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25th Anniversary Celebration Issue

Way back in the year 2000, from left, INCA Summer Institute creator Shannon Avison with instructors Nelson Bird and John Lagimodiere with student and Eagle Feather News' first intern Sandra Ahenakew sitting. (Photo by Shannon Avison)

*By John Lagimodiere
for Eagle Feather News*

To set the scene, myself and two gentlemen named Richard Manns and Glenn Saganace had a business teaching Aboriginal awareness. It was early in the business, and we had one client that booked no more than four days a month. So, we had time on our hands and were trying to fill it with business ideas. Sitting around our office one day and a fellow named Darryl Pratt comes in. Darryl has been running a monthly paper (Thundercloud News), but needs space, help selling ads and a new name because he just broke up with his business partner.

Us three, knowing nothing about newspapers and publishing, said sure! We had absolutely no clue. But Darryl did. Sell ads. Write stories. Layout. Print. Deliver. So, I became an ad salesman. Hit the phones, making appointments. Sold a full-page ad to Supreme

Basics! High fives all around the office. I was then told they had come up with a new name for the paper.

After much deliberation about Times this or Courier that, some one looked at Darryl's wife's jacket, and it had an eagle feather embroidered on the sleeve. They said, "how about Eagle Feather News?" Boom. That was it.

Now the challenge was what to print. We were university students or graduates, so we edited some papers on social issues as filler. Some friends contributed. Darryl knew writers. And it just so happened the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan election of 1998 was in full campaign mode, and I set out to cover it. What a learning experience. Met the players, learned the constitution, the election act, met my soon to be employee and pal Ivan Morin. It was fascinating to witness and ask questions and then flush out how we were going to write the story.

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JACKIE OTTMANN

First Female President

"I think that's the difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders. Indigenous leaders really do consider the spiritual component of these positions..."

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March 2022 is our

Woman's Issue

International Women's Day

April 2022 Issue:
Arts & Entertainment



ISABELLA KULAK

One Small Voice Matters

"I just want people to let their spirits shine with no regrets," said Isabella when asked if she had any advice for others.

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THIRD VICE-CHIEF ALY BEAR

Creating Change

"As a young Indigenous woman and mother, I understand the struggles and barriers that we face in society to try and become successful and taken seriously, and to sit at tables where our voices matter,"

- page 19

First Nations University of Canada names life-long educator as its first female president

By Kaitlynn Nordal
for Eagle Feather News

For some people, education and helping others is something they feel called to do. Jackie Ottmann, Misiaykimigookpaypomoytung, is no exception.

Ottmann began her career as a primary and secondary school teacher before moving on to teach post-secondary.

"I have always been in the field of education," said Ottmann. "I would say that I have been called to support Indigenous students, and all students in general, and to challenge systems and structures that create barriers to the success of Indigenous peoples."

Ottmann first got involved with the First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv) in 2006 to help develop an intercultural leadership program.

"Since that was my field of research, publication and because it was the First Nations University of Canada, I was immediately intrigued," said Ottmann.

After helping to create the program, she was then asked to teach it.

She didn't know it then, but a twist of fate would have her back a few years later - this time as the first female president of FNUniv.

Ottman heard about the job opening just over two years ago when the former president was finishing his tenure in the position.

"For many of the major decisions in my life, I step back and evaluate the opportunity. I pray and look for validation and so that's what I did in this instance," said Ottmann. "I stepped back and considered the opportunity."

"For me, it's about impacting the lives of Indigenous students in positive ways and helping the First Nations University of Canada grow even

more. So, it was an opportunity in that sense," continued Ottmann.

In September, she officially became the new president, which she said was very exciting.

"For me, it was affirmation that it was something that was meant to be," said Ottman. "I think that's the difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders. Indigenous leaders really do consider the spiritual component of these positions. There was excitement but there was also the realization of the weight of the position."

Although it has only been a few months, Ottmann feels things are going well in her new role. She thinks they are on the track to success with new units, such as the Indigenous Centre for Continuing Education, and the University Relations Unit.

"I think that's the difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders. Indigenous leaders really do consider the spiritual component of these positions. There was excitement but there was also the realization of the weight of the position."

Ottmann has big plans for the institution and for herself.

"I hope to be of service to the entire community in my tenure," she said. "That would mean we are moving towards self-determination and autonomy as a university. That is a significant goal for us as a university and it will take a lot of coordination and collaboration with the FSIN, the province, and the federal government."



Although Jackie Ottmann just started as the president of FNUniv a few months ago, there are many things she hopes to achieve during her tenure.
(Photo supplied by D. Venne)



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Publisher’s Notes

What were you doing 25 years ago?

This is the burning question that comes to mind when I think about the anniversary edition of the paper. But also, where were you 25 years ago in relation to the world of Indigenous news?

It’s hard to remember exactly what I would’ve been doing 25 years ago. I was only seven years old, in the last half of grade two. I was probably obsessed with John Deere lawnmowers and cars – unaware of the realities facing Indigenous people at the time.

It’s hard to imagine what the early days of Indigenous news would have been like – especially 25 years ago. The news of the 90s was dominated with scandal, war, terrorism and even Russia too. I remember in school current events featured in our classroom. My classmates would bring in clippings of the StarPhoenix and share what was taking place in the news – but unless it was bad news – I rarely saw people with my skin complexion in those stories.

While this is all happening, a small scrappy team was hustling out this new publication – Eagle Feather News – telling important stories unknown at the time. Because of their hard work, and a growing distribution that now includes schools all over the province, Indigenous students are receiving news about people who look like and share the same experiences as them. And perhaps a young Indigenous boy, like I was 25 years ago, is seeing himself in the news in a positive, compassionate, and loving light.

Simply, wow.

Cheers to John and team for all their hard work for the last 25 years!



Publisher’s
Notes
Ben Borne





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Loneliness helped fuel one student's desire to create a space for Indigenous students

By NC Raine
for Eagle Feather News

Walking around campus as a first-year commerce student at the University of Saskatchewan, Aubrey-Anne Laliberte-Pewapisconias felt like an outsider.

"All I saw was this sea of non-Indigenous people. I felt completely alone. I thought, 'I can't be the only person feeling this way,'" she said.



Aubrey-Anne Laliberte-Pewapisconias with the IBSS office medallion she was gifted when starting the student-ran organization. (Photo supplied by Aubrey-Anne Laliberte-Pewapisconias)

A member of Canoe Lake Cree Nation and resident of Saskatoon, Laliberte-Pewapisconias spent her freshman year in 2017 searching for the same sense of culture and community she had growing up. The student groups she joined weren't quite doing it, she said.

In her second year, she and fellow Edwards School of Business student Jessica Mirasty decided to create the Indigenous Business Students' Society (IBSS).

"We built it because we never wanted an Indigenous student to walk through

the doors of the Edwards School of Business and feel like they were alone ever again," said Laliberte-Pewapisconias. "We didn't want anyone to feel like how we felt in our first year."

They spoke with Elders, matriarchs, female educators, students, alumni and administrators to find out how to make IBSS a strong and lasting community. They established a more traditional governance system, she said, with four executives where everyone has an equal voice rather than a single president.

"I think that helps us attract a lot of students because we wanted to decolonize a colonial institution as much as we could," said Laliberte-Pewapisconias. "We realized that for so long, Indigenous students have been silenced or pushed aside. So, when Indigenous students could come together on the IBSS, I think it's motivated a lot of students to want to make changes and amplify Indigenous voices."

The group has seen some success attracting both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. This year, they have 34 members.

IBSS has organized several events, including the Indigenous Achievement Conference and the Indigenous Business Gala, in which businesses from across Saskatchewan are able to purchase a table, connect with students, and create career opportunities.

Laliberte-Pewapisconias, who is graduating as the valedictorian of her 2022 class, said she's happy there's more space at the university for Indigenous students to feel seen and heard. She and Mirasty are leaving IBSS in the hands of those who also have a drive to feel their culture reflected at their campus, she said.

"I know that IBSS will go on to do bigger and better things," said Laliberte-Pewapisconias. "For me, it's always about looking at the seven generations. I want to honour the seven generations that came before me and what they fought for. And make it so it's better for the seven generations that come after me."



Aubrey-Anne Laliberte-Pewapisconias (centre) receiving an Indigenous Achievement Award for community and leadership for starting the IBSS. (Photo supplied by Aubrey-Anne Laliberte-Pewapisconias)

"I'm most proud of how far I've come and that I never gave up."

- DANIELLE
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A young advocate proves one voice can create change

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

Last January, Isabella Kulak from Kamsack, second eldest of seven daughters from proudly Indigenous and non-Indigenous parents Lana and Chris Kulak, made local, national, and international waves after being targeted for wearing a ribbon skirt as formal wear.

One year later on January 4, Isabella, proudly celebrated Bill S-227 also known as National Ribbon Skirt Day with people across the coun-



Isabella Kulak celebrated the very first National Ribbon Skirt Day this January, and continues to advocate for everyone to celebrate who they are. (Photo supplied)

try.

“When I was 8, I got sent one ribbon skirt; now I have 18 or 19,” said Isabella. “We did a class project where we have to search our names ... when my name got searched so many photos popped up!”

The quiet, close-knit family is not heavily involved with social media. But that hasn’t stopped Isabella from going viral.

She has been depicted in memes, posters, artwork and colouring sheets with logos like “Bella the Brave” and “Not all Superheroes wear capes, some wear ribbon skirts,” along with videos that have thousands of views.

“We’re very private people and we didn’t expect so many people to have such a strong voice for my daughter,” noted her father Chris. He and his wife Lana are grateful for all the support they’ve received from across the country and around the world, including their school division after the initial incident.

Chris does not bear any ill will towards the EA who first reacted negatively towards his daughter and her skirt.

“Forgiveness is the strongest tool we have to heal with each other,” he said.

Important conversations and actions have risen from this opportunity, they noted, including Senator Mary Jane McCallum initiating the National Ribbon Skirt Day campaign, celebrated for the first time with huge community participation at Isabella’s school.

Skirts have been sent from nearly every province and territory in

the country as well as sewing machines, fabric, and ribbons. A retired RCMP officer from Germany sent Isabella \$200, and the RCMP made pins of an image she designed that says “Strong, Indigenous, Resilient.” Bella also sits on the RCMP’s women’s advisory circle of the Saskatchewan Indigenous Committee.

“When I was 8, I got sent one ribbon skirt; now I have 18 or 19,” said Isabella. “We did a class project where we have to search our names ... when my name got searched so many photos popped up!”

“I just want people to let their spirits shine with no regrets,” said Isabella when asked if she had any advice for others.

Things that made her happiest was reuniting with extended family and seeing traditional wear and ribbon skirts become more common at her school. Bella has received notes, drawings, and zoom requests from students of all ages, up to university-level.

The family said the initial incident became an opportunity for a greater conversation, education, awareness, pride, and a rallying cry.

Lana has become a consultant and they are seeing many positive changes take place locally with language and culture opportunities. One of the family’s dreams is to travel to see everyone who has reached out to them.

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One voice that refuses to be silent

By NC Raine
for Eagle Feather News

A search of “Betty Nippi-Albright” on the web or social media will quickly reveal a leader who seems almost inexhaustible in her mission to be a voice for the voiceless.

For her, advocacy is not a choice – in a province dominated by Saskatchewan Party MLAs, Nippi-Albright is one of the few candidates elected from the NDP, and the province’s only First Nation MLA.

“If I don’t use my voice, my education, my experience to move the bar and address racism, my granddaughters are going to have to do that,” she said. “I have to do this for those who come behind me. It’s



Betty Nippi-Albright, MLA for Saskatoon Centre. (Photo supplied by Shane Partridge)

about my relatives, it’s about other Indigenous people who don’t have a place in society. Indigenous people in this province are forgotten, so I have to use my voice to speak out.”

Since being elected MLA for Saskatoon Centre in 2020 – her first foray into politics – Nippi-Albright has garnered a large following. This is owed to her strong, and often audacious, statements calling out government hypocrisy, speaking up about racism, and addressing ongoing issues like Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), and Treaty Rights.

“This wasn’t ever something I strived to enter,” said Nippi-Albright. “Politics was the furthest thing from my mind.”

A member of Kinistin Saulteaux Nation, a Residential School survivor, and the third youngest of 15 children, Nippi-Albright is well aware of the inequities she faces as an Indigenous woman. Her father was of mixed-race, she said. As such, they faced racist remarks from both French and Indigenous communities.

But leadership and resistance is in her blood: she has several chiefs and councillors in her family, and her great-grandfather signed the adhesion to Treaty 4 in 1876.

“My dad also inspired me a lot,” said Nippi-Albright. “He was a man of few words, but when he spoke, it was direct. He often spoke up against bullies.”

With this passion to better her community, she studied Aboriginal Public Administration at the University of Saskatchewan before working as a community developer for the Saskatoon Health Region.

While in school, she was diagnosed with a rare eye disease that caused her to have emergency eye surgery to prevent her from going blind.

After 16 years as a community developer, her political vision began

to come into focus as she grew increasingly concerned of the lack of vocal Indigenous women in provincial politics. Her friends and family finally convinced her to run in the 2020 election.

“I knew it would be brutal because I was an outspoken Indigenous woman. I knew that when I spoke truth to power, I would be villainized,” said Nippi-Albright.

As MLA for Saskatoon Centre, she said racism sometimes makes it scary to speak the truth. But she said she’s committed to continuing being vocal about MMIWG, duty to consult, meaningful reconciliation, and honouring Treaties – a subject, she said, she was shocked to learn MLAs in the province receive no training on.

“My dad also inspired me a lot,” said Nippi-Albright. “He was a man of few words, but when he spoke, it was direct. He often spoke up against bullies.”

Following the recent news of Saskatchewan NDP Leader Ryan Meili stepping down, Nippi-Albright considered running for the position but ultimately decided against it. “Racism is what stopped me,” she said.

She said she plans on continuing to serve her community as long as her constituency supports her. She’s reminded that she has followers, as young as 13 years old, who look up to her.

“It’s inspiring,” she said. “We need to inspire young girls. We need to inspire people to have hope for a better future.”

“I’m only one voice. And there’s people who want to muzzle that one voice, that want me quiet. But we need to mobilize and support each other. I’m the only First Nation MLA in the province. So as long as I have a voice, I’ll use it.”




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Curiosity and a desire to learn is one way to make a difference

By Kaitlynn Nordal
for Eagle Feather News

When you don't know someone in law enforcement and have only heard bad things about them, it is easy to paint everyone with the same brush.

Instead of falling into that never-ending loop, Shirley Greyeyes decided to take things into her own hands and learn how law enforcement works.

The desire to understand came out of various goings-on at the time.

"Because of family talking and seeing and hearing things in the news about policing and everything that had been happening, I wanted to know about how the police service worked, how decisions were made, (and) what the police were going through," said Greyeyes.

This need to understand would lead to Greyeyes volunteering with the Saskatoon Police Advisory Committee for more than 15 years.

"I participated with other members of the community to advise the Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) via the police chief and his higher-ups on different things within the City of Saskatoon that affect people who are in minority groups," said Greyeyes.

She would also go on to be the chair of the advisory committee for the last few years of that tenure.

One day when Greyeyes was looking online, she saw openings on a few boards she was interested in, including the Saskatoon Police Board, which she officially joined in January 2021.

"I thought this was a natural step for me to move on and continue volunteering in that area of policing," said Greyeyes. "It's always been an interest to me as a First Nation woman (to know) what's going on with the police service. The more I volunteer, the more I can speak as an advocate."

As a commissioner, Greyeyes attends all meetings, views all information, and keeps up-to-date on everything to provide her opinions and feedback to the board.

"It's important to me that I continue to learn and understand," she said.

Greyeyes now hopes to use her influence on the board to make changes for the better.

"I hope to provide some input from my perspective in a safe way based on the information I receive and based on information from my community," she said. "I am there representing myself as a First Nation woman, and hopefully beyond my community. I am not there representing an organization."

Although this position requires Greyeyes to reapply every fall and she can only hold it for a maximum of six years, she is going to take advantage of every moment.

"I believe volunteering and giving back to our community is important," said Greyeyes. "This is an area I am fairly knowledgeable about and I think I can provide feedback and information to help make decisions through this committee in a positive manner -- bringing a perspective that is new to some people and learning from the people who are there as well."



Shirley Greyeyes hopes to use the influence she has as a member of the Saskatoon Police Board to make positive changes in the city. (Photo supplied by Shirley Greyeyes)

Taryn Roske,
Cigar Lake employee,
Lac La Ronge
Indian Band member

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SMEDCO supports Métis women entrepreneurs

By Julia Peterson
for Eagle Feather News

With pandemic recovery plans in full swing, the SaskMétis Economic Development Corporation (SMEDCO) is working to encourage, support, and promote businesses owned and operated by Métis people in the province.

Meanwhile, SMEDCO economic development coordinator Charity Chaboyer is fostering her own passion for supporting Métis women entrepreneurs.

She encourages Métis women, who may be thinking of starting a business, to reach out to her directly. Chaboyer wants to see women succeed and she may be able to help them by connecting them with resources.

"They are very valuable members to their communities," she said. "They are role models and leaders. There are a ton of supports out there for women alone. If you don't know where to start, come see me at SMEDCO or give me a call [because] I am always happy to help."

Some of the programs SMEDCO is currently running include the Covid-19 community business program and the Covid micro-business program, which help Métis business owners who have lost revenue because of Covid. They also help connect Métis business owners to financing packages and grants, and are working on a directory of Métis-owned businesses in Saskatchewan.

Chaboyer says she can also help connect people to programs and resources beyond SMEDCO — like grants, loans, mentorship, seminars, workshops, information sessions, and more.

Through her work, Chaboyer wants to help more Métis women take advantage of these opportunities and have an equitable chance to succeed as entrepreneurs.

"SMEDCO's approach is grounded in our understanding that, historically, Métis women entrepreneurs have had lower access to equity due to a lack of intergenerational wealth in families and little flexibility in traditional banking systems," she said. "We understand the hurdles they encounter. We work with them to alleviate obstacles and create tailored solutions for each unique Métis business."

Chaboyer says one of the major barriers for many Métis business owners in Saskatchewan is distance — many of their home communities are far away from the major cities and towns.

Even in her own home community of Cumberland House, there aren't a lot of accessible supports, she said.

"I know a lot of communities feel like, 'We're too far away, we don't have the support here,'" said Chaboyer. "We want them to know that even though we're not there, we can support them in other ways."

To better understand the needs of Métis women business owners in Saskatchewan, SMEDCO recently hosted its first focus group for Métis women, which Chaboyer said was a big success.

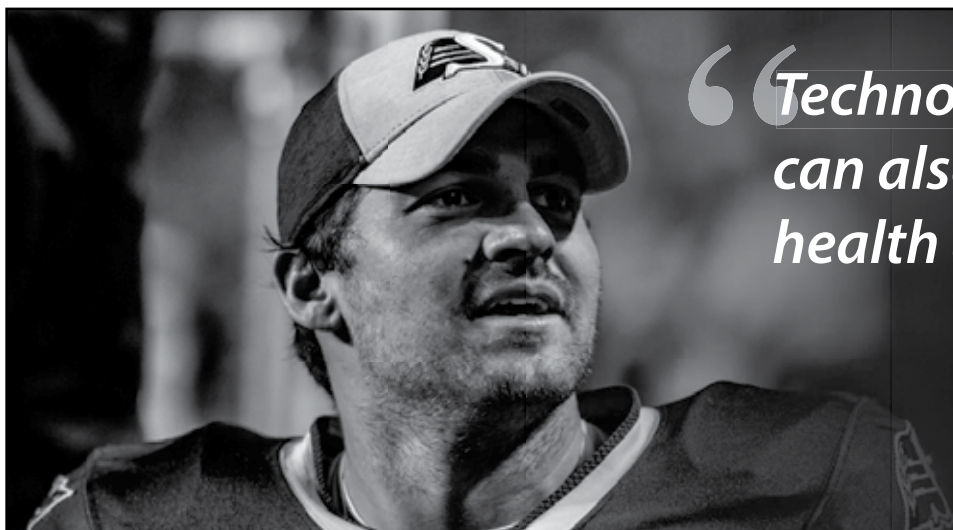


Charity Chaboyer, economic development coordinator for the SaskMétis Economic Development Corporation, says she is particularly passionate about supporting Métis women entrepreneurs. (Photo supplied by Charity Chaboyer)

"SMEDCO's approach is grounded in our understanding that, historically, Métis women entrepreneurs have had lower access to equity due to a lack of intergenerational wealth in families and little flexibility in traditional banking systems," she said. "We understand the hurdles they encounter. We work with them to alleviate obstacles and create tailored solutions for each unique Métis business."

"It was very personal, which all the women enjoyed, because they were able to speak freely about so many things," she said. "They could all relate in so many ways. There were laughs, there were tears. The women absolutely loved this event and we are hoping to do this yearly as we had such amazing feedback."

Chaboyer knows many others could benefit from the event.



"Technology can be a useful tool, but it can also take a toll on your mental health and sleeping habits."

- Cody Fajardo
Quarterback for the Saskatchewan Roughriders

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Saskatchewan

“Crazy Moon” Review

By Mike Gosselin
for Eagle Feather News

One day in 2005, my new bro Johnny (Lagimodiere) called me. It was about a year after he made the mistake of publishing one of my stories in his paper and now couldn’t get rid of me. Usually the bearer of writing work, he didn’t sound too good that day.

“I just got a review from this guy Gus Blondeau about your poetry book,” Johnny said. He was referring to a chapbook I printed so I could be like Gord Downie.

“Oh wow, cool,” I replied excitedly. “What did he think?” But my excitement must have scared Johnny because he didn’t respond. “He didn’t like it?” I asked, now sounding gutted.

Johnny fessed up. “He tore it to shreds. This guy doesn’t like you. I’m not going to run it.” I tried to object - a bad review meant someone actually read my work! But Johnny wasn’t having it. To convince me, he cleared his throat and put on his best firm, patronizing voice:

“I recently had the opportunity to read an independently released poetry book entitled Crazy Moon: A Collection of Things Written by an Unknown Poet and was immediately intrigued with the first few poems ... and that was it.

Author Michael Gosselin and his book were profiled in a recent edition of the Leader-Post and aside from all the nice things said about him, the material was not analyzed, considered or seemingly even read

by the reporter.

The article lists his influences and, quite frankly, you can hear their echoes throughout. He tries his best to analyze society, religion and even dysfunctional families but he does it in a choppy, seemingly un-edited way.

Kudos to Mr. Gosselin for doing this on his own but it doesn’t mean I’m going to like it. Stick to love poems, my man, you do a decent job of them. Otherwise, we won’t be hearing much more from the ‘Unknown Poet.’”

“You still want me to print this man,” Johnny asked. But I was caught in the reverie of hearing someone criticize my book. It sounded so awesome. “Dude. Bro. Talk to me. What am I doing?”

“I wrote the review, Johnny. I’m Gus Blondeau.”

Johnny thought I was a complete idiot. Not only that, he liked my book. But I had only made 110 copies and they sold out. Didn’t even have one left for myself. Having a published critique proved its existence and I sure as hell wasn’t going to be nice.

And Johnny happily printed the review. He respected my checking ego at the door and not taking myself too seriously. A gesture I’ll never forget. So thanks for that and everything else Johnny. You’re a solid bro!

This brings me to the important part. I wanted to share what an amazing privilege it was to work with Deirdre Ness at Eagle Feather News. A tireless plate spinner, she is one of the people I can’t imagine my life without. Thanks Dee!

The great grizzly destroys the English lion

With the coming of winter in what is now Saskatchewan, the buffalo moved north into the woodlands.

The predators, including people, the ultimate predator, followed. There was plenty of shelter, wood, water, and grass to sustain the herds until the coming of spring. Winter could be cruel and difficult to endure for all living things. In early spring, the herds grew restless and began moving once again out onto the open prairie to graze upon the renewed earth. It was a cycle that lasted thousands of years.

It all ended within two centuries. The prairie became empty in winter with the near total slaughter of the great herds. The First Nations, through starvation, disease, and conquest became unwilling subjects of the British Empire. The great freedom they once knew was gone. They were now forced to follow rigid government policies over which they had no control.

Most camps moved onto small reserves where their old winter camps had been. It is there, it can be said, the First Nations endured their longest winter.

When the First Nations finally, reluctantly entered into Treaty 6, they did so with the

most powerful Nation on earth. The British Empire circled the globe. They colonized and controlled the land and resources of many Nations. This pattern was duplicated with the conquest of the Canadian plains First Nations. India, once a prosperous wealthy nation, was reduced to poverty and experienced a devastating man-made famine. The English



Breaking Trail

John Cuthand

imported Irish food stuffs during the height of the Irish potato famine. England could have provided relief but knowingly refused. The famine claimed so many lives the Irish population has never totally recovered.

It was within a century of treaty signing

when a little-known spiritual event dramatically changed history. I remember a Knowledge Keeper from Saddle Lake First Nation sharing the story as he had once heard it.

The story tells of a time within the past century when a Cree Keeper of the great plains grizzly bear bundle dreamed he was being called upon to travel to England. It was

there the great grizzly would wage war on the English lion. Wherever this terrible raging evil spirit went, it destroyed and brought suffering to many peoples. The grizzly came to end its rule. The Keeper arrived after a long, hazardous journey. In ceremony, the great bear rose and roared a challenge to the lion. The lion arrived in a rage and a furious battle followed. The grizzly overpowered the lion, tearing it to pieces until only a small piece of its tail remained. It was then the British Empire went into decline. Country after country declared

independence and the First Nations gained increasing control over their own lives. It is said a spirit cannot be destroyed but it can be changed. All that’s left of the once all-powerful lion is an annoying small piece of its tail, which wanders and brings bad dreams.

The birth of Eagle Feather News and an unsuspecting publisher

... continued from page 1

In the meantime, Glenn was made the design person because he was the only one with any passing design talent. We gathered ads and stories, Glenn slapped it together and we felt pretty good about what we made. Come time to print though, Darryl had no money. I was fortunate to have a credit card with enough room to cover the print. So, we printed that sucker. Looked good with new MN-S President Clement Chartier on the



Eagle Feather News' original staff from left: Darryl Pratt, Wanda Bear, Glenn Saganace, Richard Manns and John Lagimodiere. (Photo supplied)

cover.

Now repeat in month two and our representative at the printer, Dennis Dowd and their designer Karen Edwards approached us and said we had the right idea for the paper, but what if the cover looked like this. And they showed us a mock up of a beautiful eagle soaring through the blue sky. We loved it! That design, with a few tweaks over time, would come to be our masthead and logo for the next 25 years. I quit my other two jobs at UPS and as a contract social worker to focus on the business.

For Issue 2, the cover story was the election of Perry Bellegarde as Chief of the FSIN. Then the next cover was when they named Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond a provincial court judge. News was happening and we were all over it. But behind the scenes, no money, turmoil, and stress. Darryl left the paper and we three became the owners. Then Glenn made



The Eagle Feather News jeep. (Photo supplied)

the decision to leave and go back to school, leaving Richard and me. Then Richard and I could not agree on many things and in October of that year I bought out Richard. By then we had moved to an office building in Riversdale. We had four or five people on staff or coming and going, a big pile of bills and a wee tiny pile of receivables and still no idea of what I was doing, but we were certainly doing



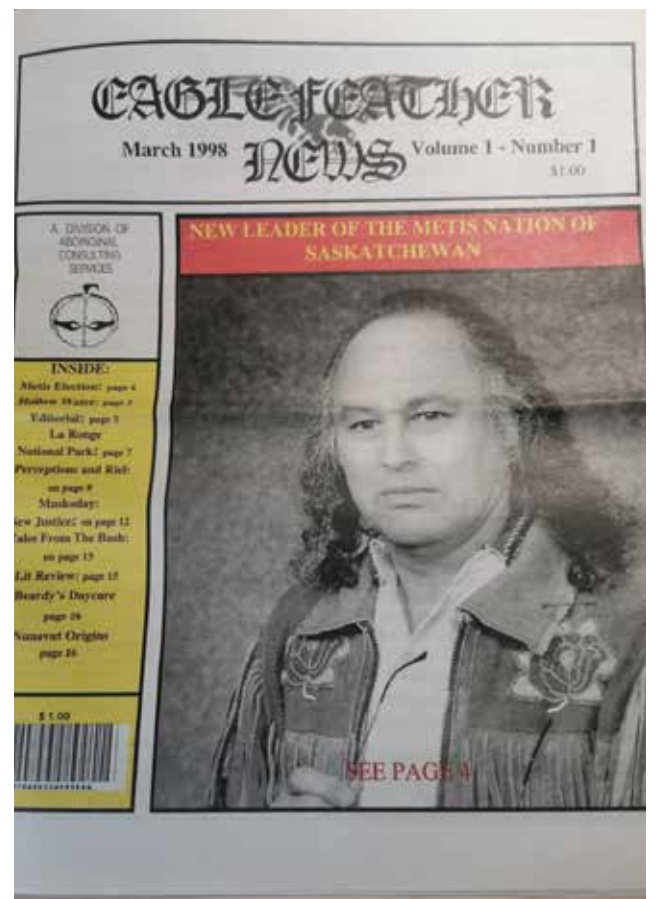
something. And in a very small nutshell, that is how I came to be the publisher and editor of *Eagle Feather News*.

Now to go from that pile of trouble and potential to where we are now 25 years later, we needed a lot of luck and lots of good people to work with. Here is a list of folks that contributed in one way or another over the years. For sure I am going to miss someone so apologies beforehand.

Bar none, the most important person in making these 25 years happen is my partner Deirdra Ness. She is my advice, support, and accountability and she just makes me better. Richard Manns and Glenn Saganace for inviting me into their business. Darryl Pratt for the paper. Dennis Dowd and Karen Edwards at AdVentures. Old school staff, writers and friends including Wanda Bear, Donna Boyer, Elizabeth Mooney, Christa Nicholat, Jaqueline Gabriell, Ivan Morin, Randy Kehrig, Calvin Vandale, Karen Trochie, Kevin Roberts, Arthur Soles, Connie Manning, Arnold Wardman, David E. Criss, Faith Obey, Peggy McLean, Darla Read our first web editor, Andrea Ledding, Nathan Raine and Julie Ann Wriston.

We must also thank every single one of our advertisers.

When it came to writers and content, I owe deep gratitude to my old friend, the late Tyrone Tootosis. He came casually strolling into our office one day, dripping culture and integrity, and changed our trajectory. He did a column called mekwanuk. He also introduced me to his mother-in-law, who he insisted should write for the paper. Enter the late, lovely, and talented Bernelda Wheeler, a featured columnist for years. She brought in John Cuthand and Maria Campbell and then Paul Chartrand as writers and eventually her daughter Winona Wheeler. What a score to have such accomplished people share their words in our paper. Other deadly columnists have included Richard Wagamese, the "Angry Indian" Tyson Kiasawatum, Sandra Ahenakew with "Sandy Sez" the hilarious Dawn Dumont, Alyson Bear, Mike Gosselin, who was a writer and columnist, and the weird and insightful "Dirk Dashing," aka Winston McLean.



Cover of the first edition of Eagle Feather News - March 1998. (Photo supplied)



Eagle Feather News office, 410 Ave. N south Saskatoon, SK. (Photo supplied)

Our dear friend Shannon Avison, department head at Indian Communication Arts at the First Nations University of Canada has been producing Indigenous journalists for 30 years. Her boundless energy in recruiting Indigenous students and training journalists is second to none in the country. Through our partnership with Shannon and FNUniv, we have published the first articles of dozens of Indigenous writers and have seen many go onto to great careers in journalism. Our former editor, Jeanelle Mandes, came through INCA, and we published her first article. Now she is with Global Regina. And Kerry Benjoe also had her first article published in our paper. Now she's running the joint.



Prince Albert Metis Fall Festival 1999. (Photo supplied)

The key person for shaping the words and design of *Eagle Feather News* over most of our journey has been my mentor and friend Warren Goulding. In the late 90s, he traded me his skills as a publisher, editor, and journalist with over 25 years experience at the time for some office space so he could write his book *Just Another Indian: A Serial Killer and Canadas Indifference*, published in 2001. That working relationship lasted over 20 years. For many years, it was just Warren and I having long phone calls and marathon weekends

as we pulled together issue after issue. The internet allowed us to work provinces apart, but those phone calls, idle chit chat, analysis of the news, and the damn paper business will always be a fond memory.

The last years have been fun to work with Deirdra, the legendary journalist Betty Ann Adam and Errol Sutherland. But the writing was on the wall and the energy was waning. Once the decision was made to leave, the right people emerged.

In 25 years in the media, I have witnessed so much history, much of it being made by average ordinary people. We told stories, good and bad. When it was bad, we tried to be fair. We mostly stuck to the good because that's what the community wants and deserves. The best thing about this whole experience though has been the people. The advertisers that supported us. The friends we worked with. The community we connected with and the people whose stories we told. And you, the reader. I want to thank you all for allowing me to take this ride with you over the past 25 years. Now we couldn't be happier to see Ben, Melody, Errol, and Kerry take over, and with a team like that, I look forward to reading this paper for the next 25 years.



John Lagimodiere on his last pickup and delivery, December 2021. (Photo supplied)

Working to revive Indigenous language and culture

By NC Raine
of Eagle Feather News

Nestled in the Saskatchewan boreal forest and surrounded by several large bodies of water, Pelican Lake First Nation has a rich history of culture and tradition, particularly when it comes to hunting, fishing, and forestry.

Destiny Thomas, a 29-year-old born and raised at Pelican Lake First Nation, is tasked as the treaty, language and culture catalyst, responsible to preserve and foster that important history on her home reserve.

“A lot of our younger generation is disconnected from who they are as Indigenous people, and have a tough time getting acquainted with language, land-based learning, and what we generally do as Indigenous people,” said Thomas.

“So we are that plug-in for the kids to get reconnected with their culture.”

As treaty, language and culture catalyst, Thomas provides resources on the treaties, Cree language, and culture for teachers in the elementary and high school, as well as members of the community. Based on requests from teachers and the community, Thomas will find speakers, experts, and Knowledge Keepers who can instill cultural practices in the young people’s lives.

In the last year, she has also helped organize events like an ice-fishing derby, and a “moose camp,” where students from the elementary



Treaty, language and culture catalyst Destiny Thomas works with youth at Pelican Lake First Nation to enrich culture into their lives. (Photo supplied by Destiny Thomas)

religious community, some parents are hesitant to allow their children to engage in cultural practices, she said. It’s about communicating with parents but not overstepping their wishes, she said.

Thomas plans to soon pursue her Masters of Indigenous Language Education so she can teach in Pelican Lake. Until then, she continues to do whatever she can to enhance the culture and lives of those in her home community.

“The kids are creating their own Cree dictionaries, and really connecting with language,” said Thomas. “I want the students involved in any way they can. Singing, dancing, anything that’s part of who we are.”



Destiny Thomas, from Pelican Lake First Nation, is dedicated to growing Indigenous culture. (Photo supplied by Destiny Thomas)

and high schools engage in land-based learning.

“They learn a lot. The kids learn to respect the animals that they hunt and fish. They learn about harvesting animals. And, they just learn a lot of respect for everything around them,” she said.

Culture was woven into her life from an early age, said Thomas, who was raised by grandparents who took her regularly to sweats and cultural ceremonies. But her immersion into culture faded in her teen years after her grandfather passed. She felt disconnected, she said, but everything fell back into place when she began studying pre-language literacy at the First Nations University of Canada in Regina.

Her rekindled passion for her culture and her home community makes her job extremely rewarding, she said.

“Just being a part of the community, working for the kids, and coming back to my home community after 10 years. Making those connections and bringing culture into the community, it means a lot,” she said.

The gig isn’t without its challenges though. As Pelican Lake is a very

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“Choosing Edwards School of Business for post-secondary has opened up so many opportunities for me as an Indigenous student. I’ve met like-minded students and I have felt supported through my entire experience with resources such as the Rawlinson Centre and support groups like the Indigenous Business Students’ Society. There is plenty of support to help you succeed and complete your degree.”

MICKAYLA CARLSON, Meota & Sweetgrass First Nation
Pursuing a Bachelor of Commerce

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Eagle Feather News is a place for everyone

By Kaitlynn Nordal
for Eagle Feather News

From the time I was a little girl I have always had a curiosity about what was going on in the world whether it was down the street or half the world away.

I would always make my parents read to me, that is, until I learned to read on my own. I would carry around a notebook and pen to write down any little thing that came to my mind.

Once I was old enough to understand what a journalist does, I knew that was the career for me.

However, I also grew up in rural Saskatchewan which meant there was no school newspaper to hone this skill.

When I got to university, I was finally able to get a taste of it.

Part of the University of Regina’s journalism program requires you to complete an internship to graduate and I got the opportunity to do mine with Eagle Feather News (EFN) in 2019.



Rose Mansbridge.
(Photo supplied)

Rose Mansbridge was the latest student from the journalism program to do her internship with EFN, which wrapped up in December.

It is an experience that made a lasting impression.

“One of the stories that has stayed with me that I covered was a story I did on

I was fortunate. It ended up being a good fit for me. Not only did Lagimodiere and his wife and partner Deirdra allow me to cover a variety of stories but they also gave me the opportunity to pitch my own and never said no when I came to them with an idea. This of course allowed me to hone skills that every journalist must have.

They also required me to take photographs for various stories. This gave me the opportunity to work on my photographic skills, which is something that’s always interested me.

I will always be thankful to EFN for taking a chance on me and giving me the opportunity to learn and grow in the process.

Danis Goulet, a Cree/Metis filmmaker from La Ronge,” said Rose.

Goulet is an award-winning Indigenous filmmaker who’s latest project Night Raiders has received critical acclaim across North America.

“As a journalist, I ironically dread conducting interviews, but talking with Danis was such a lovely experience” she said. “I think this comes from my gravitation towards film more so than journalism in the last year. It was a place where I could combine them both.”

The EFN internship also helped Mansbridge decide what journalistic path was right for her.

“I am not out of school yet, but I am very grateful for the opportunity to do an internship while I was in school,” said Rose. “I think if anything it has helped me narrow down and understand the direction I would like to head.”

Although she knew daily deadlines were. “not her jam” she still wanted to try print journalism.

“It allowed more flexibility with deadlines because of the monthly printing of the paper,” said Mansbridge. “With that being said, I find I gravitate more to the videography, editing and film side of journalism than the reporter/writer side and my experience both at the School of Journalism and at Eagle Feather News these past two years have helped me understand that,” said Rose.

This internship also helped her understand the world better and see things in a new light.

“Working for an Indigenous newspaper as a non-Indigenous person was a bit conflicting for me in the sense that I felt my internship position should be filled by someone who is Indigenous,” said Rose. “However, I am also so grateful for the opportunity to immerse myself in the world of Indigenous news-storytelling and be around Indigenous journalists. It has given me a greater understanding of the land I live on, my place as a settler journalist, and my responsibilities going forward as a person.”

EFN plans to continue providing internship opportunities to those at the School of Journalism with an intern expected to join the team in the fall semester.



Kaitlynn Nordal.
(Photo supplied)



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A family finds out how great their grandfather really was

By Lisa Pitzel (*Morning Star*)
for *Eagle Feather News*

Within the pages of a book, an old story passed down through the generations has come to life.

"My papa Ross Cummings helped the RCMP go to the North Pole," said Julie Pitzel. "He was a hunter and trapper raised in Dillon, Saskatchewan."

Although it wasn't exactly to the North Pole, it was still a pretty remarkable trek.

William Barr's book *Red Serge and Polar Bear Pants: The Biography of Harry Stallworthy*, describes the harrowing journey from Stoney Rapids to Nueltin Lake, Northwest Territories (NWT) in 1929.

In the book, Cummings is mentioned by name as the guide who helped lead the first police patrol to the Saskatchewan and NWT border.

Pitzel, 78, said her grandfather was an excellent marksman who never wasted a bullet.

"He moved with grandma Madeleine to Buffalo Narrows where they raised us," she said. "He would go into the Hudson Bay post and purchase only three bullets to hunt three animals."

In those days, her grandfather would travel by dogsled and made many trips to Nueltin Lake to hunt. It was on one of those scheduled trips when he linked up with Stallworthy to be his guide.

"(My grandfather) was loved and respected by northerners and he was very tall and strong and he played the violin," she said. "He would leave his cabin doors unlocked for others to stay and eat in when he was away. He was known to be kind and very generous and he always shared what he hunted with others."

Cummings was multilingual and spoke Dene, Cree, French and Michif fluently.

"He made sure I spoke Dene and Cree too," said Pitzel.

She's not surprised he was able to lead a successful expedition because she knew how capable her grandfather was at winter travel.

"He took us far into the north to the traplines and I was always warm sitting with grandma while Papa ran behind the dogsled," said Pitzel.

According to Barr's book, the RCMP led by Cummings travelled 1,584 kilometres in 32 ½ days.

The grueling journey began March 27, 1929 and ended on May 1.

In the book, Barr said at times the extreme snowy environment left him snow blind. At one point they crossed a frozen, but flooded-over lake on foot while their dogs swam. Another night they chopped wood all night because it was too cold to sleep.

Not only were the men pushed to their limits, so were the dogs.

Dog moccasins were used to protect their paws from the sharp and difficult terrain.

After completing the epic journey, Stallworthy suggested future patrols to Nueltin Lake be undertaken by plane.

Although Pitzel heard the story from her grandfather, hearing it described in the book was eye-opening.

"(My papa) was the best hunter and trapper and he told me in Dene to always be proud I am Dene," she said. "I am so happy that papa's very important contributions as a guide and hunter were acknowledged by Mr. Stallworthy and in this book."



William Barr. (Photo supplied)

Living the good life was the focus of this year's Indigenous Achievement Conference

By NC Raine
for *Eagle Feather News*

A student-created and -led conference shines a light on miyo-pitisiwin – a Cree term guiding one to "live the good life."

The Indigenous Business Students' Society (IBSS) – a society made up of Indigenous commerce students at the Edwards School of Business – hosted its second annual Indigenous Achievement Conference. The virtual conference hosted guests from all over Canada and focused on young people.

"We really want to amplify Indigenous voices so we can create a community of safe spaces for all the Indigenous students here," said Jessica Mirasty, fourth-year commerce student, member of Flying Dust First Nation, and co-founder of IBSS.

The students in IBSS curated a day-long conference, with "carefully selected" speakers in order to bring "thought-provoking, disrupting ideas to the table."

The event included a women's panel on being an Indigenous woman in the business world; women's networking; speakers on Afro-Indigenous perspectives; business opportunities for Indigenous students; a cultural showcase; and a keynote from Cree-Métis yoga instructor/podcast host/influencer Shayla Stonechild.

"We chose miyo-pitisiwin, living the good life in Cree, because we want to be able to incorporate those traditional teachings to live life to the fullest in a healthy, balanced way," said Mirasty.

The conference was open to everyone, and attracted 135 participants.

"It's a good way to learn to be an Indigenous ally," she said.

The conference was supported by Nutrien and featured a presentation by Lyle Acoose, a member of Sakimay First Nation, and former students at the Edwards School of Business.

"Nutrien has always been a supporter of the Edwards School of Business initiatives," said Acoose, talent attraction and advisor at Nutrien, in an email. "I am a proud alumnus, so that makes it even more special for me."

Mirasty said conferences that empower Indigenous voices are particularly important in light of the recent and continual injustices toward Indigenous people. Indigenous people need to have places where they feel safe, so they can

build a better future.

"With events happening with Residential Schools, it's really important to listen to your Indigenous peers. Being an Indigenous student in a colonized post-secondary institution, it's really easy to feel alone," she said. "Our Indigenous views aren't always being met, so we're trying to change that here."



Indigenous Business Students' Society (IBSS), part of the University of Saskatchewan's Edwards School of Business, in a group photo during the 2021/22 academic year. (Photo by Enya Bird Productions/submitted by Jessica Mirasty)

Eagle Feather News has helped many journalists find their wings

By Kerry Benjoe
of Eagle Feather News

The rise in the number of Indigenous journalists entering mainstream media, particularly here in Saskatchewan over the past 20 years is no coincidence.

“Eagle Feather’s contribution to the world of journalism has been huge,” said Shannon Avison, assistant professor of Indigenous Communications Arts (INCA) and Fine Arts at the First Nations University of Canada (FNUUniv).

John Lagimodiere, the founder of Eagle Feather News (EFN), has stepped away from the publication, but before he did he made certain the new owners would continue to provide opportunities for up-and-coming journalists.

Avison has worked with Lagimodiere for more than 20 years and, together, through the INCA Summer Institute, they have helped introduce the world of journalism to many Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

The pair met in 1999 when a group they were part of traveled from Regina to the U.S. for an Indigenous journalism conference.

Although the trip itself was memorable for various reasons, Avison said what began was a partnership between INCA and EFN that she could not have predicted.

She said, for many students, the INCA Summer Institute is their first introduction into the world of journalism because they receive a crash course in all storytelling mediums.

Since 2000, Lagimodiere has been a print journalism instructor. As part of the course, students pitch a story and write an article, which is then published in EFN.

For some, it’s the only article they ever write, but for others it’s just the start of their career.

Including Creeson Agecutay, a parliamentary correspondent for CTV National News.

When Lagimodiere announced his decision to step away from the paper, I was concerned because I know how valuable this publication is for the province but, most importantly, I know its potential.

“My first cheque paying me for my writing was from John and EFN when I was still in university,” he said. “It was such a great opportunity at that age and, as an INCA student, to have the story published and sent out to the community for everyone to see.”

Agecutay went on to intern at CTV Regina and The StarPhoenix before returning to university to complete his journalism degree.

He returned to CTV Regina where he worked for several years as a video journalist and host of Indigenous Circle.

Agecutay has since spread his wings and is now working in Ottawa.

However, he still remembers that sense of accomplishment he felt seeing his byline.

“My mom was the most excited,” said Agecutay. “We cut out my first article and we still have it today.”

In 2000, Sandra Ahenekew was the paper’s very first intern and still looks back on her time there fondly.

Although she was newly diagnosed with breast cancer and undergoing chemotherapy, Lagimodiere was supportive and took the extra time to help teach her the business and many new skills.

“EFN provides a place for Indigenous storytellers to change the narrative and share our stories and make connections with our readers,” said Ahenekew. “It provides opportunities to teach, influence and inspire EFN readers to learn about Indigenous culture and issues. Stories about us - by us - for us. I am so thankful for my time at EFN and to John for his mentorship and friendship.”

Unlike many, Avison was not surprised when Lagimodiere announced his intention to hand over his newspaper to another team, nor was she surprised at the team he selected.

“He wanted to make certain Eagle Feather not only maintained that relationship with INCA, but continued to provide opportunities for aspiring journalists,” she said. “He did that when he chose you.”

I am also an INCA alumni who met Lagimodiere in 2002 during the INCA Summer Institute.

Like Agecutay, I published my first article in Eagle Feather News and seeing my byline in print for the first time was what hooked me on journalism and storytelling.

I was a stay-at-home mom at the time and Lagimodiere periodically gave me story assignments, which I used to slowly build a portfolio.

In 2006, I took my portfolio of EFN clippings into an interview at the Regina LeaderPost and was offered the position two hours later.

I worked there for 13 years before returning to the University of Regina to pursue a master of journalism. Once again, I freelanced for the paper but this time it was to supplement my student income.

When Lagimodiere announced his decision to step away from the paper, I was concerned because I know how valuable this publication is for the province but, most importantly, I know its potential.

I will forever be grateful to Lagimodiere for not only giving this little rez girl a chance all those years ago, but for continuing to believe in my abilities and trusting me with his legacy.



Kerry Benjoe, managing editor, Eagle Feather News. (Photo supplied)





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A life-long fight to keep the Saulteaux language alive

By NC Raine
of Eagle Feather News

Lynn Cote was raised in the Saulteaux language and it was constantly reinforced by her family, who taught her how closely one's native tongue is tied with identity. But school, in a non-Indigenous community, was a different story.

"The other kids at school made me feel embarrassed to speak my language," said Cote. "The teachers as well. They made snide remarks, and you could never say anything back. You just had to take it."

Rather than give in, she held on tighter to her language. In fact, Cote has spent much of her adult life proudly speaking and teaching the language.

From the Cote First Nation, she is an assistant professor of Saulteaux Language at First Nations University (FNU), where she's been teaching for the last 17 years.

"It's still rewarding," said Cote. "I always tell my students how important it is to know your language, because that's your identity. That's who we are, and where we belong, and where we are going."

Those foundations of identity were ingrained by her grandparents, who raised her, as well as her late aunt, Margaret Cote, who pushed her to study Saulteaux linguistics.

In 1990, Margaret Cote and two others were the first three to graduate with a linguistics degree from the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (now FNU). Margaret convinced her niece, Lynn, who was studying Business Administration at SIAST, to change her degree to Saulteaux Linguistics. Margaret had been a leader in Saulteaux education and history, and Lynn thought it appropriate to continue her legacy.

"My family is why I'm where I am today," said Cote. "Even my

grandfather, he couldn't read or write, but he would sit with me and help me (through the language). He pushed me. And would tell me, 'I'm glad you're doing this.'"

Saulteaux keeps giving back to her, said Cote. She is constantly learning by speaking with Elders, learning stories from different First Nations, and finding the subtle differences across the land.

But the language itself isn't growing and that worries her.

"It's hard to find ways to teach it," she said. "Even in the homes, too many people are used to English. They think it's easier. I always tell my students, don't think in English, think in Indian. English is abstract. Our language is concrete, our words will stick to something."

"My family is why I'm where I am today," said Cote. "Even my grandfather, he couldn't read or write, but he would sit with me and help me (through the language). He pushed me. And would tell me, 'I'm glad you're doing this.'"

The language has certainly stuck to Cote, who said she is continually learning about other cultures and languages in order to use their ideas in her own. And she still has hope the Saulteaux language will be the gift to others that it's been to her.

"It deepens that understanding of yourself. It has for me."



Lynn Cote, assistant professor of Saulteaux linguistics at FNU, is a leader helping to keep the language alive. (Photo supplied by Lynn Cote)

Storytellers do more than entertain

By Andréa Ledding
for Eagle Feather News

A couple storytellers keep traditions alive as a way to reclaim the teachings disrupted by Residential School.

Solomon Ratt, a Regina storyteller, recalled how his mom would tell traditional stories in Cree to not only entertain but to pass down the language and teach important life lessons.

But that all changed when he was taken away to Residential School.

"The winter was when these stories were told," said Ratt. "We were away at school, so the stories stopped."

Years later, he found the stories in books, but they were missing important parts. Although the written Cree versions were how he remembered them, they were watered down when translated into English.

The censorship of the old stories didn't stop with just the books.

"One time, I told a group of school kids a story about a giant farting skunk, and they loved it," said Ratt. "But when they told their parents the school got complaints that maybe I shouldn't tell that story."

Whether the stories are satirical or serious, the Cree worldview is contained within them, because they teach new generations how to live, raise families, treat one another, respect the lands and so much more, he said.

Stories should always be told out loud in Cree to keep them alive then

translated into English for those who don't understand, which is what he does.

Darwin Atcheynum uses his art and sacred objects when he shares traditional teachings with young people.

"For a long time, because of residential schools, these teachings were something we had to hide but, when I grew up, I got to choose my own path," he said. "The kids love hearing the stories and are inspired by these teachings."

Atcheynum said over the generations many people have lost their culture and identity.

"The stories help them find their way back," he said. "They regain a sense of pride in who they are and where they come from."

Both storytellers participated in Indigenous Storytelling Month activities hosted by Library Services for Saskatchewan Aboriginal Peoples in February.



"Solomon Ratt, a storyteller for Indigenous Storytelling Month 2022 this February, has dedicated his life to preserving and sharing Cree stories told to him as a child, and is an Associate Professor of Language, Linguistics, and Literature at First Nations University of Canada."

Embracing reconciliation can be rewarding

By NC Raine
of Eagle Feather News

Almost 20 years into a career in talent acquisition, Michelle Brooks is contemplating a new and better way forward. The Cowessess First Nation member and Regina resident recently left her human resources position with Sasktel, all in the name of reconciliation.

“I believe that everything we do, both personally and professionally, can help advance truth and reconciliation in Canada,” said Brooks. “This is really just a way I can use the skills I have to do that.”

Last March, on International Women’s Day, Brooks launched Brooks Interview Coaching – a career coaching service that helps individuals find and grow career opportunities, and develop skills important to land the right position for them.

Brooks said she wasn’t connected to her culture growing up, as her father’s career in the RCMP forced them to live off-reserve. Brook’s father, along with several aunts and uncles, also attended Residential School. But in recent years, with more attention paid to reconciliation and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) Calls to Action, Brooks began to think more about the role she could play in supporting her people.

“I always knew I wanted to focus on getting Indigenous people into careers, but didn’t always have the opportunity to do that (at Sasktel),” she said.

Using her years of experience and insight into the hiring and interviewing process, Brooks developed several resources, including one-on-one coaching, on-demand guides, and resume services, with special attention paid to help Indigenous people get ready and employed in any industry they seek, she said.

She also is in the process of developing the Stanford Sparvier Memorial Scholarship, an annual fund for an Indigenous individual who wants to advance themselves in school.

“Meaningful reconciliation, for me, means that Indigenous people are accepted into the workplace and given meaningful work,” said Brooks. “Not just hiring people at entry-level positions, but investing in someone’s skills and being able to hire through all levels of the organization.”

She also works full-time at File Hills Qu’Appelle (FHQ) Developments in human resources but is fully committed to moving the reconciliation needle. She does this by working 10-20 hours a week in her spare time on her career coaching business.

And, through the process, her own understanding of culture has grown.

“Meaningful reconciliation, for me, means that Indigenous people are accepted into the workplace and given meaningful work,” said Brooks. “Not just hiring people at entry-level positions, but investing in someone’s skills and being able to hire through all levels of the organization.”

“Last summer I was invited to my first sundance,” said Brooks. “It was so moving and emotional. One of the things I’ve been saying is that, ‘I may be late at learning my culture, but it’s never too late to start.’”

She is happy with her decision to change career paths because it has enriched her life in many ways.

“My dad was always about helping out people, so I feel like I’m passing on that legacy,” said Brooks.



Michelle Brooks, owner of Brooks Interview Coaching, was inspired by the TRC and reconciliation to start her own business helping Indigenous people attain employment. (Photo supplied by Michelle Brooks)

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☒ Resourceful

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A black and white photograph of two women in business attire. One woman is holding a large sheet of paper, and the other is looking at it. They appear to be in a professional setting, possibly a meeting or a review session.

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Erin Goodpipe loves a good challenge

By Angela Hill
for Eagle Feather News

Erin Goodpipe, 27, is an artist, instructor, masters student, TV host -- and next on her list is a theatre festival in May in Sweden with her theatre group Red Sky Performance.

"A lot of my life is just saying 'yes' to things, and taking an opportunity, and really just doing the best that I could and learning as much as I could with these opportunities," she said.



Erin Goodpipe, photoshoot by river. (Photo supplied)

Goodpipe plays Speck, an Indigenous child, in the play Mistatim, which is a reconciliation story about friendship.

"Playing the role of youth means you really have to get into the mindset, you have to tap into being a child again, and play, and how we interact as children," she said, adding she thinks the play is asking people "to go back to these baseline ways of looking at relationships."

Goodpipe has wrapped filming Season 8 of the APTN series "The Other Side," which airs next fall, and is getting ready to co-host Season 9. It's not the first time she's hosted a program. Goodpipe started in film as the co-host of "RezX," an Indigenous lifestyle show, alongside now-Chief Cadmus Delorme.

"I didn't grow up thinking or even wanting to do any of the things that I am doing today, which I think says a lot of where I've come from, and where many Indigenous people and especially youth come from," she said.

Growing up, Goodpipe just focused on making it through, while her family dealt with the impacts of colonialism, drugs, alcohol, and

through an educational lens. She also teaches as part of the university's Indigenous Education faculty.

"Playing the role of youth means you really have to get into the mindset, you have to tap into being a child again, and play, and how we interact as children," she said, adding she thinks the play is asking people "to go back to these baseline ways of looking at relationships."



Erin Goodpipe, model shoot. (Photo supplied)



Erin Goodpipe, product modelling, photoshoot. (Photo supplied)

While based in Vancouver, Goodpipe spends a lot of time in Treaty 4. She is dakóta wínyan / anishinaabekwe from tatanka najin oyate (Standing Buffalo Dakota Nation) and recently returned from a 1.5-month trip, working with Regina's Globe Theatre.

"It's such an honour to learn from her and exchange thoughts and a passion for theatre and storytelling," said Jennifer Brewin, artistic director of the theatre.

"She's grace, and smarts, and she's fierce and kind and funny, and I just want to be around people like that all the time."



Erin Goodpipe on Rez-X promotional shoot. (Photo supplied)

broken families. Family, both biological and ceremonial, is a large part of her inspiration.

"The love for my people and the healing of our people," she said. "I once heard that as Indigenous people when we go into certain places we actually carry all of our families and all of our communities, we represent them, and that's always been a driving force for me."

She is working on a masters through the First Nations University of Canada that looks at Indigenous stories, and health and wellness

JOHN & THE EAGLE FEATHER NEWS TEAM,
THANK YOU FOR
25 YEARS OF
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SASKATCHEWAN
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

A desire to serve the people launched a political career

By Kaitlynn Nordal
for Eagle Feather News

John Mayer may sing the line “it’s hard to beat the system when we’re standing at a distance, so we keep on waiting for the world to change” but the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN)’ Third Vice-Chief Aly Bear is not waiting.

Originally, Bear decided the best way to enforce change was to go to law school.

“I was looking at those who came before me and thinking about how I could best create positive change in this world where there has



FSIN Third Vice-Chief Aly Bear. (Photo supplied)

been a lot of injustice for our people,” said Bear. “I found that (law) was the route to take if I wanted to fight for justice for our people, and to understand how to help others navigate this world.”

She said she felt a responsibility to serve the people and that has been her focus.

Bear completed law school and specialized in Indigenous law.

The year she completed her law degree, the FSIN postponed elections by one year due to Covid-19.

Bear is also well versed in politics and was approached by many people who asked if she would run in the FSIN election.

“It was perfect timing,” said Bear.

This twist of fate would lead to her new role as FSIN’s Third Vice-Chief.

“I was in shock,” said Bear, who at the time was surrounded by friends and family in her home community, when she got the news.

“While I was being hugged, my seven-year-old daughter went and wrote a note for me on a napkin,” continued Bear. “She gave it to me and that was what made me break down in that moment.”

For Bear, there are many things she hopes to accomplish while in

office. Her portfolio spans education and the First Nations Women’s Commission, among others.

With the women’s lodge that is already in the works in Saskatoon, Bear hopes to create access to justice for women and two-spirited people. She also hopes to have a women’s tribunal through the lodge.

Bear wants to use her tenure in this position to advocate for, uplift, and find more funding for land-based education, language revitalization, and full-immersion schools.

“The youth and the women are who I am advocating for,” said Bear.

“As a young Indigenous woman and mother, I understand the struggles and barriers that we face in society to try and become successful and taken seriously, and to sit at tables where our voices matter,” said Bear. “That has a lot (to do) with me wanting to continue to advocate for women especially.”

“I was looking at those who came before me and thinking about how I could best create positive change in this world where there has been a lot of injustice for our people,”

She wants to show younger generations they can accomplish anything they put their minds to.

“I want our younger people to know they are loved and to love themselves,” said Bear.

“There is hope and there are brighter days ahead. No matter what situation they are going through, we are human. We can learn from our mistakes,” she continued.



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In 25 years in the media, I have witnessed so much history, much of it being made by average ordinary people. We told stories, good and bad. When it was bad, we tried to be fair.

We mostly stuck to the good because that's what the community wants and deserves. The best thing about this whole experience though has been the people. The advertisers that supported us. The friends we worked with. The community we connected with and the people whose stories we told. And you, the reader.

I want to thank you all for allowing me to take this ride with you over the past 25 years.

John Lagimodiere

