



The Artist and Joint Connections Co-operative

The artist of the painting that appears on the cover of this issue is Sydney Appleby, a member of the Little Grand Rapids First Nation, Manitoba. He was born in 1947. His mother, Bella Keeper, was Saulteaux (Ojibway) from Little Grand Rapids. His father, Sydney Richard Appleby was British. Sydney has a Journeyman Arc Welding Ticket and a B.A. degree in Psychology from the University of Manitoba.

Sydney is currently serving a life sentence for second degree murder, which he received in 1977. In prison, he continues to paint “for tranquillity reasons”. He painted this picture while serving time in Prince Albert’s medium security Saskatchewan Penitentiary. While at the SaskPen, he also joined a group of other men serving life sentences, called the “Lifers Group”. A number of the members of the Lifers Group are in the process of starting an Arts and Craft co-operative, called “Joint Connections.” It is an excellent example of Aboriginal community economic development in practice, which the members hope will provide an example for Indigenous artists in other institutions located across Canada. In an interview, one of the members proclaimed that “this project will provide a sense of direction and allow our members to bring out their talents, build confidence and improve the community inside and out.”

The motto of the Joint Connections Co-operative is “Helping Others Help Themselves.” Their Mission Statement states:

The purpose of Joint Connections Co-operative is to provide a global resource network for financial, social and educational support to the incarcerated lifer to successfully reintegrate into the community.

Joint Connections Co-operative believes that the social and cultural strings that unite and define Canadians can and will be enhanced through artistic pursuits and commercial endeavours. We believe that the integrity of an incarcerated person can be restored through learning and teaching positive social skills.

Joint Connections Co-operative shall remain a producer co-operative based on multicultural influence and input, while using a variety of media applications. The co-operative shall remain a support resource for the lifer, the incarcerated and the reintegrated.

Joint Connections Co-operative shall be based on the brotherhood of man and the common belief in the “good of all uniting for the good of one.”