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Newspaper & Aroostook County's Independent Voice

VOL. 141, No. 28

WEDNESDAY, JULY 11, 2012

TWENTY PAGES

PRICE \$1.00

# Five Wabanaki chiefs sign historic agreement

By Joseph Cyr  
Staff Writer

AUGUSTA — History was made June 29 as five Wabanaki chiefs and Governor Paul LePage signed a document to commence the Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission process.

The signing fulfilled a commitment the state made to its Wabanaki chiefs in May, 2011. The commission is a collaborative effort to examine what happened, what is happening, and what needs to happen regarding Maine child welfare practices affecting Wabanaki people.

The public signing ceremony, which took place at the Hall of Flags in the State Capitol, represents a historic agreement between Wabanaki tribal governments and the state of Maine to uncover and acknowledge the truth, create opportunities to heal and learn from the truth, and collaborate to operate the best child welfare system possible for Wabanaki children, a goal shared by all the signatories to the mandate.

"I am happy we are able to take this next step to continue this important effort," said Gov. LePage. "I see this commission as a critical step to improve relations between the state and the tribes. As Governor, I believe my administration's relations with the tribes have always been good. Repairing damage from prior administrations is a gesture that is impor-

tant to me."

Brenda Commander, tribal chief of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, was among the five Wabanaki chiefs attending the event. Also in attendance were Chief Richard Getchell of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs, Chief Joseph Socobasin of the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Motahkmikuk, Chief Reuben Clayton Cleaves of the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Sipayik and Chief Kirk Francis of the Penobscot Indian Nation. "I think it is an important step toward healing within our community," Commander said. "We are really pleased that Gov. LePage and the Department of Health and Human Services support this effort."

Commander said she felt the ceremony showed there was a lot of support for going forward with the healing process.

"It was a great first step," she said.

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"Many of our people survived the Canadian and American boarding school system," he said. "The trauma that those children, who are now the elders of our tribe, grandmothers and grandfathers, have unwittingly passed down through the generations needs to be acknowledged so we can heal as individuals, families and as a tribe. This Truth and

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Wabanaki and state representatives have been collaborating for more than a decade, to improve child welfare system for Wabanaki children, he said. In spite of this progress, Maine's child welfare history continues to impact Wabanaki children and families today.

"The governments have come to realize that they must unearth the story of Wabanaki people's experiences in order to fully uphold the spirit, letter and intent of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in a way that is consistent with the law and promotes healing," Dieffenbacher-Krall said.

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Commander said it was not uncommon for Native American children to be taken from their homes decades ago and placed in non-Native American homes, despite the existence of the Indian Child Welfare Act signed by Congress in 1978.

"When I took office, there were very critical issues going on with DHHS and the tribe," she said. "A lot of our children were removed. It seemed that we really didn't have the voice that we do now. No matter what the parents did back then, they didn't seem to get anywhere with getting their children back home."

In the late 1990s, things were so bad, according to Commander, that a standoff took place between the tribe and DHHS.

"Ultimately, we attended several public hearing sessions throughout the state and the Maine Attorney General sat down with us," she said. "We didn't talk about jurisdictional issues. Instead we focused on the effects this (removal) had on the children."

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ment signed its first child welfare agreement with the state in 2002 and from that point forward, progress has been made with the TRC, Commander said.

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due date of July 2, Richardson thought she might come a day early in time to celebrate Canada Day, while Plourde's patriotic push trended toward the Fourth — although admittedly in the final days of her pregnancy she was looking forward to the delivery sooner rather than later.

"We were happy with either Canada Day or the Fourth of July," said Plourde. "She's just the most beautiful person I have ever laid eyes on. She is just precious."

That sentiment was echoed by Aiva's dad, who has looked forward to this day for quite some time.

"I'm pretty excited! This is our first child," said Richardson. "I turned 40 this year and always wanted to have a family. I have younger siblings, so taking care of children is something I have experience with. Although, I must say I just changed my first diaper in over 20 years."

Aiva Mae was delivered by TAMC Certified Nurse Midwife Mary Hamilton and Dr. Joyce Hebert. In honor of the occasion of TAMC's 100th baby born in the centennial year, staff of the OB GYN and Midwifery Services presented the family with a gift basket including numerous items members of the team made themselves.

"We are just so excited," said Vickie Belanger, manager of OB GYN and midwifery services. "Our staff came together to create a great gift basket. The team members gave of their time and wonderful talent to create just the perfect gift for this special baby. All of us are just beaming at the birth of our 100th baby in this significant year. The fact that she was born on the Fourth of July is just icing on the cake!"

The special centennial delivery will be followed by a good number more this month. Nearly 30 babies are expected to be born at TAMC in July.

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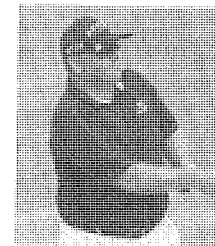
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### SPORTS

#### Hebert wins Cary Classic golf title



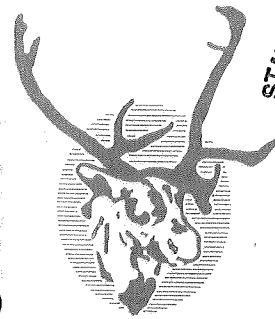
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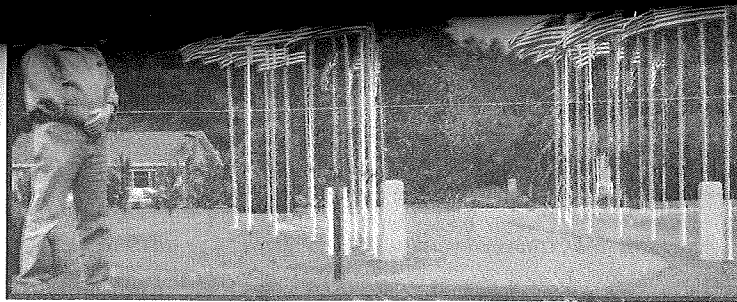
## Arootsakoostik delivers mix of music food and friendship

... thought using basket-sized flags would be a good fit," explained NMVCC chairman Harry Hafford, and corporation members were assured that the flag poles could handle the weight of rain-soaked cotton flags flying in gusty winds.

"... we ran into some bumps in the road," he added.

Under windy, precipitous circumstances, three poles bent under the weight of the flags. All of the 5-foot by 9-foot cotton flags were replaced by 5-foot by 8-foot polyester flags to prevent further damage, and Hafford anticipates the three new flag poles will be installed sometime next month.

Four individuals have already



*Aroostook Republican photo/Natalie Bazinet*  
**Though the Avenue of Flags at the Northern Maine Veterans' Cemetery in Caribou remains as majestic as it's always been, the flags flying in memory of deceased veterans have changed after the 30 cotton 5-foot by 9-foot flags became so heavy when rain-soaked that they bent three flagpoles, as members of the Northern Maine Veterans' Cemetery Corporation found out earlier this spring. Harry Hafford, left, is spreading the word about the new flags flying above the avenue — 5-foot by 8-foot polyester flags that won't damage the poles even in the worst weather Aroostook County offers up.**

## Ceremonial signing commences Wabanaki child welfare reform

By Joseph Cyr  
*Staff Writer*

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Brenda Commander, tribal chief of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, was among the five Wabanaki chiefs attending the event. Also in attendance were Chief Richard Getchell of the

**Please Turn to Page 4, REFORM**

## Fourth of July celebrations covers Limestone, Stockholm in red, white and blue

### Fourth of July festivities put Limestone in the limelight

By Natalie Bazinet  
*Staff Writer*

LIMESTONE — A flurry of fireworks colorfully concluded Limestone's week-long Fourth of July Celebration, which drew hundreds to the small community for festivities like the town's famed parade.

With over 80 entries this year, the streets were packed to watch Limestone's Fourth of July parade, themed "Red, White and Blue Vibrations," this year.

Parade winners were:

- BLVD Graphix, and their carloads of helium balloons (which were distributed amongst the crowd) won Best Business Entry;

- The Limestone/Caswell Historical Society adorned their float not only with red, white and blue, they even featured

**Please Turn to Page 3, FOURTH**



### Stockholm Parade a community hit

By Natalie Bazinet  
*Staff Writer*

STOCKHOLM — It was a crowd pleasing, flag waving, candy throwing Fourth of July Parade in Stockholm and not even sporadic rain could dampen the community's patriotic spirit.

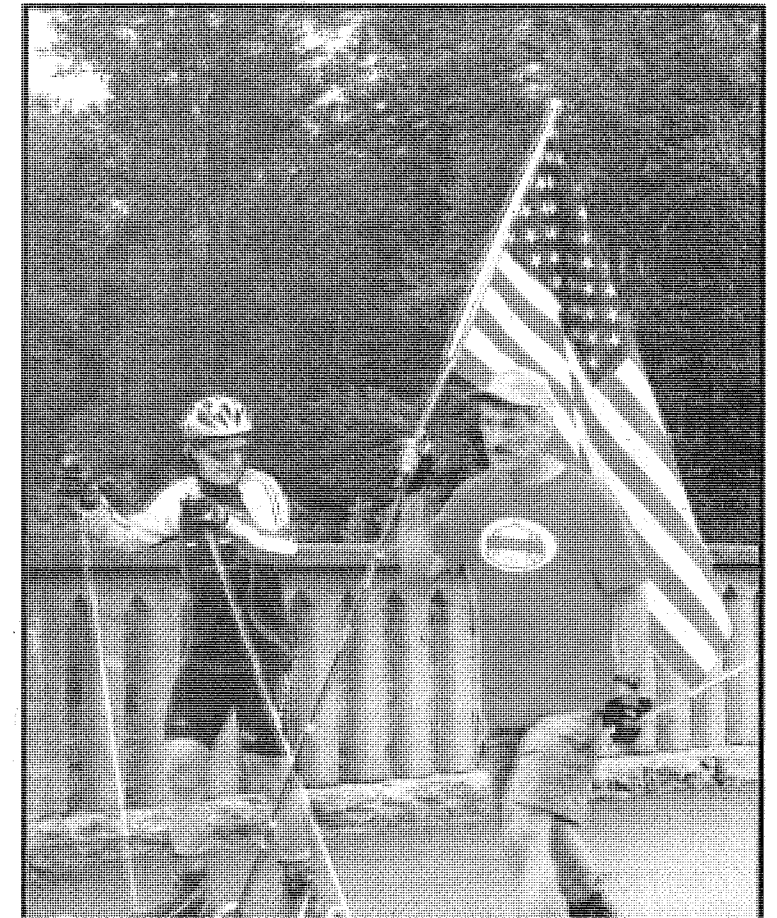
Stockholm's First Selectman David Duquette was one of many lining the streets to view the parade, and he heard a lot of good things.

"People thought it was one of our better parades, and I thought it was very nice, considering it rained a bit," Duquette said. His favorite parade entries were the Central Aroostook Community Band and the Van Buren Marching Band.

The Fourth of July Parade is just one of many events that brings many individuals with Stockholm roots back to the community.

Eric and Peggy Nelson, for example, were up from Washington, D.C. to visit Eric's father, Hazen Nelson, of Stockholm.

Enthusiastically waving flags and cheering for the passing floats,



Continued From Page 1

Aroostook Band of Micmacs, Chief Joseph Socobasin of the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Motahkmikuk, Chief Reuben Clayton Cleaves of the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Sipayik and Chief Kirk Francis of the Penobscot Indian Nation. "I think it is an important step toward healing within our community," Commander said. "We are really pleased that Gov. LePage and the Department of Health and Human Services support this effort."

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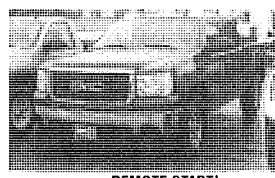
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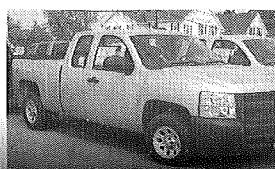
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2011 GMC Dump Truck, like new.  
1987 Dodge Dump Truck, good condition.  
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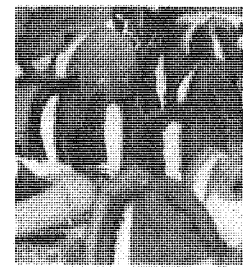
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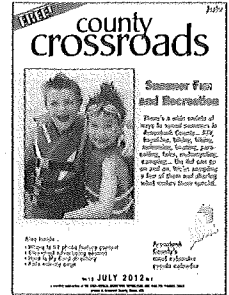
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HOULTON, MAINE, PIONEER TIMES WEDNESDAY, JULY 11, 2012

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ONE DOLLAR

## Ormsby plans appeal

CARIBOU — Thayne Ormsby will appeal his murder conviction, according to documents filed in Aroostook County Superior Court.

Attorneys for Ormsby, a 22-year-old Orient man who was sentenced in June for killing three people in Amity back in June 2010, filed paperwork to appeal the case on June 27, court clerks said Tuesday.



## Fireworks, parade, fair highlight July 4th events

By Joseph Cyr  
Staff Writer

HOULTON — It was a July 4th week to remember as the town celebrated six days of festivities with everything from an arts and crafts fair, Midnight Madness celebration, large holiday parade and of course the annual Houlton Agricultural Fair.

“The fourth of July events really went quite well,” said Lt. Dan Pelletier of the Houlton Police Department. “The parade, Midnight Madness and all the

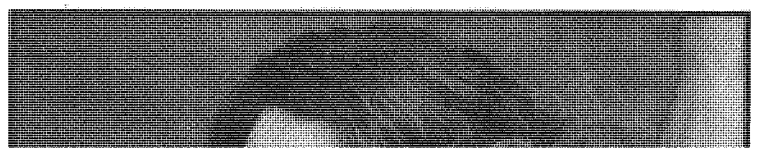
mated about 2,000 less people attended over the five-day period. “We had a great fair, but our attendance was certainly down,” he said. “People loved the fireworks, which was nice.”

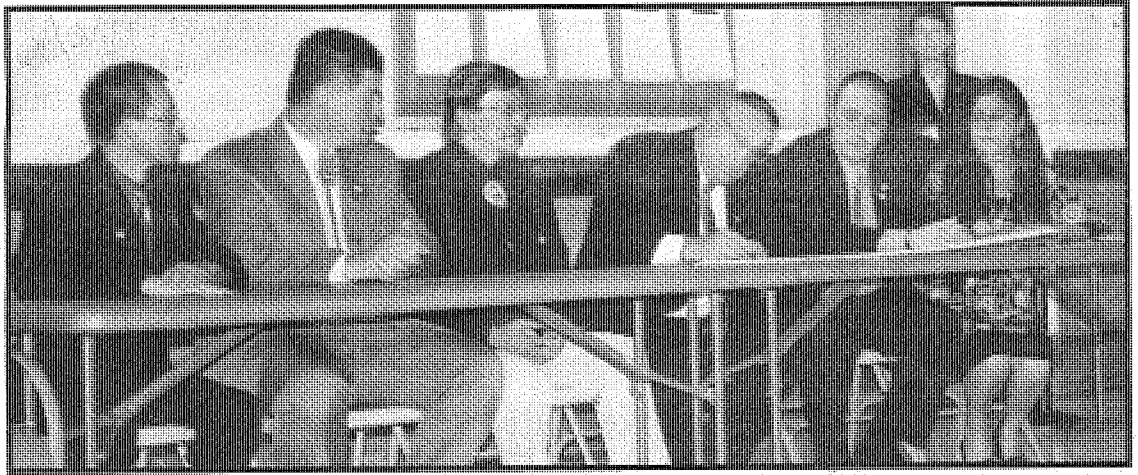
Clearly blamed a variety of factors including the fact that the

Fourth of July fell on a Wednesday; high temperatures during the week; and the Bangor Waterfront Concert series for drawing people out of town.

Showers also kept some from

(Please see Page Twelve)





Contributed photo/Penthea Burns

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the tribes have always been good. Repairing damage from prior administrations is a gesture that is important to me."

Brenda Commander, tribal

(Please see Page Two)



Houlton Pioneer Times Photo/Joseph Cyr

**ROCK OUT** — Dustin Fitzpatrick rips through a drum solo with his band "Crossroads" during the Midnight Madness event in downtown Houlton July 3. For additional photos and a story on Midnight Madness turn to Page One B.

# Smyrna family sews pillowcases for EMMC

When children at Eastern Maine Medical Center lay their heads on their pillows, they may be resting their head on a pillowcase sewn by a local Smyrna family.

The Lee family took on this project to meet other's needs.

"We think it's something Jesus would do to make children at the hospital happy," said Hannah, age 11.

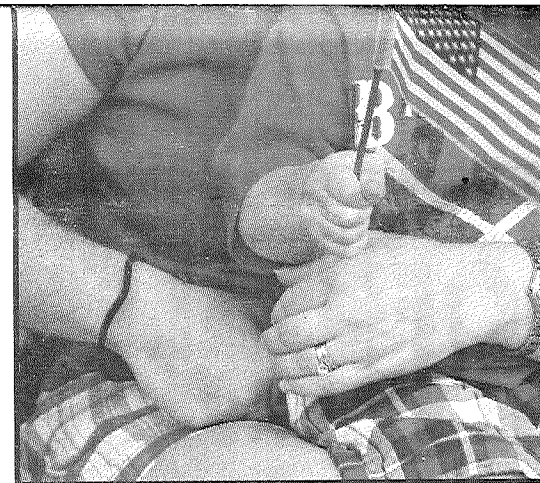
Madelyn, age 10, added, "I think then they will know a total stranger who loves them is praying for them every day."

Hannah, Madelyn and their younger sister, Sadie, age 5, along with their brothers Isaac, 8, and Elliot, 3, sewed 110 pillowcases to be sent to the Bangor hospital.

"Our goal was 100," said Hannah. But, that number grew a bit larger and with only two pillowcase fabrics exactly alike.

The pillowcases were delivered on June 19.

(Please see Page Two)



Houlton Pioneer

**ALL SMILES** — Jennifer Collins of Houlton and all smiles as they enjoy the July 4th parade.

# Town still search for new man

By Gloria Austin  
Staff Writer

The search for a new town manager is still under way, but councilors may get a step closer next Monday, July 16, when they meet in executive session to consider applicants for the position.

At Monday night's council meeting, Houlton councilors authorized the Downtown Development TIF District's and the Airport Development TIF District's captured assessed value percentage be reduced from 100 percent to 66 percent for the 2012 fiscal year.

"Reducing the percentage of these two districts will allow us to transfer additional funds into revenue that will help minimize the need for any more than a one-mil increase," said Interim Town Manager Cathy O'Leary. "Due to increased costs for the town, such as the school budget, county tax and fuel, we have reviewed the budget and revenues in depth to determine the best course of action and have worked hard to try to minimize the impact to taxpayers. We will continue to work hard to keep future increases to a minimum. No projects would be affected by a reduction in these two districts."

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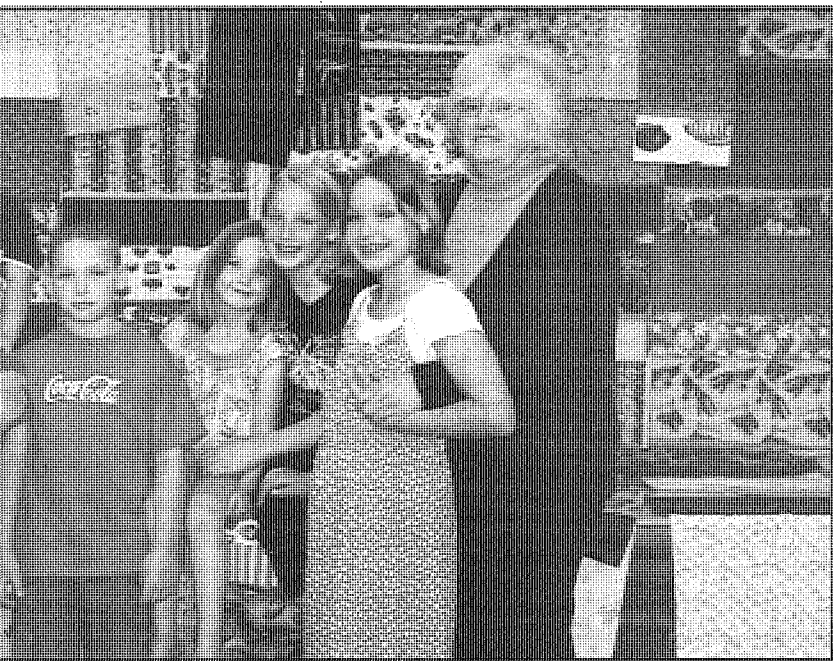
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# Wabanaki

(Continued from Page One)



Houlton Pioneer Times photograph/Gloria Austin

**ED** — The Lee family display the pillowcases they made for sick children at a center in Bangor. The family is, from left, Michelle, Elliot, Isaac, Sadie, and grandmother Mary Jane Greenlaw.

chief of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, was among the five Wabanaki chiefs attending the event. Also in attendance were Chief Richard Getchell of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs, Chief Joseph Socobasin of the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Motahkmikuk, Chief Reuben Clayton Cleaves of the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Sipayik and Chief Kirk Francis of the Penobscot Indian Nation. “I think it is an important step toward healing within our community,” Commander said. “We are really pleased that Gov. LePage and the Department of Health and Human Services support this effort.”

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“It was a great first step,” she said.

Chief Richard Getchell of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs cited the impact of boarding schools on the Micmac people.

“Many of our people survived the Canadian and American boarding school system,” he said. “The trauma that those children, who are now the elders of our tribe, grandmothers and grandfathers, have unwittingly passed down through the generations needs to be acknowledged so we can heal as individuals, families and as a tribe. This Truth and Reconciliation Commission process is crucial to that healing. We must give our people the opportunity to share their experiences, to bring voice to all that has been suppressed and repressed for far too many years.”

The Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) represents the first truth and reconciliation effort within U.S. territory that has been collaboratively developed between Indian nations and a state government, according to John Dieffenbacher-Krall, executive director of the Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission.

Wabanaki and state representatives have been collaborating for more than a decade, to improve child welfare system for Wabanaki children, he said. In spite of this progress, Maine’s child welfare history continues to impact Wabanaki children and families today.

“The governments have come to realize that they must unearth the story of Wabanaki people’s experiences in order to fully uphold the spirit, letter and intent of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in a way that is consistent with the law and promotes healing,” Dieffenbacher-Krall said.

The concept for the Tribal-State TRC began with a Truth and Reconciliation Convening Group, individuals representing

Maine Tribal Child Welfare, Maine State DHHS Office of Child and Family Services, and staff from the Muskie School of Public Service, American Friends Service Committee, and Wabanaki Mental Health Associates. Last year all five Wabanaki Tribal Governments and Governor LePage signed the Declaration of Intent to undertake the TRC.

Commander said it was not uncommon for Native American children to be taken from their homes decades ago and placed in non-Native American homes, despite the existence of the Indian Child Welfare Act signed by Congress in 1978.

“When I took office, there were very critical issues going on with DHHS and the tribe,” she said. “A lot of our children were removed. It seemed that we really didn’t have the voice that we do now. No matter what the parents did back then, they didn’t seem to get anywhere with getting their children back home.”

In the late 1990s, things were so bad, according to Commander, that a standoff took place between the tribe and DHHS.

“Ultimately, we attended several public hearing sessions throughout the state and the Maine Attorney General sat down with us,” she said. “We didn’t talk about jurisdictional issues. Instead we focused on the effects this (removal) had on the children.”

The Houlton tribal government signed its first child welfare agreement with the state in 2002 and from that point forward, progress has been made with the TRC, Commander said.

Dieffenbacher-Krall added the impetus for the TRC was three-fold.

First, it is to create a common understanding between the Wabanaki and the state of Maine concerning what happened and is happening to Wabanaki children in the child welfare system.

Secondly, it is to act on the information revealed during the TRC to implement systems change to improve the system and to better support the children and families served.

Thirdly, it is to promote healing both among Wabanaki children and their families and the people who administered a widely acknowledged less than ideal system.

“As the chief of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, a mother, and a grandmother, I know the incredible importance of our children,” Commander said. “At one time, 16 percent of all Maliseet children were in state custody. The disproportionate taking of our children threatened the survival of our tribe. I am pleased that the state of Maine stands ready to acknowledge the mistakes of the past and move forward on a new path guided by systems reform and best practices for our children.”



Houlton Pioneer Times Photo/Gloria Austin

**IRONING** — Madelyn Lee presses out wrinkles on the edging of a piece of fabric. The Lee children will be starting squares for sampler quilts with the other quilters from the Tuesday Quilters, who meet each Tuesday at the Smyrna/Merrill Historical Society.

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