

RED ROAD NEW YEAR MESSAGE 2024

LIFE IS SOMETIMES HARD. There are challenges. There are difficulties. There is pain. As a younger man, I sought to avoid pain and difficulty and only caused myself more of the same. These days, I choose to face life head on---and I have become a comet. I arc across the sky of my life and the hard times are the friction that shaves off the worn and tired bits. The more I travel head-on, the more I am shaped, and the things that no longer work, or are unnecessary drop away. It's a good way to travel. I believe eventually I will wear away all the resistance, until all that's left of me is light.

-----Richard Wagamese, EMBERS

Once again, Richard Wagamese comes to mind and this is from an earlier version of his thoughts 2016; yet still so very focused on the spirit; the star trail...many of us find ourselves on. Last year, we made note of his piece on our collective dreaming as Indigenous people...

On the back of the book EMBERS he writes:

Bring these words into your life. Feel them. Sit with them. Use them.

So happy it's a New Year. Seems since December 7, 2023, where a fellow pipe carrier, already exhausted, managed to muster up the strength, *the willingness*, to form a prayer circle and pray for those who are suffering...while simultaneously other ceremonialists in this region also found the strength to hold their lodges...a resultant synchronous event occurred; a healing occurred through the sacrifice of those brave men and women....AND; *the exhaustion - the suffering...was once again, NOT SO BAD*; and those that already do too much could do *just a little bit more...* with grace and joy!!! The beauty of our Pte Oyate culture...

December 7, 2023 - Red Road Annual Round Dance & Christmas Party.

Many of us found over the holidays, opportunities to be grateful. We lost so many to sickness before, during and after the pandemic. AND people are still getting sick.





We lost a soul sister of Red Road last October 9, 2023; Sonia Stanley. She struggled for a long time; however, she could do no more. Worked for years at the shelters, Boyle Street; as well as Red Road. She was a great source of comfort to many; and had a wicked sense of humour; whilst she too; (as many of us do), fought her own demons of generational trauma. *Sonia, did so, with grace.* Fortunately, she attended our 3rd Annual Transformative Reconciliation Gathering with many of her relatives from Frog Lake; and we danced a little to the traveller's song; symbolic. I believe all those we have lost will be there for our 4th Annual Transformative Reconciliation Gathering. Our last year of our 4 year commitment. August 18-21, 2024 River Cree. Arvol and Paula have committed their presence to being there this year; as have some of our Haudenosaunee. Exciting.

I have voiced to many; its Exciting, Exhilarating and *Exhausting !!!* So great that reconciliation is taking hold! Listening to the Golden Globes last night was unbelievable!! The world is **AWARE !!!** Lily Gladstone got Best Actress- her Mother Tantoo Cardinal, is from here!!! All the great ones from the last 30 years were there. Robert de Niro who plays the bad guy in KILLERS OF THE FLOWER MOON was part of Tribeca, who produced THUNDERHEART years ago; along with Martin Scorsese whose endless work with Robbie Robertson and Chris Eyre has showcased phenomenal Native American talent...WOW...out of all this pain, is coming all this beauty.

On that note, we had many graduates this year from our youth program who are also part of Braided Journeys; which has also done very well since its inception. So great to see our young people not be afraid to talk about who they are and where they come from. Beautiful...some of our young women graduates....

Our summer youth program once again was **AWESOME** thanks to Melanie Veitch who works so well with the kids. Our graduates of the IBSW program at YTCEP were beautiful; and spoke very eloquently. Congratulations to Everett Sunchild and his sister Tamlyn Sunchild; both who share their expertise in Indigenous social work and cultural resilience at Red Road. So very proud of you both.



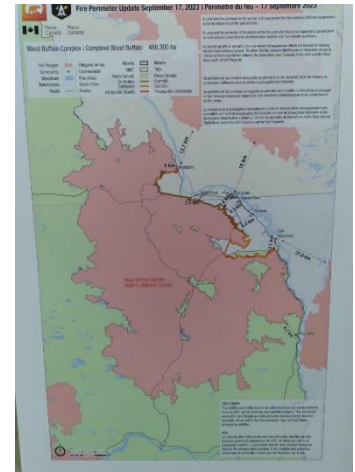
Did anyone notice how few the migratory birds were this year? That there were hardly any daffodils or tulips? We are in **CLIMATE CHANGE**. Fortunately, some of us were called out to ceremony and saw the birds; albeit in other places at different times of the year. Nevertheless, more folks are doing ceremony **EVERYWHERE**.

Our 3rd Annual Transformative Reconciliation Gathering almost did not take place...River Cree and Chief Cody Thomas of Enoch as well as Morgan Branford of the City of Edmonton, kindly lent their stalwart support for us to carry on regardless...and we did!!! We did not have the numbers; however, folks could not attend due to fires, floods and the continuing affects of **CLIMATE CHANGE**. Again; nevertheless, we persevered; and those that were meant to be there were there. Our Dene folk could not be there due to fires and evacuations. Specifically, our Fort Smith folk were evacuated to Fort Mac. However; our Dene Elder sent us a picture of the North where all the fires were. He and another Elder put tobacco down all around Fort Smith and drummed and sang songs as they went around. When they were returned

to Fort Smith in October this year, their community was untouched by fire; yet all around them was affected.



Honourary Elder Lyndon Aginas always willing to lend a hand.



Kevin Meetoos culture carrier for many nations. Our emcee at special events.



Finally, just before Christmas, the Archdiocese of Edmonton, awarded Red Road with dollars to start building a tipi village for Indigenous Homeless- those that want to be addictive free and reconnect with the Earth, Elders and ceremonial resilience.

We have been blessed.

As per usual, our calendar and events are posted on the www.redroadjourney.ca website and facebook. Join us where and when you can. AND YES, we are not perfect... We STILL have all kinds of tech issues...our landline phones are generally good now... tho' the message is not always up to date....our website is STILL an ongoing construct...though it is getting somewhat easier to navigate!!!

Our 7 sacred values of our Lakota Sioux that we talk about incessantly; and some of you may not know, are: Love, Courage, Honesty, Generosity, Chastity, Silence, Respect...are these much different than other First Nations, Metis, Inuit, other Indigenous the world over ?...We think not....LOL

Therefore in closing:

May the Creator of the Universe once again surround you with *love and respect*; as you in turn show *love and respect* to all of Creator's Creation...

Mitakuye Oyasin

Red Road

Joanne

Once again, our website is www.redroadjourney.ca

Please see attached photos and greetings for this past Christmas and New Year celebration!



STANDING BUFFALO



STANDING ROCK

SUNCHILDS



MAYAN OUR LADY OF GUADAUPE

MELANIE

