced sports facilities;
- Theatre;
- Various infrastructure projects, water systems down the OCR or 207.

In the long term view, economic independence, built on economic self-sufficiency is an important part of creating a self-sustaining community. If we take a seven generation perspective; it certainly seems like a worthy vision, more relevant than ever before. Economic independence will be based on collective wealth generation and collective wealth management, a community owned gaming project is the most realistic idea to get this process moving forward.

MY VISION OF KAHNAWÀ:KE SKAWENNI:IO BARNES



When I first heard about this project, I was filled both with apprehension and excitement. Excitement because this initiative provides the opportunity to take a step forward as a community and catalyze proactive dialogue and conversation within Kahnawà:ke. In my view, a discussion of the state of political affairs is a crucial part of that dialogue because not only do the politics of this community affect each and every one of us today, but they also determine the path and direction that we will continue on into the future.

I had feelings of apprehension because there is tension, and even hostility, surrounding much of the political discussion in Kahnawà:ke. It is no secret – we live in a community filled with a broad spectrum of competing political opinions and stances. Normally, it would be healthy to have so many differing opinions and ideas. However, it becomes problematic when political affinities are so strong and uncompromising that they preclude political groups from even meeting and discussing issues face to face. It is problematic because our political differences have created divisions within the community – divisions that are felt by everybody.

We are always talking about seven generations, how we should be living our lives in consideration of the future – to “live life in consideration of the coming generations, to think of continuing generations of our families, to think of our grandchildren and of those yet unborn, whose faces are coming from beneath the ground.” In

order to leave something for our future, whether it is land, identity, values, or well being, we have to come together as a community. We do not live in a vacuum; the political reality of today is that we are surrounded by two of the strongest polities in the world, Canada and the United States. With that being said, there are larger battles to fight and we will not accomplish anything if we continue with this vicious cycle of infighting. One of my favorite analogies about the power of unity is the one about

“ ...this initiative provides the opportunity to take a step forward as a community and catalyze proactive dialogue and conversation in Kahnawà:ke. ”

sticks: if you have one stick, you can break it. But if you have many bound together, you can't break them. United, we will be a stronger force.

Before continuing any further, I would like to make two points very clear. First, I am very well aware that what I have to say will likely be strongly criticized; I hope it is. My intentions in writing are to provoke thought and discussion. Second, this is my opinion and I am not, nor do I claim to be, speaking for anybody but myself. We are a people who pride ourselves on being the world's first people's democracy – I refuse to confine myself to conventional thought and reserve my right to speak my mind.

As mentioned earlier, uniting our people is crucial if we are going to have a fighting chance of surviving as a community and maintaining our values and identity well into the future. Unity. What does that mean? To me, it means coming together as

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a community, regardless of political or religious affiliation. Whether it be Longhouse people, Band Council, Catholics, Protestants, Great Law, or Kariwi:io. At the end of the day, we are all the same, we are still people – we share common history and experiences. Our relatives came to Kahnawà:ke from the Mohawk Valley in the 17th century and even after over 300 years and everything they went through, we're still here. If you look through history, you will find that they did whatever it took to survive – they took advantage of the political and geographic positions they were in to come out the best they possibly could. The ultimate end was survival. In contemporary times, I think that to achieve unity on a community level would require restructuring our political institutions.

How would we restructure our political institutions and what would it look like? Obviously, I cannot provide an answer; it would have to be the result of a community effort and what the People decide as a whole. What I can provide, though, is my vision of how I would see something like this working. Ideally, there would only be one system of government in Kahnawà:ke, instead of the concurrent competing systems of today. Does that mean get rid of one system and keep the other, or vice versa? Of course not – to be blunt, that would be foolish. On the one hand, the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke carries on relations with the Canadian Government. As I mentioned earlier, we do not live in a vacuum; there is a political reality outside of Kahnawà:ke and it would be more proactive to continue diplomatic relations rather than to ignore reality. Does that mean we should trust the Canadian government and be enslaved to the Indian Act? Of course not! Experience tells us that it would be illogical to ever trust the Canadian government again; like every government in the world, it works in its own self-interest. Concerning the Indian Act, while it was designed to destroy Indian people, I believe that it

can only destroy us if we let it; the human mind cannot be enslaved. In terms of the Indian Act and the Canadian government, we are in a position to exploit the system – we might as well take advantage of the resources and strengthen ourselves while we

“ Longhouse people, Band Council, Catholics, Protestants, Great Law, or Kariwi:io. At the end of the day, we are all the same, we are still people - we share common history and experiences...”

still can. The point is that since there is a political reality, we have to maintain a relationship with the Canadian government whether we like it or not. Since that is the state of things, we might as well be smart about it and work in our own self-interest as a community.

On the other hand, there is the Longhouse system that works in the framework of the Rotinonhsón:ni Confederacy. I think that it is crucial to work in this framework for multiple reasons. First, we share a history at some level or another with the rest of the Confederacy and we are all culturally similar, which makes us especially compatible. Second, the more political allies we have, the stronger we become as a political force and the more capable we become of defending ourselves against assaults on our communities: at one point under this system, we were the strongest political force in North America.

With the Great Law providing the framework for interactions within the Confederacy, Kahnawà:ke would have the freedom to develop its own system of government on the local level in a way that is

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compatible. Some have insisted that in order to have a “traditional” government in Kahnawà:ke, there have to be 9 chiefs as stated in the Great Law. If having 9 chiefs is the most efficient, then great. However, I think that the concept is the product of a gross perversion of history. Since contact with the Europeans up until the government that was in place before the Indian Act, there were never 9 chiefs on a local level in the Mohawk Nation. Rather, the people adjusted their model for their needs at any given time, which logically makes more sense. Local government would be most efficient if tailored to the needs of the people.

It is important to understand that government is

a means to an end – the end being the welfare, health, and security of the people. I make that point because it is easy to fall into the trap of believing that government is the end goal, which can prove to be very dangerous if taken to the extreme, as many of our own people have seen and experienced.

In the end, if we are able to take a step forward and mend the divisions in our community, a new structure of government would have to be developed and put in place with the consensus of the people; it will not work if it is superimposed by the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke or the Longhouse. It is time to step up as a community,

MY VISION OF KAHNAWÀ:KE TIMMY NORTON



Government/Political

In our modern updated world its very hard to see Kahnawà:ke in a Traditional Government setting. However, as part of my vision for Kahnawà:ke, I think Traditional Governance is the way to go. I know that the community has been saying

this for many years now but I for one cannot see how it will work in modern day Kahnawà:ke.

I am not a “Traditional” person who attends ceremonies and participates in any longhouse in Kahnawà:ke but I do believe in our Traditional ways but at this time I don’t see how we can adapt to a 21st century Traditional way of life.

Possible Solution

First of all we need to get clear guidance from the acting Traditional people in Kahnawà:ke and this

means one clear leader, not several different factions. So this has to happen first, a united Traditional house and I believe the community will follow.

Economic Development/Self-sufficiency

I believe that our future lies in our past, our Traditional ways and customs have to be used more for tourism and economic growth. Our future also must include better deals with the current economic ventures such as Mohawk Internet Technologies. I believe that when this concept was first dreamed of back in 1998 or even earlier than that, no one saw the potential so we were destined to be landlords to a multi million dollar industry. The future must see Kahnawà:ke gets a better deal.

Of course there is still the question of a Casino here in Kahnawà:ke. I am a strong supporter of our own native run casino in Kahnawà:ke, whether it is run by the MCK, Tewatohnisaktha or some type of community board, we must explore the possibility

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of such a venture in Kahnawà:ke again, for our future.

As one of the most viable opportunities currently operating in Kahnawà:ke the Cigarette trade must continue. However regulations, control and recognition must be obtained for the industry to continue to be an economic option in Kahnawà:ke.

Idea

A huge Pow Wow/trade show should be organized every year on St Helen's Island to showcase Kahnawà:ke talent and ingenuity, attracting people from all over the world. Profits from this venture can be used to enhance current programs.

Social Problems

Many problems in Kahnawà:ke are directly related to alcohol and drug abuse. Our over worked health services must be enhanced to attack this

problem.

The issue of banishment for convicted drug dealers should be looked at again, however, with the wide ranging affects banishment will have on a family, retribution and reconciliation should be considered as well. People have to be given the chance to help themselves.

Idea/Solution

A three-strike system should be adapted to any banishment law considered.

Finally, I would like to know that my grandchildren will have the opportunities I had with getting a piece of land, building a home and living in a community that is self sufficient and is maintaining our identity.

I am 50 years old and the things I would like to see before I die are a Kahnawà:ke run casino, traditional government, more land for the future generations and jobs for everyone.

MY FUTURE VISION OF KAHNAWÀ:KE TREENA DELORMIER

I have a vision for Kahnawà:ke. My vision is not my current perception of Kahnawà:ke, it is what I hope and believe our community is able to become. I created a vision statement to express broad goals to which Kahnawà:ke would aspire.

My vision of Kahnawà:ke is that all Kahnawa'kehró:non are well in mind, body and spirit. Kahnawa'kehró:non participate in the governance of



the community through traditional decision-making processes and celebrate our sacred ceremonies. Kanien'kéha is spoken and used proudly. The values of our families and formal organizations are firmly rooted in Kaianere'ko:wa (The Great Law of Peace) and the teachings of Ohén:ton Kariwatéhkwen. People are knowledgeable about the history or our community, the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk Nation) and the

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Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy. People are kind, accepting and respectful to each other.

My vision, however, is that of only one person. The essays resulting from this project will surely be an impressive collection of diverse and innovative ideas reflecting the individual strengths of Kahnawa'kehró:non. This project is important because it shows that the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke places value on the ideas of Kahnawa'kehró:non. However, the most powerful vision is one that would be created by the people of Kahnawà:ke, through a respectful process with broad and meaningful participation. I believe this because I have experienced the power of a shared community vision.

For too long, too many Kahnawa'kehró:non have suffered the debilitating consequences of diabetes, many dying years before their time. In 1994, when the Kahnawake Schools Diabetes Prevention Project began, one of the first objectives was to create a vision with community members. I participated in this gathering of people who were deeply concerned with ways to prevent diabetes. Our group made commitments to action in our daily lives, families and organizations and formed the KSDPP Community Advisory Board. The Community Advisory Board created a vision for the planned diabetes prevention project and our commitments to action.

The KSDPP Vision is:

“All Kahnawa'kehró:non are in excellent health. Diabetes no longer exists. All the children and adults eat healthily at all meals and are physically active daily. The children are actively supported by their parents and family who provide nutritious foods obtainable from family gardens, local food distributors and the natural environment. The schools as well as community organizations,

maintain programs and policy that reflect and reinforce healthy eating habits and daily physical activity. There are a variety of physical activities for all people offered at a wide range of recreational facilities in the community. All people accept the responsibility to cooperatively maintain a well community for the future Seven Generations.”

I am still involved with KSDPP today. The strength of the vision we created is a strong factor uniting those of us who continue to work and volunteer for a well community, free of diabetes. Our vision is powerful. However, it holds inspiration for a part of Kahnawa'kehró:non, mainly for those of us who created it, believe in it and work for diabetes prevention. It is a vision created to address diabetes, a health problem, by active community members. KSDPP and others acknowledge that work remains to create a broader, more positive-oriented vision ensuring

**“ For too long, too many
Kahnawa'kehró:non have
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consequences of diabetes... ”**

health and well-being and extends further than dealing with dis-eases. But this health vision has the danger of being embraced only by the ‘health types’ in our community. We need a holistic vision that brings together all types in our community.

It is possible that this visioning project proposed by the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke is an indication of the pressing need for Kahnawa'kehró:non to come together not around an immediate crisis, but around a positive vision for the future.

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ONKWARIWA'SHON:'A

Through this publication, the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke seeks to promote awareness and dialogue by informing the community on its activities and by analyzing the important issues affecting Kahnawà:ke.

The editorials serve to provide a forum for commentary from the Mohawk Council and/or its staff, while serving as a catalyst for community input. The editorial views expressed are the sole responsibility of the author, and may not represent those of the MCK or those of the editorial staff. Please direct all correspondence to the Communications Department.

A digital version of this publication are available on www.kahnawake.com. (Click on the 'News' Tab, then Onkwariwa'shon:'a")

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The strength of Kahnawà:ke vision would be reflected in how widely it is shared and how deeply it resonates with the values and aspirations of the people of Kahnawà:ke. The only way to create such a powerful vision is for as many Kahnawa'kehró:non as possible to create it in a process that is respectful, inclusive and values each person contribution. Our people are internationally recognized for the ability to come together in this manner. We have the knowledge and tools to do this. We just need to find a way to collect our minds and spirits around this issue. Until this time Kahnawa'kehró:non's vision for Kahnawà:ke is...to be determined.

THERE'S MORE ONLINE AT KAHNAWAKE.COM

The entire Visioning Series and several past editions of Onkwariwa'shon:'a can be read in their entirety online at Kahnawake.com!

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