

Algonquins to hold election on Aug. 23

By Nate Smelle

On Monday, Aug. 23 members of the Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini Algonquin First Nation will have the opportunity to decide who will serve the community for the next four years as the Algonquin Negotiation Representative.

Those eligible to vote will be able to cast their ballots at the North Hastings Community Centre in Bancroft on Aug. 23 from 9 a.m. until 8 p.m.

The community's current Algonquin Negotiation Representative, Stephen Hunter, is running to retain his position, and continue the work he has started; while candidates Dora Yateman and Duanne Welsh are hoping that they will earn the support they need to be the community's next representative.

To provide insight into what each of the candidates has to offer the community as Algonquin Negotiation Representative, Bancroft This Week recently sent them the following five questions:1) Why did you decide to run?2) Tell me about yourself and what makes you the best person to represent the Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini Algonquin First Nation?3) If elected, what will be your biggest priorities while in office?4) What do you think will be your biggest challenge as Algonquin Negotiation Representative, and how do you intend to handle it?5) What are your goals if elected as the next Algonquin Negotiation Representative for the Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini Algonquin First Nation?

Stephen Hunter1) I have decided to run for re-election for several reasons. Certainly having the support of our Heads of Family Council and a clear mandate from my fellow ANRs was important to me. My love for Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini Algonquin First Nation and my desire to see the best possible outcome for our membership through negotiation has always been first and foremost. While I am proud of the significant enhancements to the settlement package since my election in 2017 such as increased waterfront locally and dramatic changes to capital funds I recognize additional work that must be done. In addition I fully understand the complexity of the agenda items currently on the table for negotiation and feel this necessary to effectively protect our Communities individual interests going forward.

2) I am an Algonquin Steward and support all things that impact our people in a positive and good way. I am an Algonquin birch bark canoe builder and student of our language omamawininimowin. I am passionate about the betterment of our people and have a deep knowledge of our communities historic place within the broader Algonquin Nation. I have shown my desire, and proven my ability to build capacity within our community outside my role as ANR. I have developed policies and procedures through the not for profit Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini

Algonquin First Nation Incorporated aimed at preparing us for the benefits of Treaty. I understand that to best represent you must engage all people, you must have accountability and transparency and you must be willing to work long hours. To lead you must take risks, accept challenges and aim high. I believe that my track record shows clearly that I am the best equipped to hold position of ANR for a second term.

3) Moving forward we are faced with many items of priority. The development of a Community Constitution which will speak to political structure and land management within our Community is required in the near future and ratified by members. This must be done in a way that works in unison with and compliments the efforts of the larger group as we develop an Algonquin Nation Constitution simultaneously at the ANR table. The second phase of enrolment will soon begin and our Community has many, many more people yet to complete the process and become enrolled as electors. I would predict that our Community will potentially double in size when all is done, clearly a priority. We must continue building upon our demonstrable success administering and delivering programs and becoming ready for the time of Treaty.

4) I believe the biggest challenge will be to keep the Nation together as a whole. We are in the final stages of negotiations and all

parties concerned are hoping to have a settlement package for Algonquin voters to ratify by 2024. This will require all the Communities which make up the Algonquins of Ontario to work together. It will involve compromise and understanding, it will require historical knowledge and accuracy. As we move closer and closer to Treaty and as we address the fine details of the agreement, look at implementation and the duty to consult post treaty we will need to stay focused on the end goal. We will need to remember the family connections that we share amongst the Nation and we will need to be confident in who we are. I will use my knowledge of our Algonquin Families and Nation to turn this challenge into opportunity.

5) I hope to continue building on the momentum we have established. I will work to find additional and creative ways to support the members of Kijicho Manito both at the Negotiation table and within the Community. My hope is to see many more people become involved and feel a sense of belonging and ownership in the future of Kijicho Manito Algonquin First Nation. One matter of importance is to make sure that we adhere as best we can to the timelines as set out in the negotiations. We have spent many years negotiating and the time has come to embrace commonality across the Nation, the time has come for authenticity and to support our fellow Algonquin. My goal this term would be to see a comprehensive settlement agreement or 'treaty' developed in its entirety including a Nation Constitution, Governance structure and Land Management Code and be presented to the Algonquin Voters for their approval. Onward and Upward.

Dora Yatemen 1) Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini community is one of 10 Algonquin communities engaged in a tri-party Land Claim Settlement with the Federal and Provincial Governments. I feel it is important for everyone within my community to have a free voice and that their voices be heard at the Algonquin Negotiation Representative table with integrity. I want to be their spokesperson. Also, a lot of our native culture and traditions have been lost, and many within our community and our sister communities are working to regain what our knowledge keepers and elders of the past knew. As a Nation we can set goals and work towards what has been lost and to share that with our communities. Along with finalizing the land selects there are other things to address, such as economic and social challenges on how best to proceed.

2) I am third generation from Chief John Baptiste, my grandmother was one of his daughters. She and her son Angus were born at Baptiste Lake. My mother was born in Bancroft, and I was also born here in Bancroft. Like many, my father went where there was work, and we lived in many places in Ontario. Some of my family returned to our roots here in Bancroft, I did so after retiring from a successful and varied work career in Toronto. I became actively involved within my own community and the broader community of Bancroft, I participate in drumming, singing, Algonquin language classes offered through our Algonquin Inodewiziwin with North Hastings Children Services. I am also a board member for several not-for-profit organization within the broader community. Through my years of employment and continuing education desires, I have many qualities and skills that I can bring to the ANR table, I am a hard worker, detailed oriented, a team player, organized, I have training in the areas of legal, mediation, negotiation, project and funding. I think that these attributes and skills will be great assets as the KMM community ANR. I believe collaboration between all is a more positive means to achieve results and will move us successfully towards our goals.

3) I would like to bring forward issues about the development of social services, education, health, economic development, and art/culture teachings within our Nation and engage the members in our communities on decisions being made towards self governance. Housing for many of our community members is also a topic of discussion. I am sure that many of these issues have been previously covered, and as a new member at the ANR table the change in representatives can be positive to bring forth further discussions, patience, and understanding of the Nation's greater goal.

4) Being a woman in what now seems to be a patriarchal world. Every ANR has the right to be treated in accordance with the Seven Grandfather Teachings. We must all walk and talk as we were taught by our ancestors. These values must be practiced within our homes, and within our own communities, and I will honour those values and do my best to encourage others to do so. I think that ANRs establishing policies that everyone can agree upon and putting in place, will be challenging as not everyone will agree, but if many agree that that will be a step towards progress and to change. Change can be fearful, for various reasons, but more importantly it can be beneficial and positive if made in a mindful manner.

5) To further popularize the ground roots for the first nations in the Bancroft area again, and to further the inclusiveness and collaboration with the local community and have them feel welcomed and involved in our community ceremonies, shops and

activities and other initiatives. Promote Indigenous mental health social services and other health services with our collaborative Indigenous neighbouring communities that have such programs in place (both western and traditional medicine). Have more of my own community members become more engaged in these programs and support those within my community to be engaged in these programs and be there to support our community.

Duanne Welsh1) I think I decided to run for ANR because I felt we needed a change for our community and my focus would be on that.

2) I am dedicated to our community and our Elders and believe that we need to bring our community members together. I think I can do that by asking and working together with them. We need to start building for ourselves finding ways to have revenues coming into our community.

3) I would love to see a permanent community building built for ourselves that we could all enjoy. Being bounced around is not good for us. A permanent structure for us to enjoy for decades to come.

4) I think the biggest challenge will be getting the community together and talk about our future its important that we start to think about our loves ones teaching them our ways so they can take over when we are gone.

5) There are many goals for me if elected but the most important thing is letting the Elders and community speak up on which direction we challenge first.