

Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

Aboriginal books making inroads

Métis author Leah Dorion has been shortlisted for an impressive three Saskatchewan Book Awards. She dedicated her book, *Relatives With Roots*, to Maria Campbell.

(Photo by Jessica Iron)



By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

Leah Dorion, artist, mom, academic and author has been shortlisted for three award nominations for her book *Relatives with Roots: A Story About Métis Women's Connection to the Land* (Gabriel Dumont Institute) (translated by Rita Flamand) for the 2011 Saskatchewan Book Awards.

Dorion wrote, illustrated and lent her voice to the audio narration of the story. Métis Elder Rita Flamand provided the Michif-Cree translation and audio narration.

The story is of a girl and her grandmother who go out to pick medicines, all the while learning about Métis traditions.

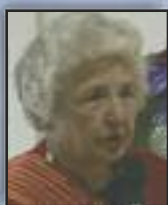
Dorion dedicated the book to a woman she admires for teaching so many young women and children her traditional knowledge.

"I dedicated this book to Maria Campbell for all she has done teaching me and so many others our stories, and how to tell them," said Dorion, a SUNTEP Faculty member in Prince Albert.

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Métis veterans deserve more recognition for their sacrifices believes Elder Cecile Blanke.

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SIGA's Shauna Bear describes her workplace as one big family and she couldn't be happier.

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SHE'S AN ARTIST!

Destiny Slippery might have surprised even herself at how much talent she has. Basketball art? Check it out.

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Welcome to our Women's Edition

Coming In April

Arts & Entertainment Issue

CPMA #40027204

February was another incredibly busy month at Wanuskewin Heritage Park. Yet another example of the growth and significance of this important place. Wanuskewin hosted three unique events; Valentines Day Buffet, Kids Day Camps, and the Storytelling Night.

A sold out affair that featured the amazing culinary talents of Chef Kevin Merasty. This event was then capped off with a traditional dance performance from the Strongarm family.



Valentine's Day Buffet - Feb 14



Day Camp for Kids Ages 7-10, held Feb 21-24. This hands-on learning experience was very well received by the kids, and was sold out. We look forward to another great camp in April!

Wanuskewin Kids Day Camp - Feb 21 - 24

February is storytelling Month, and so the Sask Aboriginal Literacy Network along with Wanuskewin held a night for all families to learn traditional games, hear stories and to sample some delicious desserts.



Storytelling Night - Feb 25

There is always something happening at Wanuskewin, and so we encourage you to follow us on Twitter (@Wanuskewin_Park) and Facebook, and to check out www.wanuskewin.com frequently to see all that is happening.

- Andrew McDonald
andrew.mcdonald@wanuskewin.com



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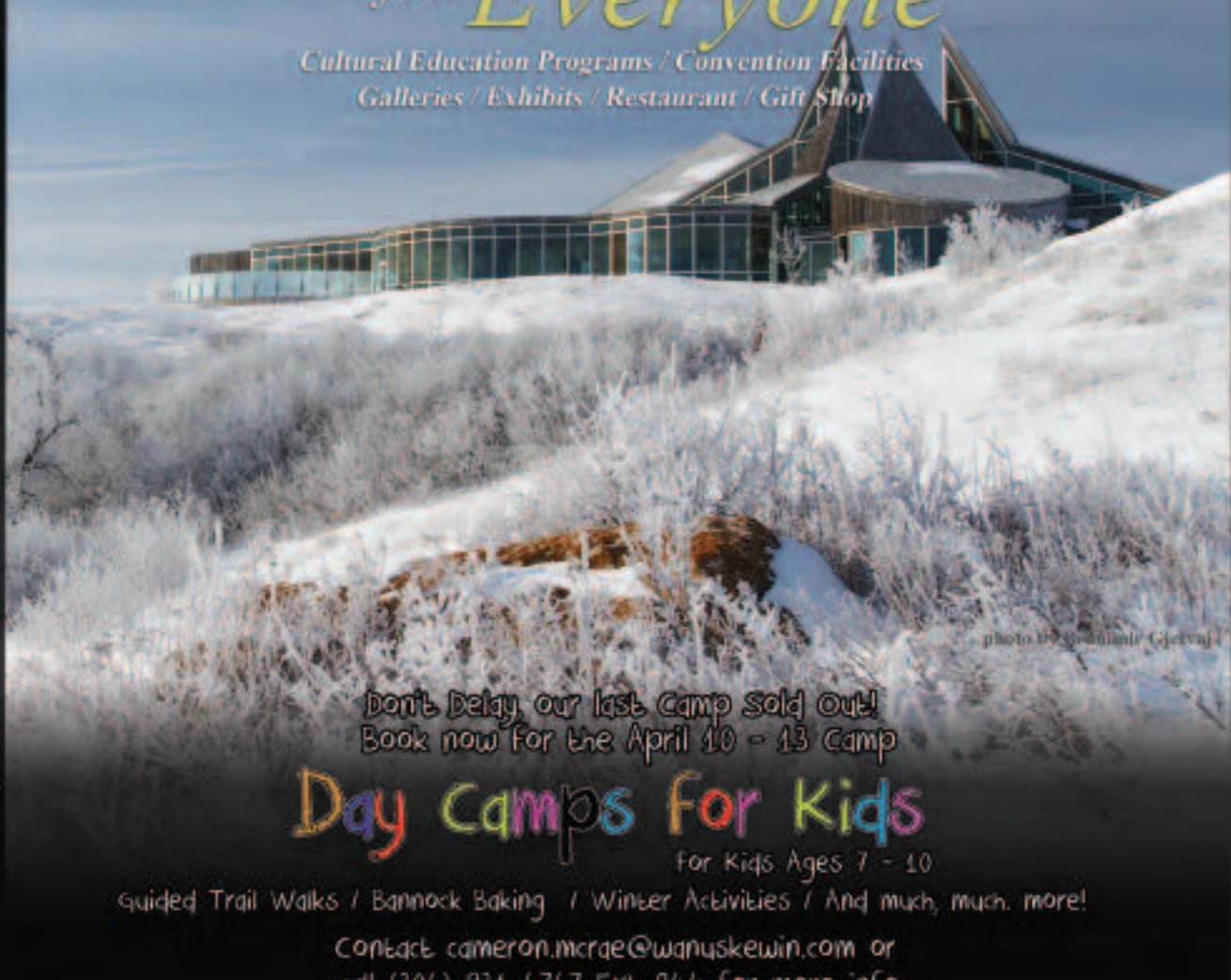


photo by Stephanie Gierke

Don't Delay, our last camp sold out!
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Save Culture

Métis Elder fighting for honour of veterans

By Creeson Agecoutay
For Eagle Feather News

Whether it is fighting for the preservation of a southern Saskatchewan lake or honouring the spirits of Métis veterans, Métis Elder Cecile Blanke will fight for what she believes in.

On December 31, 2011, Elder Blanke celebrated the New Year by organizing an emotional ceremony in Swift Current for 16 local Métis veterans of the two World Wars and the Korean War.

The ceremony began with a prayer and smudging ceremony followed by speeches and a wreath laying by Second World War veteran Hewitt Murch. Blanke told the crowd of the joyful and at times, sad life stories of the Métis veterans.

"It is stories I need to tell. The spirits tell me, 'you have to keep these memories alive. You have to keep it going' and as long I am around, I am willing to share these stories and tell about them," said Blanke.



Elder Cecile Blanke does not hold anything back when telling stories of how Metis Veterans were treated when they returned from war.

Dozens of Métis people joined the war effort over the years and volunteered to take the same risks as every other Canadian by serving their country but when they returned, many of them claim they were discriminated against and did not receive compensation.

Nor did they receive land or money for education, as many other veterans did before them.

"It made me very sad when they came home because I thought they did their job there. They did it well and for them to come home and be nobody.

"A lot of them drank. They drank themselves to death," said Blanke.

Blanke was born in 1934 and was

raised in Lebret. She knew many of the veterans personally but says they are all now deceased. All her life Blanke's family would invite many of them for dinners, to listen to their war stories and partake in every aspect of Métis culture including jigging and laughter.

Besides honouring Veterans, Elder Blanke is also passionate about all aspects of Métis life and the environment.

Part of honoring her ancestors involves a battle with land developers and the government. Since the early 1970s, she has been fighting government officials regarding the beach development around Lac Pelletier.

She says the lake has had a strong connection with the Métis since 1865 and that many people lived off the lake by fishing and hunting.

However, today she says that way of life is being lost and now the lake is being turned into a lake for recreational boats. The boats and crowds, she says, are bad for the environment and area.

"(People) bring the biggest boats and they turn the water and the edges of the soil is going in the lake and it makes the algae grow and the water gets polluted from gas and oil and there is no limit to the size of boats," says Blanke.

Her fight to preserve the area is not hers alone. Farmers and other local residents want to see the lake returned to its former pristine condition. She and a group of supporters are actively lobbying to stop all development in the Lac Pelletier area.

Blanke has a lot of supporters and friends in the area. One of them is Tekeyla Friday of Swift Current. Like Blanke, Friday is passionate about maintaining all aspects of aboriginal culture in the area.

She was among the crowd who gathered to honor the Métis Veterans. She believes this day is important for the community to learn about a culture that's always been here but seldom talked about or heard.

"It kind of helps us bring (Métis veterans) up to the front lines and to say that our people were there. They were there. To give us the honor that was deserved to them but was not given to them back in that time," said Friday.

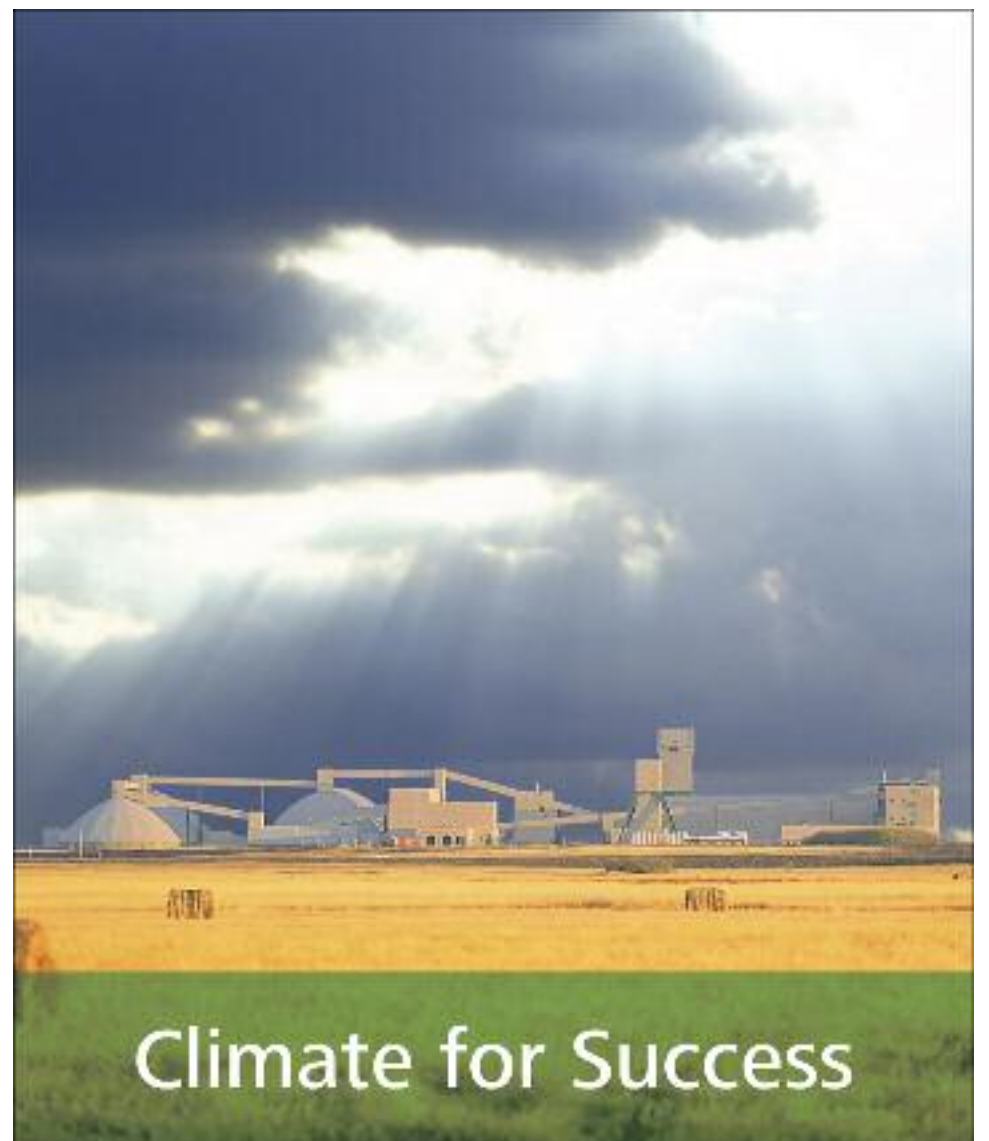
Although many there did not know the faces of the veterans who were honoured, Blanke hopes to keep their memories alive for many years to come.

"I am so glad I knew them. I am so glad I can witness these stories because I knew each and everyone one of them.

"I was very young but there is not very many that remember these people."



Sixteen candles were lit for the sixteen Metis veterans. Their lives celebrated for the sacrifices they made for their country.



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A salute to women, thanks for all you do

Welcome to the annual Eagle Feather News women's edition. We always dedicate the March issue to our moms, sisters, aunts, grandmothers, daughters and wives. It is fitting since March 8 is International Women's Day and because, really, women rock.

If you need proof, here are ten good reasons why we believe women rock.

1. When you are sick, who knows how to comfort and heal you? Mom.
2. Think of all the single moms out there and the sacrifice they make daily to get their kids fed and in school and supported.
3. A majority of Aboriginal students in post secondary are women. Can you say leaders in the community?
4. Usually less gaseous than men.
5. That moment when four or five good lady friends are talking and they all break out into laughter. Classic.
6. They have the nerve and responsibility to tell you when you are messing up or messed up and they take that responsibility seriously.
7. They are taking their place in politics as well....over a dozen Chiefs are women, over 100 councillors and several Métis Local Presidents and Area Directors are women.
8. How many people's favourite meal is cooked by a guy? Nuff said.
9. One stink eye from your mom or aunty will correct behaviour immediately ... don't make them use your full name.
10. Best hugs.

We hope you enjoy the edition.

A fond farewell

After several successful years building bridges and encouraging First Nation involvement in business and the economy, the Honourable Bill McKnight is stepping as Treaty Commissioner on April 1. McKnight once stated that: "The prosperity of First Nations people is key to the prosperity of all the people of Saskatchewan."

He couldn't be more correct. We will reflect on his term as Commissioner in our April edition and start speculating on his replacement. Will the FSIN and the Federal government appoint a woman Treaty Commissioner?

Also next month we will be focusing on arts and entertainment in our community.

Happy Birthday To Us!

With this edition, Eagle Feather News turns 14 years old and we begin our 15th year of publication. Broken down that equals over 170 different editions, over 4,128 pages of paper (sorry trees!), over three million words written, 3,000 photos published, countless good stories told and hundreds of Tums devoured at deadline time.

Women have played a significant role in the longevity of Eagle Feather News, from family support to keep the paper running to our wonderfully talented women columnists and writers over the years.

When you have the likes of the late Bernelda Wheeler, Maria Campbell, Winona Wheeler, Jess Iron and Sandra Ahenakew writing for a publication, you know the readers are being informed and entertained. They have made the job easy. Thanks to all who have contributed to our longevity in one way or another.

We hope you keep reading our stories, because we have no intention of quitting writing them.



Winona Wheeler's aunts are all different in personality, but all dear to the hearts of their nephews and nieces.

Rank Comix

By Adam Martin



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Aunty Marji was one of those incredible women

We've all known some amazing women and some of the most amazing are our own relatives.

Like many Indigenous kids, when we were growing up our aunts, kikáwisi-nawak, had a major role in our lives. They had the right to boss us around, give us heck, spoil us, and drag us along on their travels. We spent a lot of time with them and had many adventures.

They were more than babysitters; they were like our little mothers. Those aunts are old now, but they weren't back then. They were young, strong, and a little bit on the wild side. Memories of times spent with one or more of the aunts bring laughter, fondness, sometimes a few embarrassing cringes, and always a bit of loneliness for the one who passed on.

Aunts are not all alike. Each of my aunts is unique and we knew which one to go to for whatever we needed. There was the stoic prim and proper one who taught us how to make apple butter in our spotless aprons. There was the wild one who was caught more than once "mooning" or "goosing" someone in front of everybody!

And then there was youngest one, she was closest to our age and was more like a big sister because she got into trouble

with us, covered for us and backed us up.

My youngest aunty was the late Marji Pratt-Turo. She led an amazing life in her younger years, then when she hit her 40s various illnesses took hold of her and increasingly held her down. When we were kids, though, she was adventurous and scrappy.

Before I started school, aunty Marji won a beauty photo contest and the prize was a few months training in New York City with a modelling agency. So off she went to New York where she lived in poverty in Greenwich Village until her modelling career took off. This was in 1963 and she was the first Indigenous runway model in New York.

Imagine that, a scrawny Cree/Saulteaux woman from Gordon's modelling for Chanel and she even once modelled nude for that crazy artist Salvador Dali! Before she made it into the big time, Mom and I went to live with her in a two room apartment above a Jewish deli. She was dating a jazz percussionist (drummer) named Art Blakey Jr. so I got dragged along to jazz bars where he was playing.

They took me in my pyjamas and sent me to bed in his dressing room back stage until it was time to go home. Sometimes they dragged

me to parties and paid me a quarter to dance the cha-cha-cha, the twist, or a traditional shawl dance with a tea towel.

Aunty Marji's modelling name was Carla Blakey. She married her jazz player and hung out with the likes of Sammy Davis Jr. and Chubby Checker. Later, when we moved back home, she sent boxes and boxes of clothes she got from modelling. We were dirt poor but I wore New York designer

hand-me-downs.

Aunty Marji was in New York during the race riots and was right in the middle of the civil rights movement. She volunteered at the urban Indian centres and soon became an active member of the American Indian Movement.

After a near fatal car accident that ruined her modelling career, she left New York for Alcatraz Island and then to Porcupine, South Dakota. She was in Wounded Knee (1973) and told many stories about that time; crawling through U.S. military lines under the cover of darkness to bring food and supplies to those inside, working in the legal defence office, the goon squad attacks, the ceremonies. We met her at Crowdog's Paradise that summer and we all camped together at the Sun Dance.

Aunty's health started failing after that and she came home to be with her aging mom and her sisters. While her health declined she continued as best she could with her social activism. She believed in standing up for justice and you'd find her on protest lines and rallies, fund-raising and community events, powwows and ceremonies.



Aunty Marji had a full and interesting life and will never be forgotten.

Always with her drum in hand she sang for the movement, for the people, for our future. An amazing woman my Aunty Marji.



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The case of education

Over the past few decades the political rhetoric of First Nations and Métis aspirations has changed from time to time, from cultural survival and retention of identity, to equality within Canada, to self-government and land, and to access to resources.

Education has been an important part of the rhetoric as part of the 'Closing the Gap' policy at least since Prime Minister Martin's ill-fated Kelowna Accord. There are interesting options on the horizon that deserve close attention.

'Closing the Gap' policies are part of the push for equality between the social and economic conditions of Aboriginal people with others in Canada's population. The principle of equality has gained a very broad appeal in the mind of the public and university faculty and is easily adopted as a political mantra by ordinary people and by politicians of every political stripe.

So, it is not surprising that education is an important part of the policy rhetoric of the current right-wing Harper government that killed the Liberals' Kelowna Accord. The intricacies of partisan politics and philosophies can be left aside today to focus upon the developing consensus about the benefits that surely flow from education and on the best means to improve the educational attainments of Aboriginal people in Canada.

This is an issue that is particularly important in provinces such as Saskatchewan and Manitoba where the demographic picture shows us a young and growing Aboriginal population that will soon inevitably affect the politics and economics of the province.

The significance of an educated population goes to the heart of what makes for effective government. Effective governments can be measured by the three essential attributes of legitimacy, power and resources. An educated or skilled population provides the labour (manual or mental) or 'human resources' that are an essential component of the resources that are essential for effective governments, as statistics and the case of 'underdeveloped' countries show us.

As for economics, a recent Saskatchewan study released by the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan has shown that an educated Aboriginal population would yield more economic benefits to the province than all the potash produced in the history of Saskatchewan.

So it appears that one is unlikely to find any credible opposition to a policy to promote Aboriginal educational achievement. The debate is now about the preferable means of pursuing that objective.

In December the Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples chaired by Senator Gerry St. Germain and Saskatchewan's Senator Lillian Dyck, who is Deputy Chair, published its report on First Nations education. Its recommendations echo the

criticisms of former Auditor-General Sheila Fraser who argued for years that legislation is needed to create functional institutions and provide secure funding arrangements to allow planning and development.



Comment
Paul Chartrand

The need to recognize 'Indian Control of Indian Education' as proposed in 1972 by the National Indian Brotherhood has been accepted by governments, however qualified and circumscribed that control might be, and that is a feature of the Senate Committee Report. Self-government has been recognized as a legitimate objective in federal policy since 1995.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples' final report of 1996 made its recommendations on Aboriginal education as an aspect of its focus on the development of self-governing 'nations'. As such, those recommendations are on a different policy path than the 2011 report, although there remain significant areas that deserve serious consideration, even though no federal government has ever adopted the basic direction proposed by RCAP.

The Senate report proposes a national First Nation Education Act (FNEA) which would recognize the authority of 'Indian bands' within the meaning of the Indian Act, but which would opt out of the education provisions of the Indian Act by opting in to the new legislation.

Most important, the FNEA would provide for secure funding sources that allow planning and development. It would provide a statutory basis for setting measurable standards and determine who has responsibility for what instead of just 'throwing money at a problem.' In its approach, the Senate report goes beyond the model instituted by the 1998 Mi'kmaq Education Act in Nova Scotia.

In February 2012 the National Panel on First Nation Elementary and Secondary Education for Students on Reserve issued its report. It, too, recommends legislation for the same purposes, including funding, as did the Senate's December Report. The Report makes sound recommendations, no doubt.

The National Panel was created and operated in an atmosphere of well-publicized political controversy and was boycotted by some First Nations organizations. One of the criticisms leveled at its report is that it produced what was already known by First Nations and exemplified a waste of federal moneys that could have been better spent.

In fact, the Report itself quotes outgoing Saskatchewan Treaty Commissioner Bill McKnight as stating that 'we already know what to do'.

Regardless of one's views on all of this, what appears to be clear is the consensus on what ought to be done now to provide better educational achievement for First Nation students.

good food bites

WANT TO EAT HEALTHY WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK??

HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO TRY:

- Make a list and stick to it. Be sure to include healthy foods from all four food groups!
- Buy frozen and canned vegetables and fruit when fresh produce is not in season. They have just as many vitamins and minerals as fresh. Look for fruit canned in water or fruit juice (not syrup) and low sodium canned vegetables.
- Use your own herbs and spices instead of packaged rice mixes and noodles. These mixes are usually high in fat and sodium and low in fibre. Instead, purchase plain whole grains: brown rice, whole wheat pasta and barley are all great choices.
- Include powdered milk in your meal planning. Powdered milk can be added to cream soups, pancakes, muffins, mashed potatoes ... even to your coffee instead of cream. Three tablespoons of skim milk powder provide adults with almost 1/3 of their daily calcium requirements.
- Go for pulses! Dried beans, peas, chickpeas and lentils are economical, can be prepared in a variety of ways and are super healthy! 3/4 of a cup of black beans contains almost 1/2 of your daily fibre requirements, are an excellent source of iron and folate and are low in fat. Add a can of rinsed beans to soup, chili, or even a salad to bump up the nutrition.



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Saskatoon lawyer says healing more important than money as she offers huge donation to residential school survivors

By Diane Adams
For Eagle Feather News

Lisa Abbott is on a mission to help heal the wounds of residential school in Northern Saskatchewan. And she's donating \$1.5 million of her own money toward the cause.

Abbott is a Saskatoon lawyer from Chitek Lake and her clients include more than 300 residential school survivors that are registered in the Independent Assessment Process. That IAP process is the money set aside to compensate those who suffered the worst abuses in Residential School.

Most of her clients are from Black Lake, Hatchett Lake and Fond Du Lac. When she travelled to the fly-in Dene communities one thing became clear. She wanted to do something to help address the intergenerational impacts of residential schools. So she decided to start the Athabasca Healing Fund.

"What I do, is I don't take anything from my clients' claims," Abbott said. "And of the (legal fees) that (the Government of Canada) pays to me, 33 per cent of what my office makes will go back to the region," she said.

Abbott expects her total donation to be \$1.5 million.

With news reports swirling of lawyers taking huge chunks of the settlements, Abbott hopes this donation will also change the way survivors see lawyers.

"I know that a lot of times people are afraid to come forward with their claims because it's been out there in the news that clients are being taken advantage of," she said. "I wanted to (show that a lot of lawyers) are out

there in the field and we really do care about our clients and we really do want to give back."

The Athabasca Healing fund will be administered by the three fly-in communities it serves. Abbot says the fund could be used to develop Dene immersion, improve mental health services, and fund programs to stop violence and suicide.

Getting the fund established is Don Deranger's job. Deranger is the vice-chief responsible for the Athabasca Region's three fly-in communities at the Prince Albert Grand Council.

Not only did he help Abbott come up with the idea, but he's also one of her clients.

Deranger is poised to receive an IAP settlement. He says he's glad a portion of the legal fees from his settlement will make their way back to the community.

Vice-Chief Deranger says he's always wanted to find ways to make his nation "one again."

"I feel pretty good contributing," he said. "I'm getting a settlement, but I'm also contributing a portion of those federal legal fees," he added.

Both Deranger and Abbott hope this fund and this gesture will encourage more survivors to enter the IAP process before the September 2012 deadline and see more communities get something back.

Abbott says she'll find a way to give back to any community where her clients live so they can leave something to their children and grandchildren.

"I really hope that they can use this fund to set a different legacy," Abbott said.



Lisa Abbott is representing 300 residential school clients.

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Aboriginal authors well represented on book awards shortlist

• Continued from Page One

"I was absolutely delighted when the folks at Gabriel Dumont Institute called me with the news. I didn't think the book would be nominated in so many categories and really I share my joy with them."

GDI has published two of Dorion's three children's books and several of her academic and more scholarly work and they are in the process of creating another children's book.

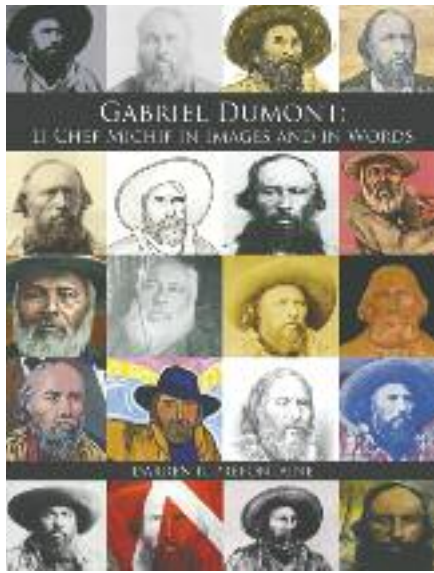
"We are a good team working together and it is for children, and the books are in Michif and to teach this is so important," added Dorion who also gives credit to her son Louis for being quality control and providing his feedback for her.

This year Gabriel Dumont Institute

has 11 different award nominations including

many merits for Gabriel Dumont: Li Chef Michif in Images and in Word by Darren R. Prefontaine, and Call of the Fiddle By Wilfred Burton and Anne Patton (Illustrated by Sherry Farrell

Racette and translated by Norman Fleury). Dorion



and Prefontaine's books are both up for Book of the Year Award rounding out an excellent showing by GDI.

Karon Shmon, Director of GDI Publishing says that the grand showing of GDI is a reflection of the community.

"GDI is really pleased to bring the voices of both our ancestors and our contemporary community to life through the talents of the Métis authors and illustrators with whom we work. We feel the resources belong to the Métis community because that is where they originated," said Shmon.

"A large number of people contribute to the production of our books. We owe our gratitude to this collective effort. To have our books receive so much attention is an affirmation that everyone's best effort went into making them."

This year First Nations and Métis authors and books have a significant presence in the shortlist and include Dorion, Darren Préfontaine, Mark Cronlund Anderson, Harold Johnson, Margaret Cote and Carmen Robertson.

Publishers nominated include Gabriel Dumont Institute, Coteau Books, Hagios Press, Purich Publishing and the Canadian Plains Research Center.

"It was very nice to see the number of First Nations and Métis authors and books being recognized across the board on the shortlist this year.

"The diversity of the authors, in addition to the tried and true greats, is going to make this year especially interesting" said Stacy Riggs, director of the Saskatchewan Book Awards.

Dorion agrees that it is nice to see



Harold Johnson is a nominee in the First People's Writing Award for his book, The Cast Stone published by Thistledown Press.

more Métis and First Nation involvement in the arts and events like the Saskatchewan Book Awards.

"Maybe Riel's prophecy is coming true," suggested

Dorion in mention of Louis Riel's famous quote that his people would sleep for 100 years and that it would be the artists that lead them back.

"We are telling stories from our place and these nomi-

nations give our Métis storytelling recognition.

"Kudos to the Métis community for progress."

Drugs and herbal interactions

It's a good idea to get a printout listing some of the reactions to a specific drug.

Paying attention to your body you'll know something isn't right and that's when you should be in touch with your physician or the emergency department of your hospital. Some reactions can happen within 20 minutes while other drugs or herbs can take days, weeks and months.

Some quick reactions could be extreme coldness or flushing, inability to



Health Matters
Flo Lavallie

concentrate, dry mouth, blurry vision, fainting, and nausea, cramping and overall feeling of unwellness. Some which can occur in hours or days include: numbness in extremities, lips, tremor, muscle weakness.

Everyone is different, and so if you are having an adverse reaction to a drug or herb, you may experience the troublesome side effects as well.

In order to be treated successfully, a patient needs to know what to tell the doctor, especially facts about previous or present drug reactions or herbal interactions with prescription drugs. The doctor, herbalist or pharmacist are not mind readers. Any new or unusual ache, discomfort or physical or mental sensation should be reported at once to your doctor. She or he cannot fully do their job if they do not have complete information from you. There are matters of safety which are of concerns whenever medicines or herbs or vitamins are taken.

The importance of following the prescribed dosage to avoid overdoses, possible hazards to the unborn or nursing child from drugs. Taking prescriptions with grapefruit juice is not

recommended. It slows metabolism of certain drugs.

Blood thinners such as Warfarin should not be taken with herbs, such as Vitamin K, Vitamin E, Omega 3, fatty acids (fish oil capsules). Garlic may increase bleeding time.

Don't hesitate to ask questions of those who prescribe your medications or fill your prescriptions. It is your body and life they seek to heal, and each person's body can react

differently to drugs. Please consult carefully with your physician before taking any drugs or before discontinuing and medications.

Most people have taken medicines to cure infection. I believe the only two things you can cure is ham or bacon. The body heals itself. Sometimes it is necessary to ingrate medication when there are situations that are difficult to treat. I will be the first person to admit that.

Medicines have also been taken to ease pain, to aid in getting to sleep, or to be helped to feel better. Many individuals don't ask questions about the prescriptions their doctors give them. They take medicine and wait for its good effects.

Unfortunately, prescription drugs have possibilities mentioned. If you feel that you are having a reaction, act on it, don't ignore it and suffer in silence.

Be informed or aware of what can harm you, even vitamins and herbs can be harmful if not advised by professionally trained health care providers.

It is the nature of a drug to provide a reaction but a positive can also become a negative.

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Women comfortable talking about 'down there'

Welcome to the 2012 Women's Edition of Eagle Feather News. What better time to talk about vaginas or 'spoons' as some of us Cree ladies call it.

In the early 1990s Eve Ensler interviewed hundreds of women and asked them to share their thoughts and feelings about their vaginas. What came out of the interviews was a play called The Vagina Monologues and a movement called V-Day.

Ensler inspired a movement and created V-Day as a way of working to stop violence against women and girls and to draw attention to rape, incest, female genital mutilation and sexual slavery.

The power of The Vagina Monologues and the subsequent V-Day movement is moving across the globe. It contains monologues from women in Bosnia and Afghanistan, from the southern United States to Great Britain. It engages with a range of emotions, images and stories. It is about sexuality and violence that haunt women's experience.

The play was first performed in 1996. Today the play has been performed hundreds of times all around the world

and has been translated into 35 languages. This year a group of approximately 24 Aboriginal women will be performing in the play in Regina at the end of April.

It is so weird sitting around talking about "spoons"! I realized that we have this power 'down there'; men want to touch it, kiss it, and fill it. In fact, I'm sure that men spend more time thinking about vaginas than women do. One spoon is never enough either, once they had your spoon they want to try another one and then another it's never ending.

What is this fascination with women's private parts? I had no idea there was so much power in the panties. You would think that the shows would be filled with men but I think they are too scared to sit in a room filled with women all talking about their vaginas.

I just love rehearsals. We sit around discussing the strange things that happen to our vaginas as we age. Some of us had no idea that the hair down there would turn white. Shocking! The first time we read the script I found myself laughing uncontrollably.



Sandee Sez
Sandra Ahenakew

I found out that there is even jewelry for the vagina area! Tapew! Some women even pierce it down there. Ouch!

Tattoo parlours are advertising vagina tattoos. OMG! They make underwear missing the crouch so you don't even have to remove your panties to show Muffy (or whatever you call her).

We've come a long way. When I was a girl no one ever talked about your down there place. In fact, I had no idea it was called a vagina until I was a teenager. My grandmother never said anything and neither did my mother. All that I know I had to find out for myself and that was through trial and error. Only bad girls talk about their spoons right?

I spoke with cast members from previous productions and many indicated their performance had a powerful effect at the time and continued long afterwards. Not only were they educated about pleasure and desire in their own bodies but at the same time raising awareness about violence against women and girls. It is actually okay to feel

pleasure. Who knew!

Regina is the perfect city to show the play as it has often been referred to as the city whose name rhymes with fun.

In Canada there are over 500 missing and murdered Aboriginal women. The Stolen Sisters website says that Aboriginal women have long struggled to draw attention to violence within their own families and communities. Canadian police and public officials have long been aware of a pattern of racist violence against Aboriginal women in Canadian cities but have done little to prevent it. We need to collectively make a stand to end this viscous cycle. It is difficult to ignore the voices of many. Stand up for her; she's your grandmother, mother, sister, daughter, wife, friend and she's worth it.

I encourage folks to attend the play if it's offered in your community and help end violence against women and girls. Funds raised from the shows goes to help organizations working toward ending violence.

Thank you for your emails and letters.

You can write to me Sandee Sez C/O Eagle Feather News P.O. Box 924 Station Main Saskatoon Sk. S7K 3M4 or email Sandra.ahenakew@gmail.com

A Call for Volunteers

for the

Métis Environment and Resource Management Advisory Committee

The MN-S Department of Lands & Resources is seeking people to sit on a new committee, MERMAC, the Métis Environment and Resources Management Advisory Committee.

The Committee will meet four or five times per year. The meetings will be held in Saskatoon, with paid travel, as per provincial rates, and hotel expenses.

To be considered, please forward to the MN-S a one-page letter on why you are interested in the environment and if you are aware of the Province of Saskatchewan's Results-Based Reform. Send your letter to:

Sarah Kemp de Gereda, Director
MN-S Department of Lands & Resources
sgereda@mn-s.ca
Send to 406 Jessop Avenue
Saskatoon, SK S7N 2S5
or fax 306-343-0171

PUBLIC REVIEW

The Saskatchewan Environmental Code

As a key step in its shift to a results-based approach to environmental regulation, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment is pleased to offer the draft Saskatchewan Environmental Code, the first of its kind in Canada, for public review.

An introductory document, a code summary, and the full text of the 19 code chapters are available on the ministry website for public review and comment:

www.environment.gov.sk.ca/codereview

The website also includes more information about the new approach and some of the other ways the ministry is changing to support it, in areas including client service, information management and technology, compliance, business processes and corporate culture.

Additional information on meetings to review the code being planned for Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert is also available on our website.

Comments and discussion are welcome at any time; however, if you are commenting on specific content in any of the code chapters, please provide your input before March 16, 2012.



Artslink website funded by Truth and Reconciliation Commission shows healing journeys of residential school survivors

By Meagen Thomas
For Eagle Feather News

Carol Greyeyes will never forget the day her mother forgot to speak Cree. It was Wednesday, June 11, 2008, the day Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued the Government of Canada's official apology to resident school survivors.

Greyeyes, an actor, artist, and educator based in Saskatoon, called her mother, a residential school survivor, to talk about her reaction to the announcement.

"She talks Cree in the hopes that (her children) will learn it but after I hung up a realized that not once during the two-hour call did she say a word of Cree," said Greyeyes.

At first, Greyeyes supposed her mother was overwhelmed with emotion but came to believe that her mother's lapse was actually a regression to a time in her life when speaking Cree was forbidden.

When the newly created Truth and Reconciliation Commission issued a call for proposals, Greyeyes saw only one category that wasn't research-based or academic in nature; arts and learning. She proposed Artslink, a website showcasing artists who would talk about their own healing journeys through the context of their art.

"Knowing what I know about art and its transformative effect, I wanted to talk to artists who reclaimed their identity and pride through art and culture," said Greyeyes.

"That that happened didn't take us down or wipe us out, despite their best efforts, and that the culture is strong and flourishing; this is the message I wanted to give."

Although she got funding to interview just six artists, Greyeyes interviewed 10 people including writer Beverly

Hungry Wolf, stone carver Lyndon Tootoosis, painter G. Ray McCallum and visual artist Marcia Chickeness. The Artslink.ca website showcases the artistic and healing journeys of these survivors and, for many, being interviewed by Greyeyes was the first time they talked openly of the fear, abuse and torment they endured.

"In every interview, their light shines through. Inevitably I would be standing behind the camera trying to cry silently because I was so moved by their realizations and their ability to forgive," Greyeyes said.

Grateful that TRC funded the projects launch, Greyeyes is actively seeking additional funds to grow and sustain Artslink.

"My daughter asked me how something like this can be reconciled. You can't reconcile without facing the truth and, as a country are all facing the truth of what happened," said Greyeyes.

"We cannot heal if this is covered up, and part of that is (government) acknowledging responsibility. And saying you're sorry. And then moving on. It's a very simple process but a difficult one."



Carol Greyeyes says artists have much to contribute to the healing journeys that many First Nations people are taking.

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TRC reveals 'hard truths' in interim report

By Andréa Ledding
For Eagle Feather News

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada released its interim report in Vancouver on February 24, noting difficulties collecting government and church documents and making recommendations to restore what has been taken away.

The TRC also called for a massive public education campaign, Canada-wide curriculum teaching the history of the schools, and released a book called "They Came For the Children" which educates about the history of residential schools. The reports are available on the website (trc.ca).

"These are hard truths, but only by coming to grips with these truths can we lay the foundation for reconciliation," Chief Commissioner Murray Sinclair noted in the report.

Other urgent recommendations included the importance of appropriate mental health services in remote communities in the North, and the importance of getting information to the Canadian public as soon as possible, so that the impact and legacy can be better understood.

The TRC described Residential Schools as an assault on Aboriginal



Commissioners Willie Littlechild, Murray Sinclair and Marie Wilson listen as residential school survivors tell their personal stories.

children, families, cultures, and self-governing and self-sustaining Aboriginal nations, which denied all Canadians a proper education about Aboriginal societies and the history of the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

But although the report notes the government took part in deliberate assault, the story is complicated when it comes to religious organizations who believed themselves to be responding "to sacred call." Sinclair, in responding to a teleconference question, noted that those First Nations people that embraced various denominations of Christianity require active support and understanding from

churches as they struggle to recover and regain residential school losses such as language, spirituality, identity, and culture in order to bring about true reconciliation.

"There is a significant lack of knowledge," observed Sinclair. "Many do not know what went on or that there were residential schools in Canada. If there is to be discussion about reconciliation, we need an educated public that can contribute to it and participate in it."

"This is not Aboriginal history, this is Canadian history," emphasized Commissioner Marie Wilson, elaborating on the need for a full education and awareness of the 150 years of residential schools and their impact on everyone.

Practical recommendations included providing personal copies of the government's apology to all residential school survivors.

Beyond making recommendations to support, educate, and begin a process of truth and healing towards reconciliation, the report concludes that this story has heroes; reconciliation requires more than a commission - an engaged and educated society - and finally, the time to contribute to the reconciliation process is now.

The document also quotes the preceding "Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples" which calls for reconciliation, recognition of self-determination, and recognition for Métis land rights and governance, among other suggestions.

Saskatoon will host the next national event in June of 2012. Three have been held so far, in Winnipeg, Inuvik, and Halifax. Regionally, five communities in Saskatchewan have already been visited and added to that will be Onion Lake April 3 - 5, Fort Qu'Appelle May 14 - 15, Buffalo Narrows May 17 - 18, La Ronge June 5 - 7, North Battleford July 9 - 10, Beauval July 12 - 15, and Ile-La-Crosse July 14.

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PotashCorp makes huge contribution to SIIT student centre

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

The Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT) set up the SIIT Foundation in October of last year. The Foundation allows them to receive and receipt charitable gifts on behalf of the institution.

Recently, they received their first donation and it is a beauty. Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Inc. (PotashCorp) announced a \$750,000 contribution to the Foundation to help students in their studies. The donation will be used to transform the institute's Resource Room into a student success centre that will house computers, study programs and other learning resources to help students earn their diplomas and certificates.

"The growth of our company and our province depends on the talents and skills of these young Aboriginal people," said Garth Moore, President of PCS Potash.

"This investment is about feeding the future and ensuring these students have the tools and support they need to complete their programs."

The renovated space will be renamed the "PotashCorp Student Success Centre" and it couldn't come soon enough for the students.

"I was just talking with my students last week and we really needed a place where we could come together and study. We don't really have a place like that right now," said Trevor Merasty, a first year Business Administration student and President of the Student Leadership Council.

"This will mean a lot. The computers will help. We have a lab here but it is smaller, and when they get the wireless, we will be very happy. We needed a place where



Trevor Merasty, President of the Student Leadership Council at SIIT presented PCS Potash President Garth Moore with a Star Blanket as a sign of their thanks for the \$750,000 donation to the SIIT Foundation.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

people can come together. It has the tools like the whiteboards and the TV monitors. It is a big upgrade for the school and really nice to see."

Located in Saskatoon, SIIT is an institution of choice for Aboriginal students looking to pursue careers in business, industrial trades, health care and information technology and has been innovative in removing barriers that stop their students from succeeding.

"Many of our students do not have computers or a supportive learning environment to complete their

projects at home," explained Randell Morris, President and CEO of SIIT.

"When complete, this new student success centre will provide access to computers, a place for group work and a space for tutors and instructors to help students work on their class assignments.

This generous contribution will greatly enhance student learning and student success at SIIT.

"Thank you to PotashCorp for helping our students learn, grow and achieve," added Morris.

The Future Matters!



Aboriginal Peoples Survey

Education and Employment

Starting in February 2012, Statistics Canada will be conducting the Aboriginal Peoples Survey with First Nations people living off reserve, Métis and Inuit across Canada. You may be invited to participate on a voluntary basis.

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Harper names new lieutenant-governor for Saskatchewan

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

A new representative of the Queen was recently named for Saskatchewan. Premier Brad Wall offered his congratulations to Vaughn C. Schofield, S.V.M., on her appointment as Saskatchewan's 21st lieutenant-governor.

"Vaughn Schofield has contributed to the well-being of our province through her work in business, the arts, education, broadcasting, corporate governance, crime prevention and community involvement," Wall said.

"As Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel of 16 Saskatchewan Service Battalion, she provides leadership and support to the unit and to the Canadian Forces Reserve, in particular to those who have returned from Afghanistan."

Organizations benefiting from Schofield's leadership include the Canadian Forces Liaison Council, St. John Ambulance (Saskatchewan), The Hospitals of Regina Foundation, the MacKenzie Art Gallery, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Program, Regina and Regina Beach Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise Club.

In recognition for her service to the community, Schofield was a 2009



Prime Minister Stephen Harper chats with Mrs. Vaughn Solomon Schofield, the new Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan. (PMO Photo by Jason Ransom)

Recipient of the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

Wall also praised the contribution made to Saskatchewan by retiring Lieutenant Governor Dr. Gordon L. Barnhart and his wife, Naomi.

"On behalf of the people of Saskatchewan I would like to thank Their Honours for their tremendous service to our province," Wall said.

"They have touched so many people with their warmth and generous spirit, but

none more than the youth of our province through the Lieutenant Governor's Leadership Forum. Tami and I wish them well as they enter this new chapter of their life."



Prince Charles and his wife, the Duchess of Cornwall will be in Saskatchewan later this year.

Lieutenant Governor Schofield will be welcoming Prince Charles and his wife Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall, when they visit the province as part of a Royal Tour of Canada during the Diamond Jubilee year of the Queen's reign as Queen of Canada.

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Aboriginal women taking on leadership roles at U of S

By Kirk Sibbald
For Eagle Feather News

She originally viewed Saskatoon as analogous to Timbuktu, but after interviewing for a faculty position at the University of Saskatchewan's College of Arts and Science, Kristina Fagan was sold.

A member of the Labrador Métis, Fagan grew up on Canada's East Coast and eventually completed a PhD in Aboriginal literature at the University of Toronto. After interviewing for faculty positions across the country she was presented with multiple job offers, but said the U of S made her choice relatively easy.

"Moving to Saskatoon was like moving



WINONA WHEELER

to Timbuktu. But when I came here for my interview, I was really made to feel by my department, the dean and the university as a whole that working in an Aboriginal-related area was really valued and important.

"And I hadn't felt that at (other places) I went to school or interviewed for positions," she said.

"It has been a really, really good place to work and I haven't regretted my decision for a moment."

Fagan's story is not unlike that of many other Aboriginal female faculty in the college – individuals who choose to work at the College of Arts and Science, in large part, due to the college's increasing emphasis on Aboriginal programming and scholarship.

A professor in the Department of English, Fagan was also hired as the inaugural assistant dean of Aboriginal affairs for the College of Arts and Science in 2011. Fagan says this position is indicative of the college and university's commitment to making campus a place where Aboriginal students and faculty can feel welcome, supported and valued.

"At other (universities) Aboriginal education is almost a fringe issue. Here, though, I think pretty much everyone on campus recognizes that Aboriginal education, and the position of Aboriginal people in society, is a critically-important issue," she said.

"To me it's amazing that the (College of Arts and Science's) dean, the president, all the way up the ladder there is a sense that Aboriginal initiatives are one of, if not the, top issues for the university. I think we're really special in that way."



ANNIE MCCAY

Pioneers

The College of Arts and Science is currently home to almost 700 Aboriginal students – almost half of the total number on campus – and the number of Aboriginal professors and sessional lecturers is also increasing annually.

To ensure this growth continues, Aboriginal-themed initiatives now figure prominently in the college and university's Third Integrated Plans, which chart strategic



CAROLINE TAIT

directions for the next four years on campus.

Of course, it wasn't always this way, and several female students and faculty deserve credit for helping pave the way.

Annie McCay was the university's first Métis woman to graduate, receiving a bachelor of arts degree from the College of Arts and Science in 1915. She served on student council, The Sheaf editorial board, played women's hockey and was the first secretary-treasurer of the U of S alumni association.

Freda Ahenakew, of the Ahtahkakoop



KRISTINA FAGAN

First Nation, received a bachelor's of arts degree from the College of Arts and Science and was one of the university's first female Aboriginal professors, joining the Department of Native Studies in the early 1980s.

• Continued on Page 15

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FREDA AHENAKEW

• Continued from Page 14

A nationally-respected expert on Cree language and traditions, Ahenakew received an honorary doctor of laws degree from the U of S in 1997.

And Winona Wheeler, whose family



MARY LONGMAN

McCay, Ahenakew paved the way

hails from the George Gordon First Nation, joined the Department of Native Studies in 1987 and currently serves as the department's head.

When Wheeler first joined the College of Arts and Science, she was the only female Aboriginal professor and there were few Aboriginal students attending the U of S. Although she says Aboriginal people are still under-represented at the university – particularly in the faculty ranks – considerable progress has taken place over the last 25 years.

"A lot has happened," she said. "There wasn't much Aboriginal content or programming when I first got here, and now it appears in a lot of different courses and departments (across the university)."

Role Models

The College of Arts and Science has made hiring more Aboriginal professors a top priority over its next planning cycle, but the ones who already there play key roles in student success.

Caroline Tait, a Métis professor in the Department of Native Studies, says she sees firsthand how important it is for Aboriginal students to have professors they can identify with on a personal level.

"I see students who highly identify with the faculty, and that creates a bond," she said. "It means a great deal to students to see people who have come from similar backgrounds, know the culture and have seen and lived through similar issues."

Fagan agrees, saying it's important students realize the college and university aren't simply another part of "the big, white world." She said Aboriginal professors in the College of Arts and Science form meaningful, lasting connections with many of their

Aboriginal students, and this is something she only sees increasing as more Aboriginal professors are hired.

"It's important that we have Aboriginal faculty and staff so that Aboriginal students feel like this is their world too," she said.

To enhance the welcoming environment created by Aboriginal faculty in the College of Arts and Science, Fagan has also implemented two new programs focused on helping students succeed personally and academically.

One of the first tasks Fagan undertook as the assistant dean of Aboriginal affairs was creating the Aboriginal Student Achievement Office (ASAO). The office, which is staffed by two Aboriginal academic advisors – Lorie Peters-Whiteman and Jacob Roesler – provides personalized advising services.

In the fall of 2012, the college will also be launching the Aboriginal First-Year Achievement Program (ASAP), designed



JENNIFER POUDRIER

to help new students succeed through mentorship services, financial supports and life-skills education.

Fagan said ASAP was developed, in large part, due to data that shows a dramatically high dropout rate for first-year Aboriginal students in the College of Arts and Science. Once students make it to second year, however, graduation rates skyrocket to almost 86 per cent.

"I found that really sad. You come to university, maybe you're the first generation in your family to be here ... and then you don't make it through first year. That has got to be so tough," said Fagan.

"So with the college's new support systems and offices and like ASAO and ASAP, we hope to help students get through that tough first year. Ultimately, that's what really motivates me. I want to see students succeed."



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Aboriginal financial planners face unique challenges

By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

For the twelfth straight year, hundreds of people attended the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada (AFOA) National Conference in Saskatoon last month.

The theme of this year's AFOA's National Conference was "good management makes for good governance," and the workshops were well received by those in attendance.

"If you compare and contrast this conference to other conferences and chiefs meetings, often the first day people are scrambling to get quorum," notes Keith Martell, co-chair, along with Leanne Bellegarde, of this year's conference.

"At 8:30 on the dot, on the first day, the room is full of people."

Martell says there were two people from Northwest Territories who, due to limited flights to Saskatoon, flew from Yellowknife to Edmonton, and then drove a rented car in order to attend.

"That's dedication. That tells me there's a need being met."

AFOA's conference is the only forum for the exchange of knowledge and information on Aboriginal finance and management in the country. Aboriginal financial professionals, band administrators and other managers, chiefs, tribal council members, government representatives and consultants working with Aboriginal communities get together to explore emerging strategies and tools to enhance finance and management in Aboriginal communities and organizations.

Some of the highlights included the conference's

plenary speakers. Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo spoke on the first day, which Goodtrack says was significant, as it came on the heels of his January meeting with the Crown. Satsan Herb George, president of the National Centre for First Nations

Goodtrack said there are a number of issues facing financial managers, including "dwindling resources while still dealing with core issues, such as human resource management, which often falls upon you as an individual," as well as IT issues and administrative items.

"Your role is changing," he explained. "You need to be providing strategic planning."

Martell was with AFOA when it was created, and says it's impressive how much capacity has been built in that short of time.

He says financial managers face issues around accounting standards and the administration of funding agreements within the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (formerly INAC).

"But the bigger issues are doing that in the context of working in Aboriginal communities," he explains. "You're not just a financial officer but also the systems administrator and human resource manager."

Recognizing that, Goodtrack says AFOA will be pushing a Certified Aboriginal Public Administrator program over the next couple of years, and it also plans to develop a series of workshops to help communities deal with HR management issues. Goodtrack says a taskforce will also be established around financial literacy.

Next year's conference is in Toronto. Goodtrack says the conference committee has begun work, but there are few details. Former National Chief Phil Fontaine is on the conference committee, and one of the co-chairs is Shannin Metatawabin, manager of Aboriginal Affairs and Sustainability with DeBeers Canada. Goodtrack says a female co-chair will soon be chosen.



Dennis Meeches, First Nation Bank CEO Keith Martell, AFOA President Terry Goodtrack, Saskatoon Tribal Council Chief Felix Thomas, Assembly of First Nations Chief Shawn Atleo, (two unidentified), Dana Soonias, CEO Wanuskewin and Leanne Bellgarde, PotashCorp Director Aboriginal Strategy. (Photo Darcy McKenzie)

Governance, spoke about traditional governance on the second day.

In addition to the plenary speakers, there were a variety of workshops, which Terry Goodtrack, AFOA's newly appointed president and CEO, says seemed to go over well. Workshops focused on topics like financial management, such as how to address economic development and infrastructure needs as well as exploring the relationship between First Nations health determinants, financial capacity and governance decisions; business development, where people looked at how to reap the benefits of positive relationships with resource industries; and leadership, which looked at how to develop a chief and council policy manual.

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Loretta Pete Lambert, Riva Farrell Racette, Signa Daum Shanks and Lea Lapointe participated in the Aboriginal Rights Moot.

Aboriginal Rights Moot puts law students to the test

By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

Three University of Saskatchewan law students put their studies into real-life practice earlier this month when they participated in the Kawaskimhon National Aboriginal Rights Moot.

Hosted this year at the U of S and held at Wanuskewin Heritage Park, the moot is non-competitive and based on current issues in Indigenous-government relations. Law schools from across Canada represent various interested parties and are required to prepare written arguments and give oral presentations on matters arising out of the selected moot problem.

The U of S team represented the Saskatchewan government. The moot is conducted in a circle format, and its objective is to attempt to reach a consensus on the issues raised by the moot problem, which this year was to develop a process for dealing with the interpretation of treaties.

The more traditional format is what drew participants Léa Lapointe, Riva Farrell Racette and Loretta Pete Lambert.

"It shows how law can become better by bringing creativity and tradition to decision-making," says Lapointe.

A focus on Aboriginal rights is precisely why Farrell Racette decided to attend law school, and why she wanted to participate.

"The moot is so unique, not being competitive, in a more traditional formal, and in a circle that's more cooperative and everyone talking it out," versus a typical

litigation exercise that would typically simulate a trial.

Signa Daum Shanks coached the team and participated in moots herself while studying law.

"It really affirms the concerns I have about law are legitimate," she says, saying the moot recharges her. "It was the support system I didn't imagine it would be, and I met people who felt the same way as me."

Daum Shanks says she spent half of her law school considering quitting because she constantly wondered why she was there.

In preparation for the three-day event, the women say they did a lot of researching on treaties, which opened their eyes.

"It's changed how I view things," explains Pete Lambert. "Now I recognize how complex the problem is."

"How complex the relationships are," adds Lapointe. "There's a delicate balance between the role of the federal and provincial governments and how they interact with First Nations. There are lots of historically rooted feelings about the issue."

An added bonus to participating in the moot is reading all of the submissions from each team. The women learned the positions, and frustrations, of various parties such as Treaty 8 representatives or the FSIN, and say they would never have had the time to do all of that research.

The team was also able to call on four Knowledge Keepers to help with their moot preparation: Professor Rob Innes, Past Indigenous Bar Association President Margaret Froh, Justice Georgina Jackson, and Judge Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond.

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This Month: Selecting a Site for Canada's National Used Fuel Repository

Canada's plan involves the construction of a national repository for the long-term management of used nuclear fuel. Used nuclear fuel is a by-product from the generation of electricity in nuclear power plants. The plan also involves the development of a used fuel transportation system and construction of a centre of expertise that will be a hub for national and international collaboration. In implementing Canada's plan, an important decision is where to locate this national repository and centre of expertise.

Q. How will a site be selected?

A. The NWMO is leading a site selection process to identify an informed and willing host community for the national repository and centre of expertise required by Canada's plan. This site selection process was developed over a two-year period in dialogue with Canadians, and reflects their ideas, experience and best advice on what an open, transparent and fair process for making this decision would include. The process also builds upon the best knowledge and experience within Canada and internationally.

Q. When will a decision on a site be made?

A. The site selection process will require between seven and 10 years of study to identify a preferred site for Canada's plan. No decision will be made before these studies have been completed and the project has been the subject of formal regulatory review and environmental assessment.

Q. What are the goals of the site selection process?

A. The site selection process will ensure:

- » any community that is selected to host the facility is both informed about the project and willing to host it;
- » any site that is selected to host this facility will safely contain and isolate used nuclear fuel for a very long period of time in an appropriate geological formation, and that there is an acceptable way of transporting used fuel to the site;
- » surrounding communities affected by the project and the transportation of used fuel are involved in planning how the project will be implemented;
- » First Nations, Métis and Inuit potentially affected by the implementation of this project are involved in learning, assessment and planning of the project.

Q. What factors will be considered?

A. Any potential community and site will be assessed against a number of factors, both technical and social in nature. First and foremost, the preferred site will be one that can safely contain and isolate used nuclear fuel, protecting humans and the environment over the very long term. Secondly, locating the facility in the community must help foster the well-being, or quality of life, of the local community and region in which it is implemented. Through the site selection process, the community and site will be assessed in a series of steps, with each step designed to evaluate the site in greater detail than the step before. A community will proceed from one step to the next only if it chooses to do so and if the work to assess the suitability of the site supports it. Ultimately, a compelling demonstration of willingness will be required, involving residents of the community, in order to host this project.

Q. Are some communities being targeted?

A. No. Only communities that are interested in the project, and express this interest by contacting the NWMO, will be considered.

Q. Can communities leave the process at any time?

A. Yes. A community that enters the site selection process can leave the process at any time up until signing a formal agreement many years in the future.



Jo-Ann Facella is the Director of Social Research and Dialogue at the Nuclear Waste Management Organization. She has worked for prominent public opinion firms (Gallup Canada and Goldfarb Consultants) and as Senior Advisor at Ontario Power Generation before joining the NWMO in 2002. Over the past 20 years, her work has focused on public involvement in policy making, and in particular, societal needs and expectations concerning the long-term management of used nuclear fuel. Ms. Facella has a master's degree in Political Science.

"Ask the NWMO" is an advertising feature published regularly in this and other community newspapers to respond to readers' questions about Canada's plan for managing used nuclear fuel over the long term and its implementation. The Nuclear Waste Management Organization welcomes your questions. Please forward your questions to askthenwmo@nwmo.ca.

For more information about the site selection process or other NWMO activities, please visit:



www.nwmo.ca

Human Resources VP likes family atmosphere at SIGA

By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

It was while being raised by a single mother on the Ochapowace First Nation that Shauna Bear knew she wanted to work in a field helping people. Her position as Vice President of Human Resources at the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (SIGA) and her nearly 12 years with the company has given her that opportunity.

Bear joined SIGA immediately after completing a two-year Business Management program at Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies. She had her heart set on SIGA because it was First Nations owned and operated, but didn't really know what she wanted to do.

"I just knew I wanted to help people. And in the HR field, you're always dealing with people."

Bear began as a Human Resources Officer at the Northern Lights Casino in Prince Albert. She only learned two years after being hired that there were other candidates with more experience and education, but she was chosen because she was fresh out of school and could be developed into what SIGA was looking for.

"Since then, it's been a whirlwind of development for me," laughs Bear.

Bear completed an intensive seven-day HR Management certificate program at Queen's University. She later participated in an under fill program in the Employee Relations department at SIGA, before successfully competing for director.

While in that position, Bear focused on developing and updating programs and services, such as the employee management committees (EMCs). When she took over, there were only a couple and now there is one at each casino as well as at central office. EMCs provide a forum for employees who are selected by their peers to discuss and work through issues with management and HR.

Under Bear, policies and procedures were updated to ensure any complaints were addressed in a timely manner, and a coaching and discipline program was also developed. This program provides training to supervisors and managers on how to coach employees to improve performance as well as how to deal with discipline.

Bear was director of employee relations for five years until she had the opportunity to act as VP of HR. She then successfully competed for the job.

She is most proud of developing a HR strategic map while in this position. It outlines a five-year plan for how to ensure the company is run efficiently while recruiting and retaining talented and engaged employees.

Bear has been instrumental in developing the health and wellness program, for which SIGA won the First Nations Canadian Gaming Award in Innovation last year.

At each casino there is there is health and wellness coordinator who is the point of contact if employees need help with family, personal, or addictions issues. It might mean referring the employee to a counsellor or meeting regularly with the coordinator to develop a plan to prevent the issue from reoccurring.

SIGA also has a number of leaves that other companies don't because it is First Nations run with First Nations employees (64 per cent of SIGA's employees are First Nations, and that rises to 75 per cent when including all Aboriginal people). For example, there is bereavement leave as well as funeral assistance if an immediate family member dies.

Bear says anywhere you go within SIGA, you are treated like family. She wants to continue building on that feeling as well as continuous learning.

"Every single one of us is a leader in our own way. You don't have to be a manager to be a leader."



Shauna Bear has found the ideal career as Vice President of Human Resources at the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority. (Photo by Darla Read)



North West Regional College

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For more information about North West Regional College, visit their website at www.nwrc.sk.ca

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Program is pending final approval of funding from all partners

Touchwood First Nations partner with ATCO

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

One of the largest modular building and site services companies in the world has entered into business with three First Nations in Saskatchewan to build a giant sized camp for the BHP Billiton proposed mine at Jansen. George Gordon First Nation, Day Star First Nation and Kawacatoose First Nation have joined with ATCO Structures & Logistics to provide workforce housing lodges, camp catering, and services.

"ATCO is excited to be working with the Touchwood Area First Nations in this resource-rich area of Saskatchewan," said Harry Wilmot, president and chief operating officer of ATCO Structures & Logistics.

"We have a long-standing tradition of working with Aboriginal communities and businesses and anticipate a productive relationship with these three First Nations.

"Our goal is to create a mutually beneficial venture that creates employment and training in this community."

The accommodation facility features diverse, high-end amenities including two pre-engineered buildings, a 20,000 sq. ft. sports complex with gymnasium, squash courts, weight room, and a raised running track that overlooks the gym.

A recreation director will organize fitness programs. A separate pre-engineered building will house a 200-seat movie theatre. The complex is expected to host a whopping 2,500 people.

The core building includes a 1,200-person dining room, a separate private dining area, lounge, library, convenience store, medical centre, and full laundry service.

Fireplaces located throughout the facility will provide a warm, comfortable setting. The two-storey accommodation wings are connected by arctic corridors and feature 160 sq. ft. bedrooms with private washrooms. Each room will include a flat screen TV, phone and wireless internet capabilities.

The first phase, comprising 500 rooms, will be operational in October 2012 with completion of the full 2,586-room camp and facilities scheduled for mid-2013.

Part of the deal is to

include an employment and training centre in the three Bands' traditional territory.

"This partnership with ATCO will improve the skills and training of our people and increase our capacity to gain meaningful employment," said Chief Glen Pratt of George Gordon First Nation.

"ATCO's strategy supports our transition from a welfare economy to a treaty-based economy," added Pratt.

"We are encouraged by the opportunities that our people will benefit from as resources are developed in our traditional territories."



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Caporal chef **CRAIG WIGGINS**, Inuit, Cartwright Labrador

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Elementary students learn importance of buffalo

By Meagen Thomas
For Eagle Feather News

Children in two Regina elementary schools are getting to see, smell and touch Saskatchewan First Nations history thanks to a new education program created by the Royal Saskatchewan Museum in partnership with Saskatchewan Provincial Parks.

Buffalo Basics turns history into a hands-on experience for elementary school students in Grades 4, 5 and 6.

Through a talk delivered by museum staffer Perry Woloshin and by touching, holding and passing around a variety of bison-related objects, students learn about historical relationship between the buffalo and the First Nations people who both respected and relied on these animals for survivals.

"The students were fascinated with looking at things. Touching and smelling a smoked hide, feeling what a bison hide is like, or picking up and feeling how heavy a buffalo robe is," said the museum's director of public programs Paula Hill.

"The First Nations had a use for about every part of the bison and that's something different for the kids who get food from the supermarket. Even just the idea of using

an animal this way and how important it was and all the ways you could make use of it. They don't think of it the same way afterwards."

The Buffalo Basics education program grew out of an interpretive display the museum created last summer for Buffalo Pound Provincial Park. The static table display was a hit with visitors so it was deployed a second time as part of the First Nations pavilion at Agribition.

"Elder Dick Bird, who works with the school system and worked in parks as well, was keen to take it into schools, especially those schools with a high population of First Nations children," said Hill.

"We haven't been doing extension programs of this type so I thought this was good chance to pilot it, see how kids liked it, and the ins and outs of taking it around."

Students are encouraged to touch the sample objects and ask questions as they learn how the various parts of the animal, from horn to tail, were used to manufacture leather goods, cooking utensils, sewing kits, soap and games. None of the items in the display are from the museum's collection, however. The painstakingly detailed modern replicas are kid-tough substitutes that look and feel as authentic as centuries-old artifacts.

"Children want to handle and see what these things are like and you can't do that with artifacts," said Hill. "The horn spoon and necklace and sewing kits containing and awl and needle are from a reconstruction company who specialize in making these things, and the hide and robe are modern as well."

Over the coming months, the museum will determine whether Buffalo Basics becomes a regular touring program and visits even more schools in more areas.

"The bison are a part of First Nations history and culture and also our story – Saskatchewan's – as a whole," said Hill.

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AGEN launches speakers bureau

By Kerry Benjio
For Eagle Feather News

After almost two decades of existence, the Aboriginal Government Employee Network (AGEN) is looking towards the future.

AGEN, founded in 1992, is an organization dedicated to partnering, promoting and supporting workplace environments that are committed to the recruitment, retention and advancement of Aboriginal employees throughout the Government of Saskatchewan's provincial ministries and Crown corporations.

AGEN Chair Cherish Deegan said the agency continues to grow and expand. It now has hundreds of members.

One of the things the group plans to focus on is its speakers bureau, Pikiskwewak, which will be relaunched in March. The name is a Cree word which means "they speak."

"It was an initiative that was started in 2003 as a partnership with AGEN and the Public Service Commission," said Deegan.

"We're bringing it back this year because the organization itself, AGEN, has focused its efforts now on recruitment, retention and cultural engagement."

She said it's important to make a connection with Aboriginal youth before they reach college so they can start planning early for their future careers.

"The idea was to relaunch it because there is a need to connect to Aboriginal communities whether they are on-reserve or in the city," said Deegan.

She said AGEN provides the training and certifica-

tion of the speakers. She is hoping to have speakers trained and ready to go this month.

A workshop was planned for February but it was decided that training would be done on a one-on basis.

Pikiskwewak presentations run for approximately 45 minutes and include the speaker's personal success story. Deegan said many of the AGEN members have unique stories of triumph that can serve as an inspiration for other youth because they can see that although it may be difficult at times, persistence and perseverance does pay off in the end.

Deegan would like the youth to see that no matter where you grow up no career is out of reach and anything is attainable.

AGEN speakers also play the "Money Game" which allows students to participate in estimating their cost of living expenses and identifies the types of jobs within the public service that are related to their current areas of interest whether it be math, science or English. She said the goal is to get students thinking about their future and how to get there and showing them that it is attainable by providing role models.

Deegan said AGEN is not just a Regina organization but is a provincial network. She said more work is planned to reach other parts of the province.

"A high number of public service employees are in Regina. We're changing that in terms of the kinds of services we offer," she said.

"We definitely want to utilize the fact that it's a provincial network and that there's more opportunities to increase our outreach in terms of visibility in remote Aboriginal communities."



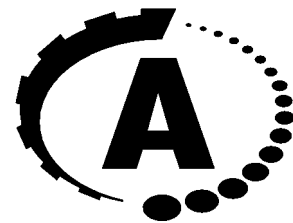
Cherish Deegan is chair of the Aboriginal Government Employees Network.

AGEN will host its 20th anniversary celebrations in Saskatoon this fall.

Deegan believes that the network has the potential to grow and will become known as a provincial entity, because Aboriginal government employees work throughout the province.

For more information on Pikiskwewak, to book a speaker or to learn more about AGEN, visit its website at www.saskagen.com.

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The Michif Languages



Language gives us our identity ... more importantly it allows us to understand our culture, dance, song and legends need to be told in the language to keep the significance of our culture...

—Rose Marie McPherson, Dauphin, Manitoba

Languages or the ability to speak them have existed for more than 500,000 years. Thousands of languages have existed since the time of our early human ancestors. Many languages such as Beothuk, Bungee (a Métis language mixing Cree and Scots-Gaelic), Manx or Prussian have died out.

Others, such as Latin and Sanskrit, are dead but continue to be studied. Some, such as English, have evolved into contemporary living languages based on a variety of ancestral languages. Languages are therefore living, evolving, and sometimes dying entities.

More importantly, language is more than a series of utilitarian expressions that express our needs and wants. Attached to languages are cultures and worldviews. Losing any language is a loss for all humanity because such a loss means losing a collective sense of a people in time and place, a distinct worldview, Oral Traditions, spiritual systems, healing traditions and harvesting strategies.

Métis individuals and organizations are concerned about preserving their heritage languages. At one time, the Métis were the most multilingual people in Canada. They spoke their own languages, as well a variety of First Nations and Settler languages. As a nation and as individuals, they continue to speak several languages.

Unfortunately, colonization has had a devastating impact upon the Métis' collective identity, particularly through the near eradication of Métis heritage languages. For almost a century, the Métis bore the stigma of having Aboriginal heritage, of having mixed ancestry, and of being "rebels."

This meant that many Métis abandoned their heritage or downplayed it in order to better fit into the non-Aboriginal mainstream. The end result was a loss of heritage language retention among at least three generations of Métis, which means that most Métis (perhaps 90-95 per cent) are unable to have a simple conversation in any of their heritage languages. The vast majority of those who still speak Métis heritage languages regularly are elderly. As a result, English has become the working and living language of the Métis Nation.

Of all the Métis heritage languages that are imperiled, the Michif languages are in the most danger of extinction. This is further complicated because the question of what is a Michif language is sometimes politically-charged. Indeed, linguists, Métis political institutions, and Métis educational and cultural institutions

have waded into this debate.

The Gabriel Dumont Institute recognizes three Michif languages in Saskatchewan because there are three different, unique and valuable languages which Métis community people in our province call "Michif." They are listed here as Michif-Cree, Michif-French, and Northern Michif.

Michif-Cree, according to linguists, is considered the "classic" Michif language in terms of its structure and history. It is composed of Plains Cree (with some

Saskatchewan (from the Battlefords north to Debden and down towards Yorkton and into the Qu'Appelle Valley), southern and central Manitoba (St. Lazare, Camperville, and Duck Bay), and northern North Dakota, where, in the Turtle Mountains, it is known as "Turtle Mountain Chippewa-Cree."

Of all the Michif languages, it has by far the largest geographic range. It is spelled phonetically and does not yet have a standardized orthography, although Norman Fleury and Rita Flammand use a double vowel system to write Michif-Cree.

Michif-French or Métis-French—traditionally spoken by the Métis in Batoche/St. Louis, Saskatchewan, and in St. Laurent and St. Eustache, Manitoba, and in other communities in Western Canada—is considered by linguists to be a dialect of Canadian French.

However, Michif-French is not always easily intelligible to Francophones. It differs from standard Canadian French in a number of ways including its lack of gender differentiation for personal pronouns, its borrowing of Cree and Saukteaux syntax (but only a few words), and its different French vocabulary, vowel pronunciation, and possessive construction.

Michif-French is one of the ancestor languages of Michif-Cree since both languages have nearly identical French components (which evolved from the French spoken by the Canayen of French-Canadian voyageurs).

Until recently, Francophones stigmatized Michif-French speakers for speaking "bad" French in communities such as St. Laurent and St. Eustache, Manitoba. Consequently, the language was not handed down to succeeding generations.

Like Michif-Cree, Michif-French is spelled phonetically, and does not have a standardized orthography.

Northern Michif is spoken in the northwest corner of Saskatchewan, with most speakers living in or near Île-à-la-Crosse, Buffalo Narrows, Beauval, and Green Lake. It is called "Michif," "Michif-Cree," "French-Cree," and even "Church-Cree" because of its smaller French component (about 2-5 per cent).

It is, according to linguists, a Woods Cree dialect with some French (noun) word borrowings. Île-à-la-



Run - pimbahtaa by artist Dustin Gerow

Saukteaux) verbs/verb phrases and French (with some English) nouns/noun phrases. Its origins date to the late eighteenth century. However, its precursors may have existed in the Great Lakes region a few generations earlier.

Michif-Cree is spoken in all three Prairie provinces, and into Montana and North Dakota. Michif-Cree communities include those in central and southeastern



"Louis Riel Day — la jhoornii poor Louis Riel" (Artist, Dustin Gerow)

Crosse Michif is strongly supported by community people, and is taught in schools, most notably Rossignol Community School in Île-à-la-Crosse.

This language has a standardized (Cree) orthography, although its few French words may be spelled phonetically or in standardized French.

Survival of Michif languages requires the commitment of Métis community, partners

to preserve these languages.

Standardization is also required if the Michif languages are to survive. Very few Michif speakers can write in Michif-Cree or Michif-French, and neither language has a standardized orthography or lexicon.

Finally, employing the passion and dedication of Michif speakers themselves is vital for the intergenerational transmission of these languages.

If these goals are not achieved, the Michif languages will disappear like Bungee, Beothuk, Manx or Prussian.

That would be tragic since the world would lose some of the most ingenious ways of communicating and storytelling ever developed.

Michif Online Dictionary and Apps Available in Spring 2012.

In partnership with the Department of Canadian Heritage's Aboriginal Languages Initiative program, the Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) is developing an online Michif-Cree dictionary as well as mobile apps that will be available to Apple and Android markets. Translated and narrated by Michif-language expert Norman Fleury, this project contains translations of over 11,500 words.

The project will also be made available for the Nintendo DS, which will contain select illustrations to go along with Michif-Cree words and phrases to help with learning the language.

Métis artist Dustin Gerow has created many original pieces for this project.

Creating further images for this project will be an ongoing aspect, which will be migrated to the Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture and on apps in future versions.

GDI is estimating a May 31, 2012 launch of the website which is being created by the University of Saskatchewan's Education and Media Production team.

Keep an eye on www.metismuseum.ca for access to the website.

—Article by Darren R. Préfontaine



"Bison — aen bufloo" (Artist, Dustin Gerow)

Standardization is also required if the Michif languages are to survive. Very few Michif speakers can write in Michif-Cree or Michif-French

Ensuring the survival of all three Michif languages will require a firm commitment by Michif speakers themselves, the Métis community, Métis educational, cultural and political institutions, and all levels of government. Increased human and fiscal infrastructure is needed for Michif-language resources and programs, particularly dictionaries, grammar and phrase books, children's audio books, and language nests and immersion programs — the tools needed



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Dirk ain't got nuthin', plus Posse pickup lines

John L.: Political turmoil over the fate of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations has cooled down even as prospective leaders assess their chances for Chieftainship this October. Here to comment on what to expect in the next few months is Eagle Feather News' own Dirk Dashing.

Dirk: Sorry John, I got nothing.

John L.: Um, I don't understand. We talked about this.

Dirk: Yeah, didn't happen. Didn't feel like it. I know what you're going to say, but in my defence, John, I really didn't feel like it.

John L.: But this is your thing, Dirk. You meet the people, find out what they are talking about, and bring me back penetrating insights on the social, political, economic and political climate in First Nation country.

Dirk: What can I say, John. The Dirkster has adopted a new law.

John L.: A new law?

Dirk: I call it Dashing's Law.

John L.: Ok, I'll bite. What is "Dashing's Law"?

Dirk: Dashing's Law is like Dashing's love – it's long and deep, and very, very hard.

John L.: I still don't understand. That tells me nothing. What does Dashing's Law have anything to do with you not having a

column ready for me this month?

Dirk: Once again, John, you've earned my pity and my contempt. Dashing's Law takes no prisoners and leaves no evidence except for the sweet mysteries

of life, the universe and everything.

Also, there is cinnamon.

John L.: That makes absolutely no sense. Do you have anything for our readers? How about the chances of a woman becoming Chief of the FSIN?

Dirk: Sounds good. Let's do it.

John L.: That's it? Let's do it? Nothing about the challenge to the political culture in Saskatchewan, or the in-roads that have to be made against the old-boys-club, or the need for a new political style or approach.

Dirk: Yup, nope, I got nothing for you. Women should get on with it. Make it happen.

John L.: "Get on with it"? That's all you got? What about the provincial government's refusal to act on the duty to consult and accommodate? I understand First Nations are frustrated with the province's approach.

Dirk: Damn right, John. They be frustrated.

John L.: So ... you got no comment on that either?

Dirk: Things will change when projects grind to a halt.

John L.: What about the need to combat racism?

Dirk: Meh. Small people with a little power will

always be a bad thing, John. I'll get on it next month.

John L.: What have you been doing?

Dirk: I got NetFlix, Mr. Littlefingers-there. All the movies and TV programs I want for eight wingwangs a month. You can't go wrong with prices like that, John. Also, I have a nasty head cold, and my picture making thingy with the words in my head is all medicated.

John L.: I can't help it, Dirk. It feels like I've wasted valuable space in the paper this month. I sometimes wonder why I pay you.

Dirk: I always wonder that, John. But thanks. With this month's paycheque I can finally get that rare Star Wars Han Solo Stormtrooper action figure.

John L.: You're going to buy a doll?

Dirk: Dude, they're called action

figures! Oh, wait, my Posse did send me some great pick up lines for members of the Lonely Hearts Club. That'll fill up some space. Let's see...

John L.: I don't think we need that but thanks anyway...

Dirk: ...so you walk up to a woman you want to meet – or a dude, we won't discriminate against our two-spirited friends – and you say, "If you were a booger I'd pick you first." Or how about this gem, "Smile if you want me." Or try this icebreaker, "Does my breath smell OK?"

John L.: Really, Dirk, I don't...

Dirk: Or try this classic, "I've been noticing you not noticing me" or "Hi, I'm Mr. Right. Someone said you were looking for me." I like this one, "Baby, if you were words on a page, you'd be the fine print." See what I did there John? We are writing in a newspaper and I did a thing about words on a page in a newspaper, which is made of paper.

John L.: On behalf of Eagle Feather News I apologize to all of our readers and sincerely hope you will not cancel your subscriptions.

Dirk says, "It ain't the jeans that make your butt look fat."

Dirk Dashing is on Facebook. Do it now.



Author Julianna Onodi joined Richard Wagamese at the launch of his book "Indian Horse" in Saskatoon.

(Photo by Andrea Ledding)

Author Wagamese offers his voice to the world

Richard Wagamese launched his new book "Indian Horse" February 15 at Oskayak High School.

Wagamese, the author of 11 books and recent winner of a National Aboriginal Achievement Award for his literary contributions, opened by introducing emerging writer Julianna Onodi, who read from her work, "Forgiving the Ghost."

Friend and scholar Janice Acoose gave the introduction before Wagamese discussed his latest novel, which deals with residential schools.

"He found hockey, and he needed it to survive," said Wagamese of his main character, and sharing a reviewer's compliment that he'd written a great book about hockey while he was writing about residential schools.

"This tells the story of a very long

very mournful chapter not in Aboriginal history alone but in Canadian history."

He chose fiction so that it would provide some relief.

As an Aboriginal journalist for 30 years, he had been told many stories about the residential schools from survivors, and he emphasized the resilience and strength of those survivors.

"No matter what happened to us as people, we found a way to smile," he noted, and shared moving sections from the book about the experiences of young people in the schools.

He ended by encouraging everyone to share their own authentic voice, to make the country and the world a better place.

"Give this world and your people the benefit of your voice."



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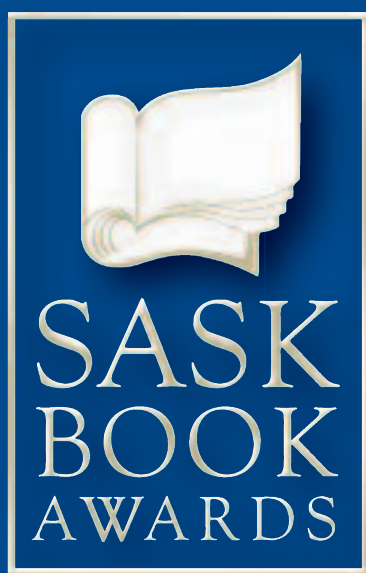
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Destiny Slippery's work has shot her into the world of art shows.

Students courting basketball art

By Mike Gosselin
For Eagle Feather News

Destiny Slippery was nervous when asked to be photographed next to the unique piece of art she created – a basketball with expressive paintings.

"I don't know if it's that good," she said hesitantly.

But with bold lines, an eye for blending color and obvious artistic ability, the piece is impressive.

"I guess it's pretty good," Destiny humbly agreed, albeit with a little prodding.

Her achievement was celebrated at a Youth Art Gala in the Remai Arts Center, where a good turnout of people were rewarded with a savory spread of delectable appetizers.

Destiny was a little overwhelmed with all the attention.

"It's just amazing to me that I'm a part of an art show. Oskayak (High School) is just awesome. I have received so many opportunities," she said as she gazed at the art display.

"Like being here."

The project was made possible through a partnership with the Saskatoon Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS), Greater Catholic Schools, Saskatoon Public Schools, and Saskatoon Community Youth Art Project (SCYAP).

"It started as a search for a new logo

for the UAS," said SCYAP Arts Leader Kevin Wesauate. "But during one of the sessions I brought in some of my own artwork, one of them being a basketball with paintings."

The rest, as they say, turned into an art show. The students who participated attend City Park and Oskayak High Schools. They started with sketching ideas for a new UAS logo but things soon took an interesting turn.

"We just started talking about art and the possibilities," Wesauate said. "They (students) really took to the idea of making basketballs into art. So we started painting basketballs."

The end result was evident on the artist's faces. They were proud of their accomplishment. But the project was designed to do more than just show off their impressive works of art.

"We involved the youth in the process of developing the (UAS) logo so they learn they have a strong voice in the community," Wesauate said.

"It was great to work with them and see the connection they made to creating a work of art."

That was something Destiny said wasn't easy.

"It took a lot of time and dedication. But to be able to be a part of something like this (art show) is just awesome."

The UAS will unveil their new student inspired logo very soon.

City celebrating cultural diversity in March

Since 1990 the City of Saskatoon has designated March as Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Month.

Last year the city and other organizations brought in Tim Wise to give a presentation on racism. Wise is among the most prominent anti-racist writers and activists in North America, and has been called "one of the most brilliant, articulate and courageous critics of white privilege in the nation" by best-selling author and professor, Michael Eric Dyson.

Due to the overwhelming response to his presentation last year, the City of Saskatoon, SIAST and Turning the Tide

Book Store have

partnered to bring him back this year. He will be giving a corporate presentation March 15 at 2 p.m. at TCU Place for businesses that want to advance their companies by understand-



TIM WISE

ing racism and then there will be an evening presentation for anyone interested at 7 p.m., also at TCU Place.

With passion and humour, Wise



Mayor Don Atchison, Race Relations Committee Chair Cornelia Laliberte and Human Rights Commissioner David Arnot raise the race relations flag in front of City Hall in Saskatoon.

(Photo City of Saskatoon)

challenges his audiences to acknowledge privilege and dismantle racism in their organizations and everyday lives. Due to the graciousness of the sponsors and the importance of the message, both events are free.

Wise is also in Regina on March 13-14 and in PA April 4-5. Check local listings for locations.



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Voices of the North celebrates 20th anniversary

Every February Prince Albert is flooded with visitors from all over the province for the annual Voices of the North showcase during Prince Albert's winter festival.

Every year I love seeing the talent and the crowds, revelling in the excitement, taking in the spectacular music ... plus they make the best bannock burgers in all of the North, hands down.

This year was the 20th anniversary for Voices of the North, and Sheryl Kimbley, one of the main organizers shared with me how the show has evolved since its beginning.

"Voices of the North originated back in 1993 when a group of people including



Leah Mercredi performed at VON.

Doug and Claudette Moran, Gerry Greyeyes, myself, Julie Roy, Lorna Tait and Bernice Sayese decided to create a stage where Aboriginal performers could showcase their talent, due to a lack of that type of thing back then," says Kimbley.

"I'm proud to say we have maintained the family that Mama Bear (Bernice) has started. We have showcased so much talent from all over but still know there's always tomorrow and so much more talent to find. I am glad little has changed. I hope that never changes."

The show features an impressive house band who each spend weeks separately learning the music for the performances. This year's lineup included Dennis Adams on lead guitar, Grant Kimbley on drums, Mitch Daigneault on rhythm guitar, Kevin Joseph on bass, Kerri English on fiddle, Mick Gratiot on keyboard and three backup singers, Sheryl Kimbley, Connie Mike and Darwin Roy.

"VOTN is unique in the way the show is brought together, we are able to do our show with performers and sometimes band members coming from all corners, and practicing (all together) for only two days prior to opening night," says Kimbley.

"VOTN is a tapestry of Aboriginal performers, where you can come one year and see rap and hip hop, to country, to rock, to fiddle, square dancing, powwow dancing and a lot of heart as the performers become very close over the few days they meet to make the show happen."

This year's performers included: Leah Mercredi, Lawrence Joseph, Lisa Lambert, Nick Daigneault, Allison Strong, Dallas and Phil Boyer, Tristen Durocher, Jane Roberts, Dallas Gamble, Alvina Aubichon, Fred Corrigan, Clarence Natomagon, Morgan Trotchie, Craig Adam, George Halkett, Northern Prairie Dancers, and the talented master of ceremonies, MBC radio personality, Dwayne Animikwan.

This year I had the privilege of helping the youth from Northern Spirits decorate the hall prior to the show, so I had an insider's view of what goes on behind the scenes. I had a lot of fun with the kids I met, but I was amazed that several of the musicians, as well as Sheryl Kimbley, seemed to be spread so thin with organizing such a huge production, as well as mentoring the youth.

Like many others I wondered why they would spend their days mentoring the youth while their evenings were already full with practices, shows, and eventually, the youth talent showcase. Then, on top of everything, they also have the largest cabaret in the North to wrap things up on Saturday night.

It seems a diet of coffee, no sleep, and pure passion gets them through it all. Kimbley shared with me that before Bernice Sayese passed on, she promised her she would do more for the youth.

Bringing the youth to work directly

with the VOTN crew teaches them hands on experience to prepare their own show every year.

"It is crazy and busy, but you gotta know these kids are worth it!" says Kimbley.

"Trusted musicians, trusted board members, community support, eager volunteers, and a small group of community sponsors are behind VOTN every year. All of the above, mixed with family support. We have a great team: Shauna Sayese, Kimberly Ahenakew, Trina Joseph-Bear, Grant Kimbley, Lisa McDermott, Marilyn Deschambeault, Hazel Arcand, Jennifer Ahenakew and Connie Mike.

"As far as sponsors go," says Kimbley, "We could never go without saying a huge thanks to MBC radio, NLC, SIGA, NLCDC, Points Athabasca, PAGC, Northern Sport Culture and Recreation and CTV over the years.

"Also, a major thanks goes out to anyone and everyone who believes in our Aboriginal talent and supports it in their communities. This is just another way to lift and heal our spirits!"

Absolutely. Find me there next year, singing along with a bannock burger in my hand.

If there's an artist, entertainer or event that you think could be featured in Eagle Feather News, give me a shout at: snazzyjess@hotmail.com. See you next month!



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students.usask.ca/aboriginal/week

Multi-sport athlete aiming for the sky

Profile: Cherish Francis

Hometown: Regina

First Nation: Nekanee

Sport(s): Softball, Volleyball, Badminton

Number: 9

College: Lethbridge

Current Job: Director of Communications at File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council

Goz: Did you play on any national or provincial teams during your athletic career?

CF: I played (on the) national (team) for softball, provincial (team) for high school volleyball. I was on the File Hills Qu'Appelle volleyball team for the FN Winter Games, Team Sask at the North American Indigenous Games as a badminton player in 1997 and as a juvenile women's volleyball player in 2002.

Goz: What is your most memorable sports moment of all time?

CF: As a volleyball head coach at the North American Indigenous Games in Cowichan, BC. Seeing my team's hard work pay off and the young athletes come home with gold medals around their necks was far more inspiring than any games I've won or played.

Goz: Any weird, quirky or otherwise embarrassing facts about you when it comes to sports?

CF: Before any game whether it be softball or volleyball I like to spend time to myself trying to focus and get my head in the game. You can usually find me alone somewhere with my earphones blasting my favorite pump up tune.

Goz: If someone offered you a lucrative contract to play either volleyball or softball, what would you choose and why?

CF: I'd have to pick volleyball, although, I love both sports. I'd like to say that volleyball gives me more of a rush and I have a mental focus for the game.

Goz: Who is your secret celebrity crush?

CF: My secret celebrity crush, but not so secret anymore, would have to be Matthew McConaughey. I love the way he talks.

Goz: Settle something for the masses. Who's cooler Robert Doucette or Morley Watson?



CF: I like both Robert Doucette and Morley Watson equally. They're both great leaders with superior leadership qualities with a common goal to gain equality for their people.

Goz: What situation would you prefer – pitching the last out with a full count and loaded bases in the Big Game

Sports Chat with Mike



or serving match point in the final against a powerhouse you weren't supposed to beat?

CF: In this situation, I'd have to say pitching the last out with a full count and loaded bases because that feeling of winning a game like that is a rush of adrenaline that every athlete should feel. I've played in many competitive games where it has come down to situations like that and the win is by far hands down the best feeling. It's what you work so hard for.

Goz: You've been an anchor, news reporter and communications exec. How have sports helped you become the success you are today?

CF: Sports has taught me how to be a team player. Sport has helped me dream big and has taken me all over Canada. To this day, sport plays a big role in my life. I hope to one day pass this on to my daughter, who will play her first season of softball this spring. Without sport, I wouldn't be the successful individual I am today.

Goz: If you could try one job for a day, what would it be?

CF: If I could try one job for a day, it would have to be an ice pilot. It looks very adventurous and fulfilling. As I get older, I'd like to get my pilot license to potentially make that dream come true.

Goz: Should men have their chest hair waxed, trimmed or full-on '70s au naturel?

CF: Oh most definitely a hair free chest is a much nicer than a heavily forested chest. Seventies au naturel is out of the questions, thankfully that was left in that era.

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- Pre-Conference Speakers: Dr. George Davis and Dr. Barrie Bennett
- Pre-Conference Training: A Day with AFL: Assessment for Learning
- Gala Evening Dinner, Treaty 4 Education Awards Presentations and Performances by Jason Chamakese and Robert Gladue, with a Feature Performance by Sierra Noble
- Trade Show
- Door prizes

For more information or to register visit www.treaty4ed.com



2012 Treaty 4 Education Conference



Treaty 4 Student Success Program