



CITY & DISTRICT

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FAMILY NOTICES B9



Lindor Reynolds

Turmoil persists at women's shelter

ONGOING tensions at Osborne House, Manitoba's largest shelter for abused women, came to a head this week when its executive director abruptly took a one-month stress leave.

Margaret Marin, who was recently put on a 90-day probationary period, said yesterday she could not discuss her reasons for leaving or the working conditions at the shelter.

The embattled director said she has hired a lawyer.

It was just the latest skirmish at the 45-bed shelter, which was rocked in December by the resignation of the majority of its board of directors. It's also an indication that despite government assurances to the contrary, unrest continues to mar what was set up to be a place of refuge for battered women and their children.

What remains to be seen is how this squabbling will affect the confidence of those same women — and whether the delivery of service will be affected as the new board tries to erase a \$50,000 deficit.

When members of last year's board resigned, they claimed they were unable to work with the provincial government, which they accused of using bullying tactics to oust them.

New board

A new board of directors has been appointed at Osborne House. They're the sort of committed people who volunteer to spend countless hours doing something in which they believe. The board chairwoman, Crown attorney Rekha Malaviya, said yesterday that taking care of the needs of clients remains the priority.

"Our clients and our staff is the focus," said Malaviya, who once worked at the shelter.

One staff member was recently laid off, she said, but that move will not affect services.

Osborne House has a budget of \$1.14 million in grants and per-diem payments from the province. It is now about 80 per cent full.

Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, the city's next-largest shelter, sometimes has a waiting list and must send women to safe houses outside Winnipeg.

The signs that all was not well with Marin and her political masters were clear earlier this month when Lockport's Sabrina Darichuk and Kelly Champlin were the victims of an apparent domestic slaying.

Traditionally, Marin would have made a statement on behalf of the shelter. This time, she said she wasn't able to talk. No statement was ever issued.

Marlene Bertrand, director of the family violence prevention program for the province, said yesterday that things are "running quite smoothly" at the shelter.

"It's my understanding that things are not chaotic," said Bertrand, who once held the same job at Osborne House that Marin is struggling to keep. "There isn't a lot of conflict in the place."

I would have loved to ask Margaret Marin what she thought. Unfortunately, she was feeling a little muzzled yesterday.

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Medical broker arrives

B.C. firm offers Manitobans fast treatment in U.S. at lowest price

By Mia Rabson

COMPARISON shopping takes on a new meaning in Manitoba this month with the arrival of a company that helps Canadians find the fastest, cheapest medical treatment available in the U.S.

Timely Medical Alternatives will begin advertising in Manitoba this weekend. The company is one of a handful

popping up in Canada to take advantage of the frustrations of Canadians waiting weeks, months, and sometimes even years for medical treatment.

"There are alternatives to waiting in long lineups," says the company's head, Richard Baker.

Clients seeking help from Baker's company are asked to courier their latest test results, X-rays and blood work to Timely's Vancouver office. From there, Baker will call around and negotiate with

U.S. hospitals for surgery at the cheapest price.

He can usually get a patient on an operating table within a week.

It's not without significant cost. Patients have paid \$20,000 US for a kidney operation, and usually between \$20,000 and \$25,000 US for a hip or knee replacement.

Baker has established close relationships with hospitals in Washington state, where he sends most of his clients. He

takes a small cut from the fee the hospital charges the patient.

Open for 18 months, Baker said he started making money in the second month and business has expanded ever since.

He normally is dealing with 50 patients at a time, with at least a dozen new calls every day.

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Happy to help

Bombers' Dave Mudge (back, centre) and former Bomber Moe Elewonibi (back, left) join students from Samuel Burland School yesterday at the grand weigh-in for a recent food drive for Winnipeg Harvest. Hundreds of students from 18 schools gathered a total of 12,653 pounds of food and the gang from Samuel Burland had the highest average of 18.8 pounds per student (2,701 pounds). With contributions from MPI and Peak of the Market, a total of 29,664 pounds of food was accumulated in the sixth-annual drive.

Gift of belonging valuable to pupils

Teachers urged to connect with kids

By Nick Martin

THE greatest gift a teacher can give a student is the sense of belonging, Augustana College native studies Prof. Martin Brokenleg told close to 1,000 delegates to an aboriginal education conference yesterday.

"If you're connected to that child, you can change that child's life," said Brokenleg. "The real task of an educator is to see a child for who he or she is meant to be."

Brokenleg teaches at Augustana in South Dakota, and is also professor of native theology at Vancouver School of Theology.

He told delegates to the Manitoba Teachers Society's Walking in Both Worlds conference that gangs feast on kids who feel they don't belong.

"Adolescents and teenagers feel a need to belong, more than they will at any other time in life. If you don't provide that belonging, they'll find a substitute."

Brokenleg said that making a child feel significant cannot be conveyed in words. "We can build resilience in any child, but it has to be done experientially — it can't be done with words."

Delegates are attending dozens of workshops, culminating in a town hall session this afternoon at the Winnipeg Convention Centre.

Kevin Chief, director of the Winnipeg Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Association, urged greater links among schools, non-profit aboriginal groups, the community and kids.

Chief said non-aboriginal teachers need help understanding aboriginal perspectives: "Non-aboriginal teachers, what is their role in aboriginal education?" he said.

Chief said that recipients of Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards typically spend 80 per cent of their acceptance speeches thanking teachers.

Now the aboriginal consultant with River East Transcona School Division, Chief attended Winnipeg School Division, and played varsity basketball at the



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"If you're connected to that child, you can change that child's life"

— Prof. Martin Brokenleg

University of Winnipeg: "With the exception of my father, the people who helped me have success in life, none of them is aboriginal."

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Please see **ABORIGINAL B2**

A 'culture of fear' keeps Filipinos quiet

By Carol Sanders

FROM the safety of her Winnipeg home for the last decade, Flor Marcelino has been publishing a monthly newspaper about what happens to people who tell the truth about crime in the Philippines. The whistle-blowers may end up missing, beaten or dead, said the editor of the *Philippine Times*, which is distributed across Canada.

She said the young Filipinos who wouldn't — or couldn't — testify in a Winnipeg murder case may have picked up a fear of speaking out from parents who grew up in the Philippines' "culture of fear."

"If you have lived in that situation where witnesses are harassed or killed, of course if you value your life, you keep quiet," said Marcelino.

"The truth is sacrificed in the process, but you want to save your own skin," said Marcelino, who came to Canada from the Philippines in 1982.

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