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A LIFE-LONG LOVE

From theatre to North of 60 to the community hall, Errol Kinistino has done it all.



By **Betty Ann Adam**
of **Eagle Feather News**

Errol Kinistino had spent decades honing musical performance, acting, theatre craft and behind-the-camera production skills by the time he was discovered for the role of Leon Deela in the long-running television series North of 60.

Kinistino is a member of Ochapowace First Nation and has family ties to Chief Kahkewistahaw, the first signatory to Treaty 4.

He is the second eldest of nine children born to Rosalie (nee Belanger) and Lawrence Kinistino, who sometimes worked in the Alberta sugar beet fields when Errol was in primary school.

He spent a couple short stints at residential school and attended a one-room day school at Ochapowace, before high school.

His parents had been traumatized as children at

residential school and were afraid to teach the children their language, so Errol heard only snippets of Michif and Saulteaux. Whenever his grandfather visited, “he would always be singing” traditional drum songs.

His parents often took the family to Standing Buffalo Dakota First Nation’s annual Sioux powwow, to see dancers and drummers, many of whom traveled from the U.S.

“The power of the drum was enormous,” and the dancers inspired Errol and his sister to make their own regalia. He was eventually initiated into the Grass Dance.

He was already playing the guitar and in the thrall of the drum and dancing by the time he attended high school in Grenfell, where the English teacher, Lillian Mitchell, ran a glee club that opened up a whole new world of music for him.

continued page 2



Leah Dorian

Online Art Showcase

“I know some people really like a flat clean surface, but I think the more bumps and curves and imperfections and texture, the better,” she said.

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April 2021 is our
**Arts &
Culture Issue**

NEXT MONTH:
Sports & Mining



Carol Rose GoldenEagle

Fueling GoldenEagle

“You don’t need permission to be awesome,” she said. “Go ahead, write, and don’t be afraid to be yourself.”

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Reconciliation Ally: Ed Mendez

Hopeful for the future

As a thirteen-year veteran of the Saskatoon arts scene, Mendez knows that his industry has lots to do to move towards reconciliation.

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Kinistino: a life-long love of the arts and performance

continued from page 1 ...

The students learned to sing 16th Century madrigals and Handel's Hallelujah Chorus, along with popular songs, like the theme from the 1970s movie Love Story.

In grade 12 he was admitted to the exclusive Fireside Club, whose advanced members sang the solos.

Kinistino went on to take ballet at the University of Saskatchewan, which further opened his appreciation for the performing arts. He hadn't intended to take dance but had registered too late to get into a drama class.

By chance, a ballet production of the Ecstasy of Rita Joe traveled through Saskatoon that year and he attended, with his deepening understanding of the work and skills of the many people who create such works. Years later, in 1982, he played the role of Jaime Paul in a Winnipeg production with Margo Kane as Rita Joe.

That was years after the summer of 1975, when he attended a six-week acting program with the Association for Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts (ANDPVA) at a farm near Toronto.

Among the program's alumni are Graham Green, Gary Farmer, Tina Keeper and Mark Dieter.

During Kinistino's training, the group created a production, which they staged at Toronto's fabled Bathurst Street Theatre (now the Randolph Theatre). A special guest at the play was the Oscar-nominated actor and poet Chief Dan George.

"Of course, we all got our pictures taken with him and he said he liked our show.

We were just learning, and it was like being in the centre of the world," he said.

"I was drawn to the arts and storytelling... I would go to these shows. I loved the culture. I could identify with the characters."

He became aware of the art of theatre lighting, costumes and props and was mesmerized by the power of these elements to create worlds.

"They took us on this story... What a powerful way to get a message across."

In 1992, Kinistino was working at Ochapowace when he drove a vanload of teens to a casting call in Regina for North of 60, where a woman told him they were looking for adults too. The next day, he auditioned in a scene that had an inebriated Leon being arrested and trying to take a swing at the new cop.

He was called to a further audition in Calgary, borrowed money from the chief to travel, and found himself up against two well-known actors for the role: Jimmy Herman, who had been in the Hollywood hit Dances With Wolves, and Gordon Tootoosis.

"And I'm this lowly little Indian. 'I'll never get this part, these guys are big name actors already.' That's what I'm thinking in the back of my head.

"And Jimmy tells, me, 'Hey Errol. Just do the best you can. You never know what these crazy white people are going to do.'"

A week later, he got the part. They had already cast Tina Louise Bomberry as Rosie Deela and reckoned no one would believe tall Tootoosis could be bullied by her and Herman was too old to be her husband.

"They thought, 'Oh he's a little shorter. He looks like he's a guy that could get hen-pecked and bossed around by a strong woman.' That's why I got the role.

"But I didn't care. They were going to keep me for four episodes and I ended up playing about 54 episodes and it was the experience of my life."

The show ran five seasons and was syndicated in more than 80 countries. Kinistino also acted in one of the North of 60 television movies that followed.

He's pleased that APTN has picked up the series.

"I looked so young... It was exciting. We got to represent Canadian Culture.



L to R Ben Cardinal as Big Joey, Erroll Kinistino as Creature Nataways and Graham Greene as Pierre St. Pierre, 1989 Theatre Passes Muraille, Centre for Canadian Theatre in Dry Lips Ought to Move to Kapuskasing

"The team of writers were so good. They put their heart and soul into their writing."

Kinistino later had a recurring role in Corner Gas, has appeared in other television roles and in real life has served on the band council.

He continues perform in theatre and live music, with his partner Josie Linka.

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Bird-Wilson takes helm of GDI

By NC Raine
for Eagle Feather News

Lisa Bird-Wilson is having a good year. She will become CEO of Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) in April and her newest book will be released in Canada in August.

Bird-Wilson is no stranger to the internal operations of GDI, having served various roles with the Métis institution for almost 24 years.

“I feel like I’m a fixture here now,” she said.

“I’ve been lucky to have a number of leadership roles that have prepared me well for this. I’ve been happy to contribute in those different ways. I’m trying to say nicely that I didn’t have this driving ambition to head the institute, but at the same time, I’m thrilled and happy to take this role.”

Bird-Wilson joined GDI in 1997 as a community liaison coordinator and worked her way up to senior management roles, including director of training and employment, and acting Director of Dumont Technical Institute.

“GDI is a pretty complicated organization with its various parts and how everything fits together like a puzzle,” she said.

The Institute has 200 full-time staff working in 20 locations across Saskatchewan.

“I feel really confident in terms of my own knowledge of those parts of the institution. It’s important in this transition that I’m a known entity across GDI. That kind of stability and confidence is going to be important going forward.”

Bird-Wilson will take over from Geordy McCaffrey, who is stepping down after 18 years as CEO.

“Myself, the Métis people of Saskatchewan, and the entire province can rest assured that GDI’s strong future and adherence to tradition remains



Dr. Earl Cook, Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Minister of Education, Lisa Bird-Wilson, Geordy McCaffrey at the GDI CEO announcement on March 22 (photo: Ryan Nordmarken and George Gingras)

in the most capable of hands,” said McCaffrey in a written statement.

As she settles into the new job, Bird-Wilson’s first novel, *Probably Ruby* hits shelves in Canada via Doubleday Publishing. In spring 2022, it will find its way around the world via Hogarth Books, a division of publishing giant Penguin Random House.

Probably Ruby, about an adopted girl who

searches for her Indigenous identity, is a way to humanize the Sixties Scoop, Bird-Wilson said.

“It’s something near and dear to my heart. That’s where my fiction tends to go. I was adopted as a child, and spent my life making my way back to my roots,” she said.

Her three previous books are in three other genres: the non-fiction *An Institute of Our Own*, about the history of GDI; the book of poetry, *The Red File*; and a short-story collection, *Just Pretending*, which was selected by the Saskatchewan Library Association for the 2019 One Book One Province literary engagement project.

Bird-Wilson also helped establish and run the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Writers Circle Inc., which hosts the annual *Ânskohk* Aboriginal Literature Festival. She says she will continue to write in spurts, when her life allows.

The roles at GDI and as a writer are intimately tied for her.

“To make the connection to (writing and) GDI, it’s one of the reasons I think the cultural aspect of the Institution’s mission is so important to me. I can see how knowing that culture builds confidence and success,” she said.

“We have to know who we are first, then we can learn and accomplish things. We have to have that confidence in our identity. That’s what I see GDI doing for the students and learners and youth who come here - to help build that identity and cultural aspect in order to foster confidence and success in who they are.”



Jacelyn Lerat-Nighttraveller, Cowessess First Nation
Indigenous Internship Program 2017-2019

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Grateful for the artists that lift us up

By John Lagimodiere
of Eagle Feather News

The older I get, the more I appreciate the arts and artists. As a young person it was books and music. But as my palette ages, visual arts and live theatre have also entered my interest zone. I always respected the way a great playwright could describe things or blend words and actions and emotions.

And painters! How do they do that? I could never understand how people could draw or paint. I cannot draw for the life of me. Any effort turns out looking like a careless colour blind 8-year-old created it. (No offence to careless colour blind 8-year olds, as I was one once and they can become good people.)

Poetry? I just can't write like that. But when I read some of the fine poets that have been gifted to us in this province, I'm blown away. Depth. Beauty. Passion. Pain.

No matter what artist I meet though, they all get such joy and sometimes pain from their art. Do painters get a rush when they lay a great stroke of blue like when a comedian gets a laugh from an audience? Do poets' own words make them cry? Does an artist smash a canvas after a bad stroke? Regardless of the artist's journey, the final consumer, average ordinary us, also get to experience the joy and sometimes pain of their work.

I have been spending some time lately with an artist named Craig Sanderson from the James Smith Cree Nation. I got to know Craig at St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon. My mom has been in there for months and I get to visit her and take her outside for an occasional smoke. It is here we met Craig. And this gentleman gets great joy from his art.

Craig tells us he has been in St. Paul's for

close to a year as he smokes and flirts with my 87-year-old mom. His way to pass time and find joy is colouring. Hours and hours. He is so prolific that one of the support staff took twelve of his favourites and had them printed into a calendar. You can see him sharing pictures and visiting with staff by the Tim Hortons, in admitting and at



Craig Sanderson spreads cheer and his artwork throughout St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

security.

He always rolls up in his wheelchair with a smile and a binder. Some days it is his blue binder, some days it is the purple one. Each one of those binders is packed with pictures that he colours. He loves flowers. His favourite colours are blue and purple. He will hand you the binder to

flip through and he explains his thoughts on each picture. Why he had a page of eagles. The types of flowers he likes. He lights up when he does this.

He often gives away the pictures, sharing his love for flowers and colours with visitors and fellow patients. And his gifts light people up! So awesome to enjoy this gentleman and his positive attitude that he shares with everyone around him. I look for him whenever I go to the hospital. Another pleasant addition to a visit with my mom. And sometimes I receive another gift of art from Craig's personal collection.

I suppose that is what artists get back the most. The joy of the people who witness their art. More good news in the arts world has our friend Louise 'Sky Dancer' Halfe being named the parliamentary poet laureate. Her brother-in-law has a beautiful piece further in this issue that likens her appointment to a wonderful act of reconciliation. He reflects how she came into their white settler family and shook them up with her 'unfiltered comments'. If you have read Sky Dancer's poems, you will know. He describes her poetry as follows... "While challenging, it uplifts us, educates us, wraps us in the poet's inspirational embrace." Sky Dancer writes about the pain of residential schools and of colonial violence. By bringing her voice and those of other poets she will promote nationally to tell our stories, truthfully and sometimes painfully, as Canada learns, perhaps it will hasten reconciliation nationally. We can only hope.

But still. The artists. Whether they are in the halls of St. Paul's or the halls of parliament, they challenge, they create and they lift us up.

These folks have been hard hit by the pandemic. Comedians. Musicians. Painters. Actors. Craftspeople. Cultural teachers. Support your local artists and artisans.



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CHECK OUT OUR LATEST TOP STORIES



FCC sees opportunities for Indigenous agriculture

An online survey of Indigenous agriculture producers and stakeholders indicated that more than 70 per cent of producers plan to increase participation in the sector over the next five years ...



APTN marks 20 years bringing stories from Indigenous perspective

The Aboriginal Peoples Television Network aired its first national newscast, Invision, presented by the first Indigenous news team on television in Canada and the world.



Cumberland House Cree Nation part of new ownership of Prince Albert hotel

The former Quality Inn in downtown Prince Albert has been given new life under a group of First Nations partners.

Cultural Appropriation and the Law, Protecting Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expressions

“Art is a powerful device that can generate resistance, reflection and understanding.”

This quote comes from Jeffery G. Hewitt and his article titled, “How Indigenous Art Is Challenging Colonial Law.” As an Indigenous woman, a Dakoya-Winyan – it is difficult to conceptualize the law into narrow categories, but this is how colonial law is studied and applied. Different categories of colonial law such as, criminal, family and business are considered their own categories and yet Indigenous law is established on the basis that everything is interconnected.

Indigenous law itself is not formally recognized within the confines of the colonial legal system and courts and this is the first mistake.

There are also many unresolved issues in regard to cultural appropriation, especially today. Sometimes it is non-Indigenous people attempting to use sacred practices, designs, art and songs for personal gain, other times it’s non-Indigenous peoples pretending to be Indigenous for personal gain.

While appropriation can be regarded as the unauthorized taking of elements of a culture foreign to one’s own, cultural appropriation erodes or degrades cultural identity and threatens diversity.

Indigenous law is written on the land, lived in ceremony and can be captured in Indigenous art. Indigenous art hold stories with spirit and that is why our historical artefacts should be returned and non-Indigenous people today should honour and recognize the harm that is caused by appropriation.

Traditional songs, art, dance and stories, form a living body of knowledge that is passed on from

generation to generation. From an Indigenous perspective, there is a clear intersection between art and law. There are serious implications that can transpire from exploiting something that is sacred. It is also known that not every song, dance, story and ceremony is meant for everyone. We come from our own traditional governance systems that were governed by clans and societies, where we were gifted things that were meant for us and our journey.

This whole concept that everything is for everyone and anyone is a colonial concept that is foreign to this land along with colonial laws. Cross-cultural influences are known to be used in art and they enrich our world, but there is a standard of respect that needs to be addressed and applied. Wearing head-dresses, claiming sacred objects and designs are governed by protocols and permission that needs to be granted before using or appropriating and creating personal gain from traditional culture.

There are also many examples of Indigenous legal orders incorporated in art, such as the Two Row Wampum Belt. The Haudenosaunee and Dutch made an agreement regarding how they were to treat each other and live together. The Haudenosaunee presented the agreement using two purple, linear rows running the length of a wampum belt. “In one row is a ship with our White Brothers’ ways; in the other, a canoe with our ways. Each will travel down the river of life side by side. Neither will attempt to steer the other’s vessel.” This was a nation-to-nation treaty in which the Dutch adopting Indigenous legal protocols affirm this historic treaty.

I believe the future is rooted in art and the art

that our people continue to create. The beading is healing, the songs are healing, the dances are healing and

so are the ceremonies. This is something that is not for everyone and should not be appropriated and therefore should be protected. There should be protocols and permission that is granted to those who want to learn and know more, but the problem is that damage has been done through colonialism. This harm that has been inflicted is ongoing and has dismantled Indigenous systems, culture and language.

There is a lot of work to be done and I do have hope in the initiatives and leaders of today and tomorrow. Protecting what we have for future generations is vital for the survival of who we are and therefore our identities, who makes us who we are and gives us purpose and belonging.

Everything is interconnected and if you see authentic Indigenous art whether it is a painting, sculpture, songs or ceremony this is something that is evident. The evolution of Indigenous art will transpire into an evolution of Indigenous law as all things are interconnected. The more we take back who we are and assert it in spaces, the more understanding and respect we should have for one another. This is about sharing, not about taking and therefore the protection of what is sacred should be at the forefront for future generations.



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Residential school survivors produce end of life planning guide

By Betty Ann Adam
of Eagle Feather News

Frank Badger was nine years old, playing with marbles in the small boys' dorm at residential school, when a supervisor came and said, "Frank, your Mushum died this morning," and then walked away.

"There was no, 'I'm sorry,' or any condolences or anything," he recalls.

That night, as he cried in his bed, a nun approached. Thinking she was coming to console him, he sat up. "She wound up and slapped me right across the face and said, 'Shut up. All this crying is not going to bring your grandfather back.'

"That's when I quit crying in regards to death."

Badger said his childhood experience affected his ability to grieve for many years.

He learned to accept death and grief when his three teenage children were killed in a car crash in 1995. He and his wife followed the tradition of giving away all of their children's possessions in appreciation for the many people who came to their memorial feasts. They became public speakers, traveling across Canada and parts of the United States, talking to students and families.

Rick Daniels, also a residential school survivor said that for children who came through Catholic residential schools, thoughts of death were always connected to the Church and hell.

But Indigenous people traditionally talk about death as simply being inevitable, and about getting ready to go to the other side to be with the Creator, he said.

"Death to indigenous people, a lot of times you're going to hear, 'it was his time' or 'it was her time."

"Death is something you have to come to understand. It's inevitable. Our day is going to come no matter what you do. A lot of people prep for that through ceremony, a sweat lodge or just a smudge every day in the morning or evening, just for help to live a good life for that day, to be prepared. If your time comes, there's nothing you can do about it.

"It's something we accept. It's hard to lose a loved one."

"It doesn't have anything to do with hell or purgatory or evil. It's to put the positive, to think about the things you've done, to raise your family, make sure your kids are taken care of, not just materially but spiritually as family to take care of each other."

Badger and Daniels are now members of Saskatchewan's Indian Residential School Survivors' Circle, which has produced *When the Time Comes*, an end of life planning guide for Indigenous people.

"It's time we started making changes," Badger said.

The guide is a compassionate, culturally appropriate walk through the many decisions and tasks that must be made when someone passes.

It is meant to start conversations before people pass and to help the living when the time comes.

Myrna LaPlante was one of the eight-member committee who assembled information with two Elder advisors.

"It's from an Indigenous committee's point of view and our lived experience. We all have lots of experience planning funerals in our communities," she said.

The committee researched other end of life resources and sought to create an Indigenous guide for, "really getting people into the mindset that this planning is part of what I need to do," LaPlante said.

The guide discusses cultural protocols and customs, explores end of life care, resuscitation and the use of life-support technology, types of services and burial or cremation.

There are sections on funerals, traditional feast and food services, on giving away possessions, coping with grief, and Powers of Attorneys to look after health-care needs and finances if one becomes incapable.

The guide gives useful information about creating a will.

"(A will) really gives the individual control over what happens at the time of their passing," and helps family members to know they are honouring the wishes of the deceased about the funeral and giving away their belongings, LaPlante said.

"It would be comforting for the family to know their loved one has completed as much planning as they wished, and the family is not left having to guess what the loved one would have wanted."

The guide addresses some topics that Indigenous communities don't often talk about, such as organ donation, which is not acceptable to some elders.

"They are difficult topics to discuss... Our goal is for people to have a say, make a plan."

The guide has a handy checklist of important documents to gather or to tell where they can be found.

The Guide is available on the website of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation under the News & Events tab and the Community Information tab.

<https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/When-the-Time-Comes-Final-Edit-and-Format3510-march-24.pdf>

The Survivors Circle also wants people to be aware of the Na-mi-quai-ni-mak (I remember them) Community Support Fund which offers small grants through the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTRC) and Parks Canada for community-based healing and remembrance projects.

Information is available on the NCTRC website under the Memorial tab.



Rick Daniels seen here with wife Judy Greyeyes, was a member of the Residential Schools Survivors Circle committee, which created an end of life planning guide. (photo submitted)



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APPLY BY: April 23, 2021

Tribal councils open vaccination sites in three cities

By Betty Ann Adam
of Eagle Feather News

Three Central Saskatchewan Tribal Councils have opened COVID-19 vaccination sites in Prince Albert, North Battleford and Saskatoon.

The tribal councils have partnered with Indigenous Services Canada to fund the vaccinations, and with the Saskatchewan Health Authority.

Prince Albert Grand Council Chief Brian Hardlotte said the partners are concerned about Indigenous people who live in towns and cities and are making an extra effort to reach vulnerable people.

"I know in the cities there's vaccination sites, but we thought it's important for our First Nations people and the Métis, (to be served) in a more comfortable setting with the translation services - a lot of our nurses speak Cree and Dene - and have an opportunity to smudge before they get vaccinated to feel more comfortable," Hardlotte said.

"If they do need transportation they call and ask for some people to come and pick them up."

Some First Nations have up to 50 per cent of their people living in one of the three urban centres, he said.

"As Tribal Councils our work is with the First Nations, but our people don't want to drive maybe four hours to their community to get vaccinated, so that's why it's important to have vaccination sites."

Prince Albert, which was the first site to open, on April 1, administered 252 doses on the first day and by April 6, was fully booked until April 23.



A gentleman receives his vaccine in Prince Albert as the Central Saskatchewan Indigenous Vaccination Sites program begins.
(Photo by Tina Pelletier)

"With the history of our people with health and the residential schools, the way we were treated, the trust wasn't always there. But with this, it helps. There may be vaccine hesitancy. We tell them it's safe and effective."

"You feel good, like the partnership is working, the people have a place to come where they feel comfortable with the people giving the vaccination," said Chief Hardlotte.

Neil Sasakamoose, Executive Director of the Battleford

Agency Tribal Chiefs, said all of its member bands had outbreaks and are working to keep rates of infection down. "These sites are a must for us because of proximity of our First Nations to North Battleford."

Fighting the pandemic is personal for Sasakamoose, whose father, Fred Sasakamoose, died from COVID-19 in December.

"We've been dealing with this for over a year now and we've lost a lot of good people. We haven't been able to have wakes or lay people to rest properly."

"My father missed this vaccine by two months and he fell to COVID-19. We all have to get through this the best we can and deal with the mental health. We haven't been able to grieve. That's the hidden part of the pandemic."

"Only 30 people were allowed at my father's funeral but there are 160 people in my immediate family."

"It compounds the worry and stress. It's almost like a silent pandemic."

Staff at the sites will collect information about which First Nations people come from to help individual bands get an understanding of how many of their people are vaccinated.

The sites will continue vaccinations until summer but there is no exact date for when all vaccinations will be done, Hardlotte said.

To book appointments in Prince Albert call PAGC at 306-953-7285 or Sask Health Authority at 1-833-727-5829.

To book appointments in Saskatoon call 1-833-653-0002 or register for Saskatoon appointment online at www.sktc.sk.ca.

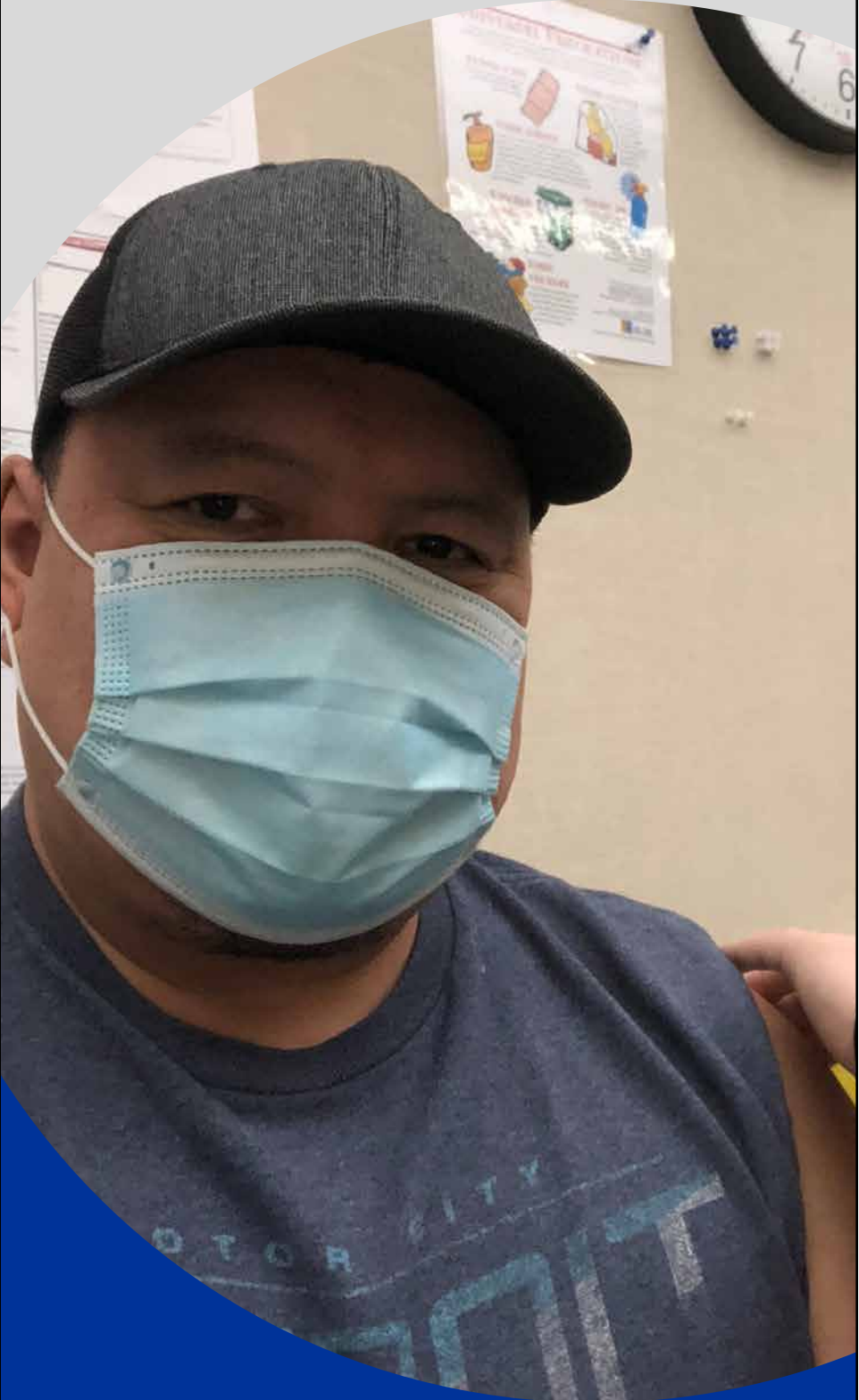
North Battleford has scheduled its opening at the Dekker Centre for April 12. Book appointments by contacting BATC at 1-883-330-BATC (2282) or the Sask Health Authority at 1-833-727-5829.

I GOT
THE SHOT



"I'm more confident every day that my immune system is working well."

Rick Robillard -
Black Lake Community
Liaison



Cameco is encouraging its workforce to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Rick Robillard is sharing his reasons for getting the shot.

www.cameconorth.com/community/stories

Poster program promotes positivity and reconciliation

By NC Raine
for Eagle Feather News

When Ezra Swiftwolfe sees the posters of successful Indigenous people from his town, as he goes to his grade 11 classes at John Paul II Collegiate in North Battleford, something stirs inside him.

The member of Moosomin First Nation wants to achieve similar success some day.

"The posters inspired me for many reasons. Seeing Indigenous people like myself being successful motivates me to be just like them. It also allows me to push myself just like they did. I want to be just like them, I want my name to be known."

A new poster campaign at the grade 8 to 12 school is providing motivation, encouragement, and wisdom to the young students through photos, stories and quotes from school alumni and community professionals. About 35 posters hang in a display case at the front entrance of the school, proving that familiar Indigenous faces in the community have stories of challenge and determination.

"We wanted to give our students visual inspiration of local role models who have graduated from our school, or their family members, so our students can see success stories of people just like them in the professional world," said Shalen Fox, Graduation Coach at John Paul II Collegiate.

Fox, a member of Sweetgrass First Nation, contacted members of the community and had them respond to questions like personal obstacles they've overcome and how they balance culture and work-life, so students could be inspired by the stories behind the individuals.

A sampling of role models includes Jason Poitras, a firefighter at Moosomin First Nation, who reminds youth to prepare for the opportunities that will come their way; Serena Frank, a licensed practical nurse from Little Pine First Nation, who was inspired by her single mother

who raised three children; Sean Fauchon, a Métis journeyman electrician, who overcame loneliness while working away from home to pay the bills and complete his apprenticeship; lawyer Eleanore Sunchild, nutritionist Daniel Albert and social worker Allysa Woodrow.

"I want to show our kids that they can go into more education beyond just high school. That you can go into university, or trades, and that there will be adversity and it will take hard work, but that if they want it, they can do it," Fox said.

The students at John Paul II Collegiate, about 35 per cent of whom are Indigenous, have responded strongly to seeing familiar role models displayed at their school. The message is important for non-Indigenous students as well, said Fox.

"We want to show them that we're in the professional world. (The role models) have overcome barriers, stereotypes, trauma, they are starting to heal, they are starting to use their voice and prove to everyone that our people can be successful in society. So, it's an act of reconciliation," he said.



Shalen Fox, Graduation Coach at John Paul II Collegiate in North Battleford in front of the role model posters they created. (Photo supplied)



MÉTIS NATION - SASKATCHEWAN CITIZENS

Chief Electoral Office
1-833-929-5599

www.mnselection.ca

CANDIDATE NOMINATION PAPERS

for the May 29, 2021 Election are now available on the website.

All candidates running for one of the 4 Executive positions, or one of the 12 Regional Representative positions, must complete the nomination forms.

Nomination forms can be filed with the Chief Electoral Officer or with one of the 12 Regional Returning Officers.

Nominations open 9:00 am, Saturday, April 24, 2021.
The deadline is 2:00 pm, Thursday, April 29, 2021.

As nominations are approved by the Chief Electoral Officer, a list of candidates will be posted on the website.

VOTING OPPORTUNITIES

Regional Returning Offices, May 14 – 21
10:00 am – 6:00 pm Closed Sunday

Advance Polls, May 22
12:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Election Day, May 29
9:00 am – 8:00 pm

* you must vote in the region where you live

* you must bring your 1) Métis Citizenship card or letter from the registry, 2) valid Health Card, and 3) documentation of name and address (see website for examples)

* polling locations will be posted on the website

Prince Albert gallery embraces Métis women’s art

*By Leah Marie Dorion
for Eagle Feather News*

About two years ago, I was approached by the Mann Art Gallery (MAG) to participate in a mini artist residency in order to catalyze more Métis-specific art making and arts programming in Prince Albert. There is a large Métis population in this region and Lana Wilson, then gallery educator and now curator of the Mann Art Gallery, desired to genuinely connect with our Métis community in a meaningful manner. I was willing to work with the Gallery because they have made a significant commitment to the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action by using the cultural arts as a form of peace-making, inclusion, and partnership. I acknowledge the collaborative nature of MAG in this outstanding initiative. As an artist, it was inspiring to see how enthusiastic they were about engaging my own personal style of Métis arts leadership and their will-



Bonny Johnson and Leah Dorion conducted Métis style moss-bag making workshops at the Mann Art gallery in Prince Albert. (Photo courtesy Mann Art Gallery)

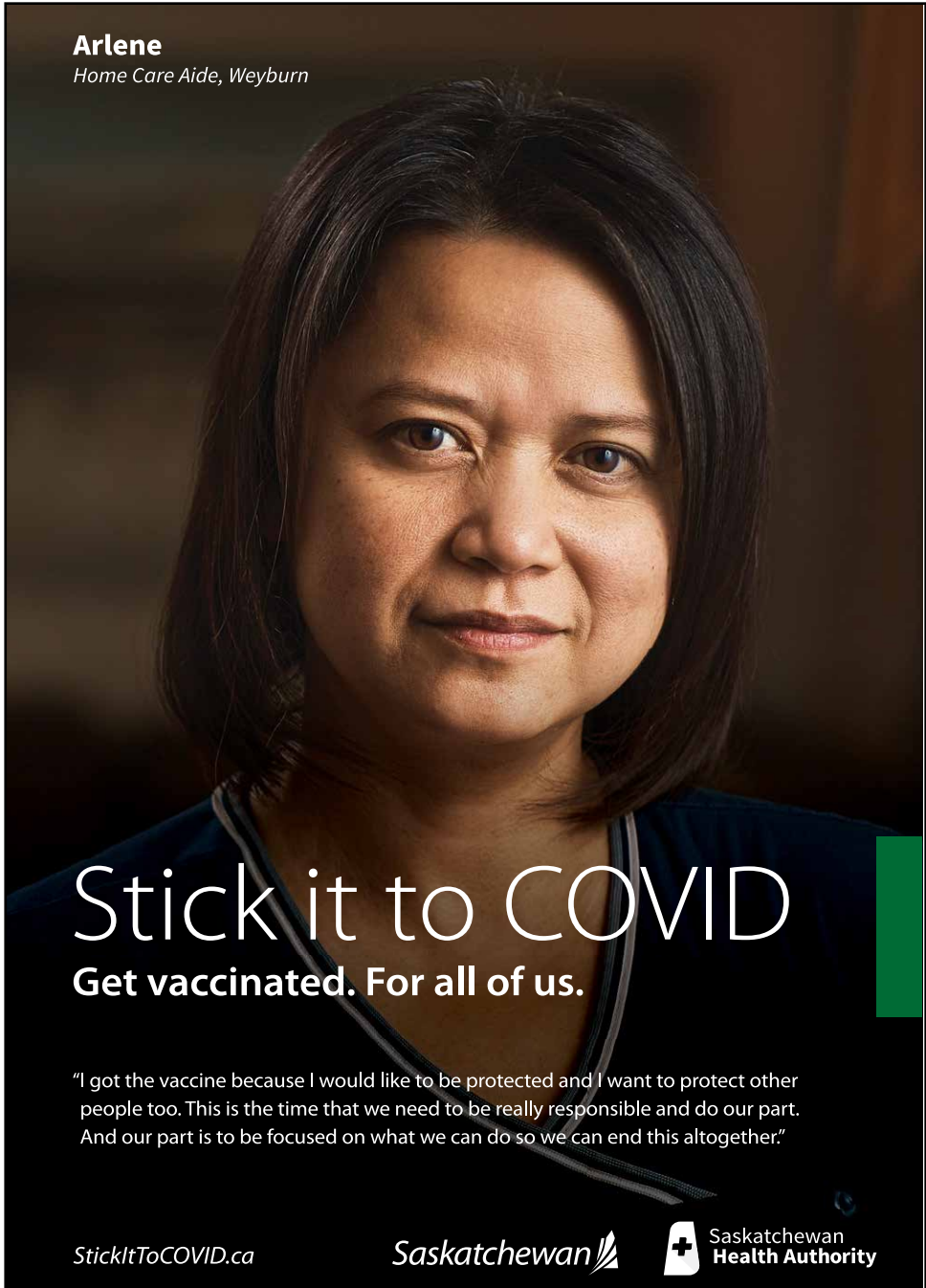
ingness to attract more local Métis women into the MAG space through cultural programming. Since I had been working to revive traditional women’s sewing, prior the mini residency, we decided to pilot a series of Métis women’s cultural sewing projects in the gallery’s education room, with its lovely natural light. “Hosting sewing workshops would help to further break down barriers between ‘craft’ and ‘fine art’ and emphasize the skill and creativity that go into creating special sewing projects,” Wilson said. “Art galleries and museums must include and celebrate art, creativity, and visual culture far beyond the traditional, Euro-centric ideas of privileging painting, drawing, and sculpture,” she said. I am proud that through our Métis women’s sewing initiative we were able to purchase six new sewing machines to keep at the gallery and were able to have direct conversations with our eight to 10 participants per workshop about how to create a more accessible environment for Métis people at the MAG. I learned Métis women want more types of Métis cultural programming and childcare support for participants and Lana came through. Not only were we able to conduct beautiful Métis specific programming, we responded to what the Métis women shared with us through formal evaluations and conversations. There was even a welcoming space for the children. During my residency at the MAG, they found extra financial resources to bring other Métis women and Elders into our unique programming

and I formed a strong relationship with local Métis educator Bonny Johnson, who I see as a future arts leader in our sewing community. Bonny says, “It is an intimate setting where we can gather, share stories, a cup of tea, and bits of humour and wisdom, as we support each other to find our voices as women. There is something so special about knowing that this is what women have done together for generations.” I was also able to bring in Elders such as Elsie Sanderson, who taught us to use sage to bless our sewing items. To date, MAG has conducted four Métis-style moss-bag making workshops, a high plains Métis style ribbon skirt workshop and we will be making moon shawls. Maybe one day, we’ll borrow some of these beautiful works for public display. Bonny says the highlight for her is watching women find their voices. “Hearing their stories and witnessing their growth has been such a gift. What can be better than being able to help a woman learn a life-long skill as well as grow as a person?” For more information visit www.mannartgallery.ca



Moss Bags Métis style were made during one of the workshops. (Photo Mann Gallery)

Arlene
Home Care Aide, Weyburn



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StickItToCOVID.ca 

Makwa Sahgaiehcan member rising TikTok star

By John Lagimodiere
of Eagle Feather News

Brett Mooswa likes to make people laugh. His 383,000 TikTok followers would agree. And with over 3.7 million views of his viral TikTok of "When a native is born," the soft spoken, gentle giant from Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation has become a TikTok star with his short, humorous takes on First Nations life.

The humour and the hundreds of thousands of followers began because of a prompt from a friend.

"I didn't even know about TikTok until just over a year ago," said Mooswa in an interview with Eagle Feather News. "But I had put a couple videos on Facebook and my buddy thought they were funny and said I should get TikTok. I thought it was all just people dancing and whatnot. I posted a couple videos, and I was surprised that people watched it and commented that it made them laugh. Then I saw a bunch of Indigenous creators on there. Sherry McKay is a big influence, and I was encouraged by these creators getting good feedback from others."

Mooswa's When a Native is Born TikTok garnered over 3 million views.

His first TikTok was in February of 2020 and showed a kid grow into a mushum. It has garnered 24,000 likes and 264,000 views. If you tune into Mooswa's TikTok page you will see his tag line Laughter is medicine. And he delivers lots of it.

"My stuff comes from everyday life. When you grow up seeing certain things and are around people who share the same humour as you, you don't give it too much thought. These things are ingrained in you to always laugh and share that laughter," said Mooswa. "In the Indigenous community it is very important. Especially if someone is experiencing loss. Humour is one of the ways that we heal in our society. It is a natural thing for me to do. It is very common in our reserves. This sense of humour. Everything I do I just exaggerate to a degree and give it a humorous approach."

Mooswa isn't one to spend hours writing a script and laying out his short videos. He does it off the cuff and most of the time with only one take. And he has tons of material in his head.

"I don't plan my videos. Everything just happens then and there. I do not write things down. It just happens when I'm sitting down or driving and an idea will pop in my head and I try to do it right away or I forget about it," said Mooswa. "That's a bad habit I have, and I tell people to take notes because I have lost a lot of golden ideas that I have forgot about."

Most of his videos are shot by himself holding and talking to his phone. He has bought a tripod now, which helps, but most are him, the phone and humorous magic.

"You don't need anything fancy, just your phone, your arm and good ideas," he adds.

Mooswa, 30 years old, has a full-time job in

the trades and has two children, Charity and Praise, with his wife Thea. Residing on Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation allows him to be ten minutes away from his passions of hunting and fishing and he loves working out at the gym to relieve stress.

That resume does not sound like it would lead a fellow to have hundreds of thousands of followers and over 5.8 million likes on TikTok and that has amazed Brett.

"It blows my mind, and I don't think I will see the day when it doesn't," he said of his following. "It is surreal. I'm just a man living on a reserve of 2,000 people. It still amazes me and I'm still thankful for the people that watch me and like my stuff. I'm thankful that people see me as an influencer. It is an honour and I don't take that lightly."

For now, TikTok creators in Canada cannot make money off their videos unless they get a sponsor or do ad promotions. But Mooswa does not do it for money or glory.

"I do this to make people laugh and heal. Sure, it would be nice to make money off it, but I personally have healed through humour," said Mooswa. "Laughter raises your serotonin and makes you heal. I am now speaking at conferences and have had youth say that my videos have helped them. Maybe this leads to me becoming an actor or voice actor or speaking at events. I love challenging myself and I love sharing laughter."



Brett Mooswa surprised himself with his massive popularity on TikTok. (Facebook)



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fsin.ca

GoldenEagle refuses to “be polite” in new novel

By Nathan Raine
for Eagle Feather News

There are authors and poets who write in order to take their readers down the path of least resistance, offering easily digestible content that aims to please, rather than provoke and challenge. Carol Rose GoldenEagle is not one of those writers.

“I don’t apologize for the (difficult themes) in my book. I’m not going to sugar-coat the violence that goes on,” said GoldenEagle in an interview.

“I wanted to write that because I find, a lot of the time, particularly with women, when we write we are polite. I don’t think we have to be.”

GoldenEagle, a Cree and Dene author and poet, with roots at Sandy Bay and La Loche, recently released her third novel, *The Narrows of Fear* (Wapawikoscikanik).

In it, GoldenEagle weaves the stories of four women who learn to celebrate their culture, after some of them experience abuse at residential school and in their communities. She says the story is sometimes brutally violent, sometimes healing, and sometimes mythical, but always deeply respectful of Indigenous culture.

“It’s a celebration of Indigenous feminism,” she said. “I think we’re conditioned to be polite in general. We’re told from the time we’re toddlers that you have to be a ‘proper’ lady. I don’t think we have to do that anymore. I think young women can go out and conquer the world as fully as they want to.”

The novel, which GoldenEagle worked on for about two years, details physical and sexual trauma that may be difficult for readers at times, she said. The themes are based on real life conversations she’s had with women, and as such, she hopes this book will be a beacon for healing.

“I hope Indigenous women will come together and realize we’re united as women. And this is happening now already – but I hope the book will strengthen us, and let people know that we’re capable of moving forward in terms of Indigenous rights in our communities.”

These types of stories, ultimately about compassion, hope, and change, have been fuelling GoldenEagle throughout her career. She has worked in both print and broadcast journalism at CBC, and has written two other novels and a book of poetry, *Hiraeth*, which was shortlisted for a Saskatchewan Book Award.

GoldenEagle was in the Sixties Scoop, never met her birth mother, and grew up knowing little of her Indigenous background and culture. The subjects in her work explore these issues, with *Bareskin Dairies* diving into impacts of the Sixties Scoop, and *Bone Black* finding justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

“I think now is the time to reclaim our place as people, people who have ideas and suggestions, people who should be part of every process,” said GoldenEagle.

GoldenEagle’s intent to tell these important stories is not slowing down. She is working on a fourth novel, “which has to do with humanity,” a collection of short stories, a children’s book, and another poetry book entitled *Essential Ingredients*, which are love letters to her three children.

Her goal is to have twenty titles on the market by the time she’s 65, she said, as well as to continue mentoring young writers to share their stories.

“You don’t need permission to be awesome,” she said. “Go ahead, write, and don’t be afraid to be yourself.”



Carol Rose GoldenEagle, whose new novel *The Narrows of Fear* celebrates Indigenous feminism in the face of tragedy. (Photo supplied)



WESTERN NATIONS

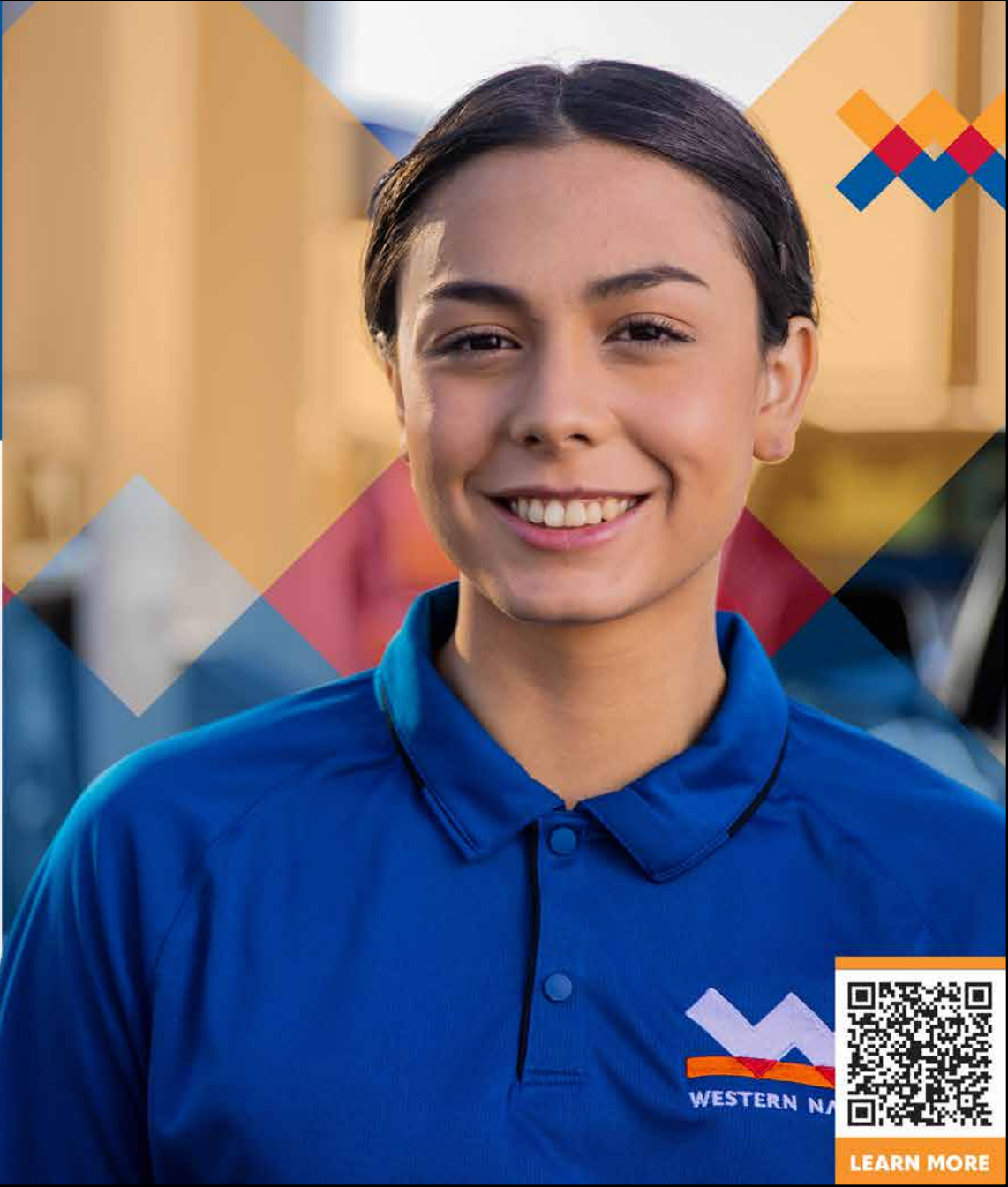
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Prince Albert

Senator Allen Bird Memorial Centre, Chief Joseph Custer Reserve #201

Vaccination site hours: By appointment only

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Traditional tattooing explored in FNUniv art class

By Julia Peterson
for Eagle Feather News

Two-spirit Métis-Cree artist Mel Lefebvre uses traditional tattooing as a mode of healing and reconnection for urban Indigenous LGBTQ+ and Indigenous women.

“I’m... looking at traditional tattoos as they relate to community but also to gender and representations,” Lefebvre said.

The Montreal-based artist brought their art practice to Audrey Dreaver’s class in the Indigenous Communications & Fine Arts department at First Nations University of Canada in March.

Lefebvre has been doing traditional tattoos for about two years as they pursue their Ph.D. at Concordia University.

The historical records of Indigenous tattoos, which were often written by, “white priests and anthropologists and explorers,” leave out important stories, Lefebvre says. They want to bring these suppressed narratives to the forefront.



Mel Lefebvre gives a traditional tattoo. They are currently studying traditional tattoos as they relate to community, gender and representations for their Ph.D. at Concordia University. (Submitted by Mel Lefebvre)

“There was a lot about men being warriors, and their tattoos would represent how many people they came into contact with in battle and things like that,” they said. “And then women’s tattoos were often reported as adornments, as ornamental. And where are the stories around two-spirit tattoos?”

When Lefebvre gives someone a traditional tattoo - by hand, always - they say the experience is profoundly intimate and meaningful for both people involved.

“I’m not only providing healing or care and connection for the person I’m tattooing, but they give that to me, too,” they said. “It’s this real sort of gift of exchange. As much as they’re receiving, I’m receiving just as much. So it’s been a real pleasure.

“There’s a lot of transformation involved - grieving and happiness and a sense of belonging that comes out of it.”

Audrey Dreaver, a lecturer and program coordinator, introduced the course on Indigenous tattoo traditions because she wants her

students to feel empowered by Indigenous art history.

Her students are learning about the vast history of Indigenous tattooing in North America, what was lost because of colonization, and the artists and practitioners now working towards revival.

She also brought Indigenous tattoo practitioner Dion Kaszas to discuss the art with the class.

“I think it’s important for Indigenous peoples to understand that the arts that we had here prior to European contact were really powerful, and they were so embedded in our culture and our way of life in all aspects of society,” she said. “It was a part of who we were.

“So learning about art history from an Indigenous perspective, it’s going to empower you as a person, because then you get to see the legacy that you come from.”

The course has been a revelation for student Suzie Nemeth.

“I had no idea that Indigenous people - and I self-identify as Métis - that my own culture had a history of tattoo practice, and that so many Indigenous nations across the world really have had a history, a proud history, of tattooing and skin marking,” she said.

When Dreaver looks at Kaszas and Lefebvre’s work, and sees her own students’ enthusiasm in learning about Indigenous tattooing, she is optimistic about the future of this form of art and knowledge.

“It gives me hope ... we will get more scholarship written by Indigenous people about Indigenous ways and traditions and history,” she said.



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Words from our Elders: Alex Kennedy, Little Pine First Nation

These memories of Alex Kennedy are excerpts from the book Wahkohtowin: Nehiyaw Relations. A book published by Sweetgrass Records. Check back monthly for words from our elders.

Who am I? I'm a human being with a spirit. Where did I come from? I came from kisikhok, the heaven. From God, that's where I come from. That's where my spirit comes from and I'm a nêhiyaw.

The word "Cree" was given to us by French people. I've been asking the French people what Cree really means in their language and historically they don't know but they gave us that name and if you really want to identify ourselves as to who we are, I always say I'm a nêhiyaw. Truly that's who I am, a nêhiyaw and that's one of the things that we have to, as elders, older people, we have to teach our young people those two things: who they are and where they come from. They also must be taught that there's such a thing as sin. Something you did wrong here on earth as a human being will follow you into the next world, the spirit world.

We have a lot of problems at home me and my wife. Forever, we're having spirits come to our house wanting prayers. We don't sleep. They keep us awake and we hear them walking around in a house. We hear them talking outside. Especially when somebody's going to die that happens. I always tell these ghosts that they don't have any business to come and see us now that they're in a spirit world. While they were living as a human being, they should have taken care of what they were as a human being. I told the ghost spirits -God didn't mean for spirits to come amongst us humans and bother uWs at night. We need our sleep- and they usually listen.

I speak to people that are more spiritually powerful than me about this. I asked them and they said they've been advised speak to me because they listen. They will listen to you and they will do what you tell them to do, and they usually disappear. But that's what happens if we as human beings don't live a good life here on earth. We've taught our children that.

...

In the creation story, a little part of it teaches us that these four men wanted to

find where God was. They had a meeting and they decided that we will all journey up into the heaven and try and see God. They wanted to see God and this fourth one was kind of hesitant. He didn't want to do it, but he says, "three of them already decided," so he joined them. They all took turns traveling around all over. They come back. Couldn't find Him. Couldn't see God, the three of them. The fourth one, reluctantly he went on his journey and someplace over there, he heard a voice. It said, "Don't those people appreciate what I have given them in life? Go back and tell them that. Go back and tell them what I'm telling you."

So, he came back and they started arguing, the four men. Pretty soon these two men couldn't understand each other. They had different languages! God created different languages within these four tribes, these four men. They all went in four directions and that's where the different tribes come from is indigenous people.

...

I'm just going to give thanks to Jerry Tootoosis A few years ago, we had a Sundance and he told us, "Gather all the children outside that are playing. Bring them in here. There's going to be a special song for them and they're going to dance in front of this this tree." All the kids were brought in and I could see. I had this grandson of ours that's being raised by Debbie and he's not ashamed. He was really dancing, and his friends were looking at him and they started dancing too now and there was about 15, 20 kids in there, in that Sundance Lodge. and they were given that special opportunity to be able to dance with in that Lodge and in one of those ceremonies okimâwatik came in. The spirit of okimâwatik came into the ceremony. He said, "That's what they call me, okimâwatik-atayokan came into the ceremony. These different spirits are coming to the ceremony, they were identifying themselves. The first one that usually comes in is kise napew mostos. You know the first thing he says whenever he comes in? 'We work for the creator! That's who we work for and different spirits come in and they speak.'"

(Ed. Note: This Elder's Story is an excerpt of a longer piece that will be available on the Eagle Feather News website as of April 19, 2021)



Elder Alex Kennedy of Little Pine First Nation. Photo by Ted Whitecalf

SkyDancer: Our Poet Laureate and her Settler In-Laws

**By David Butt
for Eagle Feather News**

Cree poet Louise Bernice Halfe, Sky Dancer, has been, for decades, my sister-in-law. She is now also Canada's newly named poet laureate. The family story I can tell reveals much about why, for the next two years, the position of poet laureate has transformative potential.

Louise married my older brother in the early 1970s; no doubt like most people marrying in their early twenties having little idea what sort of new family she was entering. We were then what would now be described as deeply cocooned in privilege. Upper-middle class professional whites in a racially homogeneous small Ontario town. We considered our values fairly progressive for the times, and I like to think we were good-hearted. But the standard history and civics curricula that framed our education and outlook disseminated uncritically the propaganda of benevolent colonialism. And we endorsed without question the nobility of a British-derived constitutional regime, oblivious to its deep-rooted complicity in the host of apartheid and genocidal practices that now self-evidently stain our national identity.

Indigeneity was invisible to us, and, as we have only belatedly acknowledged, that was by cruel design.

With Louise having recently emerged from the horror of residential school, I can only look back in wonder at how, in those early days of her marriage to Peter, she could possibly have navigated our family dynamics, and how endlessly patient she must have been with our condescending ignorance.

But Louise did far more than navigate the family landscape before her. With effort and equanimity she enriched it. She combined a ready laugh and a sparkle with well-timed, trenchant, unfiltered comments that delivered sometimes painful but always well-grounded truths. These were the precursors, inside our family bubble, of the poetry that was soon to take flight.

And take flight it did. Louise published book after book of poetry, travelling the world, connecting with indigenous groups everywhere, in pursuit of healing for herself, her people, and indeed everyone diminished in their humanity by colonialist degradations and misadventure.

Some of Louise's poetry is very hard to swallow for those of us born to the privileged status quo. Coming as it does from her and her loved ones having personally endured the darkness of systemic indigenous oppression, it reveals with stunning clarity the pain of prolonged degradation inflicted willfully by both church and state. And I confess much of Louise's poetry I can handle only in small doses. But I have come to understand that Sky Dancer is the medicine woman delivering the chemotherapy that yes, makes us nauseous in the short term, but in the long term helps eradicate

the insidious anti-indigenous cancer that has infected both our souls and our body politic.

Louise's poetry also radiates grace, and as such is far more than medicinal. While challenging, it uplifts us, educates us, wraps us in the poet's inspirational embrace, as if to say kindly, "walk with me; you can take the same steps I am taking because you are just as human as I am."

Louise has transformed our family. Using not just her powerful and captivating poetry, but her generous spirit, gregariousness, and bluntness to help us open our eyes, step out of our comfort zones, and re-think our country, our history, and our future. We are as a family surely only a few faltering steps further ahead in this journey of reconciliation, still far from the finish line; but any progress we have made is a debt owed to Sky Dancer's wisdom and patience.

And that is precisely why choosing Louise as Canada's poet laureate is such a wonderful choice for the country at this time. Reconciliation as a national imperative is indisputable. However we remain a nation struggling with the exceedingly difficult work of actualizing reconciliation, personally and communally. Inevitably, then, the conversation around reconciliation runs the very real risk of descending to the lowest common denominator: our reflexive habit of politicizing public discourse and packaging it in trite pre-digested formulations diluted and flavoured as necessary to appeal to partisans on each end of the spectrum, following which insults will be hurled back and forth across the partisan divide, to little practical effect.

A poet laureate can and should rise above all that hum-drum, all that petty self-centred political skirmishing. A poet's talents enable her to soar above the often constricted and mean-spirited crucible of politics and the development of public policy. She can reach us all by dancing in the sky that we all look up to. Sky Dancer's poetry, and her vibrant personality on the poet laureate's stage, can teach us about our history, and ourselves, in ways that simultaneously haunt us, humble us, inspire us, make us ashamed of our past, and yet give us hope for our collective future.

Sky Dancer, my complacent white family in 1970s southwestern Ontario really did not deserve your transformational gifts. But now the country does. And needs them too.



Louise Sky Dancer Halfe' brother-in-law sees her appointment as a step towards reconciliation.

Indigenous exhibit at Remai responds to pandemic

By **Andréa Ledding**
for *Eagle Feather News*

Saskatoon’s Remai Modern art gallery is hosting a group exhibition of mainly Indigenous art installations responding to the COVID-19 pandemic until August 2021.

The exhibition “An Apology, A Pill, A Ritual, A Resistance,” is a group exhibition of more than 20 artists works which, like its name, “is sort of an incomplete list of things that are intended to promote healing or wellbeing,” said Indigenous curator Tarah Hogue.

She hopes the exploration of how artists are thinking about health and healing will prompt thought about that in their own lives.

Saskatoon-area artists include Ruth Cuthand, Wally Dion, Adrian Stimson, and Linda Young, as well as others from territories across Canada and the US. The works are exhibited in the ground floor gallery, which is always free to the public, and in the third floor gallery.

“The works on the ground floor are framed in relation to thinking about treaty and the relationships within how treaty is a framework for good relations. So the work from Linda Young from Onion Lake references Treaty 6 directly. Kohkoms wearing their head kerchiefs and shawls who actually represent the female counterpoint to the treaty signatories,” Hogue said.

Some of the works in that space honour Indigenous matriarchs and their role in Indigenous medicine, such as jingle dress, which has been performed



Linda Young, *kôhkominawak (Our Grandmothers)*, 2008, mixed media. Courtesy of the artist.

for healing and strength for generations, she said.

Young created “the kohkoms” for an exhibition in 2006 curated by Adrian Stimson at the Mendel, in response to an art installation by Edward Poitras titled Internal Recall, with seven male Indigenous treaty-signers physically bound. “I was interested in his installation because it’s very striking,” said Young, adding that her own work focused on land and women and that connection to treaties and history. She followed protocol and offered tobacco to Poitras, which he accepted.

“I found his installation compelling because it felt like these men had been bound to a contract that made them prisoners more than people negotiating with equals.”

Her kohkoms have been shown at the Mendel, Wanuskewin, and were the feature of a quiet reflection space during the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples Inquiry Hearings in Saskatoon. When she was asked to participate in the Remai exhibition, she followed her usual protocol: offering tobacco, smudging, praying and consulting her Elder.

“When I do show any of the pieces in different exhibitions I always follow protocol, for me it’s the best way I can feel okay about exhibiting works of art that make people feel a certain way. When creating works of art, you have to be mindful,” Young said. “The viewer creates their own narrative when they see the kohkoms, so every viewer - to me, that’s their story.”

With this installation, she asked women in various communities if they would loan a shawl, blanket, or scarf for the kohkoms, offering tobacco.

“Ten women contributed. And so the ten women for me represent the strength and courage and leadership that women have and share with the world,” she said.

“I think grandmothers are universal, a universal image and kinship that everyone understands. It’s not just about Indigenous grandmothers, but the spirit of grandmothers throughout the world. And in this case the women who are involved represent strength, and knowledge that the grandmothers shared with us, and have passed on to us over time, over many generations.”

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Dorion’s Alberta art show available online

By Julia Peterson
for Eagle Feather News

When Leah Marie Dorion, a Métis artist from Prince Albert, paints, she tells herself to “create the world you want to live in.”

“That slogan in my art practice is kind of like my mantra,” she said. “I’m using art as a tool to just create an imaginary, beautiful, visual world.”

Now, some of Dorion’s paintings are featured in a virtual exhibit hosted by Gallery@504 in Sherwood Park, Alberta. Walking Gently: Spirit Stories and the 13 Moons features Dorion’s work alongside that of Woodland Style painter Gary Sutton. It will run until April 24.

The “13 Moons” portion of the exhibit title comes from Dorion’s paintings, where the moon is always prominent.

“It’s all about moon cycles for me,” she said. “It’s all about the circular flow and the feminine flow of creation, female flow of life, female cycles. And I just honour the sacred feminine flow of life and our role in Creator’s creation.”

“The moon inspires me so much because she’s constantly ... watching over all female energies and life givers. It’s such a fun thing to represent visually.”

This life-giving narrative has carried through Dorion’s artistic career: she took up painting after her son was born, when she was healing from postpartum depression.

“I call the birth of my son the birth of my art career, and that’s truly beautiful,” she said. “Out of all that pain and challenge came two beautiful gifts that I will treasure for the rest of my life.”

When Dorion paints, she is inspired by the Métis-style beadwork she grew up admiring, as well as by her love of gardening. To create tactile, topographic effects, she often works with her fingers to finish a piece.

“I know some people really like a flat clean surface, but I think the more bumps and curves and imperfections and texture, the better,” she said.

“I love to play in the mud and I love gardening as well, you know, the textures of the dirt and the earth. I just love it. So I think, because my art is so grounded in that earth theme, it’s just a way to bring that experience into the canvas.”

This is Dorion’s first virtual show, and she is pleased to share the experience with friends and loved ones who would not have been able to travel to Alberta to see it in person.

“I have a lot of seniors and elders in my world, and they’re just enjoying



Leah with Oscardo shawl: Leah Marie Dorion stands outdoors in front of snowy pine trees, wrapped in a blue shawl. (photo by Louis Lafferty).

staying home and joining in,” she said. “And there are kids that wouldn’t have been able to get there too. Families can sit at their computer, talk about it and look at it, browse through at their own pace in their home.”

“My mom isn’t a big computer person, she doesn’t even have a computer, but I came over and showed it to her on my big screen and we looked at it, and it was so nice to take my mom through that.”

Dorion and Sutton will give a virtual artist talk with Gallery@504 on April 24.

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The Medical Clinic at Ile a la Crosse, SK, a University-affiliated six-physician medical practice, requires the services of a full-time Clinic Support Team Member. The Natawihin-Nakasuwenik Clinic provides a spectrum of medical services from prevention and primary care, through to itinerant specialists with access to secondary and tertiary services, as well as remote training for Family Medicine Residents and medical students.

The successful candidate will provide back-up services to all other positions in the clinic, provide help and support with human resource activities, assist the clinic staff on a daily basis during busy periods, assist and support the Physician Coordinator and the Nurse Practitioner, provide orientation and administrative support for physicians, handle patient complaints, maintain physician housing units and duty vehicles, and other administrative duties as assigned.

The ideal candidate will have acquired education - medical office assistant certification and/or EMR experience considered an asset, 3-5 years’ experience in an administrative role and knowledge of and respect for First Nations and Métis lifestyle, culture and traditions. Computer skills are essential. Knowledge of medical terminology is an asset. Keen attention to accuracy and attention to detail, understanding the importance of confidentiality and professionalism, and the ability to work efficiently is required. Emphasis on safe and quality patient care is required. The ability to adapt to new technology (the clinic uses Electronic Medical Records) in order to enhance the existing administrative team is required.

This is an out-of-scope position. Salary is commensurate with qualifications and experience: \$20.37 – \$27.56 per hour plus benefits.

Campbell’s poetry will make anyone blush

By Judith Iron
for Eagle Feather News

Bold Canoe Narrows Saskatchewan- If an auntie laughs in the forest can everybody hear? Tenille K Campbell might have something to do with that. Her quick wit, wicked sense of humor and brazen poetry can make anyone blush - even when they’re alone. Sex and romance in Indian country will never be the same after discovering Campbell’s poetry.

Tenille K Campbell is a young Dene Métis woman from the English River First Nation who has just had her second book published. Her first book # Indian Love Poems (2017) paved the way for her 2021 book titled Nedi Nezu: Good Medicine. The theme: Indigenous erotica.

Campbell started writing Indigenous erotica after a difficult break up in her late twenties that left her a single mom to her daughter Aerie. The time came when she realized that she needed to start dating again, but she didn’t know how to do that. When she did have dates, she didn’t have anyone to discuss them with because many of her friends were in committed relationships.

“I started writing because I needed to express myself. I needed to try to figure out what I was feeling,” says Campbell. “I created a safe space for myself where I could write and say what I wanted without guilt or fear.”

Campbell began to pen explicit stories with her poetry. She uses humor and raw honesty in such a way that we can all recognize and empathize with her.

“Indians are such beautiful story tellers. We already know how to tell a story. We already know how to make people laugh. Poetry is just another way of doing that and I wanted to write it the way that felt familiar to how we already speak,” said Campbell.

When Campbell was writing her first book no one knew what she was writing about.

“When Indian Love Poems came out there was big reaction because it came out of nowhere,” says Campbell. “Suddenly there was this sassy tongue in cheek Indian humor book filled with sex and frybread and syrup and everyone was like what the heck?”

Campbell loves the live readings because she gets to see how the audience reacts to her words.



Tenille K Campbell – used with permission from Tenille K Campbell

“The audience goes through so many emotions. They blush. They laugh. They nudge and hit each other. Especially the women. I can tell when they really connect with what I’m saying.”

Sweet Moon Photography is another passion for Campbell. About ten years ago Campbell picked up a camera and started taking photos. “It’s just another way for me to express myself creatively,” says Campbell. “I specialize in Indigenous imagery. This year I will still do weddings, grads up north, and family portraits following Covid safety guidelines.”

“I started writing because I needed to express myself. I needed to try to figure out what I was feeling,” says Campbell. “I created a safe space for myself where I could write and say what I wanted without guilt or fear.”

Campbell says her inspiration comes from the many women she surrounds herself with. She is inspired by her family, her mother, her daughter Aerie, and the many other women she has come to know in her life.

Her challenges? “I feel like I want to do so much more. I have so many dreams and not enough time.”



Ałnedhe chú
Nuhélot'jng behk'unj,
nuhígwi hóte



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SaskCulture committed to supporting culture and creativity

By NC Raine
for Eagle Feather News

In a world now largely experienced online and socially-distanced, SaskCulture is supporting arts and culture professionals and organizations as they find new ways to serve the people.

The Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre (SICC) has completely adapted its model. Its staple programming includes language and culture camps, traditional parenting programs, in-person workshops, and language conferences – all of which became unfeasible last year.

“In the beginning, when it first hit, it was kind of quiet at SICC. We switched to doing our resource work, so we could concentrate on that, but on dropping everything else, that’s where we felt like there was a hole in our work,” said Melody Wood, Indigenous Knowledge Systems Research at SICC.

With guidance from its Elders Council, SICC developed a webinar called “Language and Culture, Connected,” featuring stories, workshops, and dis-

“extreme safety protocols,” which entails renting a room at the Saskatoon Inn, having everyone present take a COVID-19 test and recording the session at a safe, social distance.

SaskCulture is playing a major role keeping art and culture alive during the pandemic.

The art and culture sector contributes almost \$1 billion of Saskatchewan’s gross domestic product, and has been the second hardest hit sector during the pandemic, behind only the food and hospitality industry, said SaskCulture CEO Dean Kush.

“It’s hard to measure the impact. Take events like Back to Batoche, where people can no longer gather. It’s ticket driven, but there’s also people spending their money on things like art and food trucks. So, we don’t know how big the damage is (to Saskatchewan),” said Kush.

“We are not reducing the granting money. We’re hopeful we can weather the storm.”

Last year SaskCulture maintained its regular funding levels and intends to continue maintaining them, he said.

Soon after COVID-19 hit Saskatchewan, SaskCulture guaranteed continued funding to cover operating costs of some major provincial cultural organizations, including Wanuskewin Heritage Park, Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan and the Multicultural Council. In total, 30 organizations receive \$8 million annually from SaskCulture.

That lifeblood for Indigenous artists also will remain available through about \$1.8 million in project grants like the Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Leadership Grant and the Métis Cultural Development Fund, he said.

“Our commitment to Indigenous people is a cornerstone of what we’re doing at SaskCulture. We know communities need support – we’re talking about preserving heritage and language,” he said.

“We like to provide these supports, but not in a prescriptive way. It’s about what they need to do. Whether it’s preserving language or having camps on the land, we are committed to ensuring they can do what they feel is important.”



Ernest Sanderson, Chevez Ezane, Melody Wood, and Janet Fox record a Traditional Parenting lesson at the Saskatoon Inn. (Photo by Melody Wood)

cussions about Indigenous history, traditional lullabies and contemporary art.

SaskCulture supports the program, which will run indefinitely.

“The idea is to keep First Nations people continually connected with language and culture. We carry out programming with various community members and talk with them about the knowledge they have. It’s sometimes very broad, and other times focused,” Wood said.

Traditional Parenting workshops have gone online, with creators using



NA-MI-QUAI-NI-MAK

I remember them

COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUND

The Saskatoon Survivors Circle wants people to be aware of the Na-mi-quai-ni-mak (I remember them) Community Support Fund which offers small grants through the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTRC) and Parks Canada for community-based healing and remembrance projects. Information is available on the NCTRC website www.nctr.ca under the Memorial tab.

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Not so long ago in old people’s years

It wasn’t so long ago, in old people’s years, when Indian Affairs gave out a case of twenty-four Sporks to every First Nation citizen. The Spork brand gradually evolved into Spam, which is the same thing. Every family had Spork for a year and more. We had a dog named “Spork” as he was born the same day the Spork shipments arrived. I had Spork sandwiches with mustard slathered on. Mustard was essential since Spork had a rather bland taste. At least this was my experience. There was a popular rumor, stretched some, which claimed it was made from pig lips, lungs, brains and eyeballs. Despite that, it became popular poverty food, driven more out of necessity than anything else. Most people were poor back then. Spork was baked with brown sugar, fried with eggs, chopped up in a salad and mushed up mixed with onions and spread on a sandwich. It would have made a serviceable stir fry but back then Chinese food just a rumor. I think the government just wanted to get rid of it.

We downed big black vitamin pills and cod liver oil. The cod liver oil was slippery with a ghastly taste. Thank goodness for Flintstone vitamin pills which came much later. Hardtack was a hard biscuit more suitable for a hockey puck than anything else. Rumor

had it hardtack was Canadian Navy surplus which makes sense since it was most often sailor food. The sailors probably mutinied in disgust. Residential school children should have pelted staff with it. This was regular fare in residential schools along with watery soup



Breaking Trail

John Cuthand

served in aluminum bowls and cheap powdered milk on the side. The milk only resembled the real stuff and like most everything else was probably unwanted surplus from somewhere. This cheap meal was served to schoolchildren while staff ate much better in a separate room. Hard tack could only be eaten if it was soaked in milk for an extended time. The younger children couldn’t eat it as their teeth were not strong enough. A ball-peen hammer was a desirable necessity.

Indian Affairs bought glasses frames in bulk. The lenses were thick, as were the large black frames. Most everyone, unfortunately, resembled a racoon. The girls received grey rims with small horns projecting out the side. These thick-framed glasses were troll ugly. Such was the unfortunate style back in the early sixties.

Indian Affairs had us line up in a field to receive vaccines and an x-ray. Some kids wimped out and the rest of us would laugh at their expense. My needle experience was only made possible because I wouldn’t look at the needle. The x-ray machine was a hazard as far as I remember. When we were x-rayed, we clutched onto a machine the size of a fridge. There was no safety shield and everyone must have received repeated doses of radiation as the line moved along.

There was a tradition kept on Blood/ Kainai reserve: whenever cattle became road kill, a generous portion was given to the Anglican minister (as my father, Stan Cuthand, was). Once in a while at odd hours someone would show up at our place to drop off a portion of a fresh carcass. Sometimes it was nicely tenderized. I’d rather not wallow in the past but like so many pensioners, I can’t stop talking about it.



Reconciliation Ally: Ed Mendez



By John Lagimodiere
of Eagle Feather News

Ed Mendez is reconciliation in action in the arts. As a thirteen-year veteran of the Saskatoon arts scene, Mendez knows that his industry has lots to do to move towards reconciliation. As the General Manager of the Gordon Tootoosis Nikaniwin Theatre Company (GTNT), he gets to help put that in motion.

“This theatre group was created for youth to be culturally connected and to create an Indigenous presence in this art form. In my personal capacity I try and stay hands off the creative side of things and leave that to Jennifer Bishop our Artistic Director,” said Mendez in an interview with Eagle Feather News. “The role that I have is to gather as many resources and connections in the community that I can, to ensure that Indigenous people have as many opportunities in this industry as anyone else.”

Mendez knows the history of our country that has led to this. “There has been horrendous treatment of Indigenous people by settlers in this country for many hundreds of years. Reconciliation is about trying to right many of those wrongs to ensure that Canadian society is aware of the lasting impacts of colonialism,” said Mendez.

“When it comes to the shows that we are producing, it always comes through that lens. What is authentically Indigenous theatre? Can we even escape the idea of colonialism in our industry and our practices?”

Mendez says they are trying to create space for Indigenous stories to be

told and healing to begin. “Success is when we are having authentic Indigenous stories told by Indigenous people.”

Born and raised in Saskatoon to parents that left Chile in the late 1970’s, the U of S Drama graduate has been GTNT’s general manager for just over a year. He is married to Tamara and has two children, Diego and Miguel. In his spare time, he loves yard work and gardening, voice acting and has a keen interest in blacksmithing.

He is hopeful for the future for a couple reasons. First, it is the youth he sees through GTNT. He relates the story how he and a couple other instructors did a training session for youth aged 14 to 18 in the Circle of Voices program. They ran an exercise where they gave the youth verbs and they had to do the actions. “They created a short fifteen second piece in five minutes and to all of us it encapsulated the residential school experience. It was an abstract concept, and they didn’t even know they had done it,” said Mendez. “We showed it to them on video and asked what they saw. Then they understood. I told them they created such powerful imagery in just five minutes, that it shook me to my core. We told them to imagine what they could do in years or over a career. It is unreal what the youth can do.”

Last, Mendez has faith that the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be accepted. “So many industries have been called to action. I really want to see the Calls accepted in the education system. I did not learn about the Indigenous world until early university,” said Mendez. “Curriculum has changed but it would be great if non-Indigenous people had a good firm understanding of it early on.”



Ed Mendez puts reconciliation into action in the arts.

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