

On Membership, Land Ownership and More Baloney from Robert Potts

October 27, 2011

The Yawn 2011 Algonquin Negotiation Representatives ANR elections are over. Most of the members of the cabal have been acclaimed as usual since most real Anishnaabe Algonquins are not participating in this sham. Two new ANRs, Ron Bernard and Dan Kohoko, were elected in Pikwàkanagàn, replacing Vicky Two-Axe and Richard Sarazin who did not run for re-election.

Robert Potts, lawyer and Negotiator for the Algonquins of Ontario AOO, has sent out his latest newsletter reporting the election results.

Membership is for Clubs

The really critical part of Potts newsletter has to do with Membership. Keeping with colonial traditions to divide and conquer Indigenous people, Potts is working hard to identify Algonquins. He gets help from professional "history twister" Joan Holmes, who earns phenomenal amounts of money creating Algonquin history and anointing individuals with algonquin-ness. This practise is causing a lot of discord in Nishnaabe families of this area and far beyond. Many people simply recoil from such brutal methods and refuse to participate. Others get sucked in thinking it is the right thing to endure this.

Indigenous people in these parts have long identified themselves as Anishnabek Algonquins, Algonquin and Mohawk, Algonquin and other Indigenous, Algonquin with Scottish or French or quite simply they don't know for sure. How many are being pressured to say they are Algonquin is not known. The ANR's have put alot of effort into finding Algonquins in our communities.

Some of our ancestors came out from Lake of Two Mountains circa 1840's. These people were likely Mohawks who were sent by the Crown to police the Algonquins and other Anishnaabek such as the Mississauga Ojibwe and Abenaki who moved freely about the land. One such Mohawk was Francis Sharbot for whom the village of Sharbot Lake is named.

Doreen Davis says she is a descendant of Francis Sharbot. She has been known to declare that she is Mohawk. Yet she is the Algonquin Negotiation Rep ANR for Shabot Obaadjiwan. When she holds meetings she posts a sign on the door, "Algonquins Only". What does DD think she will accomplish by doing this?

There are also many Sharbots at Pikwakanagan, most of whom claim their Algonquin-ness through their mothers and remain silent about their Mohawk ancestry. There has for some time been pressure to deny one's Mohawk-ness and claim to be Algonquin.

For most of his life, Tom Sharbot of Calabogie was proud to say he was Mohawk. He knew his family history. Yet in the end, when this man was

very old, vulnerable and dying of cancer, he was persuaded to say he was Algonquin. It was all about this AOO land claim and the money some are making out of it.

Many people have heard of Grey Owl, the trapper turned conservationist/Indian impersonator and Anahareo aka Gertrude Bernard. Anahareo's family background is interesting here given that she was a Mohawk who lived at Mattawa, a town within this AOO land claim. The versions of Anahareo's family history we have contain differences about her paternal history but none contain any info about her maternal history. If you happen to know, please let us know. See the excerpts in the Endnotes.

The reason we mention this here is in context of the AOO claim and the fact that any number of people at Pikwakanagan and elsewhere in Anishnaabe Algonquin territory carry this family name, "Bernard". Would it be fair to ask if they also have Mohawk ancestry? Or if in fact, they are Mohawks? Does it really matter?

Perhaps Patrick Glassford, ANR, Greater Golden Lake, could answer this question since hearsay has it he says he has the Pikwakanagan genealogy files that went missing a few years ago. We are told Glassford is also one of about 6 people who have the complete AOO membership lists including mailing addresses. Like Randy Cota and Robert Potts, Patrick and Potts have had some very bellicose blowouts at various times.

To add to the quickly morphing picture, according to Potts, "The Métis Nation of Ontario ("MNO") has asserted that a "rights-bearing" Métis community exists in the Mattawa area. The AOO has already commissioned Joan Holmes & Associates to investigate certain threshold historical issues and it is our conclusion that no such distinctive Métis community existed at the legally significant date, applying the 2003 Supreme Court of Canada decision in R. v. Powley".

The MNO are not the only people contesting the fraudulent AOO land claim. Some other highlights from Potts "Algonquin Update October 2011" are included in the Endnotes.

Getting Our History Straight and Who Owns the Land

Historically, Anishnaabek have always been very gracious and hospitable people. We have always allowed others to take shelter or gather food in our territory as long as they did not try to take over or wage war upon us. We know we are protectors of the land but we are not possessive in the same way that colonial society is possessive about owning the land. Over the past 25 or so years, many of our people have become infected with colonial notions of land ownership and the benefits that can go with it. Many Indigenous are grabbing for their share in the profits.

Our Elders told us that we do not own the land. The land owns us. Many of those elders are gone now and a younger generation is taking their place. Some have left behind their words and thoughts for us to remember.

Nez Perce, Chief Joseph once stated in response to a government agent telling him [the Indians] no longer own those lands, and shall have this much land over there and these lands over here shall be for the whites, *"I did not say we own the land. The one that has created it is the one that may dispose of it as they will. I merely claim the right to live upon my lands and now accord you the privilege of returning to yours"*.

A few remain to remind us. Elder and Historian David Wolfe wrote, *"If I had the luxury of traveling and time, I would sit at the fire with my relations of the people of the eagle and tell them the truth of our ancient bonds."*

"There is no such thing as Algonquin nor is there a thing called Iroquois or Siouan or Athapascan etc. Those are all things the twisted tongue of the aberrant people have made and now say, these ones are this and those ones over there are that..."

"If there is a difference between those of the Lenape and those of the Ojibwe it is because of this:

Long ago, many were sent from Turtle Island to journey the earth and to finally return and with them all the things they had learned. Those who returned were somewhat different by the time they saw Turtle Island again, as many thousands of generations had passed. That is the only way there is a little difference in some of the people..."

"As to the AniYunwiyah, my maternal blood anciently was of a land now long covered by the southern waters. It was called the Old Red Land. Before its demise, certain ones of certain towns were instructed to take ancient white [the fire] in the boats and go to the north. This they did. These were called ani'Keetoowahgi [those of the chosen towns]; all together we are AniYunwiyah [of the true or original people]."

"When Ancestors sat down at Cumberland Gap (the point where Kentucky-Virginia meet), to their immediate north were many towns of the People of the Eagle. There was no problem then between the two and should be no problems now. However, we are all divided now by artificial borders and artificial tribal names. We have forgotten the ancient bonds of blood. That is it, that's all there is. Staiyu aginali Wahya AniYunwiyahgi"

Potts ends his newsletter with an absurd reference, *"The AOO Nation Flag and Logo Contest has begun..."*

As if a flag is what makes a nation!

In a future article we will examine some of the roots of the divide and conquer strategy being used by the colonial entities upon Indigenous people through membership criteria and blood quantum rules.

Kittoh

Notes, Sources and Contact Info

More from Robert Potts *"news letter For All Algonquins Of Ontario: Algonquin Negotiation Representatives Aip/Treaty Negotiations With The Governments Of Canada And Ontario - October 2011"*

"...the monthly ANR and Main Table meetings at the Pembroke Consultation Office which has more sophisticated technical facilities to accommodate these meetings".

He means internet connection and possible surveillance of participants for future extortion and coercion...For some time these meetings have been private. Algonquins are not allowed at these meetings and must get information filtered through their ANR's. This goes completely against our Indigenous Ways of full participation.

We refer to the following section because there has been some confusion over the identity of Jim Hunton. There is another area man, Jim Hutton involved in related activities. While Hutton is the CAO Chief Administrative Officer of Renfrew County, Hunton is the technical adviser to the AOO. Joan Holmes is also an AOO adviser.

"Progress on Land Selection

Jim Hunton, the Land Selection Lead and Technical Advisor for the Algonquins of Ontario, in conjunction with the ANRs have had ongoing discussions with Ontario and Canada to complete a number of "tentative" land selections within the Algonquin Territory as part of the negotiation process. I encourage you to consult with your ANR to learn more and to provide additional input into this extremely important aspect of the negotiations."

Potts is NOT encouraging Algonquins to contact Hunton for themselves.

"Work continues on a Memorandum of Understanding regarding Algonquin access and use of Small Craft Harbour facilities throughout the Algonquin Traditional Territory.

- The CFB Rockcliffe Participation Agreement has been executed and is in the process of being implemented.*
- Algonquin input into the Lansdowne Park Redevelopment in Ottawa is continuing."*

Potts ends his newsletter with this information:

The address for the website on the Algonquin Treaty Negotiations is now <http://www.blaneyalgonquin.com/>.

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<http://www.algonquinsofpikwakanagan.com/Chief%20and%20Council%20introduction%202004.htm>

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http://www.tanakiwin.com/treaty_team.htm

Negotiating Team

Excerpt from "Wilderness Man: The Strange Story of Grey Owl" by Lovat Dickson,

"...Anahareo's mother had died when she was four...Mr. Bernard was a Mohawk of the Iroquois Confederacy, a descendant of one of the tribes who had fought during the American War of Independence with the British under their Chief, Joseph Brant (Tyendinaga) and had later settled in Upper Canada. According to Grey Owl, Anahareo's grandfather was one of the original Mohawk rivermen who had helped to make history along the Ottawa River and who had been enlisted as boatmen for the Red River Expedition of 1870 and the Nile Expedition in 1883-4. Anahareo's father had been one of the rivermen in the days of the great square timber-rafts.

...Mr. Bernard says that while he is Iroquois, his own great-grandmother had been Scots. Her name was Mary Robinson and she had been captured by the Iroquois when she was small. In the Revolutionary War, the Christianized Iroquois constantly raided the Americans and brought captives back with them. These, especially children, often showed no desire to return to their homes after they had lived with the Indians for a few years and so it had been with Mary Robinson. ...Old Granny of ninety, who came to live with them was a granddaughter of Mary Robinson and Naharrenhou, a chief of the Mohawks."

Online version of Anahareo's ancestry at <http://www.anahareo.ca/anahareo/anahareo>. by Bob Richardson who "was married to the daughter of world-famous Grey Owl and Anahareo".

"Anahareo - Her Ancestry

Most of the information pre-dating Anahareo's birth stems from Mohawk oral tradition as passed to Anahareo by her grandmother. The information has not been verified through written records and much of it cannot be verified through such records, as none are known to exist.

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"Anahareo was born in Mattawa, Ontario, as Gertrude Bernard on June 18, 1906. When she was four years old, her mother died and her father asked his 95-year-old mother, Anahareo's grandmother, to take care of the little girl. Her grandmother became Anahareo's most profound mentor and her link to her Mohawk heritage. Her grandmother told her the following story about her ancestry:

In 1810 or thereabouts, Naharrenou, hereditary chief of the Mohawks, led a group of about 300 men, women and children into the wilderness from the Lake of Two Mountains, southwest of Montreal, in order to build up a resistance force against white settlers encroaching upon Indian lands. Naharrenou was Anahareo's great-great-grandfather and Grey Owl later chose the name Anahareo from the sound of Naharrenou. Anahareo herself did not know what the name Naharrenou meant or how it was actually spelt.

"The Mohawks led a "hit-and-run" guerilla war against white settlements until Naharrenou received a gunshot wound in one of those raids. The leadership of the group then fell to his son Kanistonou, Anahareo's great-grandfather.

"The Mohawks had a strict rule against taking prisoners for fear of a prisoner escaping and revealing their hide-out. Nonetheless, on one of the raids, a young Scottish settler woman by the name of Mary Robinson fled her village during the attack and eventually fell from exhaustion deep in the bush. This is where Kanistonou found her. Unable to kill her as required by the rules of the war, he had her taken back to the Mohawk camp and with considerable difficulty, he managed to get the council to tolerate her presence among the Indians. Mary Robinson quickly learned the ways of the Mohawks and after a few years, when Kanistonou expressed his desire to marry her, no one objected. Their first child, Anahareo's grandmother, was born approximately in 1812 out of this union.

"Eventually, the guerillas became more and more daring and finally the tide turned against them. Soldiers found them, went in and killed most of them, including Mary Robinson, Kanistonou and a new-born son. Her grandmother, just a babe-in-arms, was taken to Montreal and given to nuns in a convent for raising.

"Eventually, as a young woman, her grandmother fled the convent and joined relatives at Oka. She married Anahareo's grandfather there and the couple made their way west to an area just north of today's Belleville, Ontario. They farmed there and raised 11 children. After 25 years, owing to the fact that Indians could not own land in those days, they were forced off their land and had to move again. They marched in a north-westerly direction towards the Ottawa River and started a new life in the Mattawa area. This is where her grandmother died in 1920 at the age of 108. "