

Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

FNUniv princess overcomes grief

Kaleigh Starblanket smiled as she walked in her first grand entry as FNUniv Princess.

(Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)



By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

Kaleigh Starblanket from the Star Blanket Cree Nation was crowned princess at this year's First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv) annual powwow celebration in Regina.

Starblanket, 20, is a second-year university student studying business administration at FNUniv. When she heard her name being called as this year's FNUniv Princess, she was in shock as she didn't expect to win the title.

"I'm really happy and excited for the new year. I'm excited to travel and meet new people," she said.

"Ultimately, I thought it would be a good challenge for myself as I have the fear of talking because I was ashamed of my voice and my speech impediment.

"I wanted to run because I thought it was important for my family. My grandparents that passed on, they were all-natural leaders and I felt it was important to fill my role."

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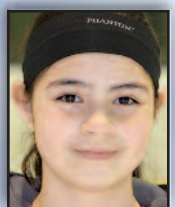
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Sports, Youth & Mining Edition

Coming In June - National Indigenous Peoples Day Issue

CPMA #40027204

Inspired to continue to fight the good fight for justice

I have been able to be a part of some phenomenal opportunities and experiences these past couple of months.

At the beginning of March, I went to Halifax to the University of Dalhousie Schulich School of Law and territory of the Mi'kmaq to represent my school at the Kawaskimhon Moot. Kawaskimohn is Cree for, speaking with knowledge.

A moot is a mock trial or debate about a hypothetical question, however, this moot was not a hypothetical question. The question we were given was about how to hold Canada accountable for the ongoing discrimination of Indigenous children in the child welfare system and what does long-term reform look like.

Of course, it was still hypothetical in the sense we were not actually taking legal action. Law schools gathered from across the country to sit at negotiation tables and try to collaborate our ideas with a concept that would be presented Dr. Cindy Blackstock.

Dr. Blackstock has dedicated her life to addressing and ending the ongoing discrimination of Indigenous children in the child welfare system.

Dr. Blackstock and the AFN filed a human rights complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission. On Jan. 26, 2016 the decision of the Tribunal found that the Department of Indigenous Services Canada's design, management and control of child welfare services on reserve, along with its funding formulas, has caused harms to First Nations children and families

that amount to discrimination.

The lack of commitment by Canada to make real reform even after the decision was why we were all working on what real reform would look like and how to hold Canada to its obligations. It is a massive topic that affects Indigenous children, families, and communities every day.

In April, after I finished my finals and my second year of law school, I was invited to go to the United Nations for the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. There, I was witness to Indigenous peoples from all over the world addressing ongoing issues and human rights violations within their own communities.

When it came time for FSIN to have the floor, Chief Taypotat of Kahkewistahaw First Nation spoke to the ongoing discrimination of Indigenous children and the implications this has on Indigenous peoples and communities. The goal was to have support from an international level to pressure Canada to abide their own laws and obligations.

In Canada they have introduced new Indigenous Child Welfare legislation, unfortunately a legislation that does not address the roots of these issues. When I had the honour to sit with Dr. Blackstock at the negotiation table in Halifax, she disapproved of the legislation and was hoping we would have some ideas that could be shared to fix the gaps the legislation was missing,

especially in areas of funding.

What is it exactly that the children need to grow up in healthy homes with their identity intact after years of colonization and attempted forced assimilation and genocide?

At the United Nations I had the opportunity to meet many people, one of those being Nathan Phillips. We had a conversation about how Native American children are fac-

ing the same barriers and discrimination in America.

I got to hear many Nations speak and so many of our Indigenous peoples internationally are facing similar issues, such as high suicide rates and ongoing battle to protect traditional territories.

May 10 is a day dedicated to bringing awareness to the implementation of Jordan's Principle through posting pictures with a teddy bear. This day in 2016 was the first of many non-compliance orders for Canada to fully implement Jordan's Principle. It's also Spirit Bear's birthday who was gifted to Dr. Blackstock by the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council just before the hearings started.

Dr. Blackstock brought Spirit Bear to all the tribunal hearings so he could 'bear witness' to the stories of Indigenous children who have been impacted by poor access to health services.

Dr. Blackstock stated, "I thought we need something in the hearing room to remind us all who this is about, it's about real children and their families."

Jordan's Principle is a child first principle and legal rule names in honour of Jordan River Anderson. Jordan passed in 2005 in a Winnipeg hospital, while the federal and provincial governments argued over jurisdiction and who would pay for his care.

The principle now provides that the government department of first contact pays for the service and can seek reimbursement from the other government/department after the child has received the service. It is meant to prevent Indigenous children from being denied essential public services.

The timely matter of a jurisdictional dispute can mean life or death for an Indigenous child, particularly for those with complex developmental, physical or mental health issues.

I was almost in disbelief after everything I have been through, that this is my life. What a privilege it has been to travel and work with and learn from such passionate, driven leaders. It is not easy working on issues so close to our heart.

All of this has only given me more drive to continue to strive forward and keep fighting the good fight no matter how hard and tiring it might be at times. I think we all need to really think about how we can create positive change for the generations to come and how we can all be involved in protecting and promoting healthy lives for our most sacred, our children.



Comment

Alyson Bear

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NDP

Undefeated volleyball team ready to conquer Canada

**By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News**

An undefeated volleyball team from Thunderchild First Nation is heading to the nationals in Toronto.

The Thunderchild Thunder Volleyball U18 boys' team will be competing in this year's Volleyball Canada U18 Nationals.

Team member Storm Wapass, 16, has been playing the sport for over five years and is excited to compete at a higher level.

"I'm looking forward to having fun," he said. "I want to build better bonds and hope that we come out on top."

Wapass and his twin brother, Wind, play volleyball with a passion back at home. Although Wind won't be attending the nationals with him, he will be thinking of his brother on the courts.

Wapass and his team practice three times a week back at home all year round. They started playing at a makeshift outdoor volleyball court almost every day all year round, even in the winter, playing in their boots.

It's a passion and love of the sport that head coach Winston Walkingbear sees in his team.

"We're going to be competing against teams from Vancouver all the way to Halifax and all the cities in be-

tween," said Walkingbear, who has been coaching this team for four years.

"It's going to be interesting and fun."

The Volleyball Canada U18 Nationals take place

\$2,500 to cover their hotel rooms and entry fees at the nationals. They were short on funds and out of nowhere, an anonymous donor donated \$10,000 to get them to the nationals.



The undefeated Thunderchild Thunder volleyball team would practice at a makeshift outdoor volleyball court where they would play passionately almost everyday, even in the winter wearing their boots.

(Photo by Dennis Okanee)

on May 9-12 in Toronto where over 60 teams will be competing. The Thunderchild Thunder team fundraised over \$14,000 for fees, travel and hotels for seven major tournaments. The Thunderchild Thunder fundraised

"He's also a role model for our young team here," said Walkingbear.

"He did very well in a league he played with. He's here to support them."

"That was pretty amazing," he said. "Very thankful for that kind of opportunity. I never met this person and we're very thankful."

There are nine team members from the Thunderchild First Nations and three other members are from Glaslyn and Cutknife area all age ranges from 16 to 18.

Walkingbear said the Thunderchild Thunder team is probably the only Indigenous men's team to compete in this tournament.

"It's quite an honour for us to be representing Indigenous youth," he said.

Walkingbear's son, Thundersky, who had won athlete and rookie of the year in volleyball, is assisting his father in coaching the Thunderchild Thunder volleyball team in Toronto.



Stacy Sutherland
Muskeg Lake Cree Nation
Treaty 6, Saskatchewan



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Miners are gold ... and potash

I have been around mining my whole life.

Dad worked at one and I have spent the better part of the last 15 years doing Indigenous awareness seminars with my buddy Winston McLean working with mining companies, potash and uranium. Collectively we have been on over a dozen mine sites across the province and underground in a few of them.

Seeing that it is Mining Week later in May, it is a good time to share some observances of mining experiences from a travelled and wise consultant.

Nutrien's Rocanville mine and Oranos Cluff Lake mine site are over 1,200 kilometers apart. Do not drive it.

Uranium mines are damp. Damp and have water dripping in places. And not that warm. And they drill up into the roof. And these are all camp jobs.

I only spent three nights each time I went up for training, but in those three days I gained pounds. The food they supply was really good and very plentiful. There was no hunger in that camp. To counter that they had excellent gym and workout facilities and a person to motivate you and organize all kinds of activities.

Some camps have boats at the nearby lake you can use to catch a wall-eye. And Texas hold em. Lots of that.

Potash mines are 28 degrees Celsius all the time, bone dry and extremely dusty. The first few times I came up from underground tours I felt nauseous from all the salt I ingested. This explains the giant thermoses of ice water that each miner takes down the hoist every day.

You can lick potash. Uranium not so much.

Riding in the hoist is the only unsettling part of going for a mine tour. Going a long way down. No view. Dark.

I once saw a Grade 12 student that was taking a tour ask if she could take a piece of potash with her as a me-

mento. The supervisor said sure no problem. On the bus going back to town the girl shook a 20 pound chunk of potash out of the leg of her coveralls. Cripes.

Some people think doing seminars for miners would be tough because of the stereotypes people have of miners. But they are not like 'that' but you get the odd person sometimes, just like every other business we have worked with.

Had a fella acting up at an awareness seminar at a mine. Wondering why we need this seminar and throwing down the usual stereotypical bluster ... and his friend beside him snapped at him and said "We need this seminar because you keep saying crap like that, now shut up and listen."

It was gold.

Also had an older fellow approach us after a seminar and express how mad he was at the education system and gov-



More and more Indigenous people are finding employment in the potash sector. The major mining companies are investing into youth programs and scholarships to ensure the next generation of miners are ready.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)



ernment for keeping him in the dark on our history. He explained that he spent years with built up resentments over nothing. He was truly upset.

Also had one gentleman say that even though the government had a terrible plan and made all this damage, he said he was just as guilty. He votes. He elects these people and he let it happen and he owned that responsibility.

Also had a guy this week, after a seminar, say he was embarrassed to be Canadian. There are lots of allies out there and many of them happen to be miners.

Being around mines has also impressed on me the importance of safety in the workplace. The companies and the employees take it very seriously and that mentality has certainly made me think through projects and actions in my own life much more thoroughly.

These folks are also environmentally responsible. I haven't met one person who worked at the mines that didn't do their best to make sure the work they did and what the company does are to the highest environmental standards. Mistakes happen but they really do care.

We are seeing way more diversity in our classrooms. The number of women, visible minorities and Indigenous people employed has literally changed the face of mining in this province in the last decade.

And all of our associates that hire us to deliver these seminars are truly working to make their organizations better by engaging the Indigenous community and having us participate as employees, consultants and subcontractors just like everyone else in the province. Good jobs.

Lots of opportunity.

We all win and good for business. Just my thoughts.



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Publications Mail Agreement No.: 40027204

OSSN #1492-7497

Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to: EFN Circ., P.O. Box 924 Saskatoon SK S7K 3M4

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Subscriptions: Annual Canadian subscription rate is \$25 per year, \$26.25 with GST. Bulk subscriptions are also available, call our office for details. Subscription requests can be mailed or emailed to our office. Forms are available on our website.

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**This issue printed on: May 8, 2019
Next issue to be printed on: June 5, 2019**

129 ways to get a husband. Really?

It's spring and in spring, a young man's mind turns to outdoor patios and getting drunk with the boys so it's up to the ladies to turn that man's eyes back to romance and running slow-motion through fields of flowers and whatever else happens in tampon commercials. (What's up the white pants, tampon commercials? Your product is good but why you got to tempt fate with those white pants?)

Modern dating is all about awkward exchanges on different phone apps. And it's daunting because you know that each person you are talking to is talking to about 12 different people on three different apps just barely managing to keep their lies straight.

It's a frustrating way to find a partner which is why I think we should harken back to a simpler time when your choices for a boyfriend was the guy next door and the carney drifting through town.

I found an article from 1958 from a ladies magazine. It was titled "129 Ways to Get a Husband" which was the only option for women back in the day since there were few jobs or opportunities for women. So, it was either get hitched or live in a chicken coop behind your brother's house (something one of my aunt's did. Although technically it wasn't a chicken coop when she was living there).

Some of the advice is practical – "be friendly to ugly men." The ladies magazine didn't pull any punches with that piece of advice; not "less-than-



handsome" or "pleasing-to-his-mom", just straight out of the gate – ugly.

You got to kind of admire that bluntness. Tip number three is be friends with "more attractive girls; they may have leftovers."

This definitely works. Beautiful women are magnets and you can be the fridge that they stick to.

I'm not sure the science is right in that metaphor but let's move on.

The next few tips are in the area of what I call strong hints. Like the comment that when "you see a handsome man, take the time to point out that the death rate of single men is twice that of married men."

Saying stuff like that will give your crush the message, "Marry me or you will die."

However, I would like to point out that in studies of happiness, married men rate high in happiness – the only people who rate higher are single women. Go figure.

There are a series of tips on how to get a man to notice you: "Stumble into rooms that he's in."

Why? So he thinks you're always day-drunk? I guess that's sort of attractive to co-dependent men.

"Wear a band aid. People always ask what happened."

That is true. They do ask and then they wonder why you are prone to injury and then they wonder if it's because you're always day-drunk.

"Don't tell him about your allergies."

That's some great advice right there. Let him find out about that peanut allergy by surprise. Surprise I'm going into respiratory distress!

Here's a doozy: "Accidentally have your purse fly open, scattering its contents all over the street."

I wouldn't bother with this. I do this once a week and I haven't met anyone but I have lost a lot of toonies.

Now for those really tough cases when you've just got to have this man. There is one super special recommendation that I would file under, "Desperate enough that it just might work."

The advice is to "stand in a corner and cry softly at a party."

Chances are good that he'll come over to find out what's wrong. I mean how could he not? Who doesn't want to spent an entire party with the girl sobbing in the corner?

As you can see from the tips, dating has always been a crap show. And we should all take comfort in that.

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Exchange inspires students

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

A First Nations school opened its community and hearts to 21 youth from Ontario in a YMCA Youth Exchange Canada Program that promotes cross-cultural awareness and a sense of belonging.

It was a worthwhile experience for all the students and the coordinators involved.

"We want to encourage other First Nations to participate. It's a great way to bridge two completely different world views and break down some barriers and create a respectful dialogue," said Lydia Sunchild, who is a Grade 12 teacher and the YMCA group leader.

The Piyeshiw Awasis School, from Thunderchild First Nation, welcomed

their visitors from James Cardinal McGuigan school in Toronto from April 28 to May 4. This program is open to Canadian youth aged 12 to 17 and travel costs are funded by the Government of Canada through Exchanges Canada.

Asana Khudabaksh, one of the exchange students from Toronto, got involved in the YMCA Youth Travel Exchange through her brother in an Aboriginal Studies class.

"I was really interested in it so I decided to take it up," said Khudabaksh. "I was excited to make friends and I was happy to fulfill that. I'm keeping in touch with them through social media."

"We got to exchange more than our cultures, values and beliefs but also our experiences."

The Thunderchild and exchange



The farewell photo between the students from Thunderchild and Toronto before departing ways during the final day of the YMCA Youth Travel Exchange.

(Photo supplied)

students participated in a full week of events that created awareness about the culture, traditions and customs of the Indigenous community located 99 km north of North Battleford.

"We had a little bit of everything planned from Thunderchild world view and tipi presentations, powwow demonstration, sweat ceremony, history and land-based demonstrations," said Lydia Sunchild.

"We went to the Chief Poundmaker museum and historic site. We also went to take them to a movie to socialize. (We) ended with a round dance."

Sunchild said when the exchange students were leaving the night of the round dance back to Toronto, a lot of the kids were in tears crying for their new-found friends. This experience had changed so many lives that were involved including a Grade 10 Thunderchild student who wants to attend university in Toronto knowing she has new

friends that way.

"I learned to be open-minded," said Wanda Smallchild, 15. "I plan to go to the University of Toronto and take law. This travel exchange is a great program. It builds friendships and character in people."

Smallchild hopes to gain more friendships when they arrive in Toronto in a few weeks time for the Youth Travel Exchange.

"Smallchild's goal wasn't always Toronto but she will be there in two years and she will have friends out there," said Sunchild.

The Thunderchild exchange students will be arriving to Toronto on May 19 for a week where they will get to experience the multi-cultures of Toronto.

"We will be (taking) them to the Air Canada Centre and we will also be watching a Blue Jays game," said Khudabaksh, who is excited to be the host for the YMCA Youth Travel Exchange.



Students from Toronto were given an opportunity to experience Indigenous culture during their week in Thunderchild First Nation.

(Photo supplied)

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Wanda Wilson, President of the Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre says the repatriation conference was well received. (Photo by Andrea Ledding)

SICC hosts gathering to discuss return of valuable cultural and sacred items

By Andréa Ledding
For Eagle Feather News

Celebrating Indigenous heritage and culture with a focus on preserving and protecting sacred objects and remains, the first e-miciminayakik gathering was recently hosted by the Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre (SICC).

"From the feedback, participants said this was long overdue," said Wanda Wilson, president of SICC.

"The on-going theft of our cultural and sacred items needs to be countered with ongoing education and action."

Each day began with a pipe ceremony and ended with prayer; in between were various keynotes and workshops focused on Indigenous intellectual property; repatriation of remains and of cultural and sacred objects which have been appropriated by museums and other colonial institutions; care, conservation, and preservation of various objects; finding language and cultural knowledge in archives; curation, law, rights, and education.

Panel presenter Jodi Simkin, who is Salish from Klahoose First Nation, noted that the countries of France, Germany, and the Netherlands have passed state laws that their museums should return cultural property to the original nations who were dispossessed by colonial practices, which includes all Indigenous materials.

Simkin expects the entire European Union to soon follow suit, passing that into legislation and bringing the ultimate return of many sacred and cultural objects to their First Nations of origin. Her own nation has partnered with other First Nations in British Columbia as well as some major B.C. museums to create an app that can be downloaded and used anywhere in the world to note First Nations artifacts displayed in any museum location.

This allows participating First Nations to monitor the placement of their items via crowdsourcing, and she hopes it not only spreads across B.C. but the entire continent in terms of participating First Nations registered with the app.

"This allows any traveler or museum-goer to be a detective for us in locating our cultural objects," said Simkin. The Salish (Klahoose) people are focused on repatriating their ancestors as well as their cultural items.

Haida presenter and archaeologist Sean Young has already repatriated hundreds of Haida ancestors whose remains were held by various institutions, along with their famed cedar Bentwood boxes and other cultural items which have sometimes proved harder to recover than the bones themselves. They have even built a special mortuary for housing the ancestors' bones before they are reburied, Young explained.

Part of the difficulty in getting cultural objects, items, and deceased ancestors back lies in colonial property laws which tend to ignore the sovereignty of Indigenous law, observed panelist Robin Gray.

"It is important to assert our sovereignty as First Nations over our cultural heritage and intellectual properties," said Gray, who added that Indigenous laws should be treated as precedent for ownership access and control of all cultural heritage.

The gathering drew a few hundred eager participants from archives, museums, institutions, and First Nations across Saskatchewan, with speakers and workshop leaders from across Turtle Island. SICC hopes to make it a regular event, because the need for it is evident by the enthusiastic response, support, and participation.

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Flying Dust First Nation to host athletes from 13 Tribal Councils at July Tony Cote Summer Games

By Kaitlynn Nordal
For Eagle Feather News

The 2019 Tony Cote Summer Games will be hosted by Flying Dust First Nation from July 14 to 19.

With events including archery, track and field, canoeing, golf, softball, tennis, and cross country there are many activities for the athletes aged 10 to 18 from the 13 participating tribal councils to showcase their athletic abilities.

Flying Dust summer games manager Clay Debray said an event like this is important because it not only brings the various communities together, but it is a good way for the youth participating to showcase their talent and culture.

Crystal Longman, the Touchwood Agency Tribal Council sport culture and recreation manager echoed Debray's thoughts.

"It's a good way to do something positive and be active," she said about the event which she estimates will have roughly 4,00 people involved in one way or another.

Tara Griffith, co-coordinator, coach and fitness trainer for Team File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council believes an event like this is significant because it allows goal setting and sense of pride and support, and chance to be social and meet people they might not have otherwise.

Morris Longman, who is this year's canoe coach for the Touchwood Agency Tribal, is more than just a coach.

"My job is suicide prevention and I build self-esteem and self-worth. I empower youth and so canoeing, or any sort of athletics empowers youth," he said.

Although their team has won silver and bronze in the past, he is hopeful they can win gold this year.

"Our community and its members are honoured and grateful to participate in the development and achievement of Saskatchewan's First Nation youth. With the generous contributions from our numerous sponsors, volunteers and partners the community of Flying Dust intends on providing the best available facilities, venues and services to our young athletes as they compete at the games. In many ways there is no greater contribution that we can make than to help Saskatchewan's First Nation youth to strive to be their best through fair and honest competition," said Chief Jeremy Norman in a written statement on the event's website.

"We were fortunate enough to get the bid to host. We're not taking it for granted we want to make sure that we're going to provide great games that are memorable for everybody," Debray said.

This will be the second time in 16 years that Flying Dust First Nation has hosted the event.

The Tony Cote Winter/Summer Games was started in 1974 by Chief Tony Cote and the Council of the Cote First Nation.



"Being far from home for the first time is a little scary and unsettling, but we did ice breakers on the first day and I got to talk to every single person in my class. That helped me make friends so I didn't feel so alone."

EMMA DEWALD
Hometown: Saskatoon, SK
Nation: Métis
Program: Business certificate



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Traditional knowledge has a role in resource development

The issue of non-renewable resource extraction, mining, is so contentious.

One side argues that the North has been economically marginalized, it's poor and our people need jobs. They also argue that resource revenues will help build infrastructure and programs in the communities.

The other side argues that destroying the land for a few jobs is not worth the damage done to the land, water and air, and all living things. That only the companies get rich. They also argue that Indigenous people have a sacred trust to protect the land.

It is all true. Our people do need jobs and we do have a fiduciary responsibility to protect the environment for future generations.

Mining is not new to us. Our people across the Americas had a body of knowledge about life underground. Archeologists tell us that quarrying, the removal of material at the earth's surface, and mining, the excavation of materials from beneath the earth's surface, go back in North America at least 9,000-10,000 years ago.

Mineral resources in Indigenous economies and livelihood existed prior to European contact but there is not much awareness about pre-contact beliefs about minerals, about the relationship between humans and minerals, about how we conduct ourselves, and culturally appropriate mining and use.

What we do know today comes from oral traditions and language, early ethnographic studies conducted among knowledge keepers long since gone, historical written accounts, and archaeology. With the continued expansion of mineral and other non-renewable resource extraction in our territories, interest is growing on how Indigenous Knowledge can help us develop sustainable resource extraction and use practices.

But we need to learn more in order to make decisions that will enhance our current lives and protect future generations.

Many Indigenous peoples shared common pre-contact beliefs about the nature of, and their relationship with, the land, water, air and all living things. Most believe it is our responsibility to act as stewards to protect natural resources.

Mining traditionally occurred within specific social and spiritual settings and was governed by rules and restrictions (who could mine and when), ceremonial purifications and offerings, and sometimes ritual fasting. Purification and ceremonies prepared miners to enter the subterranean world. Mine and quarry locations were frequently guarded by spirits who also needed

to be treated in ritual ways – by asking permission and being thanked for their gifts.

Oscar Dennis is an archaeologist from the Taltan nation. He explains that among his people, obsidian collectors approached obsidian mines from downwind to avoid frightening them and their mining techniques were gentle, governed by protocol.

Among the Dene there are traditional

teachings about uranium and the importance of keeping it in the ground. In many Indigenous nations, rocks are referred to as Grandfathers. Sweat Lodge

rocks sacrifice their lives when they are heated and rapidly cooled, to offer healing and assist the prayers. Much protocol is involved in the gathering of rocks for the lodges.

Red Pipestone (catlinite), is still used across North America for ceremonial pipes. Some peoples believe that pipe stone is the flesh of ancestral peoples killed in an ancient flood, or the blood from bison spilled by feeding thunderbirds.

The most well-known quarry is in Pipestone National Monument. The pipestone is a thin layer sandwiched between what's called Sioux Quartzite, an extremely

hard rock. Quarrying is done with shovel, sledgehammers, pry bars, chisels, wedges, and steel bars.

Quartzite needs to be shattered, and block extracted. When the pipestone layer is finally exposed, it needs to be broken using wedges. An average mining process takes two to six weeks by hand.

The Iroquois and Seneca extracted oil from the ground and used it as a salve, mosquito repellent, purge and tonic. Healers were the first oil drillers in the Americas. They believed that the oil seeps were gifts and sacred sites, and they harvested the oil by hand using a skimming technique.

Conflicts about non-renewable resource extraction come from a long history of colonial resource exploitation that required the displacement and subjugation of Indigenous peoples and the destruction of the natural world. Respect for the earth, conservation and sustainable resource management, equitable distribution of wealth, harmony, balance, and cooperation does not happen in this kind of economy.

But there are alternatives that our people can support. Fisher River Cree Nation in Treaty 5 territory, and other First Nations, are leading the way in energy generation using solar power.

If we are striving to regain our traditional teachings we need to find sources of energy and jobs that do not continue to hurt the people and the land.



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Lacrosse the big game on Standing Buffalo

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

The sport of lacrosse is growing in the community of Standing Buffalo Dakota Nation.

Brandon Yuzicappi, 17, has been playing for the Standing Buffalo Fighting Sioux lacrosse team for almost 11 years and is glad he found something he is good at.

"I really liked it and I fell in love with the game after that. I didn't want to stop," he said. "I like the physicality and the adrenaline of the game."

Yuzicappi practices with his team once a week but on his own time, he trains three times a week in his community along with his friends. When it's not lacrosse season, he's playing volleyball. He said since keeping himself active by participating in sports has helped him kick boredom and to live a healthy and positive lifestyle.

"It keeps me busy and keeps me away from (drugs and alcohol). It doesn't get me into any kind of trouble," he said.

Yuzicappi will be graduating high school next month. He hopes to get into business in university and also continue playing lacrosse on the side.

"I want to keep playing as long as I can," he said. "It's a great game, I hope more people can get into it and play it to see how game-changing it is on how it can make an impact on your life."

The Chief of Standing Buffalo, Rodger Redman, travels around with the different teams from his community to various lacrosse games and tournaments to show his pride and support.

"We have five teams from my community. A lot of our kids love the game and the program and it's doing wonders for our community," he said.

"It brings our communities together and it's a great feeling to see our children out there engaging in this sport."

Chief Redman added they put a lot of money into the lacrosse program in his community.

"We support our kids. We buy them helmets, bags, gloves, sticks and equipment to provide all that to them," he said.

"We see the results with the smiles on the parents' faces. It builds self-confidence for the kids and teaches them to interact within the sport and the spirituality is also key because it's the Creator's game so we really honour that."

He explained why it's called the Creator's game is in reference to the Six Nations Iroquois who were given this traditional First Nations game.

"It's very spiritual and there's a lot of teachings within the game and we're finding that out within our community," he said.

We honour the game and the components. We teach our kids to be respectful and to take pride of where they come from."

Russ Matthews is the Director of the Lacrosse Program at Standing Buffalo Dakota Nation. Over 10 years, he said he has seen over 200 youth come through their program. Right now, they have 75 youth enrolled in the five divisions.

"We're the only First Nation that I'm aware of in Western Canada that has a full slate of lacrosse teams registered under the provincial governing body and under the Canadian Lacrosse Association as well," said Matthews.

"We really broke the ground. We're the first to have a Jr. lacrosse program registered on the prairies."

The teams are mainly composed of Standing Buffalo band members with a few children from other First Nation communities. The youth have been practicing at school in the gym as part of their regular phys-ed program and after school lacrosse practices and camps. Standing Buffalo has been playing lacrosse for 10 years and have won numerous city provincial and international championships.



Brandon Yuzicappi plays forward with the Standing Buffalo Fighting Sioux lacrosse team. He loves to play the sport for the adrenaline of the game.

(Photo submitted)



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Indian Relay Racing runs in Antoine family

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

Indian Relay Racing is a sport that has gained a great deal of interest and involvement over the last two years.

It's a new sport that was introduced to Courage Antoine from Poundmaker Cree Nation to not only enjoy racing but to spend time with his family team.

"I like horses. I've been riding horses all my life," said the 10-year-old.. "My moshum asked if I wanted to race and I said 'sure'.

His Indian relay racing team will start competing this month all summer long. He hopes to win some races, make some friends and to have fun being around his family.

"I am kind of nervous because I haven't ridden yet since last year," he said. "My dad would take me to my moshum's to ride my miniature (horses)."

Father Lyndon Antoine from Poundmaker Cree Nation helps out with his son and his father Vernon when they head out to compete.

"He just started last year with my

dad but it grew on them quite a bit," he said. "He's been riding horses since he was three or four years old. We could have gotten him into it sooner so he could have a better outlook on what the sport is. This year, he will do better now that he understands it more."

Antoine's father Vernon's interest sparked last year. He was on the chuckwagon trial before that so he decided to switch it up to compete in Indian Relay Racing.

"It's kind of a family thing that we all go together and help each other out. It feels good for us to pass on our knowledge of horses to (Courage) to get a horsemanship," said Antoine.

"It's good being around family because it's basically a family sport that involves us all. It's an interesting sport. I've only started watching it and it's interesting to watch especially when you watch people you know doing it."

The Antoine Indian Relay Racing team will be competing at the Kehewin First Nation in Bonnyville on May 17-19 which is the Canadian Indian Relay Racing Association (CIRRA's) season



The Antoine team who have been around the sports of horses their entire lives are excited to start a new season of Indian Relay Racing – a sport that has been gaining national attention for over three years. (Photo submitted)

opener. Competitions take place all over Alberta, Saskatchewan and even as far as the USA.

"We're all excited and we're ready

to go," said CIRRA Vice President Brian Cardinal in a Facebook video post.

CIRRA started in 2017, this is the third year and it's getting bigger."

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Northlands College student engineering a bright future in mining industry

By Kaitlynn Nordal
For Eagle Feather News

Keith Halkett was looking at the bulletin board at Northlands College in La Ronge and saw an ad for The Exploration & Mining Engineering Technician Diploma.

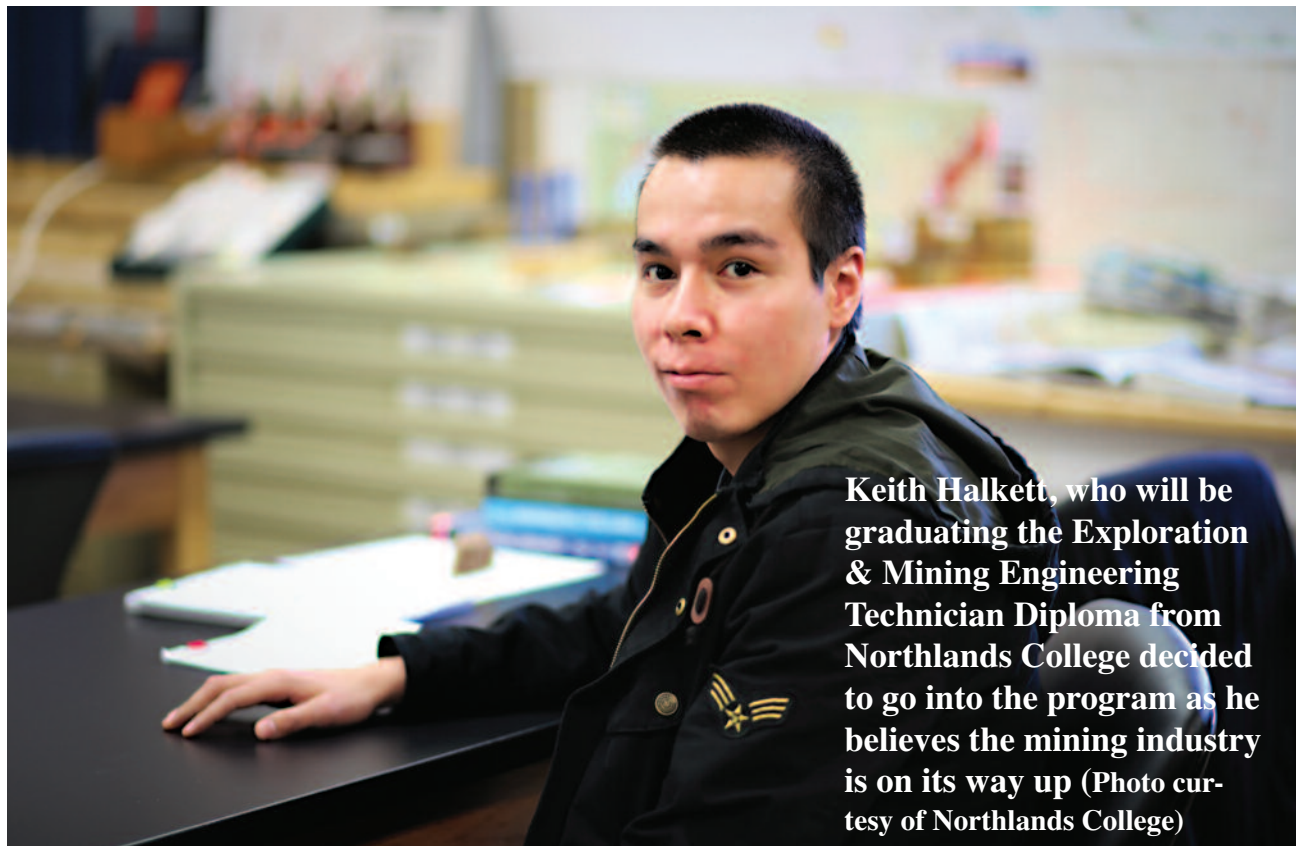
The program prepares you for opportunities in the mining industry. Seeing lots of opportunity in the future for a good career in the North, Halkett applied to get ready to be a geological or mine technician, surveyor, assayer, metallurgical technician or process or mill operators.

Chris Best, who teaches Halkett AutoCAD and Microsoft Office Applications, says his first impression of his new student was that he was pretty quiet.

"It turned out he was an ideal student, dedicated, driven," Best said.

"On the first day of school I always ask my students why they are here. Keith simply said that he was a student and was there to learn."

Halkett, a resident of La Ronge, enjoys his AutoCAD class the most as he likes the hands-on learning of how to design and make things in the engineering



Keith Halkett, who will be graduating the Exploration & Mining Engineering Technician Diploma from Northlands College decided to go into the program as he believes the mining industry is on its way up (Photo courtesy of Northlands College)

side of the program.

"I like how diverse it is," he said when speaking about his course. "It encompasses all the aspects of the mining industry. It's a challenging program. I'd recommend it to anyone that is looking to apply themselves. When I first started out in this program, I did not have a whole lot of school work ethic but now I study every day."

For people who may not already have knowledge of the mining and geological field, Halkett thinks one of the biggest challenges to the course is simply memorizing and trying to remember all the different terms that go into it.

Upon completing their diploma graduates can

complete two more years of study with Athabasca University to earn a Bachelor of Science degree or can go into the Bachelor of Mining Engineering Technology degree program from Queen's University.

After graduating this summer, Halkett hopes to take advantage of this opportunity and get into online courses through Queen's College and upgrade to a full degree in this field and move up in the mining industry.

"I think he has a bright future and a good career ahead of him," Best said.

This summer Halkett will be putting his education to use and working at Gunnar Mine doing reclamation work.

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Diversification key to Northern Saskatchewan's economic future

By Andréa Ledding
For Eagle Feather News

To get a sense of what's going on in the North, we talked to a few good men: Sean Willy, President and CEO of Des Nedhe Development, Greg Poelzer, Professor at the School of Environment and Sustainability at the University of Saskatchewan, and Jonathon Fonos, an entrepreneur born in Big River and raised in the Doré Lake area.

"My dad was a commercial fisherman and trapper so I've been in the bush and a trapper my whole life," explains Fonos, a commercial fisherman who sees northern Saskatchewan being in a very dark time, with the logging industry clear-cutting a lot of boreal forest in his area.

"When I was younger, Northern Saskatchewan was known for trapping and commercial fishing, and it supported a lot of Aboriginal and Métis people. But trappers have had their traplines decimated, the logging has gotten to a point now where it's on such a massive scale. There's upwards of 120 trucks coming out of our dirt road on any given day when the log haul is going on, and zero economic benefit for the people in Northern Saskatchewan."

He notes the loggers are from elsewhere and the companies are based in B.C. and Singapore, while the provincial government isn't even charging stumpage or getting any benefits for locals or the province at all. As well, the logging has ramped up to 12 months a year, so animals get no rest or time to raise their young.

"We have the best fish in the world, the best environment, no pollution, our lakes and rivers are pristine as you can imagine, still, and I think I would like to see it stay that way."

He hopes the government comes and consults northerners in a meaningful way about what kind of future they see and want.

"There should be a public inquiry, it's open season on the forest up here and we're going to absolutely destroy our boreal forest if we don't change. The industrialized logging has gotten unbelievable. No more foresters left in this province, the logging companies' police themselves, and we see a third of what they cut is being wasted and left smashed on the ground and what they put in a pile they'll haul out what they call sellable and burn the rest. We get choked out from smoke every winter from the brush piles they burn, and nobody knows about it."

He notes there are a lot more benefits to a forest than logging, including the amount of oxygen produced in mass quantities for the country and world.

"They plan on logging right up to our community boundaries, right up to 30 metres behind our community hall, and there's nothing we can do about that. Why are we stripping Northern Saskatchewan and what are we getting for it?"

"In Lloydminster, you see beautiful



paved highways and good paying jobs. Here you have nothing. First Nations and Métis still don't have a job, we have nothing, why are we watching them completely destroy our surroundings? We can't even get firewood, there's no forest left for wood, let alone for hunting and trapping."

As far as mining, Willy notes that since the uranium market hasn't recovered from the Japanese earthquakes of 2011, there's still a high inventory of raw uranium on the market.

"We're not holding our breath for the uranium market," says Willy, but he says Northern Saskatchewan has some of the more progressive economic development corporations because it's the birthplace of Indigenous Economic Development.

"We've been around, so we can diversify. The companies that have been created, we're taking what we've learned and working with other Indigenous organizations around the country."

Willy says there is exploration work going on, and there are goldmines by Lac La Ronge, but some northern exploration is still a few years from construction.

"In general, everyone has to be prudent with their business decisions, the uranium is at least three years from coming back, so we need to diversify into new markets. It's taking those Indigenous communities and what we've learned the past 30 years and sharing that with other Indigenous communities that want to get involved, building nation-to-nation partnerships," Willy suggests.

"We're businesses so we have to adjust, we always knew it was a finite resource. Indigenous businesses need to plan for the future in terms of diversification, markets do change."

One example of northern diversification is Des Nedhe's partnership in retail cannabis outlets in Warman, North Battleford and Yorkton.

Poelzer thinks that the climate change announcement federally is going to start creating a shift.

"There are increasing opportunities with smaller scale renewable energy," notes Poelzer. "One of the big opportu-

nities is hydro and biomass energy. Biomass is basically using biomaterials, so

in a boreal forest it's trees, for your fuel stock versus coal or propane."

Because Northern Saskatchewan has no natural gas pipeline, heating costs are high and a power bill can be \$800 a month instead of \$150 a month in the South.

"So, if you had biomass where you had combined heat and power, you can produce heat from it to heat things like schools and other public buildings and produce electricity locally, and employ local people," explains Poelzer.

"If you can produce heat and electricity locally, you don't have to ship in propane or diesel, and then you're employing people, so Lac La Ronge has done some modelling and you could have seven people harvesting trees in a sustainable way fulltime. It's an amazing opportunity if we're bold enough."



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Corporate philanthropy alive and well in Sask.

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

K+S, BHP Billiton, Nutrien, and Mosaic proudly outline some of their favourite corporate philanthropy projects. It's an impressive list.

"From the beginning of the project we've been supportive of First Nation and M  tis events especially in Treaty 4 territory," noted Terry Bird, Manager of Indigenous Affairs at K+S.

"The youth is a big part of our development, along with sport, culture, community and economic development and cultural events."

Some favourite K+S events include powwows and large tournaments bringing communities together, along with First Nations University and University of Regina scholarships particularly in the sciences and math, potentially leading students to mining career opportunities. K+S has put over \$1.5 million into community investment in the seven years they've been operating.

"I think the big one for us is Stars Air Ambulance. We're an annual contributor and have been since 2012," said Kenneth Smith, Manager Corporate Af-

fairs, Potash of BHP Billiton.

"We also make a number of investments with some of our First Nations partners, ranging in everything from local programming to housing. We recently completed a housing project and low-pressure water project with the Day Star First Nation."

Other BHP favourites include the Saskatoon Enchanted Forest Light Tour sponsorship and overall, three major areas — health and wellness and quality of life in communities, education and training, and social inclusion — working to identify and remove any gaps prohibiting groups such as Indigenous people from participating in the economy.

Over the last seven years more than \$20 million has been contributed to the province on various initiatives and Smith said he's looking forward to working with non-profits and community organizations to improve the quality of life for everyone in Saskatchewan.

Lisa Mooney, Global Lead, Sustainably and Stakeholder Relations at Nutrien, notes that Nutrien gave over \$1 million in 2018 alone to programs, services, education, training, research



Ochapowace First Nation and Mosaic dignitaries turn the sod for the Ochapowace Industrial Arts Lab at Kakisiwew School. (Photo supplied)

and advocacy measures to close the gaps Aboriginal people face, especially in education and employment. Nutrien is the title sponsor of many events, including Wicihitowin Conference for the past four years, which and the company has committed to another four years.

"When we're looking for commu-

nity investment, we look for partners who share values and have the same vision of improving quality of life for Aboriginal individuals, families and communities," said Mooney, who says the company also likes focusing on reconciliation not only with their corporation

• **Continued on Page 15**

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Jacelyn Lerat-Nighttraveller, Strategic Inclusion intern at Nutrien holds up a backpack crammed with school supplies for youth in Saskatoon.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

Reconciliation takes heart, heads, hands

• Continued from Page 14

but with their supply chain and the community at large.

“The backpack event and back-to-school carnival at White Buffalo is another example.”

Mooney adds that she’s always been taught reconciliation has to be in the heart, head, and hands, an approach Nutrien believes in.

At Mosaic, Public Affairs Manager Tyler Hopson said his company is committed to giving back to the communities surrounding their operations to the tune of approximately \$5 million annually.

“In 2018 we made a commitment to give 15 per cent of our community investment dollars to Indigenous communities and organizations,” said Hopson,

adding this is an annual commitment they’re proud of. Mosaic core focus areas are food and hunger insecurity issues, water conservation and stewardship, and local community partnerships that strengthen and enrich.

“In 2018, we supported over 35 Indigenous and Métis projects in Saskatchewan.”

Some Mosaic highlights include the Ochapowace Industrial Arts Lab at Kakisew School on-reserve, to open in the fall of 2019, and the Keeseekoose Charter Bus purchase to transport residents to and from the community from student trips, to adults attending workshops, to carpenters for supply purchasing, to social assistance clients for holiday shopping.

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At K+S, we’re building strong, lasting relationships in the communities where we live and work. Through an ongoing commitment to inclusion, respect and representation, we’ll continue to enrich the lives of all people in Saskatchewan for years to come.



K+S Potash Canada

Play communicates Indigenous history in authentic way

By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

Students in Saskatoon are being treated to a special play that explores storytelling and the history of our land through personal narratives.

The played, titled otâcimow (meaning ‘storyteller’), is part of the Saskatoon Public Schools’ annual Indigenous Ensemble, which uses song, dance, storytelling, and traditional arts to educate students and the public about First Nation and Metis culture and history.

This year’s play was written by Mika Lafond, who drew from lessons and stories she received from her grandmother, which Lafond ultimately put into this play.

“I wanted to get across to the students that by listening to stories, you can learn a lot about your history and culture,” Lafond told Eagle Feather News.

“It’s a different kind of experience, when you hear a story. There’s an interaction that happens between the performers and the audience, and I think that’s more related to how our culture worked prior to writing books. I think it’s a more authentic way to hear the stories,” she said.

The Indigenous ensemble will perform otâcimow for both elementary and high school students, approximately 2,000 students in total, over several per-



Students from high schools across Saskatoon perform otâcimow at the Robert Hinitt Castle Theatre at Aden Bowman Collegiate.

formances on April 15 and 16.

Lafond, who previously worked as a high school teacher, is excited to work with students once again and hopes her play helps them understand the connection between place and identity.

“I want the students to understand how everything is connected – the land, ceremonies, dances, and culture – in who we are. I think by including Métis and Indigenous dances, it shows that we’re all related and we all need the land to sur-

vive,” she said.

The play is a true collaboration of high school students across Saskatoon, with students from Aden Bowman, Bedford Road, Centennial, Evan Hardy, Mount Royal, Nutana, Royal West, Tommy Douglas, and Walter Murray participating in the production.

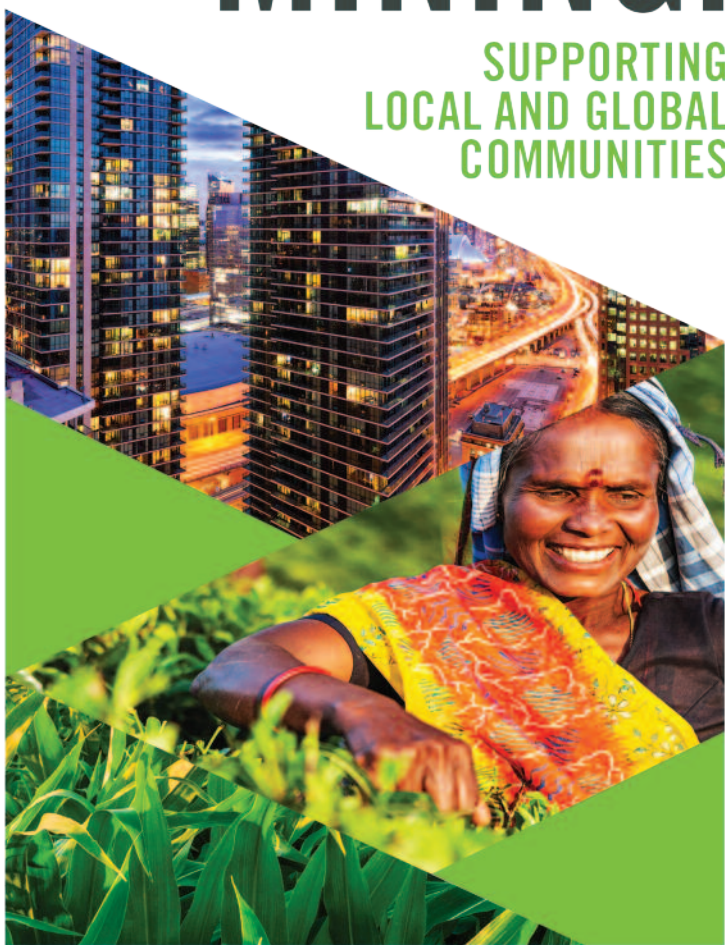
Lafond understands the significance of large public production showcasing Indigenous culture and history.

“There’s a place in the script where it talks about how our stories, ceremonies, and our whole culture was illegal at one time. How it survived was by our leaders holding on to the stories and telling them in secret,” said Lafond.

“Now that it’s not illegal anymore, we’re able to dance on stage to showcase our culture and share these stories.”

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FSIN hockey tourney all about building healthy relationships

**By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News**

While the precise origins of hockey are up for debate, historical writings describe Indigenous North Americans playing a game with sticks and a ball on ice, long before settlers arrived, that could very well have been an early version of shinny or hockey.

Regardless of its origins, from Fred Sasakamoose to Ethan Bear, Saskatchewan's Indigenous people have had a long, rich history with Canada's favourite sport. The FSIN Youth Hockey Championships is ensuring that story continues.

said Morley Watson, FSIN First Vice-Chief.

The FSIN has placed an emphasis on cultivating elite-level hockey players here in Saskatchewan, said Watson, players like NHL prospect Roddy Ross who came up playing in the Youth Hockey Championships.

"If hockey is going to survive and grow in our communities, we have to go where the hockey players are. So, we started this championship over the years," said Watson.

"It's very important in the development of them as hockey players but equally important, the development of

organizers and councillor at Sweetgrass First Nation, as well as a parent of athletes who have participated in the tournament, she understands the pride that comes with representing your First Nation.

"Having little kids being able to take that banner home with them, it brings a child up and nurtures them. No matter how small they are, if they are a good skater or bad skater, they win and lose together. Seeing them smile and cheering them on, it's huge," said Albert.

And research backs up that nurturing effect, as studies from the Canadian Mental Health Association have found that regular physical activity can reduce stress and anxiety, and those who exercise regularly are less likely to abuse drugs or alcohol.

"The tournament is really about respect and discipline. It comes from the coaches, the parents, and even from their own teammates. That's the big take-away," said Albert.

But of course, for the kids, it's about having fun. Christian Umphurville, 15, from Lac La Ronge Indian Band, said he his teammates take the tournament very seriously.

"We want to win it all," said Umphurville. "We look forward to it every year. You have pride in being able to represent your Indian band."

And for other young athletes like Gabrielle Isaac from Ochapowace First Nation, the reward is in the sport itself.

"It brings us all together," she said. "Because even though we lose or win, we still had fun all together."



More than 100 teams competed at the 2019 FSIN Youth Hockey Championship at Jemini Arena in Saskatoon

Comprised of over 110 teams, ages ranging from five to 18 years-old, from all 74 First Nations in the province, the 2019 Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) Youth Hockey Championships is a long-standing tradition that endorses not only athletic excellence, but pride and discipline.

"It promotes team unity, practicing, community pride, because this is the one championship that kids get to play where there are large crowds here, and more importantly, they're representing their own First Nation, so that's a big deal,"

them as academics and good young people."

Many of the coaches and teams in the tournament enforce a code of conduct, said Watson, to ensure young people's commitment to school equals their commitment to hockey.

"We see growth in these kids not only on the ice, but off the ice," he said. "So, it's kind of a win-win situation for us."

Trina Albert has first-hand seen the positive effect the tournament has on its young participants. As one of the event

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U of S wrestlers tough to beat

By Andréa Ledding
For Eagle Feather News

Daniel Olver is proud of the way Métis and other Indigenous youth are standing out in the wrestling world. He is current coach of the Huskies at the University of Saskatchewan.

"I wrestled in elementary and high school, was on a bunch of world teams and was a Husky as well, and eventually found my way into the role as a coach, and it's been quite the journey to say the least," said Olver.

He notes currently there are several Aboriginal kids on the team, Métis, non-status and First Nations.

"We have a bigger presence on campus and it's always good to highlight."

Hunter Lee is a Métis wrestler on the starting team who is headed to Romania, Michigan, and Italy this month, along with his brother on the junior team. Wrestler Cole Sanderson from Prince Albert will be joining the team and was on the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) wrestling team as well.

Olver added that quite a few wrestlers have come from NAIG, including wrestlers Kalin Langford and Riley Icton.

"There's a few other incoming kids that we're hoping to confirm by the end of the month, probably three or four more who have an Aboriginal background. With wrestling it seems to be that we do quite well with having this NAIG participation and excellence, they win or place second. The coach there has done an excellent job with them and as they continue, they get to the university level and we've seen a lot more with the Huskies and it's been great."

Olver also notes there is a great Indigenous community on campus via programs like SUNTEP and ITEP, along with the programming and support from the new Aboriginal Student's Centre.

"They're giving kids the opportunity to have an education but also to be a great student-athlete and that's what I'm seeing on my team," said Olver.

Hunter Lee has been with the Huskies for two years and Team Canada for four.

"I've been to both Italy and Romania before, so I'm looking forward to the competitions and to compete and train with different guys than in Canada. Italy is a ranking tournament for seniors and I'm going to get a lot of good matches in there. Last year in Romania I lost to the bronze and gold winners, but this year I hope to do better," said Lee.

His advice for other athletes? "You've just got to train hard. It doesn't matter what your surroundings are. We didn't have a match or coach, it would just be me and my brother in our backyard practicing. We'd get advice in Saskatoon on technique and go back and have a coach for part of the year in Flin Flon and we'd just keep progressing that way. You can find a lot of excuses to not do well, but just keep training hard and good things will happen."

Lee hopes to win a medal in Junior Worlds and make the Olympic team this December.

"In the Olympics I'm in the top four and we're all pretty close so I hope to win the Olympic Trials in December," said Lee.



Hunter Lee, middle, has been wrestling with the Huskies for two years and for Team Canada for four and has his eyes set on the Olympics.



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Hockey playing twins off to national championships

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

A set of twins from the Ochapowace First Nation do everything together including competing together at this year's National Aboriginal Hockey Championship in the Yukon.

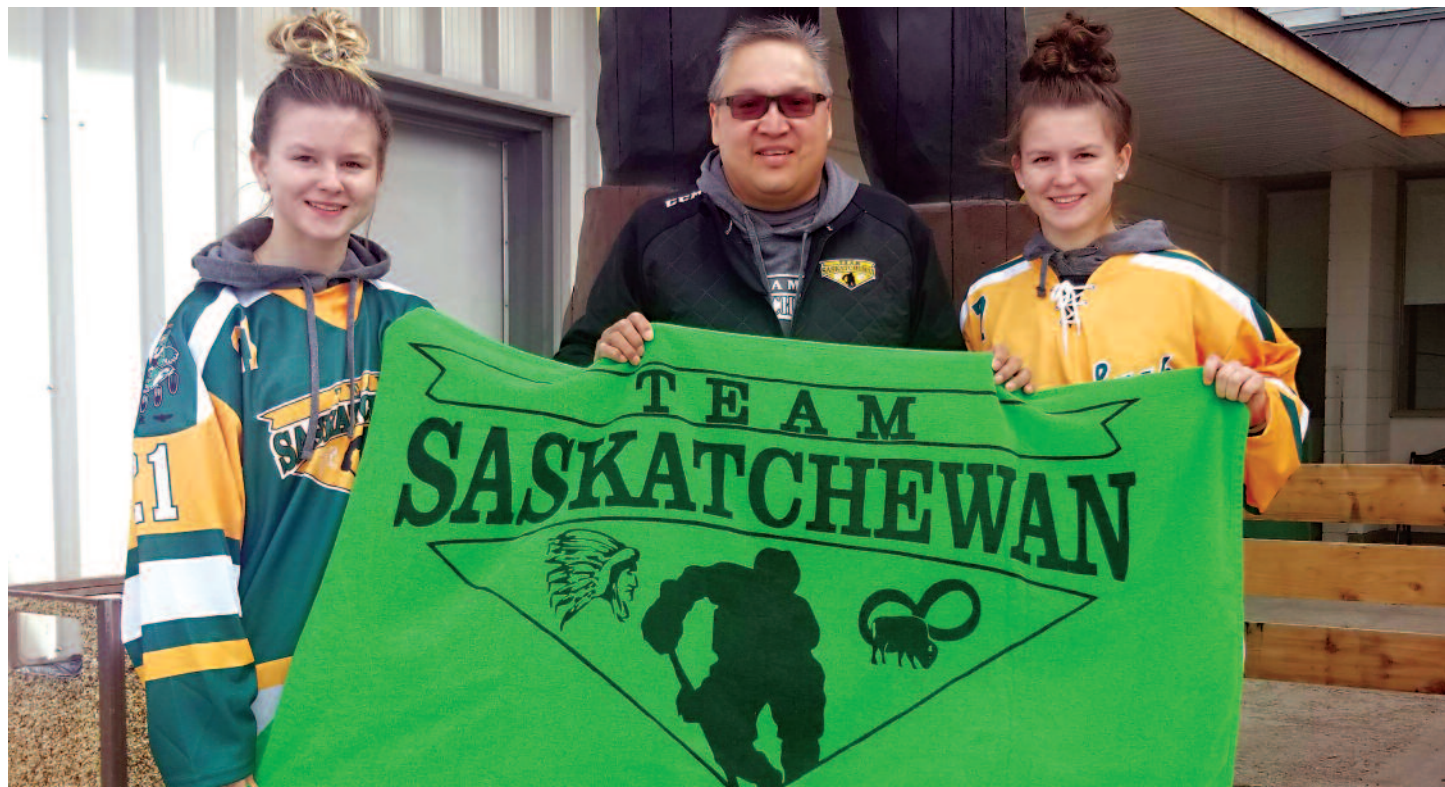
Jordyn and Kyla Bear, 15, have been playing hockey since they were four-years-old.

"My family is a hockey family and they introduced us to it and we fell in love with it," said Jordyn, who plays centre.

*"I like
how close
the girls
get
together
and work
together
as a
team"*
- Kyla Bear

"It's a good feeling playing with my twin on the ice. We've always had that connection."

This was the Bear twin's second time competing in this tournament when it was hosted in Membertou, Nova Scotia last year. It was an exhilarating experience that



Jordyn, FSIN Recreation Coordinator Ken Thomas and Kyla are pumped to go to the National Aboriginal Hockey Championship in Whitehorse, Yukon. (Photo by Glenn Pelletier)

they want to have again.

"I like how close the girls get together and work together as a team," said Kyla, who plays defence for the Melville Prairie Fire.

Jordyn said she gets her inspiration and motivation from her brother, Kirk Bear, who played in the WHL in Prince George. She added they work hard to perfect their craft in this sport by training every week and are on the ice every second day.

Kyla hopes to go to college to play hockey but also hopes to pursue a career as a veterinarian. She looks up to Cote First Nations member, Brigette Lacquette, who played for Team Canada in the Olympics last year.

"She's a family friend and she's the first Aboriginal (female) to play in the Team Canada league and that's inspirational as I want to play in the Team Canada," said Kyla.

The twins are looking forward to meeting new people, have a different experience from the last national games and to win gold.

That's the kind of enthusiasm that Ken Thomas, the FSIN Director of Sports, Culture and Recreation, likes to see when the youth from Saskatchewan attend this annual hockey tournament.

He said this is Team Saskatchewan's 18th year competing in this tournament. There are 21 male hockey players and 23 female hockey players on Team Saskatchewan who will be competing in this year's tournament.

"A lot of (the athletes) continue with their education promoting healthy lifestyles and being role models for their First Nation, Inuit and Metis communities," said Thomas.

"We've had players that come through our system that played in the NHL and went on to go play college or university hockey. It's a program that a lot of scouts come to look at First Nations players that they don't get to see in the season."

The National Aboriginal Hockey Championships take place from May 7-13.

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Oskana Cup all about youthful hockey players

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

Playing hockey was a great way for one young athlete to get out of the house and learn something new.

Thirteen-year-old Elizabeth McNabb, from the Okanese First Nation, and has been playing hockey for the Okanese Thunderstrickers for over five years and plays defense and right wing.

McNabb's stepdad taught her how to skate and introduced the sport to her.

"It's (good) to get out of the house and do something for once," said McNabb, whose favourite hockey player is Evgeni Malkin who plays for the Pittsburgh Penguins.

"It's a cool sport and it's rough. I like playing rough."

Although her team didn't win the Oskana Cup Aboriginal Hockey Championship this year, it was all about gaining a memorable experience and for the love of the game.

"It's OK to lose but just try to win and have fun," she said.

Seventy-two teams travelled from near and far to compete in this year's 14th Annual Oskana Cup Aboriginal Hockey Championships held at Regina's Co-operators Centre. Every year, the tournament tends to grow interest and participation.

Shelley M. Lavallee, president of Oskana Minor Hockey Development Inc., said the goal is always about the youth.

"When we first started the tournament, there was very little youth involvement in tournaments of our Aboriginal people," she said. "(This tournament) is all about the youth. They can meet kids from all over the place. The whole reason why we started this was to give an opportunity to the bantam players so they have an opportunity to be scouted. We've already reached that goal. We do have scouts, they hide out (at the games).

"Those opportunities definitely happen. The tournament has been growing and more competitive every year that it attracts the scouts."

Lavallee said to host this annual event, it costs over \$100,000 and the ice fee alone is \$52,000. The Oskana Cup Aboriginal Youth Hockey Championships took place from May 3 to 5.



Elizabeth McNabb who loves playing the sport of hockey competed in this year's Oskana Cup tournament.
(Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)

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Freddie Sasakamoose and his family played host to the best Indigenous hockey players in Canada.

(Photos by Errol Sutherland)



Quebec entry wins fourth annual Chief Thunderstick championship

**By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News**

Another year of the Fred Sasakamoose “Chief Thunderstick” National Hockey Championship is in the record book.

This well-known hockey tournament continues to gain interest from all corners across Canada.

“Indigenous peoples don’t have a national championship in the sport of hockey,” said Neil Sasakamoose, the lead organizer of the hockey tournament.

“This is the first ever national championship. We’re real fortunate that we’ve been able to attract teams from across Canada.”

This is the fourth year for the popular hockey tournament and each year, they are seeing the participation of teams grow. This year, there were 32 teams from across Canada who competed all weekend. The tournament has grown so big that the Fred Sasakamoose “Chief Thunderstick” National Hockey Championship finals was hosted at the SaskTel centre on Sunday, April 28.

“The SaskTel Centre (was) delighted to host the finals,” said Scott Ford, the executive director of SaskTel Centre.

“It was a great tournament. This is an event that draws really big crowds.”

Fred Sasakamoose expressed great pride in this annual event named in his honour, an event that brings so much interest and attraction for the love of hockey.

“Saskatoon, you have opened a door for us (Indigenous) people,” said Sasakamoose, who was the first Indigenous Cree from the prairies to

play in the NHL.

“To be part of this world and recognized that someday that we could show our colours.”

The Waswanipi Chiefs from Quebec won Fred Sasakamoose “Chief Thunderstick” National Hockey Championship and took home \$25,000.

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Terry McAdam
former Vice President, Finance and
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690 dancers competed in powwow

• Continued from Page One

Starblanket recently lost her grandfather, Noel Starblanket, who was a well-known respected elder and leader. Although she was still in grief, she was encouraged to continue running for the pageant, knowing the spirit of her late grandfather was with her.

“When I did my (acceptance) speech, I kept thinking ‘I’m not going to cry and break down because I’m strong.’ I had my Starblanket family there and I’m really glad I pulled it together,” she said.

“It was really challenging these past couple of weeks to focus on school and prepare for the pageant. It was a hard week for me and my family. I’m overwhelmed with emotion and I still feel the grief. I have my first role as a leader but looking back at my grandparents’ role, I just like I had big shoes to fill. In a way, I’m still coping but I’m also overjoyed.”

Even the Chair of the FNUUniv Powwow Committee had a joyous feeling from seeing another successful year of a good powwow celebration.

“I’ve been noticing a lot of non-Indigenous community wanting to be a part of the powwow,” said Richard Missens, who has been the Chair of the FNUUniv Powwow Committee for 15 years. “I got a call from one of the mosque’s in the Muslim community. We invited them to be a part of our grand entry. I think what’s part of that too is wanting to share and celebrate our Indigenous identity. This year, we had a tremendously diverse audience.”

Missens said there were 20 drum groups that registered, over 690 dancers and 45 vendors which is one of their biggest numbers. This year marked 41 years since the FNUUniv powwow was created.

The 41st annual FNUUniv Powwow was a colourful affair with hundreds of dancers and 20 drum groups performing and competing.

(Photos by Jeanelle Mandes)





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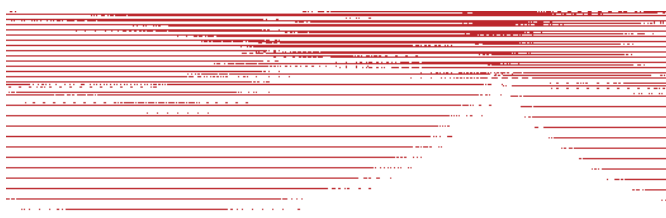
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