Fire in the bully

By Katherine Wilson

Nonfiction

Kindergarten graduation. Photograph by Sarah Kirby.

Three weeks either of hell on earth or effusive psychodrama to overtake science and ethics concerns, and ignore Indigenous counsel in healthcare management?

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On a warm-ish October Wednesday in the residence of Kamloops Tina Gosse is preparing her son's lunch for kindergarten. Her husband Ryan is in the kitchen. Tina's boy is still in bed and will be sleeping late this morning.

Indulging the boy's old-school attitude, she, against his will, has ordered him to wear a tie to his graduation ceremony that afternoon.

The ceremony kicks off with a traditional Secwépemc welcome. "We recognize we are on Secwépemc unceded territory, Kamloops," Tina, who identified Tuesday to me as a Secwépemc woman, begins her remarks. Her son, Ryan Junior, is a member of the Secwépemc Nation, and Tina, who is Métis, has spent her entire career in Indigenous governance, advocating, alongside her husband, for a more Secwépemc-centred approach to healthcare.

Tina has a lot to say. She has a project to report. "Everyone at Tribal Journeys is so excited," she says, referring to the annual gathering of Pacific Northwest Coast canoe families from Lummi Island, Bella Coola, Nanaimo, Tsawwassen, Tulalip, Quinault, Quileute, Cowichan, Squamish, Musqueam, Nuu-chah-nulth, Tsimshian, Haida, Kwakwaka'wakw, Nuxalk, Sechelt, Tla-o-qui-aht, Tla'amin, Tsleil-Waututh, Tseshaht, Heiltsuk, Ucluelet, Yuułu?ił?atḥ, Ahousaht, Hesquiat, Kyuquot, Mowachaht/Muchalaht, Pacheedaht, Qwiqwidi, Ts'ishaa, Tsawataineuk, Tsawataineuk, Kwakiutl, Kwikwasutinuxw Haxwa'mis, Quatsino, Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw, Gwawaenuk, Kwiakah, Mamalilikulla, Tlatlasikwala, Nanwakolas, Nuyumbalees, Tlowitsis, Wuikinuxv, Heiltsuk, Oweekeno, Kitasoo/Xaixais, Kitselas, Kitsumkalum, Lax Kw'alaams, Metlakatla, Nisga'a, Haisla, Gitga'at, Gitga'ata, Gitga'ata, Gitga'ata