

NWAC President's Report

This publication highlights the various activities the President has undertaken throughout the month of August.



LORRAINE WHITMAN

Lorraine Whitman was elected as the President of the Native Women's Association of Canada on September 14, 2019. Prior to her presidency at NWAC, Ms. Whitman served as President of the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association and has been advocating for Indigenous women's rights over the past 45 years.

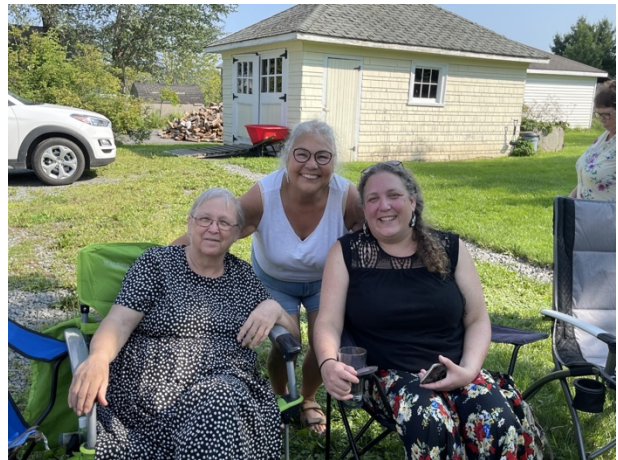
August President's Report

My Dear Friends,

The beginning of August was a time of rest for me and the last of the month the beginning of harvest season! It was a joy to share the fruits of our garden labour with the community and to see the Elders and those who I have not seen recently (due to COVID-19). It feels like we may be getting back to a somewhat "normal" life.

Days of importance this month:

August 1 was a civic holiday in our summer months; whether in our own provincial bubble or in your own region's, the day was a reason to celebrate with family at a BBQ or sitting on a patio with friends. August 9 marked International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, August 12 was International Youth Day, August 22 was International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief, And August 30 was International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances. Many of these days are brought forward from the UN as days to remember, which led me to thoughts about amber alerts in our own country.



I was interviewed by the CBC recently on amber alerts. It is unconscionable that police would issue amber alerts differently depending on the race of the child who has gone missing. The lives of all children are precious, but it seems that, when non-Indigenous children go missing, their disappearances seem to get more attention from the police than when Indigenous children go missing. Last year, when a 14-year-old Mi'kmaq girl disappeared and was believed by her community to be in danger, the police refused to issue an amber alert, saying she may have gone off voluntarily. Regardless of what the police said, this was a child who could not consent and did not have the authority to consent. I believe the police response was unacceptable and I called for the protocols around amber alerts to be revised to ensure they are being applied equally to all missing children.

I have had no response from police to this demand and I would be very surprised, though pleasantly surprised, to learn that they have, in fact, changed their protocols. But the next time an Indigenous child goes missing, we will certainly be demanding that the police take the matter seriously.


NWAC released its newest website front page encouraging all of us to get out there and vote on September 20. We have waited long enough for the Government of Canada to take our issues and our voices seriously. We are done talking; we are now voting. Indigenous women are voting in 2021. We will be silenced no more.

Why should we vote? A single bead is small, but when strung together with many others, they become something remarkable. When Indigenous women's voices come together to vote in this federal election, we will not be ignored. I hope you will get out there to vote and have your own voice heard.


May these autumn days give us strength and courage to continue with our new norm, starting in September as our children return to school. But we mustn't forget that we are still in a COVID-19 crisis. We must remain vigilant and resilient in taking our health seriously, as there are new variants keeping us at risk.

Let's enjoy what's left of summer, as Indian Summer is upon us.

Wela'lin



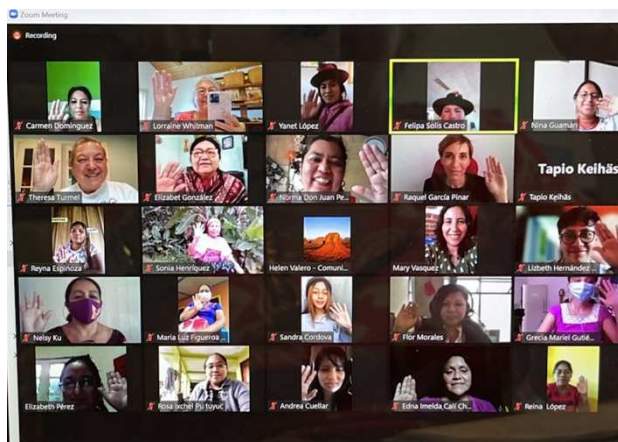
President Lorraine Whitman

 [@LWhitman_NWAC](https://twitter.com/LWhitman_NWAC)

My August Agenda

Lead with Love at Glooscap was a personal interview with two of the crew members who wanted to thank me for doing a documentary and letting people know how important love is. As Indigenous Peoples, love is one of the first gifts that was given. May we never forget the gift of kindness, especially during these pandemic time.

ECMIA—Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas involved two meetings looking at violence against Indigenous women that receive little attention, and Protection and reparations. Specifically, the topics being discussed were “Prevention” and “Attention and Healing,” and how the pandemic has impacted violence in Indigenous communities worldwide. A series of seven meetings are being held to address the violence that has taken place and come up with solutions that we can address globally.



PTMA YWAC Meeting & PTMA Nova Scotia Meeting: The President and CEO meet regularly with the board members of the PTMAs on the resources and services that the PTMAs may need to promote and enhance their own governance. These are ongoing presentations.

We also met virtually with interim President Bernadette Marshall and CEO

Karen Pictou of the Native Women’s Association of Nova Scotia to see what support NWAC can provide to help build capacity.

Glooscap AGA

I had the honour of attending the Glooscap AGA’s Opening Prayer, which was held virtually. It’s always important to remember where we come from. For me, it’s always an honour to be able to participate in an event I am able to attend.

First Board Charity Meeting

Our first charity meeting to have NWAC recognized as a charity was held virtually.

Other Events and Activities

I attended the Mi'kmawey Devert Elders Advisory Council meeting to discuss an archeological site where a building will be constructed to preserve traditional artifacts of the Lnu Mi'kmaw people.

I received a personal invitation from Claudette Commanda regarding the McLean Day Schools Settlement, held to discuss how dollars would be spent by the survivors from the settlement. This is a first step towards reconciliation.

I hosted the Journaling for Healing workshop, which focused on writing down one's thoughts in a journal. Journaling is one way of healing; it involves putting our thoughts down on paper so we can see more clearly.

I did a CBC interview on amber alerts. CBC was following up to see if any changes had taken place on this file.

Board Meeting and Commemoration Unveiling of MMIWG painting, Charlottetown

I travelled to Charlottetown, PEI, to attend a board meeting and commemoration unveiling of a MMIWG mural painting. It was an emotional event but absolutely healing for one's heart and for all the families who attended. The artwork brought out the emotion, heartache, and pain of the women; their attendance made the event all the more special. The women spoke out about their hurt and how they are trying to heal.

Indigenous Technology Virtual Event on "Our Youth and Our Future"

This was a Canada-wide event focusing on technology for Indigenous post-secondary youth. Our youth are so important—as is technology. Even as Elders, we can learn from our youth. Technology is one area that our youth can bring their knowledge to the forefront.

NWAC's Orange Faceless Doll Event

I hosted NWAC's Orange Faceless Doll event, held to commemorate our lost children. Kits for creating orange-dress faceless dolls were sent out to over 40 participants, who used the event to heal, commemorate, and remember. Our children are not forgotten.

Personnel Committee Meeting and AGA Committee Meeting

I met with the PTMAs and AGA committee to discuss areas of concern: personnel concerns and how the pandemic is impacting our human resources (PTMA focus); the upcoming virtual meeting taking place in the fall (AGA).



Native Women's
Association of Canada



L'Association des
femmes autochtones
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