

Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

New governance plan for FNUC

First Nations University of Canada Chief Operating Officer Del Anaquod explains the new governance model that was approved by Saskatchewan chiefs at a special assembly of the FSIN. Negotiations are in the works in hopes of restoring funding from the federal government and the Province for the troubled university.



By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

There will be a new structure governing the First Nations University of Canada (FNUC).

Earlier this month at a special Legislative Assembly of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN), chiefs voted in favour of a transitional model proposed by the school's interim board of governors.

The changes mean increased control for the University of Regina.

Before the "shared management and stewardship model" was outlined at assembly, board chair Joely BigEagle warned the chiefs of what the potential consequence would be if the model was not adopted.

"A failure to do so today will result in jeopardizing the cash flow and likely push First Nations University into insolvency by the end of March."

FNUC got to this point when both provincial and federal governments pulled \$12 million dollars in funding last month. The move came

on the heels of allegations of financial irregularities, which surfaced after the school's former chief financial officer was fired. Both governments also pointed to long standing governance issues at the school.

The chiefs dissolved the school's board of governors at the winter assembly, replacing it with an interim board. Since then, the board suspended the president and vice-president of finance and administration for two weeks.

• Continued on Page 2



GIFT OF LIFE

Pauline Hood has received a precious gift from her daughter, Crystal

- Page 3

AWARDS HOST

Andrea Menard will be the co-host of the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards show.

- Page 4

LEADERSHIP

MLTC Chief Helen Ben knows what it takes to be an effective leader.

- Page 8

NO MORE EXCUSES

Margaret Reynolds says it's time to stress the importance of language and culture.

- Page 18

SHARP BLADE

Saskatoon Blades player Jeremy Boyer came up big on a special night.

- Page 26

Welcome to our
Women's Issue
Coming In April :
Arts & Entertainment Edition
CPMA #40027204



Senator David Ahenakew critically ill

Senator David Ahenakew is in hospital in Shellbrook. Ahenakew, 76, has been battling cancer for some time. Family members say his condition has deteriorated in recent days and he is in critical condition.

Ahenakew is the former chief of the Assembly of First Nations and a former chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.

FNUC plays key role in Canadian society: Anaquod

• Continued from Page One

There was another development surrounding a scholarship fund of nearly \$400,000. FNUC's Chief Operating Officer Del Anaquod says "bad accounting" resulted in most of that money being used to pay operating expenses.

"The scholarship fund, in normal situations, you'd have that in a trust fund, in a separate fund. We discovered that it's not."

Anaquod assured everyone that students still received scholarship money and will continue to receive scholarships even during the current financial struggles.

The interim board recommended the chiefs accept the model as well as table the governance report by Dr. Manley Begay, because \$1.2 million from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada was supposed to be released once that report was filed.

Under the management model, all financial administration will be done through the University of Regina. Senior management will also report to the U of R until the interim board can hire a senior executive officer.

The board's term is also being extended until the end of March 2011 to give it time to implement these changes and those outlined in Begay's report. This will all happen over four years.

The resolution passed with little discussion, unlike the situation at last month's assembly, when chiefs spent nearly seven hours behind closed doors on the first day of assembly and came out with nothing concrete.

FSIN Chief Guy Lonechild was in much better spirits with these results.

"Brings us all a sense, I think, of a relief. We all need to work toward getting First Nations University back on track."

The next step for Lonechild was to talk to INAC Minister Chuck Strahl. He flew to Ottawa two days after the assembly.

"We need to have a strong indication that Minister Strahl is committed to not just the concept of the First Nations University of Canada but a long-term funding arrangement with the First Nations University of Canada after the transition period, so we're hopeful on all fronts."

Lonechild joined a contingent that had already traveled to the nation's capital. Randy Lundy, FNUC's Head of the English department, and Diane Adams, FNUC Students' Association president, met with the three opposition leaders as well as critics of Aboriginal affairs and post-secondary education.

Adams says she's encouraged the opposition leaders took the time to meet with them.



AFN Chief Sean Atleo fields questions at the FSIN special assembly.

"It says to me they think at least it's an issue worth pursuing."

She says once funding was pulled, there was always a sense they'd have to resort to such a trip.

Adams says there while there have clearly been problems with how the school has been run, there are also a lot of positives – a sentiment echoed by Anaquod when he addressed the FSIN assembly.

He says FNUC has trained more than 400 civil servants in the provincial and federal governments, and more than 1,000 in First Nations governments.

"There is no other university in the world that has as much Indigenous programming as in our institution. It would take years to replicate things that

we do in education and nursing."

He says every nursing graduate has challenged the national exam and passed – something he says no other Canadian university can boast.

Anaquod also points to the FNUC's annual pow wow.

"Our annual pow wow attracts over 7,000 people. There is no university in Canada that has a community event that the community comes out to support it (like that).

"We've had our problems, we've had our struggles, and we're going to have struggles again in the future. We will survive.

"We will fight. I look at this institution playing a key role; in Saskatchewan as well as in Canadian society."

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Gift enables ailing mom to start living again

By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

A mother has received a gift a woman normally gives a child. Pauline Hood, originally from the Canoe Lake First Nation, was given the gift of life, thanks to her daughter, Crystal. Earlier this month the two travelled to Edmonton where they each had surgery. Crystal had one of her kidneys removed, which was then transplanted into her mother.

Crystal says it's difficult to put into words how it feels now that the surgeries are complete, and both she and her mother are doing well.

"It's just a real amazing feeling. All I wanted was my mom to feel better ... we did it."

Pauline struggled with polycystic kidneys for the past couple of years – a disease which causes permanent kidney failure. She was going to dialysis three times a week.

When diagnosed, she told her family she'd eventually need a donor, which sprung Crystal into action.

"Without hesitation, I proceeded to go see a doctor, and told the doctor I'd like to be a donor for my mom, and we started testing."

After over a year and a half of testing, Crystal got the good news: she was a match.

"It was like I was floating. It was just an overwhelming, beautiful, peaceful feeling."

Pauline almost couldn't believe it when she heard the news later from her own doctor.

"I was just shocked when I was sitting there in his office. My knees, they went weak."

"It was like I was floating. It was just an overwhelming, beautiful, peaceful feeling."

- Pauline Hood

She immediately phoned her daughter, thinking the doctor made a mistake, because she had been on the deceased list for a donor. Crystal confirmed the doctor was indeed right, and then she had to do some convincing.

"I said, 'Mom, you brought me into this world, I'll do anything to keep you in this world.'"

Pauline says she struggled with the idea of taking a kidney from her daughter, a single mother of two children and her best friend, for the longest time. After a conversation with some co-workers, she accepted the offer.



Pauline Hood has a new chance at life after her daughter, Crystal, donated a kidney to her mother.

"They said, 'Pauline, what would you do if you had two healthy kidneys and she needed one, wouldn't you do the same?'"

Pauline agreed to take the kidney, saying it's phenomenal that her daughter would do that for her.

"It's just overwhelming, I can't describe how it feels. It's such a special gift. No one would ever expect that kind of a gift."

Crystal was released just two days after surgery because she recovered so well. Pauline remained in the hospital for almost a week. She will return to work the beginning of May, while Crystal says she's taking about six weeks off from her job at the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority. Before the women left, SIGA raised \$3,224 to help offset the cost of travel, food, and hotels for the family.

Crystal says she's excited for her mom to no longer be so tired and unable to do the things she loves, and Pauline says she's excited to start living again.

"I'll have my life back."

Pauline knows what it's like to wait, and says everyone has the power to help those people on waiting lists. She encourages people to sign the donor cards and put them with their driver's license.

"If they could sign the donor cards, there's so many people waiting on the wait list for transplants. I was reading up on it and it said one person could save seven lives after we're gone. That would be something, wouldn't it, to give that gift of life."



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Editorial

The stakes are high for First Nations University

It looks like it is do or die time for the First Nations University of Canada. The FSIN and its leaders have gone 'all in' with their strategy for the First Nations University of Canada.

They have done the right thing on their part by dismantling the board and in giving up control of the University's funding to the University of Regina.

They have shown their true intent through installing a very credible chief operating officer in Del Anaquod. He knows that university inside and out, has contacts everywhere and he can do the job.

The interim board of governors is stacked with academics and professionals. The interim board has also named Joely BigEagle as chair and Dr. Bonita Beatty as vice chair. What a bold move. These are two very educated and respected First Nation women from Saskatchewan. Joely BigEagle has been profiled in Eagle Feather News several times since she was a youth role model and now is an accomplished engineer. She is from White Bear First Nation and was a former student at SIFC.

Dr. Beatty BA, MA, PhD, holds her PhD in Political Science from the University of Alberta and her specialty is in the area of First Nations health governance and public administration. She is a member of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation and was once a professor at FNUC. Talk about a one-two punch.

You really can't ask the University or the Federation to do more. They have met every question and have now thrown in all their chips.

Now it is up to the Province and INAC to call their bet. Because of the economy and expected tight budgets all around, many expect the government to have a safe out. That excuse just would not fly. Everyone agrees to the importance of the institution. If you need proof of that, take a look at the list of alumni and what they have contributed to the province.

The fastest growing segment of the population in Saskatchewan is the Aboriginal community and we need to be educated in order to fill the gaps in the ever growing workforce. Now is not a time to cut back on First Nation and Métis education. Now is the time to invest.

Let's hope that provincial minister Rob Norris and INAC minister Chuck Strahl do call that bet and meet the University's moves with properly restored funding.

The good thing is, if they do match the pot and we play out the hand, after the flop we don't have to worry about someone drawing into a dirty little inside straight. If this bet is called, there is no loser.

We would all win and the school survives. And then we can all move on.

Coming next month

Next month Eagle Feather News will be presenting the arts and entertainment issue.

We will have the highlights of the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards, a profile of Métis fiddler Dallas Fiddler-Boyer fresh back from playing at the Olympics, profiles of singers, artists and writers and lots of great photography.

Of course we will be covering the First Nation Winter Games that are being held over the Easter holidays.

Expect lots of action photos and insight from our sports guy Blue Pelletier



Menard hosting Aboriginal Achievement Awards

Regina, are you ready? With only a scant few weeks to go, the folks at the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation are gearing up to present the 17th Annual National Aboriginal Achievement Awards at the Regina Connexus Centre of the Arts in Regina.

Poised to host the show is Saskatchewan's own Métis actress/songstress Andrea Menard (The Velvet Devil, Rabbit Fall) alongside Raoul Trujillo (True Blood, Apocalypto).

The Awards continue the mission of celebrating Aboriginal Canadians who have made a profound positive impact in their communities, across Canada and worldwide. Poised to join the hosts on stage are an international music icon, a

country music superstar, and an international indigenous dance troupe. There will also be traditional drumming and comedic performances.

To be held on March 26, the Awards focus on the theme of Potential and, the ability within us all to achieve greatness, despite obstacles. This will be the second time that Menard has been a host of the Awards. Menard and Michael Greyeyes (who is performing at this gala) hosted the Awards when they were held in Saskatoon.

Expect lots of laughs, some amazing entertainment, a stunning set and the very uplifting stories of the progress and achievement of the very worthy recipients of this year's awards. The vignettes are always touching testimonials to lives well lived.

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

Busy schedules deny kids effective parenting

Indigenous women are held in high regard in the atayohkewina, the sacred teachings/stories, and continue to play an important role in the spiritual and ceremonial traditions of our peoples.

The teachings tell us that woman is the backbone of our nations, the giver of life. She's the earth, the moon, the waters, and the first line of protection around the Elders and the children. I cannot speak to men's teachings but understand that when both are healthy and working together respectfully, they keep the people strong and safe.

Long ago I heard a beautiful teaching about the relationship between men and women and our nations — men and women were like the wings of an eagle, and the eagle could soar to great heights because the wings worked in perfect harmony.

If one wing was injured, or one tried to overpower the other, the eagle would falter and not be able to look after itself and its children. There is a lot of teachings in that analogy.

So contrast our sacred teachings with the harsh realities that many Indigenous women find themselves in. We hear a lot about sexism, disrespect, and the lateral

and domestic violence Indigenous women experience. But even more distressing is the treatment of women in our own communities (rural and urban). There is a huge gap here, filled with contradictions between how our Creator teaches us to live and how we treat one another. We have a lot of work ahead of us to lift the spirit, mind and body of our eagle back up again.

We also place great hope for our future on the backs of our young people. But how much effort and time are we giving them to ensure they have the teachings and the tools to take us further along our decolonization and healing journey.

My buddy Ida and I were comparing how we were raised to how we raised our own kids. Like most moms we tried to raise our kids with the best parenting skills learned from our parents, and then some.

As kids we learned by watching and listening. But more important, we learned by practicing what we saw and heard. It wasn't just talk we could brush off, we had

to "do it", and that's where we learned how important these teachings and tools were.

We learned early about responsibilities and consequences. We were expected to look after our younger siblings, to help around the house often doing adult work on our own. Many of us also worked with our relatives to help make a living like picking berries and Seneca root with our aunties and grandmother, selling beadwork, gutting fish, picking rocks, feeding the livestock, setting snares, skinning.

Our contribution to the family's well-being was important and from that we developed strong senses of pride, responsibility and self-discipline. We were also expected to figure things out on our own, to find solutions to our own problems, and face the consequences of our actions.

Some of us had some hard times growing up and so as parents we went out of our way to protect our kids from the harsh realities we experienced. For many

of us the way we make a living is separate from our home life and there is little we can ask our kids to help out with. We also make more money so can provide more luxuries for our kids than we ever had. After a long day or week at work it's easier to bring home McDonalds and put our babies in front of the TV so we can get some rest. And it's easier to do the housework ourselves because it takes less time than it takes to teach our kids how to do it.

Yeah, the world is different today than it was when we were young. There are more distractions, more negative influences, more fear of Child & Family stepping in, and somehow less time.

But by over-protecting and bailing our kids out have we denied them the opportunity to learn how find their own solutions? By not taking the time to talk, work, and play with them have we taught them to be self-centered and denied them the opportunity to feel like they have something important and valued to contribute? Which, in turn, denied them the opportunity to develop a strong sense of responsibility and self-discipline?

Much of what we can hope for our future comes from how we raise our kids.



Introspection
Winona Wheeler

Canadians unclear on which myths to hold dear

My late winter mixed bag this month starts with rejoicing at the sight of pavement on the street, the result of the higher angle of the sun at this time of year rather than balmy temperatures.

It has been a long winter, made tougher by the opinion of Saskatoon mayor Don "Snowplow" Atcheson and his allies at city hall, who apparently view street clearing as a luxury and not an essential public service. Never mind school closures, business slowdowns and stranded citizens.

Strange how that view clashes with their bylaw which purports to enslave residents with the requirement to clean the city's sidewalks in front of their homes. With this liberty-bashing bylaw instead of a good-neighbour campaign, the city expects residents to do what it does not do.

In Saskatoon, as a former colleague quipped, the snow removal program is called "spring". Perhaps the city hall folks get their cues from those who have invented the term "snow showers" to replace the delightful traditional term "flurries". Is it wishful thinking that if you call it rain it will not need to be shoveled?

...

Congratulations to friend and fellow EFN writer Maria Campbell who has been appointed a Trudeau Mentor. This is only the most recent in a long, long string of provincial and national honours and accolades earned by one of Canada's most renowned Indigenous women. Known around the world for her autobiographical book Half-Breed which has been translated into half a

dozen languages, Maria is also an accomplished playwright, film-maker, teacher, public speaker, and Elder.

Created in honour of former Prime Minister Trudeau, the national scholarship and mentorship program pairs some of the best and brightest young Canadian scholars who have won Trudeau scholarships with well-known, highly experienced leaders. Maria's nomination follows those of previous Indigenous women Sheila Watt-Cloutier (2006) Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, documentary filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin (2009) and joins Roberta Jamieson, President and CEO of the Aboriginal Achievements Foundation, also honoured this year.

Among other notable past appointments in the select group of Trudeau Mentors are Saskatchewan's Alan Blakeney and Janice McKinnon.

...

Congratulations also to old friend Jim Neilson, originally from Big River Saskatchewan, who was one of the inductees into the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame this week. Jim played 15 years, (and wore number 15) for New York Rangers in addition to other teams and is one of the defensive greats of the old six-team NHL days that some of us remember so fondly. This well-deserved recognition comes on the heels of the other celebrations and recogni-

tion that he and other Aboriginal hockey players from Saskatchewan received in Saskatoon during the World Junior Hockey championships this winter.

...

Symbolism is us! Louis Riel is the most famous Métis and probably the most enigmatic figure in Canadian history. The Riel pardon issue continues to pop up in newspaper commentaries and opinions. It is bound to be a subject of contention now that the provincial government has

declared 2010 an official "Year of the Métis". According to the government's website, the purpose is to create "an opportunity to acknowledge Métis history, celebrate their accomplishments and commemorate the 125th anniversary of the 1885 Northwest Resistance."

Recent media coverage has dealt with Bill C-248 introduced by MP Martin from Winnipeg in December 2008. That bill was only the last in a long list of doomed private member's bills that would forgive Riel. Like most of its predecessors it is characterized by a cavalier treatment of both facts and law, sacrificing historical accuracy for modern fancies.

The Riel issue is joined by an equally contentious debate, carried on mostly by the tall foreheads in ivory towers, on the participation of First Nations in a string of events that in Nēhiyawēwin (Cree language) aspin

kākī-māyahkamikahk refers to "the time when things went wrong".

At times the Riel pardon issue emerges from MPs driven by contemporary political passions apparently linked to multiculturalism, equality and all things bright and beautiful. Typically these bills resolve to do symbolic things such as erecting statues, plaques and monuments. Overlooked is the cause for which Riel died. Forgive and forget means forgive Riel and forget the Métis cause for which he died.

At other times the Riel pardon issue has emerged from Quebec federalist MPs whose motivation seems to be the appeasement of Quebecois separatist feelings with official declarations of fondness for a man regarded as a symbol of the historic struggle between French-Catholic and English-Protestant interests in Western Canada. Riel without the Métis cause is a Quebec federalist venture.

Could this view be wrong and should the bills be viewed as a budding emergence of a new spirit of Canadian nationalism, something to graft on to the spirit of the Olympic hockey gold medals? From the 19th century French philosopher Ernest Renan we have the view that nationalist histories are "the crystallization of an idealized antiquity..."

The passionate commitment to opposing views of Riel as evident in the newspaper coverage suggests that we in Canada are not yet ready to agree on what myths to hold dear and what stories to tell. As a young country we are still in the winter, although possibly the late winter, of our years.



Comment
Paul Chartrand

Racist perceptions require aggressive and immediate response

Racism is an ominous and dangerous ignorance that is quickly becoming the most pressing social issue affecting Saskatchewan people. Racism is real. It hurts people and it must be stopped.

The CBC news online discussion boards are riddled with some of the most demeaning, dehumanizing and totally degrading comments possible. Aboriginal people are often portrayed as drunken, criminal, corrupt, inept whiners mooching off the taxpayer. These postings are not the irrational rants of a Jim Pankiw. They represent a toxic, disturbing and very vocal segment of the Saskatchewan population.

Simplistic solutions to the Aboriginal issues such as assimilation and an end to Aboriginal rights are constantly promoted.

There is genuine contempt for Aboriginal peoples and very little room for rational discussion. There are participants who stick up for the Aboriginals but the agree/disagree count usually tips toward the negative.

The Manitoba Chiefs complained about their discussion boards and demanded CBC censor content. Their request was denied on the basis of free speech. Confronting anti-First Nation content rather than the media it is presented in would have been a much better choice.

There are few social issues that people somewhere have not only experienced but have developed an effective response to. The Catholic League and the Jewish Anti Defamation League are both known as very effective advocates and defenders of their people. They provide education and outreach to the public at large but are best known for aggressively responding to slander and misinformation.

The Anti Defamation League (ADL), founded in 1913 contains the following mission statement: "The immediate object of the League is to stop, by appeals to reason and conscience and, if necessary, by appeals to law, the defamation of the Jewish people.

Its ultimate purpose is to secure justice and fair treatment to all citizens alike and to put an end forever to unjust and unfair discrimination against and ridicule of any sect or body of citizens."

This statement can be found on the World Wide Web at

www.adl.org/about.asp

The Catholic League follows a similar mission. Their website is posted at catholicleague.org/about.php.



The Catholic League, like the ADL, responds quickly and effectively: "When slanderous assaults are made against the Catholic Church, the Catholic

League hits the newspapers, television, and radio talk shows defending the right of the Church to promote its teachings with as much verve as any other institution in society."

This is a policy the Aboriginal people need to emulate.

An Aboriginal peoples anti-defamation League is not only desirable but entirely possible.

It would take a highly motivated and skilled team specializing in law, culture and media. It would need adequate funds and be separate from Aboriginal political control.

The organization like the ADL and Catholic League would monitor media and the World Wide Web.

Anti Aboriginal views would not be tolerated but would be immediately and aggressively pursued.

They would educate and correct flawed information while recognizing and constructively responding to legitimate grievances.

First Nations issues would be placed in a proper context. Such an independent organization is desperately needed.

Saskatchewan is changing very fast. Aboriginals are no longer a powerless minority out of sight and out of mind. Those years have passed.

The Aboriginal population is rapidly growing, not only in numbers but in power and influence. These are the transition years.

Two peoples, so long in isolation, must find a good way to live together now and in the future.

Answers cannot be based on assimilation but on accommodation. Power and decision making must be shared.

The days of the old Indian agent are long past. The mindless mantra of the anti-Aboriginals cannot and must not drown out the voice of reason.

Aboriginal people need to get our act together and create an anti-defamation league of our own.



Building Bridges Round Dance

The Building Bridges Round Dance was held in Lebreton on February 26 at the White Calf Gym in Wa-Pii Moos-Toosis (White Calf) Cree Nation to celebrate the relationship between literacy, libraries and Aboriginal people.

Southeast Regional Library, headquartered in Weyburn, was the primary host for the event. Parkland Regional Library, headquartered in Yorkton, also assisted in sponsoring and hosting the round dance.

The lead Elders were Kirby and Cheryl Littleton. There were 30 female and 60 male singers in attendance as well as recently elected Chief Perry Bellegarde and Assistant Deputy Minister of Education Darren McKee. About 600 people attended the Round Dance as both participants and spectators, and of these, about 50 were library staff and their families from several of the province's library systems.

The Round Dance was held as part of the Government of Saskatchewan's 'Information is for Everyone' decade-long initiative to bring

about stronger ties between public libraries and Aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan.

The round dance was a great success and included events and activities such as a feast with traditional foods, a pipe ceremony, draws and raffles, a canteen, a gift give-away, a midnight lunch, and, of course, singing, music and dancing that lasted well into the morning. Round dances are held during the winter months and are intended as celebrations or to mark a special occasion.

This is the third such round dance sponsored by a Saskatchewan public library system in as many years. Previous round dances in the series were held in Saskatoon, (2008), and Regina, (2009).

The public library community appreciates the support of the Ministry of Education for providing core funding for each of the Round Dances.

The fourth and final library-sponsored round dance is planned for early 2011 in central Saskatchewan.

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Chief Ben finds balance important in leadership role

By Jessica Iron
For Eagle Feather News

Few of us experience life as leaders despite the fact that so many aspire to powerful positions at the top. One leader, Chief Helen Ben of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council has been successful as a leader and insists that balance, co-operation and respect are all key traits in her role as Chief.

"We have to make sure that we balance out our life. I think if we're very respectful to ourselves and to the people around us, and look at how we can work together, that's what's important," says Chief Ben. "If we can keep that in mind and use that as our basic principle then I think we'll go far."

Good leaders seem to make it look easy and the mark of a true professional is the apparent ease with which they do things. As Tribal Chief, Ben works with the nine communities that make up Meadow Lake Tribal Council, but they each have their own chief and council members.

"There are quite high expectations, of course, working with the communities, we need to make sure that we serve the communities," says Chief Ben. "We run programs and services at the tribal council. My specific goal is to make sure that I advocate for the First Nations and also look at treaties and work with them in regards to any issues that they may have."

"So it's quite extensive work. I also oversee some of the businesses that we have, along with, of course, the programs and services that we have within the tribal council," she adds.

She speaks passionately about their new ventures, excited at the new opportunities for Meadow Lake Tribal Council.

"We've got an aggressive agenda in regards to maybe obtaining new businesses. We've got some existing businesses, but we're in a mode of growing. We want to grow and we want to continue on," she says.

"Also, we've really been looking at our education system through a magnifying glass and working with the nine communities. So we're revamping our education system."



Chief Helen Ben of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council works well with nine communities.

Naturally, innovation can be met with trepidation, as is true with any change. Chief Ben illustrates the more difficult aspects of being a tribal chief.

"In my position one of the main challenges is trying to get the message across to other governments the importance of working together and building relationships. Because sometimes the difficulty we have as First Nation people is that other governments, non-First Nation governments, look at our organizations and us, as people, that may not bring as much value," she says.

"They need to realize that we need to work together, that we need to have good partnerships, and partnerships means equal partnerships – not where one is paternalis-

tic to the other. We have a vision, we have very good people and we need to advance our goals too."

How does she accomplish it all? By keeping herself centered. She recounts the balance needed in her life as a chief.

"For me, there are certain things that I have to juggle in my own home life as a woman, as a leader, a mother. I'm a grandmother also. So it's a lot of juggling – multi-tasking in a lot of ways," says Chief Ben.

"Balance is important, and sometimes it's very difficult to sort of make time for everything, but one needs to do that and one needs to try to keep that balance."

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UAS looking at ways to help community

By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

An organization that works to improve the lives of urban Aboriginal people is seeking input from Saskatoon's Aboriginal community.

Later this month, the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) in Saskatoon is hosting a community consultation to help set its direction for the coming fiscal year.

UAS co-chair Dale Ahenakew says numerous invitations have been delivered to Elders, youth, and community organizations with the hope that around 100 people can attend and share their thoughts.

"What's happening out there, what are the priorities, how can we assist?"



LIZ DURET



DALE AHENAKEW

The strategy is in its second last year of a five-year funding block from the federal government. It has a community investment fund of \$750,000 to disperse amongst projects led by various Aboriginal organizations and organizations that work with Aboriginal people.

As well, another \$185,000 that can be used for capacity building, which could be anything from training a board of directors to providing computer training for staff.

Saskatoon's UAS has many priorities, including improving availability and access to health information and services; increasing opportunities for Aboriginal youth through things like sports, cultural activities, education, and employment; developing initiatives to assist those facing poverty and housing difficulties; as well as looking at economic development opportunities.

Ahenakew says it's often difficult to decide who should get the money, which is why the community consultation is called: to provide direction on what the priorities should be.

Ahenakew says all of the information from the consultation will be compiled and reviewed by the UAS steering committee, which is made up of 11 First Nations and Métis people, including Ahenakew's co-chair Liz Duret and two youth who alternate.

Following the review, there will be a call for project proposals, which will be evaluated based on the priorities set out from the consultation.

"It's very hard to figure out who should get the money," says Ahenakew. "It's a small amount compared to the amount of organizations out there."

He says typically the committee looks for organizations that have strong accountability and governance. The committee also looks at what kind of impact the project would have. He says there is a goal to develop leadership, partnerships, and sustainability. Ahenakew says there are some organizations out there that are strong.

"They've been around a long time, and we need to support those."

The UAS has funded many community projects in the past. It has provided funding to a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder project by Central Urban Métis Federation Inc., as well as assisting with roof repairs.

Money was provided to CLASSIC (Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City) to help run its programs. The Saskatoon Tribal Council was also provided funding for a daycare.

Ahenakew says it's important to note that money is directed to one-year projects – the UAS can't support ongoing projects.

"It's one of the weaknesses of the program."

However, Ahenakew says the UAS also has the potential to be the "glue" to developing partnerships in the community, thus developing stronger organizations.

Another goal is to get Aboriginal representation on the boards of many organizations.

Ahenakew hopes there is a strong voice from youth this year at the community consultation, since the Aboriginal population is the youngest and fastest growing in the country.

"It's a very core sector that really



The UAS Board consists of Colleen Hamilton, Melvina Aubichon, Tyler Fetch and Sheena LaPlante in the back row. In front is Tamara Young, Elder Peter Bishop and Dakota Keematch. Missing are board member Belinda Daniels and co chairs Dale Ahenakew and Liz Duret.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

needs to be concentrated on to build a healthy community."

Youth from the schools like Oskayak and then White Buffalo Youth Lodge, EGADZ, and the Saskatoon Indian and Metis Friend Centre have been invited.

The consultation will be an all-day affair on Saturday, March 27.

Ahenakew expects the priorities to be determined over the next couple of months, with a call going out for project proposals in the spring.

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is a community partnership with
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Healing, education touted as tools needed for success

By Jessica Iron
For Eagle Feather News

In promotion of healthy lifestyles for youth, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations hosted a youth healing conference in Saskatoon. The theme of this year's gathering was, "Healing, Embracing and Empowering our Youth," says Vice-Chief Dutch Lerat.

"The FSIN recognizes the difficult challenges our youth face. This gathering is a tool for youth to express their own

people, and especially youth, believe in the power of the universe, that what we put out is exactly what we receive – whether positive or negative, based on the law of attraction.

Saddleback illustrated how First Nations cultures and ceremonies have natural healing powers, especially in regards to song and dance. He explained how the medicine wheel is traditionally divided into four parts representing our health: mental, physical, emotional and

speak, and that's what I hope to do as the AFN youth representative," says Chamakese.

"I plan to not only listen and speak about the issues that affect our young people, but take action and work towards finding solutions.

"I hope to help bridge that gap between our elders and our youth. Reclaiming our language and culture must be our top priority. I also hope to meet and learn from our current leaders who have a wealth of knowledge and expertise.

"To accomplish great things, we must not only act but also dream, not only plan, but also believe," states Chamakese.

"My goal in life is to ensure that Cree people live free from oppression, and are able to have complete control over their governance and territory," says Greyeyes. "I want to be able to continue to work with my people in a way that moves them closer to freedom in all aspects of their lives.



JARITA GREYEVES

"I hope to hold our leaders to account. Youth are well aware of not only the issues that all Indigenous communities face, but the solutions they want to see implemented. I hope that the executives of both the FSIN, and the AFN are ready to truly listen to us," says Greyeyes.



(Back row, left to right) Bucky Strongeagle, Justin St. John, Josh Maxie and Chris Strongeagle. (Front row, left to right) Arielle Standingready, Reece Lonethunder, Almer Standingready and Phillip St. John participated in the recent youth conference put on by the FSIN. All kids hail from the Whitebear First Nation.

concerns and to learn prevention and intervention services available in and out of their own First Nations communities," Lerat said.

The gathering attracted 450 youth and offered sessions like Promoting Healthy Dating Relationships for Youth, Gang Violence, Drug Awareness, and Suicide Prevention.

During his opening remarks, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Chief Guy Lonechild said, "The greatest resource we have is human resources, not natural resources."

Then he took a moment to divide the room, encouraging one side to shout "healing" and the other to shout "education," explaining that these are the tools that the youth need to utilize in order to achieve success in their lives.

One keynote speaker, Jerry Saddleback Jr., a youth addictions counselor from Samson, Alberta, recommended that

spiritual. He believes that we should always aim for the center of the medicine wheel, as that is where we can find balance.

"To be in the center of something, what brings it life is that heartbeat," says Saddleback.

Part of the purpose of the conference was to nominate and elect two youth representatives for the Assembly of First Nations Youth Council. The youth representatives elected were Evan Chamakese of Pelican Lake First Nation and Jarita Greyeyes of Muskeg Lake Cree Nation.

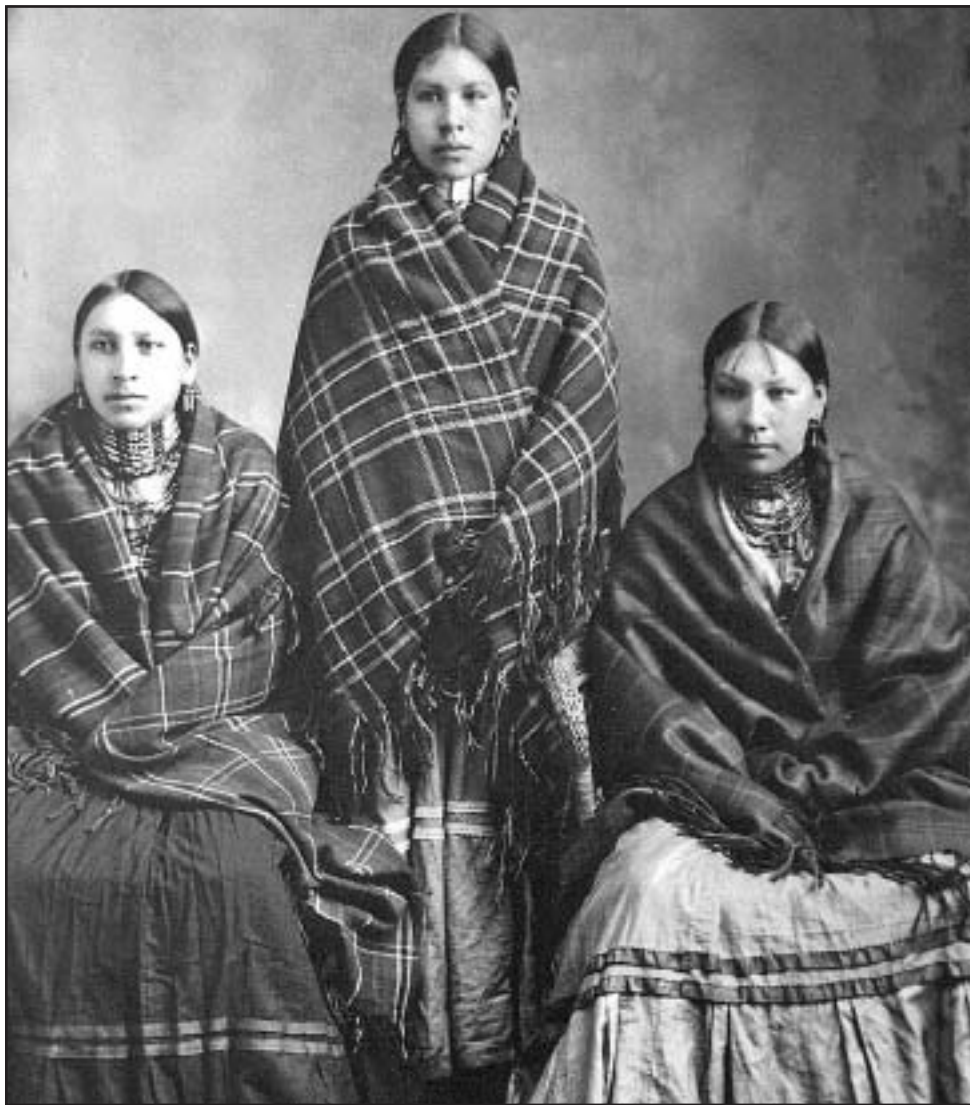
They will represent the FSIN on various youth initiatives locally, provincially and nationally. They will promote awareness, education and capacity development among First Nation youth across Saskatchewan.

"I have always been taught the reason the Creator has given us two ears and only one mouth is to listen twice as much as we

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Iskwew the giver of human life

By Tyrone Tootoosis
For Eagle Feather News

Iskwew is the Plains Cree word for woman. Iskwewak is the word for women.

I have heard said that there are two root words in the word Iskwew.

The first root word "Isk" is from the Cree word for fire "Iskotew" or, depending on how you spell it, "Iskotao".

The second part of the word in Iskwew is from the Cree word for heart "Mitah" or "Oteh."

One of our Plains Cree teachings is that language is power and land is life.

It would be good if the following teaching could serve as a respectful reminder to our people of the very important role and function Iskwewak had in our tribal societies prior to contact.

It would be good if we could reincorporate this teaching back into our collective fabric.

It is said, that "Iskwewak are the givers and keepers of human life and there is nothing more gentle than a mother's love for her children and there are very things in life stronger than a mother's gentleness.

Elders say when Iskwew breastfeeds a child, half of Iskwew's spiritual values, beliefs and other good positive traits are passed onto the child through the milk, i.e. "Kisteyihtowin - Respect", "Kisewatitawin - Love", "Kanateyimowin - Cleanliness", "Sohkeyihtamowin - Strength", "Miyo - Opikinawasowin - Good child rearing", "Wicihtowin - Sharing", "Wahkohtowin - Kinship", "Nanahitamowin - Obedience" etc., etc. I think I have heard people refer to it as blood memory ... or maybe that blood has

memory.

Iskwewak prepared and cooked the food, prepared all the animal hides, skins, furs and pelts prior to sewing them into clothing.

Iskwewak worked to prepare the buffalo hides before they were able to sew them together into a home as in a buffalo hide teepee, into seasonal clothing, tools, and footwear.

Most people go home to the love of a woman, be it a sister, a mother, a niece, an aunt, a grandmother. This is strength.

And it is this strong stable and close knit family system and structure that made our people strong. It made it possible for our people to survive on this land for thousands and thousands of years.

Iskotao - fire, occupied the heart of our teepee lodges because we needed Iskotew in order to cook our food, for warmth in the bitterly cold winter months.

Iskotao, in one form or another occupied a sacred place in the centre of our ceremonies but that is knowledge for our Elders to share once traditional protocol has been adhered to.

Without "Iskotao" it is not possible to survive.

Without "Iskwewak", it is not possible to be.

For this we should be ever thankful.

(Tyrone Tootoosis has a vast collection of recordings of Elders from across Saskatchewan. Here he has translated tapes of interviews of Little Pine First Nation Elder Alex Bonaire. He has dedicated this article to his late mom Irene B. Tootoosis who recently passed on, and to his late mother-in-law Bernelda Wheeler)

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Prevention key to combating troubling diabetes epidemic

By Delaney Windigo
For Eagle Feather News

According to new research First Nations women are at higher risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. The study conducted by researchers from the University of Saskatchewan shows the prevalence for diabetes in First Nations women is four times higher than non-First Nations women.

Dr. Roland Dyck says not only are First Nations women disproportionately represented in diabetic cases but First Nations people in general, are experiencing diabetes at younger ages.

"Most of the new cases of diabetes among First Nations people were diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, whereas most cases of non-First Nations people were diagnosed after age 60. So there's a really a huge difference in the age distribution of diabetes," said Dyck.

Colleen Cappo, who is just 31 years old, was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes in 2005. Experiencing diabetes at a young age was a tough adjustment for her.

"It was hard to keep up with my medication. If I didn't take my medication it would just make it worse," said Cappo.

Dyck has also seen an increase in the gestational diabetes cases, which is a type of diabetes during pregnancy, caused by high blood sugar. A mother who develops diabetes during pregnancy can potentially affect the child's likelihood of developing diabetes later on.

Women who suffer from diabetes during pregnancy tend to have babies with higher birth weights.

"What we've found is that First Nations people who have high birth weights are more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes. We know a large percentage of those who develop diabetes had mothers who had diabetic pregnancies," said Dyck.

Diabetes runs in Cappo's family so she tried to take precautions such as healthy eating and staying active. However, eventually she went to the doctor for diabetic screening after experiencing several symptoms.

"I was always sleeping, using the bathroom lots, always thirsty," but Cappo attributes her diabetes to other factors. "For awhile I was working in a stressful environment."

According to Dyck there are several factors that play a role in developing diabetes

"First Nations people on average have higher rates of poverty and socio-economic problems and other issues related to socio-cultural disruption. Those kinds of things may contribute to stress," he continued.

"We know that First Nations people have higher rates of overweight and obesity, than non-First Nations people and that probably plays into it as well."

Consequently, bad eating habits are not the only cause for diabetes, especially when fresh fruits and vegetables aren't



Colleen Cappo, 31, was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes five years ago.

always affordable.

"People who are less well-off, particularly if they are living in more remote areas, they just don't have access to the same quality of food that we do have in living in larger centers," said Dyck.

Taking early preventative measures

is key to combating the diabetes epidemic.

"This is a disease of young First Nations people. If we're going to try to prevent it we need to start with children and we need to try as much as possible to have healthy pregnancies for all women," said Dyck.



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First Nations need to take responsibility for safety: Greyeyes

By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

A Beardy's and Okemasis First Nations woman is studying to becoming a peacekeeper for her community because she wants to set an example.

Regan Gamble hopes to be a role model for her two children and eventually her grandchildren – just like her sister was to her.

"I had a beautiful role model, my late sister," she explains wistfully. "I went to her graduation, and she said to me, 'If I can do this, Regan, you can.' And then boom, it hit me."

Gamble's sister was the late RCMP Constable Robin Cameron who was shot and killed in 2006 while on duty near Spiritwood.

It's part of the reason Gamble is taking part in the Indigenous Peacekeepers Pilot Program started by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations in conjunction with the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIASST). Gamble says one day she'd like to even become a police officer, calling it her "absolute dream."

The classroom portion, which consists of 23 courses, is finished the end of June, and then employment begins.

FSIN's Director of Justice Doris

Greyeyes says it's time for First Nations to take responsibility for the safety of their communities. She says that needs to be

done in partnership with the RCMP, not instead of it.

"We are not here to dispense or try to

get rid of the RCMP. They are our law enforcement arm. But we need a prevention and intervention arm that is going to work equally with the law enforcement arm," she says.

Peacekeepers will be trained to respond to community and family crises, control crowd activity, and secure investigation scenes until the RCMP can arrive. Gamble says there is so much that goes on in First Nations communities and that people usually turn a blind eye.

"A lot of abuse, like domestic, physical, even sexual. Even homelessness."

She believes the peacekeepers will have an advantage in working with people because they will be working in their own communities with fellow community members.

Eighty students are being trained in the La Ronge, North Battleford, Prince Albert, and Yorkton areas, usually two from a First Nation, a male and a female.

Gamble admits she worries about the potential for danger with this job, but still finds the drive and motivation to continue pursuing her dream.

"Just knowing that I am going to make a difference in my community.



Regan Gamble is taking part in the Indigenous Peacekeepers Pilot Program.

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First Nations University ILP students warm up to cultural experience despite biting cold

By Cassandra Opikokew
For Eagle Feather News

In minus 20-degree weather, 12 students set out to pitch camp in a historical location where their ancestors had camped during brutal Saskatchewan winters and practiced sacred ceremonies. Like their ancestors, they were going to set up tipis and camp in the beautiful winter valley of Wanuskewin, telling stories by firelight and sleeping under the stars.

Or so they thought. Twelve students set out – only one actually lasted through the biting cold night.

The students were part of a four-day culture camp put on by the Intercultural Leadership Program (ILP) at the First Nations University of Canada in Regina. The ILP certificate program provides training and experience to students who want to prepare themselves to work and live in a diverse community.

“The purpose of the camp is to really immerse the students in First Nations culture, teachings and traditional practices,” said ILP department head Shannon Avison.

“We wanted this camp to be very Elder focused so that students would have lots of opportunity to engage with them.”

The culture camp and class was lead by instructor Sylvia McAdam and held at Wanuskewin Heritage Park, just north of Saskatoon over the February long weekend.

Some of the camp’s programming included Elders’ sessions, a sweat, a Grandmother’s pipe ceremony, traditional games, a feast and attending a round dance at One Arrow First Nation. Students also helped set up a tipi camp outdoors but came inside due to the cold.

Although many of the students were Aboriginal and already had some exposure to ceremonies, for Keenan Cummings, it was his first real experience with his First Nations culture.



Kayla Stonechild (left) and Priscilla McNab with Elder Juliette McAdam at the culture camp at Wanuskewin.
(Photo by Shannon Avison)

“It was the first time I had ever really done anything like that. It changed my life.”

Cummings was honored during the feast on the last night when he was presented with a drum from the Elders so that he could learn the songs of his people and sing with the men.

“I can’t wait to actually learn the songs when I’m back at home in Regina. I don’t even know what to say.

It was a total surprise.”

Traditional knowledge keeper and facilitator Allan Joe Felix explained the meaning behind the drum.

“Keenan was going through a crossroads with his life. We decided to do something special for him. So we made him a drum keeper and in our culture a drum is a home. So his responsibility now is to go back and start building that home.”

For many students, the highlight of the camp was spending time with the Elders such as Felix, Juliette and Francis McAdam, Charles Stevenson and Ivan Dreaver.

“The Elders were so kind, so accepting and they each had such a good heart and I felt that. They were so loving,” said student Lila George.

“I left my emotional stuff there. The Elders said ‘Just leave it here’ and I did and it felt good.”

Sylvia McAdam was impressed with the students’ response to the Elders.

“I really loved the fact that they felt at home. They were relaxed. And they would approach the Elders like they would their own grandparents. That’s what I had hoped for.”

Avison stresses that this unique experience is what makes First Nations University and the ILP program so important.

“Several students commented that they couldn’t believe they got this experience in a university class. It’s what we do.”

All of the students said they would like to see the camp offered again each season, since at different times of the year Elders are able to share different teachings.

“It really raises more questions than answers,” said student Bernadette Friedmann-Conrad, who is in her final semester of completing the program. “I was just amazed by it.”



The Elders were an integral part of the camp. They were (from left) A.J. Felix, Pat Felix, Juliette McAdam, Francis McAdam, Charles Stevenson and his wife Paula and helper Tony McAdam. (Photo by Shannon Avison)

SIAST plans to build on success with Aboriginal students

By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

A post-secondary school that says it already boasts more Aboriginal students than any other in the province is embarking on an ambitious, multi-million dollar plan to recruit and retain more.

The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) has developed an Aboriginal Student Achievement Plan, or ASAP, that looks at barriers Aboriginal students face when attending their four campuses and makes recommendations to address them.

ASAP was developed over an eight-month period by a steering committee of 28 people. Co-chair of the committee, Myrna Yuzicappi, says even with the 2,450 self-declared Aboriginal students attending SIAST, the school knows there's more work to be done.

"We're really mindful of the changes happening in our population, that we've got an ageing workforce, and we need to be training replacement workers. The time is right for Aboriginal people to get the training, to move into the workforce, and to be represented as contributing members."

Some of the barriers outlined in the report include complex admission processes, difficulties in relocating, financial hardships, personal and family circumstances, academic preparedness, and lack of support for English language learners.

Nancy Linklater, an Aboriginal Student Counsellor Supervisor at Kelsey campus in Saskatoon, sees the difficulties students face.

"For the students that are coming from remote areas, it would be a big challenge moving into the city of Saskatoon when they come from a smaller community ... their family support systems are not here with



Myrna Yuzicappi (left), co-chair of ASAP committee with Alison Pickrell, associate vice-president, student affairs and Shelley Bellhumeur (right), ASAP coordinator. (Photo by Darla Read)

them."

Yuzicappi says the school will look for ways to address that, and also hopes to put emphasis on encouraging more Aboriginal students to consider technical training. She believes there's more of a push for students to attend university.

"We've got an employment rate that's always in the 90 per cents, so students can be employment ready in two years or less, unlike going to university where they would go at least four years and then there's no guarantee of employment."

Jennifer Kormish has been studying at the Kelsey campus for almost three years now, and she's also the treasurer of the Aboriginal Students' Association.

She thinks the plan to recruit more students is a good idea. She thinks SIAST needs to show Aboriginal students what it can offer them.

"I know they have commercials but they don't show what the Aboriginal Centre offers. A lot of students starting have no idea what we do or that we even exist."

Kormish says when she first started

school, she was too shy to talk to anyone, but once she started going to the Aboriginal Activity Centre, she opened up because of its warm environment. She says anyone is welcome, including non-Aboriginal students, to hang out in their centre, use the computer room, or speak with the Elders. The centre also has a soup day every Friday.

Yuzicappi says the committee was not trying to be opportunistic with the plan's announcement. She says they had begun working on it long before last month's announcement that the First Nations University of Canada was losing provincial and federal funding. With funding still up in the air, Yuzicappi says students could look to SIAST as an alternative.

"If First Nations University isn't able to take students, they'll be looking for other options, and I guess we'd like them to consider us as one of their best options."

ASAP is estimated to cost \$5.5 million over five years. The school hopes to secure funding from both levels of governments as well as the private sector. Yuzicappi remains optimistic that even if the provincial and federal governments are tightening budgets now, there will eventually be money available.

Of all 21 recommendations, Yuzicappi thinks a new team of retention coordinators, modelled after a program at the Woodland campus in Prince Albert, will make a big impact right away.

"What it is, is people who work front line, assigned to programs, with Aboriginal students, and put them in touch with services that they need, when they need them."

"We found that the students who use our services are all very pleased with them, but we also found that a lot of them don't know about the services that are available to them."



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2010 - The Year

Opening ceremonies unforgettable

This past month, thanks to a recommendation and support by Gabriel Dumont Institute, I had the opportunity to attend the Indigenous Youth Gathering and participate in the opening ceremonies of the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics. I was one of four Métis youth delegates representing the Métis Nation—Saskatchewan and was joined by Daniel Olver, Dallas Fiddler-Boyer, both of Saskatoon, and Kymber Palidwar from Nipawin.

This event was made possible by the Four Host First Nations and the Vancouver Organizing Committee. The Indigenous Youth Gathering brought over 300 Aboriginal youth from across Canada together to share aspects of our cultures through the Olympic movement.

An average day at the Indigenous Youth Gathering was long and jam-packed with a number of events, rehearsals, and activities. However, it wasn't all work and no play. Instead of dreading the boring two hour bus ride back to our accommodations, we held jam sessions. These included Pacific First Nations singing and drumming, Métis fiddling and guitar playing, Prairie First Nations singing and drumming and Inuit throat singing, making our bus rides quite the cultural experience.

None of us will forget the free time where we all got to go shopping in Whistler, the Squamish/Lil'wat Cultural Center, and downtown Vancouver.

Much of our experiences at Indigenous Youth Gathering were empowering and inspirational, such as the address given by retired track and field athlete Billy Mills. Billy was a gold medalist in the 10,000 metre race of the 1964 Summer

Olympics in Tokyo. He was the first, and only, North-American athlete to ever win this event and one of only a few Aboriginal athletes to have competed in the Olympics. He spoke of the hardships he faced in college and of racism in the sporting world that almost drove him to suicide.

ceremonies.

After two weeks of long rehearsals, we were on the stage for an hour and-a-half, longer than any other performer during the opening ceremonies. If anyone has ever tried to jig that long, they will know that it is very tiring. Performing in



Kymber Palidwar, Daniel Olver, Jenna McLeod, Bekki Wilson and Bradley Brown all participated in the Indigenous Youth Gathering at the Olympics. (Photo supplied by Kymber Palidwar)

The best part about the entire experience was our performance in the Opening Ceremonies. The Vancouver Organizing Committee and the Four Host First Nations agreed that the Indigenous people of Canada should welcome the athletes of the world. Our role in the ceremonies was to be introduced by the Four Host First Nations, perform our cultural dances, welcome the athletes, and be in the mosh pit audience for Bryan Adams and Nelly Furtado. This was the first time an Indigenous group of the host country has been included in the planning and delivery of the opening

front of a stadium filled with 60,000 people and being aired on TV for three and a-half-billion viewers certainly had its motivating factors.

I jiggled with pride hoping that I was making all my family and the Métis community back at home proud. There was a gruelling point in the performance where my calves burned, my feet ached, and I was drenched in sweat. I thought that I needed to slow down, but the possibility of being seen on TV back at home not jiggling my heart out for my nation motivated me to keep on going.

My time in Vancouver has been a life-changing experience. Being able to participate in such an event has been a source of inspiration, and, I hope that all youth go back to their communities as inspired as I am.

- Written by Bradley Brown

Métis Did you know?

Did you know? One of the Franklin expeditions travelled through Cumberland House en route to the Arctic?

Did you know? Métis women were essential to the bison hunts. They followed in the carts and once the hunter took down a bison he would leave a glove as a marker and the women would take the carcasses and prepare them into pemmican.



GABRIEL D
of Native Stud

Year of the Métis



The Buffalo Hunt
by Dennis J. Weber
www.webergallery.com

Bois de flèche: Saskatchewan's metropolis

The dominant historical narrative indicates that Saskatoon was "founded" as a temperance colony by Ontario Protestants in 1882. However, the site of Saskatoon was settled by the Métis prior to 1882. In 1924, Patrice Fleury indicated that the area was an old Métis bison hunting ground from 1858 until the mid 1870s.

By the 1870s, present-day Saskatoon was part of a larger Métis community that included the Prairie Rond Settlement (Dundurn) to the south as well as Batoche and other Southbranch settlements – Toround's Coulee, St. Louis, St. Laurent, and Petite Ville – to the north. Saskatoon even had a Métis name. As late as 1889, Gabriel Dumont called Saskatoon "Bois de flèche" or Arrow Woods.

Even before it was incorporated as a city, Saskatoon had a significant Métis presence including various Road Allowance communities such as "Frenchmen's Flats" and nearby Prairie Rond.

A 1927 memoir by Archie Brown tells of a bison hunt in what is now Saskatoon, which Gabriel Dumont related to him. Brown and Dumont were helping their friend "Andy," a Métis ferryman who lived near the site of the present-day Rawlco Radio building, recuperate after he split his foot open cutting wood.

During the first snowfall a party of them (Dumont and his bison-hunting party) were running buffalo on the flats where Saskatoon now stands. He had shot a buffalo and, getting off his horse straddled the buffalo intending to cut its throat. The buffalo rose to its feet and started with him on its back or neck. He soon fell off, however, and the buffalo went a short distance and fell again. He then finished him and he had a ride on a wild buffalo. I had noticed that many of the older men had the trigger finger missing. He said it was caused by the bursting of the old muzzle loader when running buffalo. No time was spent in re-loading as it was all done on horseback, at the gallop. They would ride close to a buffalo and shoot, then pour some powder in the barrel by guess, spit a ball, of which they had one or two in their mouth, into the gun, give the barrel a slap with their hand, ride up close to another buffalo and shoot. Sometimes the bullet had only gone a short distance down the barrel, then likely the gun burst and the hunter was short a trigger finger at least.

These narratives tell another side of our shared history and illustrate that what is remembered and retold is contextual to the

experiences and valued memories of the storyteller. They also affirm that cultures accustomed to transmitting their history through the oral tradition carefully pass it to succeeding generations in a manner as important as written documentation.

- Article by **Darren Prefontaine**
and **Karon Shmon**

Chronology of the 1885 Resistance

1882 (September 4)

The Métis of Prince Albert and St. Antoine de Padoue, now Batoche, sent a petition with forty-four signatures to John A. Macdonald.

1883 (November 19)

The St. Louis Métis petitioned George Duck, the land agent in Prince Albert, with thirty-two signatures.

1884 (May 6)

The Northwest's English and French Métis passed a resolution to get Louis Riel's assistance in order to negotiate with Canada for formal title to their lands.

To be continued next month ...

Prepared by the Gabriel Dumont Institute with material developed by Darren Prefontaine, Leah Dorion, Ron Laliberté, and Father Guy Lavallée.

MBA bridging program builds confidence

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

Four years ago the University of Saskatchewan announced a \$250,000 gift from Scotiabank that would be used to support graduate Aboriginal programming in the College of Commerce.

The Scotiabank MBA Bridging Program was designed to encourage the next generation of Aboriginal business leaders to consider upgrading their skills with an MBA from the U of S. The program has been very successful in preparing Aboriginal people for the rigours of pursuing a business degree.

The five-day in-house program introduces potential MBA candidates to the U of S MBA program, provides enhanced GMAT preparation, and provides professional networking opportunities.

Each year the program also awards a \$10,000 scholarship to a deserving student. This year the recipient was Travis Inkster. He was presented his scholarship at the wrap-up of this year's Scotiabank Bridging Program.

"The Bridging program is what gave me the confidence and skills last year to get into doing my MBA at the Edwards School of Business at the U of S," said Inkster after he was presented with a Métis sash by Elder Mike Maurice and his



Travis Inkster received a Métis sash from Elder Mike Maurice and his sister Tavia.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

sister Tavia.

"You get lectures and a sense of what the lectures are like. The best help was the prep for the GMAT, the entrance test.

"That really helped. It is a very intense course. I like to compare it to

football in high school, when you are in the play, you are in the play. You focus."

Inkster now joins the ranks of previous scholarship recipients Monica Goulet, Robert Daniels and Jennifer

Campeau. And he also joins the many graduates from the preparatory course. Scotiabank has been a good ally with the Edwards School of Business Aboriginal programs.

"Enhancing the diversity of our workforce continues to be a strategic objective for Scotiabank because we understand that harnessing the skills of the broadest spectrum of talent will generate more innovative thinking, better decision-making and stronger business results," said Rory Gulka, Vice President, Saskatchewan and Manitoba North District, Scotiabank.

"We know that Métis and First Nations students have much to offer the business community and their own communities."

Inkster looked on as several participants received certificates for completing the Bridging initiative. He will be soon back to his job and family in Edmonton after he completes his MBA in August, knowing he was in their spot just a year ago.

"The most rewarding thing has been the classmates and friendships I made and the confidence I have developed. It was very rewarding," said Inkster.

"I really recommend this program for any Métis or First Nation people who want to do an MBA."

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Coalition provides voice for urban people

By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

An organization meant to represent urban, rural, and non-status Aboriginal people says it is trying to fill a gap its members sometimes fall through.

Kim Beaudin, president of the Aboriginal Affairs Coalition of Saskatchewan says he hears from his members that they feel forgotten.

"We want to advocate for people who don't have a voice, people who aren't necessarily associated with their band. I know there's hundreds of thousands of status people that live in urban areas that have never even been on their reserve...even though they know they're on their band list."

Beaudin estimates the Coalition's membership at more than 350, which was last year's count. He says it continues to grow, beginning with around a dozen people, and now Beaudin says there are members in Saskatoon, Regina, North Battleford, Prince Albert, and Cumberland House.

Aboriginal Affairs Coalition of Saskatchewan is an affiliate of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, its umbrella and national organization that was established in 1971 to represent Métis and non-status Indians. The Aboriginal Affairs Coalition was formed in 2005.

Beaudin says Aboriginal Affairs Coalition of Saskatchewan does not have to be at odds with other organizations that represent Aboriginal people, such as the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, Saskatoon Tribal Council, or the Central Urban Métis Federation Inc.

He says the Aboriginal Affairs Coalition would gladly work together with them.

"Our organization's not out to criticize any other organization such as the Métis Nation or FSIN. They have their own work to do to address their issues. Matter of fact, we'd welcome the opportunity to discuss the issues with them."

The Aboriginal Affairs Coalition of Saskatchewan shares some concerns with other Aboriginal organizations. At their latest annual general assembly, held last month, its membership passed a resolution calling on the federal government to

Nations person. We're not trying to work against any other organizations, but rather build a partnership, because in the end, we're all working towards the same common ground."

Aboriginal Affairs Coalition of

"Urban Aboriginal people, their needs are unique and different as opposed to those who live on-reserve."

Whitedeer says common issues are the difficulty in finding adequate and affordable rental housing, as well as



Kim Beaudin, Colleen Whitedeer and youth representative Emily Bear hope to grow the Aboriginal Affairs Coalition of Saskatchewan. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

recognize the United Nations' Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples – something the FSIN has been calling for as well.

Aboriginal Affairs Coalition of Saskatchewan vice-president Colleen Whitedeer says there are probably more commonalities than differences and that they're all working for the same thing.

"That's recognition of being a First

Saskatchewan executive is voted in by its membership and has an annual budget of roughly \$160,000. The board is made of volunteers. Whitedeer is from Fond du Lac, but has lived in Sandy Bay, Prince Albert, and now Saskatoon.

She felt she got the run-around from her band and heard similar stories from other people who felt they had no representation.

struggles with transportation, especially for single mothers.

Beaudin says he's met with the province in the past, but not recently. He recognizes there is provincial legislation recognizing only the MN-S and FSIN, and says it something they hope to address. Aboriginal Affairs Coalition of Saskatchewan receives no funding from the government.



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Northern doctor in line for prestigious RBC national award

By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

The "Angel of the North" is being recognized again for her work.

Dr. Lalita Malhotra of Prince Albert has made the shortlist of the first national people's choice award for the top 25 immigrants, presented by RBC. In the past, she has been awarded the Saskatchewan Order of Merit, YWCA Women of Distinction, the Order of Canada, and Prince Albert Citizen of the Year.

Malhotra moved to Canada from India about 35 years ago. She gained her nickname from the strong relationship she has built with northerners and in particular Aboriginal people. She focuses on Aboriginal women's health and opened the Women's Wellness Clinic in the city. She says women in the North don't always put the priority on health that they should, and says a lot of that is due to poor self-esteem.

She builds relationships with these women to help them feel good about themselves so they will in turn take care of themselves.

"I have three generations going at the moment. My relationship is from the grandmother down to the grandchild. You develop a relationship with the family so it's easier to communicate," Malhotra explains.

"That's how you're helping their ego and self-esteem a lot more, because you know the family background."

Elder Vicki Wilson was searching for a female doctor when she was referred to Malhotra by a friend. She's been going to her for the past 10 years now. Wilson says Malhotra is never in a rush.

"She takes time to tell you stuff. She's not in a hurry. You go to other medical people, they're always in a hurry to get rid of you, especially if you're Aboriginal, it seems."

Wilson recounts how one Christmas, Malhotra didn't take holidays in case she was needed by any women.

Malhotra has delivered more babies, up to 300 a year and more than 10,000 total, than anyone else in the province. It's a part of her job she loves.

"It is something I totally, totally enjoy. It gives me the thrill of my life. It's a wonderful feeling."

The top 25 Canadian immigrants will be chosen by online votes at <http://canadianimmigrant.ca/top25> in May.



Dr. Lalita Malhotra is a popular doctor in Northern Saskatchewan communities.

Saskatchewan Research Council

The Saskatchewan Research Council (SRC) is an applied science and technology organization. With activities driven by private sector and community needs and interests and aligned with public sector priorities, SRC is a key participant in the development, commercialization, and utilization of technology solutions to facilitate the growth and competitiveness of Saskatchewan industry.

Aboriginal Community Liaison

The Saskatchewan Research Council has been proactive in addressing the needs of Aboriginal communities and has been active in developing relationships with Aboriginal organizations, institutions and people. The Environment and Forestry Division at SRC is seeking a full-time Aboriginal Community Liaison to continue to build these relationships and networks. You will be responsible for liaising between our scientists, engineers and managers and Aboriginal communities. You will assist SRC in continuing to provide smart science solutions to communities in the area of Environment and Forestry and other program areas of the Saskatchewan Research Council, as required.

Your primary focus will be working with Aboriginal communities to ensure the successful delivery of Project CLEANS – the cleanup of 38 abandoned sites in the Athabasca Basin in northern Saskatchewan. You will be involved in business development and Aboriginal community engagement related to additional environmental remediation projects, as required.

As the ideal candidate, you have a degree in Science, Commerce, or Business Administration, or an equivalent amount of experience, and a minimum of 5 years of relevant experience working with Saskatchewan Aboriginal communities. Your strong communication, networking, and interpersonal skills position you well to deliver quality work in a team environment. You have a broad based knowledge of Aboriginal organizations, institutions, political and social issues, particularly in northern Saskatchewan communities. You have the ability to build links between science, traditional knowledge and program delivery. Travel within SK will be required.

This position will be located in Saskatoon or Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

The deadline to apply is Monday, March 22, 2010.

Email applications are preferred. Email humanresources@src.sk.ca Mail to: **Saskatchewan Research Council, Human Resources, #125 – 15 Innovation Blvd., Saskatoon, SK S7N 2X8** or Fax 306-933-7446.

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Métis soldier patrols Canada's Far North



By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

Warrant Officer Dave Dunn never imagined he'd get the opportunity to see and travel the world.

Originally from Big River and of Métis descent, Dunn joined the army as a young man because he wasn't interested in pursuing his education any further, and says he wasn't happy with an assortment of jobs he'd had: truck driver, labourer, tree planter, fisherman.

Now he is the Commanding Officer of Yellowknife's Canadian Rangers Patrol Group.

He is responsible for ensuring that 57 Ranger units in British Columbia, Northwest Territories and Nunavut do one patrol each year. Rangers patrol Canada's northern and coastal borders as well as remote and isolated communities to protect the country's sovereignty.

"The Rangers are pretty much our eyes and ears of the North. One CRPG patrols 40 per cent of Canada's land mass, so we have vast borders throughout the Arctic that are virtually unprotected and not very well travelled."

Earlier this month, Dunn stopped in Saskatoon and made a presentation about the Rangers at the First Nations University of Canada.

Dave Dunn is the commanding officer of Yellowknife's Canadian Rangers Patrol Group.

Next month Dunn is leading patrol Operation Nunavut. He and eight to 12 Rangers will travel by snow machine across 1,500 to 2,000 kilometres of the Arctic over 12 days. They will sleep in canvas tents in temperatures that can get as cold as -57 degrees Celsius before the windchill is factored in.

Dunn has seen a lot of different places. He's completed three tours in Bosnia, served under General Romeo Dallaire in Rwanda, and recently returned from a mission in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

He says it's difficult to pick out what has stood out the most for him, but has experienced some striking moments in Canada's North.

"I just seen my first live polar bear in its natural habitat last year. You don't see that every day."

"Actual Wolves in their natural habitat, coming right up to my tent. You don't see that every day."

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The written entrance exams will be held at 8:00am followed by a psychological exam at 1:00pm on the following dates:

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Wednesday, April 7 8:00am
TCU Place - Gallery B, 35 - 22nd Street East, Saskatoon

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Saskatoon Mayor Don Atchison and his handy giant scissors were on hand to help Métis entrepreneur Anne-Marie Cey open her new gym Snap Fitness.

(Photo by Lisa Landrie)

Métis entrepreneur hit on right venture

Anne-Marie Cey, local owner of a new Snap Fitness Centre, says her club is a fast, convenient, affordable alternative to traditional big-box health clubs. "We offer members a great workout experience on state of the art training equipment, at little more than a dollar per day." Cey, who lives in Martensville, is an experienced Métis business owner who previously operated a digital photography company in Saskatoon from 1999 to 2005. With a background in marketing and communications, this new venture is right up her alley. At Snap Fitness members are not required to sign a contract and are each given a personalized keycard that provides gym access round-the-clock, even during unstaffed hours. To mark the club's opening, Cey is reducing the \$49 enrollment fee by 50 per cent until the end of March. For more info call 242-7627. We chased down this busy entrepreneur to ask her some questions about her newest venture.

What possessed you to open your own gym?

I heard about the Snap Fitness franchise from a friend and really liked the business model. I am an entrepreneur at heart, I was self-employed before and missed some of the benefits of owning my own business. I also believed the business model was stellar and made a lot sense for North Saskatoon.

What skills, other than courage, do you need to be an entrepreneur?

Project management skills (able to juggle 1001 balls at once), a positive 'can-do' attitude, and a strong and supportive network of friends and family.

How did you finance the venture?

I invested my own funds, received support from Aboriginal Business Canada, Clarence Campeau Development Fund, SaskMetis Economic Development Fund (bridge loan) and my bank – Scotia Bank.

What is the biggest challenge of self-employment?

Finding a healthy balance between work, family and self.

What is the biggest reward?

Hearing my members say that they are so happy I opened a gym in their neighborhood.

Can you share a couple important tips for other women who may want to get into business?

Hire a business lawyer, an accountant, a financial advisor – research the steps required to open a business and do a lot of planning. Make sure to get all agreements in writing and if something doesn't make sense seek professional advice.

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Hypnotist Scott Ward

Hypnosis best laughs per minute

Scott Ward has made a legitimate name for himself in the wild and mysterious world of hypnotism. Originally from Selkirk, Manitoba, this Métis/Ojibway artist has performed for thousands of people around the world and is a regular guest at events in Saskatchewan. The former hoop dancer and hip hop artist is now the first full time Native American Stage Hypnotist. We caught up to him at his home in Edmonton.

How does a Métis guy wind up being a hypnotist?

Let's just say I love making people laugh and hypnosis is the best laughs per minute any stage act could get because the subjects on stage become the star of the show. I previously was a drama teacher and a career counsellor and had more fun hypnotizing my students than I was teaching them.

What is the weirdest thing you have made someone do (that we can print!)?

Well firstly, you have to want to be hypnotized and it won't work if you are dead set against trusting the hypnotist. But the most outrageous suggestion was having many male subjects feel and think they were giving birth on stage (at the Saskatoon Inn!!!)

How does hypnotism work? Does it allow you to hypnotize dealers at the casino?

I have hypnotized some RCMP constables and Saskatoon City police on stage before! But I have never Hypnotized a dealer at the casino before! That would go against my ethics – so I wouldn't do that anyways! Hypnosis, though, is a very normal and natural altered state of consciousness (an altered state of awareness), one we all experience from time to time in which the mind remains clear, alert and focused on something. Have you ever become really absorbed while watching TV? Or driven to work on auto pilot? That's the same kind of altered state as hypnosis. Some misconceptions about hypnosis are that it's a frightening or eerie state, or that it feels very weird, but it's actually very normal and very pleasant. Some people ask if they've really been hypnotised, just because it feels like such a normal state and they were expecting something very strange.

What kind of rush do you get from having a room full of people rocking?

It's my only addiction that I have and it is very satisfying having people laughing til they're crying in a community center or school or casino. Listening to the youth and elders comments afterward makes me feel great cause many people come up to give me a hug want to say they enjoyed the show and watching the school custodian or uncle becoming Elvis Presley on stage!

Any tips for kids anxious to be a hypnotist?

(Here is a little secret!) I am always on the look out for apprentices. Contact me at scott@scottward.ca

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Candidates should hold a post-secondary degree or diploma in Human Resources or a related discipline, have a solid knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture, and have demonstrated above-average communication, interpersonal, and leadership skills. Previous experience and involvement with Aboriginal organizations would also contribute to an individual's success in this position.

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Podemski takes spiritual journey prior to NAAA

The National Aboriginal Achievement Awards honour our people's achievements. They also celebrate our artists. And as past shows indicate, attendees can expect a wide array of awe-inspiring performances from some of Canada's finest Aboriginal artists.

The creative component of the live show is typical: well planned, visually stunning and regionally representative. And co-executive producer Jennifer Podemski spares no energy in making sure it stays that way.



Jennifer Podemski is the co-executive producer of the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards. This year's show happens on March 26 in Regina.

"I start planning the creative (component for the show) in May," she said from her home in Toronto. "But before designing anything, I take somewhat of a spiritual journey to get a sense of the vision of the piece based on the environment."

Through her envisioning process, Podemski found her inspiration: willow trees.

"I started researching willow trees and finding everything I could about them. Then out of blue, without knowing anything about my research, my partner tells me he found a name he liked for our daughter."

Not long after, Podemski's daughter, Willow, was born.

"She's coming with me to the show," Podemski says. "We're leaving for Regina on March 20."

And while Podemski admits motherhood is both "wonderful and challenging" it doesn't take away from her commitment to deliver another solid live show at the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards.

"I tend to do an extensive amount of research before developing anything. It's important for me to work hard to create a strong foundation to represent the region and the different cultures present there."

It is too often assumed, especially among the Canadian mainstream population, that First Nations, Inuit and Metis cultures are all one in the same – something Podemski finds as inspiration for each NAAA show.

"In Saskatchewan there's a mosaic of culture among the nations. Different stories, languages, environments. I also discovered thousands of different wild flowers in the province."

Podemski was amazed with the wide array of orchids, lilies and various other flowers in Saskatchewan and discovered a metaphor for the different cultures present here.

"Each type of flower is unique and means different things to different people. For some, flowers represent beauty. Others

and the U.S. scores with just over 30 seconds remaining, thus forcing overtime.

I didn't think I'd get to see the game – not because I couldn't but due to the fact I'm a cooler, a bad luck charm, one of the hardcore hockey fans who just seems to jinx their favorite teams.

Especially when it comes to Canada.

I hung with some writer friends for the Slovakia game and they made me sit with my back to the TV for fear I might cause a catastrophe.

And when Canada narrowly avoided a trip to the bronze medal match, I was diplomatically uninvited to the gold medal game.

The day of the big match I was in Toronto for work and feeling really lonely for my family.

Having stayed downtown, I hadn't seen grass, trees or houses for days. I was sad, depressed and wanting to come home in the worst way.

So there I was eating at a Chinese restaurant in downtown Toronto and with every slurp of hot and sour soup I delved deeper into my depression – I wanted to watch the game. Then came a text from my boss inviting me to come over and watch it.

I didn't know what to do. Do I divulge my jinx status and graciously decline so as to ensure a gold medal? Or do I selfishly deceive and head over to



enjoy beverages, finger foods and camaraderie?

About 20 minutes later I arrived at my boss's house and discovered that Toews scored. I put on a happy face and did my best to appear optimistic – Go Canada Go!

Then Perry scored! We're up 2-0!? And playing solid defence!?

I tell myself my luck is surely about to change. Maybe, just maybe, my writer friends will let me actually face the TV when we watch hockey together.

From now on I won't have to feel guilty when I sneak in and watch a couple minutes of big games.

Even after Kessler scored to make it 2-1 I was confident. As time wore down I felt invincible! Nothing the U.S. could throw at us was going to work! Then the nightmare began. The U.S. scored to tie the game with 30 seconds left.

And that's when my cab showed up to take me to the airport.

To every Canadian out there ... you're damn lucky the driver was early.

use them for fragrance. Yet others use them for medicine. These same differences are present among the cultures here. Each nation is unique and so are their languages, stories and traditions."

And while Podemski admits she tries her hardest to represent all nations of people, the task is just too big to fit into one evening of entertainment.

"Even though we can't represent everyone, we try our best. But I can say it's going to be a really rich, really exciting show. And all of this is framed around the recipients and honouring them and their achievements."

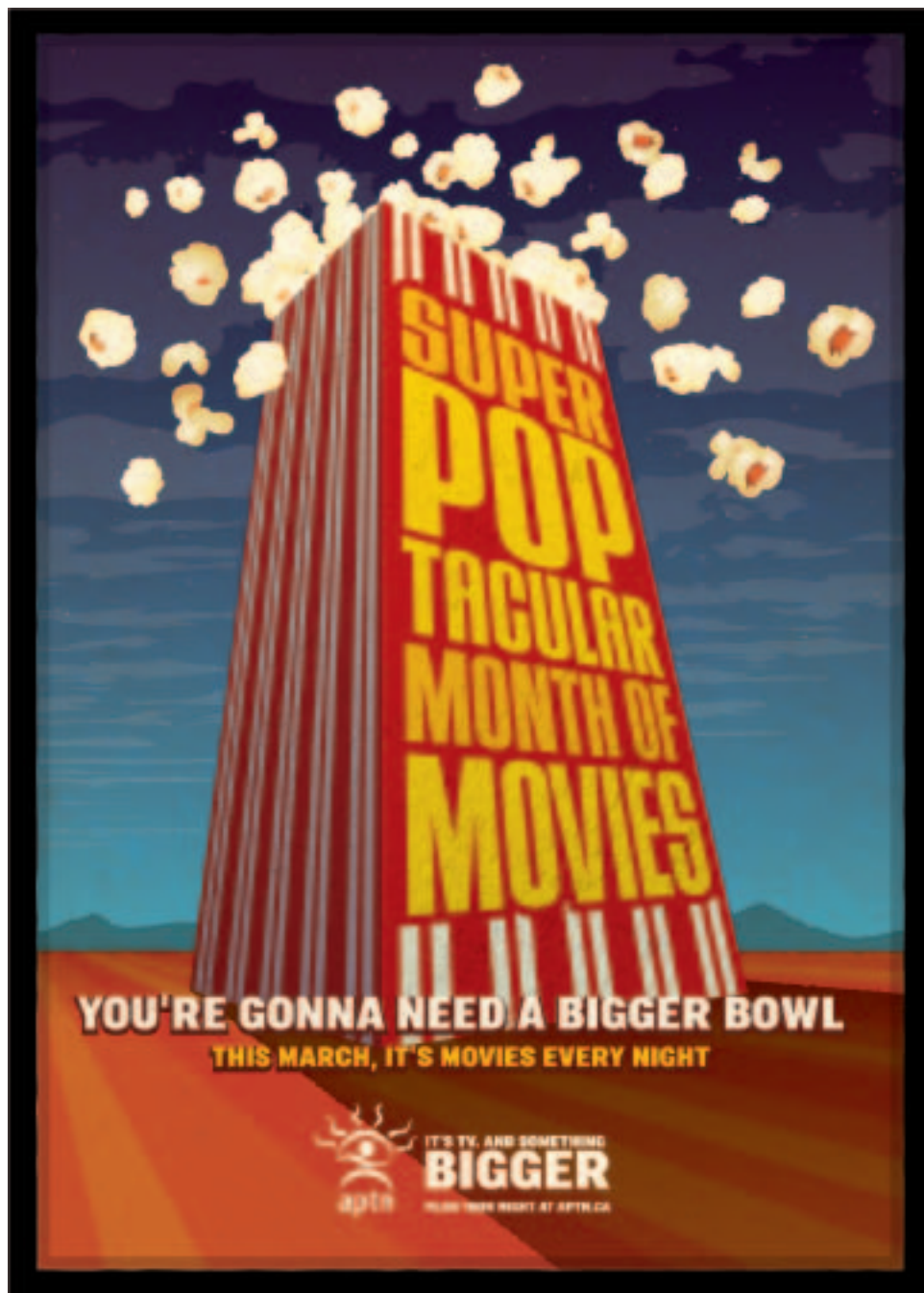
The National Aboriginal Achievement Awards show will be hosted by Andrea Menard and Raoul Trujillo and feature performances by the Wanuskewin International Dance Troupe, Red Bull Singers, Crystal Shawanda, Michael Greyeyes, Buffy Saint-Marie, Leemai Lafontaine and Ellsapie Isaac and Lorne Cardinal.

Saskatoon lawyer Don Worme is the lone Saskatchewan recipient for this year's National Aboriginal Achievement Awards. He will be honoured in the Law and Justice category.

The National Aboriginal Achievement Awards take place March 26 at the Conexus Arts Center in Regina.

Where Were You?

It was every Canadian's worst nightmare, hockey fan or not. Canada blows a 2-0 lead in the gold medal game



Boyer comes up with big game on big night

By Blue Pelletier
For Eagle Feather News

The Saskatoon Blades honoured the First Nations and Métis community during a February 20 game that turned out to be barn-burner between the hometown team and the Brandon Wheat Kings.

It started with a ceremonial puck drop at centre ice by local Chiefs and Blades player Jeremy Boyer who is a member of the Ahtahkakoop First Nation. Between the intermissions there were also cultural

dancers and drummers performances.

The Blades also took time to acknowledge the Saskatchewan First Nations Winter Games which will be held in Saskatoon April 5-10. Before the game officially started the crowd was treated to the national anthem sung by Falynn Prystupa who gave her rendition in Cree.

Before the game Boyer said his routine was the same despite the energy in the building.

"I felt as though it was a special night for me because all my family got tickets



FSIN Chief Guy Lonechild dropped the ceremonial puck at the Saskatoon Blades First Nation and Métis night. (Photo by Blue Pelletier)



Jeremy Boyer signed autographs with Ahtahkakoop hockey legend Freddie Sasakamoose during the World Junior Hockey Fest. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

and a lot of friends (were there) so there was more pressure too, which I felt helps and made me want to perform as best I could," said Boyer.

And he performed well helping put the Blades ahead 4-3 after 2 periods. They would go on to win the game 6-4. The crowd of just over 5,000 was treated to quite the game.

Boyer would finish the night with a goal and an assist and a plus one rating.

He says he has been happy with the team and his success thus far.

"We all expect to win the league. Everyone in our room feels that we have a championship team that can go all the way."

His dream, like any other hockey player, is to play in the NHL but knows it

may not be possible and that going to Europe to play would be a great experience. He just wants to play hockey.

"I was a rink rat at Sandy Lake because there was never really that many minor hockey teams there so the rink was always open for public skating," Boyer says, recalling his childhood.

"So every day after school I would get dropped off there and stay there til it was closed."

With family, friends, and a large contingent of First Nations people in attendance he definitely put forth his best effort and helped the Blades get the win they needed to keep themselves in the hunt for first place in the WHL's East Division.

2010 Year of the Métis

Now is the time to celebrate the contributions of the Métis people in Saskatchewan.

The Métis Cultural Development Fund seeks to fund activities that preserve, strengthen and transmit Métis culture and traditions in Saskatchewan.

For more information on this and other funding opportunities, check out the Métis Cultural Development Fund at www.saskculture.sk.ca or call (306) 780-9284 or toll-free 1-866-476-6830.

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Cowboys, Indians both winners at Maple Creek battle

By Paul Grigaitis
For Eagle Feather News

It's not your typical game of "Cowboys and Indians" at the Battle of Little Big Puck in Maple Creek where people shoot hockey pucks at each other rather than imaginary weapons.

The Battle of Little Big Puck is a hockey game set in southwest Saskatchewan's Cypress Hills – the home of Nekaneet First Nation.

Each third weekend of February members of the First Nation face off against current and former card-carrying members of recognized rodeo associations. It's like the children's game "Cowboys and Indians" on ice, where both sides dress up in their respective traditional gear for the third period.

Those who skate for the cowboys wear leather chaps and leather hats. Members of Nekaneet swap helmets for headdresses and wear face paint while they skate. The referees dress in red and black RCMP uniforms.

Over 600 people attended the 28th annual fundraiser at Maple Creek's Community Arena in February where entrance fees contributed towards new equipment for a new community hospital.

"It's two very separate cultures coming together for one common goal," said Dale Mosquito immediately following the game.

The Battle of Little Big Puck is a tradition that goes back to 1978 that was originally named the "Cowboys and Indians Game." The event has missed just a few years since its origin, but enthusiasm for the Southwest tradition shared between both young and old keeps it alive, Mosquito said.

Mosquito has played for "the Indians" in every game with the exception of one or two years. He said the event is symbolic of the heritage that's unique to the Cypress Hills region.

Nekaneet First Nation lies southeast of Maple Creek. Band members have traditionally worked with the ranchers of Maple Creek and the surrounding area, Mosquito explained.

"We worked for the cowboys. We worked for the ranchers. We worked for the farmers. And that's why it exists today, an event like this, because it's just that proud example of how we can all get along."

Bobby Maines Jr. has played for "the Cowboys" in nearly every game since its origin. He agrees that the event is reflective of the camaraderie in the Southwest.

"We're all just kind of together here and it's always been that way. They're proud of being Indians and we're proud of being cowboys," he said.

Fans cheered with every goal scored during last month's Battle of Little Big Puck. It was a back-and-forth game which "the Cowboys" won with a final score of 10-9, but Mosquito said the game is more about the reaction in the stands than the final score.

"You see a cowboy sitting beside an Indian grandmother and that's so special, but also you see little cowboys and they're wearing their hats and they're playing beside that little Indian – and I think that's what it's all about."

The 28th annual Battle of Little Big Puck raised over \$3,600 for an equipment fund that will support a newly announced 48 long-term care bed and 24 acute-care bed integrated health facility in Maple Creek.



Derek Pahtayken fights for the puck with a member of "the Cowboys" at the Battle of Little Big Puck in Maple Creek.
(Photo by Paul Grigaitis)

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Huskies claim first Canada West title

Mike Linklater had what could have been the game of his life, helping the University of Saskatchewan Huskies win their first ever Canada West Men's basketball championship.

The fifth year guard had 29 points, 13 assists, nine steals, and six rebounds in the 96-83 win over the Calgary Dinos.

Coach Greg Jockims credited Linklater with doing a great job "of not only orchestrating shots for himself but for others guys as well."

The game was tight throughout and went back and forth. But with the score notched at 71-71 in the fourth quarter, Showron Glover and Linklater proved why they are considered one of the premier backcourts in the country. They led the Huskies on a 15-4 run and the team controlled the game down the stretch.

Glover scored 11 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter, and added eight assists for the game. Duncan Jones contributed 20 points for the Huskies while Ross Bekkering led the Dinos with 23 points.

The Huskies and the Dinos will now head to Ottawa to play at the CIS Nationals hosted by Carleton University. The tournament begins March 19 and the finals will be played March 21.

Saskatoon to host Winter Games

The Saskatoon Tribal Council will play host to the Saskatchewan First Nation Winter Games 2010. The event will take place April 4-10.

First Nations Youth from across the province will participate in sports such as hockey, volleyball, broomball, curling, and badminton.

The opening ceremonies will be at Credit Union Centre on April 4.

Local athlete looking forward to Games experience

Kate Daniels is a Grade 12 student at Tommy Douglas Collegiate in Regina. But she is also an accomplished volley-

ball and badminton player.

Daniels played for the Senior Girls Volleyball team and is just starting her badminton season at school.

"I've always been going to the Winter Games for volleyball but this year I wish I would of went for badminton," Daniels said.

And its not like that's the only sports she does.



Members of the University of Saskatchewan Huskies celebrate the school's first-ever Canada West Men's basketball championship.

Kate has also participated in the Summer Games. Her first time there she was in track and has since gone on to play soccer. Although it wasn't her first choice she just missed the soccer tryouts.

It also happened to her at the Indigenous Games tryouts when she was unable to attend and missed her chance to make the team.

She will be representing STC at this year's Winter Games and is excited for the opportunity.

Outside of school she is just your average teenager who enjoys hanging out with friends or travelling to volleyball or badminton tournaments.

When I asked her what her plans were

this weekend she said "I will be going to the Badminton Club here in Saskatoon where I can hope to improve my skills."

FSIN youth hockey reminder

Prince Albert will play host to the FSIN Youth Hockey Championships March 19-21. Games will be played at the Dave Stuart, Kinsmen, Art Hauser, and Buckland Arenas.



For more information contact Courage Bear at FSIN (306) 665-1215.

Proud to be Canadian

With one goal Sidney Crosby elevated himself (if possible) to another level in Canadian hockey history. It may not have been Paul Henderson in '72 or Mario Lemieux with 1:26 remaining but it will definitely be a goal Canadians of this generation will talk about for decades. The goal gave the Canadians a gold medal win over the Americans.

The previous day the women got the party started with a huge win over the Americans. Canada's goalie Shannon Szabados was just ridiculous and literally won that game for them.

And watching the Olympics it was just great to see all the success the country had.

From Ice Dance Gold Medalists Scott Moir and Tessa Virtue to the emotional performance of Joannie Rochette who won a silver medal just days after burying her mother, it was an Olympics to remember and a time for all of us to be proud as Canadians.

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Charles driven to succeed in sports and in classroom

By Andréa Ledding
For Eagle Feather News

Elecktra Charles believes in hard work and says she is inspired by everyone around her.

"It's actually the everyday people around me that really inspire me – especially the girls in my track club too," said Charles in a phone interview.

"My coach – the whole energy around that place – they're all striving and that motivates me, a lot of things motivate me, to keep going."

Her academics, leadership, volunteering, and athletic feats were recognized at the SaskTel Aboriginal Youth Awards when she was named female recipient of the Outstanding Achievement Award last June, presented by Ken Cheveldayoff,

Minister of Crown Corporations.

"Elecktra is a determined, confident and compassionate individual. She gives back unselfishly to her school and community and is very proud of her heritage," Cheveldayoff said at the event, established by the Wicihitowin Foundation in honour of Aboriginal veterans to recognize Aboriginal youth.

Originally from Lac La Ronge First Nation, Elecktra is now in Grade 12 at Tommy Douglas Collegiate in Saskatoon and has been accepted into pre-med studies at the University of Saskatchewan. Her academic average at the end of her semester was 96 per cent, while she trains hard physically every day.

"I go to bed early, get up early and run before school to get training in," Charles



Elecktra Charles is not only a gifted athlete, the La Ronge student excels scholastically, maintaining a 96 per cent average in Grade 12. (Photo by Andréa Ledding) explained.

In second period spare she'll do basketball or running, weights at lunch, then practice and homework after school.

"Weekends are long runs, Sunday is a rest day – leg rest – I get caught up on homework."

She encourages others to persevere, saying it takes a lot of focus but not to give up.

"You face a lot of obstacles but as soon as they're over it just makes you stronger," she said.

With her training she's in a rhythm where not running is more difficult, because it's a habit. In minus 30 and 40 she'll hit the treadmills, but loves summers being able to run anytime or catch up on socializing.

Described at the Award Night by Cheveldayoff as an elite athlete, she won six medals (five gold) at the Indigenous Games last year, five medals at Provincials, and was recognized at the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, receiving a Tom Longboat athletic award.

When Eagle Feather News caught up with her she was gearing up for more record-breaking, having just received four more gold and silver medals at city track and field competitions, competed at the Canadian Junior Cross Country Nationals, and remained the leading scorer for the city in Senior Girls basketball.

"I average 23 points per game," she said when pressed for details, explaining she is guard and forward, and her coach was the lead scorer in the city in her day, too.

A "Tiger Ambassador" at her school with involvement in student council too, Charles was busy working on charitable donations for Haiti, and other leadership and charitable events. She plans to continue sports and volunteering when she attends university.

"I've just got everyone around me who've done so many things, and it's so influential.

"There are so many footprints to follow but at the same time you want to make your own, too."

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SaskTel

Saskatoon Tribal Council to welcome 3,500 athletes

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

Ten years ago next month, the Saskatoon Tribal Council hosted the 2000 First Nations Winter Games. It was a big affair for Saskatoon as the Games took over SaskPlace (now Credit Union Centre) for a boxing night and banquet, and it took over the city as over 3,000 athletes converged from around Saskatchewan for this now bi-annual event. The winners that year were the Meadow Lake Tribal Council.

Fast forward ten years and history is ready to repeat itself. Saskatoon Tribal Council Chief Felix Thomas and an army of volunteers 300 strong are preparing for an influx of almost 3,500 athletes during the Easter break, April 5-10.

"It is a real honour to host this event," said Chief Thomas during a break at the FSIN Special Assembly.

"My daughter was involved in the mainstream Winter Games in Moose Jaw. They had 1,800 athletes. The Olympics had about 2,800. For this event we have 3,500 athletes. That shows the magnitude of the games and the interest at the community level," says Thomas.

"We create a different environment for the young athletes. Lots of these kids don't play on club teams or don't have the resources to play off the reserve. This event they will remember for the rest of their lives."

The Games include the usual sports of hockey, volleyball, broomball, badminton and curling and it also has lots of activities for the youth and families off the court as well.



FELIX THOMAS

"The youth will have access to a career fair, a teen dance and we are also bringing past games athletes, former NHLer Scott Daniels, (Hartford and Philadelphia) lots of former major junior hockey players and other role models. Michelle Hugli is from Yellow Quill and now is at CBC and she will be speaking to the youth," added Chief Thomas.



In the year 2000, the Meadow Lake Tribal Council was presented the big trophy by the Tribal Chief Joe Quewezance for winning the overall First Nations Winter Games. This year the trophy is up for grabs with three of four tribal Councils able to win the overall title.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

"We are also trying to get someone like Theo Fleury to speak at our sponsor's banquet about his experience."

Being as big a deal as they are, the Games are very expensive to host, with this year's budget at around a million dollars.

"When we bid on these Games," said Chief Thomas, "we were in a boom. Then the economy died and we went from hoping to get some sponsors to increase their sponsorship to the point where we just got them to maintain their sponsorship."

"But we have the resources and great sponsors. INAC always comes through, the Dakota Dunes CDC as well as SIGA. When you have that core group of support, it lets you do good things."

The Games also has the Saskatoon Public School and Catholic School systems helping them with facilities and other resources.

As a youth, Chief Thomas did not make it to the Games.

"I wasn't good enough! But I wanted to go," he says. "The only things that stopped me were talent and hard work!" he joked.

"But I know how important it is for these youth to have these games. I am most looking forward to seeing the youth participate. To see them look up in the stands to see their parents. I know my children when they get to an age, they don't want mom and dad around, but they still know that we are supporting them no matter how old they get ... building on that support, win or lose and have fun. The Games allow them to make connections that last a lifetime."

"That is what makes this worthwhile. When they become adults and get into business or leadership and they meet

former participants and they have something they can share. The skills go beyond sport and to life in general."

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Teams Arrive	X	X				
Accreditation	X	X				
Pipe Ceremonies		X	X		X	X
Opening Ceremonies (Credit Union Center)		X				
VIP Banquet (Dakota Dunes Casino)			X			
Youth Entertainment			X	X	X	X
Hockey Male/Female			X	X	X	X
Volleyball			X	X	X	X
Badminton			X	X	X	X
Broomball			X	X	X	X
Curling			X	X	X	X
Food Services		X	X	X	X	X
Closing Ceremonies						X



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ILP Program Requirements:

ILP 100 – Introduction to Leadership

ILP 300 – Leadership and Change

ILP 390 – Leadership Mentorship

ILP 400 – Leadership Project



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