

THE EASTERN DOOR

KAN IEN'KEHA:KA NA'KON:KE RONTEHNHOHANONHNHA

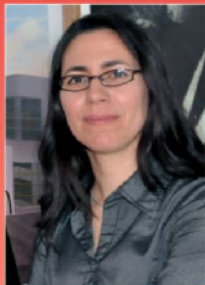
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THIS WEEK



The fellowship of the art

A Kahnawake woman was awarded with a prestigious fellowship for her interesting animated take on a Mohawk story.

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Residential school lecture

McGill held a compelling and insightful look into the effects of residential schools this week.

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Basketball, circa 1971

Howard S. Billings was once a basketball powerhouse, and three Kahnawake athletes helped to win the 1971 championship.

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Proposed changes to Native education won't fly here

RICHARD TARDIF
THE EASTERN DOOR

A study criticizing the federal government's Aboriginal Post-Secondary education program says it is riddled with Band Council fraud, favouritism and lack of transparency and needs to be put in the hands of the federal government.

Called Free to Learn: Giving Aboriginal Youth Control Over Their Post-Secondary Education, it was released in mid-March. Authors Calvin Helin, a prominent Aboriginal author, lawyer and entrepreneur, and Dave Snow, a University of Calgary doctoral candidate propose the creation of transparent Aboriginal Post Secondary Savings Accounts that would be opened at birth for every registered 'Indian'.

"That isn't the way it happens in Kahnawake," said Director of Education Edward Cross.

"It was in the 1970s when a resolution by the band council gave responsibility of the administering of education to the Kahnawake Combined Schools Committee," he said.

"This is very unique because across Canada reserves are part of a band council administration of education that allot those funds. Here we administer education."

Federally transferred funds flow through the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake and are handed over to the Kahnawake Combined Schools Committee.

The proposed policy change is considered radical by its critics. In essence, it would largely bypass organizations by creating personal savings accounts that would give each Aboriginal person \$4,000 at birth, and \$3,000 a year from



TRACEY DEER THE EASTERN DOOR

Kahnawake has a different way of doling out education dollars, so students in the community might not be affected by the latest proposal by Ottawa.

Grade 6 to 12, to be used for higher education.

This is expected to equalize opportunities for on-and off-reserve Aboriginals and creates additional incentives to finish high school.

This would avoid fraud and favouritism, keep money flowing in the direction it was allotted for and encourage institutions of higher learning to compete for Aboriginal students, and give every registered First Nations person confidence that success at school will open doors to a brighter future.

"Not all Chiefs are money-hungry and there are many Chiefs

who care about education and providing for the community," Cross said.

"I am optimistic and I don't think that the Canadian government will follow up on this."

Post secondary funding has always been a contentious area because some people look back at the British North America Act that guaranteed funding for elementary and secondary education.

"Then there was no such thing as post-secondary education but it has been an add-on to the Indian Act and now has been embedded as part of the education program under INAC, and it has set a precedent," said Cross.

The federal department of Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC) spends just over \$300 million a year on its postsecondary student-support program, an amount that has not kept pace with inflation.

According to a departmental audit, many hands end the year with surpluses, while fewer students are getting support than a decade ago: 27,000 in 1998-99, but only 23,000 in 2006-07.

Meanwhile, there is a large gap in income between Aboriginals, only three per cent of whom have a university diploma, and other Canadians, whose uni-

Continued on page 4

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Local artist chosen for prestigious art fellowship

BRITTANY LEBORGNE
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The Eiteljorg Fellowship for Native American Fine Art selects five artists every other year for its program and this year, they have chosen Kahnawaké:ronon Skawennati Fragnito to be a part of it.

"I actually tried to apply the last time, but missed the deadline," said Fragnito, who was thrilled to have been selected. "But, I'm happy that I did because I think what I submitted this time around is even better."

The Eiteljorg Museum, located in Indianapolis, is unique in that it is home to one of the best Native American and Western Art collections in the world.

The museum was established in 1989, but first began the Eiteljorg Fellowship in 1999. It takes place every two years and this year marks the 7th fellowship.

Fragnito was one of over 80 applicants and was selected by a jury of three, a former Fellow, a curator representing Canadian interests and an artist in the mainstream world.

The artwork of the five artists will be put on display in a special exhibit, which will be unveiled in November 2011 and

will remain on display for three months.

Some of their pieces will even be purchased by the museum and become part of the museum's permanent collection.

The pieces Fragnito submitted are still images from scenes in her project called TimeTraveller, a trademarked video game-like series of stories. The project will play out like a CGI-animated series of 10 episodes, about seven minutes each, but so far only one is complete and she's currently working on the second.

It takes you to the world of her main character, Hunter, a Mohawk warrior in the future, who has the ability to travel to different conflicts throughout history and witness them for himself.

However, Fragnito decided to submit only the stills. "The museum looks for tangible art," she said, but the bulk of her work is done in what she calls "new media".

"It really is a catch-all term, but I'll use whatever medium I feel best relays my message," she added.

The idea for TimeTraveller came about in response to a Panorama entitled Minnesota Massacre, a piece of artwork in



COURTESY SKAWENNATI FRAGNITO

Skawennati Fragnito works out of OBX Labs, which operates within a Concordia/UQAM joint venture called Hexagram-Concordia: Institute for Research/Creation In Media Arts and Technologies.

the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, created in 1863 that was used as propaganda to incite hatred towards Native people amongst the colonists.

It's made up of several paintings that were sewn together and they were then rolled onto a frame. As someone narrated the story it was telling, another per-

son would turn the crank and the images would go around, like a moving picture.

Jennifer Complo McNutt, Eiteljorg curator, said she will meet with the artists over the next few months and will decide exactly which pieces that will be shown and which will be purchased.

Once the selections have been made, the pieces will be photographed for the museum's catalogue and then sent off to the writers who will write about them for the catalogue.

The entire process takes two years, a relatively short period of time, according to McNutt. "Putting a museum exhibit together can take up to four years," she said. "But we do a quick turnaround so we can host it every two years."

Beginning on November 9, 2011, the artists will be flown to Indianapolis for a four-day celebration. There will be a gathering at a board member's home that Thursday, a members opening on Friday where the artwork will be unveiled, and Saturday evening will be the big gala dinner where the artists will be presented with a \$25,000 grant.

"It's quite a special event," said McNutt, "we really try and take care of them."

Of her TimeTraveller project, Fragnito said she isn't sure how long it will take her to complete it, but "I think I'm ready to go big," she laughed, and even toyed with the idea of it as a television series.

The first episode is available online at: www.timetravellertm.com.

For more information on Fragnito and her work, visit: www.abtec.org.



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The main character of TimeTravellerTM, Ratorats Hunter Dearhouse, will be visiting the year 1990 in episode three.

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