

Six Nations needs to get its act together

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For more than a year Six Nations has been faced with the daunting, stressful, emotional burden of protecting its land base.

The community has faced police raids, barricades, hostile Ontarians, government stalling, political infighting, injuries, tears and heartbreak.

Yet, despite all of this, Six Nations has protected the land.

The Reclamation at Caledonia isn't just symbolic, Six Nations reposed its land when Canada failed to live up to its more than 200 year old financial obligations to Six Nations.

Facing the kind of scorn and stress that has been heaped on Six Nations for standing up for its land rights has taken its toll.

At the Reclamation site, the days get longer and the focus is getting lost as we watch children corralled into a school for safety and a church minister afraid of neighbours he has been supporting.

In recent weeks, young men have engaged in the very kind of activities that could result in a loss of the site if police decide to use those activities, from assaults, to drug use, to threats to vandalism as an excuse to raid the site to ensure public safety.

And this week even our editor was subjected to assault by one member of the "site security", with only an elder, Floyd Montour coming to her aid, while others simply watched. Instead of acting at a meeting of "the men" the men chose to pass the buck, blaming the victim, refusing to act and by doing so condoned violence against women in our community.

The results are Six Nations people are afraid to go to the site, are hardpressed to defend the behaviour and have become concerned and in many cases embarrassed by these antics.

It has to stop. The land is at stake.

In the past few weeks, ego has taken over what was a noble cause and it's past time for Six Nations to deflate that ego and take back its land from those who would risk it for a thrill.

This began simply with a handful of people, not a single person, but the repossession of that land is a community owned movement. Those at the site who have been there for more than a year need to be thanked for their assistance and sent home for their own health and peace of mind. They have been living in a state of alarm for too long, without the assistance of counseling or a break and it's taken its toll when they begin to attack our own people, both physically and verbally.

New people, older men and women need to take on the guard. And the Confederacy needs to evaluate whether or not the people it has appointed to take on tasks associated with the Reclamation need to be replaced. For them, too, it has been a long year.

Chiefs and their clanmothers need to meet.

As a very wise Mohawk Turtle clanmother once said a chief and his clanmother are supposed to be as one, as close as two fingers together. Their minds as one, their thoughts as one for the benefit of the clan, and the people. That isn't happening. Clanmothers are holding their own meetings, without their chiefs, or clans. Chiefs are not talking to their clanmothers.

Community members claim to be taking on responsibilities in the name of those clanmothers.

Clanmothers need to remember their role is not to be chief. It is beyond that. They are to listen to their families. Carry their voice to their chiefs and work in concert with that chief. When he falls the whole clan falls. When the Great Law fails, we all fail.

Chiefs and clanmothers are supposed to be leading the way for us. It's time for them to act together, and these violent acts to stop.

After all, the Great Law is all about peace, and power through equality.