

Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

Eagle Feather News Newsmakers of 2018

Michael Linklater had a heck of a year winning multiple awards and getting elected on Council. The White Buffalo Youth Lodge was a great place to catch him for a quick picture.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)



By Jeanelle Mandes Of Eagle Feather News

Two individuals who are known for their outstanding leadership roles, advocacy and accomplishments, Michael Linklater and Jade Tootoosis, have been named this year's newsmakers of the year!

Linklater has many accomplishments under his belt with award recognitions throughout 2018. Tootoosis was the main face that advocated for change in the Canadian criminal justice system following the Gerald Stanley not guilty verdict back in February of this year.

She spoke from the heart with poise and class to media and politicians while the nation watched the need for changes in the justice system for Indigenous peoples.

Linklater was on the cover of our Eagle Feather

News over 18 years ago after being recognized with the Sasktel Outstanding Achievement Youth award. It was an honour that he was not expecting to win.

"It was an award that encompassed everything (like) sports and culture," said Linklater.

"I was absolutely blown away. That was an exciting time for me. I was very humbled and shocked to win that award. And to be on the (Eagle Feather News) cover, it was a great time.

"I actually still have a copy of that newspaper. My late father kept a lot of my newspaper clippings."

His late father was a well-known and respected elder, Walter Linklater, who passed away this past summer. He credits his late father and his mother, Mariea for the moral and spiritual strength that he carries with him.

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Newsmaker of the Year Edition

Coming In January - The Year Preview

CPMA #40027204

Linklater dazzled on the basketball court

... Tootoosis challenged court system

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"They knew that having culture as a foundation and understanding my spirituality was something they wanted to give me," he said.

"They knew that would give me and their grandchildren strength to be successful in life. That's where a lot of my cultural identity was founded on, was from them."

This year, Linklater won the prestigious Indspire Award in the sports category and the Tom Longboat award earning the title of male athlete of the year. Linklater was the team captain representing Canada in the 3-on-3 basketball World Cup where he was also voted as last year's Most Spectacular Player (MSP) of the season for the FIBA 3x3 World Tour.

"Anytime you get recognized by winning an award, it's always humbling and exciting at the same time," said the basketball star.

"It's very encouraging to continue doing what you're doing. For me, I'm always grateful that I get an opportunity to be nominated, let alone to win an award."

Linklater continues to carry the words from his late father to keep an open mind, respect one another, do your best to get along, and live a good life. With his outstanding achievements, Linklater knows his late father, his mother and his family are proud of everything he has accomplished and will continue to achieve down the road.

"It's something that I'm not working towards to always be in the news, it's more so continuing doing what I'm passionate about and continue to make change," said Linklater, who encourages others to follow his journey on his Instagram social media page.

Tootoosis is from the Red Pheasant Cree Nation and is also a member of Rocky Boy in Montana. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Native Studies from the University of Alberta, where she currently works to promote and inspire individuals to pursue an education in Native Studies.

Tootoosis not only advocates for others to pursue an education but she also has a strong voice that echoed throughout North America to create change to honour the rights of Indigenous peoples.

Following the Stanley verdict that sent shockwaves throughout the nation, Tootoosis and her family met with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and other government representatives to discuss the systemic racism in the Canadian justice system where plans for a new legislative framework for Indigenous rights was dis-



The mother of Colten Boushie, Debbie Baptiste (left) and Jade Tootoosis (right) at the United Nations.

(Photo supplied)

cussed.

Tootoosis and her family did not stop there. Their voices took them as far as the international table at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York. Tootoosis and her family advocated for change in the Canadian criminal justice system.

Despite speaking through tears and carrying a heavy heart, Tootoosis continued to advocate on behalf of her family, all Indigenous peoples and to honour her late brother, Colten Boushie.

"I felt a deep responsibility that if I can say something, I should say something. There are more positive things that come from that than negative things than not saying anything," she said.

Although it was a difficult time for her and her family, Tootoosis addressed the media and politicians with the country watching her and her family on the need for change in the justice system. She credits the strength she gained from her husband and her aunty, Debbie Baptiste, who is Boushie's mother.

"She's one of the strongest people I know. She would find the strength to get up and go into those courtrooms, to speak and be present (while) heavy in her grief," she said.

Tootoosis said through her and her family's advocacy, she remains hopeful for change.

"You got to have some form of hope to be able to continue to challenge these systems, to challenge wrongdoings and things transpiring and taking place, she said.

"If we have no hope, there's no drive, no passion, no heart in what you're doing, and it won't be successful. My

hope that what we do today will have a positive impact for future generations."

Tootoosis and Linklater have demonstrated through their hard work,

advocacy and commitment that they are deserving winners of the designation of 2018 Eagle Feather News, Newsmakers of the Year.

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Fond memories of Christmas on the rez

**By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News**

Those who grew up in First Nation communities have fond memories of celebrating Christmases with their families.

These four individuals share their childhood memories of their Christmases in the rez!

Michael Desjarlais from the Kawacatoose First Nation was raised by his kohkum, Maryann, and moshum, Mike, when he was over a year old along with other siblings. During these years, he and his family would walk house to house to eat throughout Christmas Eve and day. To this day, Desjarlais treasures a precious memory of a Christmas gift made by his moshum.

"My moshum and kohkum barely had any money. One day, my moshum cut out a horse and a man using cardboard and gave it to me for Christmas," he said.

"And he cried. I told him 'don't cry' and I took the horse and played with it. When I lost the horse, I cried."

Although he lost the original cardboard horse and man, he recreates a replica to reminisce on a gift that came from the heart and to reflect that he and his siblings were raised with love.

Gwenda Yuzicapi from the Standing Buffalo Dakota Nation remembers her Kunshi (grandma) Christmas tradition was to get all five girls dressed up in their favorite dresses and she would make rag curls on their hair the night before Christmas Eve. By the morning, her Kunshi would take them off and they had curls and they would all get ready to go to midnight mass.

"All the girls were in the choir and we sang Christmas songs. After mass, we went home and Kunshi would finish cooking her Christmas meal," she said. "Once the meal was cooked Kunshi, made a spirit dish to feed all our relatives who journeyed in (the spirit world). After all the Takojas (grandchildren) ate, we would open our presents."

Gerald Ratt, a member of the Lac La Ronge First Nation, grew up on a street known as "thriller street"

Christmas time was always a hard

time for him and his family.

"We didn't have much, as we lived on welfare. I always asked myself as a child what is the purpose of Christmas? I was a child I didn't know," said Ratt.

One December night while his mom was out, Ratt found a hammer and told his two younger sisters and younger brother they were going out to find a Christmas tree as they didn't own a saw. He recalled it being dark, cold, and the snow was deep. They made their way into the bush and Ratt was plowing a trail for his siblings.

"We searched for a tree trying to find the perfect one. We finally found one so we took the hammer one by one and tried to chop that tree down. It took us awhile ... we were tired and cold but finally that tree came down," he said.

"So, here we were four little kids pulling a Christmas tree. We got it home and saw its flaws and we thought it looked perfect in the bush. But we made the most of it and decorated it up real nice. We were happy and so was our mom."

Although Ratt and his family didn't have much growing up, he is grateful to have these memories to cherish and, to him, that is what Christmas was all about.

Tanya Severight from the Keeseekoose First Nation remembered when she was younger, her whole family would meet at her grandma, Chip, and grandpa, Dan's, big cozy place. Her aunts, uncles and cousins would travel down to spend Christmas with them.

Severight lived with her grandparents so she was always eager waiting for everyone to show up.

"My parents and siblings lived in Edmonton. Over the years, we had to keep adding tables so everyone would fit. My grandparents had six kids and of course everyone had kids," she said.

"On Christmas Eve, we would all meet at midnight to open gifts and have a midnight lunch. We would visit for a bit and everyone would go camp wherever they were staying for the holidays."

Severight said the next day, her family would have their turkey dinner

and everyone would come back to continue celebrating Christmas.

"All us kids would be playing with our new toys in the basement. One of my uncles would take us outside during the day and rig up something to haul us around, whether it was a horse or a car hood and all the kids would pile on!" she said.

"The best Christmas memories were spent with my huge family."

Mike Desjarlais replicates a man and a horse made out of cardboard to recall the memory of a Christmas gift given by his late moshum. Photo by Jeanelle Mandes





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Newsmakers an easy choice this year

Welcome to our annual December Newsmakers of the Year edition.

I am sure you are not surprised by our choices this year. If you are even randomly checking the media in this province in 2018, the odds are good you are familiar with Jade Tootoosis and Michael Linklater.

Jade Tootoosis was thrust into the media spotlight after the not guilty verdict of Gerald Stanley in the shooting death of her cousin Colten Boushie. The not guilty verdict polarized the province and racism reared its ugly head all over the place. Countless people were exposed through Facebook once their racist comments were shown to their employers ... even a town councillor weighed in with some racism.

Through all this noise and verbal violence, one voice rose above others and that was the voice of Jade Tootoosis. As the spokesperson for the family, Jade appeared or was quoted in every major and regional media outlet in Canada and sometime beyond. Her poise, grace, passion and oratory skills made her the perfect person to bring the issue to the world. She appeared on Parliament Hill and in front of the United Nations.

The pressure on her must have been insane and I assume she was constantly attacked verbally and online by the trolls of this world. She did not ask for this. She was thrust into the media spotlight by injustice and she represented the family, herself and her cousin Colten with amazing tact and diplomacy.

Michael Linklater made the news in a different way. The man hit his stride this year, and after a couple decades of honing his basketball skills and being a sport and community leader, he reaped his just rewards in 2018.

Indspire Award for Sport. Tom Longboat Award as top Indigenous Male Athlete in Canada. Fiba 3x3 World All star. He won a tourism award for bringing an international 3x3 tournament to the streets

of downtown Saskatoon. And he got elected as a Councillor for the Thunderchild First Nation. He is also the founder of Boys with Braids, teaching Indigenous boys the cultural significance of their braids and to be proud of their culture.

Quite the year, but when you look at the dedication, balance and spirit of this young man who has been excelling his

classed me in basketball (not difficult, bad knees and bad attitude over here), maturity and leadership. You just knew good things were going to come of the young man.

Another newsmaker worth mentioning was the Justice for Our Stolen Children Camp that took over the Legislature grounds for months.



Jade Tootoosis and Michael Linklater were easy choices as Eagle Feather News news makers of the year for 2018. Here Jade is in her regalia and Michael from 2010 when he won the CIS National Championship.

entire life, eventually you make big waves. I remember Michael from when he first appeared on the cover of our paper way back in the early days. He was 14 and out-

Both Jade and Michael show leadership. The strength that gets them through is from being rooted in their culture and learning from their elders and family. Unfortunately, not all kids are as lucky. The campers were protesting for



the children that are being taken in record numbers from their families and put in an under resourced foster family system. In this system, they lose their ties to family, community, culture and language. Just like the residential schools.

The protestors did us all a great service by bringing this issue to the forefront and forcing people to have some long overdue uncomfortable conversations. Oh, to have been a fly on the wall for the meeting between provincial officials and the leaders of the protest. Many thanks to them for sacrificing their lives, time and comfort for the most vulnerable in our society.

Also making the conversation was the impact of this year on settler-Indigenous relations and the precarious and sometimes frosty relationship between the provincial and federal governments and Indigenous leaders. The Stanley acquittal, arming Conservation officers with assault rifles, court cases over Treaty rights, failed pipelines and Duty to Consult decisions have led to a lot of turmoil. Times are tense.

Happily, though, the emergence of the reconciliation movement through the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, the City of Saskatoon and many other committed allies has led to a wave reconciliation groups across Saskatchewan meeting monthly to have the difficult conversations on our truth, but more importantly on how we are moving forward together. They basically ask, what can we do to make things better. Many leaders are emerging and that gives me hope.

So, Jade, Michael, the residential school survivors, champions, politicians, religious leaders, protestors and average ordinary folks participating in this movement, thank you so much for your sacrifice and dedication.

Keep making that news.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

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Dawn's version of The Greatest Story Ever Told

When I was a kid, my favourite thing was re-reading the Christmas story from the Bible.

Not because I was religious but because it was about Christmas which was my favourite time of year, because I loved toys.

I also loved reading the Bible because back then, we did not have cable or Netflix or even stories about teenage wizards (though I guess you could argue that Jesus was the first teen wizard.)

In the story, the writer described a couple, Mary and Joseph, who were making their way to Bethlehem because of the census. In order to do a proper counting of people, you had to go to where you born.

I'm not sure if you went where the guy was born or where the woman was born. All I know is that if we had this practise, nowadays, I'd have to book it back to Balcarres, Saskatchewan, which I don't think even has a hospital now.

So, the couple heads into town and finds out there are no rooms at the inn, motel, hotel or whatever. Joseph had failed to make reservations and so "they were out of luck," the innkeeper explained, because as we all know, innkeepers like to victim-blame.

But this innkeeper was an enterprising guy and he was like, "Hey I don't have any human rooms, per se, but I do have a room available – it's uh ... very rustic."

So, then he leads Joseph and his lady to the stable, which in modern times we would call a garage or a parking lot.

Did I mention that Mary was pregnant? That's a pertinent detail. When I was very pregnant, I did not like travelling anywhere. I didn't even like walking through the mall with my weird pregnant body because creepy men would stare at me. It was super gross.

Also, by the ninth month of pregnancy, I could literally

only fit one piece of clothing. So, there's Mary, in her last dress, hanging out in a stable, wondering how this could possibly get worse. Then she goes into labour. Dang.



The Christmas story then cuts to another part of the area. There's a shepherd standing on the hillside with his flock of sheep. He's just hanging out there thinking about the girl he's got back in Bethlehem wondering if she's really into him or just hanging on to him while she looks for a blacksmith (blacksmiths were the shit back in the day).

So, he's standing out there by himself and suddenly all his sheep start baaing at the same time. He's a bit freaked out, thinking he's about to watch a wolf tear apart his flock, when he sees an angel in the sky.

Now, people tend to think of angels as angels, these good fairies with white dresses and big fluffy wings. But the Bible doesn't really support that. Angels delivered bad news about as often as they delivered good news.

Like really bad news: "Like y'all better get out of town now because we're about to destroy it in a minute. No, don't pack, just git."

So, this shepherd is thinking, "Oh crap, it's an angel." And the angel knows what he's thinking and says, "It's OK shepherd, I bring tidings of GREAT JOY. It's not another annihilation message."

The angel explains that a baby has been born in a

manger and he's going to be the king of all people and do good things for the world. And so, the shepherd is thinking, well, I guess I should go meet him, get in the ground floor if this guy is gonna take over the world one day.

Plus I'm sure it'll impress Jennifer and she'll forget about her thing for blacksmiths.

By this time, Mary has given birth to Jesus. The Bible really glosses over things like childbirth which would have been hellish on a dirt floor. Then they wrap the baby in linen and set him in a manger.

In pictures there's a bunch of straw and we're supposed to think "aww how soft." But have you ever actually laid in straw? It's very poky. Personally, I would not lay a baby in straw, I would pick something much softer. Even dirt would have been preferable to straw.

So, the shepherd shows up with his flock and Mary's like "oh just what I needed, more dirty animals around my baby." But everyone is kneeling and being kind so she's like "yes thank you for coming."

Then out of nowhere, three wise men show up. They've been travelling for weeks because they read in the stars that something pretty amazing was coming up. They bring some solid gifts like gold, frankincense and myrrh. I'm a superficial gal so I'd have been like "yes, gold! Let's upgrade this room asap."

They all hang out there in the garage. And Mary must have been like, "here I thought I was the unluckiest gal in the world and now I'm sitting here with everyone fussing over my baby and a bag of gold."

I'm not religious but I do like this story a lot. Because to me this is how all babies and children should be greeted; not with soldiers, tear gas and fear, but with love, gifts and the expectation that they will do wonderful things for the world.



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Chris Harper breaks new ground as first Indigenous bishop

By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

Chris Harper did not believe he would live to see the day an Indigenous person became Bishop in Saskatchewan. He's now living that reality.

Harper, or officially, The Right Reverend Chris Harper, was consecrated as Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Saskatoon on Nov. 17, becoming the thirteenth Bishop and first Indigenous leader of the Saskatoon Diocese.

His vision as bishop, he said, is appropriate to the city he serves – he's trying to build bridges.

"I'm trying to bring two broken worlds back through a bridge of healing. The church, the Indigenous. The cultural, and the historical," Harper said.

"I want to strive towards reconciliation, towards peace building, towards enrichment and enabling those who may have felt their ministries or churches were not heard."

Harper, from Onion Lake First Nation, grew up living both on and off-reserve across Saskatchewan and Alberta. Despite being tagged "Saint Christopher" by family and friends due to his discipline and commitment to helping those in need, Harper had anything but a direct route to ministry. His work was diverse, including working as a gas jockey, emergency medical technician, and restaurateur before studying theology and entering into the priesthood in 2005.

"I tried everything in life. I think anyone who preaches about sin needs to understand what sin is. I'm a full human being. All the experiences I've gone through led me to this."

He recalled, while in seminary, being profoundly moved while witnessing a smudging in a Catholic church – a harmony between both culture and faith.



The Right Reverend Chris Harper recently became the first Indigenous Anglican Bishop of the Saskatoon Diocese. (Photo by Nathan Raine)

"When I saw that, I cried. I never thought I would live long enough to see that in my lifetime – an Indigenous expression of faith inside a church," he said.

Harper served as Indigenous Native Priest in the Diocese of Toronto before returning to ministry in Saskatoon, where he was elected bishop from a list of six candidates.

During his consecration in November, attended by bishops from across Canada, Harper imbued the ceremony with this same type of harmony, augmenting the ceremony for traditional rites for ordaining a bishop with Cree tradition, including smudging.

"For a lot of bishops, they had never experienced that," said Harper. "This is, in a sense, what I do. I'm shaking up the conventional expectations and thought of what they see as the church and what they see as long-standing historical practice within one

body."

Harper's resounding message in his ministry is one of unity and healing. He said society has become more divided, and he hopes he can help dissolve those divisions.

"Society has become more polarized. We give these labels to try to define ourselves and exclude ourselves or others from the commonalities, the things we share as human beings," he said.

"(As Indigenous), I become an opportunity, or vehicle, of healing for both the church – because the legacy of the church as a participant with residential schools – and a representative of Indigenous people themselves. Both sides, the church and Indigenous people, need to step onto the bridge of healing."

The Anglican Church had officially apologized for their involvement in residen-

tial schools in 1993. The Roman Catholic Church, who seek "ways that can foster the desired process of healing and reconciliation", has yet to issue an apology, to the criticism of many who await that apology. Harper said he does not have the right to speak on what any leadership should do.

"It would be wrong of me to say 'this has to be done.' If anything, the Spirit should speak to us all of what is right," he said.

Harper believes that true reconciliation does not come through monetary gestures, but from understanding.

"Reconciliation is more than an apology, more than words and words alone. Even with the financial settlements that were given, that was not true reconciliation. That's the consumerist way to pay for a wrong done," he said.

"Faith asks you to take something in reconciliation and walk together in peace and healing."

Harper said his goal over the next year, as newly elected Bishop, is to visit and make connections with all the churches in the diocese. He said his challenge as a bishop is striving to walk with all people, making the church a welcoming and integral part of the community.

And as the thirteenth bishop, he uses the number to lightheartedly makes a connection to his role as bishop.

"As the thirteenth bishop, I see connections with the (Saskatchewan Roughriders) '13th Man,'" Harper smiled.

"It was once seen as detrimental, but rallied people together. We need to believe in each other. If I can be some sort of change, I pray that I can use that as a symbol so we can walk together, worship together, and serve together. So, we can be one again in the family of God our Creator."

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Art sales will assist youth

By **Andréa Ledding**
For **Eagle Feather News**

Ernie Scoles is known for his generosity in the community and one of his latest collaborations is creating framed Treaty artwork with collaborator Debbie Thomas.

Both of them are donating the proceeds towards charities. Kohkoms and Moshums Against Drugs and Alcohol (KAMADA) was founded by the late Roy Peekeekoot from Ahtahkakoop, and Elder Mary Rose Naytowhow, who is legally blind.

"The drugs issue is a big issue now, especially with the legalization of cannabis," said Thomas.

"Youth are watching the television and believe that the fast lane they see is exactly what happens here, but when they come here, they have a hard time finding jobs. It's not as easy as they think it is and a lot of them resort to drugs. The bar scenes and the fast life ... some will get involved in gangs."

So, Mary Rose and she discussed revisiting the medicine chest, because prescription drugs can be abused, and people get into addictions that way, as well as introduction from peer pressure.

"These drugs that are out there are really deadly, they're not like they used to be 20 years ago. You can't just experiment and expect to get off of them. Once you

take it, you're always going to look for it," said Thomas, adding that weed legalization is making it so that youth are buying it online which can lead to overdoses and creating serious addictions.

"You don't know what's in those online drugs, they're mixed with fentanyl, they're mixed with other things that are legal (but addictive)."

She added kids might say something is Tylenol or antibiotics but it can be laced with cocaine or other products. KAMADA is getting Elders to speak to other Elders as well as youth, dealing with drug and alcohol issues, and creating communities to better accommodate youth and educate towards rebuilding communities, instead of prescribing to mainstream job demands which aren't always the answer.

"Kids going out of their communities just makes them get lost in the system. Elders provide a lot of traditional life skills just through their experiences and stories from generation to generation, which has been impacted by the Residential Schools and 60s Scoop," said Thomas.

"Without an identity it's really hard for the kids to have a strong pride of who they are, where they came from because it's hard for them to talk to people more supportive of what they want to do."

Dysfunction makes it difficult, and we are in a crisis that's not being ap-



Debbie Thomas and Ernie Scoles are selling Treaty Artwork Commissions to raise funds for KAMADA and Friends of the Park, to benefit Indigenous youth. Phone 306-934-2688 to order yours. Donations are also accepted for both charities.

proached where the kids get involved, she explained.

"And they're the ones that are going to be involved tomorrow," said Thomas. "I do a lot of craftwork, that's how I deal with stress ... it's in English and Cree because it's important to our youth, our communities, and even understanding Treaty and what it is."

She added people need to understand the cultural and contemporary aspects of Treaty, so the beaded Eagle is the protector, the medium between us and the upper life; the beaded rivers, grass, trees, and sun are represented as well,

because they are part of the wording of the treaties.

"We do it for a good cause, it's both important to us, Debbie's KAMADA and mine, Friends of the Park, to bring Indigenous youth out there through different programs workshops, film festivals, different aspects of fundraising we do. This is one of them," said Scoles, who is known for his few words combined with endless generosity in donating framing and artwork to good causes and supporting other artists in all genres, while running many charitable projects himself.

Season's Greetings



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GameSense

Shop Vac not an ideal gift for Chistmas, ex says

John L.: Every year at this time, Eagle Feather News relationship correspondent delivers his Christmas Wish List for Men. No one here can remember ever asking him to do this, but here we go again. Dirk, what have you got for us this time?

Dirk: This year I've decided to switch things up and we are going to feature what the ladies want from Santa.

John L.: This should be interesting. But before we begin, did you get everything you had on your list last year?

Dirk: Once again I was disappointed. Nowhere under the tree was my Millennium Falcon drone, and here I spent the two weeks before Christmas being nice. There was humility too, John. So much humility.

John L.: Right. Humility.

Dirk: Yes. Astonishingly humble. Legendary in fact.

John L.: Sure. So, let's get on with your list Mr. Dashing.

Dirk: Well, John, this year I employed a highly scientific process of appealing to the ladies on Facebook for their wish lists. Here are the results.

1. Most women preferred gift certificates for massages at Massage Experts. That was top of the list

2. Others were hoping for gift certificates for pedicures and entertainment

3. No surprise here, others were hoping for gift certificates from Positive Passions. Yes, they have a naughty shop

4. One woman, a lawyer, asked for a gun, John. A gun!

5. Another lady, a non-lawyer but with martial arts skills, was looking for a sword.

6. Still another non-lady lawyer but martial artist

wanted a knife that would work with her hands. Presumably, some knives work whilst others are not slicy enough. Failing that, she'll settle for a facial or mani-pedi.

7. One brave fella decided to weigh in on the survey was hoping for a restraining order. He is a lawyer

8. Golf memberships, at the Dakota Dunes of course.

9. Gift certificates for this joint called Sephora.

10. Oddly enough, there was a request for an AC/DC playlist to go with one woman's walking pants. Didn't know pants could walk, John, but I'm not hip on all the latest technology.

11. One woman asked for a book. Initially I assumed she wanted a phone

book but turns out she is a logophile and she was yearning for a thesaurus. My kind of girl, John.

12. My favorite of course is the Shop Vac. You cannot go wrong with this

one! I kid you not, one lucky lady had a wonderful mate who bought her a Shop Vac for Christmas.

John L.: That's an interesting list, Dirk. A Shop Vac?

Dirk: Yes, that was what she said. She did make it clear that the guy who bought her the Shop Vac was now an ex.

John L.: That reminds me, I'd better return something to Canadian Tire.

Dirk: I know, right? If you bought her gift at Parts Source, Home Depot or Canadian Tire, you may want to rethink your strategy.

John L.: This is valuable information, Dirk. Who knows how many disasters you helped us avoid.

Dirk: It's what I do. It's amazing what you can learn when you ask women stuff, like what they like. Who'd of thunk?

John L.: Yes, imagine that.

Dirk: What I find revealing about this

list is where our ladies are, mentally, emotionally, strategically.

John L.: What do you mean?

Dirk: Well, apparently our women want to be pampered, made to feel special, and pretty. No surprise there.

John L.: No surprise there, true enough.

Dirk: But if we disappoint, then guns, swords, knives and restraining orders could be involved, a Shop Vac could be brought in to clean up the mess, and a trip to a remote golf course to dispose of the evidence might be in order.

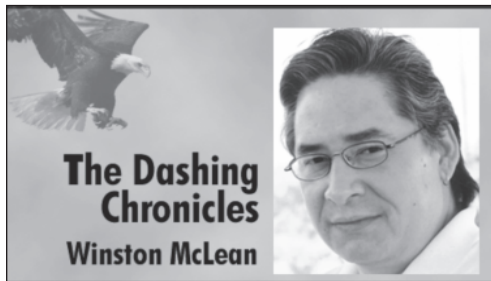
John L.: (chuckles) We'll I'm not sure I would go that far, but I agree we could always do better when buying our women gifts.

Dirk: The thesaurus could be useful with the inevitable police interrogation. I've no idea how AC/DC and walking pants fit in though. But with all the massages, pedicures and perfumes, they'll be feeling and smelling great.

John L.: That's all the time and space we have, Dirk. Thanks for your contribution this month.

Dirk: What I don't get are the walking pants...

Dirk says: How does the Ministry of Highways get the wildlife to cross at those yellow signs?



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After 14 terms, Chief Austin Bear easing into an active retirement

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

Come March of 2019, Chief Austin Bear will be out of a job. And he's looking forward to it.

After a run of 14 consecutive terms as Chief of the Muskoday First Nation, Austin Bear has decided to not run again and he plans to enjoy some time as a civilian.

A ground-breaking leader on land management and addiction services, Chief Bear now intends to turn his attention to an often-neglected part of his life.

"Over the years I have lost a great deal of time to my work and travel. Lost to my wife, my family, children and grandchildren and great grandchildren," said Chief Bear during an interview.

"I look forward to spending more time with my partner. Other than that, I simply want to keep busy."

And busy he will be. First is time spent with his spouse, three children, seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren. And as much as he is retiring, Bear is still on the First Nation Lands Advisory Board Resource Centre and is President of the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation. These two movements are very close to his heart.

"One of the most satisfying things to myself and I think a benefit to First Nations across the country is the Framework on First Nations Land Management. And the number of First Nations from coast to coast that have become signatory to the agreement," said Bear.

"They went through their community process and

their membership ratified their land code and it's now operational. In doing so they eliminated 25 per cent of the Indian Act, so to me that is very satisfying."

Bear and the Muskoday First Nation were leaders in removing their land from the Indian Act through the Land Management Act. Multiple First Nations across the country, including every member Nation of the Saskatchewan Tribal Council, operate under the Agreement. It is estimated that the Agreement has stimulated over \$100 million in investments in these communities and created thousands of jobs nationally.

To explain his long run in politics, Bear turns to his community.

"Knowing my community. Honoring and respecting and working with the elders and my council and it comes down to a matter of how you treat others," added Bear.

"I made every effort to treat the people of Muskoday that I serve with respect, dignity and to do whatever I could possible to help, particularly our elders and those that are needy."

He also adds that increased accountability has helped move things forward. "I think one of the things that changed is that First Nations are concentrated on good governance, accountability and transparency.



Tribal Council Chief Mark Arcand congratulates Muskoday Chief Austin Bear after the Tribal Council honoured Chief Bear for his many years of dedicated service to his people. (Photo by Claire Letendre)

"Not necessarily to the government and the government funders, but more so to their membership and that's where accountability and transparency should first rest."

When asked what a long serving Chief's secret to success is, the advice was easy.

"I would suggest for political hopefuls or newly elected leaders, it is quite simple. Listen to the elders. Listen to your people."

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Reconciliation movement gaining momentum in Sask.

**By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News**

Only a handful of years ago, reconciliation was a burgeoning concept in Canada to revitalize and mend the relationship between Indigenous people and Canadian society.

Now, it is very much a reality, with thousands of individuals and organizations moving developments forward in the spirit of reconciliation.

With 2018 almost in the books, Eagle Feather News is taking a look at some of Saskatchewan's most significant developments in reconciliation over the past year.

"One of our goals, for the past three or four years, has been talking to people about what 'reconciliation' means, and what successful reconciliation looks like," said Rhett Sangster, Director of Reconciliation and Community Partnerships at the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC).

"So, with this in mind we're trying to create a common agenda where everyone can agree on where we're aiming. So, if First Nations, Métis, and non-Indigenous people can all agree on what we want to build as a province, we can all start working together."

One of the headline events in Saskatoon is the Rock your Roots for Reconciliation walk in June, coinciding with National Indigenous Peoples Day. This year's event saw more than 4,000 attendees and over 100 organizations involved.

"There were more individuals and a more diverse crowd than we've ever had," said Gilles Dorval, Director of Aboriginal Relations at the City of Saskatoon.

"It shows the commitment of the community has to reconciliation."

Saskatoon also reinforced their commitment to reconciliation with the naming of Chief Mistawasis Bridge in October – the naming of which was the result of public consultation in the spirit of reconciliation.

"That whole naming process really brought the community together. We say, Graham Construction built the bridge to

join both sides. Naming the bridge built a bridge for people and the community. That's been one of the biggest highlights," said Dorval.



Leaders like Brad Bird of the United Way, Gilles Dorval of the City of Saskatoon and Rhett Sangster from the Office of the Treaty Commissioner are riding the wave of reconciliation efforts across Saskatchewan. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

Other highlights in Saskatoon in 2018 included Orange Shirt Day in September, in which thousands of people honoured residential school survivors. A reconciliation flag raising ceremony took place at City Hall in May, honouring residential school and 60s scoop survivors.

The Wicahitowin Aboriginal Engagement conference in October continues to be a strong voice and opportunity for cultures to learn and work together, assembling over 500 delegates from over 50 organizations.

Yellow Quill First Nation announced an urban reserve in downtown Saskatoon, while Muskeg Lake Cree Nation began development on an urban reserve in the city to be occupied by SIGA. And public art sprang up all over the city, including a Cree language art piece on Broadway, truth and reconciliation mural at St. Paul's Hospital, and bus shelter art project by a Métis community, to name just a few.

While Saskatoon had many public displays of reconciliation, the City also made many strides internally, said Dorval.

"We focused on trying to ensure we're moving the needle internally as well, making some appropriate changes to the systems and processes that we govern," said Dorval.

"We've been trying to develop champions within the organization. Our employees

have really taken this to heart."

The City also worked on initiatives with the Gabriel Dumont Institute, Saskatoon Tribal Council, and Saskatchewan Indige-

"It's exciting to see the growth. We've had other communities contact us and say 'can you help us?' People realize the status quo relationship isn't good for anyone. There's interest on all sides to improve the relationships and improve the understanding of our history. We're starting to take off now," said Sangster.

Reconciliation Regina held their first public event in March, with community members and the City of Regina gathering to discuss how understanding can be achieved. Regina also committed to giving 25 per cent of new streets and 50 per cent of new parks names with Indigenous roots.

In July, the Métis-Nation Saskatchewan signed a framework agreement with the federal government to recognize and implement Métis rights under the Canadian constitution.

"I'm most proud of the momentum we've been able to create this year," said Sangster. "In 2019, I see us continuing the momentum, continuing to grow, and continuing to learn."

In Saskatoon, Dorval said the city will be busy, including plans to partner with the police in education and designing a new rest and educational area by Chief Mistawasis bridge, among many other community initiatives.

"A lot of positive things occurred this year, but it doesn't mean we going to take our foot off the gas," said Dorval.

"We have a big year planned for 2019."

nous Institute of Technologies to work on Indigenous employment, said Dorval.

Developments in reconciliation weren't limited to Saskatoon. The Heart of Treaty 6 is a multi-community, government, and business group who gather to discuss what reconciliation can look like in northwest Saskatchewan. Other municipal and rural groups, including ones in or near Prince Albert, Yellow Quill, and Warman/Martensville have been meeting to educate themselves on treaties and reconciliation, said Sangster.

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Sask Polytech updates Indigenous Strategy

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

The Indigenous Strategy for the Saskatchewan Polytechnic, aimed to create awareness and education on culture and history, was refreshed with amendments and launched this year.

Jason Seright, the Director of Indigenous Strategy with Saskatchewan Polytech said the first Indigenous Strategy was done in 2009 and since then, they have decided it was time to refresh their previous strategy.

"After 10 years, we figured we should do a refreshed (strategy) and we felt that we accomplished something and we needed to change our focus and priorities," he said.

"Prior to the refresh, we'd gone out into the community and internally as well, with our students and staff, and engaged with close to 800 people through face to face conversations and online surveys. We (received) some feedback on our old plan and also things that we can be doing better and things that are working well."

The name of the strategy plan's theme is 'miyo wahkohtowin' which means 'good relations'. It's not just Saskatchewan Polytech having good relations but it's also within the community, their instructors having good relations with their students. Seright and other Sask. Polytech staff worked on the Indigenous strategy for a year and a half and released it this past June. The timeframe for the strategy plan is a five-year plan from 2018-2023.

"It's about cultural awareness training where that wasn't done in the past, it's about educating our instructors, staff and our own leadership more about Indigenous culture and history," said Seright.

"We've seen that our educational institutes in the past haven't done a good job with that, so now we made it mandatory that all of our staff to have cultural awareness training. All of our 150+ programs have Indigenous content."

"Whereas before, our Indigenous culture and history have sort have been absent from a lot of the work that's been done in the educational institute and we're wanting to include it so more people are aware of Indigenous history and culture."

Seright added the lack of knowledge creates some gaps from what people understand and not understand and felt those are some key opportunities for Sask. Polytech being an educational institute to provide that education and training.

The education institute has seen a lot of progress over the last four to five years where they've gone from a 50 per cent to a 60 per cent graduate rate.

"Last year, we saw 791 graduates. We have seen a 30 per cent increase in our students that are self-declared (Indigenous). There were 3,669 Indigenous students compared to 3,280 five years ago," he said.

"We're currently at seven per cent representative workforce. We're doing a good job with data and tracking that, we've seen progress over the last number of years."

Seright said the Indigenous strategy plan wouldn't have been possible without the involvement from the Indigenous community, the institutions president, vice-presidents, the deans, the various leadership groups and the instructors who have been very keen and motivated to refresh the strategy.

The Director of Indigenous Strategy Jason Seright said the refreshed Sask. Polytech's strategy plan is aimed for awareness and education on Indigenous culture and history.

(Photo supplied)

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Let's make this a truly Indigenous Christmas

This Christmas season, when thinking of something meaningful and unique to buy your loved ones, consider the talented, authentic Indigenous artisans and entrepreneurs in your life.

Support Indigenous businesses and get someone something original to rock in the new year. I personally love to shop Indigenous from: She Native, Helen Oro Designs, The NTVS The Originals, SECTION 35, Clan Mother Goods and Apparel, B.Yellowtail, Silver Wolf Trading Post and Native American Apparel.

Those are just some of the many different Indigenous entrepreneurs and artists to support. And why not include books authored by Indigenous writers and scholars. I am so proud to be able to mention so many and think about how many more are coming up and realizing their potential for transforming pain into the most beautiful art.

I am always rocking a choker, beaded earrings or a Tee whether I am in the boardroom or just kicking back with family and friends. This is my way of taking up space in public places and supporting one another.

Support Indigenous entrepreneurs, businesses and artists, support your friends and family and their dreams and goals. This 2019 is a whole new year to shine and bring our beautiful Indigenous culture back to life and within mainstream society.

It is not always easy trying to walk in both worlds. However, I feel pride when I am wearing authentic Indigenous art and showcasing my heritage. Also knowing my money is contributing to local Indigenous artists and businesses instead of big corporations, supporting families and communities who you know appreciate it and need it to continue to flourish.

I dream of a world that represents Indigenous peoples, not just the colonial world. The constant technical advancements and concrete jungles that tend to separate us from each other and the natural world. We must remain connected to the natural laws, the land, the animals, and one another. For a long time, Indigenous peoples have not been reflected in the laws, media or politics that make up Canadian society. It is time to take our rightful place in society, as my dad always says.

Also, you do not just have to be Indigenous to buy and support Indigenous. It is about empowering each other in society and especially those who have been evidently oppressed by the government, including public institutions and this society. In regard to Indigenous injustices and redress-

ing historical wrongs, this is what reconciliation should look like. Empowering Indigenous peoples in all professions.

Cultural appropriation is another issue in society. Ripping off Indigenous cul-

ture is also something people need to be able to recognize. People need to understand and acknowledge the real barriers and struggles Indigenous peoples have been faced

with within society. Especially if you are using Indigenous culture to promote yourself and your business.

For example, the "Spunky Squaw" boutique ran by a Caucasian settler woman from Texas. Her store and sales were online and she was being called out by Indigenous people across North America.

Headdresses are sacred, not simply fashion or a logo and especially wearing a headdress while wearing a shirt that says "fueled by whiskey."

This is derogatory and racist, such misrepresentation continues to fuel negative stereotypes, and normalize the harms and injustices Indigenous peoples face in society. We must stand against ignorant and abusive behavior and be better informed.

It comes down to respect and being respectful to one another and also educating oneself on the realities of this world. Educating the broader community should not only be on Indigenous people's shoulders or at their expense. This should be something everyone is actively taking part in for the better good of the future for all of our children.

Perhaps buying a friend or family member one of these books for Christmas or the New Year or even making it a new year goal.

Here are just a few good book titles in suggestion: Clearing the Plains, Prairie Rising, Indigenous Writes, Black Elk Speaks. Educating oneself and pushing out of comfort zones and is about being able to understand one another in a different light. To continue to evolve and create a more equal and just society for everyone.

It is also about empathy and not sympathy, not feeling sorry or guilty but just a feeling of understanding. Therefore, building better relationships together based on understanding rather than misunderstanding one another.

With that it is exam season and the Holiday Season and times are usually stressful so check in with one another and take care of one another.

Wishing everyone safe and Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year.



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Winners (seated) of the Matriarch Awards gathered for a group photo following a special evening.

Strength of Our Women gala celebration

By Andrea Ledding
For Eagle Feather
News

The third annual Strength of our Women gala celebrated “Indigenous women, the architects of our society” according to Vice-Chief Heather Bear of the Federation of Indigenous Sovereign Nations (FSIN) and co-chair of Saskatchewan First Nations Women’s Commission (SFNWC).

The evening began with the special honouring of Debbie Baptiste, Jade Tootoosis, and Eleanore Sunchild for their hard work, tears, love, compassion, empowerment, and advocacy in the wake of Colten Boushie’s death.

Colten’s mother, Debbie, asked her niece, Jade, to read her notes on her behalf.

“We are very thankful and grateful for all the people who have prayed and supported our family,” she read, listing many supporters.

“Thank you to the community and the people that continue to stand with us.”

Baptiste also congratulated all the women present for their resilience and example.

Special recognition was also given to the founding mothers of the Ocean Man First Nation, who together as a team advocated and negotiated to have appropriated land returned in the 1980’s: the late Chief Laura Big Eagle, late councillor Lucille “Luxy” Big Eagle, Adella Ewack, and Marion Standingready.

Winner of the Arts & Entertainment Award, which included nominee April Moosomin, was Delaine Antoine-Tootoosis.

“Women in our communities are so important. They bring life. Everything

that I learned was from my mom,” said Antoine-Tootoosis afterwards.

All the women who raised me made me so strong, and I’m just honoured.”

The Business Award was won by Shelley Pinacie. Other nominees were Heather Abbey and Alexandra Jarrett.

Freda O’Watch was winner of the Culture & Spirituality Award; nominee Angela Desjarlais.

Nancy Lafleur received the Education Award, with a field of nominees including Lillian Fineblanket, Stella Merasty, and Audrey MacDonald.

Eleanor Hegland received the Environment Award.

Kendra McKay received the Health & Wellness Award; nominee Rebecca Sylvester.

Ntawnis Piapot, nominated with Lori Johnstone-Clark and Emily Henry, received the Law & Justice Award.

Tara Griffith received the Sports Award.

Erica Beaudin received the Leadership & Advocacy Award; nominees included Amanda Sanderson, and Regina Poitras, Margaret Bird, Marcia Bird & Ariel Charles.

Lifetime Achievement nominees were Carrie Marion, and Marlene Buglar who was the recipient. Buglar was recognized for contributions to social work which began over 30 years ago as Executive Director of Kanaweyimik Child and Family Services in the Red Pheasant, Mosquito, Moosomin, Saulteaux, and Sweetgrass First Nations.

Buglar went on to the provincial government,

was the lead negotiator for Jordan’s Principle, and created partnerships between the Ministry and First Nations Child and Family Service agencies.

Moving to national work, she prepared a review and report which was evidence in Human Rights Tribunal hearings to increase funding for First Nations child welfare programs. She has also presented to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Lastly, the honoured matriarchs graced the stage: Peggy Iron, Marie Johnston, Sharon Bear, Angela Fidler, Irene Asapace, Marjorie Waskewitch, Veronica Tobac, Lorraine Standing, and Louisa Isbister.

Proceeds from the event go towards the SFNWC whose stated primary purpose is to assist the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

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Healing journey after residential school is challenging

By Louise Halfe
For Eagle Feather News

The journey toward healing is an on-going process. It is not a one time visit to the therapist and it is not only the piercing of the skin at the Sundance, or participation in the sweat lodges.

We can sing, dance and talk all we want but the problematic behaviors we have learned will not change unless we do something about them. Certainly, singing, dancing and participating in our ceremonies are necessary and great contributors to our well-being. They should not be dismissed.

The late JP Cardinal would announce to us that ceremony is our psychology. Healing ceremony is a daily activity. Healing work requires daily vigilance and engagement.

Many of us have been taught don't talk, don't trust, don't feel and don't think. This is not only in residential school but in other circumstances as well. It is up to us to break those rules.

We must learn to accept responsibility, make choices and accept the consequences. In other words, we must learn to "trust our process."

This is frightening. I used to have what is called the sabotage syndrome. I was afraid of being judged, shamed and abandoned.

So, I acted out in my relationship to see if all three would occur. Lack of confidence, poor self-esteem, insecurity and jealousy were my mistresses. I'd look for ways to prove that I was unlovable.

I'd blame my partner for causing me to

act out. Trust was a huge issue. I needed to feel "safe" in any relationship I endeavored to have. I also wanted to belong ... to someone, to family and to a community.

These were robbed when residential school was imposed on my parents, my siblings and myself. To make matters worse I internalized the racism implemented by that system. I felt my presence was unimportant.

For the longest time I felt I had no talent and no abilities. I was so afraid to be a failure. I didn't know how to go about making change. I didn't know what resources were available to help me.

Frankly, I didn't know how to ask for help.

What was my motivation to change? I met my husband and we had a baby. I badly wanted to have a successful relationship and I didn't want my children to inherit the scars that I carried.

Seeking and asking for help is the first act of humility. It takes courage to take that risk.

"Without courage, we cannot tell our story."1

Healing is full of mistakes. For every 20 steps forward we take ten steps back. I certainly wondered when this would occur. I wondered when in heaven's name would I begin to heal and improve my behaviors. The weight of shame, fear of abandonment, fear of being judged and ridiculed, being humiliated, along with guilt and anger are all aspects of our wounding.

These aspects are in fact wise teachers.

For example, shame teaches silence and

alienates you from others. Guilt teaches that you've done something wrong and it wants change.

Anger is a motivator, it wants consciousness and wants you to examine where the deep hurt is coming from. It too wants change.

We are governed by fear. These emotions will act out, control us, lead us astray, trigger us, order us around and attempt to destroy those very people we profess to love.

One needs to honor and embrace these shadows before one can move forward. We cannot deny them. They need to share the story of their origin.

They urge us to move toward consciousness. They want transformation.

We need the skills of our ancestors and the animals to make sense of our world. The seven

Grandmothers and grandfathers that reside in us need to wake up, get up and walk. These are love, wisdom, truth, honesty, respect, courage and humility.

Instead of looking outward we need to develop the sight of the Eagle for penetrating self-examination. This takes a tremendous amount of risk taking and courage.

We need the sunrise to illuminate our understanding that pimatiswin is borrowed time. The Thunder Beings teach us voice. Voice is needed for song, prayer and story sharing.

We have to break our silence.

The water reminds us how we swam through the deep channels of our mothers



where innocence began.

I once heard an elder say the word "mother" is often the last word on our dying breath. We need to "mother ourselves."

The lightning is our spiritual energy, it is the way forward. We need the Grandfather/mother Rock, the Mountain to remind us we have a backbone, we have strength and in our stillness we can learn to listen.

The wind contains the breath of ancestors, our loved ones that predeceased us and every living thing that ever existed on earth.

The wind is spirit and soul. Therefore, we need to honor our breath.

This is part 1 of a 2-part series by Louise Halfe on Healing.

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Christmas classic touring the province

**By Andr a Ledding
For Eagle Feather News**

Gordon Tootosis N k n win Theatre (GTNT) is presenting another Rez Christmas show, "Alone @ Home" by Curtis Peeteetuce, featuring everyone's favourite Kohkoms.

"It's wonderful to have our own holiday tradition, reflecting stories from the community that share important messages about family and friendship during the holiday season," said Peeteetuce.

"Christmas was always magical and exciting as a child. Then you lose that growing up, as if something is missing. The kohkoms of Kiwetinohk have a way of bringing humour and heart."

First-time director and longtime stage manager Aaron Shingoose said he hopes audiences walk away with a sense of warmth and appreciation for their own loved ones, the focus of the holidays.

"It's certainly an eye-opening experience on the other side of production value, pulling everything together," said Shingoose, who began as an actor/2007 graduate of GTNT's COV (Circle of Voices).

"Just the heart of this story, there's a lot of touching moments in it; the sense of community and kinship that really comes with these Kohkoms and these characters' stories."

Part of the comedy is the cross-

dressing. The Kohkoms are played by males, while this year the male roles are mainly played by Krystle Pederson.

"I think this is my ninth production, I did this one back in 2004 and played Sihkos," said Pederson.

"Getting to play Roger and different characters ... there's been this struggle between guys trying to be girls and girls trying to be guys — trying to sink into the "man" of who my characters are."

It was Danny Knight's first time being a Kohkom, and he said it was both fun and hard work.

"There's a lot of unexpected things that go along with being a Kohkom that you're not ready for, and it's not even being a real Kohkom it's being a pretend Kohkom," laughed Knight.

"A good tip is learning how to keep your knees together, to live in your hips. Tapping into the right kind of sensual that Clare is — sensual, not sexual — that's been fun and tough."

He doesn't mind dressing up as a woman on-stage and looks great doing it, noting that Iggy Pop said dressing up as a woman isn't shameful because women's clothing isn't shameful.

"I'm playing Sihkos this year, who gets left behind when Clare and Zula go off to do some shopping, and while Sihkos is home she reflects on her late husband and the grieving process.



Featuring three Kiwetinohk Christmas Kohkoms in a Rez riff on the film Home Alone. Front: Dalton Lightfoot as Zula, Danny Knight as Clare Bear,

Cory Dallas-Standing as Sihkos, and Back: Krystle Pederson as Roger and other characters.

"Then some robbers show up and as the no-nonsense Kohkom, she's going to put those robbers in their place. That's where all the comedy comes in," said Cory Dallas-Standing.

"This is my fourth year doing the Christmas show," said Dalton Lightfoot, who played Zula.

"It's really bringing the community together, there are a lot of hardships that go on around Christmas time. It's just a way to bring release to communities that otherwise wouldn't get to see a Christmas show. We go on tour and see the communities where a show wouldn't otherwise be accessible to them."

Alone @ Home opens in La Ronge's Kihkinahk Centre 7 p.m. Dec. 1 before a Saskatoon 8 p.m. run at the Broadway Theatre Dec.4-8.

The tour then hits Beatty's 11:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 11, Saulteaux 1:30 and 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 12, Whitecap Thursday Dec. 13 at 6 p.m., and closes at North Battleford's Gold Eagle Casino at 1:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 14.

"I'm so filled with happiness knowing these stories bring joy at Christmas time," said Peeteetuce.

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The staff of 60 at the Eagle Heart Centre participated in the Christmas decorating contest at the Centre located in Regina's North Central community. The annual contest has been going on for over 10 years. One of the rules is to use recycled decorations. "We decided to keep the Christmas spirit and have a team building activity," said Delora Persian, the Executive Director of the Eagle Heart Centre. "Each of our nine programs participate to decorate." Their board members and invited guests judge the contest and winners will receive a gift card for a fun evening out.



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Long overdue ... Saskatchewan lake being renamed

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

A lake near the town of Unity is being renamed to honour Indigenous women.

Replacing the previous name of Killsquaw Lake, the new name given by area Elders will be known as "Kikiskitotawâwak Iskwêwak Sâkahikan" which is Cree for "We Remember the Women Lake" to respect and honour the lives of the First Nations women who died at the site in the 19th century, according to the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN).

"Our women and children, our language, our lands and ours waters are sacred to First Nations people. That derogatory name only represented the old settler and racially prejudice mentality and language that our First Nations people endured for decades in this province" said FSIN Chief Bobby Cameron in a media release.

"Changing the name of this lake today shows a great respect and step forward towards healing the racial divide in this province, while honouring the First Nations women we've lost, our lands and waters and our Cree language."

This historical announcement wouldn't have happened without the name change nomination submission under The Heritage Property Act from Kellie Wuttunee from the Red Pheasant First Nation which is 70 kms from Unity. With the support of the Battlefords' Agency Tribal Chiefs, Battlefords Tribal Council and Elders committee, nominator and legal counsel for the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation.

"To properly respect and honour Indigenous women, we should no longer have denigrating place names in Saskatchewan or Canada," Wuttunee said.

"The previous name was harmful and undermined the pride and self-esteem of Indigenous people. By changing the name, we are giving a voice to the ones who were silenced. Words are powerful. Names are powerful. They inform our identity.

"With actions like this, we are reminding each other and telling the world that we can learn from our mistakes and move forward together."

The FSIN Executive applauded the efforts of those



From left Chief Sylvia Weenie of Stoney Knoll-Young Chipewyan First Nation, Melissa Wuttunee, River-lily Cree Wuttunee and Kellie Wuttunee celebrated the renaming of Killsquaw Lake. (Photo by Jordon Atcheynum)

involved for successfully petitioning the Government of Saskatchewan to approve the changing of Killsquaw Lake.

"Our women are our warriors and sacred life givers and in a Province that is only beginning to heal, this is a good way to honour those First Nations women who lost their lives and still continue to go missing or end up murdered" said FSIN Vice Chief Heather Bear.

"We are proud of the new name and understand the intent of the original name was to honour a group of Cree women who lost their lives at the lake, however, it's unfortunate that it has taken a century from the time it came

to be to finally reflect First Nations women in less derogatory way."

Parks, Culture and Sport Minister Gene Makowsky also stated the name change is a way of commemorating the lost lives of women in this area from the 19th century and also honours the Indigenous language and culture.

"The names of Saskatchewan's geographic features can truly reflect our shared heritage and leave a lasting legacy for future generations," he said.

The official cultural naming ceremony will take place in the Spring of 2019.

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Nine Indigenous athletes inducted into hall of fame

By NC Raine

For Eagle Feather News

The University of Saskatchewan has honoured Indigenous athletics with the induction of nine athletes into the Sports Hall of Fame.

The nine inductees are: Claude Petit, Jacqueline Lavallee, Bryan Trotter, Jim Neilson, Tony Cote, David Greeyes, Paul Acoose, Alexander Decoteau, and Fred Sasakamoose, who was the first Indigenous hockey player in the NHL.

In honour of these athletes, the U of S partnered with the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame and unveiled a new display in their Physical Activity Complex (PAC). The display includes artifacts from the nine athletes, including jerseys, trophies, photographs, and sports equipment.

The U of S has also unveiled a new interactive electronic kiosk, with information about each athlete. The kiosk will be regularly updated with information on other Indigenous athletes.

"When we have young kids or even students and community members coming into the building here on the university campus and seeing this display, they're going to be inspired," said Chad London, Dean of College of Kinesiology.

"We have over 250,000 visitors into the PAC every year, who come in to use our (facilities) and when they see these displays, that to me is the most meaningful part. They'll be inspired to say 'I can do it too.'"

The recognition and celebration of Indigenous athletics results from the U of S's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Call to Action 87, which reads: "We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history."

"This is a direct response to that call," said London. "To make sure that these amazing athletes' careers are featured as prominently as they deserve to be."

Peter Stoicheff, President of the U of S, said reconciliation is foundational to everything done at the university, and these stories of athletic success are important now and to future generations.

"In showcasing them deliberately now will, I hope, engender pride in Indigenous youth and all Canadians. We must tell these stories," said Stoicheff.

"Because of the experience they have had here in athletics, they have learned how to learn, how to lose, they have learned teamwork, discipline, how to recover from a loss and get better. All of these are skills that are transferable to the rest of their lives after they leave their sports life."

Eugene Arcand, member of the TRC, said that while this induction highlights the success of Indigenous athletes, it also highlights some challenges both past and present.

"I've come to find that every community has a hero. People that stood up in sport. That really makes me proud, but it also makes me question why they're not in the hall of fame? Was it because of segregation? Poverty? Of other variables



Fred Sasakamoose, Jacqueline Lavallee, Claude Petit, and family stand in front of new Indigenous athletics display at the PAC at the University of Saskatchewan.

that are systemic?

"Is it a class of colonial thinking versus Indigenous teaching?" said Arcand.

"As much as I applaud what we're doing, there's also a requirement for us to understand what the Calls to Action say as they relate to sport."



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Piysew Awasis volleyballers from Thunderchild unbeatable this year

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

A dream season for the Piysew Awasis Thunder Volleyball team from Thunderchild First Nation just got even better.

The team achieved an undefeated season record in league play, entry into three Saskatchewan high school tournaments, exhibition games versus 2A – 3A – 4A and 5A high school teams, Provincial Conference and Regional Tournaments and through the Provincial 1A tournament held at Middle Lake which they won to claim the provincial title.

“It was super exciting, it was one of the best feelings ever,” said team member Ryzen Walkingbear.

“Winning one of the biggest titles around was a surreal feeling.”

The team of 10 will be saying farewell to two of their players, Walkingbear and his brother Askiy, who have signed with Olds College in Alberta.

Walkingbear lives and breathes volleyball and has played the sport since he was three years. Today, he continues to train at volleyball twice a week. He was also named the U17 Male Athlete of the Year in the province by Sask. Volleyball. In his final year of high school, Walkingbear will continue playing the sport while

studying sports management at Olds College. It’s a path in which he is following the footsteps of one of his older brothers, Savana Walkingbear.

“My brother told me ‘if you have a balance between education and sports, volleyball can take you far’,” he said.

Coach Winston Walkingbear is also the trainer of the Piysew Awasis Thunder Volleyball team and has been involved with the team since last year when they were in the U16 category. He said the team’s focus is to stay in school and to follow the concept of ‘warriors’ based on team unity and family support.

Earlier this year, their team won a prestigious tournament called the U of S Huskies Volleyball Interprovincial tournament.

“It was a first time that an Indigenous team won that,” he said. “That really built a momentum going into our high school season. Right to the finals, we went undefeated.”

Coach Walkingbear trains his players year-round. He also takes the boys out on the land along with elders which is part of the experience to get them connecting back with the land.

“There’s a whole process of preparation that we do with them. But it’s also



(L to R front row): Dominic Campbell- Jimmy; Jasper Standingwater (Front) Askiy Walkingbear; Coach Skylar Walkingbear; Mark Lewis; Ryzen River Walkingbear; Storm Wapass; Wind Wapass; Cory Thunderchild; Magic Wapass; Tristin McKay; Coach Winston Walkingbear and Little Princess mascot – Ariyia Walkingbear.

(Photo supplied)

physical training; out in the big chunk of land,” he said.

“The journey began out on the natural land in preparation of the astonishing and successful season and striving to stay

in school.”

The Piysew Awasis Thunder Volleyball team is preparing for the FSIN Volleyball championship tournament in December.

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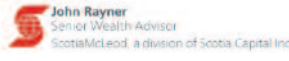
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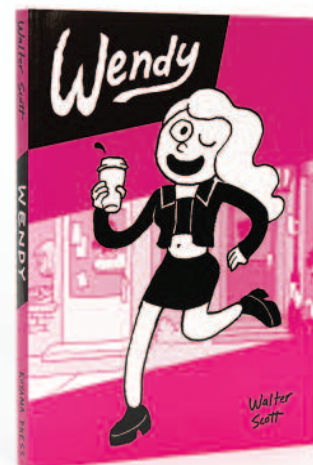
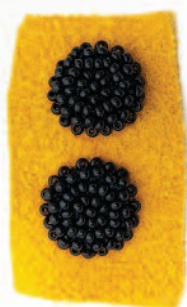


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