

Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

Aboriginal leaders upbeat after meeting with premiers

By Michael Bell
For Eagle Feather News

A blond-haired TV reporter asks Beverley Jacobs to stand over there, in front of the doors of the Saskatchewan legislature. Jacobs agrees, takes position

in front of the camera. Other reporters surround Jacobs, microphones extended, ready to capture her words.

It's surely a familiar routine for the president of the Native Women's Association of Canada. Beverley Jacobs has attended five years of meetings with The Council of the Federation, an organization that was created in 2003 in an effort to improve leadership and interprovincial-territorial co-operation.

In an hour or so, Jacobs and four other Aboriginal leaders will enter the legislature to meet with the provincial premiers and territorial leaders that make-up the council. The August 5 afternoon meeting will cover four topics: economic development, education, the H1N1 flu, and the engagement of the national government.

The summit is important, but Jacobs says that the premiers and First Nations leaders need to act.

"We've been coming to these meetings for the last five years now, and it's been talk," she says. "We've talked enough. We have the recommendations, we have implementation plans. So what we want to see next is the actual action."

Inside the legislature, the recently-elected national chief of the Assembly of First Nations seems under siege by a wall of reporters. Cameras flash at Shawn Atleo, illuminating the red symbols on his black vest. Before he disappears into the closed meeting with the premiers,

a reporter asks, "What's at risk if the premiers are unwilling to work with First Nations?"

"The risk is lost opportunity to strengthen First Nations communities economically, health-wise, education-wise," said Atleo. "We can't allow (these issues) to be prolonged. There is a great cost to poverty that is born by all in this country."

Take your pick of any societal issue – economy, health, education – you'll find Aboriginal people faring more poorly than non-Aboriginal people from one end of Canada to the other. As a recent example, the H1N1 flu virus disproportionately affects First Nations people in certain parts of the country, according to the NWAC.

Despite being only 10 per cent of the population among parts of Manitoba and northern Ontario, Aboriginal People made up one-third of 685 cases of swine flu in that region, the group says.

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BEVERLEY JACOBS



AFN Chief Shawn Atleo answers questions from the media as Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall and Beverley Jacobs, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, look on. (Photos by Michael Bell)



ON TOP OF THE WORLD
Or at least Calgary. Piapot Elders recently paid a visit to Calgary and hit some of the high spots.

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A WINNER
With pow wow season in full swing it shouldn't be surprising to find some great photos.

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BACK TO BATOCHÉ
They came back ... some 15,000 strong for the annual Métis event that unites and inspires.

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A FATHER'S PAIN
Percy Gordon's son was a victim of a violent attack in Regina's toughest neighbourhood.

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SHE'S PERFORMING
Leela Gilday will be on of the performers at the Aboriginal Music Festival in September.

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Welcome to our
Justice Issue
Coming In September :
Education Issue
CPMA #40027204

Trip honours Piapot Elders

By Faith McLean
Of Eagle Feather News

In July 2009, the Piapot First Nation took their elders on a trip to Calgary. The first stop was at the town of Piapot, which is named for Chief Piapot.

It was at this location where Chief Piapot set up camp in the path of the CPR tracks in 1883, in an act of defiance against white settlement in Cree territory. He negotiated travel allowances for his people and the town was then named in memory of the blockade.

It was at this location with the Elders present that the Council of the First Nation honored Chief Johnny Rockthunder and presented him with an eagle feather headdress.

The elders then went on to Head Smashed in Buffalo Jump where they witnessed four eagles fly directly over them. The park interpreters stated, "The eagles only come when the First Nations visit."

Their next stop was at Banff National Park, all the Elders but four rode up on the gondola. Other stops on the trip included the Heritage Park, a pow wow and the Calgary Tower. At the tower, Helen Nahnepowisk, 86,

was the only brave person to walk across the clear glass floor!

Throughout the trip the Elders shared stories about their history, traditions and family ties of the community. Being able to sit and listen to these stories was an honor and a blessing.

The trip's organizer, Vern Anaskan, did a great job with many interesting places for the Elders to enjoy and visit. Special thanks to the helpers George Toto, Nelson "Nabby" Watetch and Wanda Bird.

Helen Nahnepowisk poses at the top of the Calgary Tower. (Right) A group shot of the Elders who went on the trip to Alberta. Below right, Piapot Cree Nation Chief Johnny Rockthunder.

(Photos by Faith McLean)



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IN THE RUNNING

FSIN Chief Lawrence Joseph has announced he would like another term at the helm of the organization. But he will face competition from at least two challengers including Chief Reg Bellerose of the Muskowekwon First Nation and former FSIN Vice Chief Guy Lonechild.

Race for FSIN Chief's job getting crowded

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

One day after FSIN Chief Lawrence Joseph announced his intention to run again for Chief of the Federation, prominent southern Chief Reg Bellerose of the Muskowekwon First Nation also threw his hat in the ring.

Bellerose and Joseph join Guy Lonechild as the three officially announced candidates in a race that should get a little more crowded.

Lonechild, a former Vice Chief who served three terms at the Federation, announced last year after he chose to not run for re-election as a Vice Chief and that he intended to run for Chief because the days of "Pounding on the table and playing the blame game are over."

Joseph addressed that concern at his press conference.

"Sometimes these things have to be said," added Joseph. "If telling the truth is blaming, then I accept that. The leaders

and Senate have told me we have to work on unity and we have to address that."

Joseph stated that stabilizing the finances at the Federation was one of his major accomplishments.

"We have reduced our debt over \$600,000 and have had surpluses for the last two years. Under the direction and support of the 74 Chiefs, I have been able to fulfill my campaign promises."

Joseph said the main plank of his platform will be centred on housing issues.

The Federation is still over \$1 million in debt and the First Nation University of Canada is still facing governance problems and a lack of support from both the provincial and federal governments. There are also severe housing issues and a need for education, training and employment throughout Saskatchewan.

Bellerose, Chief of Muskowekwon for the past five years believes that he knows what needs to be done.

"We have to carry out a political agenda and elevate the office of Chiefs and councils of Saskatchewan," said Bellerose in an interview published in the Saskatoon Star Phoenix.

"We are not accessing provincial or federal ministers."

The deadline for declarations to run for the Chief of the Federation, 1st Vice

Chief and 3rd Vice Chief is late September. Incumbent Vice Chiefs, Morley Watson and Glenn Pratt have stated unofficially they intend to run again.

The election will be held in the last week of October at the Chiefs Assembly October 28 and 29 in Saskatoon at TCU Place.

Leaders promise more action, less talk

• Continued from Page One

It is for this reason and others that Aboriginal representatives want support from the provincial and territorial leaders to help overcome various injustices.

About three hours later the meeting ended, and premier Brad Wall and the Aboriginal leaders held a joint press conference.

A working group was struck to deal with the issues of the agenda, Wall said, adding that the group will begin its work immediately and report its progress to the 2010 First Ministers conference.

"We're going to ask (the working group) to default in favour of action and not meetings because I think everyone has agreed that we've met a lot, and it's time now to continue to provide action and leadership," said Wall.

"I am encouraged by the discussions that took place," Atleo said to reporters. "I think (the working group is) an important step so that we can actually measure progress," he added.

"I believe the Council of the Federation can prove to be very useful in laying the foundations of intergovernmental work on issues of critical importance to the Métis Nation," said Clem Chartier

President of the Métis National Council.

Chartier said an immediate issue needing intergovernmental cooperation is the potential crisis facing many Métis communities from the global H1N1 flu virus pandemic. He cited the example of Manitoba where 20 per cent of all Aboriginal people diagnosed with the virus are Métis.

"While there is some dialogue between health authorities and some Métis provincial organizations, no strategies or action plans have been put in place," said Chartier. "I believe the provinces and the federal government should be engaged with Métis governing bodies in taking joint action on this urgent matter."

After the press conference wrapped up, Jacobs said that it was national chief Atleo who suggested the creation of the working group.

"It's a good step because it sets up a process so that actions can be taken and successes be identified," Jacobs said, adding this year's meeting had a different tone.

"It was totally different," Jacobs said. "The premiers reported on what their provinces were doing for First Nations people. That was different from how they talked before," she said.

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Editorial

Police need our co-operation

Saskatoon Police Chief Clive Weighill has done an admirable job in rejuvenating our police service. Morale has never been higher, there is a new police station on the horizon, regional and personal accountability is the norm and community partnerships are starting to take root.

This is all occurring as the rate of contact between the police and Aboriginal people in the inner city is on the rise, but at the same time, even though our lovely city almost always leads the nation in crime, crime statistics are actually falling.

Contrary to the crime statistics, though, the problems in our inner city are getting worse and spreading.

A recent ride-along with a Saskatoon Police Service officer was a real eye opener. For a different perspective, I rode along with a four-year constable on the east side of the city. Hoping for at least a bit of excitement, the night was uneventful. A traffic stop or two, and a half-stoned kid who drove his car into a fence.

Interestingly, while we waited for a tow truck to attend to a car that had a small fire, over the radio we could follow the happenings in the hood. In the 20 minute wait we heard about a gang fight behind a business on 20th street where at least eight males were battling with pipes and two by fours. After they all fled, a 45-year-old man was left in the alley unconscious with head injuries. At the same time, two young Aboriginal males were reported to be beating and robbing a young man of his guitar on Idylwyld drive. This was all happening at 7:30 in the evening on a Wednesday.

Later as we waited for another tow truck to take away a car that wasn't registered (\$500 ticket for that), we listened as police were called to a party where a young man was trying to fight everyone. Shortly thereafter, another assault call came in. All west side, all with Aboriginal people involved.

Increasingly violent crimes are regularly taking place throughout the west side of the city, mainly between Avenue H and Avenue W and between 22nd and 20th Street. On Friday night, August 8, the Saskatoon Police responded to over 237 calls. The vast majority of the calls were from the core or west side.

In the past, the gangbangers and violent people were usually beating each other up over dope, girls or for fun. Now the violence has spilled over to include many innocent victims.

Just ask the family of 52-year-old Kenward Cote of Saskatoon. He was recently stabbed to death during an early evening robbery in an alley just off 22nd Street West. Two young Aboriginal males were seen fleeing the scene.

Our justice system is in tough, as people do not co-operate with police, do not turn in family members or friends, and oftentimes, rationalize behaviour and even condone it. We keep killing and harming each other. There are so many challenges in the Aboriginal community, it can be overwhelming.

It was refreshing to read the remarks of a mother whose son was attacked by a police dog in Saskatoon. Her statement more or less was, "if he did not break his conditions, and was not out, and had not resisted arrest, this would not have happened." She took responsibility for the incident. How brave.

The community where I live is investigating the possibility of setting up a citizen patrol. This comes on the heels of prostitutes working the corner at the end of my street and after a brutal assault that saw a man have his neck gashed by a stranger wielding a broken beer stein. The attack left him near dead. This happened three blocks from my house. I live in one of the five core neighbourhoods of Saskatoon.

Will the Cote family receive justice in the slaying of their family member? Perhaps, but it is the responsibility of the people in the community to help and time to say that no more violence will be tolerated. Time to stop. The police can only do so much. We have to do the rest. If you know anything about the murder of Kenward Cote, call the Saskatoon police at 975-8300.

What's next in Eagle Feather News

September is our education edition and we will be looking at back to school and some interesting programs in the province. We will also be at the grand opening of the new library on 20th Street in Saskatoon.

Also will be an article on "Operation Eagle" the Saskatoon Police Service eye in the sky, and how it is helping them make the city a safer place to be.

Readers Forum

Photo winners were partial to pow wow images



Congratulations to Elizabeth Watcheston who submitted this photo of her grandson Solomon Primeau. Solomon is two years old and is the son of Solomon and Dominique. Her Solomon is getting ready for his first pow wow and according to kohkum, he is a brave little warrior, not shy and has a great talent for dancing anywhere. He also loves to play hockey with his dad at the Sturgeon Lake First Nation and at home in Saskatoon. Elizabeth will be getting her cheque for \$100 in the mail soon. Thanks Elizabeth.

Are you catching a theme here? Lots of pow wow photos were sent in and this beauty caught our eye and earned second place. Melanie Trach from Denholm sent



in this shot of three buckskin dancers shot during the Sakicawasihk Pow Wow (Gold Eagle Casino) in June 2009. The dancers from left to right are Paul Dreaver, Robert Kanapace and Henry Beaudry. Melanie will be checking her mail box for her 2nd place prize of \$50. Thanks to all who sent in photos, we appreciate the effort. Check back next month for the next photo contest announcement.

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THIS ISSUE...LAST ISSUE...PAST ISSUES.

No snappy answers on question of status

The issue of defining the Aboriginal peoples of Canada is a complex and vexed issue. In this first part of a series of commentaries on the subject, I offer some general points.

Many times I have been asked questions such as, "Who is a Métis?" "Who is a status Indian?" Unfortunately there is no snappy answer to questions of this sort and often what one reads in newspapers or hears on television can mislead rather than enlighten.

First, it must be appreciated that a definition only makes sense in relation to a particular purpose. Since there could be many reasons or purposes for someone to want to seek a definition, then there are as many possible good answers as there are good questions or purposes. Let me give some examples.

Suppose the question is "Who is a Métis?" Let us imagine some responses. Suppose that someone's aunt expresses happiness at the success in sports of her young nephew and exclaims "Oh that is so nice for a young Métis to do so well!" Who will have an interest in challenging her statement about Métis identity?

Suppose, on the other hand, that a provincial Métis organization has a discussion on who will be admitted to membership in the organization. Any definition can be adopted that will suit the organization's legitimate purposes.

Finally, suppose that the question is "Who has legal rights that belong to the Métis people of Canada?" That question is a matter of law that will likely lead to only one answer. An initial question is whether the answer lies within Canadian law or some other legal system.

Discussions on defining or identifying the Aboriginal peoples of Canada often get bad starts for failure to clearly identify why the question is raised in the first place. People can identify themselves as they wish for private family reasons without necessarily involving the public interest or the interest of Aboriginal peoples.

Questions of definition of Aboriginal peoples inevitably get mixed up with personal ideas about self-identity and tend to raise emotions. Emotional assertions and rational debate on strategic options for Aboriginal groups or organizations tend not to mix well.

Moreover, identity and definition are not quite the same thing. To identify involves recognition as a person or a thing. To "self-identify" means to claim or assert a particular identity.

Definition on the other hand makes clear the meaning or features of a person or a thing.

It is one thing to identify oneself or someone else and another thing to provide a definition of the distinguishing features that makes up an identity.

The main public policy reasons for identifying or defining Aboriginal peoples or persons today concern the fact that the Indian,

Métis and Inuit peoples of Canada have acquired legal rights that are affirmed and protected in the Constitution of Canada since 1982.

These rights allow Aboriginal people or persons who belong to these 'peoples' to enjoy rights that others do not have. If the rights are to be recognized and protected as legal rights then it is necessary to have a means of identifying the ones with rights from other Canadian citizens.

The difference is between Aboriginal rights, which are enjoyed by persons who belong to an Aboriginal people, and the civil and other rights that all citizens have. The reasons for Aboriginal rights lie in history.

So does the explanation for the fact that the government of Canada has passed laws that define 'Indian' people. Agents of the government identified what they recognized as 'Indian' people when

Canadians came West. First Nations were recognized as distinct political entities in the signing of Treaties.

However, as soon as the government got the upper hand, it ignored the meaning of the Treaties, took over the lands and the people and set up systems of control for each. Reserved lands for 'Indians' were set apart from the general surveyed lands and the government administered life on these reserves.

Persons entitled to live on the reserves were defined in an Indian Act. Those who come within the Indian Act code of definition today are 'status Indians'. Other Indian people were missed or later excluded from the Act's code. They are sometimes called 'non-status Indians'.

In everyday language many people refer to 'Treaty Indian' status and call status cards issued by INAC "Treaty Cards" but Indian status does not depend upon Treaties. Many status Indians across Canada did not sign treaties. And Canada has no business to decide by itself who belongs to a people with which it enters into a Treaty.

Next month we can have a look at how Métis people were dealt with historically and examine some of the important issues faced by Métis and First Nations people who wish to make the Constitutional recognition of 1982 meaningful today, including the issue of designing 'citizenship' codes.



Comment
Paul Chartrand



Highways and Infrastructure Minister Jim Reiter, Chief Darcy Bear and Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sports Minister Dustin Duncan unveil the new sign.

Highway 19 now the Chief Whitecap Trail

Highway 219, that heads just south of Saskatoon, has been given a new name. It will now be known as Chief Whitecap Trail.

The name change effects the area of Highway 219 from its junction with Highway 11 to the area past the Whitecap Dakota First Nation. The highway that runs past Danielson Provincial Park along Highway 44 will also be known as Chief Whitecap Trail.

"The highway and new trail speak to the contributions to which Chief Whitecap made to the area," Whitecap Chief Darcy Bear says.

The unveiling of the name and sign of this new trail took place at the Dakota Dunes Casino on July 29. Elder Melvina

Eagle who is the great-great-granddaughter of Chief Whitecap started the morning with an opening prayer. She has lived on Whitecap for some time and says that "she is very very proud and that they used to have a bad road and it is good for them to have a nice road into their community now."

Part of the reasoning behind upgrading this road is to encourage economic development South of Saskatoon and perhaps enhance regional tourism.

The new sign and image will be a graphic representation of Chief Whitecap on a horse. A total of 25 of these signs will be placed along the trail.

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The undiminished spirit of Back to Batoche

You know you're getting old when you ask how someone you once knew is doing ... then immediately ask if they're still alive.

Then there's the people you meet who you once knew and the conversation turns inevitably to how so and so died from cancer, heart attack, a jealous husband and so on. Mercifully there's also always someone who is thriving and is very much an inspiration to those of us over 55.

It seems the older I get the faster time moves.

This year I returned to Back to Batoche after 25 years away. I was looking forward to seeing old acquaintances I once knew when I worked for the old Métis Society of Saskatchewan back in the 1970s.

Instead I felt like a graveyard ghost walking among a new generation I knew only by their last names.

These are proud names like Vandal, Boyer, Lalibertie, Fosseneuve, Durocher, Lafontaine, Dumont, Favel, Pritchard and Morcette to name but a few. They include direct descendants of the Métis soldiers who fought and died in the Uprising of 1885.

There is a continuity.

The old Batoche grounds I knew had no permanent facilities. People camped pretty much where they wanted and there was a lot of drinking. The Métis Society of Saskatchewan Annual Assembly was held on site and the politics could get very intense if not volatile.

The camp was huge. Well over 10,000 people attended, making Batoche, for a brief time, Saskatchewan's fifth largest city. Only the Lac St. Anne Pilgrimage in Alberta attracted as many Aboriginal people.

There was a family who came every year by hay wagon pulled by an aging Cockshutt tractor. I heard they were road allowance people from the Birch Hills. They followed the back roads and camped along the way.

The new Batoche grounds are much larger. Sobriety is strictly enforced and the facilities are permanent and well built.

I remember the old graveyard and the first commemoration held there. I recall old lady Alexina Morcette falling to her knees and reciting Hail Mary in Michif beside the mass grave of the Métis fallen. The memory still haunts me in a deep beyond words emotional way.

Alexina Morcette's mother was 17 years old when she lived through the Battle of Batoche. It is said Riel himself comforted her as she huddled by the church frightened by the sound of bullets flying into their camp.

Old Moise Ouellette, said to be near

100 years old, refused to retreat when the Canadian soldiers made their final charge against the Métis lines. He was cut down in a hail of bullets. In deference to his years the Canadians buried him in a separate grave next to the mass grave.



The old graveyard also had two graves beyond the fence. There was a time when people who committed suicide were not allowed burial in consecrated ground. I see now that the fence has been mercifully extended to include them. I hope this brings some comfort to their descendants.

The Batoche National Historic Site has been revamped and much improved. The new layout gives much better insight into how the battle was fought. The battleground still has the same timeless calm and hallowed feel.

I once met the grandson of Isidor Dumont in Maple Creek. He had a big daughter named Bubbles and a whiney dog named Bob. He used to say, "it's damn hard being a halfbreed dog isn't it," and the dog would whine. Isidor was the brother of the famous Métis General, Gabriel Dumont.

I also knew Tapwe Chrétien, the famous fiddler from Yellowknife, NWT. He originated from Willow Bunch, Saskatchewan. We used to travel together to the Cree Métis communities along the south Slave Lake. One time we stopped in to visit a family at Fort Fitzgerald.

The grandparents' cabin was stuffed with grandchildren. The men retired to the living room and the old man told his stories. When he finished, Tapwe pulled out his fiddle and played a lively rendition of the Arctic Red River jig. I heard foot tapping sounds from the next room. When I looked there by the woodstove a smiling grandmother clapped in time as her brood of young grandchildren jigged around the room.

Memories are like a patchwork quilt we make from the passing of our years. I cherish the memory of those oldtimers and I feel grateful to have known them.

This year I choked back tears when I witnessed a Durocher girl from Beauval jig heel and toe to the sound of the fiddle. She was fantastic.

Things have changed so much, yet they are the same. An undiminished spirit still burns brightly and the people still come home to Batoche.

Message from the Minister

I am pleased that our province recently played host to a meeting of national Aboriginal leaders and Canadian premiers as part of the recent Council of the Federation conference in Regina.

On August 5, the Legislative Building was the stage for these important discussions that will help guide us into the future.

Of particular note, we welcomed the new leader of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), National Chief Shawn Atleo, to Saskatchewan. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize all candidates for their strong showing at the recent AFN elections, including Saskatchewan's own Perry Bellegarde.

Our growing relations with First Nation and Métis leaders continue to be the foundation of our efforts to create a brighter future for Aboriginal Peoples.



Honourable Bill Hutchinson
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs



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- ▶ Wash your hands often and thoroughly—for at least 20 seconds—in warm, soapy water or use hand sanitizer.
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- ▶ Stay home if you're sick, and call your health care provider if your symptoms get worse.

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Toutes les souches de la grippe peuvent être dangereuses. Cependant, de bonnes pratiques hygiéniques appliquées quotidiennement vous permettront de vous protéger si le virus se propage rapidement au Canada.

- ▶ Lavez-vous soigneusement et fréquemment les mains au savon et à l'eau chaude — au moins 20 secondes — ou utilisez un gel antiseptique pour les mains.
- ▶ Toussez ou éternuez dans votre bras plutôt que dans votre main.
- ▶ Nettoyez et désinfectez les surfaces et les articles que vous partagez avec d'autres personnes.
- ▶ Restez à la maison si vous êtes malade, et consultez un fournisseur de soins de santé si vos symptômes s'aggravent.

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Healthy bodies, healthy minds vital for school success

Tansi. Well parents, your favourite time of year is quickly approaching – the new school year is about to begin.

Are you ready? Are your children's immunizations up to date? Most schools require that you bring your child's immunization record proving that it is up to date or your child will not be allowed to start school until they are up to date.

Many of the First Nations have medical clinics on-reserve now, so keeping your child immunized isn't as difficult as it once was.

It is sad that many parents look at school as a daycare centre and don't accept that they also have a responsibility to help their child succeed in school. Perhaps, like me, they had children when they were too young to understand the responsibility of having a child.

Later, I foolishly thought that once my children were grown up that my job was done – guess what? Our job as parents is never done. When it comes to our children's education we should be ensuring that they are completing their assignments, checking to make sure they do their homework and helping them if they are having difficulty.

We should be attending the parent

teacher interviews and asking the teacher what we can do to help our children have a successful school year. If parents or caregivers don't show interest in their children's education how can we expect the children to care?

Most parents want the world to be a better place for their children but that doesn't just happen – it takes work and commitment. We have to take an active role in the lives of our children. We must show interest in what our kids are doing in every aspect of their lives.

Who are they hanging out with? There is an old saying that says, "Show me who your friends are and I'll tell you how you are."

Don't just send your kid outside to get some exercise, instead go for a walk with them, or play catch with them. It's so important to show them, through our actions, that their education and well being is important to us as well.

Another thing for parents to keep in mind as this new school year approach-

es is the Swine Flu or H1N1. Ensure that you keep your children at home if they are sick in order to help stop the spread of the disease.

If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish

or gray skin color

- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting

• Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held

- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath

- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen

- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion

- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

I know I talked about H1N1 last month but the number of people with this virus is expected to rise in the fall and early winter which is regular flu season.

Doctors are recommending that people over 65 get their regular flu shots.

To the youth out there, good luck in the school year. I am looking for Aboriginal cancer survivors who would be interested in sharing their survival stories with me. If you or someone you know has cancer or had cancer in the past please contact me. Let's work together to develop tools that will help others who may be suffering in silence, or too shy to talk about their cancer.

Cancer can be beaten – I am living proof. I enjoy hearing from you keeps your cards and letters coming.

Write to me Sandee Sez C/O Eagle Feather News, Box 924 Station Main, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3M4 or email s.ahenakew@yahoo.ca

Until next month, play safe and have



Sandee Sez

Sandra Ahenakew



Health MOU completes first year

The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, Province of Saskatchewan and Health Canada are nearing the first anniversary of their partnership to improve health and health services to First Nations people.

On August 19, 2008 a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on First Nations Health and Well-Being was signed by the three parties. A commitment was made to work more collaboratively to improve the health and well-being of First Nations people by closing the gaps in health programs and service delivery.

"The health of Saskatchewan First Nations people is in a critical state that requires immediate and focused attention," says Vice Chief Glen Pratt of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. "This MOU is intended to move the administration of health services from rhetoric to action, and to find ways to achieve positive, tangible benefits for communities."

Compared to other Canadians, First Nations people are experiencing higher rates of preventable communicable diseases; tuberculosis outbreaks; higher rates of chronic diseases (for example Type 2 diabetes is almost four times higher among First Nations people on reserve); and, high rates of suicide in their communities (the rate of First Nations youth suicide is over four times greater compared to the rest of Canada).

In its first year, the MOU process provided an opportunity to consult with First Nations communities, to identify regional differences and to conduct valuable research. The MOU is also helping to verify the findings of recent studies, and is a direct avenue to bring First Nations health issues to the forefront of the provincial, local and federal government's health agendas.

"One of the primary advantages of the MOU," Pratt says,

"is that it brings both the federal and provincial governments to the same table so that we can address areas of responsibility and hopefully prevent the practise of passing responsibility back and forth when it comes to health."

As directed in the memorandum, a Steering Committee has been organized with the primary goal of developing a Saskatchewan First Nations health and well-being plan. The committee developed a shared vision, a strong set of shared expectations, and agreement on four strategic themes and six high-level priorities. The committee agreed to key aspects of the plan, specifically:

- **It will be a long-term rolling plan with 2-3 year time horizons;**
- **It will be a living document that will be regularly refreshed; and**
- **It will preserve the original intentions of the partners even as the details change.**

The communities are very clear about what is needed in health. MOU forums were held this year and visits were made to communities to clarify the MOU process and to seek input on the process and priority areas for consideration in the plan. Participants were eager to share their experiences and opinions and there was optimism that their input would have an impact on changes to policy and service delivery in the province. This consultation with communities resulted in a focus on six priorities that will frame the First Nations Health and Well-being Plan:

- **Chronic Disease Prevention and Management;**
- **Mental Health and Addictions;**
- **Strengthening Health Human Resources;**
- **Improving Health Care System Experience;**

- **Long-Term Care; and**
- **Engagement and Involvement.**

In the upcoming year, task groups made up of representatives of each of the three parties to the MOU will provide expertise and recommendations to the Steering Committee in each of the six priority areas. These recommendations will provide the basis of the 10-year First Nations Health and Well-being Plan.

Each group will be tasked with drafting options for specific short term and long term collaborative action in the priority areas with a particular focus on improving the integration of federal, provincial and First Nations funded programs and services. First Nations representatives for the priority working groups will be selected at a STAG meeting on September 2-4.

According to Vice Chief Pratt, "any forward plan must be action oriented, and must include traditional methods of addressing the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional health of both the individual and the family."

"The way forward will require a joint commitment to deal with the root causes and structural issues causing socio-economic gaps that lead to poor health for First Nations people," Pratt continues.

This year, the MOU Steering Committee will focus on establishing the priority task groups and on developing position papers on the priority areas.



Vice Chief Glen Pratt

MN-S leadership gets its financial house in order

By Mike Gosselin
For Eagle Feather News

The Métis Nation-Saskatchewan recently bid adieu to the red ink smeared all over their finances that President Robert Doucette's administration inherited two years ago.

"As of July 31, 2009 the MN-S is debt free. We owe no debt to anyone," said the ever-amiable Doucette. "This attitude of just give us the money and get out of our way, we're going to spend it any way we want because we're an aboriginal government, those days are over. They're over, and they should be over."

In 2007, Doucette and his executive team assumed \$1.8 million in debt and immediately rolled up their sleeves to figure out how to dig themselves out the gaping hole left by the previous administration.

"When we took over we didn't even have phones," Doucette quipped.

They began cleaning up old funding files that had resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars in overpayments being assigned to the MN-S. Once they sent in the reports and straightened out the files, those overpayments were eliminated. In addition, selling their building on Robin Crescent in Saskatoon, allowed the MN-S to eliminate their huge debt.

Doucette also said through MN-S investments, his government hopes to be completely free and clear of all provincial and federal funding, which is currently around \$3 million, in the future.

"For example, we put \$500,000 into the Batoche site this year. Those improvements resulted in 15,000 people attending Batoche Days. Next year our target is 25,000."

With a long history of botched elections and other rumoured shenanigans, this announcement is pivotal in the new direction of stability, accountability and success the Métis Nation wants to take. And Doucette is committed to making it happen.

"We have balanced two budgets with surpluses. We've increased our staff. We've re-established our relationship with both levels of government and industry," said Doucette. "We have also increased revenue to our nation in both fiscal years. That's a huge accomplishment for an Aboriginal government, for any level of government."



Adèle Gaudet, from Bellevue, is a Heritage Presenter this summer at Batoche National Historic Site of Canada. Here she plays the fiddle to welcome guests to the pancake breakfast and open house. A visit to the national historical site at Batoche was free for anyone who had a wrist band from the Back to Batoche celebrations.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)



Under President Robert Doucette's leadership, the MN-S has successfully attacked its huge debt problem.



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Lloyd Arcand from Muskeg Lake Cree Nation presses his horses to go faster in the chariot races held at Batoche. The rodeo, chuck wagon and chariot races were very popular and helped to draw record numbers to Batoche this year.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)



At any cultural event, veterans are always welcome and respected and asked to help carry in flags for grand entries. Here, veteran Janet Blais from Saskatoon is joined by Walter Koenders, chairman of the BC Métis Veterans Committee, and his wife, Mary, as they prepare for the grand entry.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

BACK to BATOCHÉ 2009



What would Back to Batoche be without fiddles, family and some wicked square dancing and jigging? Well, it wouldn't be Back to Batoche at all. Here some young dancers twist and twirl to entertain the crowd.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)



Mr. and Mrs. Batoche, Emile and Annette Lavallee received their sashes from Métis Nation-Saskatchewan President Robert Doucette. Emile and Annette are lifelong residents of the Bellevue and Batoche areas and are currently living in the house on the Back to Batoche site. They have been attending the event for decades and this year, and according to Peter Rudyck who nominated them, they are great people and they were gracious hosts.

(Photo by Gaylene Poulin)

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Atleo touches down in Sask. at Carry the Kettle

By Jennifer Dubois
For Eagle Feather News

After being elected as the new Assembly of First Nations National Chief, Shawn Atleo made his first Saskatchewan stop at Carry the Kettle's annual pow wow on July 26.

He was welcomed with a Grand Chief Entry, joined by Carry The Kettle Chief Barry Kennedy and the Treaty Chiefs including FSIN Chief Lawrence Joseph.

Chief Atleo said he was honoured to participate and to see how the pow wow is keeping the culture strong.

"It's an opportunity to really celebrate our culture and to draw strength from the young people. They have strong words to share here this evening, and the Elders are there to provide the guidance. And I see the treaty chiefs coming together," Atleo said.

Speaking to a crowd of more than 2,000 people, Chief Atleo gave some inspirational words. Coming from a non-treaty background, he says his plan is to work with all chiefs to protect the treaties and to join the treaty and non-treaty First Nations together.

"You know it's about the treaties, what they meant and what they mean. About the treaty way of life, that sacredness and it's also about non-treaty and treaty people coming together right across this land," Atleo said.

He said he was inspired by the youth that know their own the traditional ways of their ancestors and he said he encourages others to continue to learn their own languages.

"Our people are still here we are not a dying people.



New AFN Chief Shawn Atleo poses with First Nations University of Canada business student president Thomas Benjoe and student association president Mike Dubois at the Carry the Kettle pow wow.

(Photo by Jennifer Dubois)

Our language will continue, our Nations will keep being strong. We're going to rise up together. It's time to come together across all of our territories and support one another, treaty and non-treaty. There's an incredible bright future ahead of us."

Chief Atleo said his priority is to continue to protect the treaty rights and agreements that were signed long ago.

After winning a grueling eight-ballot election, Atleo said he's pleased to be representing Aboriginal people

on national level. He has high hopes for uniting Aboriginals from each end of the country.

"I think the young people, particularly, are saying to the leaders it's time to unite. Wherever you come from, whether you come from West Coast, my village, right here from Carry the Kettle, you come from Migmaw, the Atlantic. You saw the Veterans standing out here and they fought as Indigenous people from coast to coast to coast. And so the young people are saying it's time that we're involved, it's time that we are supported.

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Youth Peacekeepers bettering their community

A Peer Mediation Training Program at the Piapot Cree Nation culminated with a special honouring ceremony in the school gym to recognize the accomplishments of six young people and two teachers who successfully completed the intense 17-week program.

The Youth Peacemakers Program gives young people the knowledge and skills to take responsibility in their school in resolving conflicts using mediation. It is about students resolving conflicts among themselves.

The students will be taking on a new role in the school as peacemakers, mediators, role models and helpers to other students.

The training program starts with work on self-awareness and self-confidence and then moves into understanding the role of the helper in a First Nations community.

The third section is on learning positive communication skills like empathy, listening and questioning. The fourth section involves developing skills in problem solving including setting goals, exploring alternative solutions, making plans and evaluating progress.

The fifth section is about learning and practising conflict resolutions skills needed to facilitate mediation sessions. The young people also developed their own code of friendship or code of behaviour for youth peacemakers at Payepot School.

The program was based on the Youth Peacemakers Manual which is written in both English and Cree languages. The sessions were held in a circle format under the guidance of community Elders.

Lillian and Cliff Campbell and Margaret Rockthunder provided their spiritual support and cultural teachings that were passed on to the young participants.

mat, Jordan Bitternose, Kenneth Slippery, Braiden Omeseoo and Chance Cappel.

The two teachers who received certificates were



Graduates of the Peer Mediation Training Program at Piapot Cree Nation were honoured recently.

These young people have a commitment to making their school a healthier and safer place to learn. They have developed a deeper understanding of themselves and other people in their community.

The skills of learning to listen to other peoples points of view and resolve differences peacefully helps to prepare young people to live in our multi-cultural world. The school and community benefit from the program through youth leadership.

The following young people received certificates of completion: Natasha Cyr, Cornelia Kaysaywayse-

Tanya Perry and Richard Cyr. The program was facilitated through the Restorative Justice Unit of the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council from October 2008 to June 2009.

Dancing Young Buffalo Youth Singers participated in for the Grand Entry and performed Honour Songs at this event, which was much appreciated by the organizers.

This program was brought out to Treaty Four First Nations initially by the Yorkton Tribal Council to Sakimay First Nation, Broadview and Grenfell Schools.

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Plans in works for tenth annual Day of Mourning

By Blue Pelletier
For Eagle Feather News

The 10th Annual Day of Mourning will take place on Friday August 14 in cities across Canada. The day is a time to remember all the victims who have been lost as a result of their involvement in the sex trade.

The idea for this event was spawned after a street worker was found frozen to death under a car in Calgary. The victim's death made national headlines. And it made people aware that it was not okay to be de-sensitized to these kinds of things. People on the street still matter. They have families and people who care about them. Their situations do not make them any less human.

The Day of Mourning is a day to help those effected by the sex trade. It allows them a chance to share stories. It is a day of therapy and healing. A day for people to remember the loss of those from their family and circle of friends.

It started as an event that quickly spread from Calgary and Edmonton to places like Saskatoon and Regina. This year Prince Albert will send a large number of people to join those participating in Saskatoon.

Each year in Saskatoon members of the Egadz Youth Committee take the reins and help make this event what it is. They have full control of every aspect and it is up to them to make this a special day for all involved.



Michelle Banhegy, Trina Elmhurst (Egadz Worker), Crystal Sanderson, Dee Eyahpaise, Mike Scott, and Bill Thibodeau Executive Director of Egadz are preparing for the Day of Mourning on August 14 in Saskatoon. (Photos by Blue Pelletier)

The Youth Committee members each have a personal attachment and their own reasons for helping out.

Mike Scott is one of the committee's members and he says the issue is close to home for his family.

"I remember days when I would see my sister on the streets. Walking around high out of her mind," he explains.

"I would watch her kids at home. She didn't realize how much she was hurting me and her kids. Over the years things haven't changed. Drugs are still more important and it seems days are running out. There's still a light of hope, that's why I need the Day of Mourning."

On the Day of Mourning there will be plenty of performances to entertain the

attendees. Bannock and soup will be served. A memorial walk and a candle light vigil will take place to honour the memories of those lost. There will also be a release of balloons in which the names of people lost will be written and placed inside.

It will all start around 6:30 pm and will be held at Pleasant Hill Park. If there is bad weather or rain, the event will move

inside to Pleasant Hill Community School.

"It's important to bring awareness to these issues and to find a positive way to bring in the young people and let them take control," says Bill Thibodeau, the Executive Director at Egadz.

For more information on this event contact Egadz at 306-931-6644 or email Trina at TRINA@EGADZ.CA.



Youth Committee members discuss plans for the Day of Mourning.

All Nominators who submit a complete nomination form are eligible to win a trip for two to the 2010 NAAA gala in Regina Saskatchewan.

The Awards are an excellent opportunity to popularize the successes of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in Canada - for far too long they have not been recognized.

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Oppression of women ends with Harmony Song program

By Andréa Ledding
For Eagle Feather News

Harmony Song, a program for women healing from childhood sexual abuse and residential school abuses, has helped literally thousands of women journey towards healing in the past seven years.

"We had 412 women come through in the last quarter," said Val Metsikassus, Harmony Song program worker.

Hired in April 2009, she began back in 2002 with the pilot program sponsored by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. She left to gain experience, do some soul-searching, and work through her own healing paths, but not before being directed by Elder Laura Wasacase to go to a sweat where she was given the name 'Harmony Song' for the program.

"So many women who couldn't talk about their experiences used songs to express themselves," she explains.

Metsikassus will sometimes provide singing or drumming – a woman once said, "I remember you. You helped my friend when she couldn't speak. The drum grounded her."

While comments like this are meaningful, she says she can't take credit.

"It's the power of drums, the power of healing songs," she says. "This was a gift given to us to heal us."

The program runs in Tamara's House on Victoria Avenue in Saskatoon, a short-term safe house and resource centre for female survivors of childhood sexual abuse founded in the early 1990s.

Aboriginal Healing Circles are held on Wednesday nights. There are also eight bedrooms, and besides resources and support groups, 24-hour staff provide care for women 18 and over needing a safe space for crisis healing. Monthly newsletters are available online, or by regular mail. And most recently they have set up a blog, and page on FaceBook.

"As part of Tamara's House, we are able to provide one-on-one support counseling, group work, and an extensive lending library on sexual abuse issues," noted Metsikassus.

Funding for the program will run out in March of 2010, but they are hopeful someone will step up.

"We're seeking funding elsewhere – there are three of us staffed with Harmony Song: an outreach worker, program worker, and residence worker. And it's a good program that has helped a lot of women."

Mona Morin is the Residence co-ordinator, and Kelly is the outreach worker. They all agree that women who come in leave with a visible shift towards healing, within days there is a physical difference.

"It's really something to see a woman come in and be



Val Metsikassus, Kelly Palmer, and Mona Morin at Tamara's House.

completely closed off – watching her open, begin trusting and sharing her secrets," said Morin, adding it's also humbling and an honour "because of the courage it takes to do that."

At the first Harmony Song event Morin attended, she most remembered simply the soup.

"Whoever had made that soup put so much love into it, you could feel and taste it," she says.

Sometimes, communities will have a retreat co-created for their unique needs, which is healing but can also be challenging. Not only are there dynamics between family generations, neighbours, and relatives to consider, but some women are outing themselves for the first time as survivors in their community. But healing begins with the individual, then goes on to the family, community, and the nation, the women added.

They have seen all ages come through, even right up to their 60s and 70s.

"It's rarer, but older women usually request older women

support groups because of the age difference, based on how far they've come in their own healing," Metsikassus explained.

A diverse approach ensures help for all women, and culturally appropriate programs, links and educational opportunities. Everything is done in consultation with Spiritual Teachers and Elders: traditional ceremonies, teachings, arts and crafts, leisure time, and circles promoting healing, sharing, and grieving.

Besides Gathering and Sacred Space and temporary housing, many weekdays bring regular drop-in programming. There is yoga, afternoon walks, and on Thursdays, "SOS" Day – Soups Or Sandwiches (or Salads!). Anywhere from one to 12 women show up for a nutritious prepared lunch, courtesy of the staff and a SaskTel Care Grant.

Childcare is provided on Wednesday nights for women attending the healing circle led by Elder Maria Linklater.

And clients of Tamara's House are always welcome to a little "TLC" – "Tamara's Lovin' Closet" – donated clothing, accessories, and household items to nurture women inside and out.

"We've also had beading and other activities to empower the women on their healing journey," adds Metsikassus.

There's interest in a women's drumming group this autumn, a perfect activity for colder seasons.

"We are First Nations women helping other First Nations women to heal and restore their identity."

They hope to continue a very successful regalia-making session, originally funded by a City of Saskatoon grant and running seven weeks beyond the planned 16 weeks. Committed to working with women on all their healing paths, their Cree slogan is "Iskwewak-Setoskatotan" – women staying strong together.

"Women have been oppressed so much we cannot treat them that way again – it's part of breaking the cycle of residential school oppression," she adds.

"And we see such creativity blossoming – beading, singing, sewing, cooking – a lot of talented women come through here. It's very rewarding, to see them when they leave."



John Cuthand

Box 231 Grandora, Saskatchewan S0K 1V0
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"My people must find their way back to the stars" – Paspaschase, Cree warrior, mystic and Chief, 1902

The work I do includes:

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- Priority one is client safety
- References available upon request

About Me:

Award winning Aboriginal programmer*
Twenty-one years diverse frontline experience in the human service field
Aboriginal journalist for over ten years
Plains Cree ceremonial lodge keeper for over twenty years
Sessional lecturer Cree History and Culture, First Nations University of Canada
Columnist Eagle Feather News
Diploma Indigenous Social Work (DISW)
Trained in Family Preservation, Solution Focused Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, Positive Peer Culture (adolescent), suicide intervention, Critical Incident Debriefing and addictions awareness (dual diagnosis experience)

*Deputy Minister's Award, Excellence in the Public Service (1991) Department of Social Services, Government of Saskatchewan

"To stand and face ourselves may be the hardest act we ever do but it may also be the most worthwhile. The way to healing is known. It is embedded in the timeless values, stories and legends of our people. The greater part of what we call healing may very well be the act of decolonizing ourselves. Therapy that does not include a competent understanding and appreciation of the Aboriginal experience is at best limited and at worst debilitating. A true spiritual gift is neither a mental health disorder nor a cognitive distortion." – John Cuthand

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Percy Gordon's son was a victim of a violent crime in Regina's North Central neighbourhood. (Below) The ugly side of a troubled neighbourhood.

Violence continues to plague North Central Regina with Aboriginal residents feeling most of the pain

By Brett Cyr
For Eagle Feather News

As violence grows in Regina, Saskatchewan, more Aboriginal people are feeling the effects of this troubling trend.

Percy Gordon, a long-time First Nation resident of the Regina North Central neighborhood, recently had a son attacked and stabbed in the neighborhood.

"On Friday, June 25, 2009, Perell told the police he was waiting for the bus when these two Aboriginal males approached him and asked him for money. When he said he had no money, they began punching him and the other male stabbed him in the face," said Gordon.

As a result of violent crime rising in Regina, Gordon believes that violence is intensifying in his Regina neighborhood of North Central.

"Since 1969, my family and I have lived in North Central or 'The Hood.' We have seen crime and violence escalate to a level of intensity with no relief. Danger is everywhere in the hood," said Gordon.

Because of the growing problem of violence in this Regina neighborhood, he believes the violence problem needs to be addressed by Regina City Hall.

"It appears the Regina city council are afraid to deal with public safety issues that effect the people who reside in North Central.

"The police need more leave to pursue suspects and criminals with greater effort. This power comes from City Hall," said Gordon.

While Percy Gordon is not the only one to experience violent crime in the Regina neighborhood, Harold Lavallee

discussed how he lost his son to violent crime during a national CTV program titled, "City of Gangs" in 2008.

"This is the house where my son Willie had gotten killed. My boys were sleeping upstairs, my youngest son slept in that room. He was stabbed. My other son was in the back room and he was stabbed up, too," said Lavallee.

In the winter of 2006, Raymond Kanapace's son, Raymond Jr. Kanapace, was also the victim of violence at a North Central care home for autistic First Nation children.

"On February 23, 2006, my son was stabbed at the Oyate House while the staff was outside watching a fire down the block. They should of been watching my son," said Kanapace.

Raymond Kanapace also feels that the police didn't care much either about his son's investigation and it was swept under the rug.

"Me and my wife tried to talk to the police, but they always replied 'Oh, we're still doing an investigation.' We couldn't get any answers why that happened to our son," said Kanapace.

On June 24, 2009, Troy Hagen, chief of the Regina Police service, recently announced at the Board of Police Commissioners that violent crime is rising in Regina.

"Assaults is one of our major pressure points. We saw an increase last year in assaults," he said.

Assaults were noticeably on the rise and The Board of Police commissioners report showed that there were 324 violent crimes in the city in May versus 282 in the same month of the previous year.

In the past Maclean's magazine named North Central as the "Worst Neighborhood in Canada" along with the "Most Dangerous City" in 2008.



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Missing women: An all too familiar story for students

By Brandy Watson
For Eagle Feather News

Almost 50 per cent of students at a Regina high school know a First Nations woman who has gone missing. This startling statistic was uncovered when the school took a student poll given by the photojournalism program students.

The students in the program were shocked to find out that four out of eight students in their class knew a missing First Nations woman, so they decided to investigate.

The entire student body was polled on whether they knew a missing First Nations woman, and if so, what their connection to the woman was. We found out that 42 per cent of the students know a missing First Nations woman. Out of this 42 per cent, 44 per cent of the students were

related to this person, and 56 per cent of the students knew the missing person as a friend.

Because the number is so high, we decided to compare our school statistics with that of Regina and the province.

Elizabeth Popowich from the Regina Police Service told us that five of the six missing females in Regina are Aboriginal. On the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police website, there are 29 missing women in Saskatchewan and 58.6 per cent of them are of Aboriginal descent. The number of missing men in Saskatchewan is 67 and only 43.3 per cent of them are of Aboriginal descent.

So, it would appear that there are also high numbers of missing First Nations women in both Regina and

Saskatchewan, and the students at our high school know many of these women as well.

Christine Big Eagle, a high school student, has an aunt that has been missing since February 11, 2007. To Christine, her auntie was like a mother and a sister and nothing could come between them. The two grew up together, and since the disappearance of Danita Big Eagle, it's been hard for her. Christine explains that there is no feeling that can be compared to how she feels about the loss of her aunt.

Christine is hopeful that Danita will come home one day, but would like to tell the public that if they have information about Danita to contact the family.

Even if it's bad news, Christine would like to know.



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Photojournalism students speak up

By Skyla Lavallee
For Eagle Feather News

I was very lucky to be involved in the photojournalism project with Grade 11 and 12 students at Scott Collegiate.

We decided to work with Elmer Eashappie, formerly of the Leader-Post, to produce a special feature on Missing First Nations Women in Saskatchewan. In this feature, we covered personal stories, statistics, government and community involvement, and solutions or preventative ideas.

Some of the stories cover police reports, media coverage, justice issues, and the healing process. In addition to writing articles, we took photographs to accompany our writing. We thank Mark Taylor, a freelance photographer, for working with us.

The topic of Missing First Nations Women hit close to home with our class, since nearly half of us know a missing First Nations woman. With our writing and photos, we hope to shed some light on this very important issue.

The photojournalism project was two classes combined, Art and English, over the entire morning of school for one quarter. We started the quarter on January 27 and completed it on April 8. This is great because

students can earn two credits for graduation in one class.

The teachers, Janine Taylor and Jori Cachene, thought this project would be a great way to get the students interested in school, with the added bonus of being in the paper and taking pictures.

Teachers and administrators at Scott are making a move towards Project-Based Learning. Project-Based Learning is a model of teaching and learning that shifts away from a more traditional school experience to an experiential teaching method. In this model, curriculum objectives are met through projects designed and implemented by teachers and/or students.

Project-Based Learning is meant to engage and motivate students by including them in their own learning. The hopes of staff at the school are that students involved in projects will have improved attendance and be more active in their learning.

This special feature is a pilot project in partnership with Scott Collegiate, INCA-First Nation University of Canada (Shannon Avison), the Leader-Post, and Eagle Feather News.

It is being funded by the ArtSmart Grant, provided by the Saskatchewan Arts Board.

Students at Scott Collegiate in Regina have produced several articles on missing First Nations women in Saskatchewan. More articles will appear in coming issues.

Where is Danita Big Eagle?

By Summer Delorme
For Eagle Feather News

Every minute of every day, Dianne Big Eagle, mother of missing woman Danita Big Eagle, thinks about her daughter and waits for the phone to ring with news that she has been found.

Danita was born March 6, 1984, in Arcola. She spent most of her life on the White Bear Reserve, but also lived in Regina with her mother and her two children. She disappeared on February 11, 2007 at approximately 10 p.m. and was reported missing on February 14, 2007.

Dianne lives in Regina with Danita's two children, Cassidy Big Eagle, who is five years old, and Talon Big Eagle, who is two years old. Both have been in Dianne's care since the disappearance of their mother. Dianne has made it her purpose in life to raise Danita's children until she returns.

Dianne remembers Danita as a great and kind person.

"Her smile could light up a room, she really loved her children, she had a good heart of gold," she said. Even though she didn't agree with some of Danita's choices in life, Dianne let her make her own mistakes and hoped that she would one day learn from them.

"It was hard not to interfere with her

life, (but) she was very loveable, she could do no wrong," said Dianne.

"To Danita, life was a party. She always came home, usually in a hurry, to check the kids, kiss them up, shoo them away, and get ready to go out," Dianne adds.

"She'd say 'Mom, take care of my kids. I'll be back later, Okay?'"

The last time Dianne saw Danita she had candies and goodie bags for her babies.

"She was her same bubbly, happy self. She was meeting someone later. Before she disappeared, she called me at approximately 10 p.m. from a room in a motel.

"You could hear loud music and laughter in the back ground. She said she may need a ride later. I reminded her she was to babysit for me Monday and she said not to worry, she'd be there.

That was the last time Dianne talked to Danita. From the time Danita vanished, Dianne has always felt that she would turn up. She questions whether or not Danita would leave of her own free will, because she can't believe Danita would abandon her children.

Dianne will not rest until she hears from her daughter herself on this matter. So, Dianne's search continues and Danita's children are a Godsend for her. "Without them, I'd have no purpose in life. My hope for Danita's safe return is all I pray for lately."

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Gurski has a world class arm

When Softball Canada announced the team that they will send to Prague, Czech Republic at the Easton Youth World Cup, only one member of the team was from Saskatchewan.

That one member is Megan Gurski. She is a 15-year-old Métis pitcher from Saskatoon.

The tournament takes place from August 10 to August 16.

Gurski has been playing softball since she was five years old. At a young age her father, Barry, had a talk with her because he knew she wanted to be a pitcher. He told her "being a pitcher is a lot of pressure and the team will look to you to get you through the tough times."

Gurski has responded by being the MVP of her team, the Lasers, every year since 2005.

She has gone on to pitch in numerous big games. In 2007-2009 she has played in Western Canadians. This last year they won Westerns and she was named MVP of the final. Not only did she pitch outstanding she also batted a not too shabby .600 for the tournament.

Team Canada Coach Tony Foti says, "travelling to Prague will be a unique experience for the team and will be a great introduction to international softball for this young group of athletes."

Gurski hopes to take her softball career as far as possible and maybe parlay her skills into a scholarship offer from schools down south. She would like to major in interior design.

And if one Gurski isn't enough, we should all keep an eye on Megan's younger sister, Rebecca, who is 14 and a very accomplished pitcher herself.

FSIN Chiefs ready to make a run at Nationals

The FSIN Chiefs have advanced to the Playoffs at the Canadian Men's Junior Fastball Championships in Owen Sound, Ontario.

The Chiefs who are Saskatchewan's Provincial Junior A Men's Champions, finished the round robin portion of the tournament with a 6-2 record.

As we went to press the team was still alive and hoping to advance to the championship.

FSIN Vice-Chief and Head Coach of the Chiefs, Morley Watson says, "the team is playing great defensively and the pitching has been solid, but the bats need to come to life, we need some hits if we hope to get to the championship."

Rider's up and down season continues

The Riders continue to have an up and down season. After going into Calgary and surprising many with a hard

athletics, canoeing, golf, softball and soccer. This year's demonstration sport will be Hand Games.

During the Games, the area of Onion Lake and surrounding area will triple in size. The games bring with it an energy and excitement that will be welcomed by those in the community. Look in next month's issue for all the results of the games.

Random thoughts

Why the Jays decided not to move Roy Halladay baffles me. He will not re-sign. Not if he ever hopes to play in the playoffs anyway... Best off-season hockey move thus far, Jay Bouwmeester signing with the Flames. That was huge! Does anyone even care about hockey in Phoenix? Screw Hamilton, bring them back to Winnipeg where they belong. ... The Spurs and the Celtics look pretty awesome now, but LA getting Artest was just not fair ... RIP Arturo Gatti, if you never saw him fight you really missed something special.



Johnathon Assoon, from the Kawacatoose First Nation does one of his many legs to carry the First Nation Summer Games lance to the 2009 games being hosted by the Onion Lake Cree Nation. The lance was going to be passed to the Onion Lake community to start the Summer Games. This photo was taken just north of North Battleford on August 8.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

fought exciting win in week 5. They basically gave the game away to what I see as a lesser squad in B.C.

They need to find a quarterback that can sustain drives and make the throws needed to move the chains. Sounds familiar, but pick one quarterback and let them be the starter. It's not fair to either Durant or Jyles. It's really a broken record but the Riders have to be more consistent on both sides of the ball. It's frustrating watching a team that looks like both the best and worst in the CFL at times.

First Nation Summer Games are here

The Saskatchewan First Nation Summer Games will be on during the month of August. They run from August 9-13, and will be hosted by the Onion Lake Cree Nation.

The games will be attended by the ten Tribal Councils in the province and three individual First Nations.

Teams will compete in the following sports: archery,



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Bill Cook, Dale McArthur and Vinnie Fiorante are Indifference.

Indifference still rock 'n' rollin'

In the world of music, time can be a band's worst enemy. Unless you're an overnight success, which most musicians know is nothing more than an unlikely myth, it takes time – a lot of it – to realize the seemingly unreachable dream of making a living by making music.

For alt-rock band Indifference, eight years have passed since forming and after two albums, countless hours of practice and endless live gigs, they are finally on the verge of establishing themselves as one of Saskatchewan's premier rock and roll bands.

“We got together in 2001. It’s been a hard road but we’re still here, chasing the dream of making music as our livelihood,” says front man Bill Cook. “It’s the same for any artist. Until you achieve your goal, you pretty much do it for free.”

And it's not easy.

“We’ve had our ups and downs like any other band. But I think over time you mature and grow up.”

This sentiment is a necessity for any band serious about making it in the difficult, cut-throat music industry. Until recently, the band – lead singer/bassist Cook, guitarist Dale McArthur and drummer Vinnie Fiorante – thought they would wallow in obscurity for eternity but their tireless work and dedication to making good music is finally paying off.

“We’ve played a few big gigs over the past little while. Vinnie (Fiorante) developed a relationship with a couple promoters (in Regina, the band’s hometown) and since then we’ve been opening for some really well-known bands.”

Those bands include State of Shock, Marcy Playground (“I smell sex and candy...”), War Party and headlining the Buckcherry after-party.

Indifference will also perform at the Aboriginal Music Festival in Saskatoon this September (see below for details) as well as open for rock legends Nazareth and Trooper on August 28 at the Bear Claw Casino on White Bear First Nation, a show Cook says the band is honoured to

play.

“It’ll be really interesting to open for those guys. It’s kinda like we’re sharing the stage with a piece of rock history – two bands who have achieved incredible success and still tour for the love of it. We’re really looking forward to it.”

Also on the horizon is a new album of original music. Tentatively titled *No Reverb*, the band hopes their latest CD will be ready for release this fall.

“We’re really trying to take our time and do it right. When you don’t have a record label backing you, it makes it that much more difficult to produce a really good album. Basically any money we make performing goes to making it.”

The band's friend and temporary bassist Gerard Wolfe is recording the album, something Cook feels will improve sales and exposure for the band.

“We’ve rushed when we’ve made albums in the past, mostly due to budget. This time we’re going to record as the money we make permits it. It’s going to take a lot longer, but we all feel it’s worth it in the long run.”

And although things are looking up for Indifference, there is still a lot of work to be done. Cook believes in doing it yourself but at some point would like a little help from people established in the industry.

“We’d really benefit from finding a record label to help produce an album, find a booking agent to help us with a coast to coast Canadian tour and a manager would be nice too.”

But if Indifference isn't fortunate enough to fulfill their wish list, they, for lack of better words, will keep on rocking.

"I think anyone who gets into music, especially the rock 'n' roll thing, dreams of stardom and money but I'm personally happy where I'm at right now.

"I got a good job (teaching Cree at FNUC) and a loving family. And I'm also able to make music. Life doesn't get much better."

Check out Indifference at
www.myspace.com/indifferencelive

Aboriginal Music Festival in Saskatoon Sept. 10-11

Program is gearing up to present the sixth installment of the Aboriginal Music Festival and Career Fair on Sept. 10 and 11 at TCU Place in Saskatoon.

Day One of the Festival includes a Career Fair, Youth Leadership Workshops and Emerging Artist Festival free of charge. Day Two welcomes an impressive assortment of musicians for the Aboriginal Music Festival.

This year's performers include Juno winner Leela Gilday, Tracey Bone and JC Campbell, Mitch Daigneault, Eekwol, Out of the Blue, Mykal Gambul, Jason Chamakese, Becky Thomas, Krystle Pederson and, of course, Indifference.

Advance tickets are \$20 or \$30 at the



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First conference on Aboriginal cemeteries: History, Ancestry, Loved Ones

By Andréa Ledding
For Eagle Feather News

This September, history will not only be made, but protected, when AMI Memorials hosts Canada's first conference on Aboriginal Cemeteries.

"We want to bring to light the many issues affecting our sacred burial sites – our ancient and historical sites," said Joseph Bear, head of the company providing culturally appropriate memorials, plaques, and cemetery services. Bear, originally from Ochapawace First Nation, notes cemeteries are important for both those interred and those left behind.

"We are talking about many things, including a loss of history and ancestry."

The rough condition of many sites – lack of record-keeping, and many unmarked graves – can be complicated by private burials, no regulations for sacred burial grounds, and traditional beliefs that create reluctance to discuss death and burial.

"It's something we've got to address," he noted in a phone interview. "I can't imagine what's it's going to be like otherwise ... children and grandchildren are going to continue going through the same cycle we're going through in terms of loss."

In his own family, Bear lost a brother before he was "even born and thought of" but his family has no idea where he was laid to rest.

"Our family's healing process will never be complete," Bear said, noting a commonality with many residential school era deaths.

"Thousands of families are going through that same process of not knowing. And that is such an important aspect of how we heal as human beings – spiritually, physically and emotionally."



Bear believes in empowering communities and leadership by engaging them in proactively examining and dealing with organization and maintenance of burial grounds. Ideally, different levels of government will also address the chronic underfunding for these types of community needs nation-wide.

In the funeral care and memorialization industry for over 15 years, Bear has

seen many cemeteries in poor condition or deplorable disrepair, and wants to see both the ancestors and their descendants shown proper respect balanced with a community's right to deny westernization of their grounds.

"That's why we are hosting Canada's first conference on Aboriginal cemeteries."

From talking to chiefs he's learned

Respecting traditions and historical practices of communities is vital, and he believes the overall conference, featuring many guest speakers with a variety of experiences and specialties, will allow a practical framework while sharing aboriginal faith, beliefs, and traditions.

Data from speakers and conference delegates will help create a generic program for all aboriginal communities in designing, developing, and maintaining a burial site.

"We've had very positive responses from many chiefs and council members and community and family members from across Canada," noted Bear, and the potential for healing is what motivates him.

"We want to make things better for our people," he said – such as a model made available to every aboriginal community.

"To find a good solution for the problem and then put it into action – for every community to become successful managing their burial sites, with a solid program to govern them."

He also hopes to set up a National Aboriginal Cemetery Association across Canada to benefit all aboriginal people of Canada no matter what their ancestry.

The "Restore and Respect" Conference, Sept. 20 and 21, has room for 300.

Bear says early registration is encouraged, since it will fill quickly: <http://www.remco-memorials.ca/conference/>

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