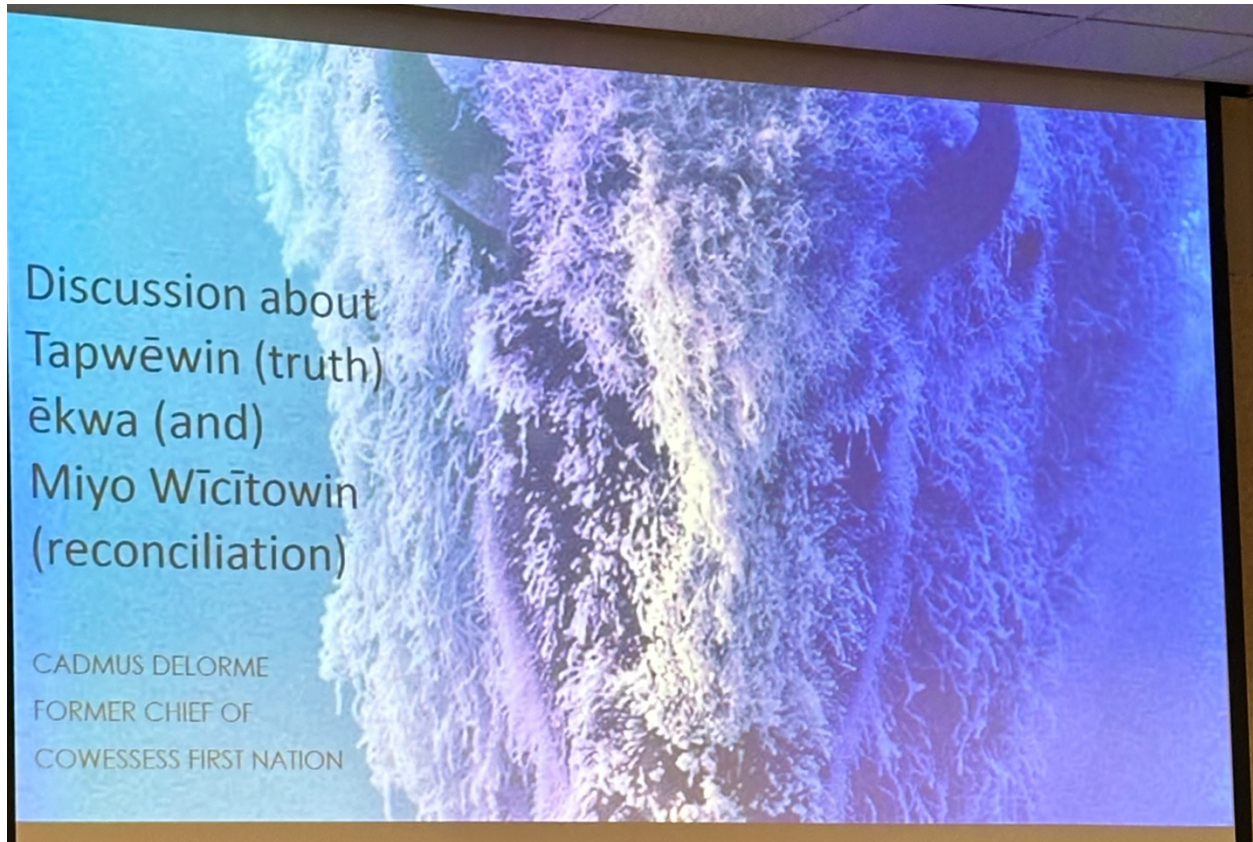


“Reconciliation” that Reconciles

At Frontier School Division’s “Orientation for the 2023-2024 Year” Cadmus Delorme spoke to us first morning session about Reconciliation and “uncomfortable conversations.”



Cadmus till recently was Chief of Cowessess First Nation near me in SE SK. When youthful Cadmus became Chief, someone privy to Cowessess band affairs told me they expected the band to end up in Third Party Management (no fun). Instead the band has thrived (as best bands can do so) indicating that Cadmus has faced adversity, and progressed, not just in the larger society’s terms, but in the First Nations arena too. Cadmus has learned how to have hard “uncomfortable conversations.”

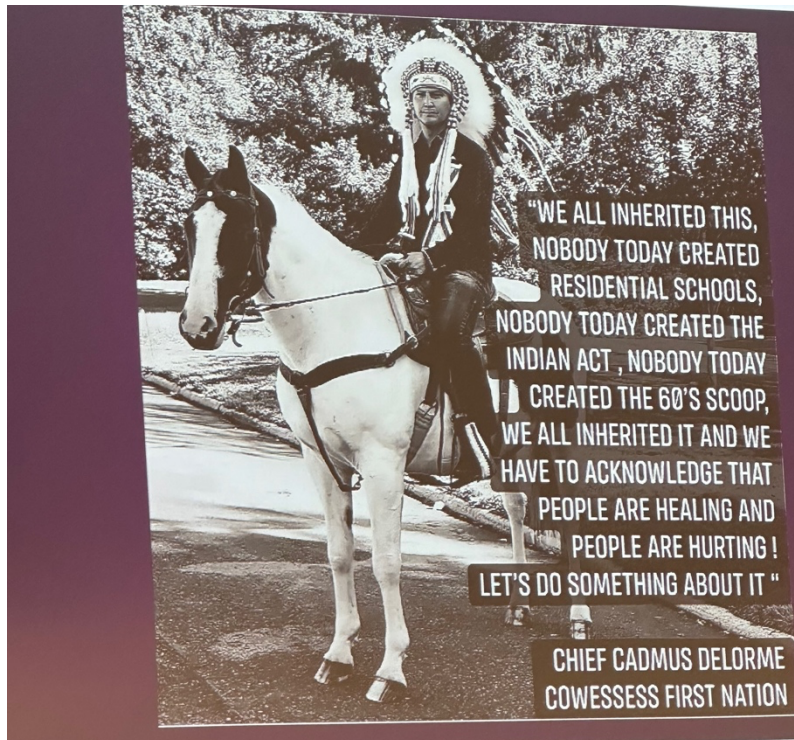
He has taken the senior position with the Truth & Reconciliation Archives commission.



Cadmus brought his four year-old son Kingsley with him. Someone from Cowessess told me he and his wife Kim have taken in their children and raised them as their own. The truth of this I have not been able to verify. It obviously does not matter, having no bearing on the love given and received. This too is something at which Indigenous peoples have always excelled, capable of a hearty, earthy, soft-hearted, inclusive, humble(d), unabashed-welcoming and -accepting realism—see Crowfoot and Quannah Parker—fractious- and uncertain-nationed Europeans have long struggled with.

Cowessess recently signed a pioneering Child Care Agreement. At that ceremony Cadmus gave “one of my best speeches” and when he turned things over to Justin “he clasped me with one of his locked eyes [bromance] embraces and asked “Did you really write that yourself?” Later when Cadmus and wife Kim were “lying in bed doing what couples do—scrolling on their phones—“Kim showed me the photo with Justin and said ‘I wish you looked at me like that.’” To which Cadmus replied: “If you give me \$4 000 000” I’ll look at you like that too!”





Fort Qu'Appelle near Cowessess “phoned me up and asked me to bring a headdress and horse to the local parade and look stoic. When a balloon went underneath my horse and he spooked, I got off and led him the rest of the way!”

Cadmus says First Nations people do not want to go back to pre-Contact ways; they want to truly be a full part/partner of Canada now and in the future. “My daughter and I go hunting—in Costco!” Cadmus, like the great Cree comedian Don Burnstick, can get away with saying such things.

When I chatted with Cadmus afterwards—I had the privilege of giving him a copy of *Valley of the Birdtail*, his copy of which he had given (before finishing) to his mother—not Catholic and not therefore directed to Marievale in the Qu'Appelle Valley, but instead to Methodist/United Church Birtle Residential School in Birdtail River territory—he asked what I thought was the path forward. All I could say was “uncomfortable conversations” too, adding that, given the backlash rising in White conservative circles, I felt the “uncomfortable” part was going to cut both ways. I would have absolutely no problem having any conversations with Cadmus even hearing things I did not want to hear. He meets you halfway with good will and honesty.

Cadmus Delorme is a true ground-breaker, a trailblazer. And funny!