

No growth, big increase: Budget doesn't add up

I WAS looking through some old Chronicle-Journal editorials and came across one from Saturday, May 29, 1971 entitled, *New Tax Rate For City Isn't Going Overboard*. As you can guess the article is about the municipal budget. Of note in this editorial is a paragraph that states, "Including grants and other sources of funds, it will cost \$27,315,569 to run Thun-

der Bay this year, in a population that is approaching 110,000." The budget for 2017 will be around \$235,000,000. That works out to approximately a 5-per-cent increase annually, compounded over 46 years. How is it that with no population growth in 46 years, there is that much of an increase?

Andreas Petersen
THUNDER BAY

...Will Need To be Dealt With This Year: Analysis — CJ, Jan. 29). Is it art, decorative, or simply structural? I have seen some very nice retaining walls and I have helped build a few in my career in construction with a nice slope and some decorative formwork, but the main thing was they were structurally sound and functional.

Now there is thought of incorporating some themescape on this wall, maybe hiring an artist to design it. I think that you can build a solid functional wall and, if budget allows it, maybe face it with similar

letters of opinion. Letters kept to 300 words have priority and may be edited for space, style, accuracy and clarity. Letters must be the original work of the author and be exclusive to The Chronicle-Journal. Please cite page and date for articles mentioned.

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to the Internet is an essential part of the social fabric, federal regulators seem to accept the notion as a no-brainer. This past December, the chair of the CRTC declared the Internet as a basic service, noting that "The future of our economy, our prosperity and our society — indeed the future of every citizen — requires us to set ambitious goals, and to get on with connecting all Canadians for the 21st century."

It should be well understood, particularly by legislators, that an informed public is necessary for a high functioning democracy. Author Scott Turow, once noted, "Widespread public access to knowledge, like public education, is one of the pillars of our democracy, a guarantee that we can maintain a well-informed citizenry." He is not alone in this opinion — Albert Einstein, Thomas Jefferson and many others have expressed similar ideas.

The Internet is a social network akin to what the home phone was decades ago when it was declared basic service. It is a major research tool for many citizens and serves as a key communication link between families and communities. According to the Ontario Library Association, 28 per cent of Ontarians rely on their public library for Internet access. The need for access to free Internet is particularly significant for a growing number of seniors and low-income earners.

While much needs to be done to accomplish the vision put forward by the CRTC, there is no reason some of that work can't begin with our public library system. The value of a society connected to information and to each other is not something that can be limited to entries on a balance sheet.

Dan Oldfield is a former CBC reporter and lead negotiator for the Canadian Media Guild and currently a partner in Syzygy Learning and Facilitation. He has a home in the Thunder Bay area.

'Warrior' for indigenous people to speak at 11th Diversity Thunder Bay breakfast

BY LISA BECKWICK

MARIE Wilson, characterized as a warrior by the survivors of Indian residential schools in Canada, will be the keynote speaker at Diversity Thunder Bay's upcoming breakfast to celebrate the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Wilson's entire professional life has been devoted to diversity and inclusion, building bridges of understanding across many cultures within Canada and abroad as a teacher, translator, award-winning journalist, executive manager and university professor, as well as a truth and reconciliation commissioner.

For six-and-a-half years, Marie Wilson fought tirelessly as the one non-indigenous commissioner of the historic Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Wilson insisted that the ongoing work of reconciliation belongs to all Canadians, and not just to the indigenous people who lived through



ONE CITY
MANY VOICES

Thunder Bay's Anti-Racism and Respect Advisory Committee produces this monthly column to promote greater understanding of race relations in Northwestern Ontario.

130 years of forced residential schooling imposed on them by Canada. Even though she heard horrific accounts of cruelty and abuse from among the 7,000 courageous survivors, she found faith and hope for our future.

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed on March 21 of each year. We mark this day to remember

the 1960 Sharpeville massacre where 69 unarmed and peaceful demonstrators were killed by South African police as they protested the country's unjust apartheid laws.

Since proclaiming the day in 1966, the General Assembly called on the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination. Racist laws and practices have been abolished in many countries but despite much progress, racism continues to exist and to affect the lives of individuals, and ethnic and religious groups worldwide. Racism violates our human rights and our communities suffer from the injustice.

Diversity Thunder Bay is a community-based organization whose mission is to work towards an equitable community free of racism and discrimination of any kind. Every year, Diversity Thunder Bay honours March 21 by hosting a breakfast celebration on or around that date. This year marks our 11th annual event, and we are proud to have Dr. Wilson join us.

Wilson will speak on "Canada at 150: Diversity and the Gift of Reconciliation."

Her presentation will encourage us to explore our past so that we can move forward together on a path to national healing.

Join us for this special opportunity to hear Marie Wilson speak about how we move forward in a way that is respectful, fair, and enriching for all of us.

Diversity Thunder Bay's 11th Annual International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Celebration Breakfast will be held on Wednesday, March 22 from 7:30-9 a.m. at the Valhalla Inn. Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased online at www.diversitythunderbay.ca.

Lisa Beckwick is the interim vice-president, People, Mission and Values for St. Joseph's Care Group, is co-chair for the breakfast celebration, and has been a member of Diversity Thunder Bay since 2005.

The views and opinions expressed in this column are those of the author.