



Listuguj mourns death of Chief of Police Henry Vicaire

Listuguj Chief of Police Henry “Hank” Vicaire was rushed to the Campbellton Regional Hospital on Friday the 13th under emergency circumstances, but was unable to recover. He passed away several hours later. He was 50.

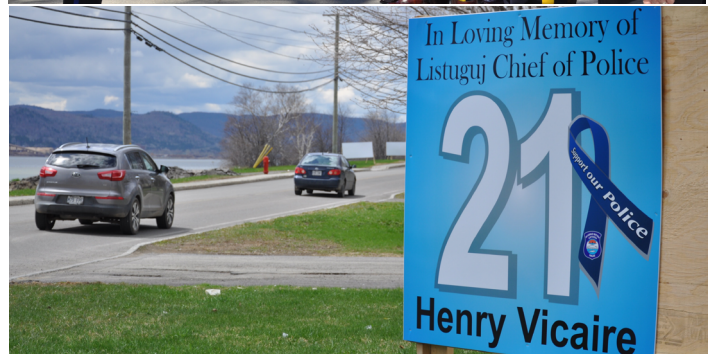
On May 18, at around 10.30 a.m., various delegations of Police, SQ, RCMP, Firemen, Ambulance technicians from around Listuguj, and a representatives of Henry’s Bike Club, gathered in front of his house. A solemn march to St. Anne’s church followed, where political banners were covered and painted with the number 21, in respect to the badge of the Chief of Police.

The Church was packed and the mass started with the Spirit Bear singers chanting the Mi’gmaq Honor song. Native and non-natives families and friends of Henry “Hank” Vicaire gathered to pay respect to a person that the eulogies described as a humorous, sensitive, respectful and a talented human being.

Henry Vicaire was born in Campbellton, N.B. in 1965. He attended the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC) where he earned his policing certification in 1994. He served as a Listuguj K-9 officer from 2002 to 2010 with detector dogs Echo and then Bonzai. He became Listuguj Chief of Police in 2012.

Chief of Police Vicaire had a varied background before becoming Chief of Police. He was a woodsman, a carpenter and an ironworker. Listuguj members know that Chief of Police Vicaire was a motorcycle enthusiast and loved to ride his Harley Davidson.

Henry was the son of Maggie Isaac and Henry Vicaire Sr., and a proud member of Listuguj First Nation. He leaves behind his wife Samantha and four children between the ages of 12 and 28.



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Native Spirituality gaining interest in Mi'gmaqi

Driving around Listuguj (Busteed area) last week you could see a group of volunteers working the tipi poles, bringing firewood and preparing the site for the four-day ceremonies organized by Families First Support Services.

“We have many programs, and over the years many people asked us to do workshops about traditions, ceremonies, traditional medicine and teachings,” said Christine Metallic, Community and Cultural Support Coordinator for the FFSS. The ceremonies we are preparing now is to respond to these needs.”

Among the ceremonies there is the Sweat Lodge, a purification ceremony where participants enter a dome shaped lodge constructed of willow and covered with material to provide a semi-tight enclosure and complete darkness. The Lodge represents the mother's womb.

When the ceremony starts the Elder pours water on the heated rocks (Grand Fathers) and participants pray for themselves, their families, their communities, they chant and take turns to speak. The duration of this ceremony varies depending of the number of participants, the Elder who leads it, and the reason for the Ceremony.

Taking part in this sacred ceremony has different impacts on different people. Those participating for the first time usually feel a resurgence of strength and connection with their identity, and for some it's the beginning of a journey of healing.

“Sweat Lodge is a sacred place where your whole body gets cleansed and what you feel inside is incredible” said Frank Augustine an Elder from Elsipogtog who came to Listuguj to lead the ceremonies with his wife Josie. “There are things you may see, and you may receive teaching because there are spirits there to help you if you care to listen.”



Elders Frank and Josie Augustine from Elsipogtog



Elders Frank and Josie, married for over 50 years, travel across Canada and Mi'gmaqi carrying these teachings. Frank was around 40 years old when he decided to take the spiritual journey that changed his life for the better.

“We see people following traditional teachings and Native spirituality and we see how their lives had changed” says Christine Metallic, whose experience as a community worker in different communities. “Looking at non-native ways, methods of healing like therapist, meditation, Tai Chi or Reiki are not the only solutions. We need something that works for you, and native spirituality reach us deep and at different levels.”

Following Native spirituality is all about faith. All religions of the world have their ceremonies and protocols that guide social behaviors, practices, determine sacred places, and provide the worldview with teaching about human's relationship with the world around, above and below.

If in the past the practice of Indigenous spirituality were forbidden, outlawed and associated to devils or superstitious, nowadays there is a certain acceptance. In Mi'gmaqi, and across Canada, interest has been growing.

“Twenty years ago there was a lot of hard work put into bringing back our teachings,” Josie said, while preparing the lodge for the ceremonies. “A lot of seeds were planted and now we see the seed popping up.”

“I see more interest in Listuguj” said husband Frank. “When we used to visit there was a handful of people. Now we see more people. We see that there's a thirst for our spirituality.”

There are some people who took part in native ceremonies here for the first time.

AGS Science Fair 2016



Davery Mitchell in front of his presentation that encouraged to read about making "lava lamps."



Asher Arsenault with his Science Fair project.



Judge Denny Isaac, one of the eight judges for the Science Fair, listening to the collective presentation of the students.



Miss Delores and Miss Darla with the Forest Kindergarten Class.

On Friday afternoon, at around 6 pm. Ala'suinu Barnaby, 11, ended his 24-hours fast while other men and women were continuing theirs. He decided to do his fast with support from his parents on site. "Ever since my auntie Tanya did her four-day fast a few years ago I've been wanting to do it as well," he said. "I also did it because I just lost my uncle Henry (Vicaire) and I did it for him. I did a lot of praying in the Sweat Lodge before I went into my fast. I felt successful, I felt good and proud of myself. It wasn't easy but I learned a lesson: patience. I think anyone who has a chance should do this ceremony."

Maybe at the Listuguj Pow Wow this year we will see more Sweat Lodges and we may see again the Sacred fire lit for all those who want to pray for their families, for themselves, and the communities. After all it's about belief and traditions that are now available in Listuguj and in neighboring Mi'gmaq communities.



Little gestures to protect Mother Earth

There is a new Ranger in town and his name is Ayden Barnaby. An Earth Ranger that is.

A curious eight year old, Ayden visited the Earth Ranger website, where school age kids find tips and missions on how to protect animals and Mother Earth. His mission is to collect and recycle 20 batteries, and to dispose them properly.

"I choose to collect batteries because when they are thrown away to the garbage they end up on the landfills where batteries will leak their chemicals into the ecosystem" said Ayden.

The Earth Ranger missions ended up involving kids, families, friends and communities. In order to achieve his mission he went door to door in his neighborhood. He asked his friends, and when he got messages from community members, his parent would drive them to get the batteries.

When Justin Caldwell of CHRQ started to air Ayden's message requesting batteries he got more calls. Within two weeks of his mission, he collected almost 700 batteries that he took to the GMRC office, where there is a disposal box that is shipped to a recycling facility every week.



Ayden Barnaby with the bags of batteries that he's collected in the community.

"I like to help animals, and the chemicals of the batteries are bad for the Earth" said Ayden that takes seriously his Earth Ranger mission seriously. His goal now is now to collect 1000 batteries before taking on his new mission: protect the bees.

Spring Activities



Edmond Condo and Brennie Martin are fixing a wall damaged by winter. A well known brick layers tandem, Edmond and Brennie always have the easy laugh during and after work.



Jessica Gideon, GMRC Aquatic Research Technician goes periodically to the AGS classroom to clean one of the two salmon incubation tanks. The students see the evolutions of the salmon and on May science faire the entire class did a well sustained presentation on Plamu.



This program, "Fish Friends," initiated by GMRC, teaches about biology, life cycle, habitat, and about the cultural significance of Plamu. In June the classes will participate in releasing the salmon fry into the river hoping to ensure its existence historically connected to the Mi'gmaq people.