

eaglefeathernews

INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH

CPMA #40027204

ELDER PROFILE
**LEO
DESNOMIE**

*By Kerry Benjoe
of Eagle Feather News*

Leo Desnomie carries stories and memories of a time long forgotten.

An Elder from the Peepeekisis Cree Nation, he experienced what most only find in history books, like the Indian Agent, the Pass System and Indian Industrial Schools, to name a few; but most importantly he remembers everything his grandfather taught him including his language and ceremonies.

Desnomie was born on-reserve in the summer of 1935 when the rest of the world was in the midst of the Second World War.

However, he was not delivered by a midwife, but by a doctor at the Peepeekisis Hospital.

"It was already well established a few years prior," said Desnomie. "It was an actual hospital with doctors and nurses, the whole nine yards."

At the time, Peepeekisis was a bustling community.

"I think it got too successful, so the hospital was moved to (Fort Qu'Appelle)," said Desnomie.

Although many families had farms to support themselves, unlike other area farmers, First Nation farmers operated under strict government policies.

"We had farm instructors," said Desnomie. "We weren't allowed to kill our own cows."

Every animal was tagged and numbered and the farm instructor kept the records under lock and key.

Desnomie said they learned to get creative. There were times an animal would get sick and have to be put down.

"We had to say that or how else would we get away with it?"

Once he reached school age, he was taken to the industrial school in Lebret.

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EAGLE FEATHER NEWS

TAKE THE QUIZ

Test your Indigenous knowledge in this month's edition of the National Indigenous Peoples Day Quiz.

- page 10

June 2022 is our
**Indigenous
History Month**

July 2022 Issue:
Graduation

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CREE LANGUAGE / DAKOTA LANGUAGE
Revitalizing our Languages
"Coming through the Residential School era and so many people being unable to speak the language ... then coming home to learn it again ..."

- page 6 & 7

CONNIE WALKER
A Story Waiting to Tell
When their father was a RCMP officer in the 1970s, he pulled over a suspected drunk driver, who turned out to be the priest who abused him in Residential School.

- page 12

Elder Profile

History through the eyes of an Elder

... continued from page 1

It was there he witnessed poverty, hunger and violence for the first time in his life.

Desnomie's memories of the school are bleak.

"I couldn't even talk to my sister," he said, because the boys and girls were kept separate.

He remembers asking to speak to her, but it was under strict rules.

"All we could do was basically say, 'Hi' because we couldn't talk," said Desnomie. "The nuns were standing right there."

He knew doing so again would be useless.

Desnomie tried to escape from the school once with a few other

from the little Town of Gillespie," said Desnomie. "We worked pretty close with them and we used their equipment for our ranch and stuff like that. We got to know them and they got to know us."

The town is now gone as are most of the policies and practices of that era.

Desnomie pursued a career in the trades as both a welder and plumber and had a long career in the Canadian Air Force before retiring.

He eventually found peace through ceremony.

Desnomie, now 87, chooses to share his traditional knowledge with anyone interested.



Leo Desnomie sits holding a book that contains some of his family history that can be traced back for generations. He has witnessed plenty of changes throughout his 87 years. (Photo by Kerry Benjoe)

boys. Although they made it home, they were apprehended four days later and taken back where Desnomie faced severe punishment.

By the time the boys were 12 or 13, they were assigned jobs, so their education stopped.

The school had a bakery, large gardens, a dairy, chickens and everything else imaginable but the students didn't receive any of the food they produced, only the priests and nuns did, he said.

The hunger was hard on the students and often the older kids would try to help out the younger ones.

"Sometimes when I would be loading up the truck with bread from the bakery, when the nuns or supervisors weren't looking, I would accidentally drop a loaf and the kids would grab it and eat it," said Desnomie.

His time ended when he was 16 and he returned home.

The Pass System was still in place, but it didn't prevent friendships from forming between his family and non-Indigenous farmers in the area.

"We were right on the edge of the reserve and our neighbours were

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Back in the classroom

By Nicole Garn
for Eagle Feather News

The Indigenous Communication Arts (INCA) Summer Institute is back and better than ever.

The institute has returned to the classroom after being offered online in 2020. Due to the program’s two-year turnover, INCA Summer Institute students have not been in the classroom since 2018.

While remote learning offers a unique opportunity to reach students and teachers anywhere in Canada, students are excited to be back in the classroom.

“I’m looking forward to meeting all of the instructors in person and seeing everyone and being able to really be hands-on,” said Mercedes Redman, who previously took the program back in 2020. She felt that she missed out on the engaging aspects of the program while remote.

Being back in person is not the only new thing for INCA students. They also get to enjoy new facilities on campus.

Through support from the First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv), INCA now has a newsroom, two radio studios, a classroom space, a computer lab, and an administrative office.

“I was actually nervous for the first time. It was so different after so long,” said Shannon Avison, assistant professor and program coordinator in the INCA program. Although she was nervous, she was excited to share the new facilities with the students.

“It’s so nice to come back to this great support from the university,” said Avison.

INCA has also expanded its program offerings. It took advantage of distance learning during the pandemic and began offering an Indigenous Journalism and Communications one-year certificate.

“I would really like to keep a remote component,” said Avison. “We are the First Nations University of Canada; we need to be offering programming across the country.”

The program is also in the process of considering a four-year Bachelor of Indigenous Communication Arts.

The Summer Institute used to be offered at the Journalism School at the University of Regina, but this was “not home,” said Avison. Now that the

INCA program has its own facilities, there is room to flourish at FNUniv.

Students take classes like Indigenous fine arts, Cree language, Indigenous studies, as well as INCA classes.

“It’s a program non-Indigenous students who want to go into journalism and (who) want to answer the (TRC) Call 86 — that’s the answer, come here,” said Avison.

Students value this type of education.

“(INCA) seems like a one-of-a-kind program, with it being so Indigenous-focused,” said Redman.

Students also appreciate how the program creates a second family.

Current INCA student Amber Bear said the INCA family Avison has created is the best thing to come out of her university experience.

INCA alumni, Mary Powder said, “(INCA) made me realize how blessed I am that I work with my language. The institute was the best experience I enjoyed with newfound friends.”

The INCA Summer Institute is a six-week crash course in journalism at the FNUniv. Students are immersed in print, radio, podcasting, television, photo-journalism, and more.

Teachers and special guests include many INCA alumni like Betty Ann Adam, Kerry Benjoe, and Nelson Bird.

The Institute also offers an internship opportunity for students to receive more hands-on learning and professional work experience.

The Summer Institute is offered every second year from May to June.

For more information about the program, head to www.incasummer.ca or contact Shannon Avison at 306-536-8069 or savison@firstnationsuniversity.ca.



APTN reporter Tamara Pimentel showed INCA students Jolene Kequahtoway and Nicole Garn how to shoot a television interview. (Photo supplied by Shannon Avison)



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Indigenous History Month and what to expect from Eagle Feather

June is Indigenous History Month and although it's been 15 years since it was proclaimed provincially, it only became recognized nationally in 2009.

However, many people still aren't aware that we have the entire month to celebrate our unique history and not just one day.

With that said, it's great to be able to celebrate Indigenous People's Day on June 21 with in-person activities, which have been on hold since the start of the pandemic.

For those who don't know. Indigenous History Month was initiated in Regina by a group of young professionals. It was proclaimed first by the City of Regina's mayor at the time, Pat Fiacco.

Regina was also the first municipality in Canada to permanently install a Treaty Territory flag, as well as the Métis flag. Other cities and towns have since followed suit.

In keeping with the spirit of celebrating Indigenous History Month, you will find some longer features available online at www.eaglefeathernews.com throughout the month of June.

So keep an eye out for those.

For those who don't know, Eagle Feather News has had a long history with the Indigenous Communications Arts (INCA) program at First Nations University of Canada (FNU) and, this summer, the INCA Summer Institute has returned to in-person classes.

For six weeks, the students receive a crash course in journalism. This includes training in print, radio and television.

I spent some time with the students as part of the print section. The students each produced a print article, some of which will be featured

in the June and July editions of Eagle Feather.

Congratulations to the students and thank you for all your hard work. After two years of online classes, I'm sure it's been tough to adjust to the gruelling schedule.

Eagle Feather has always been very supportive to up-and-coming journalists.

For the last number of years, a student from the University of Regina's J-School has joined our team for a semester as part of their internship requirement.

This year was no different.

In February, I interviewed two students for the position and made my choice.

I was looking forward to working with Mercedes Redman.

She not only impressed me during the interview process but for someone so young, she accomplished

many things in terms of research projects, podcasting, writing and storytelling. She interned for the RezX magazine while still in high school and did a stint with CTV and Indigenous Circle.

Mercedes was passionate not only about storytelling but about telling Indigenous stories for Indigenous people.

When she passed suddenly on May 27 at the age of 22, it shocked many of us in the journalism community.

I am honoured to be sharing one of her last articles that she produced as part of the INCA Summer Institute.



Editor In-Chief
Kerry Benjoe



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Saskatoon group formed to address Cree language crisis

By NC Raine
of Eagle Feather News

Milton Tootoosis has a very clear and direct impression on the state of Cree language in Saskatchewan.

“We are in a crisis,” he said.

Tootoosis, member of Poundmaker Cree Nation and the Chief Economic Reconciliation Officer at the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority (SREDA), decided to do something about it and applied for a project grant through Heritage Canada.

To his surprise, in December, Tootoosis was notified his proposal had been approved.

“The ultimate goal is to consult with language speakers themselves, not just academics or politicians or educational institutions, but talk to the people at the grassroots level to get ideas and advice on how to retain, rejuvenate, and strengthen the Plains Cree language,” he said.

The language revitalization project will be managed by YXE Cree Speakers Society (YXE CSS) — a new group Tootoosis helped create in January to gather and consult with fluent Cree speakers.

The group is currently consulting with fluent speakers, traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders, and will soon start planning a large Cree speakers conference for next year.

“I’ve been watching and observing the trends and noticing a higher and higher percentage of our young people not being able to speak Cree,” said Tootoosis. “You go to cultural events like powwows and you see singers and dancers who don’t speak their own language.”

He believes more needs to be done.

“The systems we are currently using, like Cree immersion schools, are not producing the results we anticipated,” said Tootoosis. “They are not producing the fluent speakers in the numbers we envisioned at the time. The education system isn’t working like it should be.”

One of the goals is to create a final report for the government and communities that includes an inventory of all the tools and instruments used to preserve the Plains Cree language, a list of recommendations, and perhaps

even their own Calls to Action.

“I think (this project) will raise awareness of the fact that we’re still here despite the genocide that has occurred, and is still happening to our people,” said Tootoosis. “We are resilient, we are strong, and there’s a movement to keep our language alive.”

An important development with the YXE CSS has been an increasing inclination from Elders, who previously may have resisted being documented through newer forms of technology, to be audio or video recorded while speaking their mother tongue.

The recording of their voices will serve as a useful tool going forward, said Tootoosis.

But the challenge of preserving language has deep roots, said Tootoosis. He points to assimilation policies envisioned by John A. McDonald over a century ago still being alive in our society, as well as colonization and Residential School impacts, which made many Cree or Indigenous language speakers feel as though they could or should not speak their mother tongue.

“Many generations have not been made to feel proud of their cultural identity,” said Tootoosis. “We want to help people realize they are nêhiyawêwin, and be proud of it. In order to understand the true meaning of being nêhiyawêwin, you need to understand the basic language, because we are told that it is the spirit language.”



Milton Tootoosis (back left) and the YXE Cree Speakers Society are using grant funding to consult with language speakers on revitalizing Cree, as well as creating a conference in 2023. (Photo supplied)



Celebrate

National Indigenous Peoples Day

June 21

SIGA is proud to be a First Nation owned and operated organization and to recognize and celebrate the diverse cultures and contributions of Indigenous peoples.





Dakota Language Preservation in Saskatchewan

By Mercedes Redman
for Eagle Feather News

Three Dakota bands are working to preserve language in their communities.

“Coming through the Residential School era and so many people being unable to speak the language ... then coming home to learn it again, those traumatic experiences have stopped a lot of people from speaking (the language),” said Standing Buffalo Chief Roberta Soo-Oyewaste.

According to the 2016 Canadian census, the Dakota population in Saskatchewan is 1,900, with only 415 speakers.

The three Dakota Nations in the province are Standing Buffalo, Wahpeton, and Whitecap.

Curtis Standing, Wahpeton band councillor, uses Dakota conversationally to give access to the language.

“We all fall into the trap of using English when we can be using our language,” he said. “We’ve got to really initiate the language, to make an effort to use Dakota first.”

Standing says it is hard, even for him, to switch to Dakota because he is so used to speaking English.

He said even if you use Dakota to ask short questions like, “Where are you going? Where are you coming from? Who did you see at the store?” It’s worth the effort to use the language and have people understand it.

The Dakota are a part of the Oceti Sakowin, the People of the Seven Council Fires, also known as the Sioux Nation, who are from the Northern United States, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. The Sioux Nation consists of three groups, which speak different dialects of the same language: Dakota, Nakoda, and Lakota.

Standing Buffalo and Wahpeton have implemented language preservation efforts in their schools, beginning in pre-kindergarten.

“How can we best educate our teachers?” said Soo-Oyewaste. “When it comes back into the school, we not only have to teach the children, it has to trickle down to the parents.”

Whitecap has created a Dakota language strategy to implement initiatives to address the risk of losing the language. They include an annual Dakota language gathering, elementary language programming, and high school/post-secondary courses.

Saskatchewan’s three Dakota Nations emphasize the value of Dakota language preservation.

“It’s our identity,” said Soo-Oyewaste. “Our kids need to understand. Coming through the Residential School, so much identity, culture, and language was lost. So we need to help them find that balance to ensure they’re stable and they can walk in both worlds.”

The Dakota leaders say they feel pride in the community when they hear the language spoken because it’s being preserved.

“The best sound you can hear in your ears is Dakodiapi,” said Standing. “When you hear it, it’s so beautiful, like I want it to be spoken.”



Mercedes Redman, member of the Standing Buffalo Dakota Nation passed suddenly on May 27. Redman was pursuing a journalism degree from the University of Regina. She was a teaching assistant for the INCA Summer Institute, where she worked alongside other students. Redman had a passion for storytelling and never one to pass up an opportunity, she produced this article. It is on a subject she was passionate about, which was the Dakota language and culture. (Photo supplied)

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Covid Delta variant made me the sickest I have ever been

In a time when covid restrictions are being lifted and it is thought the pandemic is in decline, I was slammed hard by the Delta variant. It came on like a bulldozer over-powering my three previous vaccinations. I became very sick, the sickest I have ever been.

There had been an outbreak of the highly contagious variant among the Babine First Nation in northern British Columbia. I was with a group close by when an infected individual joined us. Six out of 18 people were infected and the camp ended early. I was hit the hardest. I am a senior, diabetic and disabled, all of which crippled my defenses.

It started off like a cold. I experienced coughing, worsening congestion, a light fever and drowsiness. I became exhausted, dizzy and weak as the disease progressed. My body ached. I lost my hunger, hearing and felt sharp pain in my chest whenever I coughed. I spent as much time asleep as I did awake. I was spared the dreaded lung infection whereby I would be hospitalized in an intensive care isolation ward. Someone said if it wasn't for my previous vaccinations I may have died. Covid at its worst can and does kill.

My ordeal lasted over a week. During this

time, we returned to Saskatchewan from B.C. It meant staying in a hotel one night. We stopped in Hinton Alberta and checked in. I felt guilty not telling them I was sick. When we disclosed the next day, they didn't seem all that worried. The room would be left for a few hours before they

in one ear and 90 per cent deaf in the other. I still have not fully recovered despite being prescribed antibiotics. I fortunately do not have the disease long term.

Most people, including myself, were frustrated with the seemingly endless disruption to their lives. We wanted restrictions eased as the pandemic lifted. It was too early but bowing to public pressure, politicians, as politicians do, lifted most of the restrictions. The result was rising covid infections, only now with five Covid variants. Due to most people having three vaccinations, the outbreak was greatly decreased from what it could have been. I had my three injections but missed the fourth booster shot to my regret.

The dominant culture values the individual far more than the collective. There are ego-centered people who speak out aggressively for their "freedom" while denying it to others. It is no exaggeration to say people died who would otherwise have been spared. This reality is lost to the deniers whose minds are locked and unrelenting despite credible information from credible sources. Given my experience and that of others, I have nothing but contempt for their ignorance.




Breaking Trail

John Cuthand

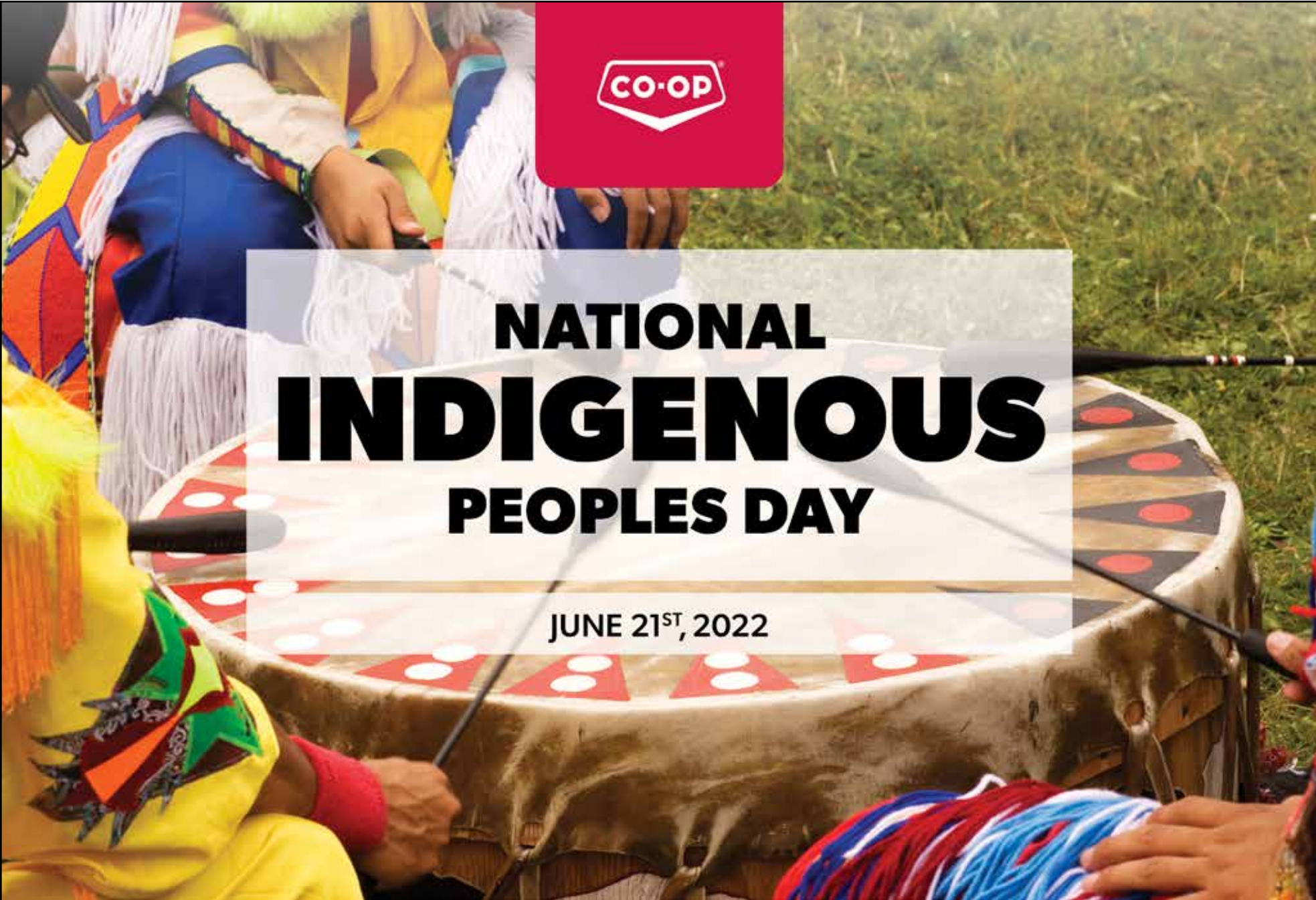
cleaned. I didn't know the covid virus, an airborne disease, dies within six hours on surfaces and in the air.

I didn't want to be the cause of an outbreak in Saskatoon, although in all likelihood it had already happened before we came home. The disease very gradually receded but I remained deaf



**NATIONAL
INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES DAY**

JUNE 21ST, 2022



Indigenous artwork will be on display in Wascana Park

By Michaela Crook
for Eagle Feather News

The first thing people will see at the site of the multi-million dollar Wascana pool revitalization project is an ornate gate by an Indigenous artist.

Larissa Kitchemonia’s design will include: buffalo skulls, running buffaloes, other animals, plants, the sun and the sky layered in an aluminium diorama.

The Anishnaabe-Saulteaux artist from Key First Nation, wanted her design for the pool gate to be connected to the history of the area.

“How do I capture the buffalo skull and the spirit of the buffalo at the same time while also being really aware of the fact that I want it to have some kind of life or spirit of positivity,” said Kitchemonia.

The buffalo represents the revitalization and resurgence of culture, she said.



Artist Larissa Kitchemonia has designed the new gate for the multi-million dollar Wascana Pool project in Regina (Photo supplied by Larissa Kitchemonia)

According to the City of Regina’s call for artists, the pool’s proximity to Wascana Lake is significant because the name Wascana is derived from the Cree word *oskana ka-asastiki*, meaning “pile of bones,” a reference to the bison bones around Wascana Creek prior to and during colonization.

It was important for the city to represent the history and connection to the land on which the pool will reside, which is why an Indigenous artist was commissioned for the project.

Not only is the gate designed by an Indigenous artist, but it is being constructed by an Indigenous company.

Kitchemonia said as part of the design process she toured Pro Metal Industries, which is one of the only First Nations-owned manufacturing enterprises in

Canada.

“I’m already at the production stage and hopefully I get an update in the next few weeks,” said Kitchemonia.

A press release from the city said the project supports its goals of strengthening the Indigenous community’s artistic and cultural presence.

Kitchemonia was selected by a panel of professionals, but this is not the first art installation she has completed in Regina.

Her paintings can be found at Confederation Park, the Mâdawêyatîtan Centre and in the University of Regina’s (U of R) College West building.

Kitchemonia has completed a fine arts degree from the First Nations University of Canada and is pursuing a Master of Interdisciplinary Studies at the U of R.

Although she focuses primarily on painting and beadwork, she also explores installation and sculpture.

Common themes in her artwork include nature, womanhood and motherhood, which are all interwoven with First Nation ideology and practices.

The deadline for the delivery of the gate is June 30 and it will be installed sometime in July.

People will be able to view the gate because it will be used by construction crews to keep the public out of the work area.

The nearly \$16-million project received \$12 million from the Municipal Economic Enhancement Program. Once fully completed, it will feature a waterslide, spray pad, accessible playground and a concession stand, which will be open to pool users and visitors to the park.

The pool is scheduled to open next summer.



Artist rendering of new Wascana Pool to open in 2023 (rendering supplied by the City of Regina)

Sponsored Content

Cote First Nation Elders create a co-op to preserve language and traditions

By: Kelsey No Runner for Co-operatives First

Faced with the reality of losing their most precious resource, Elders and Knowledge Keepers from Cote First Nation took matters into their own hands.

In the heart of southern Saskatchewan on Treaty 4 territory, the Onakawawin language is becoming harder to hear in the conversations between Cote First Nation members.

This loss of Onakwawin is because of colonization and Indian Residential Schools (IRS) and can be detrimental to the way of life and traditions of Saulteaux people.

“Without the language and without the culture, there can be no

ceremony,” said Elder Wanda Cote. “You can’t perform the ceremonies in English. We’re trying to preserve the language to carry on our culture and our traditions. We’re given that language by the Creator to pass on to our children.”

Through the collaboration of community Elders and support from Yorkton Tribal Council, Kici Anishinabek Kananakachiwewat Community Service Co-operative was developed. By working together for the advancement of future generations, they are challenging the forces that tried to erase who they are as an Indigenous community.

The Elder-led co-op translates to “Elderly Knowledge Keepers Community Services Co-operative” and is based on the goals of the seven founding members.

Elder Madeline Whitehawk is using the strength of her life experience as an IRS survivor and former educator of 50 years to empower the work the co-operative is creating.

“I was raised in the forest and I lived in harmony with nature. I speak the language fluently,” said Whitehawk. “I have a linguistics background, and throughout my years I’ve gained knowledge on curriculum development and language development.”



Founding members of the Kici Anishinabek Kananakachiwewat Community Service Co-operative: Jacqueline Whitehawk, Vernon Cote, and Brian Severight, Josie Cote, Wanda Cote and Madeline Whitehawk

“We often hear our leadership say we have to preserve our language, but nobody has really done anything. As Elders, we got together this summer, and asked, ‘Well, what can we do?’ We want to do something now.”

Each of the co-op members bring invaluable expertise to the group, including community service, traditional knowledge and culture preservation.

The co-op will carry out traditional cultural and land-based activities, promote healthy and balanced lifestyles, and provide education about the Onakawawin language.

Starting a community-based co-operative can be another step toward self-determination and self-reliance for your community. Learn more about the benefits of the co-op model and how to get started on-Nation at yourwaytogether.ca

National Indigenous Peoples Day - QUIZ

By Melody Lynch
of Eagle Feather News

Which of the following Treaty Territories are located in Saskatchewan?

- Treaties 2, 4, 6, 8, & 10
- Treaties 4 & 6
- Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, & 10
- Treaties 1, 3, 5, 7, & 9

In 1954, Jean Cutland Goodwill became the first registered Indigenous nurse in Saskatchewan. Where was she born?

- Sweetgrass First Nation
- Black Lake First Nation
- Poundmaker Cree Nation
- Fond du Lac First Nation



This influential activist and leader was president of the Saskatchewan Indian Women’s Association (SIWA) in the 1970s and a reporter for the Saskatchewan Indian newspaper:

- Irene Tootosis
- Isabelle McNab
- Bertha Clark Jones
- Sadie Cote

On December 10, 1873, Gabriel Dumont was elected President of the Council of St. Laurent for one year. Who from the list below was chosen as one of his members of council?

- Pierre Dumont
- Alexander Hamelin
- Jean Gurriepy
- Abraham Moyse

Who was the leader of the FSIN the year the Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement was signed between the provincial and federal governments and 25 First Nations in Saskatchewan?

- Perry Bellegarde
- Albert Bellegarde
- Blaine Favel
- Roland Crowe

This year has been declared the International Year of Indigenous Languages. The Algonquian languages are the largest group of First Nation languages in North America. Which of the following are the Algonquian languages found in Saskatchewan today?

- Cree and Saulteaux
- Nakoda, Dakota and Lakota
- Cree and Blackfoot
- Saulteaux and Dene

Which is the most northern and isolated community in Saskatchewan, settled by trappers in the 1900s?

- Fond du Lac
- Uranium City
- Wollaston Lake
- Camsell Portage

Saskatoon		ᓴᓃᓂᓴᓂ	
<small>Adrian Stimson, New Born Buffalo Boy (performance still), 2022. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Credit: Blaire Russell.</small>			
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National Indigenous Peoples Day - QUIZ
ANSWER KEY

Which of the following Treaty Territories are located in Saskatchewan?

- Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, & 10

In 1954, Jean Cutland Goodwill became the first registered Indigenous nurse in Saskatchewan. Where was she born?

- Poundmaker Cree Nation

This influential activist and leader was president of the Saskatchewan Indian Women’s Association (SIWA) in the 1970s and a reporter for the Saskatchewan Indian newspaper:

- Isabelle McNab

On December 10, 1873, Gabriel Dumont was elected President of the Council of St. Laurent for one year. Who from the list below was chosen as one of his members of council?

- Alexander Hamelin

Who was the leader of the FSIN the year the Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement was signed between the provincial and federal governments and 25 First Nations in Saskatchewan?

- Roland Crowe

This year has been declared the International Year of Indigenous Languages. The Algonquian languages are the largest group of First Nation languages in North America. Which of the following are the Algonquian languages found in Saskatchewan today?

- Cree and Saulteaux

Which is the most northern and isolated community in Saskatchewan, settled by trappers in the 1900s?

- Camsell Portage

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REGION	LOCATION	DATE	TIME
Western Region 1	Meadow Lake Alliance Church, 805 5th St W.	June 13	11-4 PM, 5-9 PM
Western Region 2A	Saskatoon St George's Senior Citizen's Centre, 1235 20th St.	June 14	5-9 PM
Western Region 2	Prince Albert TBC	June 15	5-9 PM
	Big River Big River Métis Hall, 300 1st St. N.	June 16	5-9 PM
Eastern Region 3	Indian Head Memorial Hall, 423 Grand Ave.	June 18	9-4 PM
Eastern Region 2A	Yorkton Holiday Inn Express, 63 7th Ave. N.	June 22	5-9 PM
Western Region 3	Swift Current The Modern Family Restaurant, 49 Central Ave. N.	June 23	5-9 PM
	Regina Ramada Hotel, 1818 Victoria Ave.	June 24 & June 25	5-9 PM 11-4 PM

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Career journalist Connie Walker shares her story

By Rebecca Fajt
for Eagle Feather News

Critically acclaimed Cree journalist Connie Walker has told many stories, but this time around, she gets personal and shares a little bit about her own journey, including her latest project.

Originally from the Okanese First Nation, she says her media career all started in 1998 when she was in the Indigenous Communication Arts (INCA) program at the First Nations University of Canada (FNUUniv).

Before the program was over, Walker was offered a job with CBC, where she worked for more than 20 years.

She has dedicated her time to giving the news an Indigenous perspective and pushed to cover the story of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW). In 2016, she combined her storytelling skills with her passion for MMIW awareness and delved into the world of podcasting.

Walker hosted two successful seasons of CBC's *Missing & Murdered* before joining Gimlet Media, for her new podcast series *Stolen*.

The second season of *Stolen* is titled *Surviving St. Michael's*, which hits close to home for her. Walker takes listeners on an emotional journey of discovery as she learns more about her father's side of the family and their experience in Residential School.

Until recently, Walker knew very little about her father's time at St. Michael's, but he shared stories with her siblings.

"I never spoke with my dad about his experiences at Residential School, but my relationship ... was affected by my memories of him as a kid," said Walker.

The years he spent there had a negative influence on him; he turned to alcohol and would often become violent, she said. After her parents separated when she was seven, Walker didn't see him again until she was 14.

Following the 2021 revelation of the unmarked graves at the Kamloops Indian Residential School, Walker's brother shared a story about their father

Howard Cameron on Facebook.

It was one she never heard before. When their father was a RCMP officer in the 1970s, he pulled over a suspected drunk driver, who turned out to be the priest who abused him in Residential School.

Walker said her dad and all 15 of his siblings attended the Residential School located in Duck Lake. Cameron died in 2013, long before Walker could talk to him about the incident or about his experience at the school.

In his absence, she interviewed family members to find out more about her dad's experience.

"I've been blown away by all the support of my family," said Walker. "It's a very sensitive and personal story ... they've been incredibly generous."

She admits it's emotionally difficult to hear what students endured in Residential School, but even more so when the stories come from family members.

Walker said "time is running out ... for us to be able to learn the truth" and have the students' stories told. She lost two uncles in the past year, so she knows how critical it is to document this history.

Walker hopes the podcast will help other survivors come forward to seek justice.

Betty Ann Adam, a contract reporter for the podcast and former journalist for The Saskatoon StarPhoenix, has worked on the project since September.

She said although the public is aware of the issues, such as MMIW and Residential Schools through media coverage, Walker's dedication to telling individual stories and finding the truth sets her apart from others because they are told on a personal level.

"It's fascinating and exciting to be working with such an accomplished team, especially led by (Walker) ... she's a great investigative journalist," Adam said.

The new eight-episode season of *Stolen* debuted on May 17 and is found exclusively on Spotify.



Howard Cameron, Connie Walker's father, in uniform during his short stint as a RCMP officer. (Photo supplied by Connie Walker, Twitter)

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Preserving language with podcasts

By Emilie Wren
for Eagle Feather News

The pîkiskwêwin project is making a splash in the world of podcasts and Indigenous language revitalization.

pîkiskwêwin, a project designed to help restore and maintain Indigenous languages, has recently launched with 13 podcasts and videos exploring a wide range of topics.

The project was initiated by the Indigenous Communication and Fine Arts (ICFA) program at First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv).

“Really, it’s to create content in the languages. Not teaching content exactly, but actually talking about things (and) normalizing it,” said Shannon Avison, FNUniv assistant professor and project manager.

Mawmaw Sachweezin, a Michif cooking show created for pîkiskwêwin, has already gained traction.



pîkiskwêwin team members hold original art by Kevin Spencer Cardinal, A Woodland Cree artist, commissioned for the pîkiskwêwin project. (Photo supplied by pîkiskwêwin)

The first three episodes have garnered over 2,500 views on YouTube in their first month.

“When we started looking around, we realized that there was only one podcast in an [Indigenous] language,” said Avison.

While many podcasts talk about aspects of Indigenous cultures, few do so in Indigenous languages, she said.

The podcasts feature the Michif, Cree, Dakota and Saulteaux languages. Each series covers topics such as cooking, food sovereignty, language, art, traditional knowledge and traditional storytelling.

The podcasts are attracting a global audience, with people listening in from as far away as China and Sweden.

Bee Bird, pîkiskwêwin project producer and trainer, believes the podcasts are helping to keep Indigenous cultures alive.

“Language is what’s important,” said Bird. “[Language] has a strong connection with culture. If you’re losing your language, you’re basically losing your culture.”

He said the goal is to get people speaking their language every day even while doing day-to-day stuff like cooking.

The project also provides people with an opportunity to connect.

“I hope it brings people closer together,” said Bird. “It brought me closer together with [not only] my team but with the Elders.”

He said making that connection with the Elders is vital.

“When you have that connection to them, it’s very helpful, spiritually and physically,” said Bird.

The project name pîkiskwêwin is the Cree word for “language.” It was chosen because the project’s home is located on traditional territory of the Cree people, Avison said.

Avison hopes the project will continue to spread outside of the province and help to create and promote more language content from across Canada.

“Our goal is to write another proposal to go wider than Saskatchewan, to expand it, so we could include B.C. languages [or] Ontario languages,” said Avison.

She added that the project could also serve as a hub in the future for promoting other content in Indigenous languages.

pîkiskwêwin releases three new podcast episodes per week, both of new or running series.

Episodes can be found on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, YouTube, and at www.pîkiskwêwin.ca.

Cree-ating resources for language learners

By Chance Deneyou
for Eagle Feather News

Solomon “Solsquatch” Ratt, a long-time Cree instructor, proved he’s a creature of habit by choosing to launch his latest book with an impromptu Cree lesson.

The book, aptly titled *âhkami-Nêhiyawêtan: Let’s Keep Speaking Cree*, is the culmination of years of work by the Cree language instructor, who is affectionately called Solsquatch by students because of his fascination with Saskquatch.

Rather than explain how it’s different from other text books he’s published, Ratt decided to show people by recruiting students to demonstrate.

Darian Agecoutay had a copy of the book on him so he was called on by Ratt.

The two bantered back and forth in Cree, sometimes they broke out in laughter. However, most people at the event didn’t know what was being said and that’s exactly why Ratt created the book and why Agecoutay chose to study Cree at FNUniv — to revive the language.

Ratt said the new textbook is “student friendly, designed for self-study.”

“It differs from other Cree textbooks in that it offers more than grammar explanations and word lists,” he said. “The book provides anecdotes, employing those grammar items and those words within a context of simple stories followed by questions about the stories.”

Agecoutay agrees and says the book is interactive yet fluid because there is no wrong answer. The only requirement is to answer in Cree.

He said the book encourages language learners to “just speak Cree.” Agecoutay has used that same approach in his own language journey,

which began six short years ago when he was only 18.

“I’m not fluent, but I try,” he said.

His perseverance has paid off because he can read and write in Cree and hold Cree conversations with his teachers.

Initially, Agecoutay entered university to pursue a degree in environmental studies, but after his first Cree class he was hooked. Now a Cree sessional instructor at FNUniv, he doesn’t think he will ever leave because he’s dedicated to language preservation just like Ratt.

“The language found me, that’s what I always say,” said Agecoutay.

Unfortunately, only his great grandparents knew their language.

“We lost our language a long time ago, because of Residential School,” said Agecoutay, who is from the Cowessess First Nation.

The Marieval Indian Residential School operated from 1899 until 1997 on his reserve.

Ratt, a Residential School Survivor, was able to retain his language. He said teaching found him.

Ratt first entered university to pursue journalism, but was quickly recruited to teach Cree, which he’s been doing since the 1980s.

Back then, there were few Cree resources, which was frustrating.

“It wasn’t good enough,” said Ratt.

So along with teaching, he’s written and published nine books.

Agecoutay is thankful for all the work Ratt has done to preserve the language because he doesn’t know what state the Cree language would be in if Ratt didn’t lay that foundation for learners like himself to follow.

âhkami-Nêhiyawêtan: Let’s Keep Speaking Cree, published by the University of Regina Press, is available at bookstores.



Solomon Ratt at the launch of his newest book in the atrium at First Nations University of Canada (Photo by Chance Deneyou)



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Students take pride in their pre-colonial art display

By NC Raine
for Eagle Feather News

Proudly displayed in the gallery of Wanuskewin Heritage Park is artwork and writing from about 75 young students who took part in an Indigenous history and culture program.

“You can feel the pride when they see the work they have (displayed) here,” said Trevor Iron, Grade 7-8 teacher at Wâhkôhtowin School in Saskatoon, and member of Canoe Lake Cree First Nation.

“Seeing it here, on the main stage, is a huge accomplishment for them. I let them know that this is just a first step for them,” said Iron.

The students’ work is the product of the Saskatoon Public Schools (SPSD) and Wanuskewin “Pre-Contact Literacy and Art Project,” which is aimed to dispel stereotypes and reclaim Northern Plains Indigenous heritage by providing the students with a hands-on opportunity to learn about the period of Indigenous history before European contact was made.

“Our mission was always to get down to the root of who are the Indigenous people and what their story is, which is in line with Reconciliation,” said Honey Constant, Heritage Educator working SPSPD and Wanuskewin on the

project.

“The more we talk about the history, the stories that were passed down, how they lived on this land — giving the students these first-hand experiences only builds a better understanding and appreciation for each other as human beings,” she said.

The project was funded by The Brownlee Family Foundation, as well as contributions from SK Arts and Saskatchewan Music Educators Association. Three classes participated in the project — the Grade 7 glass from Chief Whitecap School and the Grade 7/8 and 8 classes from Wâhkôhtowin School.

Following lessons grouped by season, students were invited to share what they had learned through writing stories and creating art about the conditions Plains Indigenous people faced.



Painted hide on display at Wanuskewin as part of a pre-contact art project. (Photos by Honey Constant)



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**SASKATCHEWAN
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Group photo of students Chief Whitecap School and Wâhkôhtowin School were invited to celebrate the “Reclaiming Heritage” project. (Photos by Honey Constant)

The resulting art and writing is titled, “Reclaiming Heritage,” which includes poems, short stories, paintings, wood burnings, animal hide paintings, and songs. The works will be displayed at Wanuskewin until June 24, and then moved to the SPSPD building in downtown Saskatoon.

“I think it has meant a lot to all the students, even the non-Indigenous ones,” said Constant. “I think they learned to feel comfortable with the content, in putting themselves in a position to create something that they don’t necessarily know first hand. I hope that they have a sense of connection to the history too.”

Connecting directly with the land, and even wildlife, was something particularly memorable for his students, said Iron.

As many of the lessons and experiences took place at Wanuskewin, Iron recalled one afternoon when his students hoped to see the bison. After being out in the field for a short time without seeing any, Iron instructed his students to make a call to the bison and to their amazement, the herd came running toward the group.

“The kids were asking, ‘Why are they coming, running to us?’ I said, ‘because you asked them,’” said Iron. “That moment really opened their eyes to the connection we have to everything living in our world.”



On June 2 at Wanuskewin, students from Chief Whitecap School and Wâhkôhtowin School were invited to celebrate the “Reclaiming Heritage” project, where their art was displayed. (Photos by Honey Constant)



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Two members of George Gordon First Nation win National Entrepreneurship Award

*By Chance Deneyou
for Eagle Feather News*

Jacob Sinclair and Jennifer Dubois are the latest recipients of entrepreneurship awards by the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association (NACCA). NACCA put out a call for awards, as is their annual tradition. It is a national competition which means that nominations were sent in from all across Canada. Representatives of the Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation (SIEF) nominated Sinclair and Dubois for two of the categories.

General Manager of SIEF, Terry Brodziak, said that they were lucky to have two of their nominations selected. He also said that nominating these businesses was easy because they are businesses that SIEF knew of and were doing good.

"We have worked with them in the past," he said. "Any businesses that feel that they want to be considered for certain things should feel free to contact us."

Sinclair was nominated, and won, the COVID-19 Business Resiliency Award. The award was created for businesses that were able to survive the COVID-19 pandemic and adjust to the unprecedented times.

"It has been a rollercoaster," he said. "It has many ups, many downs and it just continues."

Sinclair's journey to the NACCA award actually began not too long ago with another award.

"I had won an award back in the fall time through SIEF for the SIEF Entrepreneurial Spirit Award. They are the ones who actually nominated me for the NACCA award," he said. "Terry Brodziak let me know that they had nominated me back in January and a few months later, he let me know that I was successful."

Brodziak said that they nominated Sinclair for this award because his business is doing very well and he has been able to adjust. Sinclair owns and operates Anytime Fitness in the city of Regina and has done so since 2019. Sinclair runs two branches of his gym business in the city 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This has been a hard task given the multiple

shutdowns and the harsh government regulations on gyms. The one-time award was designed to recognize an Indigenous business that has demonstrated a high level of resilience and adaptability during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I was honoured just to be nominated and ecstatic when I found out that I won," Brodziak said.

According to Brodziak, while the brief trip to Montreal for the award was complex because of COVID, it was "neat to be put on a national stage being from George Gordon First Nation but then having another entrepreneur from George Gordon First Nation was a very awesome experience."

This is because both Jacob Sinclair and Jennifer Dubois are members of George Gordon First Nation, which is about 115 km north of Regina. The two entrepreneurs also operate their businesses in Regina. Two of the seven awards given out on the night of the

ceremony went to George Gordon thanks to the work of the two entrepreneurs.

Dubois was nominated for , and eventually became a recipient of, the Indigenous Woman Entrepreneur Award of Excellence. Dubois has been running Miyosiwin Salon Spa,

which she founded, for five years in their commercial space. According to Brodziak, Dubois was nominated not only for her involvement and development with her salon and spa, but also because of "all the stuff that she's been doing to increase the number of employees and training that she's giving to other Indigenous people." The award that Dubois won recognizes an Indigenous woman entrepreneur who is substantially involved in the day-to-day management and operations of an Indigenous-owned company that has been in business for at least two years.

For Dubois, the news of the win was exciting because she was pretty surprised.

"The award has opened up some opportunities to be able to network with people that I normally would not have the chance to, if not for the recognition of this award. It has given us more to work with and more opportunities to take advantage of," she said.

While she has big plans for the future, Dubois is no stranger to adversity. On April 4, 2018, the business next to her spa was involved in a fire accident, which caused water and smoke damage to her salon. A year later, the salon held a grand re-opening after renovations were completed to the building it occupies at 434 Broad Street.

She also said she has had issues with non First Nations being reluctant about coming into the space.

"It was not until I started to do more presentations and speaking engagements that I was able to let the general public know that even though we brand ourselves as Indigenous does not mean that we exclude non First Nations individuals coming into her space."

As for the impact that she hopes the wins will have for her community, Dubois said "I know that the younger generation do look up to us as role models and I encourage the youth to reach out and ask questions and do their own networking," she said. "Hopefully this brings about more entrepreneurs and more people who want to invest in their careers and we see more Indigenous businesses out of it."

She also said that she is grateful for all the support she has received from her community and knows she would not be where she is without them rooting for her.

Brodziak is excited for what the aftermath of winning such a prestigious award will mean for the two Regina business owners.

"I think it has highlighted their exposure on a national level," he said. "It definitely increased their exposure on a provincial level and having them both from George Gordon First Nation, speaks highly of that First Nation and their involvement in helping individuals become entrepreneurs."

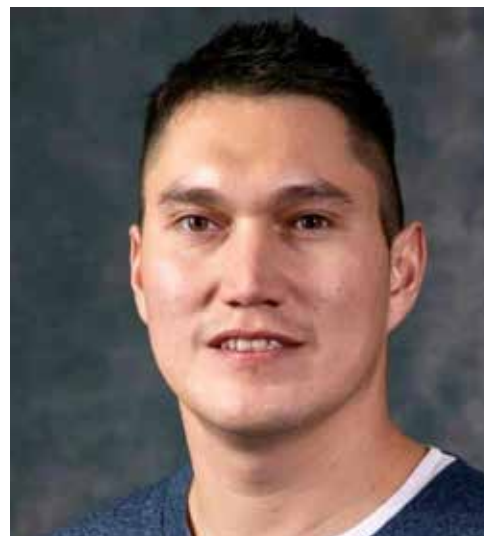
Brodziak also mentioned that SIEF is happy to help other Indigenous businesses that may be struggling, reach a place of commendation and acclaim like Sinclair's and Dubois'.

"If there are businesses looking for assistance, they should definitely reach out to SIEF and we will see what we can do," he said.

Sinclair and Dubois each received a commemorative trophy, a paid trip to the award presentation and \$5,000.



Jennifer Dubois. (Photo supplied)



Jake Sinclair. (Photo supplied)

Contract employment opportunity

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Deputy Director Programs
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Resumes will be opened in public at the above address on June 27, 2022.


Parties wishing to view the facility or requiring further clarification to assist in their submission can contact the Deputy Director Programs at 306-956-8803.

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Saskatchewan

Celebrating National Indigenous Peoples day

June 21, 2022



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In fact, Whitecap Resources Inc. expects to expand its Weyburn CO2 facility, already the largest of its kind in the world which uses CO2 captured from industrial facilities for enhanced oil recovery. CO2 capture significantly lowers GHG emissions from industrial facilities and when coupled with enhanced oil recovery, reduces emissions when compared to traditional oil production.




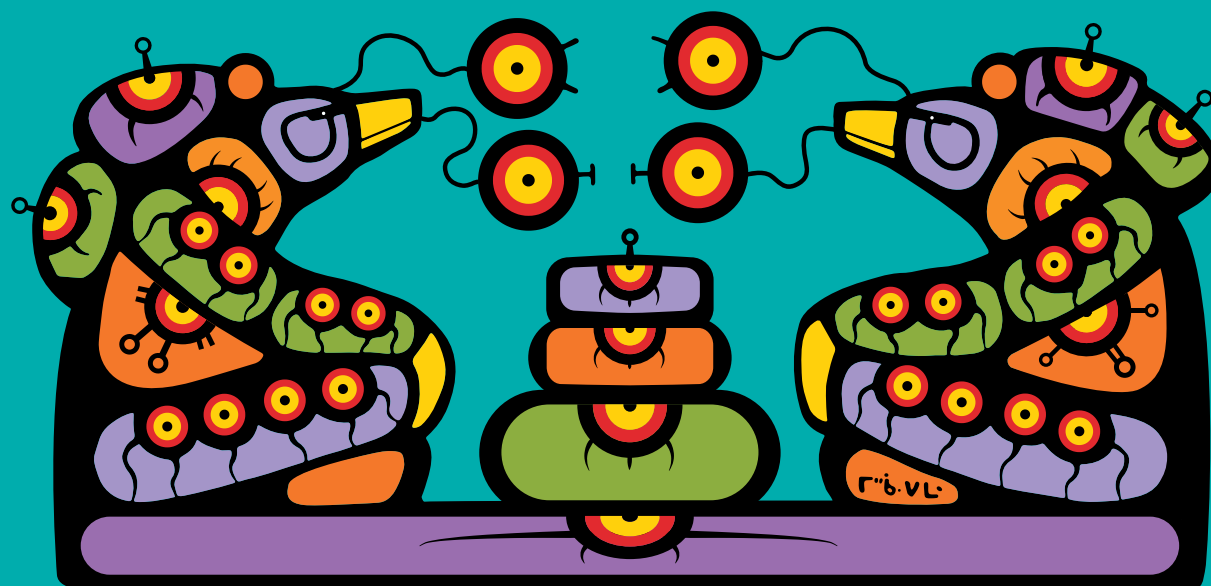
This year, the province is partnering with the Saskatchewan Research Council and the private sector to research the development of a hydrogen hub using CCUS.

Interest in extracting lithium from subsurface brine water continues to grow, and inroads are being made by companies into geothermal energy.

The future is bright for Saskatchewan as industry, supported by the provincial government, continues to make strategic investments into sustainable energy technologies.

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pîkiskwêwin

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