

# REES' Pieces

## Have we Become Crystallized?

The August 17<sup>th</sup> election ushered in Tim Houston's Progressive Conservative team into power with 31 seats out of a possible 55. The outcome was shocking in the number of seats they amassed, but not a complete surprise they toppled Rankin's Liberals who were seeking their third mandate.

The entire coverage area of the Shoreline Journal and *South Cumberland News* is represented by four Tory blue MLAs. Once the votes were counted in the election the results showed Tory Rushton (Cumberland South); Dave Ritcey, (Truro Bible Hill Salmon River Millbrook) and Larry Harrison, (Colchester South Musquodoboit Valley) easily won re-election.

Newcomer, Tom Taggart easily beat Merlyn Smith, who was carrying the Liberal banner hoping to keep former MLA, Karen Casey riding in the Liberal column.

Soon Houston's new government will be sworn in. Houston hit the road running the morning after the election. One of his first actions was to invite other party leaders, Rankin (Liberal) and Burrell (NDP) to join him in meeting Dr Robert Strang to get an update on the CoVid-19 situation.

For the past 18 months, Nova Scotia has been a Canada-wide leader with the least number of infec-

tions, hospitalizations and death on a per capita basis. It is Houston's goal to reduce Covid occurrences even further allowing him to focus on rebuilding the Nova Scotia economy, and usher in a "new normal" with residents as comfortable, as possible as we go forward.

Houston's big task for the moment is to choose his cabinet ensuring quality paying attention to regional representation, diversity on gender, ethnic backgrounds and leadership attributes. It is unlikely, but if brief recent political success and quality provided a seat at the cabinet table, Cumberland and Colchester could see more than one cabinet minister around the table.

If for no other reason, Tory Rushton, Cumberland South, could be considered for his youth; re-election success and to help dispel the feeling of many Cumberland County area has been ignored by many successive governments as demonstrated by the re-election of Barbara Smith-McCrossin, who won as an independent, following her ouster from the PC's, primarily on strongly representing the interests of residents in Cumberland North (Amherst and area) during the blockade of Hwy 104.

Representing the Truro Bible Hill Salmon River Millbrook, Dave Ritcey who won re-election comes to the political world with a long list of experience as a senior business executive, whose family have a strong Progressive Conservative background. Remember, Gerald Ritcey, is deceased father and the

family's lengthy involvement in several community groups and projects.

Newcomer, Tom Taggart, won accolades for gaining one of many seats for the PC's from the Liberals by snatching Colchester North from the Liberal held seat of retiring Karen Casey. She previously represented the riding as a PC prior to switching parties to join the Liberals. Taggart has over 12 years experience in municipal politics for his service in Colchester's District 10 and several years as a Nova Scotia representative to the board of Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). Some have suggested he could be a candidate for the Minister of Municipal Affairs portfolio.

It is unlikely the Northern Region will get more than one cabinet minister, but there definitely is quality among our local MLA ranks.

Perhaps it is opportune to review my opening remarks the outcome of the election was not a total surprise, but the largess of seats amassed was a shocker. In an overall analysis, it was not the large swing of votes determining the outcome, but their strategic location. In the popularity contest, the PC's gained three percent to 38.7 of votes cast going from 17 seats to 31, while the Liberals dropped from 27 seats to 17 with their percentage of the vote fell 2.7 percent to 36.7.

There is no point in trying to evaluate why the outcome except to say Houston spent the last 18 months focusing on one thing – problems in Health-care. The Liberals folly started to show a lack luster performance the day after (Sunday) Rankin won the leadership when he failed to have breakfast with the other contenders from the leadership race and not speaking to one of the Candidates until Wednesday. There are several other instances displaying weakness or lack of good judgment on Rankin's behalf. Most noticeable is his public disclosure of two Driving under the Influence (DUI's). His admission was the proper thing to do, however doing it during a Covid media update was the wrong venue. It put Dr

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*Kwe (gway) which means hello, I come in peace. My name is Anita Jean Abram, from Millbrook Mi'kmaq First Nation. My parents are Cyril and Elder Dr. Jane (Young) Abram. My mother is a residential school survivor of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School. I am the mother of one son, 27, Mise'i. I am a student at Cape Breton University, finishing my B.A in Mi'kmaq studies, so I thought that I may enlighten people about some of our*

*Indigenous knowledge. My beliefs and practices are passed down by generation to generation. These lessons were not available when I went to school in Truro, Nova Scotia. I am grateful for my mother's courage in surviving but at the same time I feel her pain. I can see now that Mi'kmaq history is coming to light within the education system. If you have any questions my email is jeanabram@hotmail.com.*

## L'nuwey Worldview

*"Knowledge is to be preserved for the good of the community and not the self. Knowledge may be power, as the saying goes, but it should never be used to disempower others"*  
Tuma Young



Anita Jean Abram



L'nuwey world view is defined in very different aspects, expressions; it is a cognitive linguistic framework of knowledge and a lifelong process.

"Worldview can be seen as mirroring this ecological fluidity by a verb-dominant, poly-synthetic language using evidential endings on verbs to indicate relationships between the life forces in the waters, the forests and the skies, otherwise known as the sacred ecological spaces." (Ayukpachi)

L'nuwey Worldview is expressed through stories and ceremonies, the creation story, animals, spirits, alliances, relationships etc.- these stories are really teaching aids meant to show the L'nu the path to "the highest form of existence", living in harmony with the life forces active in different ecological realms. The primary ways the L'nuwey is expressed is through A'tukwaaqan (passed down from generation to another either by songs, stories and demonstration).

This is a story about a man who lives with his kiju (grandmother) in a wigwam and is visited by two young men who are on a mission to find more people. The man tells his kiju to make them something to eat before the sun goes down. The young men ask him "what does he do here?" The man replies, "You'll see when the sun goes down." The sun is going down beneath the earth, and the man inside the wigwam begins to beat on bark, and to sing. The sun has gone beneath the earth. He beats on his birch bark drum, and he sings. He says, "I am Waisisk Ketumuaji Ji'nm, I am Man singing For Animals. I am singing for the animals, for all the animals, the waisisk, to come alive, to come back to life, from all those parts of them, all those wings, heads, feet, all those bones, meat, marrow, all those part of them that have not been eaten by the People, all those parts of them that have not been eaten by other animals, all those parts of them that have been thrown away."

He sings through the night until sunrise, he says to his visitors, "This is my work every night. I do not like to see the People waste anything, any part of the animal. They should treat those things with respect. They should save everything. They should save eel skins. They should save all the parts of the animals. What they cannot save and use, they should bury with respect. They should not waste any hair or anything."

This is a classic L'nu teaching story graphically conveying the need to treat animals with respect and to honor the sacrifices they have made. If this is not done, when the animal returns and is flesh again it will remember the treatment it received and not be so willing to give itself again to nourish the ungrateful L'nu. This brings us to the concept central to

the L'nuwey concept of Netukulimk, the traditional law of what might be called "natural resources management."

The dictionary definition of Netukulimk refers to "provisioning," others define it more specifically as "the use of the natural bounty provided by the Creator for the self-support and well-being of the individual and the community at large." Netukulimk, as treated in the story, tells the listener what resources can be prudently taken from nature, and how and when the "harvest" should occur. Elder Albert Marshall explained that Netukulimk are guiding principles of the relationship and responsibility to the land as we are the eyes, ears and voice of Mother Earth.

This next story holds very dear to my heart as I can understand this woman's mind and the feelings that she had endured. It begins with her being a loving Aunt (Su'kwis) taking care of her nieces and nephews. She got married and after a while she was not with child. She began to fret, to worry about this, wondering what all the other women will think, that she was not a real woman. Her sisters began to wonder what was wrong. To take her mind off of the problem, she took a job as a hospital worker cleaning the maternity wards. This only made the situation worse. She saw other women with babies every day and knew that she was not able to have her own children. She told her husband that she must be barren and that it would be all right for him to leave her. He left but only because she was getting ill from thinking about her illness. She got very depressed but kept working and became a nurse's aide, learning about how to take care of women and helped the doctors and a translator for the L'nu in the hospital. After a while her illness took over and she could not work. She became like an animal, grunting, yelling, screaming at the top of her lungs, running down the road and scaring everyone on the reserve. She hurt herself physically scratching the inside of her legs to make it seemed like she bled like a real woman. Her husband said that being barren made her feel like less of a woman. An old woman spoke and said, "Our aunt has Power but she doesn't know it. We will go to her with our problems; all the women will go to her and ask her to help them with women's illnesses. She will become our doctor."

Over time she helped women when they were pregnant. She knew what plants to use to stop miscarriages and save babies.

She became very well-known and respected for her knowledge and was able to cure many people. She managed to raise several orphans who considered her their mother.

This modern tale is intended to teach and illustrate some of the L'nuwey worldview regarding proper behavior in a community, the primary lesson being that everyone has gifts, skills and a valuable role to play. It can also stand as a metaphor for the integration of the individual, as well as one for the integration of the group

"through compassionate and respectful group action."

The reason why I can relate to this Aunt is because I was a single mom who had a beautiful baby boy, healthy and happy. I had a healthy pregnancy and took very good care of myself and my child within. I had to have an emergency C-Section, I hemorrhaged and had to have a hysterectomy. This was my first pregnancy at the age of 22. I didn't understand at first and suffered deeply with post-pardon depression. It haunted me knowing that I was never to have another child or a child to offer to another man and I did feel less of a woman. My parents were my saviors and got me through it; it still upsets me from time to time but I am grateful to be alive and I love my son and all my nieces and nephews and treat them like my own.

So we have L'nuwey World view that is an inherent knowledge that grounds us properly, restoratively, respectfully, ecologically that effects our behavior, thought process, actions of kindness and humility. Without its survival, love and hope are just words. I insisted on publishing this article because I believe that our people are not behaving properly, being misguided in their thought process and forgetting L'nuwey Worldview.

Msit No'komaq (All my relations)

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