

Activist works to ensure women are remembered

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After many years of research and countless hours in a reference library, Amber O'Hara said she found very little information about these women that went missing, "which was very sad."

For the last decade, O'Hara has dedicated much of her time to constructing a Web site (www.missingnativewomen.org) to honor the Aboriginal women who are missing or have been murdered.

"This is what I've been really focusing on pretty much 24 hours a day for the last 10 years. I didn't want them to be

forgotten women, so I started building this Web site."

According to O'Hara, any time a case comes up that deals with a missing Aboriginal mother, teen or child or where there are unidentified remains, she is notified by police. She then does research to confirm that the missing individual is of Aboriginal ancestry before posting the information online.

"Everyone on my Web site is of Aboriginal ancestry and that's one thing I insist on," O'Hara said. "Because every other woman has been covered in the media and our women haven't been."

NAN and government establish partnership

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) has entered into a new partnership with the provincial government in order to try to improve the lives of people living within NAN territory.

The two partners announced creation of a Northern Table on March 21, designed to provide a forum to address the challenges faced by NAN communities and to try to close the socio-economic gap between people living in

those communities and the non-Aboriginal citizens of the province.

"A new era in government relations must begin in order for our people to begin to prosper from the natural resources that have contributed to the prosperity of other Ontarians," said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beaudy. "Provided the table is approached by both sides in good faith, this is the first step to achieving that."

Songs and stories can be used to preserve language

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The Internet can also be used to reach out specifically to young people and to expose them to Metis language, culture and history.

"For example, if you've got our young children going to, at a tender age of four or five

years old, they're on the Web now playing Barbie.com. Then why can't we have our children also be dressing our own Metis voyageurs, for example ... let's make a Metis voyageur Barbie. Those sorts of things," Tony Belcourt said.

"Languages are central to culture. It's part of a person's being. And the reality is the Michif language is, like many other Aboriginal languages they're in danger. So we need to do everything we can to revitalize and keep the language going."

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