

# Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

## Chief Cook-Searson newsmaker of 2015

It was a common sight to see Lac La Ronge Indian Band Chief Tammy Cook-Searson on her phone this summer during the forest fires. Between regular and social media Chief Cook-Searson was all over the place, earning her the title of newsmaker of the year.

(Photo Supplied)

**By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News**

SASKATOON – The writers and readers of Eagle Feather News have chosen Lac la Ronge Indian Band Chief Tammy Cook-Searson as the newsmaker of the year for 2015.

If you hearken back to the summer of 2015 in

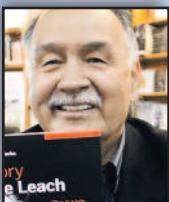
Saskatchewan, all you can think of are the massive fires that engulfed our North, the evacuations and the unbelievable leadership and presence of Chief Cook-Searson.

She was shocked to find out she was named our newsmaker.

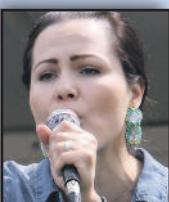
• Continued on Page 2



## INSIDE



**HE WRITES, HE SCORES!**  
Former NHL star Reggie Leach's new book contains some powerful advice on hockey and life.  
- Page 3



**GOOD KILL**  
Ekwol's latest musical release is receiving rave reviews for its important messages for young people.  
- Page 10



**ART WITH A HEART**  
SYCAP artists are finding that art is building their confidence levels as they discover new forms of trust.  
- Page 13



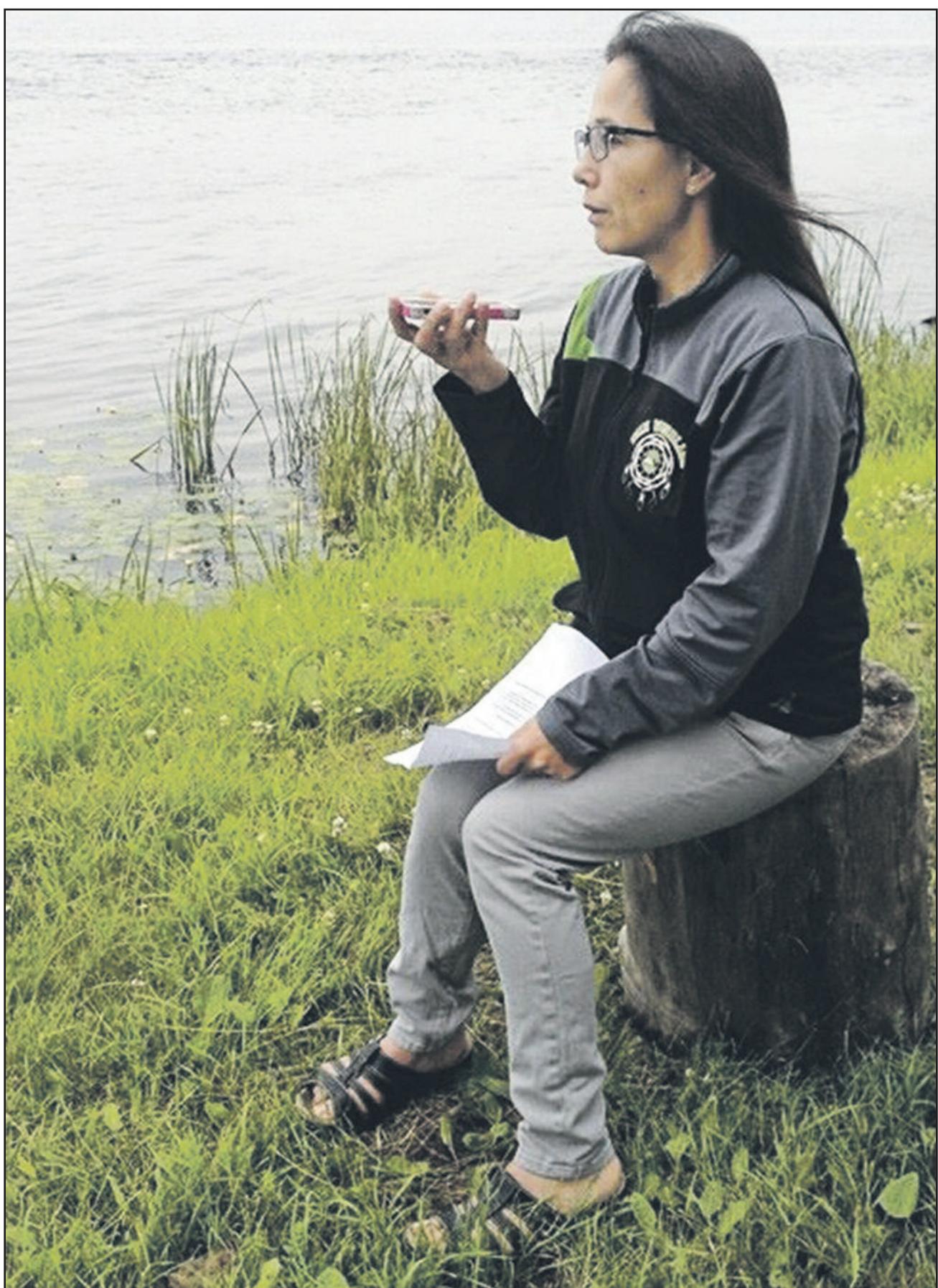
**YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR**  
The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business has honoured dancer Jacob Pratt and his business  
- Page 15



**SHE'S A PRINCESS**  
Maggie Eastman is this year's FSIN Spirit of Our Nations powwow princess.  
- Page 14

*Newsmaker of the Year Edition*  
Coming In January - The Year in Review Issue

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# Cook-Searson provided solid leadership during crisis

## • Continued from Page One

"I am honoured to be chosen," said Chief Cook-Searson on hearing the news. "Thanks to Eagle Feather News for choosing me. It was a difficult summer for everyone involved but it had to be covered. This is exciting to be news-maker of the year."

As the North burned, Chief Cook-Searson was repeatedly called on by the media for updates and commentary from the region and she tried to accommodate all the requests.

"Sometimes I was up to 1 a.m. to update Facebook. At one time each of our six communities were under the threat of fire or smoke and we would work with essential services ... and then up at 4 a.m. for a national interview with eastern media, then Skype or Facetime other interviews," said Chief Cook-Searson who appeared repeatedly on every major media outlet in Saskatchewan and many national news organizations.

According to Chief Tammy, technology and social media played a key role in communication during the fire.

"Social media was so important. When we were doing evacuations, the older people would be there and we asked how they heard and they said they saw it on

Facebook. People had hand held devices and then passed the message around. It played a huge role," said Chief Tammy.

She saw her Facebook followers grow to over 7,000 during the fires and one of her posts wound up reaching over 500,000 people.

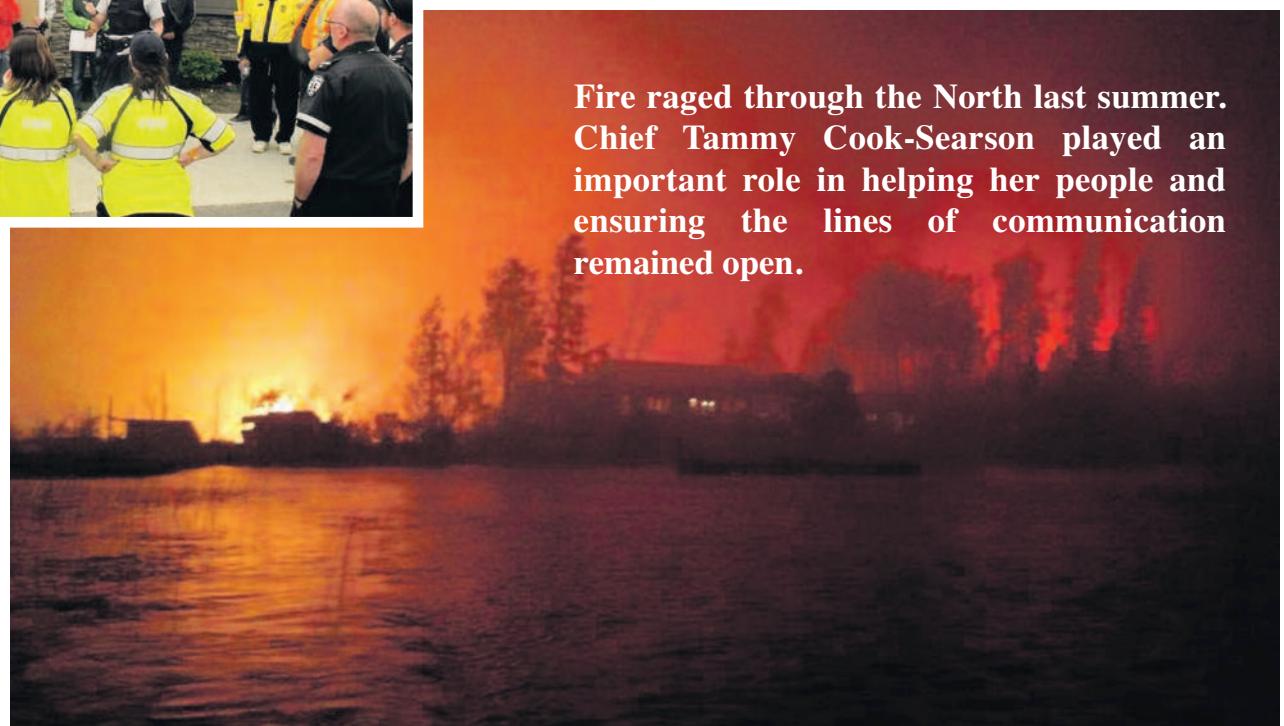
The lessons learned this year will come in handy for Chief Tammy and other northern residents.

"There is so much strength and resilience in the community and so many people wanted to help. Now we have a lot more people trained as a result of this summer's fires.

"But we still have a lot of work to do to get our people ready and geared up for the upcoming season," said Chief Tammy Cook-Searson.

"We don't know how it is going to be and we don't have any snow yet.

"It may be another dry summer."



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# Reggie Leach scores a winner with revealing book about a storied hockey career and life

By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News

**SASKATOON** – Reggie Leach is quite possibly the best First Nation hockey player of all time.

Leach holds the NHL record for most playoff goals, he has a Stanley Cup, he won the Conn Smyth Trophy as the playoff MVP while on a losing team, played for Team Canada in 1976, scored 61 goals in one season and played on the Flyers squad that went undefeated for an incredible thirty-five games. His wicked shot earned him the moniker the Riverton Rifle.

He learned a lot in that long and storied career and now he is passing on that knowledge through a new book *The Riverton Rifle: My Story-Straight Shooting on Hockey and on Life*.

The biography takes you from his youth in Riverton, Manitoba through his rise to Stanley Cup greatness, and follows the dramatic fall caused by his drinking problem and his subsequent rebirth as a successful businessman, family man, and pillar of the Aboriginal community.

The book has caught on and is now hitting the bestseller lists, something Reggie never imagined happening.

“It is overwhelming the reaction to the book. And you go to these book signings and see people you haven’t seen for years and you talk about when I was younger and playing and playing in Flin Flon. It is nice to reconnect,” said the affable Leach during a break at McNally Robinson Booksellers in Saskatoon.

He was busy catching up, signing books and jerseys and letting people play with his Stanley Cup ring.

**“The book is for my grandkids and kids that are struggling”**

“But I wanted the book in my words, not hers. After time she got used to the way I talk and it worked out good.”

He learned a lot about himself in the process.

“Lots of the book is from years ago and in my teens. You bring this up and as a young teen when you do stuff you really don’t think what you did at the time. The book itself is not all about hockey. It is a teaching book. A learning book,” said Leach.

“The book is for my grandkids and kids that are struggling. It is based upon the seven Grandfather teachings of the Ojibway culture. The book is readable for everybody.”

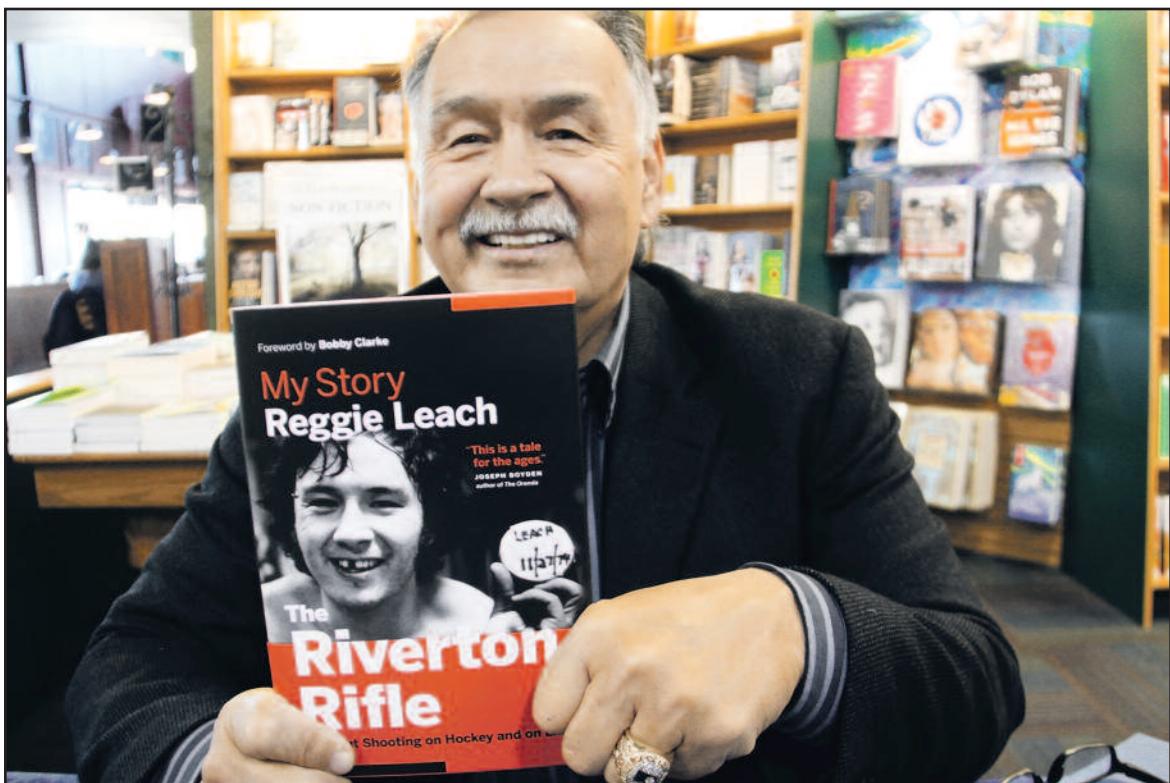
And like the title of his book, the talk is straight about the highs, and the lows.

“I touched on the problems I went through. That was only a small part of my life. I addressed the issue and moved on from there.”

Leach now does motivational speaking and runs Shoot to Score Hockey schools with his sons and still loves getting out there on the ice for sometimes seven hours a day teaching kids the skills of hockey. He wants to see more First Nation kids in the NHL and other than practice, he had some words of advice.

“Whatever choice you make, you own that choice. Whether it is good or bad. There are too many adults and kids today that make bad choices but aren’t responsible for their actions,” said Leach.

“I think the book is about taking responsibility for the mistakes you made and just own up to it and move on.”



Stanley Cup winner and Philadelphia Flyer great Reggie Leach was in town for a book signing for his book *The Riverton Rifle: My Story-Straight Talk on Hockey and on Life*. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)



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# Challenging year but great hopes for 2016!

The end of the year is always exhausting as people often plan life around the highs and lows of the 12 months of the calendar with Christmas always being the big reward at the end of the year.

This year was a challenging one in Saskatchewan and it seems as though the negative things that happened over the year pile on and make late November and early December rather depressing.

To circumvent the negative we always look back on the year that was for the newsmaker of the year (Congratulations Chief Tammy Cook-Searson!) and

If symbolism means anything, Trudeau and the Liberals have already hit it out of the ball park. At the swearing in ceremony, Trudeau and his ministers were led in by the traditional Cree drummer followed by Inuit throat singers and the ceremony was then rounded out by the Prairie Fire Métis Dancers.

And now they announce a national

the Métis National Anthem as the flag was raised and then again in the lobby of the building.

Did you know that St. Michael's is a Métis school? Somewhere that day Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont smiled.

Justice Murray Sinclair, Marie

Wilson and Willie Littlechild have released the Truth and Reconciliation report and their Calls to Action. This plan gives Canadians a road map towards reconciliation. Good news already in that the Universities of Regina and Saskatchewan and the Regional Colleges and big business and cities are all responding and making plans. The City of Saskatoon is even calling 2015-2016 the Year of Reconciliation. Great start to a long process no?

The Flying Dust Market Garden harvested a huge load of certified organic vegetables this year and made a substantial donation of potatoes to the Door of Hope (the food bank in Meadow Lake).

The Market Garden has donated produce from the Garden to the Door of Hope ever since it started and they also donate to the Saskatoon Friendship Inn. The community really benefits from good jobs and affordable food.

Security for children is also an important thing. Our friends at EGADZ have gone mobile as a means of addressing violence and abuse against women and youth. A new website, [www.IAmNot4Sale.ca](http://www.IAmNot4Sale.ca), and app were developed by youth to help vulnerable individuals who are sexually exploited and trafficked through social media. It is unfortunate that we need this service but in reality we do.

What does give us hope though are the young people like Sally McKenzie who battle through sometimes difficult lives to help produce such needed and innovative ways to help young people. With the proper supports, maybe they can become the next Chief Tammy Cook-Searson.

Ya never know.

This Christmas, be good to the young people. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



**The St. Michael's Métis Community School choir made history when they came to the Saskatoon Polytechnic Campus on Louis Riel day and sang the Métis National Anthem as the Métis flag was raised. Then the entire school sang the anthem in the foyer.**

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

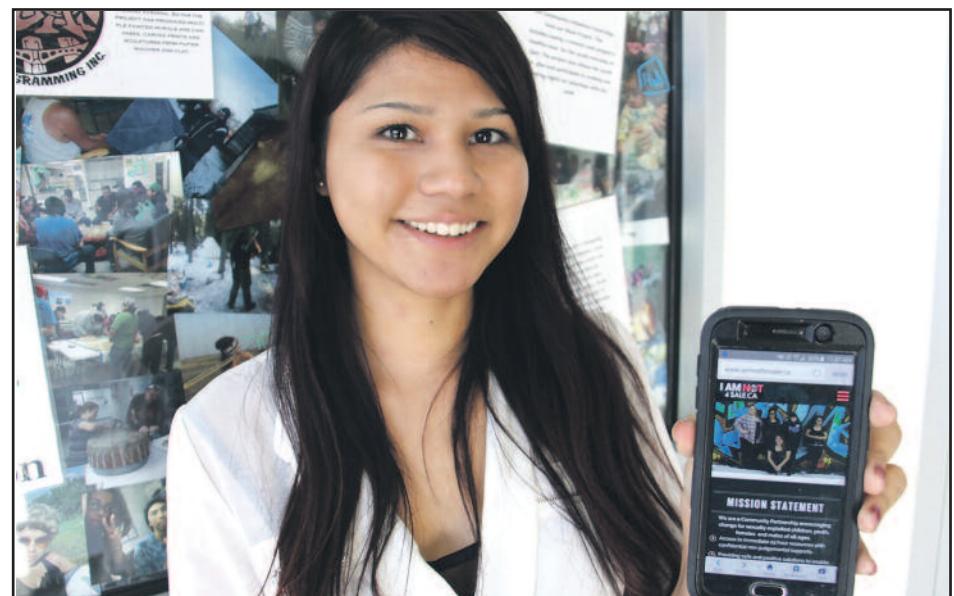
the positives that have happened that give us hope for the future.

Below are some totally random people or events, simple or grand, from the past few months that make us reflect positively on 2015 as we hang on till Christmas.

The Liberal Party win and the naming of Justin Trudeau as our prime minister has given us a wonderful boost. The Aboriginal vote was strong this election and Trudeau has made many promises that make us excited for the next four years.

inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Sure these are just symbols and not real legislation, but wow, nice start.

The Saskatchewan Polytechnic has launched a plan to indigenize their campuses. They want to incorporate Aboriginal pictures, people, curriculum and events into all their campuses. One event they host is the raising of the Métis flag on Louis Riel Day at every campus. This year they made history in Saskatoon as the students from St. Michael's Community School came over and sang



**Sally McKenzie wants youth to have access to tools to escape sexual exploitation. With EGADZ, they have created [www.Iamnot4sale.ca](http://www.Iamnot4sale.ca) as a way to access help.**

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)



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# A winter without snow can be very dull and dreary

I think I was about six years old the Christmas we had no snow.

We went visiting our nokoms in a wagon instead of a sleigh. There were no hot stones wrapped in blankets for our feet and no rabbit skin robes to snuggle into because it was too warm.

Instead, we sat in the back of that wagon and bounced around until we were sure our teeth were all cracked because the road was frozen solid and the wagon had no springs.

Even our rich cousins who came from the big city by car were looking completely rattled by the time we all arrived at nokom's house.

It stayed that way all through the holidays and according to my 96-year-old aunty it stayed that way into mid-January when it finally snowed, but barely enough to cover the ground.

I can't think of anything darker, bleaker and more pitiful looking than no snow in a place as materially poor as our community was.

Snow always gave it a clean beauty, making the small log cabins snuggly looking and the yards and trees sparkle in the sunlight.

Funny, isn't it, how lots of sunshine seems to come with a snowy winter. It also gave us children hills to slide down and an ice rink to skate on.

Every season gives us a particular beauty and rich memory but for the life of me, I can't think of any rich or beautiful memories about that winter, just barren and poor and cold.

So this month I have been praying every single day for snow. I don't want children to wake up in a dark, dreary, grey place especially if life is hard for them already.

Which reminds me, if you're privileged, I hope you've remembered to share that by buying some extra gifts for kids who are having a hard time. Not just gifts but also a big donation to the food bank. Times are harder this year; the number of people struggling is higher.

Many young men who worked the oil patch to support their families are

home and not able to get work anywhere and for the first time in their lives are having to go to the food bank.

With that comes new despairs and lots of depression. The services out there are not only dealing with old poverty they also have to deal with the new.

OK, I'll stop being so dreary. It's not that I hate this Christmas, I just wished it would snow.

On a happy note, I have finished the last of my baking. I just have tourtieres to make and I am done.

I made le puchin three weeks ago and it smelled wonderful.

My eight-year-old great-granddaughter who is learning to make it said as she was measuring the spices.

"Why do I have to learn to do this nokom? Nobody likes it except you."

She's right, none of my family likes le puchin. They think it's too sweet and sugar in their homes is equivalent to having cyanide on the table.

But I give it to my brothers and all the old people I know who love it and enjoy it.

When I told her this she said "But they're all old and they'll be gone when I grow up so who will I give it to?"

She's a smarty pants that one but yeah ... who will she give it to? Probably no one will even know what sugar is by then, much less le puchin.

I was on my way home from shopping yesterday and stopped off at my favourite store, Village Green on 20th Street and I ran into Priscilla Settee. (She shops there, too)

She said she popped in to see if there was any bargains but I reassured her that I got to them first.

She was on her way to a book launch at White Buffalo and invited me to join her. Str8 Up people, she said, were launching their third book so that's where I spent the rest of my afternoon.

What an amazing bunch of people. You all know that STR8 UP is an

organization founded by Father Andre and two gang members serving time in the Saskatoon Correctional Centre and yes, the rest is good history.

The authors of the new book are former gang members who, with the help and support of Andre and STR8 UP people, have been able to leave the "life" and begin new journeys.

Their stories remind me of my own life and how the compassion and support of even one person can change the course of our lives forever and how that change can help others also find "liberation."

It's a hard journey becoming straight and it takes courage and every bit of strength a person possesses to just sometimes make another minute, hour and day.

But it can be done and you STR8 UP people have done that in so many ways.

You are all so beautiful you make me and I am sure, many other people stronger.

I wish you all a kind and gentle New Year and that only warm winds will always blow on your backs, keeping you safe.

And as if all that feel good on a bleak, dreary day with no snow was not enough, I came home and switched on TV to watch the news and there was a brother drumming and singing a beautiful song.

He was welcoming the new prime minister to open parliament and a Throne Speech that promises a new relationship between the Canadian government and Indigenous peoples.

You know something, I believe that gorgeous young Prime Minister.

I believe he will do all in his power to create a better country for everyone.

But the most monumental change he has made is bringing our peoples' ceremony into that place where, until he arrived, has been the source of our dispossession.

He has, with that act alone, included us in everything making it normal and true.

No one will ever be able to undo the "life force" that has been created by that act of respect and kindness.

So I went to bed feeling really great at the end of this bleak dull day.

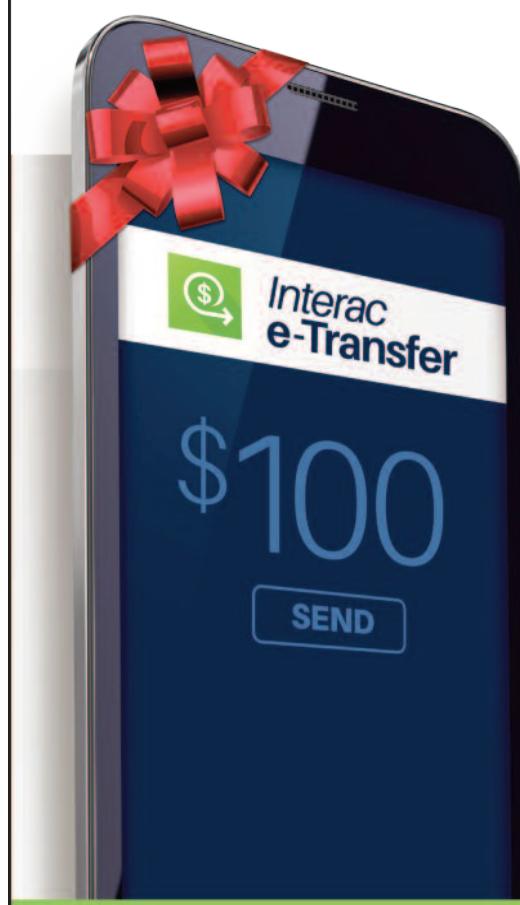
I take back what I said about no good memories when there is no snow.

Miyo Ochaytoo Kiskikow Mr. Prime Minister, and to all of us the voters, a beautiful Christmas and a Happy Kissing Day and New Year.



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# Exposing the Santa Claus conspiracy

There's an app that parents can download this holiday season to get Santa Claus to castigate your kid for you.

For \$1.99, you call a number and Santa Claus will tell your kid to behave or else he'll put them on the naughty list.

As a new parent, that sounds kind of nuts. I asked my mom if Santa threats worked on a child's behaviour and she replied, "For the three weeks leading up to Christmas, you kids wouldn't breathe without asking me first." So yeah, I guess it's an effective tool.

But why stop at naughty list threats? Why not turn over more parenting to Santa – get Santa to tell your kid all the things you've been meaning to tell them: "Us adults really screwed up the ozone, so you'll wear sunscreen your entire life." Or, "Men who drive loud motorcycles were bullied as small children."

How about this one: "Trickle-down economics is total b.s." and "a mall without a Sephora is not a real mall."

These are also important tips: "Don't mix hard stuff with any other booze" and "Never interrupt mommy when she's watching the Property Brothers on HGTV."

If you grew up in North America, you know all the basic Santa Claus lore – he's an overweight guy of indeterminate race (since about 1995 anyway) who gives gifts to good boys and girls and coal to the naughty ones.

Although I'm not sure why coal is considered bad because if you burn coal it keeps you warm – so how's that a punishment? I personally wouldn't mind having a pile of coal on my front lawn mostly just to annoy my holier than thou, granola neighbours.

Some say that modern Santa Claus is based on Saint Nicholas who was a generous Bishop. (I guess the other ones were stingy dudes.) Nicholas is also the patron saint of children and pawnbrokers – which makes sense, because over time, both will bleed you dry.



## That's What She Said

Dawn Dumont

Santa Claus isn't a single dude who gives gifts to kids – that would be creepy. He has a wife, Mrs. Santa Claus. The fact that she doesn't seem to have a first name makes me lose a little bit of respect for her, and Santa.

Together this old-fashioned couple live at the North Pole. Although with climate change, they should consider moving. Otherwise children may lay awake at night worrying that Santa's home is currently melting and falling into the ocean like other ice shelves.

And, if negotiations at COP21 fail to lower emissions, he and Mrs. Claus could be floating by Newfoundland on an iceberg as early as the spring.

Throughout the year, Santa's elves, an industrious group of short people, make toys in Santa's workshop and then stamp "Mattel" on the bottom of them for all of the kids in the world right up until Christmas Eve. In order to

run this corporation, Santa must be one hell of a union buster because no North American company could afford that type of labour force working through the holidays.

The miracle of Santa Claus is believing, despite all evidence to the contrary. Growing up on a reserve, it was a difficult story to swallow. For instance, the jolly fat man couldn't squeeze down a chimney on our houses because there were none.

My grandpa had a wood stove but the stove pipe was tiny and there was always a fire burning in there and nobody wants an ole St. Nick bonfire.

Then there was the reindeer problem – how would nine flying reindeer make it across the reserve without becoming someone's Christmas dinner and wall trophy? We all know Rudolph would have been delicious as needy, insecure deer are particularly tender.

To get past all this – I told myself (and my more gullible siblings) that Santa Claus dropped our gifts off in town and our parents picked them up and brought them home. What about those Kmart and Zellers bags stuffed in our parents' closet? Merely them trying to cover up for the big guy.

But then there was another problem – what about our cousins who Santa sometimes forgot to buy gifts for (like when Santa was in between jobs at the time)? My mom's solution was that she would take from our pile, slap a new nametag on it and pray that her own brats would be too filled with the Christmas spirit and turkey stuffing to protest.

You see, even though Santa is a magical bearded being, he still needs help from all of us. And in return, you can use him to scare your kids into going to bed on time – now if I could only use him to get my baby to sleep more than four hours at a stretch.

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**Prince Albert, Saskatchewan**

# Wicihitowin conference stresses importance of working together

**By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News**

**SASKATOON** – Aboriginal engagement and service delivery in Saskatoon received a big boost in the form of the Mawe Wicihitowin “Working Together” conference.

Over two days in November, 320 delegates were treated to sessions on First Nations history and the residential schools, Métis history, media training, anti-racism education and hiring and retaining Aboriginal people.

Running concurrently was an old people and elders session led by Willie Ermine where they focused on incorporating Aboriginal values in programs and services. The session built a learning document to be available as an introductory guide for individuals who have questions about protocol and the appropriate role of Elders and Old People within their organizations.

“Aboriginal engagement and inclusion is an important issue in our community,” said Gilles Dorval, Director of Aboriginal Relations with the City of Saskatoon.

“Working together – the theme of our first Aboriginal Engagement Conference – is important in delivering enhanced programs and services to better meet the needs of our Aboriginal citizens.”

The conference was presented in

partnership with the City of Saskatoon, the United Way, Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Health Region, and other Community-Based Organizations.

The goal was to help provide support to the many organizations across Saskatchewan that are inclusive of Aboriginal people as employees, volunteers and decision makers – especially in the understanding of Aboriginal people in the context of historic and contemporary issues.

“We hope the conference will influence organizations that serve Aboriginal people to be representative of the Aboriginal community in their workforce and in decision making capacities in governance,” says Ashley Kayseas, Director, Aboriginal Relations, United Way of Saskatoon and Area.

The introductory keynote speaker was Stephen Kakfwi, the former Premier of the Northwest Territories and the President and CEO of Canadians for a New Partnership. His message was one of unity.

“An essential thing in working together is knowing each other. Building a community, the elders told us to respect one another,” said Kakfwi. “We learned that working together was the way to be strong.”

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Chair Murray Sinclair gave an elo-



**Justice Murray Sinclair gave an emotional and powerful closing key note address at the Mawe Wicihitowin Conference urging everyone to adopt the TRC Calls to Action.**

quent and very emotional closing keynote speech that brought the two days together. Opening with a video of a residential school survivor, Sinclair had a rapt audience as he explained the effects of over 100 years of government oppression.

“Nobody can heal you but yourself and the answers are in the community. The solutions must come from the indigenous community. The government can’t help,” said Sinclair.

He also had advice for those looking to offer reconciliation.

“Read the Calls to Action. Find one you can help to make a reality. All of them are achievable with effort. I challenge you

all. Don’t stop talking about this. Make a commitment to continue to work together. If you don’t, then who? It is up to you.”

Gilles Dorval was impressed with the overwhelming positive reaction to the conference.

“We want to keep the feeling of hope going and keep people thinking that reconciliation is possible,” said Dorval.

“The amount of people here from different sectors was amazing and we had great support from the corporate community.

“Now we have keep responding to the needs of our citizens and keep going forward building a better Saskatoon.”

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[fcc.ca/Diversity](http://fcc.ca/Diversity)



# Book tells recovery stories of former gang members

**By Fraser Needham  
For Eagle Feather News**

**SASKATOON** – Father Andre Polievre wants to get the new STR8 UP book into the hands of as many people as possible who come into contact with those affected by street gang life.

"We hope that judges read it, prosecutors read it, police read it, guards read it, probation officers read it, teachers read it and then they can help young people that they know are going through these different processes and say, 'hey, read this,'" the founder of the Saskatoon organization that helps people transition out of gang life says.

**STR8 UP: Stories of Courage – A Healing Workbook** is a collection of stories by former gang members.

It is the organization's second book.

Polievre says while the first book focused on why young people get into gangs, the new one tells about the healing journeys of various individuals after they leave gangs.

"We talked about the fact that we had a book but that it missed something important. What it missed was



**Members of STR8 UP at the launch of the organization's new book, STR8 UP: Stories of Courage – A Healing Workbook.**

(Photo by Fraser Needham)

the recovery stories. It focused on how come, how come these guys and gals became gang members, what it meant to be a gang member, the behaviour – but there's more to it than that," he says. "There's a whole transition and transformation."

Curtis Eklund's story is in the first STR8 UP book and he provides illus-

trations for both books.

He says young people may be attracted to the quick money and power of a street gang but it is a life that leads nowhere fast.

"I hope that my story will touch even one young person's heart and they can take from my life experience, they can learn from it and they don't make a

fatal decision to join a gang or do a serious crime or anything like that," Eklund says.

"Because the truth of it is, is to join a gang means to do a life sentence or go six feet into the ground. That's the reality of gang life."

Eklund is currently on parole, living in Vancouver and in the process of turning his life around.

He has his driver's licence back and owns a car, has a tattoo business on the side and will begin studying to be a carpenter in the New Year.

Eklund says he is now certainly living a life he never thought possible just a few short years ago.

"My every waking thought and every waking move was about my gang, about my drugs, how much I was going to make and what I was going to do with it, who I

was going to take out with the drug business, all sorts of stuff like that – shadows, just shadow thoughts," he says.

The official launch of STR8 UP: Stories of Courage took place at McNally Robinson in Saskatoon on Dec. 2.

The book is published by Hear My Heart Books Inc.

## Season's Greetings



# Latest tragedy accompanies marking of tenth anniversary

**By Andréa Ledding**  
**For Eagle Feather News**

SASKATOON – Iskwewuk E-Wichiwitochik (IE, Cree for “Women Walking Together”) had a sombre celebration on Saturday, Nov. 28, commemorating a decade of support and activism on behalf of missing and murdered Indigenous women and their families.

Co-chair Myrna LaPlante spoke to the media about the recent discovery of the remains of Karina Beth Ann Wolfe, who has been missing since July 2010 at age 20. Karina’s mother Carol, a very active spokesperson since the disappearance of Karina, was scheduled to be part of the ceremonies but due to the heart-breaking developments was not present.

Part of the activities were amended to include a donation box for funds for the Wolfe family, and a card-writing activity to express condolences and support during this time. Donations are still welcomed for Karina’s family as they prepare for funeral and court expenses.

After an opening pipe ceremony led by Elder Steve Morningchild, father of Calinda Waterhen who was murdered in 1993, the day continued with master of ceremonies Chris Sicotte. Judy Hughes spoke of the importance of continuing advocacy, while Jorgina Sunn lifted her voice in beautiful song. Darlene Okemaysim-Sicotte shared on behalf of IE, and Kay Lerat brought greetings and solidarity from FSIN.

After a feast, the afternoon continued with one of IE’s initiating and founding members, Monica Goulet, sharing the microphone with Crystal LaPlante of Saskatoon Tribal Council to speak about the monument to the missing and murdered, which will be installed in front of the new police station.



A chair was left empty in honour of Karina Wolfe at the 10th anniversary of Women Walking Together. The organization also welcomed the announcement of the national inquiry.

“The monument shows a beautiful Indigenous woman dancing,” noted Goulet, talking about the intensive community and Elder-based approach used in selecting the final monument, which shows the beauty and strength of Indigenous women. Goulet also ac-

knowledged the presence of Gwenda Yuzicappi the mother of Amber Redman whose body was discovered in 2008. Amber was a beautiful traditional dancer and culturally strong young woman.

Carol Wolfe spoke to media on Nov. 30 through an interpreter.

“Karina was taken from our family too early in her journey of life, our family is suffering with a heavy heart we will never get to see her again,” Carol said. “The last memory I have is Karina saying, ‘I love you mom and I will be home later.’ Karina never got to come home. This is something that should never have happened.”

On Nov. 10, Jerry Constant turned himself into the police station with his story of what had happened, and the location of Karina’s body, which was then found within a few days, northwest of the city in a marshy area near the airport boundary roads.

When DNA confirmed the results, the family was notified. Constant was arrested and charged with second degree murder and causing an indignity to a body. His first appearance was made Nov. 30 by video to a packed courthouse, and the Crown has requested a mental assessment be made.

His second appearance is scheduled to take place in early December.

Visitation of Karina’s body was held Dec. 1 in Saskatoon, then the wake and interment took place at Muskeg Lake Cree Nation later in the week.

“Carol has been a tireless advocate on this issue, she really took the lead in action all along, and IE followed her lead as much as possible. She never gave up hope for Karina, and she is a hero in her own right,” noted Darlene Okemaysim-Sicotte.

**Season's Greetings**

On behalf of the Board of Governors, Elders Council, Management and Staff at the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre.

We wish you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a joyous New Year in 2015!

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(Nākawē)

Tethe Yati Honi Nezo  
(Dene)

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(Plains Cree)

mitho manitowi-kīsikānisik  
(Woodland Cree)

mino manitowi-kīsikānisik  
(Swampy Cree)

Wanikiya Tonpi Anpetu  
(Dakota)

Wakan Takan Mičinkši Yuhabi Amba  
(Nakota)

Wanikiya Tunpi Anpetu Iyuškinpi  
(Lakota)

**Thank you**

for the pleasure of your friendship and goodwill during the past year.

We wish you a wonderful holiday season and a new year full of happiness and prosperity.

**k+s**  
K+S Potash Canada

# Eekwol's Good Kill: a plea to youth and testament of all people

**Review By Zondra Roy  
For Eagle Feather News**

SASKATOON – Eekwol's highly anticipated album, "Good Kill" is different from anything we've heard from her before.

It starts out with an instrumental by DJ Zoolman, from Six Nations and a member of A Tribe Called Red. It melds traditional and contemporary sounds that prepare us for Eekwol's plea to the next generation: "Hunt for security, hunt for safety for our kids, hunt for knowledge, hunt for discipline, hunt for success, hunt for longevity, hunt for humility, and hunt for compassion."

This is what she describes as a "Good Kill", a title that makes reference to receiving her Master's degree, and Perry Bellegarde, in his speech to the graduates, said that this degree was "a good kill".

This is a moment that transcended this entire album, and gives reason to why we should listen.

The first track hits hard: Pitiful attests to the struggle we all have with ego, how we differentiate "wants and needs" and allow superficiality to mask a "self loathing" behavior – this is a cycle she describes as "pitiful".

"I will not be conquered", is a testament to the past, the present and the future that she will not succumb to contemporary forces of imperialism and she challenges her listeners to follow suit. She ends the song with a question to all people: "we need to change, are we going to do it?"

"Born a Guy", rebels against gender binaries; both politically and aesthetically, this satisfies the appreciation for musicality and the contemporary native of women in hip hop and those who do not embody the traditional gender characteristics. She admits, this song is fun and should not be taken too literally.

"Good Kill", produced by RDS, instantly offers an invitation to Indigenous youth to take control of their lives while addressing the realities that haunt them. Its enticing, dark undertone creates eeriness in the journey.

The haunting sound returns in "Shift". An alluring approach how she draws you to really think about what she is continuously proposing. It's motivating; it's captivating – exactly what I am looking for in a Monday morning jam.

The vivid reality in "Ghosts" both in her lyrics and emotion – the bravery it

Lindsay Knight has released a powerful new album in "Good Kill".

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)



took to put this song together is enough to inspire.

"Lessons in Cool" – it's a catchy, fun and engaging song that makes a person just feel really good about themselves. The message is simple: be yourself.

Her album amplifies reconciliation in a way that is best understood – through song and dance. Her album release party can attest to that.

It took place at The Hayloft on Wednesday, Nov. 28 in Saskatoon. The sold-out show featured Zoey Pricelys Roy, T-Rhyme aka Tara Campbell, and DJ Heywood aka Sheldon Evacheski.

Never have all three local Indigenous female emcees graced the stage together and the energy built up with each performance. Love, solidarity, resiliency and community permeated through the Caswell Hill venue as each artist shared stories of their own adversities and triumphs – it seems family and community are the lifeline for a lot of people.

Eekwol's performance gives everyone a perma-smile for the entire time she is on stage. Her catchy lyrics, her ability to bring people into her world and the way she sends such a tough message in a positive way are what keep people wanting more.

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**SCIROCCO DRAMA**

**Curtis is Cree [nehiyaw] from the Beardy's & Okemasis First Nation. Since 2002, he has been working on his craft as a playwright; his first script took him to Toronto. 13 years, 25 scripts, (20 of which have been produced) later, Curtis is the Artistic Director at GTNT**

**He dedicates all his efforts and accomplishments to his beautiful son Mahikan. Special thanks to family and friends for years of support!**  
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# Postmistress understudy delivers incredible performance

**By Andréa Ledding**  
**For Eagle Feather News**

**SASKATOON** – Tomson Highway's latest play, a one-woman musical, took Saskatoon by storm in November.

The opening piece for the newly renamed Gordon Tootoosis Nikaniwan Theatre, *The (Post) Mistress* starred powerhouse Patricia Cano in the evenings, with Tomson accompanying along with a saxophonist. Cano also had a local understudy, Krystle Pederson, who performed the matinees and brought the house down with her closing performance. She received applause after every song and a standing ovation at the end.

After her final performance she had a few minutes to talk with Eagle Feather News in her dressing room which she shares with Cano, complete with a cot — Cano is so dedicated she sleeps right in the theatre when she can, explained Pederson.

Pederson, a graduate of GTNT's Circle of Voices, said the experience was incredible.

"It's been very exciting. Tomson wrote such a beautiful play, the whole story — every song goes with a person that she's talking about, and just the way it's written I've been told by many people you never catch on to what's coming at the end," noted Krystle, referring to a plot twist that enters with the last song or two, when the audience realizes what kind of magic has been afoot.

"But it's so beautiful, the whole script. The woman is so loving and caring and she just kind of makes you laugh. It's been a great time to be a part of the show and be *The (Post) Mistress*."

Pederson had been away from the stage for five years, so she was a bit unsure although excited when she found out about the upcoming show a year ago. But when rehearsals arrived this winter, she realized how much she missed being on the boards and being a part of theatre life. Despite putting out so much energy, especially in the beginning of the second act with a dance and song that ends with her on the floor, she says she ends the performance really pumped up with all the energy that comes from the audience.

So how much preparation does a two-hour one-woman show take?

"We did three weeks of rehearsals, so not very long," noted Pederson, adding that as understudy the process was unique.

"My rehearsals were a lot different than hers, it was a lot of watching. Understudying is kind of new for myself. It was lots of watching and absorbing what was going on in rehearsals. And, I guess that mentorship side — Patricia really mentored me throughout the whole process — we'd do the show together, we'd do choreography at the same time. I really leaned on her to guide me through the show. It was awesome to work with her — and Tomson as well, his songs are so beautiful."

Pederson also sang with Tomson Highway a few years ago at the Roxy Theatre, performing three songs from *The (Post) Mistress*, so it was satisfying to learn the whole repertoire for the musical and completely become the character.

"It's just been an exciting journey. You think two



Krystle Pederson had the thrill of her career performing in "*The (Post) Mistress*" by Thompson Highway. Krystle was the understudy and performed in all of the matinees.

hours is going to be so long but once you're up there it just flies by. It was a great experience from top to bottom," said Pederson before new general manager Osemis Isbister-Bear knocked on the dressing room door.

He and Warren Isbister-Bear noted that while they'd watched Cano perform several times and her powerful stage presence always brings them close to tears, there is something about watching a northern Indigenous woman perform-

ing in Cree that puts them over the top.

"And Tomson just said in the lobby, the best part of coming out to Saskatoon was watching you grow and develop," noted Osemis.

"He says next time you'll have an understudy who does your matinées while you do the evenings."

That brought Pederson to hug Osemis amidst laughs and tears of gratitude herself, like the tears and laughter she had evoked that afternoon from a packed house, with her beautiful music and emotion-filled laugh-provoking performance.

Just when it couldn't get any better, Tomson himself appeared in the doorway, and when asked if he had any words said only, "Well I'm proud of her, I think that says enough."

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- Share your Family Literacy tips by tweeting #Lit4Fam or posting on Facebook.

- Join us for our annual Family Literacy Celebration at the Frances Morrison Library, January 23rd, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

- January 27th is **Family Literacy Day**. Check out our website to find out more.



# Language Keepers Conference dealt with issues surrounding Indigenous language restoration

**By Jeanelle Mandes**  
**For Eagle Feather News**

**SASKATOON** – The main theme of a recent First Nations Language Keepers conference was the restoration of Indigenous languages and the effort of keeping them alive.

That is what Leo Gamble from Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation took away from the two-day conference held at the Saskatoon Inn in November.

"It's important to have these conferences to keep our languages alive for our young people to have a chance to learn the language(s)," he says.

"There's people like me that had parents (that) had spoken their language but chosen not to teach their children. And I'm one of them."

Gamble is hopeful that not only him but other people will learn the language as he says "there's a responsibility to each of us to keep the language alive."

Delegates had the opportunity to attend a variety of sessions with various keynote speakers who stressed the importance of Indigenous languages. To accommodate the high number of participants, the conference was divided up in different sessions with different guest speakers such as Zoe Hopkins, Glenda Abbott and Kevin Tacan.

Gamble's memorable guest speaker, where he took away valuable information about languages, was with Chris Scribe.

"What he shared in his presentation was that if the government and the churches can use education to take away our languages, now that we have the power to educate our own people, we can use education to get the language back. That's the biggest thing (from the conference) that came to mind for me is that we can use the education system to restore the language," he adds.

Dorothy Myo, the president of the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre (SICC), first organized the conference ten years ago and has kept it going on an annual basis to create more awareness on the seven Indigenous languages in Saskatchewan.

She says one of the goals of the event is for everyone to take in and exchange information with the delegates, presenters and keynote speakers who brought their own stories from their areas.

"We're over 430 delegates this year so we're kind of pushing it to the limits of capacity. (Every year) fluctuates around the 400 mark. Some of the participants and guest speakers travelled far as Yellowknife, Ontario, Alberta, South and North Dakota," says Myo who is a fluent Cree speaker.

This is the only First Nations language conference in Canada which makes the event unique with an amazing turnout each year. The SICC president points out how the Indigenous languages are slowly depleting and the mandate of this conference will stress the awareness of revitalizing the languages.

"We have a huge loss of our language as First Nations people and it's declining rapidly. Many of our languages are endangered of being extinct," she says.

Myo says, in Saskatchewan, the Nakota language has very few speakers who are master speakers and they're all plus 60 years of age.

"There's different ways and models of preserving languages and that's what people are looking at," she says. "We have to go to the young people and we can't wait for them to come to us to teach them the languages. It's not going to happen."

Myo says many people attend the conference each year to find new information of learning the languages and to discover different methodologies that people are using .

"However small you want to start in terms of learning your language, there's hope for us to revitalize (it). In order to carry forward our culture and do the ceremonies, we need to know the language. That's where our identity comes from," she adds.

"I'm sure there are people who would love to be fluent in their language but they just don't know where or how to begin.

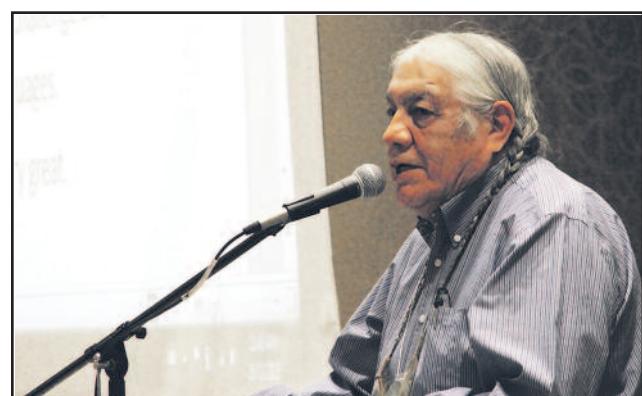
"They can find that out here."



**SICC President Dorothy Myo** says the attendance at the conference grows each year because the event is one of a kind in the country. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)



**Flutist Jason Chamakese** thrilled the crowd with his first performance on his flute in several months after a health scare. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)



**Bruce Starlight** from the Tsuu T'ina Nation spoke on preservation of language. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

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**Seasons Greetings**

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Indigenous Gaming Regulators

# Participants paint inspiring picture of art program

**By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News**

SASKATOON – Keesha Johnstone is a shy and burgeoning artist who is inspired by Louis Riel.

"I always looked up to him. He was a good leader for the Métis people and all my classes in history I would always go back to Louis Riel," said Johnstone.

She was speaking at the grand opening of an art show where she and her fellow Saskatoon Community Youth Arts Programming Urban Canvas XI participants were showing their art for the first time.

SCYAP has run eleven Urban Canvas programs since the inception of the grass root arts training program over 15 years ago. The Canvas project allows at-risk youth who face multiple barriers to employment an opportunity to parley their natural talent and interests into an intense employment related art skill and personal development program.

Darrell Lechman is the director and founder of SCYAP and he has become a go-to source for government ministries trying to understand how to provide services and training to youth.

"We believe there is a time in people's lives when change or a redirection can happen. It is at this time when we can provide youth with a positive and influ-

ential environment and we build that around something they love and in this case it is in art," said Lechman.

in several different life skills and art forms.

Christopher Scott is one of the old-



Keesha Johnstone says Louis Riel was the inspiration for her piece on display at the SCYAP Gallery as part of the Urban Canvas XI program.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

"Art is the tool that engages them and allows for building blocks of trust, belief, confidence and ultimately high self-esteem and self-worth."

The program is in high demand as over 150 youth applied for one of the 12 spots. The participants do receive a training allowance and are exposed to training

est participants this year but not too old to learn new things.

"I can't believe how much I have learned about different techniques, so far. Stuff I didn't know, and when I use it ... it is like wow, this makes me a better artist," said Scott who is a member of Ahtahkakoop First Nation and who was

always drawing in his journals in school as an outlet for himself.

"I also learned I'm a kid at heart. Around my urban canvas teammates I'm one of the oldest but one of the youngest in behaviour. I have made people come out of their shells. I get a lot of funny looks from them, though."

Lechman admits that during the 39 weeks of the program a lot is shared.

"We all learn from each other. We all kind of have certain issues or difficulties that we deal with each year and we have different youth with different difficulties," said Lechman. "But yet they are really all the same in the big picture and the youth face lots of social anxiety."

Next up in the course, the Urban Canvas youth are going to learn about painting. And that is good news to Keesha Johnstone.

"I am looking forward to learning painting next. I always liked that medium," said Johnstone who is from Mistawasis First Nation.

"I am here because I always loved drawing since I was seven years old. The program has taught me lots about art, but also about myself. It has gotten me out of my comfort zone so far."

"I suffer from anxiety and this helps me get out of it more. The program is pretty positive for everyone here."

For more information on our programs check out: [www.clarencecampeau.com](http://www.clarencecampeau.com)

## Saskatoon Community Youth Arts Programming (SCYAP)

and its Board of Directors and staff wish to give a heartfelt thank you to the sponsors of the SCYAP Urban Canvas XI project:

Thank You!



The project gives 12 young people ages 16 – 30 an opportunity to parley their natural talent and interests into an intense 34 week full-time employment related art skill enhancement and personal development program. This initiative, which includes extensive life skills, and mentoring, prepares them for employment or further education, thus paving the road to a healthier, happier and more productive life.

Learn more about SCYAP at:

[www.scyapinc.org](http://www.scyapinc.org) or [www.facebook.com/scyapinc](https://www.facebook.com/scyapinc)



# PROVINCIAL BUSINESS BRIEFS

## Economic development success rewarded by SIEF

The Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation recently presented the Entrepreneurial Spirit Award to Points Athabasca FHQ Contracting (PAFHQ).



**SIEF Chairperson Lucy Pelletier presented the 2015 Entrepreneurial Spirit Award to Points Athabasca FHQ Contracting. The award was accepted by Tribal Representative Edmund Bellegarde and Harley Camsell, General Manager for PAFHQ.**

(Photo supplied)

This award, in its fifth year, is given to a First Nation entity that is a business, corporation, individual or First Nation that exemplifies forward movement and involvement in creating sustainable economic development for the First Nations of Saskatchewan.

PAFHQ was built on a vision of maximizing First Nation equity ownership; longer, sustainable growth and diversification; and building opportunity together with First Nation communities and members. It was created in December 2011 as a partnership among FHQ Developments, Points Athabasca Contracting and Graham Business Trust.

The partnership model builds on the success of Points Athabasca Construction Ltd. and Athabasca Basin Developments Ltd. PAFHQ Contracting is owned by FHQ Developments (50%), Points Athabasca Contracting (17%) and Graham Construction (33%). Together this partnership group directly benefits 18 Saskatchewan First Nations, which include 11 communities among the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council and seven communities in Saskatchewan's northern Athabasca region.

## Sask. business leaders capture CCAB awards

The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) has two new award recipients for its Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame (ABHF): Chief Darcy Bear of Whitecap Dakota First Nation in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and Jacob Pratt, founder and creative director of Wambdi Dance. Chief Bear is the recipient of the 2016 ABHF Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition for his years of service and business suc-

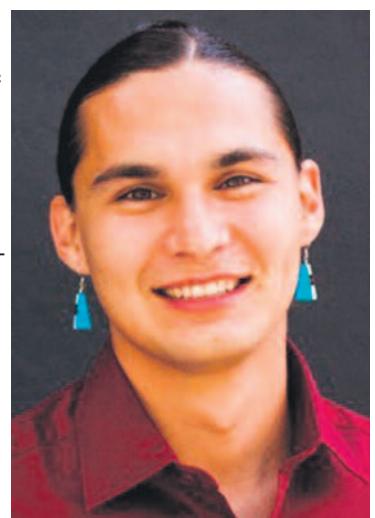
cess as Chief of Whitecap Dakota First Nation. Through his leadership, his community has become a model of economic development, a go-to tourist destination, and even an officially recognized health partner.

Chief Bear is admired and respected by his community, by government, and by his fellow business leaders.

Jacob Pratt is the recipient of the 2016 National Youth Aboriginal Entrepreneur Award. Wambdi Dance brings Aboriginal culture to the highly competitive field of dance performance and events. As part of his award, Jacob will receive \$10,000 from CCAB to expand his business.



DARCY BEAR



JACOB PRATT

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The National Indian Brotherhood Trust Fund is accepting applications for education programs aimed at healing and reconciliation. These funds have been made available from a surplus of the compensation allocated for former students of Indian residential schools, consistent with the terms of the 2007 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.

Applications are available to First Nation and Métis individuals, governments and organizations. Preference will be given to applicants who are former Indian residential school students.

Group applications are available now with a deadline of January 15, 2016. Individual applications will be available in Spring 2016.

For more information please contact the National Indian Brotherhood Trust Fund directly.

Toll Free: 1-888-268-0520  
Fax: 613-686-6757  
Email: [info@nibtrust.ca](mailto:info@nibtrust.ca)  
[www.nibtrust.ca](http://www.nibtrust.ca)

# PROVINCIAL BUSINESS BRIEFS

## Black Lake entering power generation field

The results are in and Black Lake community members have voted in favour of proceeding with the \$630 million Tazi Twe hydro project. The community vote took place on November 18, with advance polls on November 10 and 13. Members of the band voted 63 per cent in favour of the Tazi Twe Hydroelectric project; 44 per cent of eligible voters cast a ballot.

The project has been in the works for over 20 years, and had already received federal environmental approval.

"Today is a great day for Black Lake First Nation," says Chief Rick Robillard. "Today, we heard from our community members and I'm pleased to say that this project will move forward to the next steps. Many people have been working towards this day for many years, and I'm happy to hear that our community is in support of Black Lake First Nation becoming proud owners in a profitable, long term business."

The Tazi Twe hydroelectric project is a proposed water diversion hydroelectric project that will supply 50 megawatts to the provincial power grid. It will be the first new hydro project in Saskatchewan in over



RICK ROBILLARD

30 years, and is expected to bring \$1.3 billion into the community over the project's 90 year lifespan. It will be the first hydro project built entirely on reserve land in Saskatchewan. Black Lake First Nation selected SaskPower as their preferred partner to develop this hydro project, and an agreement in principle was signed in 2013.

The framework agreement between SaskPower and Black Lake First Nation establishes a 30 per cent interest for Black Lake and will provide a cash flow stream to the band for the next 90 years.

## West Wind Aviation expands service in the North

West Wind Aviation, one of Western Canada's largest air charter companies, alongside its scheduled flight operations, has expanded once again with the purchase of seven fixed wing wheeled aircraft and two hangars from La Ronge-based Osprey Wings Ltd., effective Nov. 28, 2015.

Dennis Baranieski, Vice President, Business Development and Customer Relations with West Wind Aviation, said, "We are very pleased to announce the expansion of West Wind flight operations in Saskatchewan through the acquisition of these assets from Osprey Wings. Osprey is a highly

regarded and successful company and our organizations have worked co-operatively for several years."

The addition of the new aircraft increases the West Wind fleet from 28 to 35. The expanded operation now includes a total of nine bases in Saskatchewan.

West Wind Aviation is a First Nations and employee owned company. The 2002 purchase of a majority of West Wind shares by Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC) and Prince Albert Development Corporation (PADC) was a significant development in the history of aviation in the province. It proved to be a highly regarded model of partnership with First Nations in Canada.

As of 2015, with its purchase of additional shares, Athabasca Basin Development (ABD) holds 55 per cent of the West Wind Aviation. ABD is owned by seven communities in the Athabasca Basin, providing West Wind with strong support for its northern operations.



## Law Society of Saskatchewan Public Representatives

The **Law Society of Saskatchewan** is seeking applications from members of the public, who are not lawyers, to serve as board members for up to a three year term.

The Law Society regulates the legal profession in the public interest, including setting standards for admission, education, ethics and the conduct of lawyers. This duty is entrusted to the Benchers who are the governing body of the Law Society.

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# FNPA hosts energy forum

**By Fraser Needham  
For Eagle Feather News**

**SASKATOON** – The First Nations Power Authority seeks to link Indigenous communities and industry leaders with the ultimate goal of capitalizing on expanding energy markets.

The not-for-profit corporation held its first community energy forum in Saskatoon on Nov. 17 with about 90 people in attendance.

The event was co-hosted by the Saskatchewan Office of The Treaty Commissioner.

Leah Nelson Guay is the CEO of FNPA.

She says with SaskPower opening up its grid system to alternate sources of energy, now is a good time for any number of First Nations to get into the business of providing power in the province.

“Why we are here and what this forum is all about is to link First Nations economic development authorities with industry leaders as part of facilitating potential partnerships between the two in some of these new energy markets,” Nelson Guay says.



**First Nations Power Authority CEO Leah Nelson Guay (left)** and **Milton Tootoosis of the Saskatchewan Office of The Treaty Commissioner (right)** at the Community Energy Forum.

Albert Derocher, the manager of the Flying Dust Band Holding Corporation, was one of the keynote speakers at the conference.

The Meadow Lake-area First Nation currently owns nine-quarter sections of land in southeastern Saskatchewan and has partnered with Crescent Point Energy to extract oil and gas in the area.

However, the Flying Dust band is also currently exploring the potential of using flare gas produced by this economic activity as a potential clean power source.

As part of the project, carbon dioxide would be removed from the flare gas and Flying Dust believes as much as 20 megawatts of clean power could be produced from the site, which would make it the largest of its kind in the province.

The FDB Holding Corporation has put forward an unsolicited power proposal to SaskPower that, if approved, would see a five megawatts demonstration project go forward at the site.

Derocher says that by March Flying Dust should have some indication from the Crown utility as to whether the demonstration project will go ahead or not.

He says because the band realizes oil and gas production does have some negative environmental effects in the area, they want to lessen some of this impact while at the same time pursuing new economic development opportunities.

“Having an oil and gas company does put us in a bit of a tough situation,” Derocher says. “Where we’re wanting to be environmental stewards of the land, we’re also pumping oil and gas out of the earth. So, for us to lessen our impact from this, because we need it as an economic development driver, we’ve decided to get into flare gas to lessen that environmental impact that we have, that footprint I guess.”

Derocher says exploring the business of using flare gas as a source of clean energy has been a steep learning curve over the past few years, which has meant getting in contact with



**Albert Derocher of the Flying Dust Band Holding Corporation makes a presentation at the Community Energy Forum in Saskatoon on Nov. 17.**

the right people including those at FNPA.

“What we’ve learned is that when you get into an industry like this, you need to have the proper technical expertise,” he says. “So, we’ve learned to get through the system and find the proper people.

“We’ve found some pretty good people in Western Canada who are dealing in flare gas already. We’ve had many discussions with them. Some of them want to be partners, some of them are just interested in what we are doing.”

The First Nations Power Authority has a number of projects on the go in Saskatchewan including two demonstration solar projects in the far northern communities of Fond du Lac and Hatchet Lake.

These projects have the capacity to provide 50 kilowatts of power to the local schools in each community with potential annual savings of between \$8,000 to \$10,000 on power bills.



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# Ottawa announces inquiry into missing and murdered women



Justice is coming for the victims and families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls as the federal government has started the process for a national inquiry.

(Photo by Willow Lagomodiere)

## Extensive consultations promised

**By Fraser Needham  
For Eagle Feather News**

The new Liberal government says it will soon launch a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women but it wants to get it right first.

This is why the federal government will be conducting extensive consultations with various stakeholders in coming months – including victims of violence and their families, Aboriginal leaders and community groups – before officially launching the inquiry sometime in 2016.

This is being called phase one while the actual inquiry will constitute phase two.

The national consultations will be led by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett, Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould and Status of Women Minister Patty Hajdu.

The government has also designed a discussion guide which will soon be available online to help focus meetings on the inquiry design process.

Questions in the discussion guide include who should conduct the inquiry, its length, who should be heard and what issues considered.

The public and other stakeholders will be encouraged to submit their own answers to these questions once the discussion guide is available online.

"Missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls represent a heart-breaking national tragedy that must be addressed immediately," Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett says in a released statement.

"Inaction ends today. This is why we need to hear from all Canadians – especially survivors, families and loved ones, Indigenous organizations, and provinces and territories – to help us identify the best process for this inquiry."

Darlene Okemaysim-Sicotte is the co-chair of Iskwewuk E-wichiwitochik

(Women Walking Together), a support network for families of missing and murdered Indigenous women based out of Saskatoon.

She says extensive consultations prior to officially launching a national inquiry are the right way to go.

"I think it's necessary to have that design process, to have that inclusive process," Okemaysim-Sicotte says.

"That's why they are meeting with families right away Friday and it won't be the only place or time they will be meeting with families. In the next while they will be engaging with national advocacy groups and grassroots people to work on that design process because that's going to be the necessary part of the groundwork leading up to the time they actually start the inquiry in the spring.

"So I think it's very necessary to start on those grounds. It will start building their database and they will start seeing a repeat of the same wishes. Some of them will be very dynamic from each other and there's other things they don't want to miss. So I think it's important the design process has a lot of feedback and input by as many people as possible."

The Liberal government has committed two years and \$40 million to a national inquiry on missing and murdered Indigenous women.

The government announcement was made in Ottawa on Dec. 8.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau met with Assembly of First Nations leaders in nearby Gatineau, Quebec.

A 2014 RCMP report estimates 1,181 Indigenous women were either killed or went missing between 1980 and 2012.

The previous Conservative government repeatedly refused to call an inquiry into the issue.

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Battlefords Industrial Career Centre  
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# Canadiens hockey legends visit La Ronge

**By Linda Mikolayenko  
For Eagle Feather News**

**LA RONGE** – The Montreal Canadiens Alumni Hockey Tour made an exciting stop at the Lac La Ronge Indian Band's Jonas Roberts Memorial Community Centre facing off against the La Ronge 89er Selects before more than 400 spectators.

"It's going to be a fun game," former NHL star John Chabot said, emphasizing the word "fun".

Coached by Habs legend, Guy Lafleur, Chabot and Stephane Richer were among the 10 players on the Alumni team who were joined by two locals, Dean Senga and Devin Bernatchez.

"It was a dream come true," said Bernatchez, who has been a Montreal Canadiens fan for as long as he can remember, and idolized Richer as a kid.

"It took me back to my younger days playing road hockey on Dalby Crescent. When I scored a goal, I was Stephane Richer."



**LLRIB Chief Tammy Cook-Searson (second from left) and Kevin Roberts, JRMCC Director of Sports and Recreation (right) pose for a photo with local players and the Canadiens Alumni team.**

(Photo by Sage Roberts, courtesy Tammy Cook-Searson)

Playing forward, Bernatchez scored two goals when he donned the Canadiens jersey, and assisted on two others.

"To play with them is something I will cherish forever," said the former La Ronge Ice Wolves player.

As a minor hockey coach for the last decade, Bernatchez was pleased that proceeds from the November event are going to support youth sports, and gives full credit to the organizers for all their efforts.

Plans to bring the tour to La Ronge began back in the summer, said Kevin Roberts, Jonas Roberts Memorial Community Centre's Director of Sports and Recreation.

"Through emails and phone calls, we were able to nail down a date that worked for our schedule and theirs," he said.

The Saskatchewan portion of the Alumni tour also included games in Yorkton and Unity. To make the La Ronge experience unique, Roberts said they arranged for a traditional meal that included fish, moose meat and bannock. The supper was part of a VIP event where fans could meet and greet their idols, get autographs, and pose for photos.

The ceremonial puck drop and face-off included Lac La Ronge Indian Band Chief Tammy Cook-Searson, Prince Albert Grand Council Vice-Chief Brian Hardlotte, John Chabot, representing the Canadiens Alumni and Sam Roberts of the 89er Selects, along with mascot, Captain Cree.

The Selects team was put together especially for the occasion, made up of 12 guys who couldn't pass up the op-

portunity for a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and though the score was 12-4 in favour of the Alumni, it didn't seem to matter.

Although a huge hockey fan himself, Kevin Roberts said his responsibilities that evening didn't allow him to lace up his skates, but he enjoyed the camaraderie with the Montreal Alumni team.

"The guys were great!" he said.

In a generous gesture, during the first intermission, the Alumni team also played a five-minute game with the youngest players in JRMCC minor hockey program, the IP 89er pre-novice team.

"For some of them, it was their first hockey experience," said Roberts. "So that was a big boost to them to continue to stay involved."

While the La Ronge players were left with dreams realized and great memories, the Canadiens Alumni left La Ronge with special mementos of the evening.

Gary Parada, who played goal for the 89er Selects, presented each of them with dream catchers featuring the Canadiens logo.



**An excited Shirley McLeod gets her Canadiens jersey autographed by Habs legend Guy Lafleur. McLeod was also excited that her brother, Devin Bernatchez, got to play on the same team as his idols.**

(Photo by Linda Mikolayenko)

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# World Indigenous Games phenomenal experience for athlete

**By Sekwun Ahenakew  
For Eagle Feather News**

Our team was ready and waiting for a few hours, and we were becoming accustomed to "Brazilian Time."

In a sea of colour surrounding us, the arena director announced our Tug of War event in Portuguese. The huge crowd of Indigenous Peoples from around the world were going wild, I was pumped from listening to our coach and his words of encouragement, focused from seeing our fiercely painted opponents and exhilarated from that fact that I was participating at the first-ever World Indigenous Games, in Palmas, Brazil, as an athlete!

As excited as I was and as intense as the heat was, I remained quiet ... focused on a huge, dusty rope, red sand on my feet and the backs of nine teammates, as I was the anchor.

The tug of war rope was approximately 35 metres in length and about three inches in diameter. Our playing field was sand and we were all barefoot. My teammates of this U.S. delegation included members of the Crow, Northern Cheyenne, Navajo, Apache, Comanche, Lummi, Chippewa, Nez Percé and Cherokee nations. I was a recruit and so was Eves Brown, a Maori from New Zealand.

Old-fashioned tug-of-war – where our opponents, with their faces painted to strike fear in our hearts – was about to begin.

Our faces were painted, too, and our walk to the rope made me feel proud of who I was. After the officials confirmed each team was standing and the rope was not wrapped around the anchor, they blew the whistle.

One, two three, pull, was our strategy. We had to figure out a tactic that would tug our opponents out of the sand mounds they buried themselves in and to gain an advantage with the tag marker.

In my mind, two minutes didn't seem like a long time, but during the event, all time stood still. It was just like in those athletic commercials when all you hear is breathing.

Being in a central position on the rope, Temrys, volunteered to be the main one who shouted out directions. During the two minute long battle, we were one voice, one heart, one soul. Two minutes, seemed like eternity.

At first we pulled with chaotic excitement until we could hear Temryss, "One, two, three pull, One two three pull!"

We chimed in and created a rhythm that kept us all in sync to victory! This victory advanced us to the semi-finals!

The games were held on a seven-hectare park, with large lots of red patches of sand and dirt with random walkways, holding blankets full of crafts, such as wooden rattles, tradi-

tional bows, feathered earrings and necklaces made of wooden seeds.

It was here that I plopped down and opened my gym bag and pulled out my dress and beadwork. It was here that I transformed from athlete to dancer. I quickly made my way to the Cultural Village to join the Many Nations Dance Troupe.

To get into the Cultural Village, we usually have to go through a security clearance. On this night, by this time, security recognized me and I was let in quickly. Crowds of people were already situated in a semi-circle around the dancers and the Young Bucks drum group were singing proudly.

I was greeted by smiles and the flashes of many cameras. I had just enough time to squeeze through the crowd, sip some water and start dancing. I felt on top of the world, having just advanced in the tug of war event with Team USA at the main arena and showcasing my dance style, soon after, with Team Canada at the Cultural Village.

All participants earned medals carved from wood, seeds and other natural items. There were more than 2,000 participants from Brazil and 23 countries, either participating in the athletic events or showcasing their dances by performing at the Cultural Village.

With humbleness I can say I will not only be receiving a wooden medal from being on Team Canada's cultural representation but from one from our American brothers and sisters across the medicine line, for athletics, as well.

Through this phenomenal experience I can say that it has changed my life and opened my eyes to a whole ancient world of strength and richness of Indigenous People.

The purpose of the games was to raise awareness about the many different Indigenous groups around the world. The Many Nations Dance Troupe, led by Eu-



**Sekwun Ahenakew participated in the World Indigenous Games in athletics and as a cultural performer. Here she is sixth from left with her American tug of war team.**

gene and Lorna Arcand from Saskatchewan, joined other Team Canada participants to collectively show the world that we are here and that we are alive!

The next World Indigenous Games will be in Canada in 2017. I encourage everyone who wishes to participate to proudly display your culture as well as your athleticism.

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# FSIN's Spirit of Our Nations powwow crowns new princess

**By Jamin Mike and Morgan Esperance  
For Eagle Feather News**

**SASKATOON** – Maggie Eastman had a very emotional Spirit of Our Nations powwow.

During the supper break intermission, the powwow crowned her the new Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Princess. Eastman was overwhelmed with tears of joy.

“I wanted to run because I have a message to bring forward to the youth,” said the powwow princess who is in Grade 12 at Oskayak High School in Saskatoon. It was her dream to earn this title ever since seeing the past FSIN princesses run when she was a young girl.

“My message is to take the time to learn your language and take the time to go back to your cultural and ceremonial ways. This is what’s going to help us and heal us in the future.”

Many others agree with her and are in support as she takes on this role and leads by example just like the former FSIN Princess Jolene Creely.

From the Okanese reserve, Creely is truly proud that she had the opportunity to represent the 74 First Nations as a Dakota and Cree woman.

“I would definitely encourage the next Miss FSIN princess to just keep living a good life and to stay away from that negative aspect,” said Creely who is currently a student at the First Nations University of Canada.

Over 700 dancers registered for the annual Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations powwow and they gathered to share in celebration and spirit. Dancers such as Laryn Oakes come to the powwow each year for the enjoyment of being with peers and fellow dancers.

Oakes has much to say as she not only dances but spectates the entire event.

“It’s a pretty good turnout and there are a lot of good drums here. There are lots of dancers that came from all over the United States and Canada.”

She has been attending and dancing at this powwow since before she could remember. Oakes especially enjoys the singing of the powwow.

The celebration was a success as each dancer, singer and spectator enjoyed themselves. Each day went along smooth as the committee dedicated all of their time to this weekend and event.

The new Miss FSIN has been in shock since the crown was placed on her head.

“It feels so amazing! I am so grateful to represent the 74 First Nations across Saskatchewan. And as soon as I was crowned, I felt tears of joy. I am so happy to be doing this. I’m so excited to travel to the schools and to talk to the youth about the message I need to bring forth,” said Eastman.



FSIN Youth Representatives Andre Bear and Cheyenne Fineday with Miss. FSIN Maggie Eastman.

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