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The sun rises over some teepees and with the Saskatchewan Legislative Building in the background during the Winter Solstice Ceremony held on the grounds of the Saskatchewan Legislature in December. Organizers of the first-time outdoor event believe the winter solstice is the start of the new year for Indigenous people. (Photo by Prescott Demas)

By Kerry Benjoe  
of Eagle Feather News

Despite the frigid temperatures, 13 teepees were set up on the grounds of the Saskatchewan Legislature to mark the winter solstice.

"This is our New Year (celebration)," said Joley BigEagle-Kequahtoway, co-founder of the Buffalo People's Art Institute and organizer of the outdoor event.

The first winter solstice ceremony was held indoors, but doing that again was not possible.

So instead, small groups gathered in individual teepees and simultaneously hosted a pipe ceremony and feast.

BigEagle-Kequahtoway said reviving old traditions is all part of decolonization. It was a

way to celebrate the end of the year and welcome a new one with prayers, and to create a safe space, especially for the women, to bring out their ceremonial items.

"I know there are some women who are still feeling the effects of residential school and intergenerational trauma," she said. "This was an opportunity to say... 'You have this sacred pipe and we have this tobacco to offer to you to lift your pipe.'"

BigEagle-Kequahtoway explained the summer solstice and the winter solstice have always been very significant to Indigenous people.

"There is this energy, you can't see it, but it's there," she said.

The pipe carriers were asked specifically to pray for the children.

*continued page 2 ...*



CHIEF BOBBY CAMERON

## WHAT'S NEW IN '22

"We are proud of it because we didn't do that work for us, we did it for all those future leaders who are coming up behind us, so they can continue the good work for our First Nations."

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January 2021 is our

## Looking Forward to 2022

February 2022 Issue:  
Health & Wellness



### B'Yauling Toni 300 Kilometer Trek

Once again B'Yauling Toni has demonstrated his commitment to reconciliation by snowshoeing nearly 300 kilometres to deliver a pair of moccasins to the Timber Bay School site.

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### MN-S PRESIDENT GLEN MCCALLUM Looking Ahead for New Year

"But more importantly, at the same time, is working with big businesses where the procurement policy needs to be addressed, the duty to consult and accommodate needs to be addressed."

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# Decolonizing the holidays with a winter solstice ceremony

... continued from page 1

The teepee village was set up on the very spot the Justice for Our Stolen Children Camp occupied for 200 days and where Tristen Durrocher fasted to raise awareness about youth suicide.

BigEagle-Kequahtoway believes the site's history makes it a sacred space and that's why she chose it.

"The work that I do is to always think of the youth and those who are wanting to know what their identity is," she said. "This gathering is a creation of a brotherhood and sisterhood to protect the youth."

The cold didn't deter people from the community and neighbouring



**Group photo of Winter Solstice volunteers (left to right) Darin Milo, Richelle Dubois, Leon Sparvier, Tema Oskana Corkery-Demas, Prescott Demas, Shannon Corkery, Joely BigEagle-Kequahtoway. (Photo supplied)**

First Nations from attending, such as Marcel Heichert, an Afghanistan war veteran.

The night prior to the ceremony he provided security and fire watch duty for the teepee village.

"It was good," Heichert said about the experience. "We had a lot of people come out in the evening to check it out."



**Marcel Heichert and Joely BigEagle-Kequahtoway taking down the camp. (Photo by Kerry Benjoe)**

Previously, he participated in the indoor winter solstice ceremony, but preferred the outdoor one because it felt more special.

Although the province was not involved, Regina Mayor Sandra Masters attended.

"She supported this in terms of a letter for the Canada Council grant and she supported it by honouring her commitment to host a pipe ceremony (during her term every December)," said BigEagle-Kequahtoway. "The City of Regina (also) set up a teepee as part of that commitment."

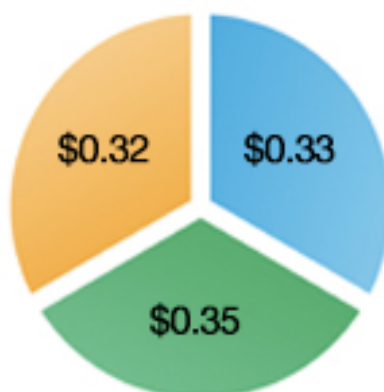
The plan moving forward is to continue the winter solstice ceremony at the same site next year.

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# Basketball camp combines culture and sport

By Kerry Benjoe  
of Eagle Feather News

Daniel Stonechild decided to change things up on the court by combining culture and basketball.

Over the Christmas holidays, he organized the FN Basketball Camp in Regina at the Mamaweyatitan Centre.

Stonechild hopes this is only the start of something bigger.

The four-day camp was a collaboration between the Regina Public Schools, the Regina Public Library and the North Central Community Association.

Stonechild, who is both a teacher and coach at Scott Collegiate, said he wanted to do more than teach the fundamentals of basketball.

So he based the camp on the teaching akameyimoh, which in the Cree language means try hard, don't give up.

"On the court, when you're running and you get tired, you try hard and you don't give up so I really wanted to emphasize those kinds of things," said Stonechild.

Everyday the camp began with a pipe ceremony with Dexter Asapace, an elder from the Kawacatoose First Nation.

"He shared really good teachings that were life enriching and the students really enjoyed being able to partake in them," said Stonechild.

As a coach, he believes it's important to introduce youth to the culture because many living in urban centres have lost that connection, so combining basketball with culture seemed like the ideal fit.



Joshua Panipekeesik in the white shorts on the court helping other youth on the court. (Photo by Kerry Benjoe)

Stonechild knows from personal experience how powerful reconnecting to culture and ceremony can be.

"I had a tragedy happen to me about seven years ago where I lost a girlfriend," he said.

It was a very difficult time and it wasn't until Stonechild visited an elder and began attending ceremonies that he began to feel better.

"I felt that strength and healing through our culture and understanding my identity as a Nehiyaw person," he said.

Stonechild shared his story with the youth, but the camp was a way for him to help show them what he was talking about.

Joshua Panipekeesick, 17, said the camp was amazing.

"It was a good environment to be in," he said.

Panipekeesick enjoyed learning new skills on the court as well as helping to teach the younger kids.

The camp was open to Grades 6 to 12 and one of the goals was to develop a mentorship type environment between the elementary and high school students.

Panipekeesick said the cultural teachings and lessons have already had a positive impact on him.

He hopes the camp will continue because he would like to stay involved with it.





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## PUBLISHER'S NOTES

NEWs team, assemble! As we welcome a new year, we also usher in a new era for Eagle Feather News.

Yes, the long awaited transition to new ownership is finally here. As John and Dierdra step away from their role in delivering this publication to you, our new team is energetically working to uphold the long-standing legacy and reputation they have built.

It feels a bit like getting the keys to your dad's car. Initially, you feel compelled to roll those windows all the way down and take'r for a good rip. But there's something precious and special about getting those keys – the trust and responsibility that goes with it – and the determination not to mess that up.

There's a great weight that comes with taking on the role of publishing an iconic Saskatchewan newspaper. We feel a deep responsibility to capture and share stories in ways that connect people to each other and further positive dialogue.

Being the owners of a home-grown media company isn't as glamorous as you might imagine. We spend a lot of time sitting around in our comfy sweaters thinking about the big picture, considering what's worked well, what isn't working well, and what we can do to keep growing and moving forward. But while we're thinking big about what's next for Eagle Feather News, what anchors us is the plan for 2022.

In terms of our content, expect the same bird's eye view of what's happening across our First Nation and Métis lands. Stories that feature the voices and faces of your people in your community. We are

committed to telling the stories that matter to you. Stories that help to build relationships and spur positive change for our communities.

Not unlike 2021, this year will come with many challenges, but also opportunities to celebrate.

For the next couple of months, we'll be focused on our 25th

anniversary coming up in March. Yes, that's right, Eagle Feather News has been serving Saskatchewan for 25 years. We're looking forward to celebrating this milestone with you – in whatever way is possible, because yes – Covid-19 continues to cast its long shadow over everything we do.

And yet the pandemic has also made us keenly aware of the important role we have to play in using storytelling to connect people while apart. And we know that digital technology is going to play a key part in that.

In this next year you'll start to see a stronger emphasis on our digital presence. We know that our paper is a life-line to many – and it is here to stay – but there are certainly more opportunities to build relationships with our readers and subscribers through digital platforms. Stay tuned to what's next in this space for Eagle Feather News.

From the new team at EFN, Happy New Year! Thank you for reading, subscribing, advertising and partnering with us so we can continue the tradition of helping to keep our people connected.

While we may crack the windows a bit and take a moment to feel the wind in our hair, rest assured, we're not going to mess it up.



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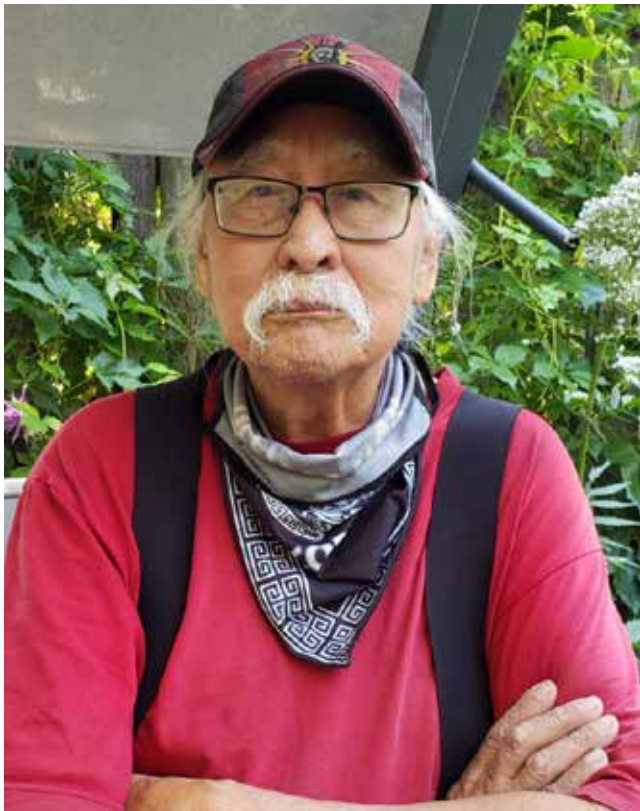
*"From U City to the Queen City and everywhere in between."*

# Province loses life-long advocate Emil Bell

By Judith Iron  
for Eagle Feather News

Emil Bell never backed down from a good fight and was not afraid to put his body on the line during walks, protests and hunger strikes. Born in 1941, he lived through many harsh government policies like the Pass System, which was eradicated in the 1950s. Bell was a man of strong morals and lived life exactly how he wanted, even in death.

In October, he passed away at his home, which he lovingly referred to as Fire Lake, located on the Canoe Lake Cree First Nation. Bell loved his home and being near the water, the trees and the birds.



Emil Bell (Photo by Don Kossick)

When news of his passing reached social media, heartfelt messages from fellow advocates, educators, journalists and former government officials posted under a photo of a 1989 newspaper clipping titled, Three students join Indian education protest.

According to The Star Phoenix article, Bell was already on a nine-day fast when three students joined him. It was part of a Canada-wide protest opposing the federal government's

changes to its post-secondary education policy, which put a cap on funding. Although he didn't seek fame, Bell was not afraid to speak publicly about important issues and causes.

Those closest to the long-time advocate shared the softer side of him. When he wasn't actively involved in a movement or protest, he stayed close to home where he enjoyed the simpler things in life like watching Blu-Ray movies and visiting with friends.

Bell was a man of action even in his personal life.

Concerned with reducing the impact on the environment, he changed how he lived.

Bell spent the last few years eliminating his own carbon footprint by utilizing power sources like solar panels and wind turbines at home.

He loved nature and did what he could to protect it. Bell would often just sit in his recliner and enjoy the view from his living-room window.

His kind nature and gentle smile often masked his warrior spirit, that is until he opened his mouth.

Bell fought hard for justice, earning the respect and admiration of many along the way.

"He started a movement of activists," said Mandy Laliberte, a Canoe Lake



Emil Bell, walking to Regina for MMIW inquiry. (Photo by Don Kossick)

resident. "He sparked my interest and got me going just by listening to him." Bell inspired many through his stories and his knowledge.

"(He) motivated me to fight for justice," said Laliberte. "I will miss listening to him speak, but his memory will live on."

Bell loved people and made friends easily. Don Kossick, a long-time community activist, enjoyed Bell's last-minute arrivals and invitations for coffee or breakfast. He said those impromptu meetings with Bell would often bring about ideas and decisions on actions for change.

"Emil was a true warrior for justice," said Kossick. "I'm going to miss him. His spirit will be with us as we continue to confront injustice. We can only hope we have the same impact he did."

## Puzzled by investing?



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# Cooking up fun in the Kitchen

By NC Raine  
of Eagle Feather News

Kellie Haywahe is not your average eight-year-old in the kitchen.

In the last couple months she has compiled a cooking résumé that rivals others with decades more experience.

Some of the healthy recipes she knows how to prepare for her and her family includes parfaits, blueberry bannock, carrot and sweet potato soup, apple cider from scratch, and different types of salads and that list is growing.

"I want it to continue for a long time," said Kellie about the cooking class. "It keeps my mind and my hands busy after school."

She is one of the many kids on Ocean Man First Nation who is garnering cooking skills and healthy eating habits through the Kids Kitchen program.

It is an after-school project initiated by the Yorkton Tribal Council (YTC),



**Ingredients are prepped and portioned for each participant prior to their arrival to the class after school. (Photo by Carleen Daniels)**

for kids from grade 3 to grade 12. Each week the group participates in a cooking class organized by two registered dietitians – Ashley Rodman and Carlee Hamilton.

"YTC found that there was a big gap in services, from the older children to the youth because there's not a lot of programs specifically for that age group," said Hamilton. "So we are hoping to create a program that keeps kids busy while they get to learn new healthy living and new cooking skills."

Once a week, at the local community centre, the students make a snack or appetizer, a main course, and then a dessert, all with food supplied by

the tribal council. Not only do the kids share a meal together, the dietitians teach them basic kitchen skills, which they can use at home.

"Generally, most of them were pretty inexperienced in the kitchen," said Hamilton. "Most of them knew how to make basic pasta or noodles. So it's nice to see them grow with their cooking skills. Sometimes kids and vegetables don't get along, but they're always willing to try."

The program was funded under a principle of reinforcing or establishing positive habits among the young population at the First Nation.

After each lesson, the young cooks take home the extras to share with their family and are encouraged to practice what they've learned at home.

"It keeps them busy, and reduces them from sitting around and getting into other things," said Rodman. "I think (YTC) wanted to get them in more of a routine and have a busier and more involved schedule."

The program has been well received by both the kids and their parents. Sometimes up to 24 kids show up for the lessons, said Hamilton and Rodman.

Starting in January, the weekly lessons will be held virtually to accommodate Covid-19 safety concerns.

Rodman has noticed the children's enthusiasm and interest in cooking increases with every lesson and she doubts that will change, regardless of where the lessons are held.

"When we asked them what they want to make, they were very ambitious," said Rodman. "They want to learn how to properly cook steak, or make crème brûlée. They are very excited to try harder things."

Kellie's father Stephen Haywahe, sees the positive impacts the cooking classes have had at home.

"It's been great," he said. "They teach them healthy options, stuff with less sugar. She's not eating junk food all the time. And they're learning skills she can actually use at home, like how to cut (things) and (how to) use measuring



**Groups of kids, working masked and in pairs, at Ocean Man First Nation are learning a variety of recipes and cooking skills as part of a new Kids Kitchen program. (Photo by Carleen Daniels)**

cups." In a time when safe social and community activities can be scarce, Stephen said the program is refreshing because Kellie has a chance to safely get out of the house and do something productive.

However, for his aspiring eight-year-old, it's all about pushing her culinary limits.

"I want to learn about seasoning," said Kellie. "I want to learn how to make a big turkey dinner with stuffing."



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# Hockey Night in Canada back on APTN

By Judith Iron  
of Eagle Feather News



Clarence 'Tsiboy' Iron, doorway at CFNK 89.9 FM. (Photo supplied)

ing the plays in the Cree language. That is especially true of many elders who only speak and understand the Cree language.

"I meet a lot of elders who get really excited to tell me they really like watching hockey now because they understand me," laughs Iron, "Some of them didn't watch before because it was all in English, so they didn't understand what was happening. Then they heard about me doing it in Cree and now they love watching and listening to it in the Cree language."

Iron is happy being able to use his first language while announcing hockey because he aspires to revitalize the Cree language. His goal is to motivate and encourage others to learn.

"I really want to see our people, young and old, speak and practice Cree more," says Iron, "We have to bring it back before we lose it altogether."

The 2022 Hockey Night in Canada games were set to start in January, but those games have been rescheduled for later dates. Please check the APTN or SportsNet websites for alternative dates. The March and April dates are as follows:



Clarence 'Tsiboy' Iron at radio station work desk. (Photo supplied)


- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Saturday, March 5  | Vancouver @ Toronto |
| Saturday, March 26 | Edmonton @ Calgary  |
| Saturday, April 9  | Montreal @ Toronto  |
| Saturday, April 23 | Toronto @ Florida   |

It's that time of the year: Hockey Night in Canada with an Aboriginal twist. SportsNet and the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) have announced that they will be continuing with the Cree language schedule on Hockey Night in Canada. Clarence 'Tsiboy' Iron is heading back to Winnipeg where he will once again be announcing play-by-play hockey in the Cree language.

Covid-19 put a temporary damper on the excitement of Cree hockey in the 2021 season, but 2022 will see Cree sports announcer Clarence 'Tsiboy' Iron Saturday nights on Hockey Night in Canada from the studios of the APTN.

Iron is happy to be back doing what he loves, but it's not always easy. "I have to keep an eye on who is playing and learn their names and numbers, but I also need to practice hockey terms because I don't use them everyday."

Iron says there's been a good response from a lot of Cree speaking people who appear to enjoy the sport more now that Iron is translating and announc-



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# Hockey legend's legacy lives on

*By Kaitlynn Nordal  
for Eagle Feather News*

Efforts are being made to make certain Jim Neilson, who played 17 years in the NHL during the 1960s and 70s, will not be forgotten.

In honour of his legacy, the Big River First Nation is in the process of building the Jim Neilson Sports Complex, which will be a rink attached to the school.



**Jim Neilson (Photo by D. Neilson)**

Those closest to him couldn't be happier.

"It's a big deal to have a new rink and school and place to gravitate to," said David Neilson. "To have my dad's name connected to that is very honoring."

Originally from Big River, Jim grew up in a Prince Albert orphanage, which is where he first discovered hockey.

During his NHL career, he was a defenseman for the New York Rangers, California Golden Seals, Cleveland Barons and the

Edmonton Oilers. He went on to play 1,024 games where he amassed 69 goals, 299 assists, and was also a four-time all-star before retiring in 1979. In 2010, Jim was inducted into the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame.

To his children, the NHLer was just dad and playing hockey was his job.

David was about six years old when he began to realize his dad was truly someone in the world of hockey.



**Jim Neilson signing autographs for fans during his time with the New York Rangers. (Photo by D. Neilson)**

At that time, Jim was a fixture on the New York Rangers defense lineup. He was with the team from 1962 until 1974.

Sometime in the 1970s, Milton Tootoosis saw a picture of Jim on his box of cereal and it piqued his interest.

"I thought, 'Wow look at that, an Indigenous person in the National Hockey League and on a cereal box,'" he said.

Tootoosis was intrigued and the more he learned, the more amazed he became.

"He beat the odds of someone making it into the NHL in that era when there were only six teams," he said. "That was incredible."

Not only did Jim beat the odds by making it to the NHL, he battled

overt racism to stay in the game.

"I have press clippings where dad is referred to as the Indian on the team and all these other stereotypes," said David.

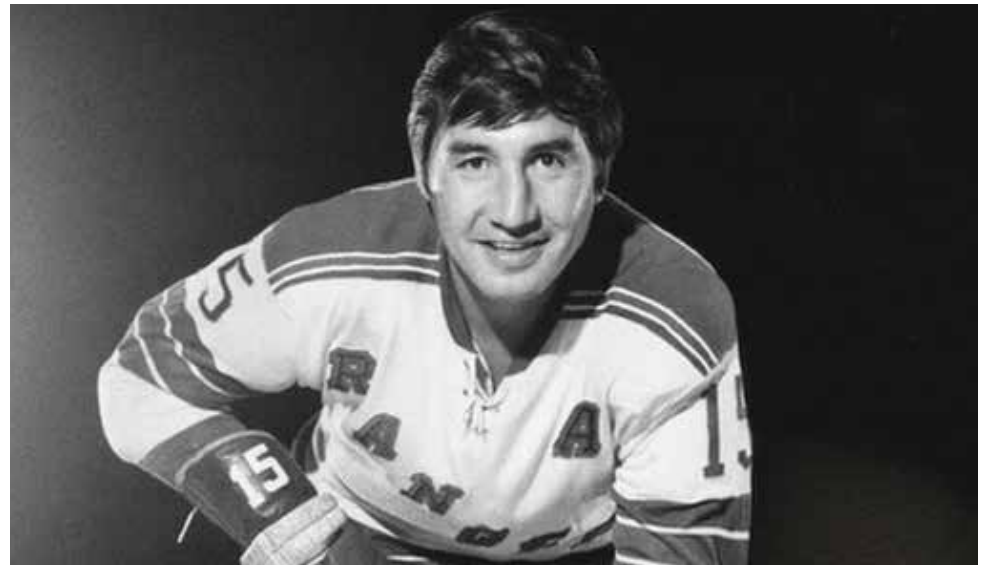
However, Jim did not let the negativity stop him.

"He was always aware he was an Indigenous person in a predominantly white sport but he just let his ability do the talking," said David. "It takes a lot of mental toughness to not let that racism get the best of you."

Tootoosis remained a fan long after Jim retired.



**During his 17-year career, Jim would be a defenseman for the New York Rangers, California Golden Seals, Cleveland Barons, and Edmonton Oilers and played more than 1,000 games before retiring in 1979. (Photo by D. Neilson)**



**Jim Neilson, New York Rangers (Photo by D. Neilson)**

The pair met in the early 2000s and became friends.

He said Jim was a trailblazer who set an example of what an individual can do if they set their mind to it. Tootoosis believes Jim's story should never be forgotten.

As a way to pay tribute to his friend and idol, he has organized the Jim Neilson Invitational Hockey Tournament, which is scheduled for the first weekend in April.



**Jim Neilson skating after the puck during his time with the New York Rangers. (Photo by D. Neilson)**

# Researchers and elders receive hefty grant to study birthing and child-rearing

By EFN Staff  
of Eagle Feather News

The First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv) has been awarded a four-year CIHR Project Grant worth approximately \$500K to study traditional birthing and child-rearing teachings of elders and knowledge keepers from the File Hills Qu’Appelle Tribal Council (FHQTC).

The project called, Takohpinawasowin will develop educational materials on traditional birthing and child-rearing.

“Takohpinawasowin is intended to provide a culturally safe, place-based, supportive environment where community members can story and re-story their experiences and their understanding of birth and child-rearing practices,” said Brenda Green the nominated principal investigator.

According to the news release, Takohpinawasowin is a Cree word that means ‘wrapping around to support each other where life-giving and child-rearing is a community responsibility and wholistic activity.’

“We hope to support a renewed relationship with the land, build community capacity for traditional family bonding and reflect on the strengths of how to incorporate traditional customary practices into mainstream health services,” said Green.

She added that it’s important to incorporate Indigenous health practices into everything but it can sometimes be difficult.

“I think that’s basically the biggest issue,” said Green. “Trying to maneuver the western healthcare system into a more inclusive and socially responsible and culturally safe process that enables ... communities to heal themselves.”

The planning and meetings for the project started before the Covid-19 pandemic, however the group was able to continue the momentum.

“We have been meeting virtually for about two years now and just planning out this process,” said Green. “The next step is to basically start the research process.”



**Dr. Brenda Green, Nominated Principal Investigator, for the Takohpinawasowin project, FNUniv Indigenous Health; (Photo supplied)**

This will include having a community agreement in place with the various tribal councils then hopefully hiring Indigenous community people as research assistants and research coordinators for the duration of the project.

The goal of the four-year CIHR Research Project Grant will be used to create educational materials that could bring the community together to support families in life-giving practices.

Colleen Strongarm, a knowledge keeper from the Kawacatoose First Nation, initiated the project with a \$5,000.00 grant from Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research to establish and support a Community Advisory Committee made up of community knowledge keepers and elders.

Green said the Takohpinawasowin project is about helping

Indigenous mothers by using traditional practices with contemporary Western healthcare practices.

“What we’re hoping to do with this study is incorporate traditional birthing practices into mainstream maternity healthcare,” said Green. “We can’t force practitioners or nurses to do this, but we can teach them the value of understanding (the) cultural (components).”

Other members of the advisory committee include elders Rose Pambrum from Muskowekwan First Nation, Edna Brass from Kawacatoose First Nation, Mary McNab from George Gordon First Nation and Monica Buffalo from Day Star First Nation. The research team consists of Green, Kathleen O’Reilly, Cassandra Wajuntah, Elizabeth Cooper and Anna Leah King.



First Nations University (Archived Photo)

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# The forgotten pair of moccasins for Timber Bay School

By Kerry Benjoe  
of Eagle Feather News

Once again B'Yauling Toni has demonstrated his commitment to reconciliation by snowshoeing nearly 300 kilometres to deliver a pair of moccasins to the Timber Bay School site.

"I chose to walk because I think it's symbolic of what a lot of Indigenous children had to go through both to reach these schools, as well as to escape them," he said. "Hopefully through my walking I can learn a little bit about some of the things they had to face."

Over the summer, the 21-year-old biked to every Indian Residential School in the province where he laid a pair of moccasins in honour of all survivors and victims of the institutions.

However, Timber Bay was not on his list.

"I heard about this place on my journey and when I got home I knew I had to go back and do something about that," said Toni.

The Timber Bay Children's Home located 18 kilometres outside of Montreal Lake Cree Nation is not recognized as a federal residential school and not included in the settlement. It was provincially and federally funded from 1952 until 1994.

To date, Indigenous leaders have been unsuccessful in attempts to have Timber Bay added to the list.

When Toni reached Montreal Lake he was joined by Chief Karen Bird of Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, Chief Joyce Naytowhow-McLeod of Montreal Lake Cree Nation, Chief Tammy Cook-Searson of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band and Prince Albert Grand Council Chief Brian Hardlotte, who all snowshoed alongside him to the school.

"It was a surreal experience," said Toni. "I was quite honoured to meet with those leaders and to see them there."

He said the experience so far has shown him how much work still needs to be done.

"Earlier in the summer I had a realization that something has gone on here, in the place that I call home, that I really don't understand," said Toni.

The quest to educate himself has taken him places where he's met many people



**Chief Tammy Cook-Searson of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band greets B'Yauling Toni on the final leg of his journey. (Photo supplied)**

such as Dwight Ballantyne.

The B.C. resident heard about Toni's summer journey and reached out to him. The pair met and discussions soon turned to Timber Bay.

"I got to find out who he was and why he does what he does," said Ballantyne. "He's astonishing, that's for sure."

As founder of the Ballantyne Project, he has been working for years to raise awareness about Indian Residential Schools particularly the Timber Bay School because as a member of Montreal Lake Cree Nation - it's personal.

"Toni told me he was going to snowshoe over the Christmas holidays and he asked me if I could work with him," said Ballantyne. "I had no doubt he was going to do it."

He helped Toni with the communications part of his journey.

"I think he is the perfect example of how you can take action," said Ballantyne. "I can't even thank him enough for what he did because it is an emotional story for me and my community."

He said the fight to get the school recognized as a residential school is far from over. Ballantyne has started the Forgotten Pair Petition that has more than 1,000 signatures, the goal is to present it to Premier Scott Moe in the near future.



**B'Yauling Toni (centre) with the three Woodlands Chiefs (left-right) Chief Karen Bird of Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, Chief Joyce Naytowhow-McLeod of Montreal Lake Cree Nation and Chief Tammy Cook-Searson of Lac La Ronge Indian Band. (Photo supplied)**



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## FSIN Chief Bobby Cameron looks ahead to the new year with optimism

*By Kerry Benjoe  
of Eagle Feather News*

A permanent office, a new online gaming agreement and a major on-reserve housing investment from the federal government are some of the things the Federation of Saskatchewan Indigenous Nations is looking forward to this year.

Now in his third term, Chief Bobby Cameron said he's excited about where the organization is heading.

The FSIN had a soft opening of its new treaty governance building, but is planning an official grand opening celebration soon.

"In 75 years, we have never owned our own treaty office," said Cameron. "We are proud of it because we didn't do that work for us, we did it for all those future leaders who are coming up behind us, so they can continue the good work for our First Nations."

It took five years of work to procure the building.

"We officially move into our office in March," said Cameron.

The decision to set down permanent roots was about creating a strong foundation for the organization now and in the future because doing so helps to establish stability, consistency and continuity within FSIN, he explained.

Cameron is looking forward to signing a historical online gaming deal with the province, which will be the first of its kind in Canada.

"Once it's in full swing and hits the markets, we are thinking between \$7M to \$20M (in revenue) towards 74 First Nations is what will be generated for them," said Cameron.

Online gaming exists in B.C and Ontario but in those deals the First Nations receive between 5 to 7 per cent of the revenue, but here it will



**Chief Bobby Cameron, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations. (Archived Photo)**

be a 50/50 split.

"So we are leaps and bounds ahead of everyone else," said Cameron.



**Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations executive, First Vice-Chief David Pratt, Second Vice-Chief Dutch Lerat, Third Vice-Chief Aly Bear, Fourth Vice-Chief Heather Bear, Chief Bobby Cameron. (Archived Photo)**

It was a busy year for FSIN, with many highs and lows.

A proud moment for him was to see the number of high school graduates this year.

"It was a shining light during the COVID times," said Cameron. "Despite the challenges, many of our Grade 12 students still succeeded."

Over the holidays, the FSIN executive delivered winter clothing to those most in need in the major urban centres.

"There were hundreds and hundreds who were thankful that we did that, but there is still so much more to do," said Cameron. "It was just our part to contribute."

The social issues facing the urban First Nation population is a concern to FSIN.

"There are many reasons why First Nations move to towns and cities," said Cameron.

Sometimes it's to access education and programs and better their lives, but sometimes it's because they have no choice.

"What we are trying to do at the FSIN, which is something we have been doing for several years, is to continue lobbying and advocating for the treaty right to shelter," said Cameron. "In essence, to build more houses on reserve, so First Nations can house their families and those who have been wanting to come home can get their own house."

That lobbying may have paid off.

He has heard the federal government will make a major investment in on-reserve housing so he's looking forward to the release of the federal budget.

Indian Residential Schools dominated headlines in 2021 with the discovery of unmarked graves and the FSIN remains steadfast in its position.

"We will continue to push for what the survivors have been saying, true compensation, get those records back, build healing and wellness centres at those sites," said Cameron. "If the government can spend millions of dollars to put these residential schools up, they can spend millions of dollars to put healing and wellness centres up too at these exact sites."

Although he's pleased with the progress that's been made on some fronts, even through a pandemic, he says FSIN will continue to work hard in 2022.

# Two Indigenous women are to receive Canada’s highest honour

By Kerry Benjoe  
of Eagle Feather News

Although former senator Lillian Dyck is retired, she hopes to return to Ottawa sometime this year; if so, she will be joined by former Canadian ambassador Deborah Chatsis.

Before the year ended, Canada’s first Indigenous Governor Mary Simon announced the new appointments to the Order of Canada, which included the two trailblazers.

According to the announcement, Dyck is being recognized for her contributions to human rights and social justice, as well as her advocacy work for First Nations and racial minorities while Chatsis is being recognized for human rights advocacy around the world.

When Dyck received the call from Simon’s office, she assumed it was to provide a reference for a nominee.

“It’s something you just can’t imagine,” she said.

After the call, she reflected on her career in academia and in politics.



Lillian Dyck (Photo supplied)

Thirty years ago, she was at her lowest point in life and never could have imagined she would be named an Officer to the Order of Canada.

“I was so defeated at the time, just crying my heart out because it was just so difficult in the place that I was working,” said Dyck. “It was difficult primarily because of who I was, female and non-white.”

Rather than throw in the towel, she found the fighting spirit she got from her father, a first generation Chinese immigrant, and her mother, a residential school survivor. Dyck’s persever-

ance eventually took her to Ottawa.

“Both of (my parents) suffered through racist legislation,” she said. “How ironic their daughter should become a legislator.”

Dyck is equally excited for the other recipients, many of whom are her close personal friends.

“I just can’t wait to see them and hug them and reminisce,” she said, still hopeful there will be an in-person ceremony.

Dyck added that it was great to see such diversity in this year’s appointments, which also includes Chatsis, a member of the Ahtahk-koop First Nation.

The life-long federal government employee can now add Member of the Order of Canada to her lengthy list of accomplishments, which includes, Ambassador of Canada to Vietnam, Director of South Asia Relations, Global Affairs Canada, Ambassador of Canada to Guatemala and High Commissioner to Belize.

Despite her extensive resume, Chatsis was still shocked when she received the call.

“I have seen the list before and it was more community focused and so working for the government, I didn’t think I would be considered as a candidate,” said Chatsis.

Her career took her all over the world, but it didn’t start out that way.

“I started pretty low on the ladder,” said Chatsis.

She recalled spending her first two days on the job stapling and photocopying material for someone else.

However, Chatsis has never been afraid to take a chance and try something new, both academically and professionally, which has enriched her life and career.

The Order of Canada, one of the highest civilian honours, recognizes outstanding achievement, dedication to the community and service to the nation on three levels: Companions, Officers and Members.



Deborah Chatsis (Photo supplied)

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# EFN Breaking Trail Jan, 2022

The remarkable healing power of kindness and caring by everyday people.

Many First Nations people who have lived through the residential school era find it very difficult to express affection and so fail to fully nurture their children as a result. They love their children but are unable to express it. Children seldom receive praise and many parents don't or rather can't see this as a problem. Some families even become a collection of strangers with each carrying their own burden of hurts. It's not a character flaw nor is it based on culture but rather it is a learned behavior from a dark source. The residential schools were designed to oppress despite being described in often lofty colonial terms. The painful cruel impact residential schools had on children was often but not always, passed on to their own children with varying degrees of devastating results.

An extreme example is crime. Saskatchewan has the highest crime severity rate in Canada. It also has the highest murder rate with most victims Indigenous people killed by Indigenous people. Indigenous people are 10 per cent of the provincial population but represent seventy six per cent of inmates in provincial correctional centers. The figure is even higher for Young Offender Centers. Combine this with other miseries and the result is a devastating toxic brew.

There is no minimizing nor sugar coating what has been described as cultural genocide. The residential schools in biblical terms sowed the wind and reaped the whirlwind.

There are very important exceptions which offer a hopeful path to healing. There are those raised in the same painful dysfunctional environment which, creates criminals but who did

a point of light in darkness, something to hold on to, something to grow from no matter how insignificant it may seem. These youth did not become buffalo running with the herd tumbling over a cliff.

The important lesson from this example is how everyday people can make a big difference toward the healthy growth of young people. It can be as simple as encouragement and seeing the good the kid may not be able to see in themselves and reflecting it back at them.

So much has changed in so short a time both for the better and the worst. A powerful emerging healing movement is being largely led by those who were once crippled by colonialism themselves. Deprived children now have mentors and heroes. The old honorable culture is returning. Indigenous people no longer look at the floor in the presence of non-Indigenous people but are now seeing eye to eye with power. The once arrogant residential school administrators and abusive staff are now scurrying rats finding places to hide.

A change is coming slowly painfully but there will be no returning to what was. A little kindness, a little caring and love for others can and is making a big difference. Most people don't realize how small gestures of kindness and encouragement can help love starved youth find the good within themselves and others.



## Breaking Trail

John Cuthand

not become criminals. The question is why. A study was done where many of these people were interviewed. They all stated the same reason. They had someone who believed in them. This could include a school teacher, a coach, a mailman and seemingly insignificant others. They did not know how important for these youth their kindness was. These mentors were



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FEDERAL INDIAN DAY SCHOOL CLASS ACTION

# MN-S President has big plans in 2022

By Kerry Benjoe  
of Eagle Feather News

Progress was made on many fronts, but the Métis Nation - Saskatchewan plans to keep the momentum going in the new year.

Glen McCallum, MN-S president, said he's pleased with how far the organization has come in four-and-a-half years.

In his first term, the MN-S had no employees or even an office space. It started with an MOU framework to a core governance agreement with the federal government that has resulted in funding dollars for post secondary, housing, Métis child and family, and economic development.

"Today, we have two offices (and) we have 145 employees that work for us," said McCallum. "So we've done pretty good."

Last year, the MN-S budget was over \$90M and the organization was successful in negotiating, not one, but two historical agreements, both of which will improve the lives of its Métis citizens now and in the future.

Most recently, the MN-S and the University of Saskatoon signed an agreement on Métis citizenship and identity.

"They are focused on our government and looking at our structure in regards to how we bring citizens into the Métis Nation," said McCallum.

It's historical because it was the first time an institution in Canada has agreed to work with the Métis in such a way, he explained.



MN-S President Glen McCallum speaking at the Métis Nation Legislative Assembly, November 2022. (Photo supplied)

The U of S agreed to rely on the MN-S citizenship registry to determine whether or not a person is eligible to access its Métis-based opportunities.

The president said the MN-S is more than willing to work with any other organization, group, city or municipality interested in creating similar agreements.

"There are a lot more folks who are knocking on our doors," said McCallum. "I've talked to a few individuals like the mayor of Saskatoon, the mayor of Prince Albert and there are other folks like the RCMP and the provincial government."

Progress has also been made when it comes to the right to hunt.

Presently, the Métis can hunt in the Northern Saskatchewan Administration District, which covers the northern half of the province.

"Right now, what we are talking about and what our people have been negotiating, is an agreement right across the province, in regards to harvesting," said McCallum.

The MN-S has signed an MOU harvesting agreement with the province, but is expecting to sign one with the federal government sometime this summer.

McCallum said such successes are great, but unifying the nation is what matters.

"If we don't engage with our grassroots people then we don't have nothing," he said.

McCallum believes the work currently underway with its citizens is paying off, which was evident in its recent election.

"It was understood by our citizens, the importance of having your citizenship card," said McCallum.

He believes the registry provides consistency for the Métis Nation.

The MN-S is working to become more inclusive of women, elders, veterans and youth. Currently women hold the majority of seats on council.

However there is still a lot more work to be done on other fronts.

"We have to start to look into assets in terms of, 'What do we have and what are we capable of?'" said McCallum. "But more importantly, at the same time, is working with big businesses where the procurement pol-

icy needs to be addressed, the duty to consult and accommodate needs to be addressed."

Economic development will be a major focus in 2022.

"What a lot of people don't realize is that through SMEDCO (SaskMétis Economic Development Corp.), we have over 1,500 small businesses in Saskatchewan - we have to start promoting that," said McCallum.

Overall, he is looking forward to continuing to build a strong foundation for the Métis Nation.



MN-S President Glen McCallum with his wife Verna (Photo supplied)

A large, colorful, stylized Indigenous artwork featuring a bison in the center. The bison is decorated with various symbols, including a sun, a moon, and a star. The background is a deep blue with white geometric patterns. The artwork is framed by a white border.

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