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Elder Lillian Piapot



TEAGAN LITTLECHIEF
HITTING THE HIGH NOTES

"We started out so small, but we believed that we could take it somewhere, not sure in the beginning where," she said. "I've always had big dreams of being able to perform the national anthem at a large-scale event."

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December 2022 is our
Christsmas & Holiday Issue

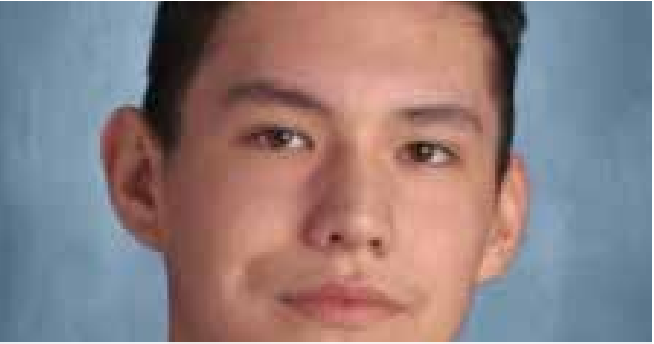
JANUARY 2023 Issue:
Storytelling Month

*By Esther Oladapo
for Eagle Feather News*

Lillian Piapot is quite easily Regina's most recognizable Kokum - no easy task in a city with nearly a quarter million people. She's an important knowledge keeper who's generous with her time, despite her mobility issues. Originally from the Piapot Cree Nation located 30 minutes northeast of Regina, the 81-year-old says the reserve was named after her father-in-law's dad Chief Payepot. When Piapot was 28 she left the reserve and moved into the city. Like many of her generation, she attended Indian Residential School and although she loved learning, she did not have the opportunity

to further her education. While in school, education was secondary to learning how to clean and other types of domestic work. One of the things she is most proud of is still being able to speak the Cree language. "I didn't forget," said Piapot. "They didn't beat it out of me." She says retaining the language is very important especially today. When she's asked to speak or say a prayer at events she always does so in Cree because she values the language. Wherever Piapot goes people naturally gravitate towards her because she exudes kindness and gentleness, which many find comforting. Tracy Desjarlais is one such person. She often assists Piapot by transporting her to events in and around the city.

continued page 2 ...



SEAN BERNARD
QUEST FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

"Well for me, there is no planet-B, there is only Earth, and this is where for me as an Indigenous person the earth is the spirit and the earth is the relationship that we have with the earth is so special on that connection."

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PRINCE ALBERT MUSEUM
HONOURING HISTORY

"I think it has been a big turnaround in the thinking and, not only with (Indigenous) people, but sharing the knowledge that we have in our society."

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Trail Blazer: Elder Lillian Piapot

... continued from page 1

"My Kokum Lillian means a lot to me," said Desjarlais. "She has been like a mother to me since my mom passed in 2019."

Desjarlais said there are very few Elders, especially in Regina, who can speak the Cree language, which has created a demand for Piapot.

Despite a dependence on a walker to get around and a new pace-maker, it hasn't slowed the Regina Kokum down.

The resilient Elder has faced more than her share of hardship.



Elder Lillian Piapot with Joc O'Rourke, President & CEO of the Mosaic Company. (Photo supplied)

"I was abandoned by my mother and was brought up by my grandmother," said Piapot. "I had to also bring up my mother's children which is why they call me mother-mom. When I eventually had my children, I brought them up alone and lived as a single mum because my husband left me."

In 1969, she was a single mom and new to the city. It was a depressing time and she

faced a lot of racism. In the 1960s there were very few Indigenous families living in the city.

With children to care for, she found ways to survive.

Piapot, once claimed to be white to keep her job.

Although some things have gotten better there's still room for im-

provement, she said.

"Racism is what I have a hard time with within Regina," said Piapot. "I run into it daily. It was always there, and I accepted it and normalized it."

She worked her entire life and did not depend on social programs, which is something she's proud of.

Piapot remains busy and is the resident elder at Miller Comprehensive High School. She shares her knowledge about Indigenous people because real Indigenous history is not written in text books.

Although she's lived most of her life in the city, she still remembers what it was like to live on reserve.

It was a peaceful life.

The men hunted and fished and farmed to provide for their families.

Piapot went to ceremonies and danced, both of which instilled her with a strong sense of cultural pride that she carries with her.

Despite living in North Central for most of her life, she never attended a football game but that all changed after she met Joc O'Rourke, president and CEO of the Mosaic Company.

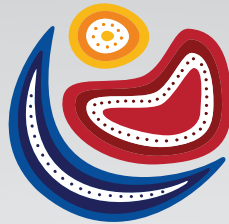
The pair met during a funding announcement at the YWCA in Regina and O'Rourke invited Piapot to the Grey Cup game.

He made certain her first game was memorable by giving her the star treatment that included new Roughrider gear, transportation and VIP seating.

Although football "wasn't her cup of tea", she enjoyed the opportunity to share a little about the Cree culture with those she met.

Piapot said the best part of the day was listening to Teagan Littlechief singing the national anthem partially in Cree.

When reflecting on her life and the many obstacles she's overcome, Piapot said one of her proudest moments have been watching her grandchildren succeed like her granddaughter Ntawnis Piapot who is an award-winning journalist.



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Teagan Littlechief wows Grey Cup crowd with her version of O’ Canada

By Memory McLeod
for Eagle Feather News

An amazing voice and ability to wow a crowd is something Teagan Littlechief began in Pre-K when a teacher encouraged her mother to enroll her into voice lessons and she hasn’t looked back.



Teagan Littlechief belts out the national anthem in English, French and Cree. Millions of people across the country tuned into the Grey Cup game. The singer from Whitebear First Nation said it was a dream come true. (photo supplied by Littlechief)

Since then, the mother and daughter have become team and together they have been building a dream, which propelled the Whitebear First Nation singer into the national spotlight.

Littlechief was asked to sing the national anthem in three languages at the 2022 Grey Cup Festival in Regina, which she did in not two but three languages.

Although she’s not a fluent speaker of either Cree or French, she embraced the challenge of doing something that hadn’t done before at the Grey Cup.

“It was a first for me, and I absolutely loved it,” said Littlechief. “Singing in Cree, I feel like it came naturally, and it just felt like me. It only took me about 2 weeks to get it memorized. The French took right until the day of the anthem. I had a friend help me with

French. They said it sounded good to encourage me. So there I am, a ball of nerves, the day of practicing and this lady who is fluent came along and said ‘try it this way’ so that helped and I was more confident with it after that.”

Since her early days of singing at festivals and other gatherings, Littlechief and her mother have stayed the course towards building the dream – to sing in front of bigger crowds and at larger venues.

“We started out so small, but we believed that we could take it somewhere, not sure in the beginning where,” she said. “I’ve always had big dreams of being able to perform the national anthem at a large-scale event.”

Her dream became a reality on November 20 when she performed to more than 33,000 at the stadium with millions more tuning into.

Littlechief credits her parents for helping her reach this milestone in her career because they invested both time and energy in making sure she would be successful.

While sports was always big in her family, she says her parents pushed her to make the best out of her opportunities.

Littlechief describes her mother, Sara, her mentor. who wore many hats over the years as they traveled together to different communities and events.

“She has been my life coach, my best friend, my driver, my back person,” said Littlechief. “She made sure I took care of myself and helped me get clean and sober. She was my rock. She knew what to say or do if I was bullied for my singing. She made sure my friends stuck by me.”

Like many others, she faced setbacks due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

“Of course, during that time when everything shut down, the phone went quiet too,” said Littlechief. “Over the years I’d struggled in addiction and not good relationships and my singing went to the back burner. During covid I started my recovery process and took my music seriously. Doors just started opening up.”

After winning the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Artist of the year at the 2022 Saskatchewan Country Music awards, being asked to sing at the Grey Cup has only made her dreams get even bigger.

It has been a long road for Littlechief. She began singing the national anthem at Saskatchewan Roughrider games since her son, now 11 years old, was born.

Her son has grown up seeing and hearing his mother sing at football games and has gained a passion for the game and the team.



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Cold War veteran his story of his journey

By *Liam O'Connor*
of *Eagle Feather News*

Like many of his generation, Emile Highway, an 80-year-old veteran from Reindeer Lake, Manitoba, was taken by the Residential School System as a child.

He attended the Guy Hill Indian Residential School for almost eight years, then in Grade 8 he said students were kicked out so they couldn't receive any level of higher education.

Highway said that his time there was extremely traumatic and, after eight years, he didn't walk away from the school with a competent level of education to prepare him for the world.

"We're going to keep kicking your people out at Grade 8, so they can't progress economically, socially [or] politically. And you're gonna be where you are, you're stuck," said Highway, describing the sentiment of the government at the time.

Determined to learn and make something of himself despite the roadblocks placed in his way, Highway decided the Canadian military would be his best route to higher education.

"I was smart enough to realize that I needed some kind of a trade in order to make a living as I reached adulthood."

Highway applied to the Royal Canadian Electrical Mechanical Engineers (RCEME), a program for mechanical positions embedded with the infantry division where he could fix cars, trucks, tanks and artillery.

However, Highway said he was refused because he didn't have the education qualifications.

He went back to school, got the qualifications and reapplied — this time he was accepted into the military, but they told him the RCEME program was full, but they needed men in infantry — and Highway obliged them.

"(Residential Schools) made us susceptible or readily affected, to being recruited or voluntarily enlisted into the army," said Highway. "And that's what happened to a lot of us who went to Residential School. I met veterans overseas who had been through the same process, so it was deliberate."

Highway recalled a time when he and other Indigenous veterans chatted about why Indigenous people fought for "the white man's army," and he said they all came to the conclusion that they did it for the land and treaties.

After training, Highway was sent off to West Germany during the Cold War in November 1963.

He remembers being shipped off to West Germany at this time vividly because it was shortly after the assassination of United States President, John F. Kennedy.

His job while in West Germany was to keep the Russians out of Europe.

While the architecture, food and language were eye-opening for Highway, he said he looks back on that time and thinks about how the term "never again" was coined and used around the world because of the Holocaust, but there continue to be many atrocities and inhumanities to this day.

"There have been so many tragedies similar but not equal to the Holocaust over the years, that this 'never again' is absolutely meaningless."

"Like Rwanda and Cambodia, Biafra, Darfur and Bosnia."

Highway went on to do a peace mission in Cyprus and eventually ended up back in Canada.

Never giving up on getting a higher education and achieving the trade he initially had his sights set on, Highway applied to a military engineering program, where he finally was able to upgrade his education and work at a power plant in B.C.

"All I had was a blanket, I mean a (piece of) cardboard for a blanket, you know, and I never thought I'd own a home, no, never in my wildest dreams did I ever think I would own my own house. I bought an old house, renovated it, hired contractors to put in a new kitchen and stuff like that. I'm sitting in it right now."



Emile Highway stands at attention during Remembrance Day services, despite the freezing temperatures. (Photo by Highway)



Saskatchewan pair make an impact in Paris

By NC Raine
for Eagle Feather News

From a young age, both Lindsay Isbister and Carmen Halkett had dreams of fashion, big cities, foreign countries, and expressing their culture to the world.

These dreams have been made a reality. Multiples times over.



Isbister modelling for Amoe Bee Designs in Paris. (Photo by Lindsay Isbister)

New York Fashion Week; from the Statue of Liberty to the Eiffel Tower, two young women from the prairies, showing the world their culture.

“It really was a dream come true. New York has always been my number one goal. So getting the opportunity to walk there was absolutely amazing,” said Isbister.



Carmen Halkett's fashion designs and Carmen in Paris. (Photo by Lindsay Isbister)

“I believe that our own ways or dressing reflects where we are from, where we live, how we express, how we create, and how we associate. And how we get the chance to choose how we show up in the world,” said Halkett.

Similarly, Isbister found strength in the intersection of fashion and her culture. From Mistawasis Nêhiyawak, Isbister has been modelling since she was 12 years old. But her arrival in the modelling world came by a rather unconventional way.

“I lacked confidence as a child. I was bullied in school and had really low self-confidence. I didn't even want to go to school,” said Isbister.

But after a friend encouraged her to enroll in a local modelling program, things took a major shift.

“Once I started modelling, my confidence went way up. I could stand in front of people and talk. It really built my confidence up, so that's why I want to work with others to do that,” she said.

When not gracing the runway in New York

This past fall, both Isbister and Halkett, model and designer, respectively, travelled to France to take part in Paris Fashion Week. It was an experience both spent their lives working towards.

“Being in Paris, representing my designs, has been a dream of mine since I was eight or nine years old. I had a Paris-themed bedroom growing up. So I kind of manifested it in a way,” said Halkett.

The two took part in the Indigenous showcase, Isbister for her modelling, and Halkett for her designs, during fashion week. The trip came just a couple months after the equally big and prestigious New

“And we got a lot of questions. People were intrigued by our different fashion. So it was really an opportunity to share our culture and where we're from.”

Halkett, from Little Red River First Nation, and owner of Carmen Theresa Lynn Designs, has been designing since she was in Grade 2, and incorporates her Cree roots into every thread she creates. Her great-grandmother designed and created their clothes, while her mom made mukluks and star blankets. So from a young age, a sewing machine was the tool Halkett used to express herself.



Isbister and Halkett in Paris for Fashion Week. (Photo by Lindsay Isbister)

or Paris, Isbister is doing exactly that. She mentors youth, mostly Indigenous, on modelling – everything from confidence building, runway walking, how to work with agencies, designers, and photographers, and proper etiquette when on shoots or in shows.

“I get asked a lot, ‘can I model? I'm not a size 0.’ They don't consider themselves having the perfect magazine or runway look. I let people know, anyone can model. You just have to have confidence,” said Isbister.

“So I'm hoping to inspire young Indigenous people. To show them you can get out there and follow your dreams.”

Both Isbister and Halkett are hoping to attend London Fashion Week this February, which will be a first for both of them. But hopping around the globe hasn't made them forget about their roots.

The two put on their own fashion show this October at the Roxy in Saskatoon, with musical acts performing alongside the fashions from five local Indigenous designers, including Halkett's own designs. Then, on December 17 in Saskatoon, Isbister will be modelling and Halkett presenting her designs in the “Dreams” fashion show put on by Only Solutions Clothing Brand.

“This is our home. I love getting more Indigenous representation out there in the fashion world. People here need to know how special they are,” said Halkett.

“I just think we're unstoppable,” said Isbister. “We need to keep showing the world our culture and how great it is.”

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Sean Bernard takes on the weight of climate change

By Liam O'Connor
of Eagle Feather News

With the weight of the world on his generation's shoulders, Sean Bernard, a grade 12 student from Meadow Lake, Sask. feels a sense of hope after taking on the massive task of presenting at the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Summit, also called Conference of the Parties (COP27).



Trip to Egypt for the COP27 meeting. Sean Bernard on stage presenting with the Global Child Manifesto. (Photo by Tanis Crawford)

Manifesto,

The manifesto entails problems in the student's communities around the planet, then solutions and their own personal opinions.

Because you're Indigenous, do you have a different understanding and relationship with the environment that may have been of benefit to the COP27 presentation?

Bernard: I had a sense of responsibility that I felt to take this on, and not only for myself, or for the indigenous communities, and especially my communities. So I feel like there's an under-representation of our communities and these indigenous people.

Recently, a new UN analysis indicates that the planet is not on track to meet the Paris climate accord agreement. How does that make you feel as a youth inheriting the environmental catastrophe that scientists are predicting?

Bernard: At first, it seems scary. And it is a little a sense of like, worrisome, but after this experience, after working with the children that I worked with, like people my age, I have a sense of hope. Now, the sense of this positivity that we're here, and we're wanting to learn, and we want to demand our voice, we want to advocate our voice out there.

Why do you think there is a sense of urgency in your generation compared to others?

Bernard: Well for me, there is no planet-B, there is only Earth, and this is where for me as an Indigenous person the earth is the spirit and the earth is the relationship that we have with the earth is so special on that connection. And the urgency for me is that losing that connection is very, very hard for my community, my traditions, my culture and my identity.

In your opinion, what's preventing countries from meeting environmental goals?

Bernard: We have to start finding different ways we can start living rather than having this linear way of living. Because if we have this linear way of living, there's no sustainability, there's no sense of cycle. We can't recycle what we're doing.

Which environmental area specifically could Canada strive to improve currently?

Bernard: From living in Saskatchewan, and also being a neighbor to Alberta, we're very high on oil, we're very high on fossil fuels and that's how our economy works here. We have to start making this change, where it's not going to be our main economy, we have to start creating some sustainable energy

and sustainable jobs where people can actually start working in a different field rather than in the oil fields and in the fossil fuel industry.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.



Sean Bernard. (Photo by Tanis Crawford)

Bernard was chosen for the project by his northern life-styles teacher, Tanis Crawford, which he said is because of his known student advocacy within Carpenter High School.

"We need our youth who we're educating as teachers," said Crawford. "We need our youth holding us as adults responsible for it (climate change) because they are inheriting this."

With a team of other like-minded youth leaders from around the world, Bernard and the team met over various Zoom meetings, where they created the Global Child



Sean Bernard. (Photo by Tanis Crawford)



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Cole Cappel becomes first graduate of an all-new program at FNUniv

By *Liam O'Connor*
of *Eagle Feather News*

A brand new program that offers a certificate at the First Nations University (FNUniv) is called the Indigenous Journalism and Communication program (INJC).

INJC is designed to be a one-year, 30 credit program, and it launched during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021. Students learn a number of different journalistic disciplines, such as print, broadcast and social media.

Recently in the 2022 Fall convocation group, Cole Cappel became the first person to graduate from the INJC program.

Cole is a 29-year-old from Muscowpetung First Nation and expressed that his family members were the ones to push him to get this certificate.

“My family, they just mess around, and they call it the degree club,” said Cole. “Like, everybody’s got a degree and I need a degree to get into the degree club.”

When Cole graduated from high school he was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS), a disease that affects the brain and spinal cord and, ultimately, causes numerous mobility issues.

Cole’s mother Candace Cappel described the diagnosis as a “shift” that occurred in their family and Cole’s life.

“We didn’t know a lot about it. We were told that First Nations people don’t get MS,” said Candace. “So, there was this whole process of grieving that we went through that our lives were changing because our son had this condition that we didn’t really understand or know about.”

Lower rates of MS in Indigenous people is true; it is also a deceptive statistic because of how quickly the rates of MS are increasing in Indigenous people — according to mssociety.ca:

A 2018, a study led by Dr. Ruth Ann Marrie looked at First Nations Peoples in Manitoba using population-based administrative data over a 25-year period (between 1984 to 2011) and showed that although rates of MS in First Nations populations are lower than the general population, prevalence of MS is increasing at a dramatic rate – a 351 per cent increase over this period amongst First Nations peoples versus a 225 percent increase the non-First Nations population.

Despite the unfortunate circumstance, Cole trudged on with the support of his family and advisors. Sometimes that support took the form of Candace or students in the program helping Cole type out his articles or transcribe interviews for him.

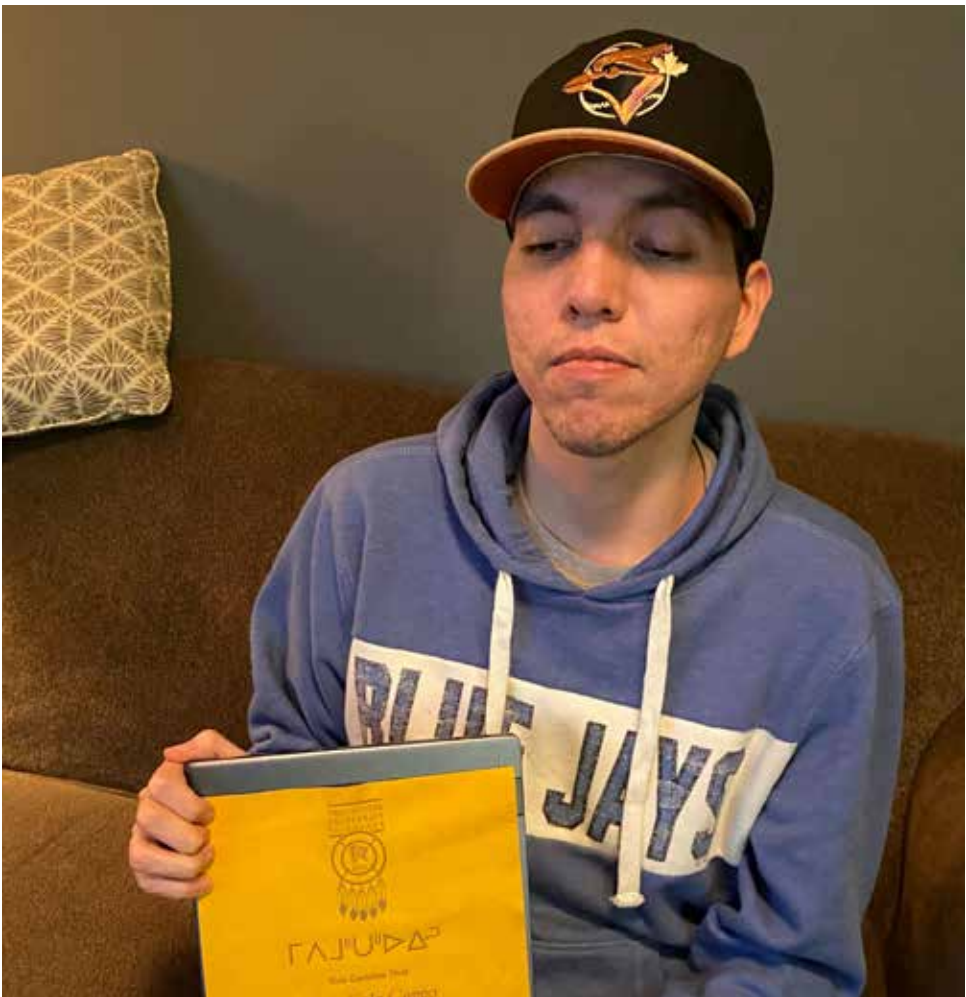
When asked about what made him land on journalism and communication, Cole said it was a mix of Shannon Avison — the program coordinator of Indigenous Communication Arts — and his keen interest in Mixed Martial Arts (MMA).

“My other motivation is I’m into mixed martial arts and the journalist Ariel Helwani, and I’ve been following him since his start.”

Ariel Helwani is a Canadian and one of the most well-known MMA journalists in the industry. Avison has had the chance to teach, not only Cole but also his father, mother, sister and brother — who now all have business degrees from the First Nations University. She had many fond memories working with and instructing Cole in the program.

“Cheeky, super cheeky,” Avison joked. “For all the things he’s been through, he is so joyful and cheers on the other students and he’s just absolutely a delight to have as a student.”

Candace said her goal was always to have all her children graduate high school because she and her husband were both in Residential School when they were kids and Candace never finished high school. So, all of the business degrees, certificates and success are just the “cherry on top” for her.



Cole Cappel holds his parchment that he received during the FNUniv Fall Convocation. He completed the Indigenous Journalism and Communications (INJC) program now offered at the First Nations University of Canada. (photo supplied by Shannon Avison)

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The holidays are a time to be with family and friends, sharing in culture, tradition, food and ceremony. With the prospect of a new year upon us, take time to reflect on the accomplishments of the year gone by and the importance of community.

From all of us at the Métis Nation Government in Saskatchewan, have a safe and happy season and may the new year find everyone in good spirits and good health.



J H W A Y E U N O W E L

Season's Greetings

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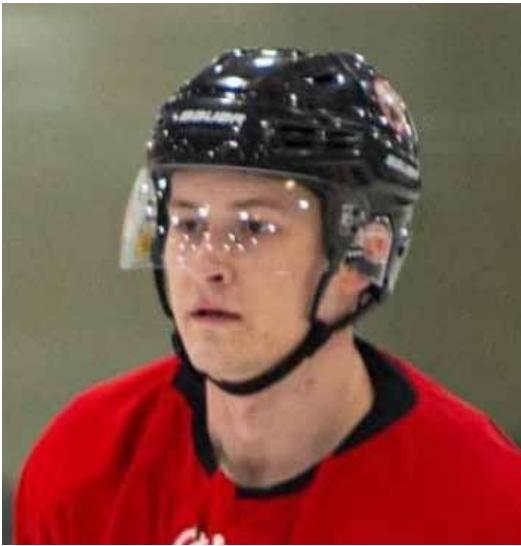
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Passing life lessons on and off the ice

By NC Raine
of Eagle Feather News

Kirk Bear has had a distinguished career in athletics, playing hockey in leagues including National U Sports for the University of Regina, and the Western Hockey League (WHL). But for Bear, it's always been about something bigger than just hockey.



Kirk Bear during his time in the Western Hockey League (WHL). The Ochapowace member played for Red Deer Rebels. (Photo by Kirk Bear)

"I think it's about the relationships hockey has given me," said Bear.

"On some of my teams, I was [the only Indigenous person]. Some of my teammates, even some parents, really dove in trying to understand First Nations people. I think it helped change some perspectives on who Indigenous people are."

Understanding different perspectives, including his own, has been engrained in Bear from an early age.

From Ochapowace Nation, Bear grew up in the small town of Whitewood before moving back to his home First Nation at 13 when his father became a councillor there. It was an experience

that left a lasting mark.

"Culture was huge to me growing up. We had an Elder named Steve Dorma, we would go into the bush and look for medicine. You don't realize how much there is to learn until an Elder takes time to show you. It's something I look forward to passing on to my kids one day," said Bear.

But moving back to his home reserve had its challenges. Bear is more "fair-skinned" than many of his peers and Indigenous community members, which would often lead to classmates denouncing him as not being Indigenous.

"Moving to the First Nation, that first year was tough. Because I was essentially seen as a white kid in an Indigenous school," he said.

Bear said a principal at the school helped him cope and develop thicker skin. And his family encouraged him to respond by simply immersing himself deeper into his culture.

"My Uncle Albert taught me that this problem won't matter if you learn your culture. So I was a big singer at powwows, and learned my culture through song and drum."

Meanwhile, his burgeoning hockey career was giving him the opportunity to apply some of these lessons. Bear, following in his father's footsteps, attended the Athol Murray College of Notre Dame, where he made the triple A team. He then played for the Melville Millionaires in the SJHL and Red Deer Rebels in the WHL. Being one of the only Indigenous players on these teams meant the opportunity to broaden the perspectives of his teammates.



Kirk Bear holds his scroll from the University of Regina surrounded by members of his family. Receiving his post-secondary education is among his list of achievements thus far. (Photo by Kirk Bear)

"Of course there was sometimes name-calling. I was the only one who would sometimes pull up to the arena in a rez van," said Bear. "But I had some teammates really take an interest. Some would come out to the reservation to see what the life was like there. They actually wanted to understand what First Nations were about."

Now, in order to keep passing on lessons both on and off the ice, Bear is head coach and part owner of the Extreme Hockey Regina Capitals – a team of 17- to 21-year-olds in the Prairie Junior Hockey League.

"I'm helping turn boys into young men," said Bear.

"I'm a shoulder to lean on for them. I was in their shoes and I always had coaches there for me. So if I can help these guys down their own path, that's really important to me."

When he's away from the ice, Bear is a financial advisor at Conexus Credit Union in Regina. It's a role not many Indigenous people are in, he said, but leads to him being highly sought after for that very reason.

"Once people find out you're from a First Nation, they want to come see you. There's an understanding there. People want to connect and have a conversation, rather than being sent a spreadsheet in an email."

As if he's not busy enough, Bear also sits on board of the Regina Alternative Measures Program, which works with Indigenous people to keep them out of incarceration.

Bear said all of this is about providing the helping hand that he's had so many times.

"If someone is feeling down or out, it's often just a phone call or message to someone. A role model or positive influence in your life. Inviting that first contact is important. I've had to do it a lot in my life, and I wouldn't be where I am now if I didn't."



Since leaving the world of hockey, Kirk Bear has chosen to pursue a career in banking and is a financial advisor at Conexus Credit Union in Regina.

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Former Eagle Feather publisher breaks his one-year of silence

By John Lagimodiere
for Eagle Feather News

This is weird. I kind of forgot how to write after almost a year off. How to start. What to write about. And why am I still writing when I quit this game to specifically get away from the anxiety of writing all the time. Sometimes words and thoughts are hard.

But Kerry assured me it was just like riding a bike. Bad analogy, as I have fallen off a lot of bikes in my day. One time after a dynamic ramp jump, I went face first in the alley, with my feet kicking the back of my head. You just shouldn't bend that way. I stood up and had my entire bottom lip full of sand and gravel. Not one mark, cut or injury on my face, just a sore knee and a bunch of Eastview alley dirt in my mouth. It was a miracle. Just like me agreeing to write this month.



Lagimodiere enjoying all his new hobbies after retirement. (Photo supplied)

I was relieved to be out of the news world this year. But I am still a news hound. Eagle Feather News is still and will always be my home page. I still get some press releases and follow some newsies and influencers on social media. Enjoying the news without the responsibility of covering it or assigning someone for it. It was a relief, especially when there were some big stories that captivated the community.

The tragedy at James Smith Cree Nation has rocked our country and forever affected our friends and relatives from that community. We must keep the victims, survivors and their families in our thoughts this season as they gather for their toughest Christmas ever.

And our old pal and former columnist Dawn Dumont had us all concerned when she and her son disappeared. Thankfully they were found safe and now we wait to see the repercussions. I was most shocked that she stopped in the northern United States instead of booking it for Mexico. When you need to hide, always go to Mexico.

Those stories were emotional and challenging to follow, but I always balanced the tough stories by following the good news stories that keep coming from Eagle Feather News. Seeing Chief Mary-Anne Day Walker-Pelletier and the legendary actor, author and activist Harry Daniels get stamps made by Canada Post in their honour was something. I had the good fortune of meeting both of those amazing people in my media career and am grateful to have. Leadership personified.

Getting out of the media has given me two things I didn't have before. The ability to do some facilitating or events that wouldn't have been possible as a journalist and publisher. And I have been gifted a bunch of time.

I was lucky to help facilitate part of a memorandum of understanding between several First Nations and the Northwest Territories about the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Fascinating!

I got to dabble with the committee that was tasked to figure out the process of renaming John A. MacDonald Road in Saskatoon. A long overdue process to put that racist Orangeman and his legacy in their proper place. Also did some work with some Elders and a police service. Good, on the ground community work that I just didn't have time for before.

The extra time has also led me to be addicted to the TV shows Rutherford Falls and Reservation Dogs. Oh, my golly the humour and characters on these shows. Thankfully Reservation Dogs has been renewed. That show is brilliant. I laugh and cry each episode.

A couple dirty TV pleasures include Reacher (kick butt former military, he never loses), and of course, Yellowstone. I can't get enough of Rip and Beth. Admittedly, I have a crush on both.

Was lucky enough to be Speaker of the House for the last Métis Nation Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly. I got to work with my old pal and cohort Merelda Fiddler-Potter and to witness politics in progress. With the MN-S beginning a modern-day treaty renegotiation with the Government of Canada, these are heady times for the Métis of Saskatchewan, and it was rewarding to be involved.

Removing myself from the media was the right choice. My brain slowed down, I was less stressed and angry and just better. It changed how I look at a day. No more fuming and hurrying to the next thing. Enjoy the moment.

I even had a day to see my doctor about my bum knee finally. A full day to have the appointment and get an x-ray and ultrasound, usually a day I would be wound tight! But I had my phone and nothing brewing so I sat in peace and did Angry Birds to fill time. While I waited a young woman come into the office obviously struggling with a bad back issue. I finished my appointment and was waiting for an x-ray. She came for an x-ray as well and suffered in pain as she waited. The technician came to get me for my turn, and I just couldn't do it. I said take the suffering lady before me. Maybe save her 20 minutes of misery and heck, I had nowhere to go anyways.

Once it was my turn the technician told me the lady was getting married in three days and was extremely grateful to go ahead. She cried even! Cost me twenty minutes and made her day. Made me cherish the gift of time and the ability to gift it to others. Little things.

And if you are curious about the results of the x-ray and ultrasound, it turns out the old Indigiknees aren't going to get any better and, even though I have the time, I'm not allowed to jump my bike off of ramps anymore.

Merry Christmas folks!



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Speaking and living the Cree life

By Christina Gervais
of Eagle Feather News

Once Andrea Custer stepped into the world of Cree there was no turning back. Originally from Pelican Lake, her family lived a land-based lifestyle and once the ice melted they lived in traditional camps. Unfortunately, she lost the connection to the language after attending Indian Residential School. Custer first attended when she was nine but only briefly. Her late grandfather visited her at the school and saw that she was unhappy, so he took her home. Custer was 15, returned to residential school and once she was finished school, she didn't return home. This is when her connection to the Cree language was interrupted. However, Custer found her way back into the Cree world. Her journey began about seven years ago when she met Belinda Daniels. In 2014, Custer applied to intern for Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (CILLD) based out of the University of Alberta working under Daniels. After the internship Custer attended a renaming ceremony for Maskwacis First Nation in Alberta. It was a powerful experience, that changed her trajectory in life. She realized language is a part of decolonization. Custer moved back to Saskatchewan and became a Cree teacher, which was the beginning of her work to revitalize the Cree language. "Responsibility lies with us in our homes because we are our children's first teachers" says Custer. Most recently, she and Daniels collaborated on a book called nehiyawetan kikinahk: Speaking Cree in the Home to help others implement Cree in their households. It launched on Nov. 3 at the First Nations University of Canada in Regina and in Saskatoon at Indigenous 1st Designs. The book is basically a beginner's manual to Cree. In addition to the book the pair has a four-episode podcast on Pikiskwewin.ca "Cree and Coffee with the Crazy Crees." The first episode the pair talks about the origin of the name Cree and Coffee, followed by talks with guest speakers Keith Goulet, Leda Corrigan, and Solomon Ratt. Each day, Custer chooses to bring the Cree language into her life, which has changed how she parents.

She introduced her youngest son to the language while he still in the womb. Custer held recorders up to her stomach for him to listen to Cree, she sang and spoke to her unborn child in Cree, so he adapted it before even being born. Custer hired a fluent Cree speaker to care for her son when she returned to work. This work continues now that he's in daycare. Knowing her son is surrounded by only Cree "is medicine to her heart." However, it is challenging because she must remind people, he's a fluent speaker and speaking English to him disrupts his learning. Custer has begun teaching her older children Cree too. "You need to spend a lot of time in language, find people as passionate as you are [if you are serious about learning the language]," said Custer. "Make those connections and reach out." She is doing what she can to make Cree more accessible to everyone. Custer has a YouTube channel called "Learn Cree with Andrea" where she uploads videos regularly sharing how she implements Cree within her home. In her debut video she says, "our children deserve to learn the language, inherit the language, it's their birthright and it's our responsibility to pass that onto them just as it was passed down to us." The book nehiyawetan kikinahk: Speaking Cree in the Home is available at the UR Press and at Indigenous 1st designs located in Prince Albert and Saskatoon.



Andrea Custer has successfully incorporated the Cree language into every aspect of her life including and her children's lives. It is a fete she is very proud of because she is determined to help revitalize the language in the province. (Photo supplied by Shannon Avison)

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Baltimore's rich Indigenous History

By Magdeline Jones
for Eagle Feather News

The Lumbee Tribe has proven time and time again that home is where you make it.

The tribe was formed in the 1700s by Indigenous people in the Carolinas fleeing colonialism. They moved to the swamps around the Lumber River, nicknamed "Drowning Creek" by European settlers.

The Lumbee is the largest tribe east of the Mississippi and most tribal members still live in towns along the Lumber River.

After the Second World War, thousands of Lumbee people moved up the US coast to Baltimore, Maryland in search of job opportunities and a better life.

The mass migration of Lumbee extended to 64 blocks of red-brick row-houses in east Baltimore and became referred to as the Baltimore American Indian Reservation.

In 1968, Lumbee elder, Linda Cox, was 18 when she moved to the city from Pembroke, North Carolina.

"[I] grew up on the farm, and I hated farming," she said still using common Lumbee vernacular. "[I] would have to get up in the morning to take out a barn of tobacco to put in another barn of 'baccer."

It was a tough life.

"You don't appreciate it at the time, all of the work and the vegetables that we actually grew," Cox said about her childhood. "You take it for granted until you get older."

Many Lumbee moved to Baltimore out of necessity.

"We were poor, and I didn't realize... because everybody around me was living the same way," said Cox.

By the late 1960s, the Lumbee established their own church, trading post, restaurants, and cultural center.

In 1968, Cox's mom, Elizabeth Locklear, co-founded the Baltimore American Indian Center (BAIC), which is still open today.

The vision was to create a place "for natives to be able to come together and keep our culture alive."

"It's important for our kids," said Cox, the current BAIC director. "They don't need to be ashamed of who they are."

Lumbee elder Jeanette Walker-Jones moved to Baltimore in 1959.

She remains involved in the community and has seen many changes.

"The Native American people have moved out of the neighborhood," said Walker-Jones. "A lot of them moved to the counties... the neighborhood is so different, a lot of people aren't comfortable coming to the city anymore."

Another remnant of the Baltimore American Indian Reservation is the South Broadway Baptist Church that opened in 1978. However, the Lumbee began congregating in east Baltimore as early as 1952. The church is still attended mostly by the Lumbee many of whom travel from outside of the city for services.

In the 1970s, the South Broadway Baptist Church began to also be used as an Indigenous study center.

Walker-Jones applied for an education grant and got it.

"I would go to the schools...identify the Indian kids, identify their needs, and after school, we would tutor the kids and help them improve on their math and reading skills," she said.

Tiffany Locklear a former student remembers the program.

"They never gave up on me no matter how many times I disappointed them," she said. "They are the reason I went back and got my diploma... I couldn't have [done] it without them."


Those still living in the area know it's important to keep the history alive because it is a testament to the Lumbee resilience.

"Ain't nobody can tell our story like we can tell our story," said Cox. "Not too many of us left here in east Baltimore ...On my block there was eight or nine [Indigenous] families, now it's only me."

Magdeline Jones is a member of the Lumbee Tribe and a student at First Nations University of Canada and was part of the Indigenous Communications Arts Print and Online Journalism Class. This feature was produced as part of her class work.




East Baltimore street rowhouses in the Baltimore American Indian Reservation part of the city. (Photo supplied)




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Newo Yotina Friendship Centre - Post-pandemic recovery takes many forms

*By Memory McLeod
for Eagle Feather News*

One can hardly open a social media app these days without seeing information about mental health.

The months of isolation have taken their toll on the wellbeing of most Canadians and now some of the most vulnerable women and Two-Spirit people in Regina and Saskatoon have a chance to gather to address post pandemic recovery and wellness.

Mental health is paramount in the post pandemic recovery process. People want to feel better, but that doesn't look the same for everyone. Honouring Her Spark is one response that highlights inclusivity to female and Two-Spirit clients offered through the Yotina Friendship Centre in Regina and the Saskatoon Indian and Metis Friendship Centre.

Though in its infancy stage, the initiative comes from a need for people to gather together and build community once again, said coordinator Lindsay Cottin.

"The idea came out of the pandemic...how do we address the needs of people who have been stuck at home who may have otherwise been able to access programming and advocacy," said Cottin. "We have different programs here that address needs varying from housing, addictions, or employment for whoever needs that support. We are an inclusive place for people to come and take part in what our community has to offer."

By bringing in local talent and wellness practitioners, the program provides a well-rounded offering of classes and events to lift a weary spirit. The program seeks to apply the four aspects of the medicine wheel to address the mental, spiritual, physical and emotional wellbeing.

"We wanted to take a holistic approach to mental health," said Cottin.



Jolene Creely centre with participants of one of her sessions at New Yotina Friendship Centre. (Photo supplied)

"We are open to ideas, and have kind of blended it so that all women, or those who identify as women or Two-Spirit have a safe place to come and learn ways to do self-care."

One popular choice this past summer was having clients learn about a new indigenous Birthing Program training birth helpers to support families as they navigate through the birthing process.

"That was something new that we were proud to offer and to be able to bring those programs into the inner city, a population sometimes overlooked in access," said Cottin. "We try to identify those gaps and look for ways to utilize what is available."

She pointed out that recovery entails more than just regaining programs and services lost during the pandemic.

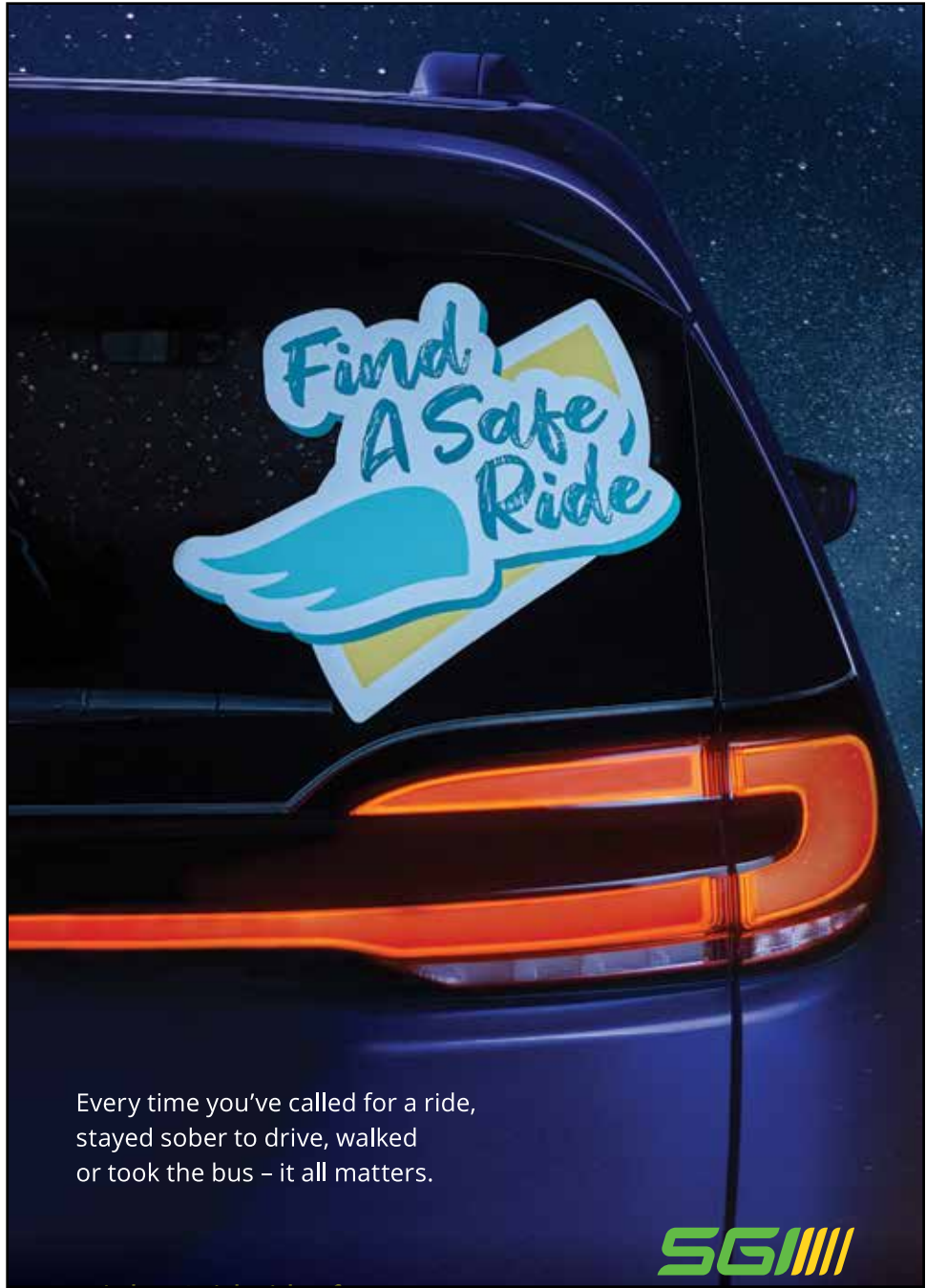
"It's personal for our clients, we hear what the needs are and try to respond to that. We are listening for how those mental health needs, that anxiety can be alleviated. For instance we are looking at art therapy. Our next class is beading, anything we can find to address those needs."



Jolene Creely session photo at New Yotina Friendship Centre. (Photo supplied)

Located in a community where food security is a daily struggle, the Centre featured a talk by Michelle Brass, who spoke about how increasing traditional foods into our diets can improve health and wellbeing.

"The best thing is to be able to bring free classes and access to this great education provided by indigenous people from our own communities who designed them with our clients in mind. We deal with some of the most vulnerable people and we are happy to provide as much advocacy and support as we can," Cottin said.



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Media focus on Alberta’s “Sovereignty Act” and Bill C-21 ignores Indigenous rights assault in Saskatchewan’s own cloned legislation

In an Op-Ed piece in the Prince Albert Herald (December 2nd, p. 4), freelance journalist Ken MacDougall took aim at Saskatchewan’s introduction of the “Saskatchewan First Act” and its potential for hidden attack upon Indigenous rights legislation garnered through treaty and Canada’s recent embrace of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. His explanation follows.

Only peoples imbued with a sense of the absurd will understand the humour in watching former Alberta premier Jason Kenney, recently deposed as leader of the “Unhinged and Confused Party” first resigning his legislative seat, then condemning his former caucus for introducing the “Alberta Sovereignty within a United Canada Act” for its vacuousness disrespect for Canada’s Constitution. To Saskatchewan Indigenous leaders, it is almost as though they had just heard that former Premier Brad Wall had just recanted his “Shop at Cameco” campaign, only to witness the creation of two new constellations on the eastern horizon.

All humour aside, the Saskatchewan First Act (S.F.A.) is merely a clone of Alberta’s Act. Moreover, the national media’s focus upon these acts being utilized as roadblocks to the federal government’s proposed gun control legislation, Bill C-21, ignores the reality that both items provide an escape mechanism to their obligation to consult with First Nation and Metis peoples on matters upon which both parties conflict as to the potential benefit or harm such policy might have upon their respective economic agendas and control on their mutually governed lands.

Faced with an economic disaster and budgetary shortfall of its own creation, the Saskatchewan Party has long attempted to create an illusion that such economic morass is a direct result of the federal government demonstrating serious overreach in attempting to interfere in the development of provincial resources, particularly petroleum and potash. Further muddying the waters is the reality that Indigenous leaders, long having been denied their share in the economic benefits that are accrued with such development but powerless to stop such initiative other than through courtroom procedure or acts of legal civil protest.

It has thus fallen to NDP MLA Betty Nippi-Albright to attempt to codify an Indigenous right to be consulted by the province in affairs affecting their provincial jurisdictions. Such consultation in the past has only been undertaken through online surveys or email exchange heavily weighted with time constraints, methods that only recently have further contributed to dissension on how Crown lands should be opened to lumber interests fleeing BC regulatory crackdown, while seeking a new home for “investment” in Saskatchewan.

The problem is, even if such discussions conclude with written agreement between the government and its Indigenous partners, the S.F.A.’s terms of reference in the “protection of federal overreach” currently would allow the province to override its intent, thus making such codification of consultation terminology meaningless.

One must remember that it was in utilizing logic such as this that fuelled the Harper government’s objections to accepting the terms and conditions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Not unlike the Harper government, however, the Saskatchewan Party has never lacked for opportunity to blame others for its own imposed economic malaise, constantly reminding the public that overzealous utilization by Indigenous interests in opposing such policy has created economic hardship upon its “taxpayer” base.

In reality, the only reason the Saskatchewan government is now introducing this legislation is to enable it to continue attempting to widen the divide between rural and urban “needs” while increasing racial tensions between Indigenous communities and their surroundings, thereby allowing it to hold onto the votes of even greater extremists supporting either the Buffalo or Saskatchewan Unity parties and those still disaffected by the economic ravages created by the COVID pandemic.

In my personal opinion, I believe that the Saskatchewan First Act deserves every vulgar synonym for its pejorative acronym – S. F. A. – both in meaning and content. It’s an interpretation that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike can view with equal contempt, and hopefully enable dissenting voices on both sides to unite in defeating its intent.



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New exhibit documents and celebrates Indigenous history

By Marjorie D.L. Roden
for Eagle Feather News

Within the walls of the original Prince Albert Fire Hall, now known as the Prince Albert Historical Museum, it was the official opening of a five-year project.

“It just makes my heart happy today to have it completed so we can move onto the next step,” enthused Michelle Taylor, manager and curator for the Prince Albert Historical Society.

However, it’s not the end of the work but rather a whole new chapter in the life of the museum.

“We will continue with expanding it and updating it,” said Taylor. “We have more room in our tech department, which includes script documents, photos, and other documents.”

The room covers the history of the Prince Albert community from about



The interior of the Gathering Place exhibit in Prince Albert that is filled with murals and other important artifacts (Photo by Marjorie Roden)

10,000 years ago up until 1905.

“Without our Indigenous friends, Prince Albert wouldn’t have existed,” said Taylor. “So it’s really important that we show the history of (all of) those who helped make the city.”

The room in the museum is called kistapinanihk or the Gathering Place exhibit. Signage is displayed to explain the different parts of PA’s history utilizing both Indigenous languages along with English translations.

One of the people called on to help was Elder Denise Tacan. She provided part of the community’s history on a display in her first language of Dakota.

“I’d like to bring all of my grandkids to this,” Tacan said.

At the opening she was accompanied by two of her eldest grandchildren and she proudly showed off the display that she helped create.

“It’s awesome, I never expected this,” Tacan said. “I just love the murals, they’re awesome. Now that COVID is gone, they can get a lot more done (at



Some of the exhibits on display at the Prince Albert Historical Museum (Photo by Marjorie Roden)

the museum).”

Artist-in-Residence, Leah Dorion was also at the opening and said she was proud of how the room turned out.

“I really enjoyed this because we worked so hard to get this story,” said Dorion. “It went in phases from art to the new artifacts in terms of the signs.

I love working with the advisory committee, because there was such a collaborative passion. We wanted to make a greater story.”

Also part of the Knowledge Keepers team was Leo Omani.

“I think it has been a big turnaround in the thinking and, not only with (Indigenous) people, but sharing the knowledge that we have in our society,” said Omani.

“Realizing there’s much more knowledge in this area than when the province came to be, it’s an opportunity for dialogue, and realize that we are not “one”, we are “many”, as an Indigenous people.”

The exhibit is not just a one-off.

“This is very much the starting point to bring Indigenous history to schools and to seniors’ residents,” said Taylor.

“We’re trying to do partnerships with SUNTEP, to develop educational suitcases, so that we can take them out to schools ... Not just schools in Prince Albert, but the outside communities.”

Taylor said although the exhibit focuses on over 10,000 years, she knows what they do have is only a small snapshot of the history that exists, but is pleased with what they have compiled.

“We were guided by the knowledge keepers, we focused on what they felt was important about the history,” said Taylor.

The museum is located on the corner of Central Avenue and River Street, and is open Monday to Friday from 9 am to 4 pm.



The exhibits at the Prince Albert Historical Museum include both indigenous and English descriptions. The exhibits were created with guidance of several Knowledge Keepers. (photo by Marjorie Roden)



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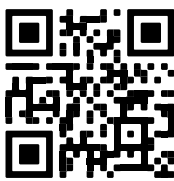
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Using stories to unite cultures

By Marjorie D.L. Roden
for Eagle Feather News

The Prince Albert Multicultural Council (PAMC) hosted a Diversity Night to build bridges between Indigenous people and New Canadians.

Michelle Hassler, PAMC executive director, was pleased with the evening's event.

The night began with Hassler, sharing the information about the land acknowledgement and how it is a part of the National Truth and Reconciliation's Calls to Action.

"The land acknowledgement is not only saying it in the beginning, and reading it, but it's more giving yourself a reflection about the story and the history of the land," she said. "(It's) also, self-reflection about the stories you've heard about Indigenous culture or the stories you've heard about Canada or the land that we are standing on right now,"

Hassler encouraged the crowd to do exactly that whenever they hear a land acknowledgement being given. She said doing that every time is a way to honour the true history of the land and the Indigenous people in Canada.

Cree storyteller Hugh Merasty shared the creation story of Turtle Island.

The story was filled with moments of seriousness, laughter, sadness and hope.

Traditionally stories of the Cree trickster Wisahkecahk are only told in the winter.

Merasty shared the many sacrifices the animals made and told the story in its traditional form.

After he was finished, Merasty had a chance to chat about the origins of the story and why it is significant.

"They (the ancestors) came from the east, in the northwest from the Algonquin family, and they're very diverse with the languages there," said Merasty. "There are five sub dialects of Cree, and then there's Ojibway, there's Saulteaux, Anishinabe, the Oji-Cree...there's a bunch of them."

He explained the history of the Indigenous people is contained within the creation story.

He said traditional stories today are still passed down from one generation to the next.

"I do have a few mentors or teachers," said Merasty. "One is not too far from here. He's a Saulteaux, from just south of Melfort, and his stories and his teachings are very similar to others I've learned."

Another teacher and mentor is from Frog Lake, Alta. and said the other storyteller in his life is his father.

"So there's three, from all different areas. One's from Alberta and then two are from Saskatchewan, but each of the two from Saskatchewan are very different," said Merasty.

Sometimes the animals in the stories may change, but basically the creation stories all have similarities.

Merasty said the stories are old and are meant to be shared.

"I mean, why keep it to myself?" he said. "What's going to happen if I leave this world? I just try and share it with everyone, and I always try and spread kindness because you don't know what another person's going through in their life."

He believes storytelling is a way to help spread kindness.

"Why spread sadness, or why spread anger, or hatred, or anything with negativity in general,"

said Merasty. "Try and share positive things and good things."

The Multicultural Society Hall was packed for the event, which Hassler and Merasty took as a good sign.



Hugh Merasty, (seated) a Cree storyteller, shares the Cree Creation story with members of the Prince Albert Multicultural Council during a Diversity Night celebration. Merasty believes stories should always be shared with anyone who is willing to listen. (Photo by Marjorie Roden)

Holiday GREETINGS

Wishing you our warmest holiday greetings and all the best in 2023!



K+S Potash Canada

The Sask. First Nation Water Association to offer free training for FN members

By Liam O'Connor
of Eagle Feather News

Clean drinking water has been a problem within Indigenous communities across Saskatchewan in recent years, as many have had to go into boil water advisories. Another aspect that experts feel isn't getting enough attention is not having enough or not being able to keep water treatment operators. That is what the Saskatchewan First Nation Water Association (SFNWA) intends to change through more readily available and affordable training.

Experts say that it is vital to have trained operators at these water treatment systems in communities to prevent boil water advisories from occurring.

"That's why we're seeing these advisories come up again," said Brita Malekian, an engineer.



Water Movement films and produces operations and maintenance videos of expert Circuit Riders from Technical Services Advisory Group in Alberta. The people featured are all actors. (Photo by Water Movement)

"And even if they're lifted, they'll come back again, just because they're not being maintained properly."

Oftentimes, when First Nation members want to get the necessary training to become an operator they have to travel to either Regina or Saskatoon, then find accommodations for the days it will take to complete the training. Deon Hassler, president of SFNWA, and experienced water treatment operator and circuit rider wants to remove that barrier to entry by offering free training for those First Nation communities.

"We're trying to do that and make it more convenient anyway we can make it work." Said Hassler.

Another issue Hassler aims to curb is the low pass rate of individuals who take the operator exam, which he mainly attributes to insufficient time to study and a harder exam in comparison to previous years.

"There's a big binder, it's probably about three, four inches thick," said Hassler. "And they got to study that in four days and then they write it on the fifth day."

By offering this training it will give the trainees more time to understand all the information they need to know for the exam.

A not-for-profit organization called the Water Movement, which wants to "bridge the connection between Indigenous water treatment operators" according to their website.

Malekian, also an ambassador for the Water Movement, said a key issue in the water sector is keeping the operators in their communities because they will often take positions in municipalities where the pay is better.

"I think retention of new operators is massive," said Malekian. "And I think one of the ways we can address that is by inspiring the next generation to get into the water sector and ensuring that the operators who are working in communities, that they're being paid competitive and fair wages so that they stay in the community."

Malekian said she is launching an all-Indigenous expert committee in 2023 to assess and look at the current operator salary and see what it should be.



Water Movement films and produces operations and maintenance videos of expert Circuit Riders from Technical Services Advisory Group in Alberta. The people featured are all actors. (Photo by Water Movement)

"So hopefully, with a committee like that, there'll be some outcomes where operators feel like they're being compensated properly, and then they stay in the communities." Said Malekian.

Hassler said the training is expected to take place in the Spring of 2023 in the North Battleford and Prince Albert area.

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- Yann Martel, supporter 2021

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How many apps?

By Eric Standing
for Eagle Feather News

Tech can be a struggle for me. It wasn't always this way, however. At one point, early in childhood, I owned a simplified version of a portable computer that taught basic coding, which is to say I had a rudimentary understanding of computer programming as an eight-year-old in 1986.

Unfortunately, I soon became distracted by a camera someone had given me, and so "My First Computer" came to rest in the bottom of the toy box for a few years.

Then as a teen, I realized that I could carry around a pager and, with this device, friends could contact me from anywhere at a very low monthly rate, and I could simply return the call from a landline or a payphone.

Eventually, this led to a cell phone in the late 90s and the discovery that I could simply tap the buttons multiple times to bring up letters on the screen, spelling words that could be sent to other users' screens, thereby avoiding the need for lengthy conversation, a process we now call "texting."

Not only that, but I discovered I could go on the corresponding websites to my friends' phone carriers and type text messages to them with my keyboard from my computer at home and they would receive it on their mobile phones.

After excitedly showing people this, I was laughed at, and told, "Why wouldn't you just call?"

Alas, true visionaries are often shunned, and now actual phone calls are treated as though answering them may spread leprosy, and most people want to know, "Why wouldn't you just text?"

Had I stuck with computer programming, I can only assume that my days would be consumed with the stress of racing my fellow billionaires into outer-space and choosing what kind of

caviar to eat rather than peacefully writing for a newspaper, so I can count my blessings.

The irony is that 36 years later I am now traveling around with a camera someone gave me and an outdated laptop (simplified version of a portable computer) for a living.

So it was over the years that my appreciation of modern technology was replaced by a fascination with all things primitive and my smartphone could not hold my interest as long as rubbing two sticks together to make fire. I discarded my Blackberry and switched to a flip-phone that I clung to until six years ago.

Lately, out of a mixture of necessity and interest, technology has been nosing back into my life, a little at a time, and I have found myself creating podcasts and working on documents in real time with people from around the world, much to my advantage.

One thing I don't look forward to anymore is all the apps that I seemingly have to download in order to do daily life.

What used to be a wallet full of membership cards has now become multiple screens full of apps to pick through every time I want a cheeseburger on the road, since luckily the app craze has not yet reached every business in my small town.

Years ago I found myself commuting to Regina for work and, having stopped at a particular mega-chain gas station, realized they had a loyalty program, so I signed up.

After what felt like thousands of dollars worth of gas and cinnabon purchases, I proudly produced my loyalty card from my wallet and presented it to the cashier, assuming the next tank would be on them.

She scanned it and gave me four cents off the cost of my food and gas. I had earned four cents ... for being loyal to them for months on end.

No thanks, from now on I will support my local petroleum vendors. I don't know exactly

what price my loyalty can be bought for, but I do now know that it is worth more than four cents. Perhaps a nickel?

Frequently crossing into the United States makes things even more difficult for app-phobics like me since up until recently an app was needed just to cross the border.

This border crossing app is no longer necessary but when shopping, the apps needed to save money in the U.S. are not available on my Canadian phone, and I refuse to pay for and carry a separate phone so that I can save on donuts at McDonald's U.S.

As quick as the corporations are to sign a person up for their app program, the same speed can not often be seen when attempting to cash in on these rewards.

"I have a bunch of reward points on my app and I want to cash them in."

"Do you have your membership card?"

"I thought you switched to the app."

"We did but we still need the card to redeem points."

Then when I go home and fetch the card, I am told that these points can only be redeemed on a wednesday evening if there is a full moon and Mercury is in retrograde.

Then what's the point?

I miss the days when I could just buy a pop and chips without having to swear an oath of eternal loyalty to a corporation and, besides, I am completely out of password ideas at this point.



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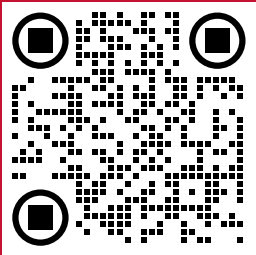
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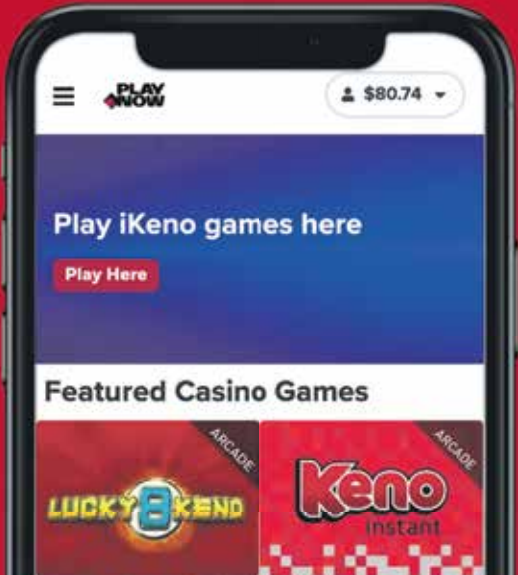
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