

Learn and Act: Acadia Mawio'mi, Sisters In Spirit, Moosehide Men

by Annapolis Valley Monthly Meeting of the Religions Society of Friends: Truth and Reconciliation Committee

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Welcome to the third edition of "Learn and Act," the newsletter of Annapolis Valley Quakers' [Truth and Reconciliation Committee](#). In this issue we invite our readers to attend Acadia's Mawio'mi, and to learn about the issues it raises. Want to know how rewarding it can be to attend events organized by Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities working together? See our Update below, to read Marilyn Manzer's experiences at Grand Pré 2017.

Act: Oct 4-5 Mawio'mi at Acadia



Acadia University is hosting its [8th Annual Mawio'mi](#) (Mi'kmaq for "gathering") in Wolfville, Wed Oct 4th and Thurs Oct 5th. The theme is Circle of Hope. The event, co-hosted by [Mi'kmaw Family and Children's Services](#), intends to raise awareness of and honour missing and murdered Indigenous women, men, children, and two-spirit people.

The Truth and Reconciliation Committee will be there – please join us!

There are many [events happening during the two-day Mawio'mi](#), including ceremonies, feasts, a reading by Mi'kmaw poet laureate [Rebecca Thomas](#), a restorative justice workshop, and a storytelling evening. There are also activities aligned with the [Moosehide Campaign](#), and the [Sisters in Spirit Vigils](#) co-ordinated by the [Native Women's Association of Canada](#). Check out the [schedule](#) for a full listing. All events are free and open to the community, and children are welcome.

Learn: Sisters in Spirit, Moosehide Men

Planning to attend Acadia's Mawio'mi? Want to get up to date on some of the campaigns and issues that will be discussed? Follow the links below to learn more.

Sisters in Spirit

“[Sisters in Spirit](#)” is the name of a national movement honouring and bringing awareness to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). It is co-ordinated by [Native Women’s Association of Canada](#) (NWAC), which promotes the “social, economic, cultural, and political well-being of First Nations and Métis women”. People across the country are invited to [organize events on October 4th](#). The goals include honouring the memories of those who have been lost, and providing support to families who have lost a loved one.



The [Sisters in Spirit campaign started in 2005](#) as a “research, education, and policy initiative driven by Aboriginal women” about “the alarmingly high rates of violence against Aboriginal women and girls in Canada.” The project supported NWAC in developing a database of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, documenting the experiences and recommendations of their families, promoting families’ effective access to justice, and [publishing learning resources and reports](#).

The campaign uses the [Grandmother Moon](#) logo shown above, in connection with a poem of the same name.

Grandmother Moon

You know all women from birth to death
We seek your knowledge
We seek your strength
Some are STARS up there with you
Some are STARS on Mother Earth
Grandmother, lighten our path in the dark
Creator, keep our sisters safe from harm
Maa duu? Mussi cho

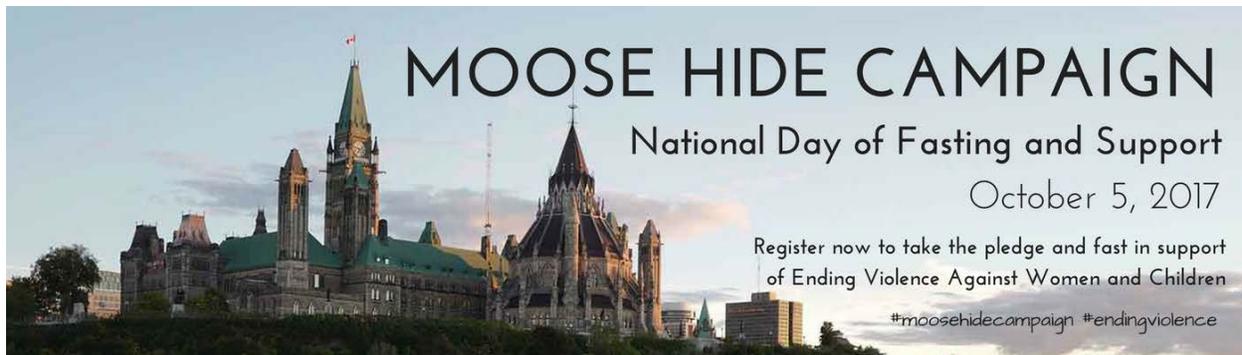
-Kukdookaa

Moosehide Campaign

The [Moosehide Campaign](#) “is a grassroots movement of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Men who are standing up against violence towards women and children.” They invite men to wear a square of moosehide to pledge their support, engage in a [fast on October 5th](#), and take action against sexual violence in their lives.

The Moose Hide Campaign was started by Paul Lacerte and his daughter Raven, in 2011. During a hunting trip along the “Highway of Tears”, a stretch of highway in northern BC where many women have been murdered or gone missing, they “harvested a moose and the daughter was preparing it when they had a [moment of inspiration to tan the Moose Hide and cut it into squares for men to wear](#). The

inspiration came from the land, from the loving relationship between the father and the daughter, from the stretch of highway where violence has taken so many loved ones, and from the spirit of the moose.”



The Moosehide Campaign invites men to [take a stand against sexual assault and harassment by promoting gender equity, healthy relationships, and positive ideals of masculinity.](#)

Moosehide patches are [available for order](#). The campaign website also has many [resources](#). You can also read more about [how they seek accountability to Indigenous women](#) and why men specifically are invited to fast.

Update: Enjoying a Mi'kmaw-Acadian Cultural Celebration



In our last newsletter, we encouraged people to attend a Pow-wow, and many did! Here's an update from Truth and Reconciliation Committee member Marilyn Manzer, on her experience at the [Grand Pré 2017 celebration](#).

“In August I attended an amazing celebration honouring the Acadian and Mi'kmaw cultural sharing that began 400 years ago. It was held at the Grand Pré National Historic Site, which

commemorates the Acadian settlement that was located there until the British deportation of 1755. I volunteered during two days and attended concerts in the evenings. I loved the event and would have attended even more if I could have! This was part of my effort to facilitate reconciliation with First Nations, along with serving on the Truth and Reconciliation Committee that brings you this newsletter.

The outdoor event included a fabulous art show on a “street” with 58 tents where Acadians and First Nations folks from across Canada were selling their art and crafts. There were concessions selling Acadian and Mik'maw food. Some had free samples of traditional foods like fry bread. There were also organizations giving out information on community programs and projects and places to visit. There

were many big tipis where Mik'maw people were demonstrating crafts such as birchbark canoes, quill art, hide tanning, and beadwork. There was a story-telling tipi and others sharing cultural information. Acadian people presented lectures, panel discussions, performances, etc. in a big round "rendezvous" tent.

The huge main stage featured many, many amazing Acadian and Mik'maw performers, both well-known and not-so-well-known, playing in front of an art and light show from noon til 10:30pm daily. My personal favourites were [La Baie en Joie](#), a troupe of young Acadian dancers from Saulnierville NS, [Bernie Francis](#), a [Mi'kmaq linguist](#) and [singer-songwriter](#) from Membertou First Nation, [Edith Butler](#), a [well-known Acadian folksinger](#) from New Brunswick, and [Don Amero](#), a [Métis/Acadian singer-songwriter](#) from Winnipeg. The lawn next to the Evangeline statue contained tents and a stage to facilitate Mik'maw cultural demonstrations, including a 5-hour powwow scheduled for Saturday afternoon. Saturday poured with rain and the powwow was moved to the gym at Acadia University, but still was well-attended and very exciting. There were many dances with Mik'maq in traditional regalia (which was highly artistic and beautiful) and a half dozen different singing and drumming groups that took turns playing for the dances. Spectators were invited to join the dancing and many did. The rain stopped in the evening and "[The Relatives](#)" were obviously a popular dance band. I joined many others to dance in front of the stage.

Thousands of people came and I personally recognized only a few – which is unusual for me at local events. I totally loved it."