

Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

Hand of destiny guides young gymnast

By Judy Bird
For Eagle Feather News

When nine-year-old Rema Buschow-Pander takes the floor to perform her rhythmic gymnastics routine at the Saskatchewan Winter Games in Prince Albert later this month, she will be honouring a grandmother she never knew, melding

art forms of two very different cultures, and potentially bringing home a winning title.

That might seem like a lot of pressure for a nine-year-old, but Rema's mother says it is a labour of love.

"She is very passionate about it, and wants to do it all the time. This isn't driven by me," said Carmen Buschow, Rema's mother.

"She works so hard. She trains 20 hours a week. I don't know how she does it, she amazes me all the time."

Rhythmic gymnastics features four types of apparatus that athletes use in their routines: the ball, hoops, clubs and ribbons, and also has a freestyle routine that is choreographed.

"The free routine is pretty much a dance but there are certain elements of difficulty and execution they have to follow. Each coach will script a routine that falls in the level of difficulty for their division," said Carmen.

Rema's dedication is inspiring. Along with Rhythmic gymnastics, she takes ballet and jazz dance. Last summer, she trained for two weeks in Los Angeles, then went for two weeks to the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and two weeks to Toronto.

Her hard work pays off. At the Winter Game trials, her free routine scored 9.55. A national-level competitor who is a few years older scored 9.8.

Rema's free routine will feature the song Electric Powwow by A Tribe Called Red. She belongs to Wascana Rhythmic Gymnastics Club and studies under coaches Julie Lavasseur and her sister, Julie. Carmen said that according to Rema's coaches, it will be the first time that powwow music is being incorporated into this Russian and European-dominated sport, to their knowledge.

The way this all came together was like a bit like the hand of destiny. Rema's coach Jenny had a piece of music with powwow in it, but didn't think there was anyone in the club who was First Nations.

"I told her that Rema learned to dance powwow," said Carmen. Both she and her daughter are members of Thunderchild First Nation. They all realized the piece was for her.

Jenny and Rema choreographed the piece, and Rema will perform it in competition for the first time in Prince Albert February 19 - 22 where she will represent Team Regina.



Rema Buschow-Pander is incorporating powwow music into her gymnastics routine. She will represent Team Regina in a competition in Prince Albert this month. (Photo by Mike Dubois)

The powwow music isn't the only connection to her late grandmother in Rema's life. There are so many instances and connections, it's uncanny.

Carmen's mom died of breast cancer before Rema was born. Carmen had been adopted as a child and only learned about her birth mother and her siblings when she was an adult. She was four months pregnant with Rema when she got a phone call that her birth mother was terminally ill, and the family wanted her to come.

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Health & Wellness Edition
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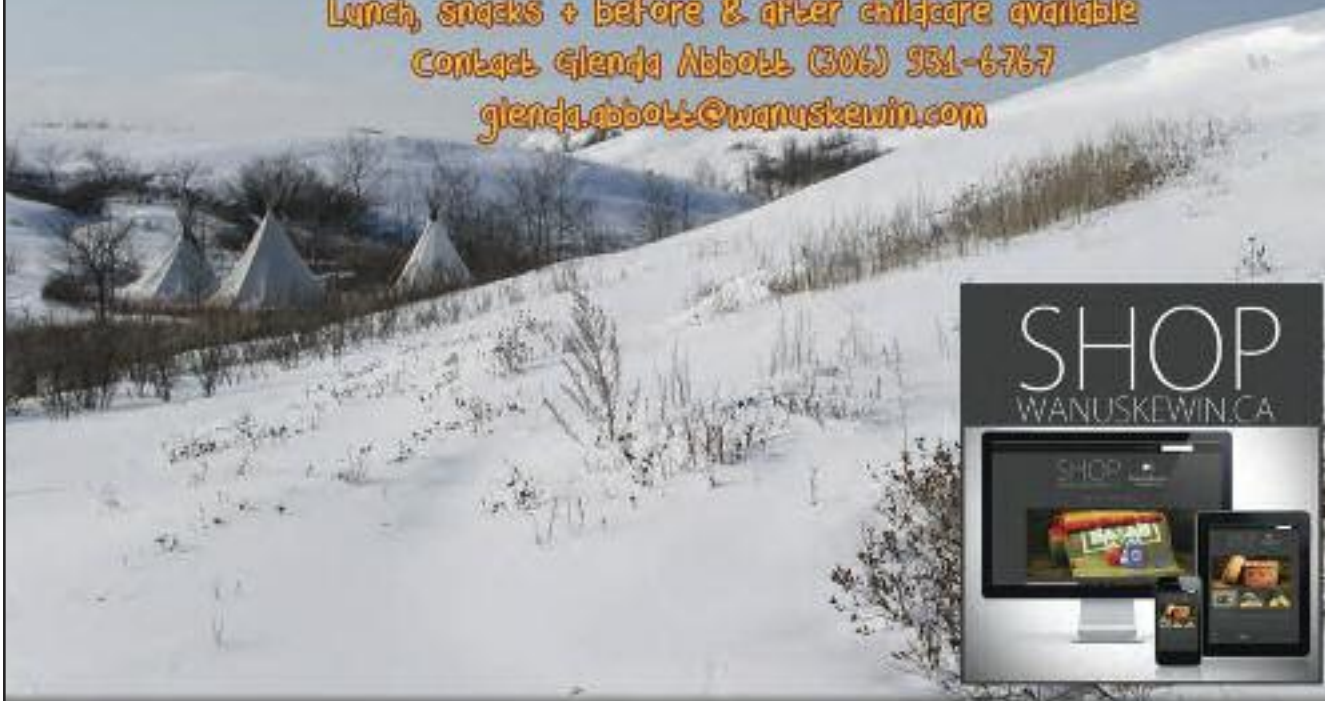
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Brave youngster turns attention to helping sick kids

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

Bella Arcand hit the airwaves last week to share her remarkable story as well as a whopping \$1,400 donation for the Children’s Hospital of Saskatchewan.

Eight-year-old Bella took part in the 12th Annual Children’s Hospital Radiothon and was interviewed on 600 CJWW, 98 Cool FM and 92.9 The Bull in Saskatoon. Bella’s story was first told in an Eagle Feather News article last year. She was diagnosed with Rasmussen’s Encephalitis (RE), a rare brain disease that caused her to have seizures dozens of times daily.

No one knows what causes RE. Standard anti-seizure medicines and treatments don’t work. So the only known “cure” is radical surgery called a hemispherectomy.

There were no resources in Saskatchewan for this operation, nor a children’s hospital so Bella and her family had to go to Edmonton where she had a 10-hour brain surgery on January 30, 2013. They had to stay five more months as she rehabilitated.

Bella was invited down to the radiothon one year later to share her story on the airwaves. She raised funds at her school and through her family and they raised \$1,400. She also charmed the radio hosts that interviewed her as she told her story.

Her mom, Bev Lafond, helped with the on-air interview and is a big proponent of a children’s hospital in this area. She knows the hardship well.

“The travel to Edmonton was so hard. It was a great facility, but that is not as important as having family there,” said Bev. “I was fortunate my family could travel and help. I know one woman whose child had the same thing and had to go to Montreal. I couldn’t imagine.”

Bella has a razor sharp wit and great sense of humour that belies the fact she is still having seizures. “Bella is doing really well despite the seizures returning. They are about 6-10 each day, short in duration,” said Lafond.

“We are still looking at next steps. It could be another surgery, it could be that we are just going to leave it and see how things progress.”

Sister Ava is glad to have Bella back to play with and tease. And she doesn’t have to worry anymore about her electronics running out of charge during the long drive to Edmonton and she doesn’t want other kids to have to travel either.

Bella, who turns nine in March, was determined to raise money for the hospital.

“It felt good to donate and I want to help kids and their families,” she said after her tour of the airwaves. “I really missed my sister, she’s a brat I just ignore her. We can do lots of things, like build a hospital and put some fun things in there for the kids.”

Bella and the radiothon raised a record \$703,471. They expect the hospital to be built by 2016.



Radio host Steve Chisholm accepted a \$1400 donation from Bella and her mom Bev Lafond and sister Ava. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)



Left to right: Todd Sandhu, Director of Operations, Regina Food Bank; Bill Holt, Executive Director, Food Banks of Saskatchewan; Laurie O'Connor, Executive Director, Saskatoon Food Bank; Lee Anafalo, Vice President, Human Resources and Administration, PotashCorp; Steve Compton, Executive Director, Regina Food Bank.

More than two million reasons to give thanks

This holiday season, PotashCorp and the Food Banks of Saskatchewan encouraged the people of Saskatchewan to consider the needs of their neighbours and give to local food banks. For every dollar you donated, PotashCorp pledged to give one too, to a maximum of \$1 million.

By coming together, we raised more than \$2.8 million to help feed hungry people across the province and inspire them to reach their

hopes and dreams. We believe food is the foundation on which people can build better lives for themselves and their families, and we want to help provide the tools to succeed.

Because of the generosity of the people of our province along with PotashCorp's contribution, we're feeding our communities today and providing hope for the future.

Thank you, Saskatchewan.



Bella charmed the radio announcers with her wit and courage.



Good health comes our way in many forms

Welcome to the health edition. It has long been said that there is healing in the arts.

The pure act of beading or dancing or performing in some way is good for the heart and soul; for both the performer and the audience. I guess that is why I have always been a fan of the performances at the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company, particularly of the Circle of Voices shows.

The COV shows are always created by a professional playwright based on the stories and input of youth who commit to attending seminars, training events and to acting in the show. This year the COV play was written by Métis writer Pj Prudat who spent time with veteran Métis writers Maria Campell, Louise Halfe and the Circle of Voices youth to write Réunir.

Réunir is a river of history flowing along the language of the Métis, the death of Métis men, and the survival of the Métis women. Réunir takes place after the battle of Batoche, centering on the character Virginie as she struggles to find a life in the midst of the Métis Nation's Displacement. Virginie's Kohkom acts as a guide, sharing stories to comfort and invigorate young Virginie.

This year's play runs March 5-12 and is sure to move and entertain. Make sure you check it out.

• • •

Speaking of uplifting and inspiring, make sure you check out the story on Bella Arcand on page 3. Bella is a year removed from an intensive operation on her brain that hopefully would help stop the several dozen seizures she was having daily. The operation went well and Bella, after five months of rehabilitation rejoined her pals at Holliston School in Saskatoon. In the meantime, her seizures have returned but are less frequent and milder, but regardless of her challenges, this young dynamo keeps trucking on.

She recently fundraised \$1,400 with her classmates and family to help build the Saskatchewan Children's Hospital.

She was then interviewed on three different radio shows about her health and the money she raised. And for the record, she nailed every interview with class, grace and wit and she had the announcers eating out of the palm of her hand. Kudos to Bella and her family for their togetherness and donation. Great stuff!

• • •

Another story of courage flooded the media last month as a simple slogan on a pink sweatshirt sparked controversy and discussion across the nation. "Got Land? Thank an Indian" was the simple statement Tenelle Starr had on her shirt. She is 13, is in Grade 8 and goes to school in Balcarres, about 90 kilometres northeast of Regina.

• • •

refreshing was how Tenelle held herself through this entire process. Gracious and well spoken in the media, she showed many people that the future leaders in First Nation country are starting to emerge already.

Remember, parents, you are the leader when it comes to the health of your children. You have to be their role model. Big issues facing the Aboriginal community are the low levels of parents that actually vaccinate their children and the high level of people who smoke in their home and car with their toddlers

around. This should be a no brainer. Do you want your child to have measles, whooping cough or polio? Well then, get them their shots. They will NOT get autism, and they

will be protected from diseases we have been trying to eradicate for a century. Don't believe us? Then do some research. Do not believe folks like Jenny McCarthy, she is a ditz.

And second hand smoke kills ... especially when it is compacted in a car full of children. Do yourself and them a favour and quit. Best health decision you will ever make.

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Speaking of leaders, both First Nation and Métis leaders in Saskatchewan are in a bind.

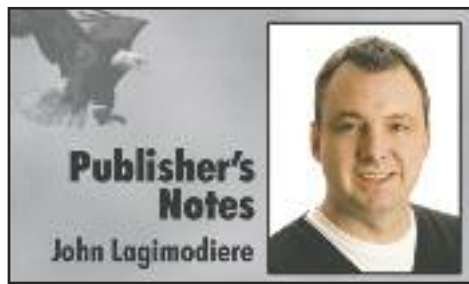
The federal government is cutting funding to Aboriginal Representative Organizations. The FSIN has delivered over 60 layoff notices to their staff across Saskatchewan. In the meantime, they are trying to devise a solution and find money so the important work of the Federation can continue.

Coming down the pipe but not official yet, expect the same situation to happen at the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan. Come April 1 (April fool's Day and aka Indian New Year) the situation is so dire that there is no guarantee at the FSIN or MN-S that some of the executive will even be able to be paid.

Stuck between a rock and a hard place, the organizations' financial woes were overshadowed in early February by the First Nation Control of First Nation Education announcement by the federal government. By announcing a \$1.9 billion investment in First Nation education, the Cons Gang took the spotlight off the fact they are crippling the organizations that work hard to get those dollars and programs from the government.

The catch is the money doesn't come until 2016, which is likely after the next federal election. There are lots of good things in the new legislation, but there is also reason for caution as the Cons Gang have been known to sneak stuff into legislation while they distract you with something else.

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Bella Arcand clowns for the cameras after raising \$1,400 for Saskatchewan Children's Hospital

She is a member of the nearby Star Blanket First Nation. Little did she know this issue would blow up and that she would be the target of internet trolls who attacked the teenager for basically prac-

around. This should be a no brainer. Do you want your child to have measles, whooping cough or polio? Well then, get them their shots.

They will NOT get autism, and they

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Hurtful words not part of our spiritual being

Two things that were very powerful for me happened almost at the end of the year. One was the death of Nelson Mandela and the other was reading an article written by a young man who spoke of his work to create change for gay, lesbian and transgendered people.

Both the death of a man whose life epitomized freedom in every sense and the life story of a man whose suffering was inflicted by his own people caused me to reflect on freedom and what that means for each of us, and for us as a people and community.

I was about five or six years old the first time I heard the word "queer". I spoke only Cree and Michif at the time and so hearing an English word spoken by one of our people made it memorable. I am sure they spoke other English words, but it is this one that I remember.

We were travelling in a caravan of wagons loaded down with family and bags of seneca root to sell in Prince Albert when we saw a huge building. Never in our lives had we seen anything so big. My sister was so excited she almost fell off the wagon as she clapped her hands and yelled, "Look at that big shack mamma!"

I was older so I knew it wasn't a shack; it was a fairy castle and a king and his princess daughter lived there. I had seen a picture book in Debden.

"No, not a castle," my dad explained

to us as we all stared at the building in awe. "It is Prince Albert Pen. That's where the government puts people that break the law."

"No. It's a fairy castle," I argued and just then my 20-year-old uncle, who was well travelled and knowledgeable about outside ways,

laughed and said, "It's a fairy castle all right and it's full of fairies and queers."

"Queers!" I'd never heard that before but I knew from the way my uncle laughed that it must mean something mean and ugly, because most of the time my uncle was a mean man.

I never associated the word to another relative who often came to visit us and who dressed like a woman. We called him Uncle, but to this day I don't know how he was related to us or if he even was, because in our way we called all friends of our parents, aunty and uncle.

What I do know is he was a kind, gentle man who spent his time in the house with the women helping them with the endless work of cooking, cleaning, laundry and gardening. My mom and aunts always looked forward to his visits because he came with news from other communities, relating his stories with colorful, graphic detail and great

humor.

He was fun and loving to be around and he made the best chocolate fudge in the world. All of us little kids loved him dearly and we never questioned why he dressed as he did or why he spent

his time with women.

We knew he was different but he was different like our red headed cousin was different and our old Uncle Pahchuneese, who had been a great buffalo hunter when he was young and loved to tell us those stories.

His difference, like our cousin's and old uncle's, made us rich, which is what difference used to mean when we were kids. It was what our moshoms and kokoms believed and what they taught us. It was people like Uncle _____ who went away and came back with mean, ugly laughter and words like queer, bastard, bitch and other demeaning and humiliating words that made us feel poor.

We need only look at our old languages to know that there are no curse words that dehumanize or ridicule what the Creator has put on the earth. The words that are used to do that today are new words. Colonized words that come from a "chimaksees" (pitiful) place. They

are not the words of rich or free people.

I have, since that long ago day, met many men and women like that kind old uncle who worked with the women. Some of them are old, some of them young and it is always painful to hear them say they left home and came to the city because of the persecution at home by family and community.

"Kitimahksowak" our kokoms and moshoms would have said about that behavior. "We are pitiful and will continue to be so as long as we behave that way."

Our way to freedom is so clearly lit by the spiritual teachings of our people. Kindness, courage, generosity, humility, respect, wisdom, and love.

Each one of these words has a bundle filled with knowledge, teachings and all the things that are the keys to our freedom. So, my wish for 2014 is for all of us to open the bundles and reflect on those words.

Sookaymoowin, for example, means courage. Sookaytah, to think in a courageous way, sokaymook, to take courage and sookaymootan, let us all take courage.

So to all of us, "sookaymootan niwahkoomakanak." "Let's all take courage my relatives and walk that road to freedom together. It is how we treat each other that frees us, not government dollars.

Hiy hiy, Marci.



Harper announces education funding; FSIN skeptical

Prime Minister Stephen Harper recently announced an historic agreement between the Government of Canada and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to proceed with the final drafting and introduction of the First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act.

This agreement is the result of years-long, unprecedented process of consultations and discussions and is being met with praise and disdain across the country.

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo calls it a new approach to First Nations control of First Nations education.

"Today is about the beginning of a new era of fairness, opportunity and hope for First Nations children, youth and students," said National Chief Atleo at the announcement.

"Today is a victory for First Nations leaders and citizens who have for decades, indeed since the first generation of residential school survivors, called for First Nations control of First Nations education. The approach we are announcing today embraces the essential and connected components of First Nations control of First Nations education founded on our rights, jurisdiction and Treaties; and secure, sustainable and fair funding that supports our students' success and strengthens their languages and cultures."

However, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Vice Chief Bobby Cameron remains skeptical about the Government of Canada's recent announcement on the First Nations Education Act and possible

funding increase.

"Many of these issues meant to be addressed by the legislation such as following provincial standards and teacher certification are already in place on our Treaty Territory schools," Cameron said.



Prime Minister Stephen Harper announces funding.

"We've been waiting for decades for this commitment to First Nations education. We are disappointed the two per cent post-secondary cap has not been addressed"

Cameron has continued to press for the lifting of the two per cent cap that has burdened First Nations education since 1996.

"The \$1.25 Billion announced by Prime Minister Harper is not coming fast enough. First Nations education programs are experiencing a \$355 million shortfall now," Cameron added.

"They cannot wait till 2016. Canada has said they want the education legislation to be implemented this September. We strongly recommend that the funding be released at the same time."

The Government of Canada announced that it will make a significant financial commitment of over \$1.9 billion to support the First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act.

According to their press release the funding will account for language and culture programming. The legislation will also improve transparency and promote accountability by establishing clear roles and responsibilities for First Nation education administrators, and annual reporting requirements.

The bill will also allow for the establishment of First Nation Education Authorities.

These Authorities will act like school boards in the provincial education system to provide the key secondary support to help ensure that First Nation schools are meeting their requirements under the Act, and are providing a quality education for First Nation students.

The Act will also repeal the provisions in the Indian Act related to residential schools.

SIGA ready to gamble on two casinos

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

The Casino Regina is a flagship gaming operation in a beautiful historic building. Casino Moose Jaw could be considered Casino Regina's ugly little sister ... dumpy, dusty and small. Regardless of their differences, together they sure do make an attractive pair to the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and SIGA.

FSIN Chief Perry Bellegarde approached Premier Brad Wall in January about SIGA purchasing those two casinos to add to its current stable of six casinos. Premier Wall was for it. The casinos and SIGA bring so much to the community and provide funds for sport, youth, culture and education that are pivotal to communities.

Wall asked the NDP to help support the deal. You have to remember that the province has a law on the books that makes it illegal to sell our Crown corporations. Premier Brad Wall wanted to include the NDP so there could be a unanimous vote.

NDP leader Cam Broten is calling on the government to release the full details of its agreement and says he will not support the rushed, secret deal to sell valuable public assets. ▸

"Casinos Regina and Moose Jaw belong to the people of Saskatchewan," said Broten. "They're profitable. They help fund health care, schools and community initiatives. As far as I'm concerned, they're not for sale."

As it stands now, the deal is dead or in limbo. Regardless, the talk has begun and the process is far from over. This will be a well discussed topic at the FSIN Assembly Feb. 12 and 13 as well as on coffee row all around the province.

SaskGaming brought in \$137.2 million in revenue in 2012 alone, totalling \$52.6 million in profit. SaskGaming also has \$78.7 million in assets. The government claims the sale price would be between \$100 and \$200 million.



SIGA is interested in purchasing the government owned casinos in Moose Jaw and Regina.

Stand side by side – bullies won't stand a chance

Bullying happens until it is stopped

- Bullying can happen to anyone
- Bullying can be by one person or many
- Bullying can happen anywhere
- Bullying may include: name calling, cruel comments, teasing, spread rumours, excluding someone from a group, physical or verbal attacks, making people feel frightened, putting people down

- Bullying is almost always intentional.

Why do People Bully?

To pretend they are tough – to try to get others to like them – to hide their fears, to copy others who bully – they are unhappy – they don't like who they are.

It has nothing to do with you, do not feel guilty! It's a statement about who they are as human beings. How does Bullying make you feel?

Depressed, sick, fed up, nervous, tired, angry, stuck, humiliated, unsafe, alone, scared, confused, worried, lonely, sad and not wanting to go to school.

If you are being bullied what can you do?

- Get help, don't keep it a secret, avoid the bully, be with other people – violence is not the answer.

If someone is being bullied, what can you do? How can you help?

- Be a friend, be a mediator. Talk to someone who can help.

Stand up and take the first step. Doing nothing is actually doing

something. It makes the situation worse. Standing around watching can be mistaken as approval and can actually reinforce the bullying. Kids that bully will become adult bullies and only then we'll call it abuse, assault, harassment etc.

Be part of the solution!

Bullies often are addicts of drugs, alcohol, during that period in time when they

bully others they feel empowered to force them into financially supporting their habit.

People use drugs to change consciousness, which does work. However, once this mode of operating becomes a habit and then a way of life. Changing consciousness transforms to avoid suffering and eventually is suffering. This happens outside of awareness. Before long, addiction is causing suffering and eventually is suffering. It is ironically an attempt to heal, to seek relief via getting high, medicating feelings, escaping how things are right now.

When children get bullied at school all day, their self-esteem, self-worth is affected to the point of not being able to stand up for themselves.

There is a kids help phone, 1-800-668-6868. You can also phone the police or 911. These calls are confidential. You need to identify yourself so they can protect you.

Flo Lavallie, DNM www.companionhealthoasis.com



Funding Available for Cultural Activity

SaskCulture offers a variety of funding programs to support cultural activity in communities throughout Saskatchewan.

Métis Cultural Development Fund

In partnership with Gabriel Dumont Institute, this fund supports community-based cultural activities and initiatives that preserve and pass on the Métis culture and traditions.

Deadlines: April 30, October 31

Aboriginal Arts & Culture Leadership Fund

Aims to increase capacity in Métis and First Nations communities through the development of arts and cultural leadership opportunities involving youth and mentors.

Deadlines: April 15 and October 15

Capacity Building Grant

Supports capacity-building opportunities in existing, new and emerging cultural organizations.

Deadlines: May 7, October 15

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For more information, contact Damon Badger Heit at (306) 780-9251 or toll-free at 1-866-476-6830, email: dbheit@saskculture.sk.ca, or visit www.saskculture.sk.ca.

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The bus doesn't stop here

By Adam Gamble
For Eagle Feather News

Attending class at the First Nations University of Canada remains a difficult task for students who take the bus. Since being built in 2002, FNUniv has never had its own bus stop. Students either have to catch a bus to the Riddell Centre, Classroom Building or Luther College and walk the remaining distance. The Luther College stop is the closest –230 metres away from the university. The other stops are on the opposite side of the University of Regina.

“It is difficult to know why a bus stop was never built, considering there have been many changes over the years, including administration,” says Rocelle Kooy, FNUniv communications director.

During the 2005-2006 school year, Adam Martin, then a student at FNUniv, spoke to a City of Regina employee about getting a bus stop along First Nations Way, which loops around FNUniv.

“He told me that a city bus would not be able to fit on the road because it’s too narrow. And even if it could, having a bus stop there would take up valuable time for the current bus routes.

“These weren’t answers. They were excuses,”

Martin suggests.

Charter buses drive on it to drop off those taking a tour of FNUniv during the summer months. City buses also take that route to drop off people at the First Nations Pavilion during Mosaic.

“Not having a bus stop really frustrates me, especially during the winter,” said Keccia Cook, a student at FNUniv.

Last year, Cook dropped off a request at Transit

Services. Like Martin’s effort, nothing transpired.

“I know it may not be a big deal to some, but there are bus stops all over U of R – and not one at FNU,” says Cook.

“We can’t do any work without the authorization of the administration of the U of R,” says Nathan Luhnig, City of Regina business development manager.

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Great farming heritage of First Nations in Saskatchewan was healthy

By Harvey Knight
For Eagle Feather News

Up until about 40 years ago the people of Muskoday First Nation lived a healthy organic hunting-food gathering-farming lifestyle. We grew gardens and crops without the use of chemicals, raised free-range cattle, chickens and turkeys, hunted deer, moose, and rabbits, and picked wild berries and medicine plants. We ate good fish and drank clean water from the South Saskatchewan River, which was still clean back then.

Like some other reserves in southern and central Saskatchewan, Muskoday already had an established, thriving farming economy by the time the Treaties in this area were concluded. As a child I grew up in this mixed farming community, where the people took care of themselves and each other, and welfare assistance was virtually unknown.

A respect for the land, plants, and animals and a specialized knowledge of our relationship to them prevailed in the community, as I recall. Diseases and obesity that plague us today were virtually unknown then, as I remember. We were not wealthy but we were healthy and self-sufficient back then.

It wasn't until after I grew up I learned more about my agricultural history and culture from stories elders told and by attending university. Farming and garden cultures already flourished in these parts before European settlers arrived here. The Saulteaux (Ojibway-Cree) and Cree people arrived here in these vast plains, parklands, and boreal forest from the East in earlier times, hundreds of years before the Europeans came into this territory. They were not only hunters and gatherers but were also adept farmers and gardeners. The Métis, with their mixed First Nation and European heritage, had also arrived

earlier, establishing their grain and gardens of Indigenous food plants.

Their predecessors had been growing corn, squash, beans and other food plants in the East for many centuries before the arrival of the Europeans, and they brought this food planting tradition with them to this place we now call Saskatchewan. But there are stories and archeological evidence emerging that tell of agricultural economies existing along the South Saskatchewan River in prehistoric times even before the arrival of the Cree and Saulteaux peoples.



Sedentary village societies belonging to Atsina, Hadatsa, and Mandan tribes of the Sioux Nations lived and grew corn, squash, and beans on fertile lands along the South Saskatchewan River. They were forced out of this territory upon the arrival of the Cree and Saulteaux Nations and moved south into the what is now known as the North Midwestern part of the States.

But the Indigenous food growing cultures of North America are rooted in an agricultural tradition that existed throughout the Americas on a vast scale going back to antiquity. Most plant foods we eat to today were first domesticated by Native Americans. As far back as 10,000 years ago Indians all over North, Central, and South America were harvesting large quantities of crops

of plants, according to archeologists and Indian Elders.

Food plants that were first developed by Native American peoples include corn, squashes, pumpkins, potatoes, sunflower, tomatoes, beans, a wide variety of peppers, blue grapes, peanuts, cocoa, vanilla, maple syrup, avocados, pineapples, and watermelon. These plants have been a lasting legacy of the American Indian and a remarkable contribution as the major food staples in the world today. These plants are now grown all over the world and sustain countless millions.

The incredible success of Native American agriculture can be attributed to the way we were connected to the natural life of the world. In ancient times, they say, we learned to live and co-exist in companionship with plants, like corn, squash, beans, and potatoes, providing mutual support to one another for the sake survival and success.

It was a relationship based on equality and reciprocity. The plants agreed to give humans life and sustenance, and in fact changed themselves genetically to be palatable and tasty for human consumption. In return, humans promised to always nourish and protect their plant relatives from their enemies. So in this sense Native Americans never "domesticated" plants for consumption in the Western sense of the word, not really.

What happened to that world of health and well-being? In a few short decades, we witnessed the demise of our agricultural traditions and saw our diets completely change from eating organically grown foods and wild meat to eating processed, artificial, chemical-based foods.

And diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer, heart disease and obesity have risen dramatically as a result.

One answer to our health problems is clear: start growing and consuming our own organic food crops – especially crops of native origin.

Making a difference

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Child poverty big issue for Children's Advocate

By Larissa Burnouf
For Eagle Feather News

Saskatchewan's Children's Advocate believes it is time for both levels of government to step up when it comes to putting a stop to the growing number of children dying in the province.

Bob Pringle says his office has examined every child death in Saskatchewan dating back to 1997 and Saskatchewan is losing an average of 25 children per year. An overwhelming majority of the nearly 500 kids who have died in the last two decades were receiving services from the Ministry of Social Services or had received care and/or services within 12 months of their death.

Even more startling, an overwhelming majority of those children were aboriginal.

Pringle says the majority of aboriginal children live in poverty and nothing is being done by government to address those issues.

"It's poverty that drives the child welfare system. It's poverty that drives the youth justice system and we should be concerned about the number of deaths, but we should be outraged that in this province two-thirds of aboriginal children live in poverty," Pringle said.

He says the federal government "can't continue to have responsibility for First Nations children and not step up to the plate."

He believes that poverty is a substantial human rights issue that is being swept under the rug.

"We can talk until the cows come home about the deaths going up or down but until we address those risk factors and structural disadvantages, we're not going to make an impact."

Pringle adds that the finger can't always be pointed at Social Services when something goes wrong.

"The sad reality is that 43-44 per cent of the children that come into care are medically fragile. They're born with compromised immune systems."

He says children who die as a result of pre-existing health conditions, along with infants who pass away from unsafe sleeping conditions or who die in their sleep including causes undetermined by the coroner, make up 58 per cent of the 500 children who have died in the last 20 years.

"Social Services does not have the capacity to provide all of the services needed to the families including the mental health services needed," said Pringle, adding that there are a number of issues that the Ministry just simply can't handle or be held responsible for including addictions, housing, legal, child care, and education and training issues.

He says the public also has a fear of the Ministry which forces families away from receiving the help and services they need.

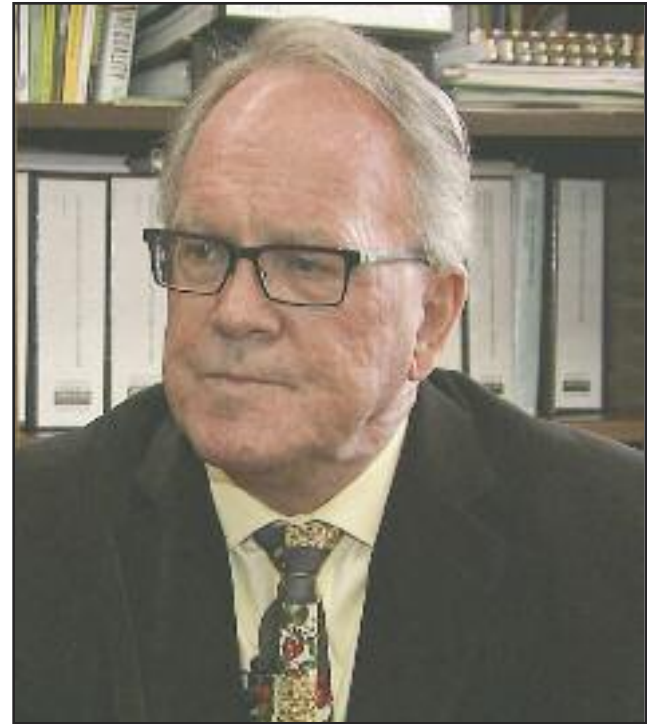
"There are a lot of families who don't go for support because they know that they're going to lose their children because in many ways, that's been their experience," Pringle said.

In many of his visits to communities, a growing number of elders are forced to care for their grandchildren. He says many grandparents have explained to him that they are scared to ask for help, because they don't want social workers to deem them unfit and apprehend their grandchildren.

Pringle says that some positive changes are being made within the Ministry and it's a step in the right direction, however more needs to be done.

"There are still overcrowded homes."

He says community members also need to take an active role in helping the province's children.



BOB PRINGLE

"The sad reality is that child protection work is perhaps the most difficult job."

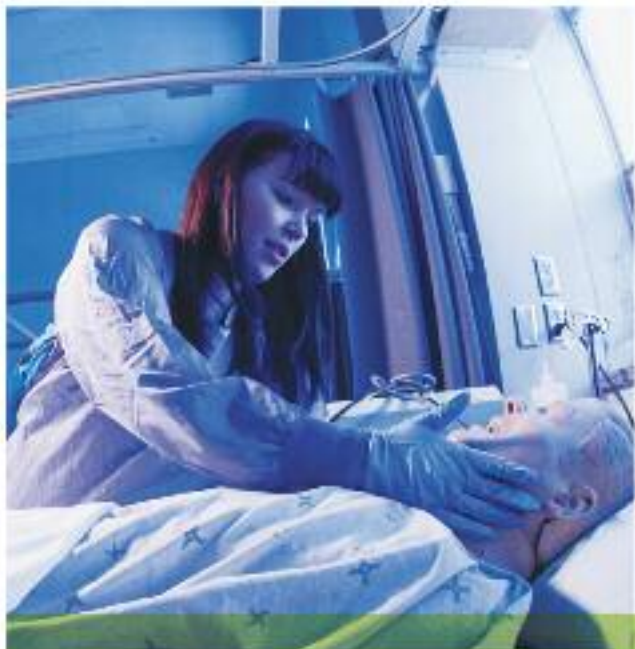
He says many social workers gain experience and then leave for other jobs, leaving the most inexperienced workers dealing with families on the front lines.

"Somehow we can ignore that the majority of aboriginal children live in poverty. If two-thirds of non-aboriginal children lived in poverty, we would deal with that and that in itself is tragic."

He says the entire community, along with government need to help those living in poverty.

"If we don't address the two-thirds of aboriginal children that are poor and their families are poor, that's the pool of potential deaths in the future because their families are so disadvantaged and vulnerable."

"We need to just face up and deal with it."



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Group home for Indigenous youth opens its doors in The Far North

By Fraser Needham
For Eagle Feather News

Prior to last month, troubled youth from Saskatchewan's far north were sent away as far as Prince Albert and Regina for foster care.

However, thanks to a new group home that opened its doors in Black Lake on Jan. 16, they can now stay closer to their home communities.

The \$2.1 million group home is a collaborative project between the Athabasca Denesuline First Nations of Black Lake, Fond du Lac and Hatchet Lake. There are currently six Indigenous youth between the ages of 12 and 17 living in the ten-bed facility.

Athabasca Dene Child and Family Services executive director Yvonne Wolverine says the new group home is the product of a number of years of planning. She says it has long been the feeling of local First Nations that at risk youth from nearby communities will do best in a facility that is located within a culturally appropriate setting and close to friends and family.

"It is difficult to be away from home and away from your culture, your language, it gets very difficult when you are growing up, especially at a young age," she says.

"So, the leaders decided in the past, the board members, that we needed to do something to bring our children home."

Saskatchewan's Children's Advocate Bob Pringle was on hand for the grand opening of the group home. He agrees with Wolverine that Aboriginal youth should have the opportunity to receive family services close to home.

"It's important, in my view, that children be placed in settings of their own culture," he says. "I am strong believer that First Nations children, and Métis children, ideally should ensure that their provided services that take into account a sense of their culture and are ideally provided by First Nations and Métis caregivers."

The Black Lake group home has also been made possible through a generous half million-dollar donation by uranium mining companies Cameco and Areva. Cameco official Darrel Burnouf says his company believes it is important to support

"It's important, in my view, that children be placed in settings of their own culture," – Bob Pringle


Glenn Lafleur of Areva adds his company realizes the importance of northern youth being able to receive services close to friends and family and this is why they have made a significant contribution to the group home.

"It's important that the youth stay at home, instead of being sent south, they'll have family support here at the group home," he says.

The group home will provide educational, spiritual and recreational services. In addition, it will also offer therapeutic and family counseling, cultural programming and holistic addiction and trauma recovery.



Athabasca Dene Child and Family Services executive director Yvonne Wolverine received a gift from Hatchet Lake First Nation Chief Bart Tsannie at the opening of a group home in Black Lake. (Photo by Fraser Needham)



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Since 2007, almost 80,000 former students have received a Common Experience Payment ("CEP") as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. CEP recipients are now eligible to receive non-cash Personal Credits of up to \$3,000, for either themselves or certain family members, for educational programs and services.

What are Personal Credits? Personal Credits may be used for a wide range of educational programs and services, including those provided by universities, colleges, trade or training schools, Indigenous Institutions of Higher Learning, or which relate to literacy or trades, as well as programs and services related to Aboriginal identities, histories, cultures or languages.

How much are Personal Credits? Adequate funds are available for each CEP recipient to receive up to \$3,000 in Personal Credits, depending on your approved educational expenses.

Which educational entities and groups are included? A list of approved educational entities and groups has been jointly developed by Canada, the Assembly of First Nations and Inuit representatives. If an educational entity or group is not on the list, please consult the website for more information.

Will I receive a cheque? No. Cheques will be issued directly to the educational entity or group providing the service.

Who can use Personal Credits? CEP recipients can use the full amount themselves or give part or all of their Personal Credits to certain family members such as a spouse, child,

grandchild or sibling, as defined in the terms and conditions. Personal Credits of multiple CEP recipients can be combined to support a group learning activity.

How can I get Personal Credits? Each CEP recipient will be mailed an Acknowledgement Form. If you do not receive an Acknowledgement Form by the end of January 2014, please call 1-866-343-1858. Completed Acknowledgement Forms should be returned as soon as possible and must be postmarked no later than **October 31, 2014**.

How do I redeem my Personal Credits? Once approved, you will be sent a personalized Redemption Form for each individual using Personal Credits at each educational entity

or group. Once the Form is received, provide it to the educational entity or group listed. The educational entity or group must then complete and mail back the Redemption Form postmarked no later than **December 1, 2014**.

What happens to unused Personal Credits? The value of unused Personal Credits will be transferred to the National Indian Brotherhood Trust Fund and Inuvialuit Education Foundation for educational programs.

For more information, including how Personal Credits can be redeemed by certain family members of CEP recipients that are deceased, visit www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca or call 1-866-343-1858.

The IRS Crisis Line (1-866-925-4419) provides immediate and culturally appropriate counselling support to former students who are experiencing distress.

CEP recipients have the option of sharing their Personal Credits with certain family members, such as:

- Children
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Leaving the gang lifestyle behind takes time, courage, honesty

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

“How can our community support young people in leaving gang life?” That was the important question being asked at the conference 10,000 Healing Steps: Resilience and Community.

The conference was hosted by Str8 Up, an innovative program founded by Father Andre Pollievre, a man who has dedicated his life to helping gang members leave the lifestyle.

Str8 Up is in a pivotal time in its existence. The demand for support for former gang members is high, and Str8 Up is popular and proving to be an effective way to support people out of the criminal lifestyle.

To help create a vision going forward, they invited Father Gregory Boyle, New York Times best-selling author of Tattoos on the Heart, and Founder of Homeboy Industries – the largest gang intervention program in America – to come share his story. He brought along members of Homeboy Industries who are sharing their experience of supporting individuals to leave gang membership in Los Angeles, and highlighting the industries and jobs they create to promote healing.

“It took a long time to get into and then out of the gang lifestyle. You don’t just leave overnight.”

- Georgina

Pollievre and members of STR8 UP also shared their stories of how they were drawn into gang life and how they were able to leave the gang with the support of other ex-gang members.

Other speakers included Dr. Mark Totten, Canadian expert on gangs and author of Nasty, Brutish and Short: The Lives of Gang Members in Canada. Robert Henry, lecturer at the University of Saskatchewan and author of Brighter

Days Ahead, Sergeant Craig Nyirfa of the Saskatoon Police Services and Justice Murray Sinclair.

“It is important to talk about our youth,” said Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the keynote speaker at the banquet.

“We have to acknowledge the impact of the residential schools, as well as the impact of what was taught about our people in the public schools. We have been taught we are lesser peoples.

“The past has left us a damaged people trying to raise families without the skills. Our children should receive an education that makes them proud. This country is entitled to benefit from our contribution.”

Throughout the conference, Str8 Up members were presenting and telling their personal stories. There were some very emotional moments as the crowd embraced members with applause and support as they told stories of dropping colours, gaining sobriety or of getting their children back from care.

“You have to remember many of us struggled with addictions and poor self-esteem,” said Georgina, a Str8 Up member who shared the group’s five rules of engagement.

“We have to be honest and truthful. I had so many different aliases and names. But you have to commit or it doesn’t work. And you have to promise to four years.

“It took a long time to get into and then out of the gang lifestyle. You don’t just leave overnight,” she explained

Saskatoon Police Chief Clive Weighill is well aware of the importance of supporting groups like Str8 Up.

“Ten years ago we polled the city on crime issues. Gangs rated only at half a per cent. Last year in the poll it was the number one issue,” said Weighill.

“What Str8 Up is doing here is so important. They see what the problem



Dwayne Sasakamoose presented Father Andre with a walking stick topped with an antler and a rosary as a symbol of the members of Str8 Up gratitude. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

is. They know what the causes are. They are the ones that can make a difference.”

And Father Andre knows that by embracing the gang members and holding them as they make their journey, they can make that change.

At the end of the conference banquet, the members had an opportunity to give back. Father Andre was presented with a walking stick topped with a horn carving and adorned with a rosary and eagle feather. As he stood there admiring his walking stick, wrapped in a blanket with tears streaming down his face, each and every member of Str8 Up took to the stage to embrace him, their tears of gratitude evident.



Georgina presented on the rules of Str8 Up, and Father Andre was gifted with a blanket that was placed on him by Elders Mary Lee and Mike Maurice. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)



Partnership delivers food from the freezer to the table

An innovative program is striving to bring food security to inner city Saskatoon. Recently 20 apartment size freezers were delivered to Infinity and Newapaatahaanick houses through a partnership between CHEP Good Food, Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. and Affinity Credit Union.

Chep Good Food Inc. works with children, families and communities to improve access to good food and promote food security and they believe that a community development approach is necessary to fulfill its mission.

Over the last few years, CHEP's Aboriginal Partnership Coordinator, Colleen Hamilton, has been working closely with the staff and residents of CUMFI. Their programs are safe and supported environment for people to be able to create a more stable, positive approach for each individual. It is with spirit of hope, helping, learning and healing that they are able to create a safer, healthier community.

Together they also deliver many programs and workshops, have fruit in lobby of the main office for people coming in, partnered in community events and have trained their staff in becoming community kitchen leaders to deliver their own programs on healthy and affordable food. Chep and CUMFI now have a strong partnership that benefits both organizations.

One of CUMFI's many initiatives is the supportive living apartment buildings; they are called Kanawayimik (we are showing them) Infinity (forever) and



Colleen Hamilton of CHEP accept a donation from Lovie Wesolowski Spicer as CHEP Executive Director Karen Archibald looks on.

Newapaaatahaanick (we are keeping them). The ten unit buildings are a supportive housing facility that provides safe residences for people and their children who are at risk due to addictions, parenting or justice system. The apartments were developed through CUMFI's Métis Community Homelessness initiative.

The apartments act as a transitional home and provide a long term plan with emergency housing for single mothers and fathers and with their children while also providing the opportunity for stabilization, programming, education and employment.

Working closely with CUMFI over the years, CHEP has supported a progression of food related activities for women. Programming began with an initial six

week cooking session. Cooking sessions enable participants to share their skills, to learn new skills and to stretch very limited family food budgets through the miracle of cooking in bulk.

They are now on the third year of partnering and out of these sessions, the women expressed interest in learning how to grow their own food. This year CHEP was able to provide Infinity House residence a garden space through its community gardening program, where woman have learned to plan, maintain and harvest fresh vegetables. Then women and some men from both apartment participated in a food perseveration workshop this August, in which they learned to blanch fresh, local garden vegetables.

Two years ago, the Aboriginal Partnership Coordinator, Colleen Hamilton, had a vision for a more vibrant, healthy, and more accessible means for families to eat healthier. This collective vision was talked about with staff and participants in developing this initiative.

The collective kitchens that CHEP has offered to CUMFI have been an incredible example of a seed that has germinated, grown and blossomed and continues to grow, with traditional food skills, gardening and food security.

The "Freezer project" sees 20 apartment size freezers delivered to the residents. The participants in the last cooking session have all put \$25.00 each to purchases in bulk. In the next couple of weeks they will be sharing meat, vegetables, and making soups for their freezers. The freezers could make life a little easier for mothers and fathers at these two supported living programs. In upcoming programs they will focus on how to save money and eat healthier by buying in bulk, cooking and freezing the food for their families.

This could not have been done without Colleen Hamilton's way of thinking, she is a person of ideas and does not quit until she can find a way to get the idea a reality. Another great person that helped was Russ Manning from Coast Appliances, who lives in Pleasant Hill area and gave CHEP the freezers at cost. Even with the great gift of freezers at cost it could not have been done without the financial contribution from Affinity Credit Union.

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Sorry dude, I'm not on the menu in 2014

Don't be fooled people; February is not about finding your sweetheart. It's really about spending your money.

Be my Valentine. What does that mean anyway? If I say yes, am I a Valentine for a day or longer? Where are the rules around this day for lovers?

The stores have created these 'spend your money' holidays. I think the stores are in cahoots with the gas companies who like to jack up the price of gas before holidays.

The only thing I understand is that flowers and chocolate will cost you way more this month and guaranteed the price of gas will go through the roof just before May long weekend.

Ladies, if you're looking to snag this month beware there are some real characters running about.

Things that made me say, "Ever Sick". I met some crazy people this past year.

I am enjoying getting older but I have to tell you that the older gentlemen I have met lately have lost their marbles.

Whatever happened to asking a lady for coffee or a movie? Lately men have said the most inappropriate things to me. One guy wanted to suck my toe!

Ever sick!

Another guy gave me his phone number and said he wanted to have coffee and get to know me. I thought that was nice; then he lifted my hand to his mouth to kiss my hand and then he bit me!

"I could just bite you all over."

Really!

Do women actually want

someone to bite them? Needless to say I will not be having coffee with that man.

Just when I thought I had heard it all, I was in a hotel in Winnipeg waiting to order something to eat when I see this guy staring at me. He walks over to me and says, "I want to eat you!"

I told him that wasn't on the menu but that didn't stop him from describing his talents.

What is wrong with these men? Do they actually get dates or have a late night fling by speaking to women like that? I don't think so, but, hey, you never know.

I am looking forward to 2014 and all that the New Year can bring.

I am praying that the Creator will

put good, kind and sane people in my path this year, men that want to rub my feet and not suck my toe, men that really want to go out for coffee and not interested in biting me, and, finally, men that want to take me out for something to eat instead of wanting to eat me!



The first 50 years of my life have been interesting and I know that whatever time I have left will be equally as entertaining.

Whatever message I was sending to the guys in 2013 will have to be changed because that was so last year! Tapwe!

I believe that people are put before us for a reason. Perhaps we are supposed to learn something from them or they will learn something from us.

I have attempted to figure out what I was to learn from last year's encounters but haven't quite figured it out yet.

Maybe it's that it takes all kinds of people to make this world go around.

I sure wish I could speak Cree because I'm pretty sure those would be

some crazy, funny stories in Cree.

So here's I what I learned from 2013: don't talk to strange men even if they look normal; chances are they are a few cards short of a deck.

Not everyone who asks you to go out for coffee really wants coffee; no matter how ugly you think your feet are someone out there likes your toes.

Some people in restaurants are hungry but not for food. I vow to keep my feet covered, stay out of coffee shops and never make eye contact with strange men in restaurants.

You just never know what is going through their minds. I doubt they wanted to buy me Valentine's, flowers or chocolates!

What will 2014 bring? Cheaper gas, flowers and chocolate? Probably not, but I am hoping for good health, happiness and prosperity.

I hope that the people I meet are filled with love, respect and kindness. Happy Snagging day to all.

Thank you for your emails and letters.

You can write to me at Sandee Sez C/O Eagle Feather News P.O. Box 924 St Main Saskatoon SK S7K 3M4 or email sandra.ahenakew@gmail.com

Saskatoon Indian & Métis Friendship Centre Free Programs & Courses

Young Worker Readiness Certificate

Ongoing

The Young Worker Readiness Certificate Course (YWRCC) is designed for youth ages 14-15, but is recommended for anyone needing a refresher in OHS and LS. The YWRCC certificate is required by law for youth ages 14-15 interested in working in Saskatchewan.

Food Safe Course

Offered in 2014 in January and February

This is a certified course and may be of special interest to those interested in pursuing a career in professional kitchens. The course will be held at SIMFC and will encompass the whole day starting at 9:00 and ending at 5:30. Please contact the SIMFC for exact dates.

Traditional Parenting Course

February 2014

This course helps new parents learn traditional skills in caring for their children. The course is a 3-hour class with Elder Mary Lee which will be held at SIMFC.

Cree Classes

Mondays 2:00 – 4:00 pm @ SIMFC

Tuesdays 2:00 – 6:00 pm @ the Library on 20th

Wednesdays 6:00 – 9:00 @ White Buffalo Youth Lodge

Thursdays 6:30 – 8:30 pm @ SIMFC

Learn to speak Cree in a fun environment! The classes are designed to be informative, fun, and interactive with the instructor, Darryl Chamakese, being a fluent Cree speaker and a proud member of Chitek Lake Cree Nation.

Canadian Red Cross Babysitting Course

March 8th 2014

Participants 11 years and older may register for either of the two class dates. This class will take 8 hours to complete. Maximum number per class is 12 and classes will be held downtown at 443-2nd Avenue North.

Basketball Team

SIMFC invites youth 14-24 to take part in the new basketball team starting February 15th here at the Centre. The team will play as part of the White Buffalo Youth Lodge league. Come out for the fun and the challenge of competition! Call the Centre for more details!

All certification based workshops are for ages 24 and under

SCOT & WHMIS Online Certification

Ongoing

Generalized program which offers basic knowledge in being safe at a construction site; WHMIS also offers basic Workplace & Hazardous Materials and Information System information to participants.

First Aid & CPR/AED Level C

2 different class dates in February & March 2014 Participants will learn basic First Aid and CPR training from Sharalife First Aid. These 2 separate class dates are a level C and will cover the use of AED.



306.244.0174 Please call to register or for more information

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More Aboriginal students moving into medicine

By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

As Saskatchewan's demographic changes due to a rising Aboriginal population, some institutions are taking note – including the University of Saskatchewan's College of Medicine, which is taking steps to ensure it is graduating more Aboriginal doctors to better reflect the population it is serving.

The Aboriginal Equity Program, sanctioned by the Human Rights Commission of Saskatchewan, was established in 1992 when three seats in the incoming first year class were reserved for students of Aboriginal ancestry. Before this, there were only three known students of Aboriginal ancestry who had graduated from the M.D. program. In the following six years, 14 Aboriginal students graduated.

That's why the college's Aboriginal Coordinator, Val Arnault-Pelletier, says the equity program has been successful.

"We have had growing numbers of Aboriginal applicants over the years, and growing interest from our Aboriginal students as they recognize community and family members graduating from the College," Arnault-Pelletier explains.

"It snowballs, and now we are seeing interest from family members whose siblings are studying. For example, a First Nation student in second year has a sister who is very interested in Medicine as she sees her sister progress successfully through Medicine."

There have been graduates from First Nations and Métis communities across Saskatchewan, including Fond du Lac First Nation, La Loche, Starblanket, Poundmaker, and Little Pine, with more to come.

Seeing the success of the equity program, the number of equity seats was increased in 2006 from three seats to 10 per cent of the entering class (at the time that was six out of 60). Class sizes have continued to grow: 68 in 2007, 84 in 2008-2010, with 100 students in the 2012-2013 school year.

So far, there have been 45 Aboriginal graduates from the College of Medicine, and Arnault-Pelletier says the future is very encouraging with 41 Aboriginal students currently enrolled and expected to graduate in the next

four years.

"There are also a large number of Aboriginal students in residency programs, bringing our total to 72."

Currently there are also seven Aboriginal students enrolled and studying in the Master of Physical Therapy program.

In addition to the equity program, there has also been an effort to include Aboriginal culture within the College of Medicine, something Arnault-Pelletier is important for all students in the college, not just Aboriginal students. These initiatives are included in the curriculum, ceremonies, symbolism, and other activities and programming, and ensure an Aboriginal student's reality is reflected in their studies so they are more likely to successfully complete their program.

"It helps create better understanding, opportunities for dialogue and teaching moments, and it helps to build community and bridge cultures," she says.

"Our programming and activities also depict the strength and resiliency of our people, such as the Pow Wow Health Booth. There are many of us working together for better health outcomes and respectful ways to work with our people."

She points to the U of S Indigenous Health Committee and Aboriginal Health Education Working Group members (consisting of Aboriginal students, faculty and staff) who are powerful advocates for respectful inclusion of Aboriginal students, programming, curriculum, faculty development and community in all activities.

There are 17 initiatives in total. Some examples include a whitecoat ceremony where there is a Métis physician as a keynote speaker; including eagle feathers, star blankets, Métis sashes, Elders, sweat lodges at graduation ceremonies; a one-day orientation with Elders, role model physicians, and upper year students; a mentorship program; and an effort to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge into the curriculum.

Arnault-Pelletier knows from student feedback that these efforts are appreciated by Aboriginal students. She was told by a second year First Nations College of Medicine student: "The support I received from my family and the College of Medicine both financially and



VAL ARNAULT-PELLETIER

academically has made the journey easier and less stressful. Thank you for believing in me."

And, a post secondary counsellor from Muskoday told her: "The supports developed within this College are helping young Aboriginal people reach their full potential; exactly what every person deserves."

The bottom line, says Arnault-Pelletier, is we need more trained Aboriginal health professionals to work in the urban and rural contexts to provide the best quality healthcare to Aboriginal people, and society in general, as future leaders and role models.

"In addition, we need to improve our curriculum to respectfully include Indigenous knowledge so all students are trained and aware of the unique concerns, cultural protocols and historical and modern contexts of Aboriginal people.

"It is of benefit for society in general to have Aboriginal people trained in all areas and sectors, to be included and hired into professional positions, to earn good livings and have the opportunity to provide for their families."

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Name: Adam McInnes, 3rd year
Hometown: Shaunavon, SK, with Métis ancestry from the Red River region of Manitoba

Hobbies/interests: Camping, fishing, traditional skills, sports, astronomy and the future of space exploration. I also enjoy designing and building things, and learning about history and sciences.

Why he chose Medicine: I have wanted to be a scientist for almost as long as I can remember. Growing up, I was always trying to learn more, and enjoyed

making things, but I was fascinated with history. I had originally wanted to be an archaeologist ... I took a semester of archaeology, but realized that, though I loved it, I didn't want to do that for the rest of my life. (Much later) I was sitting at home, and I happened to be watching Oprah. It was an episode with Dr. Oz, and they were paying tribute to Prof. Randy Pausch (of The Last Lecture fame) who had recently passed away. Dr. Oz was talking about what he loves about medicine, how he gets that wake-up call every day about what is important in life from his patients, and that he can make a major difference in their lives. I realized right then that I wanted to be a doctor. The very next thought was that I didn't want to be in school for that long and have to work that hard, and I tried for two weeks to talk myself out of it. But I couldn't do it, so a few months later I was back in university, and on my way to becoming a doctor.

Role models: Scientists such as Neil deGrasse Tyson, Bill Nye, Carl Sagan, Chris Hadfield, and Stephen Hawking. Also people who have tried to make the world a better place for people to live in, such as Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and the Cree leader Poundmaker.

Any obstacles trying to get into Medicine: Mostly psychological and financial. I was an older student when I came back to school (I was 25), and, though I could still learn academics quite well, the change in lifestyle was more difficult to adapt to. But these obstacles are small in comparison to the intrinsic rewards of what I am accomplishing, and the opportunities that this creates for me.

Type of Medicine he hopes to practice and where: I want to work in regenerative medicine and/or bionic

medicine. These fields are cutting edge, and have a great deal of potential to revolutionize the way we practice medicine. Having grown up on a farm in rural Saskatchewan, I would appreciate opportunities to be in rural communities, but I don't know how feasible that will be.

Advice for young Aboriginal kids who dream of becoming a doctor: One of my heroes, Chris Hadfield, gave this advice to a young person about them wanting becoming an astronaut, which I think is very fitting (and I also have hanging on my wall at home): "Decide in your heart of hearts what really excites and challenges you, and start moving your life in that direction. Every decision you make, from what you eat to what you do with your time tonight, turns you into who you are tomorrow, and the day after that. Look at who you want to be, and start sculpting yourself into that person. You may not get exactly where you thought you'd be, but you will be doing things that suit you in a profession you believe in. Don't let life randomly kick you into the adult you don't want to become."

Advice for Aboriginal students applying to Medicine: Don't forget who you are or where you come from. Work hard, learn for the love of learning, help others, get involved, and try to make the world a better place.

...

Name: Hannah St. Denis-Katz, 2nd year
Hometown: Grew up in Saskatoon; her mother is from Beardy's & Okemasis

Hobbies/interests: I love participating in physical activity. I try to make it to the gym every morning,

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work and challenges of medical studies



6:35 a.m. spin and sculpt class is my favorite, gets my day going. During the summer months I run long-distance and hope to run a marathon in the future. Another hobby of mine is art. I've been painting since I was six, and continue to paint, mostly acrylic on canvas, particular landscape.

Why Medicine: I get asked this question all the time, and I'm not sure I have a great answer. I don't have any family members in medicine, but when I was 10, my mother was reading me an article about shortage of doctors in Saskatoon Health Region and suggested I help by becoming a doctor. From then on I was set on becoming a doctor.

Role models: When I was younger I use to hate getting asked this question because I always felt like I had to come up with some clever answer for who my role model was. Now, it's an easy question for me because I grew up with the most incredible role model, my mother. My mother is the most strong headed, ambitious, successful, woman I know. She started from literally nothing, and beat the odds, getting her PhD in Natives Studies, she continues to amaze me with the things she has done and is doing.

Any obstacles to getting into Medicine: Everyone faces obstacles getting into medicine! Whether it is academics, social life, family, or a number of other factors, for me I had the best support system but the challenge for me was keeping a balance in my life. After high school, I moved to Montreal to do my undergraduate in their biomedical science program at McGill University. These two years were the hardest two years of my life, and unfortunately, academics took over some of my life, which forced some of my hobbies to take a back seat. So, my biggest obstacle was staying balanced. Luckily, I have now developed skills to better manage my academic demands and while maintaining my physical, social and extracurricular activities.

Type of Medicine she hopes to prac-

tice and where: Ever since I watched my first surgery in the OR at Royal University Hospital I have been interested in this area of medicine. Before, I got into medicine I always thought I would go into pediatrics because I love working with children, and I hadn't really thought about surgery. Now, two years into medicine I would like to pursue surgery, in particular I like the area of pediatric plastic surgery. There is a new cleft lip and palate program in Saskatoon, which involves a multi-disciplinary team, working with this program would be a dream for me. This being said I feel I still have yet to experience many areas of medicine, so I need to keep an open mind to other areas.

Advice for young Aboriginal kids who dream of becoming a doctor: Go for it! Don't let anyone tell you it is not achievable! Use the resources and support available to you!

Advice for Aboriginal students applying to Medicine: Stay balanced. Balance is key.



**Name: Jenna Shirley, 1st year
Hometown: Saskatoon, SK**

Hobbies/interests: I am often studying like mad, but I do try to get in the odd racket game with friends, like badminton, tennis, or squash. One of my other favorite things to do is draw and paint, but that doesn't happen as often as I would like.

Why Medicine: The deciding factor for me was that I wanted to work in an environment where I could help people. There is no other profession I would rather study.

Role models: Growing-up my role models were my parents. I don't think that has changed very much. They were married at the age of 18 and raised four children. My mom went back to school when I was 12 years old. I don't think there are any two people more committed to seeing their children succeed in life, and for that I will always look up to my parents as role models.

Any obstacles to getting into Medicine: I suppose everyone faces some obsta-

cles on the way to their future careers. A lot of them are small, but I found one of the greatest ones was remembering what the goal was. There were often times I didn't think I was good enough to be accepted into the College of Medicine. It was hard not to accept defeat after a bad test in undergrad or after applying and not getting in right away. Eventually, if you want it enough, it is possible to move past those obstacles and achieve your goals.

Type of Medicine she hopes to practice and where: I have yet to find a specific type of medicine I would like to practice. My greatest interest is within Pediatrics and Obstetrics. The reason I am leaning towards this area is that I feel that children are the most worthy of care. They are almost always smiling – even when they have been sick for a long time. I grew up with a lot of younger cousins, and it feels natural to work with children. We will see where I end up over the next few years. As for where I would like to practice, all I need is a place where my family also lives.

Advice for young Aboriginal kids who dream of becoming a doctor: The same advice I would give to any kids that want to be a doctor. You will get out of it what you put into it, so work as hard as you can.

Advice for Aboriginal students applying to Medicine: To the aboriginal students applying to get into medicine; it is possible. Don't forget to keep a balance between all aspects of life, and work for what you want.

...

**Name: Karissa Brabant, 2nd year
Hometown: Regina, SK, with family history tracing back to the Little Black Bear First Nation**

Hobbies/Interests: I really (and I mean REALLY) enjoy video games – PC and console (Playstation). I enjoy puzzle, fantasy RPG, and strategy games. My favourite game is Portal (1 and 2). I also enjoy reading. In the summers I like to spend time outdoors. I am a dog person. I'm allergic to cats so I didn't have much choice in that one.

Why Medicine: I wanted to do something applied, as opposed to research. I enjoy helping people, and I enjoy a challenge. I feel like I would have been bored with anything else.

Role models: My parents have always been great role models – they both worked very hard to provide for my siblings and I, and I want to do the same for my future family. I have many role models. Adam McInnes (who is also being interviewed for this article) is a good friend of mine who encouraged me to apply to medicine. I often go to him for advice and encouragement, and an idea of what to expect as he is a year ahead of me. We've worked together on many extracurricu-



lar projects and I'm excited to work with him throughout my career. I watched M*A*S*H a lot as a kid with my mom. Hawkeye and Colonel Potter were my favourite characters, because they took the situation they were in and made the best of it, while doing a great job as surgeons. I want to be like that when I grow up.

Any obstacles to getting into Medicine: Honestly, the greatest obstacle was myself. I was thinking of medicine early in my university career, but didn't apply for the longest time because I thought I wouldn't be good enough. I was afraid of blood, unsure about how I would be able to deal with bodies, and almost certain that the workload would be too much for me. Then I hit my fourth year of university and realized that I had no idea what else I would do when I was done. I finished my biology degree, and applied to medicine under the assumption that if it was too hard, I could always quit. However, I absolutely had to at least try. I knew that if I didn't try, I would regret it forever. Now, I know I would regret quitting. The field of medicine never gave me a choice, it's all I ever want to do.

Type of Medicine she hopes to practice and where: I hope to become a family doctor (general practitioner) specializing in surgical skills, obstetrics, and emergency medicine. I want to focus on these fields as it opens up my options for both rural and urban practice. I want to open my own clinic someday.

Advice for young Aboriginal kids who dream of becoming a doctor: Don't let fear hold you back. No matter what you are worried about, there will always be someone here who's got your back. Give it a try!

Advice for Aboriginal students applying to Medicine: My advice to all students applying to get into medicine is to enjoy the experience. The interviews are intimidating, but fun – if you let yourself relax. If you don't get in, try again next year. If medicine is what you really want to do, then it will happen for you. You just gotta keep trying. If you do get in, brace yourself – it's gonna be an exciting, difficult, exhausting, and invigorating four years.



MAYOR DON ATCHISON

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

Saskatoon Mayor Don Atchison is direct in his response to the role Aboriginal people must play in the future of Saskatoon.

City anxious to hear from Aboriginal people as population grows to 500,000

“We need Aboriginal people to be successful so the City can be successful,” said Mayor Atchison in an interview with Eagle Feather News. “And we need them to have a voice.”

“We need to know what Aboriginal people need from the City as we grow to 500,000.”

Atchison is referring to the Growing Forward project underway by the City. Growing Forward! Shaping Saskatoon is a specific public planning initiative to help guide investments to accommodate growth to half a million people that will likely come in the next 40 years. This means big changes for the city and they need to know what the community needs.

“I want to hear from the individuals and what they need in a city that big,” said Mayor Atchison. “I want to know what moms and dads want for their children and grandchildren.”

The mayor is very proud of the involvement of Aboriginal people in the city and of the partnerships they have across organizations. Just on a business level, the list of Aboriginal investment is impressive. Muskeg Lake, One Arrow, English River, Yellow Quill and Red Pheasant are bands that have reserves in or around Saskatoon.

Add in the land holdings that several bands own in fee simple and you have over a dozen bands with significant financial investments in the City of Saskatoon. Include the Saskatoon Tribal Council, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and its affiliates, the Métis

Nation-Saskatchewan and affiliates and a whopping 35,000 Métis and First Nation people living in the city and it becomes imperative that citizens be involved.

Muskeg Lake Cree Nation Chief Cliff Tawpisin appreciates that his First Nation has a strong tie to the City of Saskatoon. Not only do they have dozens of members living in the city, Muskeg Lake opened the first commercial urban reserve in Saskatoon decades ago and has been prospering ever since.

“We have a very respectful relationship with the city and their administration,” said Chief Tawpisin.

“The urban holdings are very important for our community and it creates wealth and jobs and opportunity. The city benefits too. That’s why Mayor Atchison came to a meeting we had with Aboriginal Affairs to help expedite our last urban reserve process.

“Other cities look to our relationship as one to aspire to. We should all be proud of that. It is not just Chief and Council that create this. It is our members and other citizens of Saskatoon that work together that make it happen. We should all be contributing to the future of this city.”

Growing Forward is a wide-reaching public planning exercise using tools like private meetings with organizations, social media and a website and soliciting input through a mobile app. There are also two public meetings on February 25, one in the morning and one in the evening at TCU Place.

• Continued on Page 19

mikisiw-pīsim: a fundraiser for kimiwan zine

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Kikinahk Friendship Centre, 320 Boardman Street

Nipawin: March 7, 2014 1-4 p.m.
Nipawin Oasis Community Centre, 504 Railway Ave.



Métis, First Nations leaders play key role as Saskatoon plans Growing Forward project

• Continued from Page 18

Alan Wallace, Director of Planning and Development for the City, hopes to hear from the Aboriginal community through all forms.

“The input we get from the website and in person will be incorporated into the City’s Growth Plan to Half a Million,” Wallace says.

“We hope this framework will allow us to make

changes in our community in a way that will keep Saskatoon a prosperous and great place to live for all citizens. We fail if we don’t have the Métis and First Nation voice at these consultations.”

Wallace adds that the economic success of the City ties closely with the economic success of First Nation and Métis people pointing to the success of the urban reserves and the significant land holdings surrounding the city, but this process goes beyond business relationships.

“We communicate with the Aboriginal leaders often and with their economic clout we need to bring them into the plan, but we need to hear from everyone. This is everyone’s future.”

The look forward is focusing on bus rapid transit and bridge needs. Imagine a city double the size it is now and imagine having to bus from one end to the other. Can you imagine special bus lanes on busy streets, where apartments have retail locations below them and suites up top?

Imagine 70,000 people living in downtown Saskatoon. More people per square block than we are used to. Should there be consideration for First Nation and Métis people in downtown? Do we need another bridge downtown?

According to Atchison, the City of Saskatoon has made remarkable strides in the past decade on improving the quality of life of Aboriginal people and of embracing the relationship between all citizens.

“I can go on about the changes we have seen. Métis Nation-President Doucette always comments we are the only city that has a Métis leaders statue and a Chiefs statue and city founders statue within a few hundred meters of each other,” said Atchison referring to Gabriel Dumont in Friendship Park and Chief Whitecap and John Lake at the Traffic Bridge round about.

“Look at the housing partnerships with CUMFI. They take over an apartment building that had over 400 calls to the police each year. CUMFI takes over and provides safe and affordable housing with no drugs and alcohol and the calls drop to six. We have so much to be proud of together.”

Atchison went on to add several more accomplish-



CHIEF CLIFF TAWPISIN

ments the city can be proud of including helping students at SIIT and Oskayak get to school with the UPass system, the Saskatoon Tribal Councils student housing on Avenue H, Whitecap Dakota First Nations donation of a major art installation for the roundabout at River landing, flying the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan and Treaty 6 flags at City Hall and the hosting of the national gathering of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

“I could go on, but I think you get my drift,” smiled Mayor Atchison. “We have lots going on here together as a community and the voice of First Nation and Métis citizens is valued. They have an important role to play.

“We need to talk about our future and our heritage together.”



Métis and Treaty 6 flags fly proudly in Saskatoon.



Public Event #1

February 25th, 2014
TCU Place, 35, 22nd Street East
10 – 1 p.m. & 6 – 9 p.m.

Saskatoon is changing. It is how we manage change that is important.

Growing Forward! Shaping Saskatoon is a proactive way of planning for our future. By building on our strengths and applying what we have learned from public participation in Saskatoon Speaks, we are improving how we move around the city and ensuring future growth continues to be sustainable.

For more than a century Aboriginal peoples have been a part of helping Saskatoon grow and shape its future. Now more than ever, Aboriginal peoples are important to help shape the economic development of Saskatoon. That’s why all Aboriginal peoples should have their say and be a part of Growing Forward – Shaping Saskatoon. This way, we can be sure the future remains bright and prosperous for everyone in our community.

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Capotes have been popular for more than two centuries

Made from Hudson's Bay Company point blankets, capotes are hooded jackets, which became popular among First Nations, Métis, and French Canadians during the fur trade period.

Durable and practical, capotes are lightweight for spring and fall wearing, but are still warm enough to be worn during the winter. In 1780, the Hudson's Bay Company point blanket became a regular inland trade item. Sold in pairs, each blanket was graded by weight and size using a "point" system.

The number of indigo blue lines woven into each blanket's corner identified the number of points and could be found easily without unfolding the blanket. Blankets could range from one to six points and could be further broken down into half-point increments.

Blanket capotes extended to the knees and flared at the bottom to allow for greater leg movement while the wearer was running behind a dogsled or was astride a horse. Although most capotes had hoods, variations with collars and detachable hoods were also made. Earlier capotes wrapped around the body and were kept closed using a sash. For a time, capotes with a fastening button on the right shoulder were also popular.

Prior to the 1821 merger of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company, blue was the colour preferred by the North West Company, while red was worn by the Hudson's Bay Company employees. In the early 1800s,

the Hudson's Bay Company began to sell commercially-manufactured capotes from Lower Canada (now Quebec).

Commercially produced capotes were double breasted with wide lapels and neat rows of brass buttons. Often hooded, they quickly became popular among the Métis, replacing the blanket capote made by Métis women.

In the early 1800s the point blanket capote became so widespread that different groups adopted certain styles and colours as a sign of ethnic distinction. The Métis preferred blue while the First Nations, red. The multi-stripe form was worn by both, but generally for dress occasions because they discoloured easily and were less common as a trade item than the solid colours.

Alexander Ross of the Red River Settlement described, "a common blue capote, red belt and corduroy trousers... (as) the universal costume of both Canadians (French Canadians) and half-breeds."

In 1823, a traveller's arrival to Red River was welcomed by a group of 20 "Bois-Brûlés" who rode out to meet him, firing their guns in the air as they passed his camp.

He described the Métis riders all wearing deep indigo blue hooded capotes that were secured around their waists by military sashes. Blue capotes remained popular among the Métis well into the early 1900s.

– Gabriel Dumont Institute



Busy hands and a sure eye make for a good capote experience.



Gail Assoon and Brenda Favel pose in their new capote jackets at a workshop in Regina. (Photos by Karen Schmon)



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of Native Studies and Applied Research

REMEMBERING WILL HAVE TO DO: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF LOUISE (TROTIER) MOINE

Deftly merging pioneer history with Aboriginal autobiography, Louise Moine wrote about her childhood spent on the ranching frontier of southwest Saskatchewan in the early 1900s and about her time in an Indian residential school in two published



books and various articles in the 1970s and early '80s. A long-time resident of Val Marie, Saskatchewan, she also wrote candid vignettes of her many family members and friends living in southwest Saskatchewan and northern Montana. *Remembering Will Have to Do: The Life and Times of Louise (Trotier) Moine* collects her various writings, including her previously-published books and essays, as well as unpublished stories, photographs, and appendices. Having lived almost 102 years, Louise Moine witnessed the changing Prairie West as Euro-Canadian and European settlers moved in and overwhelmed the region's Aboriginal residents. Although much of this text was written decades ago, it is still retains its relevance and carries

an authenticity of somebody who personally witnessed the rise of southwest Saskatchewan's ranching culture, the end of the Métis' nomadic lifestyle, the growth of the dysfunctional Indian residential school system, and the impact of colonization on the region's Aboriginal peoples. **\$20.00**

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My Mexican adventure Part Dos

It's close to midnight and we're hurtling down the road from our resort to the city of Puerto Vallarta in a van. Half of us don't have seatbelts on and three people are sitting on the floor.

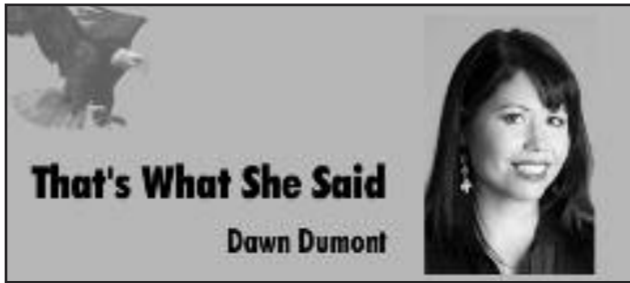
A bride – and I know she's a bride because she's still wearing her wedding dress – keeps heckling the driver to go faster and he responds, "Don't bother a Mexican man when he's drinking." We all laugh, at least one of us out of hysterical fear.

Not for the first time I think, maybe Canadians want to die in Mexico?

Before I left for our neighbours to the far south, my mom, who only watches TV shows that are depressing or frightening, told me to never, ever, stand on a balcony while in Mexico. It does seem like a lot of Canadians have fallen off or through them. Oddly enough, the very first thing I did when getting to Mexico was run to the nearest balcony and lean over it. It's like a compulsion!

All the negative media attention gave me the feeling that maybe Mexicans don't want us visiting, like maybe they want to keep their paradise all to themselves like the only woman at a Brazilian soccer tournament (a highly recommended fantasy).

Being unwelcome while travelling is definitely more familiar to me than the latter. When I was a kid, my family travelled a lot but I never felt wanted anywhere, particularly in the motels we stayed in. It's probably because we weren't supposed to be staying in them. As we pulled into the parking lot, mom would



split us kids into registered guests and non-registered. The non-registered had to duck down in the car. Then after she signed in herself with the least sloppy kid, she would drive around the back, let the three dirty kids out and we would skulk around to a side door where the lucky kid (usually my older sister) would let us in.

Later we would head down the pool and nervously glance at the sign that said, "for registered guests only," before heading inside in T-shirts and cut-offs.

It was a super-fun ten minutes before we got kicked out for wearing non-regulation bathing suits and also, for doing cannonballs, which are admittedly number three on the list of the most annoying things you can do in a pool – peeing and eating cheezies being one and two respectively.

My first time as a registered guest was probably around the age of 19 when I got my first credit card. I rented a hotel room, and like a good Cree girl, I promptly snuck in a bunch of family members (a "bunch" is any number higher than six but lower than 10 where you officially become a "tribe.")

We almost got kicked out when one of my family members rolled off the bed and his naked back was exposed to the security guard doing his rounds that night. The security guard furiously knocked on the door like a member of the Gestapo.

I had to get up from my bed in the bathtub to go see what was wrong while the rest of my guests scrambled into hiding places like cockroaches.

But Mexico isn't unfriendly like a certain hotel chain that rhymes with Schm-oliday Inn. First trip into town, we made friends with a cab driver named Gabriel. He told us that tourism in Mexico was down significantly because of all the negative press.

He didn't deny that bad stuff happened in Mexico (and how could he? According to CBC news, 15,000 people were killed by drug cartels last year.) But Gabriel explained, "That stuff happens when people go looking for drugs."

Although I couldn't figure out what drugs had to do with the falling-off the-balcony situation, I agree drugs can bring you into contact with some unsavoury people. Like one time I bought weed from my older sister who later stole it back and then told on me.

The good part of the lower tourism rates is that all Canadian visitors are pampered like minor celebrities. Mexicans offered to make our drinks, carry our bags and rub our bellies when we ate too much.

With such excellent service, we cavorted about the resort like giant drunk pandas with sunburns (which is another, highly recommended, fantasy.)



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SASKATCHEWAN



Indian residential school display at Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon

Several pieces of art honouring residential school survivors were recently unveiled by the Department of Art and Art History at the University of Saskatchewan and the Saskatoon Tribal Council.

“The residential school story and experiences need to be told, understood, and remembered,” said Tribal Council Chief Felix Thomas.

“The art created by this project reflects this and keeps the stories alive. The project and art will also act as an important educational and public awareness tool now, and into the future.”

Participating students had the opportunity to take part in workshops and heard Elders’ stories and recollections of the residential school experience. Students expressed the stories and their emotions behind the stories through their art. The resulting pieces serve as a memorial to residential school survivors, inter-generational survivors and the lost children of the residential schools.

“This partnership is unique in that it gives both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students the chance to work together in reflection and learning,” said Susan Shantz, department head in the Department of Art and Art History.

“They have the opportunity to translate their new understanding into meaningful artistic symbols.”

A presentation of the Project will also be presented at the March TRC National Event in Edmonton, to be placed in the Bentwood Box and a mural will be placed somewhere prominent in the City of Saskatoon.

“New Child” by Kayla Prive is the piece that has been chosen to be made into a mural.

“I titled this piece “New Child” because it illustrates the renewal of a beautiful people moving forward into a time of healing and rebirth. Elders spoke about how the retelling of painful stories brings back the quiet, afraid, and silenced young child that is still there inside,” said Prive.

“My deepest hope for all First Nations people, especially those suffering from the intergenerational impact of Residential Schools, is that a “new child” can be born and the frightened child inside can be freed.”

The art project has had a strong impact already for survivors.

“The instructors and students of the Commemoration Project should be applauded for the efforts in their understanding of the dark era of Residential Schools in this country and province. The symbolism in the artwork gives hope to many who still live



Kayla Prive poses with the piece she created that was selected by the Elders group to be made into a mural to be placed somewhere prominent in the city.

with the intergenerational impacts of these institutions,” said Eugene (Bird) Arcand, who was No. 781, at the Duck Lake Residential School from 1957-1967.

Replicas of the work will be shared to the seven member nations of the STC and will serve as a symbol of hope and healing. The exhibit is on display until March 2 at the Mendel Art Gallery.

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SIIT career centre introduces students to mining industry

By Judy Bird
For Eagle Feather News

Ashley Banks-Lavallee knew she wanted a career in the mining industry. Burton Thomson knew he wanted a career, something different than the construction jobs he'd had.

Construction Careers Regina, a career centre of the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology, introduced them and other students to the Mining Industry Pre-employment Program (MIPP), which is funded by the Ministry of the Economy.

MIPP includes a 40-hour practicum, and the students completed it at Mosaic's Belle Plaine site in November. It was a valuable part of the program, but it offered just a glimpse into the expansive operation.

"There's only so much you can see in a week in a site that's 52-square kilometres," said Banks-Lavallee, one of the MIPP graduates.

"MIPP deserves a lot of credit. They really prepared these students for coming to an industrial site and setting these expectations up with the students what it would be like to work in a larger industrial setting," said Nevin Maga, site manager of the mine at Belle Plaine.

Like many students completing programs, they were faced with the issue of needing a job to gain experience, and couldn't get experience because they didn't have a job. As good as the program is in preparing the students, a 40-hour practicum just wasn't enough to provide necessary experience to help the grads secure a job. That's when Mosaic stepped in.

"That really put the light bulb on. If the MIPP program is so good, and the 40-hour practicum isn't enough, it's up to the companies to step up and say how can we facilitate this? Everybody wants a representative workforce. The companies will have to step up and figure out how we can remove the roadblock of increasing the four day practicum."

Students and Mosaic officials met to discuss their interests.

"From that point, we thought why don't we take some people out of this 40-hour practicum and see if they're interested in coming on for a three-month work term. We had some selection criteria, and the students set out criteria whether they'd like to work for us or not," said Maga.

Five students, including Banks-Lavallee and Thomson, were successful in the selection process, and are now working at the Belle Plaine location.

"People here at Mosaic, they're so safety-conscious. They want you to do things the right way, the safe way, and to do well and succeed," Banks-Lavallee said.



Ashley Banks-Lavallee does some welding in the fab shop.



Burton Thomson takes a product sample while loading railcars.

"Everybody's been good to me, willing to show me everything, so it's been good so far," said Thomson.

"I still have quite a few things to learn yet but I'm just glad to be there. I'm glad how everyone's showing me what to do."

They now have jobs and will gain experience, and Mosaic has potential workers for their site.

"We have a lot more First Nations and Métis people working at our other sites, Esterhazy for example, but Belle Plaine has been a tougher site to make progress," said Marshall Hamilton, VP of Human Resources, Potash Business Unit at Mosaic.

"I have been super impressed that the site has been open to take these five students. That's our ultimate goal, to have First Nation and Métis candidates who have the skills, to come forward work in our workplace."

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SIAST STUDENT PROFILE

Cornell Estwick

Welding certificate

Hometown: Sandy Bay, SK

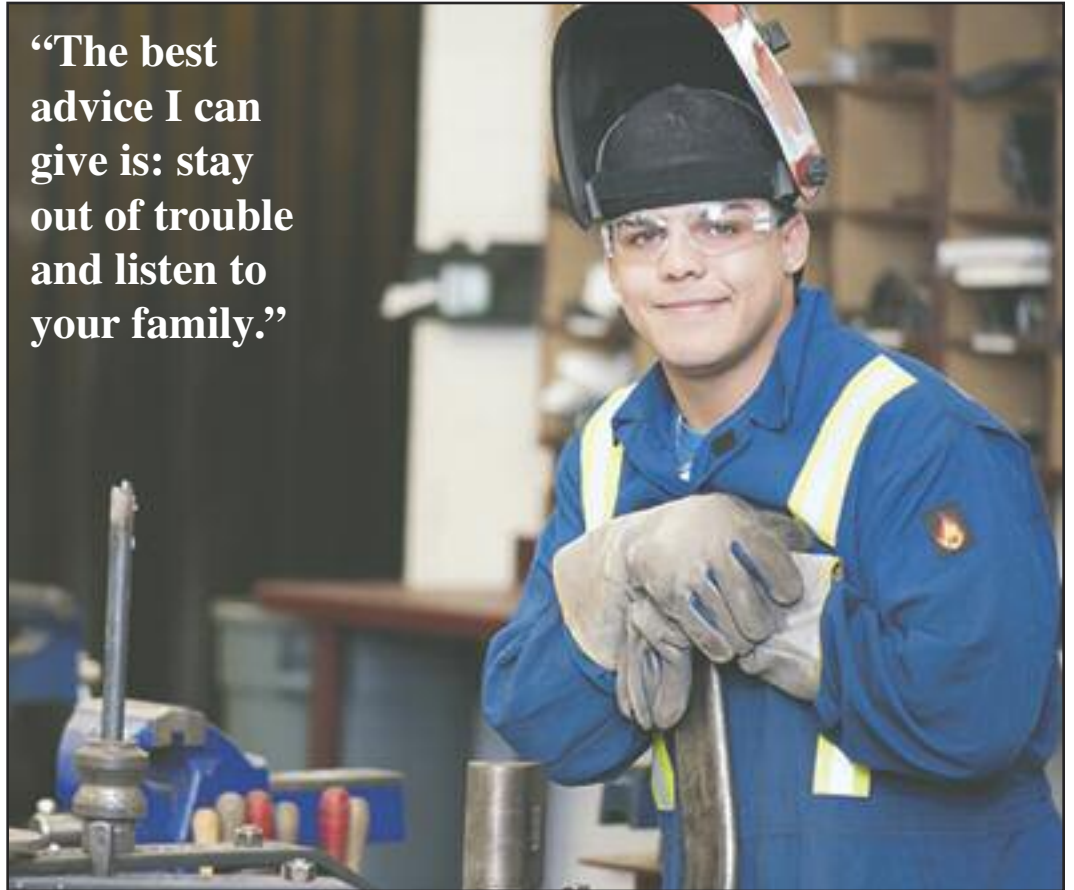
Cornell Estwick recognized early on that post-secondary education would be the best way to keep his life steady and on track: "I wanted to continue on with school right after high school without a break so I did not get into trouble."

Estwick had a few different options available to him at that point, but one held particular appeal. He enrolled in Welding at SIAST Woodland Campus in Prince Albert, a natural progression considering he'd been welding at school since Grade 9. As for eventual employment, he plans to capitalize on the resource boom in Saskatchewan and ply his trade in a mine.

In adjusting to post-secondary education, Estwick found support in SIAST student services and elsewhere: "I have had to overcome both learning and speech difficulties. The encouragement from my family, my instructors and my Aboriginal Student Achievement Plan advisor were all very helpful." Math was quite a struggle but with help from tutors and fellow students he graduated. "The best things about school were the instructors helping me and the students who are now my friends."

For more information on this program, visit: goSIAST.com/industrialtrades.

"The best advice I can give is: stay out of trouble and listen to your family."



Cornell Estwick is enrolled in welding at SIAST Woodland Campus in Prince Albert.



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SAWCC helps encourage women entrepreneurs

By **Andréa Ledding**
For Eagle Feather News

Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation (SAWCC) celebrated ten years of advocacy and community with a conference on employment, entrepreneurship, and economic development for women.

Keynote speaker Michelle Audette, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), brought greetings and admiration for the group, noting that SAWCC was a leader and shining example of providing positive and empowering action, and in celebrating individuals such as organizer and now past-president and advisor, Judy Hughes. Audette also spoke passionately of a vision to end violence and poverty in the face of colonialism and an adversarial government.

"More than 20,000 people have said to Stephen Harper we must have an inquiry into missing women, and take action," noted Audette, urging everyone to sign the petition that will be presented by MP Carolyn Bennett in mid-February.

NWAC continues to advocate for the missing and murdered, and to work proactively to prevent further violence. NWAC's "Faceless Dolls" exhibit aims to honour those gone, comfort those left behind, and educate those who are unaware of the disproportionate number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women across the country.

To continue to work proactively, NWAC has also just launched a woman's network of Aboriginal entrepreneurs, offering mentorship, independence, and stability to counter the socio-economic and political circumstances which leave so many women vulnerable.

The two day SAWCC conference ended with a "Faceless Dolls" workshop in which participants created their own contributions to the exhibit, but overall the two days focused on individual stories and panels from entrepreneurs such as Heather Abbey, creator of the new online website www.shopindigenous.ca; BrandyLee Maxie, fitness consultant; and clothing designers of the brand new "4U Fashions" who staged a half hour fashion show at the banquet.

In the two days of panels, struggles along with success were shared, and attendees commented that they felt

inspired. Everyone worked together in small group discussions and interacted with the panels to provide action plans and highlight barriers, to continue to move the work forward.

Professionals from agencies who deal with consulting, business plans, and funding such as Clarence Campeau Development Fund, Saskatchewan Aboriginal Equity Foundation, and Aboriginal Skills & Employment Training Strategy presented information, offered tips, and debunked myths, while employers such as the City of Regina, PotashCorp, and First Nations Bank presented employment opportunities and tips, via Aboriginal employees and industry leaders like Leanne Bellegarde.

Funding for the conference was partially provided by provincial ministries, with corporate backing from Affinity Credit Union to bring in Michelle Audette from her home base in Sept-Isles, Quebec. One of Audette's key points was about the emphasis often put on education.

"Education is important, but for me self-esteem was the key," said Audette, noting that her Innu identity and the pride she feels in it is what each woman most needs to succeed, along with a safe and supportive community and positive opportunities.

The two-day gathering provided a welcoming and inclusive space for Aboriginal women to share, learn, and network.



Participants at the SAWCC conference took time to make "Faceless Dolls" part of a memorial to missing and murdered women. (Photo by Sweetmoon Photography)



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Matthew Cloud, Transit Operator, Saskatoon Transit



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Dignitaries on hand to witness the SIIT and U of S partnership were from left FSIN Vice Chief Bobby Cameron, Whitecap Dakota Chief and SIIT Chair Darcy Bear, Dean of Edwards School of Business Daphne Taras, Minister of Advanced Education Rob Norris and SIIT President Riel Bellegarde. Far right is student Mario Deschambeault who will benefit greatly from the agreement.



U of S opens door to SIIT two-year business diploma program grads

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

Mario Deschambeault and many future SIIT students are going to benefit greatly from an agreement between the Edwards School of Business at the University of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT).

They just signed their first-ever agreement that will lead to more Aboriginal students holding university business degrees.

Deschambeault is in the second year of his Business Administration Program. The partnership agreement means that when Deschambeault graduates in spring from SIIT's two-year Business Diploma program, he will qualify as having completed the first two years required for the four-year U of S Bachelor of Commerce degree offered through Edwards. Traditionally, this was not the case. SIIT students interested in the BComm program

would not have been able to count all of their previous credits towards the degree.

"This has a huge impact on us and allows us to stay in Saskatchewan," said Deschambeault of the agreement. "I am absolutely going to the University of Saskatchewan to finish my degree."

"We are committed to creating new opportunities for educational achievement of Aboriginal students," said Edwards' Dean Daphne Taras.

"This agreement establishes a clean and clear route from SIIT to the Edwards School that will develop the next generation of Aboriginal business leaders. We know there is appetite for this route and we look forward to welcoming SIIT graduates into our program."

While the U of S holds transfer agreements with other institutions, this is a first-time partnership between Edwards and SIIT.

"Today marks the beginning of a new partnership

between the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies and the Edwards School of Business," said Kim Fraser-Saddleback, vice-president, Academics and Student Services at SIIT.

"This partnership will provide an opportunity for SIIT business diploma graduates to continue on a pathway towards completion of a degree at Edwards, while staying closer to home."

A number of specialty program streams within the transfer agreement are still being worked out, though students can begin transferring as of the signing of this agreement.

In the meantime, Deschambeault intends to get his degree and eventually work in business and maybe become an accountant or an auditor.

"I'm pretty hopeful about the future of Saskatchewan right now. There are lots of job opportunities around and the transferability of my course gives it more credibility and is exciting," said Deschambeault.



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Program is pending final approval of funding from all partners.





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Professionals getting organized

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

“Why have a Saskatoon Aboriginal Professional Association?” Cherish Deegan, President of the Regina Aboriginal Professional Association, asked rhetorically. “Why not have a Saskatoon Aboriginal Professional Association?” she answered herself to many chuckles from the crowd.

Deegan was the keynote speaker at Creating Connections, an event that is hoped to be the launch of a professional association in Saskatoon based on the Regina Professional Association model.

RAPA as it is known, has been in existence for 15 years and has been integral in creating a strong bond in the Aboriginal professional network, as well as supporting charities and in moving events like National Aboriginal History month forward.

At the Urban Aboriginal Strategy’s Community Engagement Forum held in March of 2013, members of the Aboriginal community identified the need for an Aboriginal Professionals Association for the city of Saskatoon. A committee was struck and led to the first event featuring Deegan as well as a panel of community folk that use networking in their business or artistic endeavors. Of course there was networking time and food too.

CeCe Baptiste is a committee member and a driving force behind this idea.

“We have a lot of great talent within our community and over the past few decades our number of leaders has increased, people who have made a difference in both improving our relations with the non-Aboriginal populations and increasing opportunities for up and coming individuals to be successful,” said Baptiste.

“There is still a lot of work that needs to be done to ensure that this success increases and that more Aboriginal peoples are attached in the workplace. What this association would do is increase peoples’ networks across sectors and across the spectrum within a career life cycle. We can provide support to one another through mentorship opportunities and increasing our exposure to different careers and viewpoints.”

The panel at Creating Connections was diverse and thorough. Gilles Dorval from the City of Saskatoon talked about employment. Melody Wood of kimiwan zine talked about social media. Chris Sicotte of Affinity Credit Union spoke about networking for business, and Heather Abbey of shopindigenous.ca talked about the need for both in her business.

The ultimate goal of the evening was



From left Chris Sicotte, Cherish Deegan, Heather Abbey, Melody Wood and Gilles Dorval all spoke at the Creating Connections networking event to launch the start of the Saskatoon Aboriginal Professional Association. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

to create some momentum and for a committee to take the association forward past a March event.

“You can tell the interest was high,” said Baptiste. “We had over 120 people show up so we are thrilled. We wanted to build excitement from the grassroots level and inspire people to stand behind such an initiative. We’ve had some really great positive feedback so far from the attendees.”

The next event is in March and that is when the Association will be officially handed over from the UAS group that started it. Not only will the organization

do good work, it will elevate fellow Aboriginal people.

“I believe that there is a needed space to highlight our successes,” added Baptiste.

“The Aboriginal voice is growing; we are an important part of the economy and we can do great things when we band together in a unified way.

Individuals interested in becoming involved with future planning for this initiative may submit their expression of interest to Brad Bird, Urban Aboriginal Strategy Coordinator or respond to this email at yxeapa@gmail.com.



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Canada

Dance to Harper's tune or perish

It is said that whoever arrives at a place of conflict early will be in a position to take the initiative. Those who arrive late must hustle into action with a troubled mind.

The bottom line? If you are skilled in conflict then you will make the first move to prevent others from taking their initiative.

This is exactly what Stephen Harper has done when he slashed the budgets of First Nation organizations across the land. And so we joined the elite club of scientists, environmentalists and veterans who had their throats cut.

If you're not with us, you're against us, is the attitude Harper is enforcing.

Bernard Valcourt, the Federal High Priest of All Things Indian, put it best, in the most bland terms possible, "We're not taking the money away ... We are ensuring that the finite resources we have will be targeted towards those priority projects that we share."

Anyone with half a wit – and I am told that I am such a one – knows that this is code for, "Sure you'll get cash, but only if you do what pleases us!"

Seems reminiscent of an old strategy from the 1880s when rations were withheld unless and until First Nation

families prostituted their wives and daughters to the Indian Agent's very personal agenda.

And so, in late January the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations announced that around 63 of its employees faced layoff at the end of March if no new money was found.

In firing off the "potential" layoff notices I am sure the Federation was only minimizing the organization's exposure to liability, which any lawyer will advise. Some may have seen this crisis as an opportunity to "clean house."

Still, there are many who question the advisability of putting the staff on notice. Others worry the move will never be forgotten.

Right or wrong, many hard working men and women in the organization feel they were thrown under the bus to save the very organization they had dedicated themselves to.

Going forward some employees will wonder if they can trust the leadership. Some might even hold back from going

that extra mile and taking sound risks to better Indian lives.

Even now resumes are being dusted off and fluffed up.

Finally, it can take years to assemble just the right people, with the right skills, values and commitment to get the job done. Re-staffing is not an overnight

affair, and there is no guarantee that the gifted and knowledgeable will be attracted to the organization down the road.

But there is hope. Even now plans and contingencies are being developed to not only save the sinking ship, but to refit the vessel so it will be even more effective at taking the fight to the federal and the provincial governments.

In this regard we will hear some leaders complain, "The Federation must return to its mandate of Treaty protection." While this sounds purposeful, it is an inherently passive and reactionary stance, when what our people need is a bold, decisive catalyst to help us right the wrongs, get the justice, and create oppor-

tunity.

And remember that quote from Valcourt earlier, the one about "not taking money away" but redirecting it? Guess what. On February 7 Harper announced \$1.9 billion for First Nation education, to take effect after the next federal election.

So now we know where funding for our organizations went. It's hard to argue against more funding for education. But Harper should not be applauded for doing the right thing.

Harper being Harper you can bet that there are strings attached. Bands may have to sign on to his dreaded First Nation Education Act – a piece of legislation that should send shivers down White and Indian spines alike.

Don't sign on and you can starve out in the cold. Harper is going to work with the "willing."

The Federation and the Chiefs of Saskatchewan meet in February to deliberate. Federation employees wait, some with resignation, others with hope. To say they are all being called to action with troubled minds is not an exaggeration.

Dirk says, "If you don't like me now you won't like me later because I just get worse."



The Dashing Chronicles
Winston McLean

Bus stop location being discussed

• Continued from Page 7

In the past two and a half years, Luhning says the City of Regina has received three requests to construct a bus stop at FNUniv.

One of these requests was from Brad Bellegarde, FNUniv Student Association vice president of communications. Bellegarde's request prompted a meeting between Luhning, Nelson Wagner, vice president of facilities management at the U of R and himself one-and-a-half years ago.

"We talked about how the stop by Luther ... perhaps should be closer to FNUniv, along First Nations Way. But, that's as far as we went," said Wagner.

After CTV News aired a story on Jan. 8 about FNUniv lacking a bus stop, discussion resumed. Wagner spoke with Lorne Wolfe, director of plant, property and maintenance at FNUniv, about the future of a bus stop along University Drive East.

The west side, near the cross walk from Luther to FNUniv is now a possible location, Wagner explained. He also says the facilities management is considering its submission for the new budget this May.

In order for a bus stop to be built there, FNUniv would have to submit a proposal to facilities management.

Wagner says this has never been done since becoming vice president of facilities management in 2006.

Based on urgency and safety, facilities management would then approve it and submit it to the U of R budget committee for a final approval. Their decision is based on the operating grant from the province and what is most needed around campus.

But, would the need for a bus stop be enough?

In 2005, Nicole Bear began requesting the U of R and FNUniv build a sidewalk from Luther College to FNUniv.

"Every winter, I kept getting stuck in the snow on my way to class at FNUniv," said Bear, who is dependent on an electric wheelchair to get around.

"After I appeared on the news (in 2009) on the International Day for Persons with Disabilities, the sidewalk between Luther and FNUniv was done within months."

Perhaps now that the lack of a bus stop at FNUniv has media coverage, one will actually be built.

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Rema and her mother Carmen Buschow. (Photo by Mike Dubois)

Powerful connection with grandmother

• Continued from Page 1

She explained that she was having complications from her pregnancy, and the phone went quiet. Her mother had insisted that one of her daughters was pregnant. She was on her deathbed, and her daughters thought she was delirious. None of them knew Carmen was expecting.

On the way to North Battleford for the funeral, Carmen and her husband were trying to think of a name for the baby. They'd just learned they were having a girl.

"We couldn't come up with a single name. Our minds were completely blank, we thought how strange is this that we can't even come up with one name?" said Carmen.

A truck passed by with the name Rema on it, but they dismissed it. They arrived at the funeral and read the memorial card for her mother, and saw her middle name was Rema. They knew they'd found their daughter's name.

Carmen told her sister that she planned to let Rema dance powwow when she grew up as a way to honour having her grandmother's name. She took lessons, learned how to dance and how to smudge. Having a busy gymnastics schedule didn't allow much time for powwow dancing, but

Rema enjoyed it. When her coach created her gymnastics routine with the powwow music, she also needed a new outfit.

Only after talking to her sister again did Carmen learn that Rema unknowingly picked her grandmother's favourite colours: purple, aquamarine, and a gold/silver tone.

When she was preparing to perform her routine at the Winter Game trials, she asked her mother if she should smudge.

"I don't normally do that because I wasn't raised that way," said Carmen.

Recognizing that it was a protocol Rema had learned, she encouraged her daughter to smudge, but didn't expect her next question.

"She came to me and said 'mommy

do you think I should smudge my feet?' I said 'sure if you want to.' The next day Carmen spoke with her sister and told her about Rema wanting to smudge her feet.

"My sister told me that mom always reminded them to smudge their feet," she said. "There is such a strong powerful force happening with this little girl, it blows my mind."

Rema will definitely be one to watch in Prince Albert, and at a competition in Ohio in April, where she will go up against gymnasts from Russia, Italy, Spain, Japan, Bulgaria, Ecuador, and other international places. With her grandmother cheering from the other side, something tells me that this girl is going to bring home that winning title someday soon.



Saskatoon Indian & Métis Friendship Centre Youth Committee's Upcoming Events

Youth Committee's 13th Annual Jigging Competition

SIMFC is proud to once again offer the very popular Jigging Competition! It's a time for the community to get together and celebrate Métis culture through dance, food and entertainment! This event invites everyone from every cultural and ethnic background to attend. The event reinforces Métis pride through cultural expression, teachings and foods! This year's event will be held on Friday March 14th 2014. The event is open to anyone and everyone, with categories ranging from Tiny Tots to Seniors (Age 51 and older). The event is a free-of-charge event.

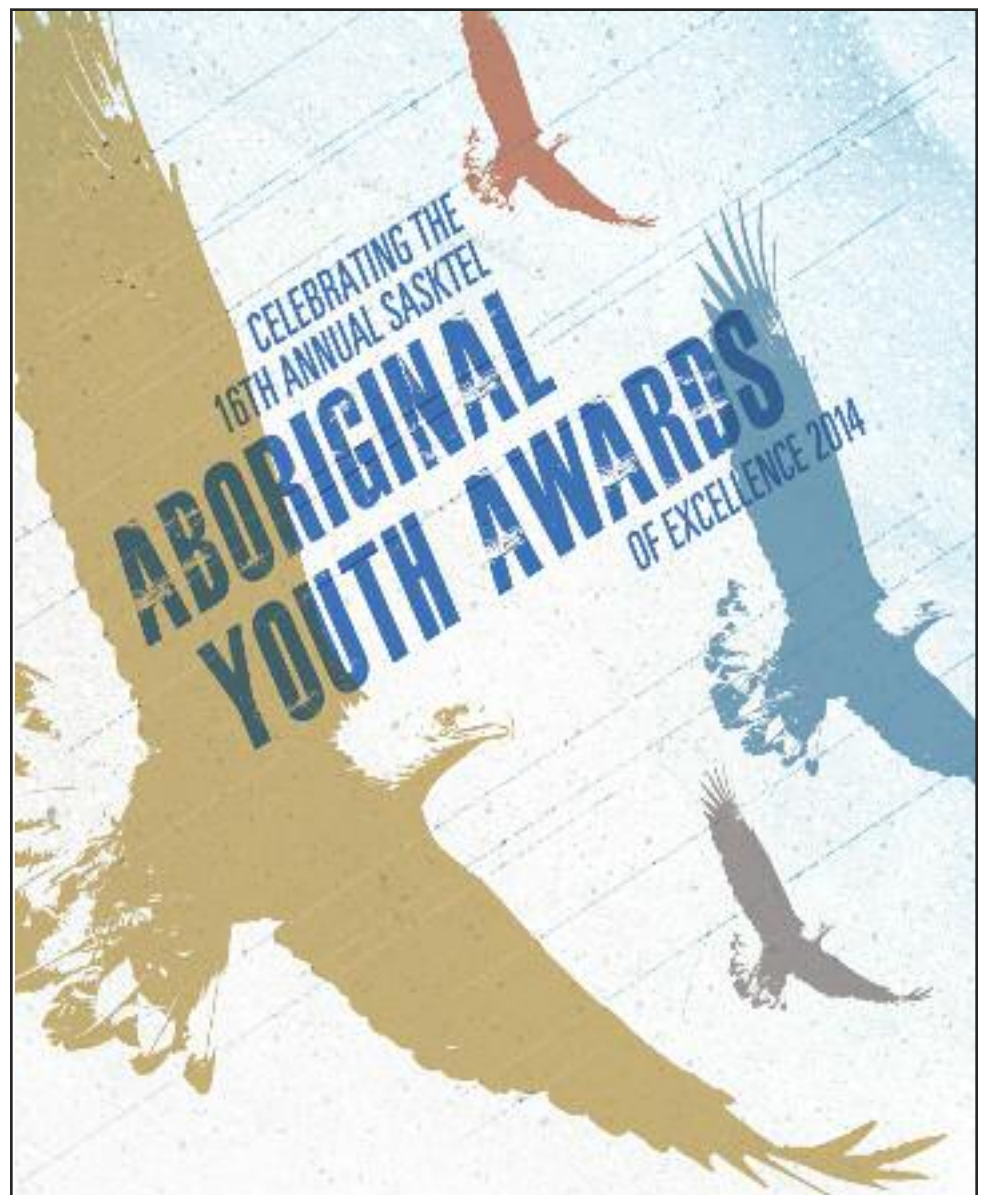
SIMFC Annual Youth Round Dance

SIMFC is proud to host another annual event which is our Youth Round Dance on February 28th 2014. The Round Dance is a celebration of life. It is an event where people gather to dance, sing and pray for others in need. A feast will be served at this event and everyone is welcome to participate. This event is also a free-of-charge event.

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SIGA provides major shot in arm for Indigenous Games

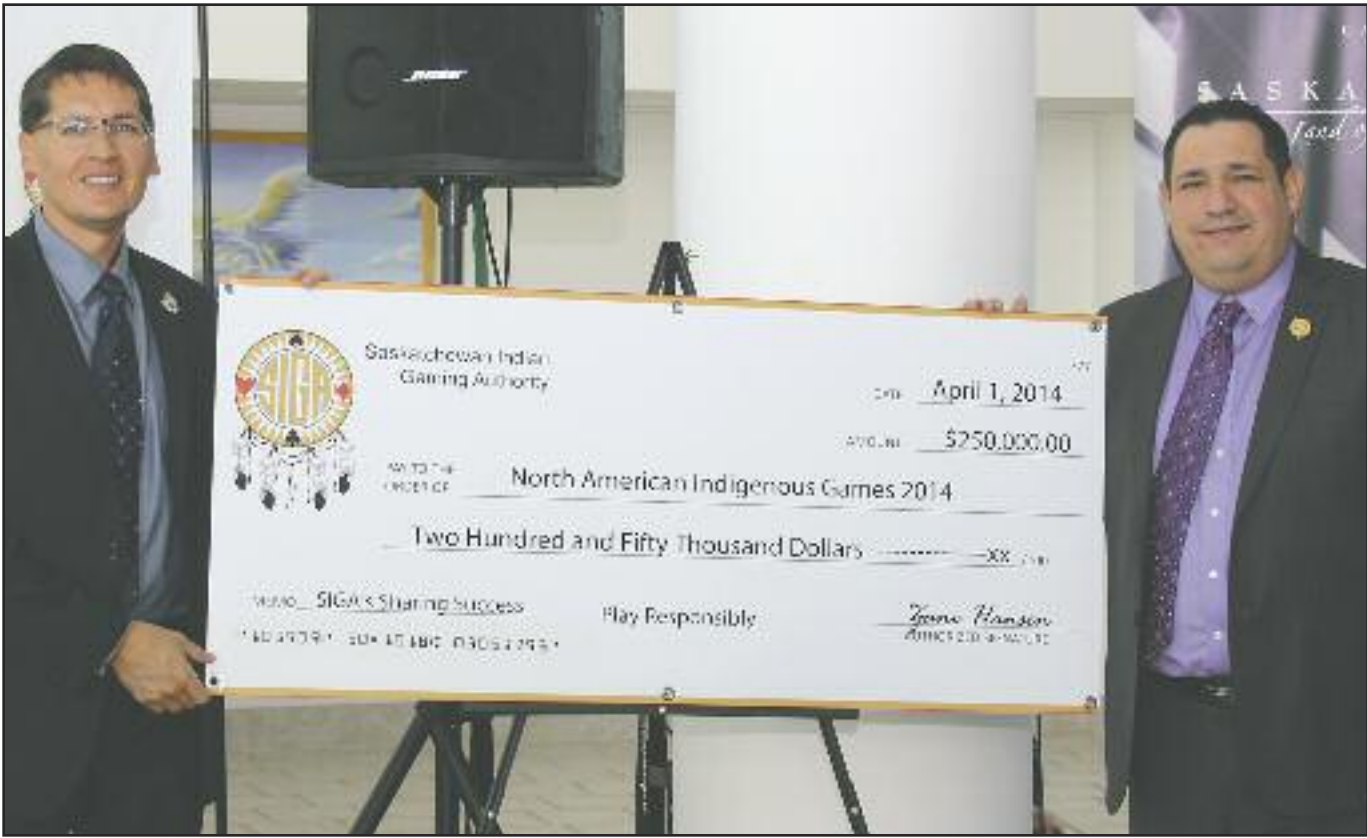
By Judy Bird
For Eagle Feather News

The 2014 North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) has received a boost in its corporate funding with a \$250,000 donation from the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (SIGA).

“As a First Nations company, we put a high priority on giving back. When we can give back to events that really invest in youth and develop them, it’s a fantastic cause. This is a major contribution for us, one of the largest we’ve ever done,” said Zane Hansen, President and CEO of SIGA.

“To have one of our own First Nations companies step up and be the largest donor to the Games, it speaks volumes of the company at SIGA, of our leaders, and it really helps our bottom line,” said Glen Pratt, CEO of the Regina 2014 NAIG.

“It’s really going to help overall with our cultural village. We get operational dollars from the two levels of governments that help us to house the athletes, feed the



SIGA President and CEO Zane Hansen (left) presents a cheque to Glen Pratt, CEO of 2014 Regina NAIG.

athletes, do the basic things, and so by having more sponsors, we get to do more things like the cultural village and enhance the games the best we can,” Pratt said.

The goal is to raise \$2 million in corporate sponsorship. With this latest donation from SIGA, they are about half way to reaching that goal. Pratt hopes that

other corporations follow suit and support the Games.

“It’s been a bit of a challenge to compete with the Grey Cup and with other large scale events. Hopefully this will kick-start other corporations to come on board and support us, the same way they support the Riders, the Canada Games and

beyond,” he added.

NAIG was given just over \$7 million in government funding but the rest must be raised. Pratt hopes that they committee can raise that, and more in order to leave a half million dollar legacy for future games.

Other games, such as the Pan-Am games and the Canada Games have legacy funds (over \$1 billion, and about \$80 million respectively) but NAIG does not.

“Our Games are just as large as other Games, in fact we’re larger than Canada Games, we have more athletes. We have very big games (to put on)

but we’re doing it on a bare bones budget,” Pratt said.

The 2014 NAIG takes place in Regina July 20-27 and bring about \$32 million in economic impact to the city.

For more information, or to sign up as a volunteer for the games, go to www.regina2014naig.com

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Everyday heroes and mentors paved the way for career in sports for Derek Rope

Name: Derek Rope
Sports Played: Track and Field
First Nation: Pasqua First Nation
Hometown: Saskatoon
Current Position: NAIG Coordinator Athletics Team Saskatchewan; Meet Director, Aboriginal Indoor Track & Field Championships
Nickname: Rope/Roper

GOZ: Why is it important it is for aboriginal youth to be involved in sport?

ROPER: Whatever the sport, whatever the level, whatever the age, I believe participation in sport is vital to the healthy development of our First Nation and Metis youth. To me, the team building, discipline and pride that come with being involved in sport is invaluable and positively influences education outcomes, healthy lifestyle choices and mentorship.

GOZ: Have events like the North American Indigenous Games created more opportunities for Aboriginal athletes?

ROPER: Absolutely. We see now more than ever First Nations and Metis athletes competing at the provincial through to the international stage.

GOZ: How does it feel to have NAIG 2014 in Saskatchewan?

ROPER: There is nothing like competing and winning in front of a “hometown” crowd! I am sure these games will be the biggest and best yet!
 GOZ: I’ve always wondered if there are any friendly rivalries that have developed over the years at NAIG.
 ROPER: I can’t speak for other events, however, if I had to choose a friendly rivalry in athletics I would have to say Manitoba but it’s all in the spirit of sportsmanship. I think that Team Sask has a friendly rivalry with every province or state team competing. Six of seven titles is quite the record and I am sure there will be teams gunning to take home a championship.

GOZ: Every successful youth has a mentor or hero.

Who was yours? Why were they so important in your development/success?

ROPER: Growing up I was always supported and guided in the things I wanted to pursue by my parents, they are my heroes. I was always reminded to be proud of who I was as a First Nations person and that the limits we have are the limits we put on ourselves. We didn’t have a lot of money to say the least but I can always remember my mom saying “come hell or high water” when it meant getting my brothers and I to a game, a track meet or performance. I was lucky, I had everyday heroes and mentors.

GOZ: Coaching, working, playing music, volunteering – how do you find time to stay balanced?

ROPER: Well I really enjoy the things I am involved in and am fortunate to be surrounded by great people to share them with. They are all apart of who I am.

GOZ: Favorite Sports Movie All-time?

ROPER: Running Brave: The Billy Mills story. My brother Kelly and I must have worn out three videos of that movie watching it before every race or when we needed some running inspiration before a workout.

GOZ: Favorite Sporting Moment?

ROPER: I would have to say being the Rookie of the Year for Huskies Track and Field when I ran for U of S, however, a close second is Eugene Arcand introducing my brother and I to Billy Mills when competing at NAIG in Prince Albert. I just stood there star-struck not saying anything, just shaking his hand.

GOZ: With regard to sports, you’ve secretly always wanted to be a ...

ROPER: Volleyball player but unfortunately I jump like a rock and have hands like two frying pans, but I sure do love playing the game.



Sports Chat

Mike Gosselin



Derek Rope as a coach at NAIG in Cowichan with athlete Jill George and a retro shot of Derek as Rookie of the Year at the U of S.

ABORIGINAL Coaches & Officials Program

BECOME A COACH OR OFFICIAL

The Aboriginal Coaches and Officials Program is organizing and supporting training and development opportunities across the province for Aboriginal peoples to become involved in sport as a coach or an official. Becoming a coach or an official is a rewarding experience and helps our young people grow, not only as athletes, but as tomorrow’s leaders.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER CONTACT:

Natalie Lukiw
 Aboriginal Coaches and Officials Coordinator
 510 Cynthia Street, Saskatoon, SK S7L 7K7
 Email: nlukiw@sasksport.sk.ca
www.saskcoach.ca/aboutACOP.php

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Rez dog mascot needs a name

The Saskatoon Tribal Council has adopted a new mascot designed to engage children and youth about staying in school and other positive messaging.

The new mascot made his debut throughout January and will represent STC at various events and activities including the First Nations winter and summer games, member community treaty days and powwows.

The mascot is modeled after a reserve dog and has proven a hit with kids.

“We knew we needed a fresh, relatable idea to engage youth. Handing kids a pamphlet doesn’t work,” says Saskatoon Tribal Council Tribal Chief Felix Thomas. “The universal thing that all reserves have in common is the reserve dog.”

Throughout January and early February, the “rez dog” mascot is visiting approximately 30 rural and city schools with high Aboriginal student enrollment. During the visit, a creative contest for students to name the mascot and tell his life story is being announced. Although the mascot’s image targets the Aboriginal youth demographic, the contest is open to all students.

STC plans to build on the mascot’s popularity and further engage children and youth in mascot themed online activities, events and promotional items.

The naming contest prizes include two iPads for best name and best story and a classroom pizza party, numerous honourable mention prizes, sports equipment packages. The contest entry deadline is February 25 and can also be entered on the STC website at www.sktc.sk.ca



This giant Rez Dog has gotten loose in the city and is causing all kinds of havoc. They would call him in for the night, but he has no name! Please help him get a name! Go to www.sktc.sk.ca to help out.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

NORTH AMERICAN
INDIGENOUS
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REGINA - SASKATCHEWAN - JULY 20-22, 2014



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