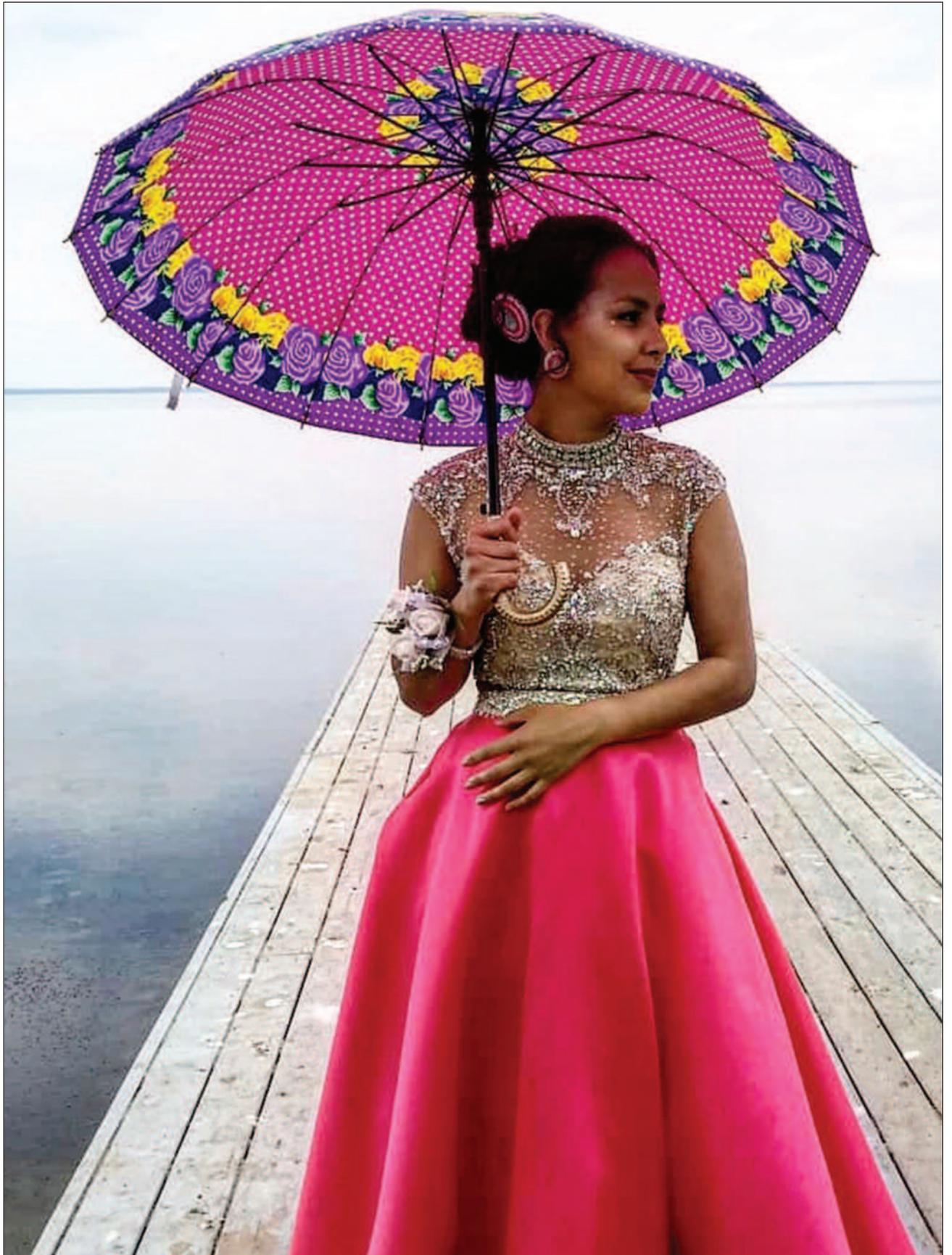


Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

Grads dazzle in class and in pictures

First place winner of the Eagle Feather News grad photo contest is Shauntel Lemaigre, a 17-year-old high school graduate from La Loche who will be entering Saskatchewan Polytechnic in Saskatoon to become a paramedic.



By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

It's that time of the year again when Eagle Feather News is on the hunt for photos for the graduation photo contest.

This year's entries were outstanding and record-breaking. It was difficult to decide the Top 3 winners but here they are.

Landing in first place is Shauntel Lemaigre, a 17-

year-old high school graduate from La Loche in northern Saskatchewan. Lemaigre has turned tragedy into motivation. Lemaigre lost her cousin and best friend, Madison Janvier, to cancer when the girls were only eight years old.

"We did everything together," said Lemaigre. "And so, when she wasn't here anymore, I had to find a way to grieve and to cope."

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Hunter McLean's leadership abilities shone through earning him the prestigious President's Award at SIIT. - Page 3



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Nineteen students have graduated from a firefighting training program sponsored by Saskatoon schools. - Page 11



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Graduation Edition

Coming In August - Justice Issue

CPMA #40027204

SIMFC honours grads

By Angela Hill
For Eagle Feather News

Grade 12 Indigenous students from across the Saskatoon came together in June to celebrate their successes at the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre's 34th annual graduation ceremony.

"Every year we are seeing more and more graduates from an Indigenous background completing their high school education and that makes us so proud," said Terry Gossen, graduation coordinator at the friendship centre.

About 190 graduates were recognized during the events held at the Grand Salon at TCU Place on June 14. Among them was Dawson Thomas, who graduated from Oskayak High School.



Summer Quewezance won a scholarship from Big Brothers Big Sisters presented by Jennifer Humble at the graduation celebration.

"To graduate and finally move on towards post-secondary, to move towards my career feels amazing. It feels like I am that one more step closer to getting my life on track," he said.

He spoke during the celebration, giving the speech



Almost two hundred graduates participated in the 34th Annual Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre graduation ceremony.

to the parents and support networks. He spoke about how their support pushed them, challenged them, and reminded them they can get up after failures and keep going. It was also all the simple things, like driving them to school, Thomas said.

"The little things really matter in the end. Those little things really count towards our successes."

Thomas said throughout his education he moved a lot, and for a long time he didn't feel a connection to his culture.

"I felt like I wasn't sure who I really was," but Thomas added that his high school and the support from his mother changed that and made graduation possible.

He plans on taking social work at university and says he wants to make a difference in the world.

The night itself was incredible said Summer Quewezance, who was also among the graduates.

"Being in a room with all of those people, it kind of blew my mind to see that there were so many First Nations and Métis people graduating," she said. She received five scholarships that night and cheered as her close friend was recognized with a spirit award.

"It just makes me so proud," Quewezance said.

There was a photo booth for serious and fun photos, a candy bar, and grand march, but there was also

ceremony included – the students smudged and a drum group played, said Gossen. Then was the banquet where some of the graduates provided entertainment.

"What really stood out for me during the planning of the event was how talented and motivated and inspiring all of these young people are," she said. In some cases, Gossen said she spoke with youth graduates that she has known since they were young.

"It was really full circle for me."

Thomas said during the grand march, there was clapping and cheering every time a graduate walked across the stage.

"It was really amazing moment to be a part of it," he said. "It felt like such a huge, empowering moment."

As he walked around the event and met new people, Thomas said he realized that graduating didn't mark the end of something, but the beginning of what comes next for the graduates.

"I know they will do great things," he said.

The Saskatoon Indian Métis Friendship Centre celebrates their 50th anniversary in operation this year, making this year's graduation even more special.

The graduation ceremony is just one of the programs and services offered by the organization to support Indigenous people living in urban areas.

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President's Award for McLean

By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

Decked out in graduation garb and striding assuredly across the stage to receive the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology (SIIT) President's Award for Leadership, few would guess that Hunter McLean wants little to do with the spotlight or the hundreds of eyes focused keenly on him.

"It looked like I was having a good time, but internally, I was trying not to throw up. Or cry. Or pass out. I'm not used to that kind of parading on display for people," said McLean of his honouring at this year's SIIT spring convocation.

McLean is unquestionably a leader. He's a salt-of-the-earth kind of guy who's compelled to support those around him. But what makes McLean a special type of leader is his desire to better his community without any sort of applause or recognition.

"I never think of myself as a leader," he said. "You should do things for a reason and hope some good comes out of it. I think (the leadership award) affirms that I'm on the right path in making sure support is there for other people that allows them to flourish."

McLean, 28, from James Smith Cree Nation, leaves his academic career at SIIT with a diploma in business administration (graduating with distinction), but his impact on the college will long be felt by students after him. In his first year, McLean volunteered much of his free time supporting his peers through any personal or academic problems they had, as well as volunteering to get his hands dirty with any SIIT functions and events.

In his second year, though, McLean began to make his mark.

A group project with McLean snowballed into the creation of a Pride awareness day, which then led to writing a proposal for a safe space, where students of all backgrounds and orientations could talk and connect, judgment free, with their peers.

"I always felt like I wanted people to feel included because I never really felt included while I was growing up," said McLean, who came out as gay in high school.

"I see people struggling and I want to do what I can to make it easier for them."

Eventually, through participating in conversation circles and listening to the stories of everyone around him, McLean and fellow SIIT student Violet Swan were able to establish a permanent Pride Centre, the first of its kind at the SIIT campus.

"The more education and knowledge we have, the better our future will be for students. The Pride Centre helps to foster that inclusivity," said McLean. "It goes back to reconciliation and the whole process of re-learning our history and sharing our stories."

McLean's participation in nearly every student-led initiative on campus caught the eye of staff and faculty. Susanne Berg, Director of Marketing and Communications at SIIT, and Laura Negraeff, business instructor, nominated him for the leadership award, which recognizes one student for their commitment to education, enhancing the student experience, and demonstrating SIIT values. McLean was a clear choice.

"The thing that impressed me most is his ability to take a leadership role in ways beyond picking up a microphone or being a really vocal person at the front," said Berg. "He takes a leadership role in the quieter places."

This modest approach to leadership comes naturally to McLean, who bristles then nervously laughs when asked about his accomplishments or qualities of character. Rather, he defers to what he can do for others.

"I think it's important to be able to take a step back from your own life and help out other people," he said.

McLean plans to attend the University of Saskatchewan this fall to continue his education in business, with hopes of eventually opening his own retail store. But



President's Award for Leadership winner Hunter McLean Left to Right Chief Bobby Cameron, Chief Carlton Bear, Hunter McLean, Chief Michael Starr, and President & CEO Riel Bellegarde. (Photo by Jarrett Crowe)

whatever McLean does going forward, it will likely be motivated by leading his community in ways that will make it a healthier, more inclusive place to live. Call him a leader, whether he likes it or not.

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Grads overcame their own challenges

As we're in the midst of summer, graduation season is winding down.

Whether you just celebrated your own graduation or a loved one's, it's a momentous milestone worth embracing.

From celebrating a kindergarten, completing high school or achieving a higher education; it's always the beginning of a new chapter.

This month's issue is dedicated to showcasing our province's Indigenous graduates as Eagle Feather News held its annual grad photo contest. The submission numbers were outstanding and might I add ... record-breaking!

Although we picked our top three best photos listed in this issue, we truly believe every entry was a winner.

Obtaining an education is never easy. There are always obstacles that are meant to halt us in our paths but it's how we face and overcome them that make the journey worthwhile.

During my interviews with a few of the youth grads, they all mentioned how they encountered challenges that made them want to give up. But one thing they all had in common was having a strong support system to motivate them to keep going forward.

It took me back to my days as a post-secondary student. I was a single mother pushing my way to obtain a post-secondary education. My daughter was my motivation. I spent countless nights studying, reading and writing papers. I felt overwhelmed numerous times but I remember who was watching me; my daughter.

One night, I sat up all night typing a multi-page paper that was due the next morning, I remember feeling overstressed and ready to call it a night until I heard footsteps coming down the hallway. Out comes my half-asleep daughter dragging her blanket on

the floor.

She looked at me, gave me half a smile and patted my arm as she made her way to the couch to sleep.

It was like she was saying, 'don't give up Mom, you can do it!' That moment justified why I worked so hard to obtain a higher education so I can provide her with a brighter future.

When I hear stories of younger people obtaining their education, it fills

high school graduation at Beardy's & Okemasis Cree Nation. She is a young mother of three beautiful children and one on the way.

Watching her smile on her special day with her family and friends along her side filled me with so much pride for her.

She is a true inspiration to many that obtaining an education is achievable.



Kierra Cameron's high school graduation in Beardy's & Okemasis Cree Nation was a celebration for the family and her three young children.
(Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)

me with so much pride. Everyone has a story of how they got to where they are.

Last month, I had the opportunity to capture my niece Kierra Cameron's

The large amount of grad photo submissions to our contest showed that graduation rates in our Indigenous communities are rising.



Comment

Jeanelle Mandes

According to the provincial audit report, in the 2016-17 school year, the grad rate for self-declared Indigenous students was 43.2 per cent – up from 41.9 per cent from the year before – compared to 85.4 per cent for non-Indigenous students.

As well, data from a Ministry of Advanced Education media release revealed that “between 2013 and 2017, there has been a 26 per cent increase in First Nations, Métis and Inuit students enrolled in credentialed programs at Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions, with nearly 5,400 students enrolled in 2017...the number of credentials awarded to First Nations, Métis and Inuit students has grown 35 per cent since 2013 with nearly 1,700 such credentials awarded in 2017.”

That's remarkable to see such a significant increase of Indigenous students in high school and post-secondary institutions. Let's continue to see those numbers rise. So, to all the graduates of 2018, don't stop there.

Keep pushing yourself further for an education. Challenge yourself to reach even higher milestones. When the going gets tough, confide in the person who motivates or mentors you. Sometimes we all just need a little push in the right direction.

As the saying goes, 'education is the new buffalo' and we need to continue looking to education as a way of subsistence and further advancing to create those brighter futures ahead.

Thank you to all grad photo entries – sending congratulations to all Indigenous graduates of 2018!

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I'm just waiting for my next invention to click

There's a quote that's attributed to Wayne Gretzky that says, "You miss a hundred per cent of the shots you don't take."

I'm pretty sure that it's something that people have been saying for centuries but it's still good advice. Not for gambling addicts, though, it's horrible advice for them.

But in the vein of taking risks, I'd like to talk about something near and dear to my heart – inventions.

Now, while I have zero mechanical or electrical skills (I've often referred to my car motor as a bowlful of metal spaghetti and the only thing I know about electricity is that you shouldn't lick batteries), I believe that someday I'll invent something that helps humanity and will result in me getting a statue, one with robot arms that rotate in a strong wind like a useless windmill.

Everything I learned about being an inventor comes from a movie called Joy. It's about this woman who invents a mop and then becomes rich.

That movie taught me that the first key to inventing is to understand a need.

Now, I never know when my floor needs washing – to me, a sticky floor just means I'm burning more calories when I walk across it – so I'd never invent anything like a mop. However, there are things that I'm into – Netflix watching, folding laundry, buying clothes, etc.

One of those things is sure to inspire some type of invention. The second key to inventing is conviction. That means when you tell people, "hey here's this thing!" and they're like, "that is

stupid," you don't listen to them.

I believe 95 per cent of success is not listening to other people. I can't remember who told me that. And the third key to inventing is obviously to sell it and make a lot of money. This is the part that most of us get stuck at.



Here are some of the inventions I've invented (but did nothing about). As you will see, my inventions were on the right track as they were similar to other inventions (copycats) that later came along.

The toothbrush head – I had the idea for a detachable toothbrush head that would be attached to the toothpaste. So instead of replacing toothbrushes, you would just replace the toothpaste.

There were some challenges of course – like maybe your mouth isn't big enough to get an entire toothpaste container into it and what about when the toothpaste container was flattened out and hard to keep erect?

Also, would your family or roommates feel OK about you having your gross toothbrush head attached to the toothpaste?

Now this exact prototype hasn't been in-

vented yet, but I did see a toothbrush that had a tooth-whitener in the bottom of it. So, the technology does exist for my invention.

You may have found that one a bit silly so here's where I redeem myself – Kleenex with menthol built into it. Because then you can inhale some healing menthol every time you're blowing your nose. Many people scoffed at this invention but then Kleenex started putting lotion into Kleenex. If you can put lotion in, then you can put menthol in. Again, I was ahead of my time.

A highway that creates energy. We are in the midst of an energy crisis (again), gas prices are at about \$1.30 – even at the First Nation gas stations! Coal is out of the question, and nuclear energy makes most people poop themselves – so we need to think out of the box.

How about if we installed in the highways a pad of rollers that stored the energy of the tires of the cars that travelled on it every day? It's the same principle as hydroelectric power except in my vision, the wheels are the water.

The genius of this invention is that it uses human nature. Because people aren't going to stop travelling no matter what the price of gas is or how ungodly hot it is outside, so then let's use our collective willful ignorance for everyone's benefit.

Now I don't have the math skills to put that together, so I'll leave it in the capable hands of our young people going into engineering.

Just call me when its time to model for the statue – I'll be working on my pose.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2018!



**Saskatoon Indian & Métis Friendship Centre
celebrated its 34th Annual Aboriginal Graduation Gala
in the Grand Salon at TCU Place on June 14th.**



This year's gala was a record event with 192 participants, which brought together Saskatoon's Indigenous community for a night of celebration and recognition. Our generous event sponsors and scholarship providers awarded \$22,000 to students for their commitment in academia, sports, community involvement, and personal growth.

Thank you to everyone involved for supporting our youth as they reach a major milestone in their journey!



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SIMFC celebrating 50 years of service 1968-2018.

Dylan Crowe overcame family tragedy to earn his diploma at māmawēyatitân centre

**By Kristy Stonechild
For Eagle Feather News**

Dylan Crowe's path to graduation wasn't simple. He dropped out of school after his uncle was murdered.

Crowe is one of 20 students who made up the first graduating class of the māmawēyatitân centre in North Central Regina.

Principal Shannon Fayant says the centre is more than an infrastructure, "our kids didn't build it but it was built on their prayers."

She adds the school administration consulted the students and decided to embrace a soft dress code. The students wanted to rebrand themselves.

The students decided to honour the old Scott Collegiate, which was built in 1923, by keeping the colour blue and becoming the wolves – the school mascot.

"Here at Scott it's just like you get welcomed every day with a big smile all the time, people know your name and they get the time to sit down with you and get to know you, and I think that's one of the best ways to learning is being able to know your teacher," says Crowe.

"I use the outdoor afterschool program (to) play basketball after school. My brothers are involved in the afterschool programs".

Fayant lists off a dozen programs which include medicine picking for the girls and drum groups for the boys.

"We're able to pick our sage for the year and our students' harvest it and our elders are there. Our young men will do pipe," she says.

"When we talk about ceremony and culture, our young

men will do the pipe (ceremony) and then our young women will go to the hills and pick the sage. Then we'll come together as community."

Activities reflect the fact that up to 97 per cent of the kids are of Indigenous ancestry. Crowe says "the spiritual side of his school contributed to his success being able to just go and smudge whenever that's amazing."

māmawēyatitân centre is organized on a quarter system which helps students like Crowe to complete their high school diploma. He said he completed his math class in one month. The centre, which opened last September, is more than just a school, it's a community center with a public library, Regina Police Service and a daycare.

The centre's first graduation ceremony was held on June 26. Crowe says he's proud to be in the first graduating class.

"I didn't think of it like too much of anything but I guess it's a pretty big deal because you know, like, you're the first one to graduate from this new school," he says.

"Who knows how long this school's going to be around. Just being able to say that you're the first one to (graduate)."

Crowe plans to apply to a teacher education program after graduation with hopes of becoming a gym or math teacher.

"Those are my two favorite subjects and I always wanted to become a teacher since I was a little kid because I found it interesting to teach the younger generations coming up," Crowe says.

"I'd also like to influence kids like how I was influenced by my teachers."



After losing his uncle, Dylan Crowe used the supports of the māmawēyatitân centre to help pass his Grade 12.



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(Above) Third place: Hunter Boyer from the Peter Bal-lantyne Cree Nation is advancing his football career by playing junior football in Nanaimo, B.C. with hopes to make it into a university team someday and pursue an education to become a high school teacher.



Congratulations to Averi Goforth who received an honourable mention.

Announcing

• Continued from Page 1

She wanted to do something to pay tribute to her cousin and add perspective to appreciating life and those around you. During graduation, Lemaigre shared a speech in which she shared the story of Janvier who would have been sitting there to celebrate.

“I wanted (my fellow classmates) to learn not to take life for granted. She was supposed to be there, graduating with us. Because she wasn’t, I believed I should honour her,” she said.

When she was informed of winning first place in the grad photo contest, she was in shock and couldn’t believe it.

“It felt pretty cool because I (never) won anything before,” said Lemaigre. “It was a great opportunity.”

She hopes other youth can follow suit and be inspired to finish high school.

“Push past your limits even if you don’t believe in yourself,” she said.

This fall, she plans to attend Saskatchewan Polytechnic to become a paramedic – a testament to the value she continues to put into every human life.

In second place,

Dezaray Wapass, from the Big River First Nation, said receiving her high school diploma was the biggest achievement in her life.

“It felt so amazing. It felt like it wasn’t real (because) it went by so fast,” she said.

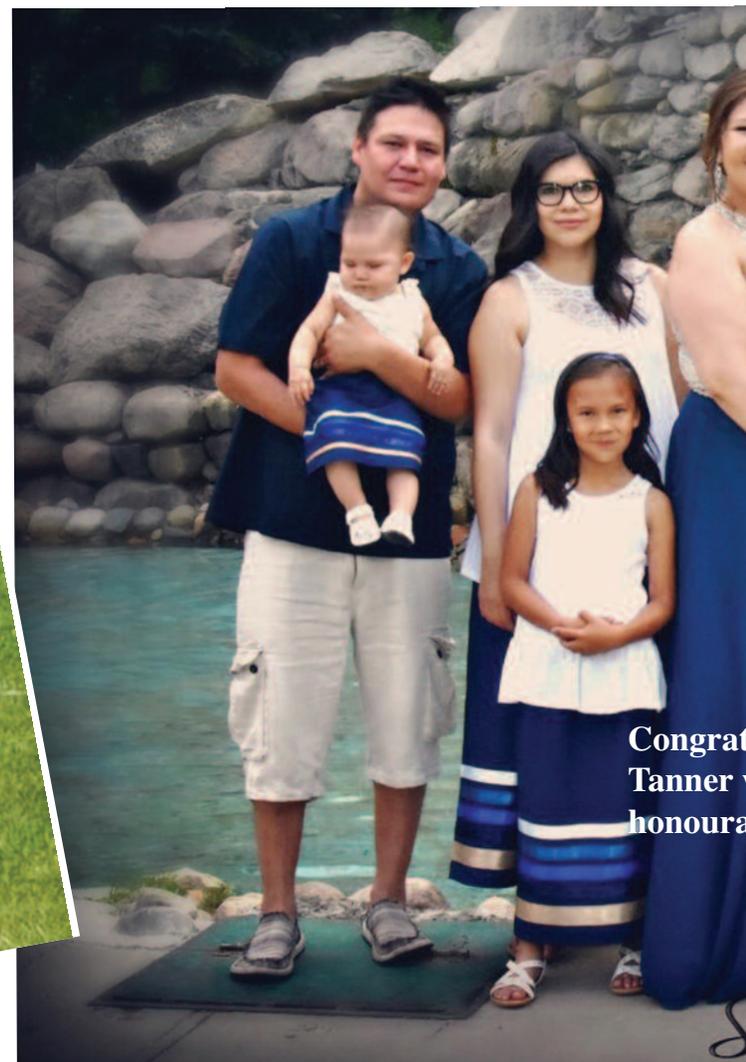
The 19-year-old was also in the Prince Albert Athletics Track Club and she found it difficult at times to balance a sport she loves and concentrate on her studies with school. But she pushed herself to the finish line and the victory was something magical for Wapass.

“I had no other choice but to stay up late after (track) practices and get my homework done,” she said. “That was my biggest challenge, to balance school and my athletic life.”

Her message to youth is to never give up on what seems impossible.

“You can hand in your work still if you’re really dedicated to it,” she said. “Get your mind set and focused on whatever is most important – which is school and homework.”

Wapass was accepted to the University of Saskatchewan for the upcoming fall semester and plans on trying out for the university’s Huskies



Congratulations to Tanner Tanner who received an honourable mention.

the winners!

Team.

Hunter Boyer from the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation placed third in the contest.

The 18-year-old completed Grade 12 from Ecole St. Mary High School in Prince Albert. Boyer said it was an unforgettable moment after he received his diploma.

“I had lots of butterflies in my stomach,” he said. “It was pretty cool to see all my family and my friends being there for me on my special day. It was really exciting!”

At the start of the school year, Boyer encountered troubles keeping his marks up but with continuous encouragement from his teachers, he successfully handed in all his required assignments.

Boyer balanced football and his studies but he owes his success to the words from his football coach, Danny Earl – who not only coached him in the sport but encouraged him to work hard in school.

“He always pushed me to be the best that I can be,” said Boyer.

“He made sure I was always doing good in school and that it was my main priority.”

Boyer will be further advancing

his football career by playing junior football with the VI Raiders in Nanaimo, B.C. with his first game at the beginning of August.

He hopes to make it into a university team someday and pursue an education to become a high school teacher.

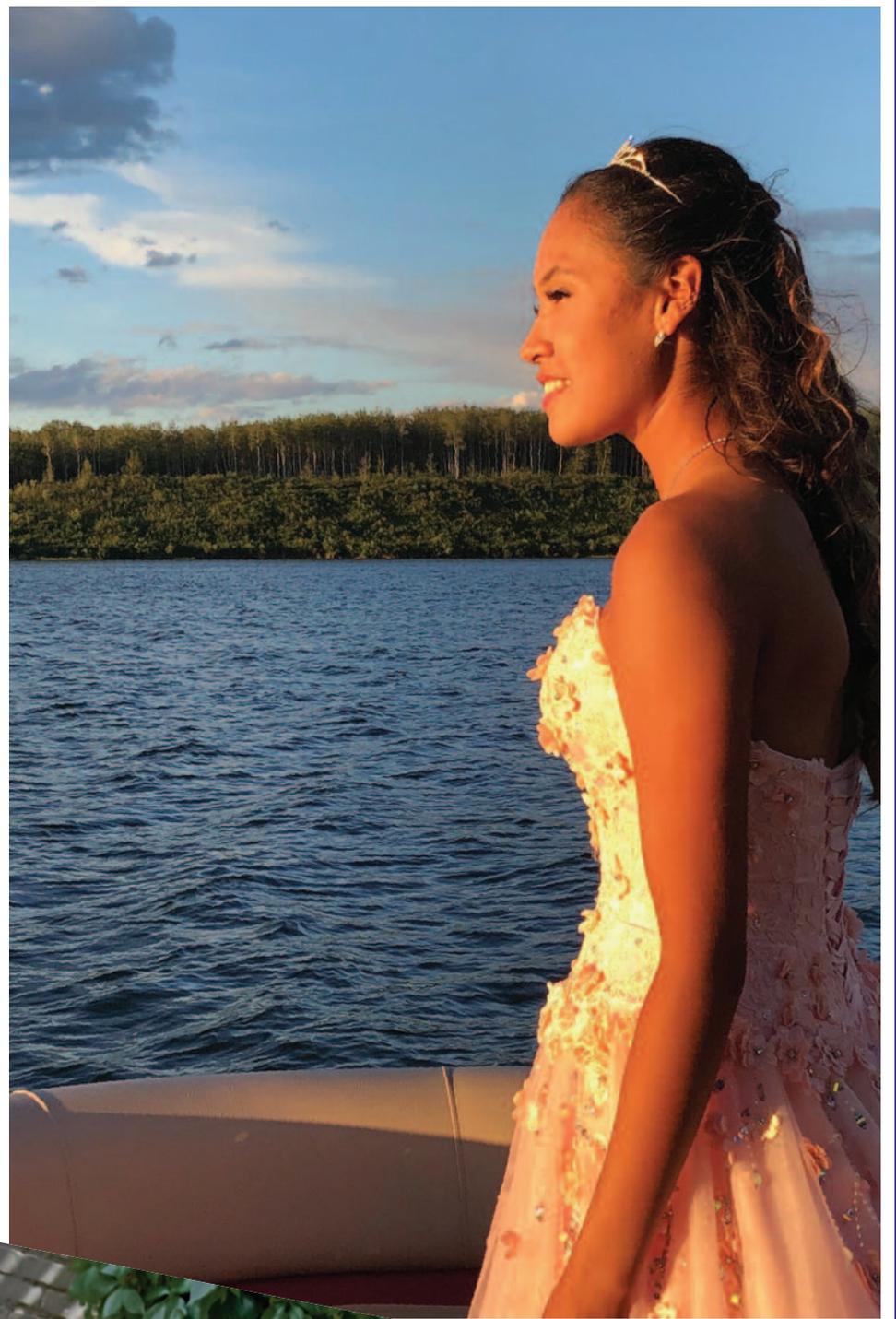
It wasn’t easy for him to get to where he’s at now. He struggled balancing his studies and playing football.

“We were on the field every single day right after school. And we had games on Thursdays and Fridays. The only time we had to do homework was on the weekend,” he said.

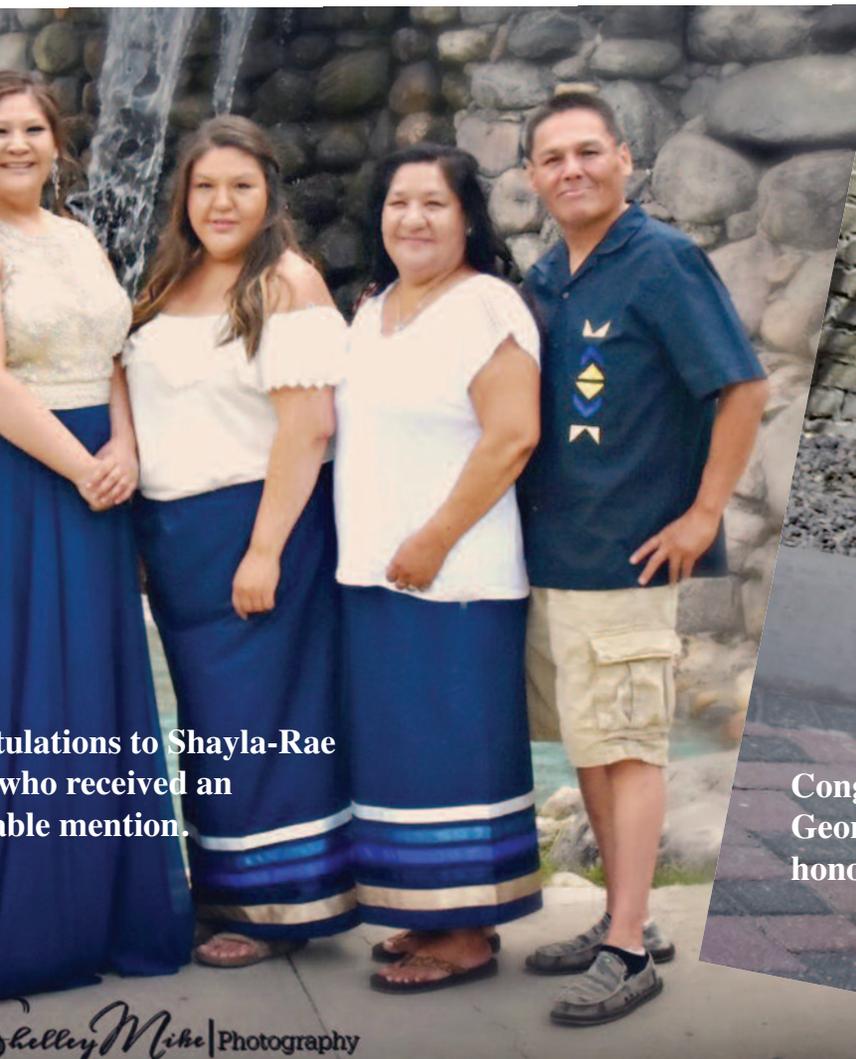
“Juggling five classes of homework on a weekend was really hard and it dropped my grades but my teachers helped me bounce back to get my grades back up.

“It gets hard but if you look at the people around you, you’d want to make them proud of you,” he said.

“Make yourself proud at the same time. Graduating high school was a big accomplishment and you can do so much more after that so I really encourage others to do that.”



Above) In second place, Dezaray Wapass from the Big River First Nation was accepted into the University of Saskatchewan in the fall and plans on trying out for the university’s Huskies Team.



Congratulations to Shayla-Rae who received an honorable mention.

Shelley Mike Photography



Congratulations to Lyric George who received an honourable mention

Outstanding La Loche graduate turned tragedy into motivation

By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

While many high school graduates use their big day to focus on celebration, summer holidays, and making future plans, Shauntel Lemaigre took the opportunity to share an important message with her peers about gratitude and the fragility of human life.

Lemaigre, a 17-year-old high school graduate from La Loche, has turned tragedy into motivation. Lemaigre lost her cousin and best friend Madison Janvier to cancer when the girls were only eight years old.

“We did everything together,” said Lemaigre. “And so, when she wasn’t here anymore, I had to find a way to grieve and to cope.”

Lemaigre decided to dedicate herself to her studies in school - an opportunity sadly taken from her cousin, Janvier. As she approached graduation at the end of high school, Lemaigre wanted to do something to tribute her cousin and add perspective to appreciating life and those around you.

“I wanted (my fellow classmates) to learn not to take life for granted. She was supposed to be there, graduating with us. Because she wasn’t, I believed I should honour her,” she said.

During graduation, Lemaigre shared a speech in which she shared the story of Janvier, her spirit and character, and how, if not for her tragic death, she would have been sitting there, in celebration, with the rest of the graduates.

“When she passed away, it gave me more motivation for graduating. I did it for her,” said Lemaigre. “It felt great to have the support from the people around me that I love. Graduating was one of the biggest achievements in my life.”

But graduation is only the beginning of the road for Lemaigre. She hopes to see her hometown of La Loche implement a more activities for kids in order to create a healthier community. And this fall, she plans to attend Saskatchewan Polytechnic to become a paramedic – a testament to the value she continues to put into every human life.



Shauntel Lemaigre honoured her cousin and best friend Madison Janvier at her graduation. She lost her cousin 10 years ago.



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FIRE Cadet Program students climbed the ladder to success

The Saskatoon Fire Department recently celebrated the graduation of 19 students from its FIRE Cadet Program.

Each of these students has demonstrated responsibility, respect, teamwork, community involvement, pride, and leadership to get to this point.

The FIRE Cadet Program is supported by the Saskatoon Public Schools and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools and is part of the Career Education Program at Bedford Road Collegiate, Mount Royal Collegiate, Tommy Douglas Collegiate, E.D. Feehan Catholic High School, Bethlehem Catholic High School, Bishop James Mahoney Catholic High School, and Holy Cross Catholic High School.

Students from these schools applied to be a part of the program and were selected after an interview process.

“The FIRE Cadets have displayed impressive levels of teamwork and growth throughout their time with the Saskatoon Fire Department,” said Holly Lindberg, one of the firefighters leading the program.

“The students came from a diverse set of backgrounds and interests, but quickly developed a sense of comradery. It’s a unique and rewarding experience to help lead these students and watch them work together to achieve various tasks and challenges.”

Throughout the eight-week program cadets learned to operate fire hoses, hydrants, fire trucks, and an aer-

ial. They gained technical rope, ladder, extrication, dangerous goods, firefighter self-rescue, and water rescue skills. Cadets also received the CPR Level C and valuable experience giving fire safety presentations.

“The support we have received from our community has been instrumental in the success of our students and the program,” said Brandon Bishop of the Saskatoon Fire Department.

“Don Flaman from Flaman Sales provided us with a trailer for the entire length of the program, SGI provided us with cars to allow our students to practice their extrication skills, and FFUN Motor Group provided the program with a van to shuttle the students to and from training sessions.”



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Mental Health and Wellness grads healing and celebrating

By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

Members of the very first graduating class of the Mental Health and Wellness (MH&W) program at the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT) are finding new ways to heal both those in their community and themselves.

The two-year diploma program was previously called the Community Services and Addictions program but was changed in order to modernize and better accommodate young Indigenous populations.

“We realized that we need to make some changes with the Addictions program to keep up with the industry standards,” said Barb Sankey, Dean of Health and Community Studies at SIIT.

“We want to make sure we included First Nations youth in this training, because there are so many issues out there with our Indigenous youth populations, that we wanted to start addressing those populations.”

The program focuses on a holistic approach to addictions, incorporating both Indigenous and Western based healing. Students were also able to gain first-hand experience through fieldwork, lab, and practicum opportunities. Of the 22 students enrolled in the program two years ago, 19 returned for the second year, with 18 receiving their diplomas this spring.

“We felt that the program exceeded all of our expectations,” said Al Kehler, instructor in the second year MH&W program. Kehler, who had previously been an instructor in the Addictions program at SIIT for six years, said the new program brought with it a new perspective from the students.

“As soon as we changed the title to Mental Health and Wellness, it drew in a completely different mindset. People come

in with more life experience and with this, a renewed willingness to learn. It took me by surprise.”

in with more life experience and with this, a renewed willingness to learn. It took me by surprise.”

onization, sexual abuse, trauma – and some of them have lived it. You can’t really ask your clients to go place that you weren’t willing to go yourself,” said Ryan Jimmy, MH&W instructor at SIIT.

“The feedback I hear most often from students is that they had no idea how much work they had to do on themselves,” echoed Kehler. “I think our program creates a place where they feel safe to go to those places.”

Myrna Durocher, graduate from the first MH&W program, was one of those students who had a breakthrough during the program. An experience, she said, which wasn’t rare among her peers.

“We all had some life-changing moments when we were in there,” said Durocher. “It’s like you’re dissecting yourself as you’re taking the program because you’re learning about healing from every angle.”

Durocher said she was inspired to enroll in the program after going through her own recovery process. Already landing a job as the Youth Mentor at Canoe Lake First Nation, she says her personal experiences, and knowledge acquired through the program, will allow her to connect personally with those for who she provides care.

“Coming out of my own treatment, it was like having a new set of eyes, a new mindset. (Enrolling in this program), I knew I wanted to help people the way I was helped.”

With their unique approach to healing involving land-based learning and cultural components, SIIT faculty says that they’re already seeing a growing interest and demand for graduates in the program.

“I think the program allows community members and students to realize they have the skills and knowledge to help themselves and their communities,” said Jimmy.

“You just need to find the strength and resiliency in working with your community.”



Myrna Durocher raises her diploma to the sky after receiving it from SIIT Vice President Academic Tavia Laliberte and SIIT President and CEO Riel Bellegarde.

(Photo by Jarrett Crowe)

It was Sankey who initiated the change to the program in order to make it more Indigenous focused and holistic, fo-

sonal healing and growth.

“The students were often dealing with serious topics around family violence, col-

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Way to go grads ... keep moving forward

Graduation is a big deal so I want to say congratulations to all the grads out there. I hope you had an amazing time and were able to celebrate you!

If you did not have the best grad or did not graduate, do not get down on yourself. I will share my story of Grade 12 grad and how I was able to get another shot at graduation when I convoked last year with my first degree from the University of Saskatchewan. And, hopefully, in two years I will have another shot at graduation when I convocate with my law degree.

When I was 17, I was in a car accident. The driver was drinking and I was flung face first through the windshield of the vehicle. I was supposed to graduate three months after this accident but of course due to severe injuries I was not able to complete the classes I was in.

My graduation was a nightmare to say the least. All my friends and teachers convinced me to go to grad even though I had severe facial scarring and half my hair was all cut and shaved due to major surgeries.

I went and got a grad dress, my makeup done and got hair extensions to

try and appear to look "normal". I was there taking pictures with my friends and it was one of the hardest things I have ever done. Being seen in public after this accident was hard enough.

While I was in the washroom with my friends and they were all fixing their makeup, I had a severe anxiety attack looking at myself in the mirror. I ran out of grad balling my eyes out. I wanted to give up on life right then and there.

Let me just say the rest of the night turned out just as bad. The summer was hard. I lost a close friend that summer who used to stay up late nights with me convincing me I was going to be OK when I wanted to just end it all.

I went back to school in the fall, anyway, and I graduated with A's across the board. I never thought I would make a comeback from all of this, never mind achieve a degree and be in law school now.

My message to all of you grads

and those still trying to graduate, is never give up. I may not know you, but I believe in you. It is never too late also to go back and get your education. Education is something no one can take away from you, knowledge is power.

Some people might say a degree is just a piece of paper but it was not for me. It was empowering for

me to get a second chance and walk that stage and have my name called and my children watching me as I held my head high and proud.

That piece of paper will open doors for me and I chose classes that interested me and geared my research on who I am as a Dakota Wiyan (Woman). I learned so much about myself, and the true history of my people, and this country.

I have met many more unreal people who have overcome adversity and obstacles who continue to inspire me and keep me focused and determined.

I am now five years sober and if

told you it was easy I would be lying. I am only human and dealing with reality all the time and not being able to run from my problems like I used to is a whole new world for me. I see the world clearer than I ever have and even though my vision is limited from the accident now, I see more than I ever have in my entire life.

I would do anything for my daughters and that includes this path that I am now on and working super hard and choosing to do the right thing.

Our children and their futures are worth choosing to do the right thing for. I don't ever want to see my girls struggling and still fighting this fight we been fighting for so long. My biggest fear, if you read my last column, is things are getting worse.

I know it is easier said than done. I am here trying my hardest, I am tired but in the end, I know I cannot go back, because I have come so far and I would never screw up the progress I made.

I do my best every day and I think that is all we can do. I know who's watching over me and looking out.

Oyate Oaye (Keep moving forward).



Dirk explains what it means to be Canadian

John L.: When not chasing after Infinity Stones across the galaxy or tending to his mom's Red Fescue lawn in Saskatoon, Dirk Dashing often shares his views on the meaning of life, the universe and everything else with us, here at Eagle Feather News. I swear, he makes me read these intro cards.

Dirk: It's called branding, John. But let me get to the point: All over Canada people are flailing their arms over the price of Red Fescue lawns now that Trump has plunged us into a trade war. A trade war not started by us, but by the Peruvian water goddess, Steve.

John L.: Um, what?

Dirk: But I don't want to talk about that. I want to talk about something closer to home, only a little further back on the space-time continuum.

John L.: Um ... OK?

Dirk: John, Canadian history is a fascinating and dull topic, even for NHL hockey players. And don't get me started on the Mixed Men's and Women's Sewing Guild of Cupar. Once they get going on a topic, John, well, um ... it's hard to find adjectives and verbs that make we want to finish this sentence.

John L.: OK. So you want to talk about Canadian history.

Dirk: That's right, John. There are a lot of misconceptions about First Nation people and our place in Canada. This is due, in no small part, to the lousy job the old education system has done.

John L.: There are a lot of people who would agree with you. Can you give us an example.

Dirk: I wasn't quite prepared for an in-depth interview with, like, questions and stuff.

John L.: That's kind of what we do here, Dirk. You asked for this format. In fact, you're the one actually writing this column. I'm only here in your imagination.

Dirk: John, you promised you wouldn't share that fact, publicly.

John L.: Dirk. The example?

Dirk: Right. Have you ever heard someone complain "How can Canada have Treaties with its own people?"

John L.: Of course I have.

Dirk: What puzzles me, and nothing ever puzzles me ... except women of course ... you know, we should do a column on women, that would be interesting.

John L.: Dirk! Focus. We're talking

about Treaties.

Dirk: Of course. So what puzzles me is when exactly was it we became Canadian? Riddle me that John. Was it like, we were doing our thing for thousands of years until one day in 1534 when Jacques Plante stepped

foot onto the Banks of Newfoundland? As Jacques Plante entered the scene, I can imagine Beaver One River turning to his wife, Anasta-

sia One River, saying, "Stacy, do'yall suddenly feel different?" He spoke with a heavy Texan accent. Mrs. One River replied in a perfect mix of Irish-English, "Aye. Yes, I do. It is as though I did not have an identity before, but now I feel marvellously, completely. Oh, what is the word ... Canadian!" Beaver exclaimed, "Yup, feels only right we've finally been discovered. All this nature and harmony was getting ole'. It's 1534 and its about time for some good ole' exploitation, etc." Beaver also had trouble with adjectives and verbs to finish his sentences.

Y'know, John, I had no idea the an-

cient Beothuk First Nations had a banking system, or that Jacques Plante was a giant. They're extinct now. The Beothuk and their Banks. Sad story.

John L.: Ok, there are several things wrong with that, Dirk. For starters Jacques Plante was a goaltender for the Montreal Canadians in the 1950s and '60s. It was Jacques Cartier who discovered Newfoundland, and the Beothuk.

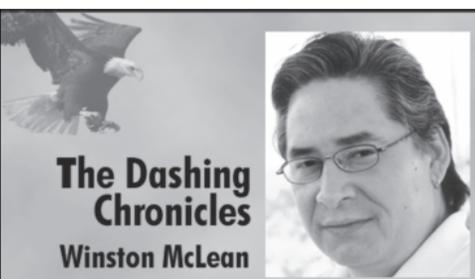
Dirk: Don't let the so-called facts fool you, John. The bottom line here is, when did we stop being First Nation and become Canadian? Not that there's anything wrong with that.

John L.: Well, some will argue that we became Canadian in 1960, when we got the right to vote in national elections.

Dirk: True, but Treaties were signed before Confederation in 1867 and, as you know, John, only nations can make Treaties. Riddle me that, John. Riddle me that. Now, since you brought up the topic of women, here's what I know.

John L.: We'll save that for next time, Dirk. We are, as you say, out of time and space.

Dirk says, "I haven't been writing since I have been having trouble making smart making with my brain."



Aubichon handled obstacles, sets sights on RCMP career

**By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News**

Mervin Aubichon has big dreams of entering into a career in policing.

The 18-year-old recent graduate from Twin Lakes Community School in Buffalo Narrows will be enrolled into the seven-month Aboriginal policing program at Saskatchewan Polytechnic in Saskatoon this fall. His long-term goal is to get into the RCMP.

“(The career) matches the things that I like to do,” he said. “I like sports, running and basketball. I picked a career that matched and it stuck out the most to me.”

Aubichon had a hard time keeping his marks up in school.

“I struggled a bit with math because I just didn’t want to pay attention and also (dealing) with personal life,” he said. “Pretty much what any other high school student goes through, I went through, too.”

Aubichon pushed through the obstacles and relied on support from his family and friends to motivate him to challenge himself to finish high school.

“Basketball was also a huge part of my life. When I finished that up, it was emotional,” he said. “That’s what kept me straight to push through it all.”

He hopes other youth who are facing challenges in their life will not allow



This photo received a couple votes in our photo contest. A family member just happened to photograph graduate Mervin Aubichon when a plane landed on the bay behind him at Buffalo Narrows.

it to interfere with school and to keep yourself busy.

“Just pay attention, study hard to get the highest grade possible,” said

Aubichon.

“No matter what you think you can’t do, you can do it! Coming from me, I struggled a lot and I’ve been through so

many things throughout my teen years.

“It’s not impossible to do what you want to do. Whatever drives you to do good, do it.”



Campfires caused 28 wildfires in Saskatchewan last year

If you are planning to have a campfire:

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Spot a wildfire?

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Canada's Nuclear Regulator



Notice of public meeting and participant funding

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) will hold a public Commission meeting during which CNSC staff will present the *Regulatory Oversight Report for Uranium Mines, Mills, Historic and Decommissioned Sites in Canada: 2017 (2017 Report)*.

The 2017 Report provides CNSC staff’s assessment during the 2017 calendar year of the safety performance of licensees and their facilities authorized by the CNSC to mine and mill uranium. It also provides an update on the status of historic and decommissioned sites in Canada.

Dates: December 12–13, 2018
Place: CNSC public hearing room, 14th floor, 280 Slater Street, Ottawa, ON
Time: As set by the agenda published prior to the meeting date

The meeting dates and location may change. Check our website for the latest details. The meeting will be webcast live and then archived online for 90 days.

Through its Participant Funding Program (PFP), the CNSC is offering up to **\$35,000** in funding to assist Indigenous peoples, members of the public, and stakeholders in reviewing the 2017 Report and providing topic-specific submissions to the Commission.

Persons who have an interest or expertise in this matter are invited to comment, in writing, on the 2017 Report. Written submissions must be filed with the Commission Secretariat by August 31, 2018 online at nuclearsafety.gc.ca/eng/the-commission/intervention or by using the contact information below.

Details on requirements for these requests are available online or by contacting the Secretariat. After October 12, 2018, the 2017 Report will be available online or on request to the Secretariat.

Find out more on the Commission meeting process at nuclearsafety.gc.ca.

Contact information:

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Support for protesters growing

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

Over more than 130 days, tipis and supporters of the Justice for Our Stolen Children camp have increased significantly.

Starting from one to 14 tipis, supporters of the camp located on Regina's Legislative Building grounds said they are expecting more tipis to be put up.

"There are a few more expected," said camp supporter, Robyn Pitawanakwat. "The support seems to continue to grow as more people find out about us."

Two days after the Regina Police Service (RPS) and the Provincial Capital Commission (PCC) dismantled the main tipi at the Justice for Our Stolen Children camp on June 18, protesters resurrected the camp.

"This is an amazing time of unity. A lot of organizations and individuals coming together that previously didn't work so well together but I think the common goal of finding justice for our children and re-unifying families whenever possible," said Pitawanakwat.

"These are issues that all these organizations (and communities) are dealing with so it reinforces our need to be here."

After multiple attempts for a government meeting, the camp supporters finally met with five provincial ministers on July 2 in Fort Qu'Appelle. Camp sup-

porters discussed and addressed concerns of systemic racism in justice, social services and other underlying issues Indigenous people face.

"We've been waiting to hear back if they are wanting to meet again, to see if they're going to make any progress on the issues that we raised with them," said Pitawanakwat.

"The majority of (the issues raised) are with the Department of Social Services with child apprehension issues. That is something that needs to change immediately."

Other concerns raised at the meeting was a request for the police and the Coroner's Act updated.

Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe was not in attendance at the meeting. In fact, Moe addressed the media and made a callout to Regina Police Service in the last week of June to take down the tipis at the Justice for Our Stolen Children camp. RPS responded they are not choosing sides in this protest but will continue to keep public safety as their ultimate goal.

"Right now, our focus is community safety. We don't feel a police response at this point, especially knowing that there is a meeting and a discussion planned," said RPS Chief Evan Bray in an email statement.

"We make sure that there's no risk to the public, which at this point we don't feel there is. And so, our response right



Fourteen tipis are standing strong at the Justice for Our Stolen Children camp and supporters said they are expecting more to come. (Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)

now is to let that discussion happen and ultimately hope for a peaceful resolution."

RPS members maintained the peace on the afternoon of July 9 after receiving a call from a member of the camp who reported that an unknown adult male was at the camp location and behaving in an intimidating way toward members of the camp.

Elizabeth Popowich from RPS Communications confirmed in an email statement that police attended and found a 56-year-old male was in possession of a knife. The matter is still under investigation and no one was reported injured.

"With respect to the protest itself, the Regina Police Service continues to communicate regularly with the stake-

holders," according to the RPS statement.

"Keeping the peace is active work even if it is not always visible to the public."

The White Raven Healing Centre, in conjunction with the Justice for Our Stolen Children Camp and the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council (FHQTC), has begun to offer professional mental health services on-site at the justice camp. Camp organizers said there is no time frame as to when the tipis will be coming down.

The Justice for Our Stolen Children camp transpired following the verdicts of Gerald Stanley and Raymond Cormier, both of whom were acquitted on charges stemming from the deaths of Colten Boushie and Tina Fontaine.

1st Annual Oskana Cup Golf Tournament

This is a fundraising golf tournament to help support and promote Aboriginal Youth Involved in Competitive Hockey.

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City of Saskatoon dedicates its new bridge in the name of reconciliation

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

Saskatoon is doing its part for reconciliation through various events and historical moments held over the past few weeks.

A towering new public artwork commemorating truth and reconciliation has been unveiled in Victoria Park in Saskatoon. Placed high on a grassy hill neighbouring Saskatoon's River Landing and overlooking the South Saskatchewan River, the new artwork entitled "The Coming Spring" was unveiled to the public. The artwork is Saskatoon's latest symbolic commitment to truth and reconciliation.

"In learning to speak the truth to each other, and in seeking reconciliation, we can see the promise here on that patch of grass in Canada's coming spring," said Gordon Reeve, artist behind the new artwork.

On National Indigenous Peoples Day (NIPD), several celebrations were held in the city to celebrate and embrace the identity of Indigenous peoples.

The day started with the third annual "Rock Your Roots" Walk for Reconciliation where a record crowd of over 4,000 people gathered in Victoria Park. This year's walk theme was titled "Planting the Seed" with participants walking together, the seeds of reconciliation were planted to honour survivors and answering the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action.

Last month, the Saskatoon Community Foundation made a four-year commitment to the Rock Your Roots walk, providing funding through to 2021. The "Rock Your Roots" Walk for Reconciliation is one of a number of events organized by Reconciliation Saskatoon, an 88-member initiative of organizations, non-profits, businesses and partners who have come together towards one mission: to initiate a citywide conversation about reconciliation and provide opportunities for everyone to

engage in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

The walk ended just before noon and joined up with NIPD celebrations which included free lunch, special guest speakers and live entertainment hosted by the Saskatoon Indian & Métis Friendship Centre.

The NIPD was also a significant time for the name unveiling for the north-end bridge. The North Commuter Parkway Bridge Naming Steering Committee announced "Chief Mistawasis" as the recommended name of the North Commuter Parkway Bridge.

"Prior to, and following Treaty No. 6, Chief Mistawasis was a bridge to changing times between people, communities and Nations," said Mistawasis Chief Daryl Watson.

"Mistawasis Nêhiyawak follows Chief Mistawasis' legacy and belief in treaties, partnerships, alliances, friendships in sharing territories and all that Creator provides for us all."

Chief Mistawasis was one of over 400 names that were gathered from the community as part of an extensive community engagement exercise that began last July. An integral part of the naming process was to educate the community on Indigenous people's history, culture and contributions.

The North Commuter Parkway (NCP) Bridge Naming Committee consists of community leaders from Central Urban Métis Federation Incorporated, Saskatoon Tribal Council, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations, the City of Saskatoon and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner.

"As we come together to celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day in Victoria Park and get involved in "Rock Your Roots" Walk for Reconciliation it's fitting that we have chosen to name the North Commuter Bridge after Chief Mistawasis to acknowledge the contributions of those who came before us and strived to create a



Dignitaries and elders unveiled the new name for the North Commuter Parkway (NCP) bridge which will be known as Chief Mistawasis Bridge.

(Photo supplied)

better future," said Harry LaFond, Executive Director, Office of the Treaty Commissioner.

The bridge naming announcement was made prior to the kick-off of the "Rock Your Roots" Walk for Reconciliation and NIPD celebrations. The final recommendation for the name Chief Mistawasis to be applied to the bridge will be presented to City Council in August for formal approval.

"The process to bring us to this day has been one of learning and growth," said Mayor Charlie Clark.

"Reconciliation is a journey, and it is a journey that the City of Saskatoon is dedicated to continuing as we seek to bridge the divides within our community. Our Elders have been appealing to us to treat one another as relatives, which is a powerful starting place for building a stronger Treaty relationship for future generations."

St. Paul's Hospital and Affinity Credit Union unveiled reconciliation art murals as well as Reconciliation Saskatoon held a flag raising ceremony to honour residential school and Sixties Scoop survivors and the lives that were lost.



The new artwork entitled "The Coming Spring" was unveiled to the public towards the end of June. The artwork is Saskatoon's latest symbolic commitment to truth and reconciliation. (Photo by NC Raine)



2018 NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY
ROCK YOUR ROOTS WALK
JUNE 21
Planting the Seed
#RECONCILIATIONSK

On behalf of Reconciliation Saskatoon and the Rock Your Roots Organizing Committee, we'd like to extend our heart-felt thank you for your commitment to making our Rock Your Roots Walk a success again this year. Your investment to reconciliation in our community is truly appreciated and we look forward to our ongoing partnership.

A HUGE THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

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