



Report From Your Board Chair

Much has happened at West Hill since the last report. Our new Board met on April 13 and an important Congregational Meeting took place on April 18. We had previously decided that the congregation must make a choice about whether to proceed with the Severance Option. If we chose this pathway, we would have to fulfill the necessary legal requirements and approvals of the municipality and the city to buy back from the Boys and Girls Club of East Scarborough (BGCES) the west driveway and the labyrinth area (the hockey stick) for \$200,000. This clause was included as an option for West Hill that must be completed within 500 days of the closing of the sale of the property. The deadline would be November 24, 2021. Our advisors have stated that it could take up to 6 months to accomplish the approvals for the severance.

There have been many spoken and written words to address this issue and to assist us in coming to a conclusion. The Board had recommended that we proceed with the severance process and retain a negotiator/advisor to assist in this process. A Severance Option Committee (SOC), chaired by Florence Soknacki, had been struck to act in an advisory capacity and be the group that would connect with our advisors and the BGCES. The wording of the motion passed by the Board was as follows:

That WHUC engage with the UPRC (United Property Resource Corporation) to begin the severance process to purchase the west driveway and the labyrinth area for \$200,000 as per the Lease Agreement and that this motion would require a 2/3 majority to carry.

Motion passed with a 71% in-favour vote.

A second approved motion was that WHUC retain a negotiator to represent us in our communications with the BGCES. This person would be recommended by the UPRC.

The immediate actions were for Mike to contact Utcha Sawyers with this decision and for Florence to connect with Tim Blair of UPRC and Carla Leon of EDGE. Both of these actions have taken place. In addition, it was suggested that Florence consider continuing in her capacity with the SOC, which will likely be renamed as the UPRC Committee. The plan will be that the members of the committee reconvene and report back to the Board their willingness to continue to serve. The request for a negotiator and for volunteers would first be announced to the congregation and then the Board would appoint the people to fill those positions.

Rev. Sarah Smith has agreed to have her contract renewed from May 1 to the end of August (i.e., for another 4-month term). We are so happy to have Sarah as our Supply Minister. She has come to know and understand our West Hill community and is able to adjust her Psychotherapy practice to allow her 15 hour/week commitment to us to enable her to be with us most Sunday mornings and to participate in the Tuesday Wellness Group, Wednesday Book Study and Coffee Time on Thursdays. Her wisdom and knowledge of the United Church has helped us through several of the issues that we have faced. In making some of the choices West Hill has faced, there may be some disappointment and frustration for our members and Sarah has been available to help us through the tough times. In addition, her supporting role for the In Touch Team is much appreciated. She is available and open to continue to be our Supply Minister to the end of the year, if need be. Through Scott, we have been receiving updates about Gretta Vosper's medical leave of absence and it is not yet known when she might return. It has now been 6 months and although we deeply miss her, we want her to be healthy and well when she returns to us.



IN THE SPIRIT



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We have many more options for all ages. Please check out our website for our class schedule, rates and more information (647-352-4879): www.inthespityoga.com, email letsconnect@inthespityoga.com

Report From Your Board Chair continued...

On your behalf, I again express our admiration and deep appreciation to Scott Kearns for his central role in arranging our Sunday gatherings. Whether it be Scott or another presenter that he has engaged, our Sunday times together have been creative, challenging and informative.

Although it has now been over a year since we have been using Zoom technology for our gatherings and meetings, it is a blessing for us to get together each week and have Scott as our host and connector. Accolades to Peter Thomas and Glenn Cockwell for their technical support each Sunday. For those who have questions or concerns, please know that our team of myself, Annie and Scott are always available via phone or email. Although this is a message that you might hear often, it is sincere. I have enjoyed email and phone conversations from several of our folks and I know that Scott and Annie feel the same way.

After over 9 years as our Director of Finance, Laura Bowes is stepping down. Her accounting and governance acumen have been so valuable and much appreciated by us. Her behind-the-scenes activities include keeping our records accurate, doing our tax reporting and following CRA guidelines, overseeing payroll, and doing a monthly report. We are posting this position and ask any of the West Hill community who have these skills and are willing to serve and help to please let us know.

For over a year, we have been proceeding to be a co-sponsor for a refugee named Tina from Uganda who is currently in a refugee camp in Kenya. Her arrival is imminent after many delays. We are asking for volunteers from our group who could offer orientation, transportation and friendly social contact that follows pandemic/lockdown guidelines. Please connect with Annie, Mike or Scott if you are willing to step up.

West Hill is addressing the future by facing forward and moving in that direction and we have several initiatives that are in progress to help us plan together. Starting with the update of Vision Works with a group led by Scott, we also are preparing for a strategic planning exercise with a professional facilitator under the leadership of Jean Skillman. At the Board Meeting on May 11, it was decided to engage EDGE: A Network for Ministry Development, an affiliate of the United Church. The process starts with the training of 6 to 8 leaders committing to 6 monthly 90 minute sessions. The selection process will start shortly for our group leaders. In addition, Dennis Augustine is at work with the Third Space Arts group which will be available to us all and will utilize the time and space that WHUC has available for community arts programs and our outreach.

Travelling our journey together ...
May love abound

Michael Lawrie, Board Chair



May 23rd
Part 3 (2005-2009)

June 13th
Part 4 (2010-2014)

June 27th
Part 5 (2015-2020 and beyond)

Over the course of May and June, Rick Miller will continue to share his show, BOOM YZ, with the West Hill community during the Zoom Sunday Service in association with Third Space Arts and Kidoons. Each time, he will present and perform a new work-in-progress excerpt of BOOM YZ, the final chapter of his BOOM Trilogy (www.boomshow.ca). This solo theatre production, which premieres in October 2021, examines the last 25 years of history, culture, music and technology through intergenerational storytelling.

In February, Rick performed Part 1 (1996-2000), on May 2nd he performed Part 2 (2000-2004), and over the coming weeks he will move chronologically to the present day and the possible futures that lay before us. Join us as we shine a light on the past with an eye to the future and feet firmly planted in the present.

As always, if you have any Millennial or GenZ family members, Rick would love to get their feedback!

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First Nations Study Group

~ Robinson-Huron Treaty ~



Chief Shingwauk
at Robinson Huron Treaty Signing in 1850

The **Robinson-Huron Treaty (RHT)** was signed on **September 9, 1850** on Whitefish Island in Baawating (Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario). Lake Huron Anishinabek leaders, Chiefs and Principal Men entered treaty with the British Crown. Treaties are the foundation of this country. They are recognized and affirmed in the Canadian Constitution so they are part of the supreme law of the land. Because all citizens benefit from the RHT, it is important for all citizens to know about the Robinson-Huron Treaty and its principles, intentions and content, both in the written and oral context.

Crown's appeal of 2018 Robinson-Huron Treaty ruling began this week

by Jenny Lamothe, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter, Sudbury.com (Thursday, April 15, 2021)

The annuities case launched by the Robinson-Huron Treaty Litigation Fund (RHTLF), a group representing the rights of the members of the 21 First Nation signatories to the Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850, continues this week with the Ontario government's appeal of a recent and ground-breaking decision moving forward on April 12.

That decision, handed down by Justice Patricia Hennessy in December of 2018, held that "the Crown has a mandatory and reviewable obligation to increase the Treaties' annuities when the economic circumstances warrant."

Though the case is complicated, the treaty itself is not, said Chief Dean Sayers in a press briefing on April 12, ahead of the appeal.

"It's clear, it's straightforward," said Sayers, who serves as chief of Batchewana First Nation. "Canada and Ontario need to honour the obligations set out in the escalator clause within the Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850."

At the very least, "we're calling on Ontario to drop the appeal, stop wasting energy, time and money."

The Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850 Annuities Statement of Claim, which was launched by the RHTLF in 2014, involves a claim for resource revenues. At the time, the settlers of the area were driving economic growth on land that did not belong to them, encroaching on traditional lands.

Working within a framework that they understood, the sharing of resources for common good, the First Nations of much of Northeastern Ontario entered into a treaty with the Crown, as represented by William Benjamin Robinson, a former mine manager who was named treaty commissioner.



Chief Dean Sayers, Batchewana First Nation



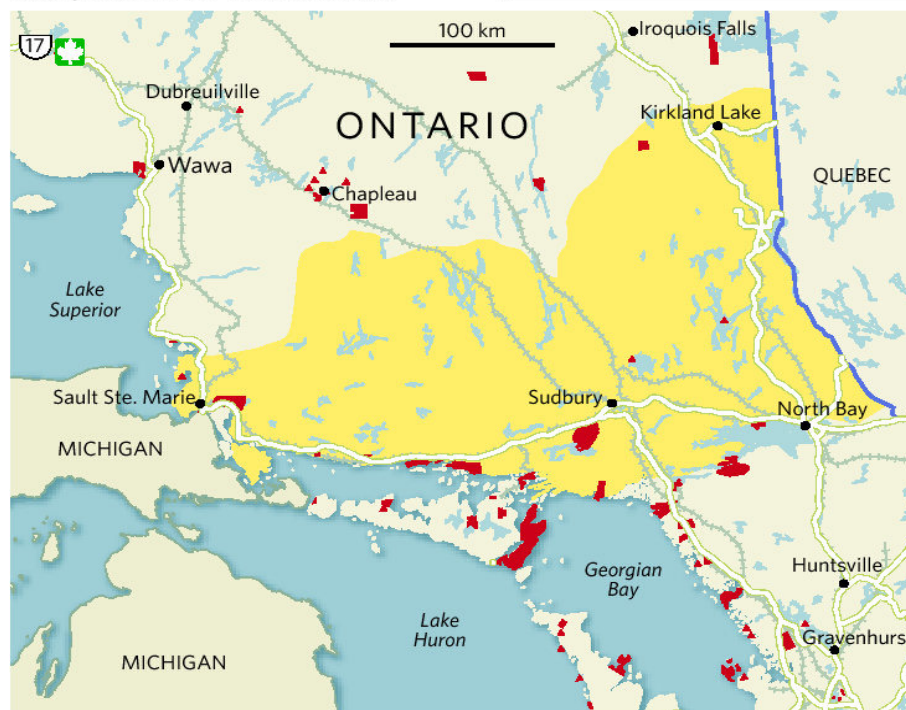
Wm. Benjamin Robinson

Massive treaty challenged

The Robinson Huron Treaty of 1850 covers some 92,463 square kilometers in the middle of Ontario and involves nearly two dozen First Nations.

LEGEND

- First Nations
- Robinson Huron treaty area



SOURCE: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

TORONTO STAR GRAPHIC

Under the treaty, the Crown promised to pay a perpetual annuity of £600 (\$2,400), which in 1850 worked out to approximately \$1.60 per person. But Robinson provided an additional incentive for the Anishnawbek communities to sign the treaty.

It is called an ‘augmentation clause’ and it reads “[...] should the Territory hereby ceded [...] at any future period produce such an amount as will enable the Government of this Province, without incurring loss, to increase the annuity hereby secured to them, then and in that case the same shall be augmented from time to time.”

Basically, if further wealth was generated in the territory, the Crown is obligated to increase the annuity “to such further sums as Her Majesty may graciously be pleased to order.”

For instance, picture yourself as a farmer with a field. You grow some corn for yourself, to feed your family, but still have a large parcel of land unused. A new neighbour asks if perhaps they can plant in the soil you have worked and cared for, in return for a portion of the money they make selling the corn they grow. You’re intrigued, but unsure. So they sweeten the pot: the more money they make selling corn grown on your land, the more money they’ll give to you.

But the crux of the issue, and what Justice Hennessy specifically stated in her decisions, is that the Crown, or your neighbour to continue the analogy, failed to live up to their end of the bargain.

Not only was the annuity not raised the first year after the opening of mines everywhere in 1851, but the annuity was not increased until 1874, despite the economic growth on the land.

In 1874, the annuity amount was raised from \$1.60 per person to \$4 per person. There has never been another increase. In 2021, that annuity is a cheque for \$4 for each person. Currently, the 24,000 to 30,000 descendants of the Ojibway Indians covered under the treaty receive \$4 a year each.

The decisions, in what the RHTLF refers to as Stage 1 and Stage 2, both ruled in favour of the First Nations, asserting that Canada and Ontario have a mandatory obligation to review the annuity amount.

While the provincial government is proceeding with that appeal this week, the federal government has declined to pursue it.

To find out more about the case go to the Robinson-Huron Treaty Litigation Fund website: www.robinsonhurontreaty1850.com.

For treaty history go to: History | RHT1850 robinsonhurontreaty1850.com

respectfully submitted by Ruth Gill on behalf of the First Nations Study Group

Vision Works

The VisionWorks project began back in 2002/2003 with the decision to develop, not a statement of faith, but a vision for how we wanted to live in the world, with one another, and with ourselves. Rather than seeking consensus on beliefs, we sought to name the values we held in common and ground them in our understanding of life itself. We created a VisionWorks writing group to study statements of values from diverse sources and present a draft for the Board and then the whole congregation to read and discuss. That first writing group included Gretta (our minister), who suggested that VisionWorks be re-evaluated every five years; Gretta has, by choice, not been a part of any of the subsequent three writing groups (2009, 2015, and 2020/2021), demonstrating that the document and commitment to its principles comes out of the community itself.


Gradually over the years, West Hill has articulated more and more clearly its commitment to living justly and compassionately with self, others, and the planet. While these values are commonly held in many religious and nonreligious groups, VisionWorks' distinctive feature is identifying our foundation, our source of knowledge, to be nothing other than life itself, the indisputable reality of our interrelated, interdependent, interconnected existence. In the light of that reality, it introduces values in terms of choice – how we *choose* to live, individually and with one another, in this awesome, challenging world. Although the phrasing and format of VisionWorks changes somewhat every five years as the next group evaluates it for clarity, relevance, and capacity to inspire, we as the community of West Hill continue to choose love as our guide and commit to growing together in wisdom for living.

NOTE: The name VisionWorks may not make immediate sense, sounding as it does like the title of a strategic or operational plan. It actually came out of a long-ago project that started but then morphed into the statement of values it is today. However, as it does present a *vision* for living, and, as we are increasingly aware, living with justice, compassion, integrity, openness, and courage can be a lot of *work*, we've kept the title – and the commitment to working out the vision together.

submitted by Scott Kearns

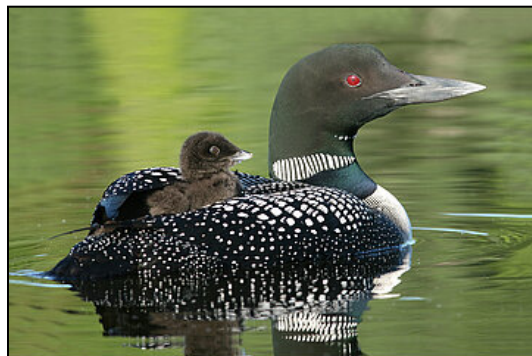
Have a Safe & Happy Summer!

The next issue of news@westhill
will be published in mid-August



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Outreach News

August Backpack/School Supplies Campaign

Traditionally, through the month of August, the Outreach Committee has run a backpack/school supplies campaign to support children going back to school. This year, as in past years, donations that are received through August, will be distributed to Family Residence on Kingston Road and Storefront on Lawrence Avenue; both locations have many young people who are in need of our support.

This year, come September, we all hope that students will be back in school for in-person learning with their friends and teachers...having new backpacks and school supplies will add to their joy! STAY TUNED...more details to follow!!

Outreach Committee (Jeanne Hamel, Gill Cockwell, June Dickson, Donna Lockhart, Ingrid Shouldice, Barb Russell)

Crafty Ladies

Despite our COVID times, crafty ladies, being Crafty Ladies, have continued doing what they do... crafts! We have a nice selection of our popular kitchen hand towels (thanks to Joan Miller!) as well as dishcloths. We also have many twiddle muffs for seniors who need something to do with their hands.

We continue to collect milk bags (3 litre, outer bags) for our ground mats which will be donated to support our Scarborough community. Please contact the office for further information.

respectfully submitted by Barb Russell

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Zooming with West Hill

Please join us for our virtual ZOOM gatherings. **If you don't have a computer, you can simply access ZOOM by TELEPHONE to listen/participate.** Contact the office to get the phone and meeting identification numbers.

Sunday Morning Service/Perspective(s) at 10:30

Tuesday Afternoon Wellness Gathering from 2 to 3



Thursday Morning Coffee from 10 to 11

West Hill United Board of 2021

Board Chair: Mike Lawrie

Property Chair: Gary Megson

Ministry and Personnel Chair: Anita DesRosiers

Communication and Marketing Chair: Dennis Augustine

Education and Growth: Deb Ellis

Friendship and Hospitality: Barb Russell

Community Care: Babette Oliviera

Celebrating the Spirit: Vacant

Finance Chair & Treasurer: John McKechnie

Members at Large: Emily Trivers, Donna Hall, Peter Thomas, George Oliver, Ellen Dinerman

Jean Skillman: Governance and Strategic Planning

Regional Representatives: Annemarie Leepel and Louise Lawrie

Trustees: Glenn Cockwell, Jim Hyland, Marion Cruikshank, Frank Kilroy, Gretta Vosper

West Hill United

A warm place to find yourself

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