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Beautiful Poetry

“What caught me about the aerial artists was how free they looked... It was kind of mesmerizing watching them fly through the air,”

By **Betty Ann Adam**
of *Eagle Feather News*

Mercedes Sinclair was 10 when she became enthralled by the artistic athletes of Cirque du Soleil performing at SaskTel Centre.

“What caught me about the aerial artists was how free they looked... It was kind of mesmerizing watching them fly through the air,” she said.

Sinclair has always loved climbing high. When she was little, it was on trees at Pike Lake that she climbed until she could see the surrounding fields and farm houses, and then it was to the top of the rock-climbing walls at the university and downtown, where she clambered to the ceiling and tried to grip the upside-down holds.

By the time she saw the aerial artists, she was already climbing the walls at home, where her mother, Raven Sinclair, had installed hand grips in the

living room that led to monkey bars in the archway for her to play on.

That summer, she went to the aerial camp at Move and Soar, a fitness business in Market Mall that featured the free-hanging silks, looped slings and “lyre” or hoop apparatus of the aerial classes offered by Yuki Block, who had trained in the U.S. with circus artists.

Block moved her business to Preston Avenue in 2018 and built up a dedicated community of mostly female athletes, said Anastasia Van der Most, a long-time student, then instructor, who, along with Romi Oqendo and Kaity Weichel, bought the renamed Fly Studios YXE in 2020 when Block moved to Nashville.

The three instructors had learned from her and other experts she brought in to give workshops over the years, or from classes they took elsewhere.

continued page 2



Thomas Benjoe - FHQ Developments
Finding Your Passion

“I want young Indigenous people to look at him and say, ‘Wow, I can be a CEO!’ I want young people to say, ‘if he can be the president of the largest business group in the province, the chair of that board, so can I.’”

- page 22

May 2021 is our
Sports & Mining Issue

NEXT MONTH:
Indigenous Peoples Day



Kyla and Jordyn Bear - Ochapowace
Heading to the Big Show

“As twins they are always together, they push each other. One thing I thank the Creator for (is) they are never walking into a dressing room alone...”

- page 6



Reconciliation Ally: Nick Wright
Hopeful for the future

“Be aware, and then figure the rest out as you go. Meet people, have an open mind and listen. And then you’ll start to find yourself in a place of reconciliation, and maybe you didn’t even know it happened, but you’re in it now,”

- page 26

Aerial silks allows artists to defy gravity

continued from page 1 ...

Sinclair, now 16, has been a regular student at the studio for six years.

She loved the new ways to play, climbing up the lengths of fabric attached at the 24-foot ceiling and learning to wrap her feet and legs in ways that allowed her to do movements while suspended above the floor.

She found there's a world of difference between climbing solid surfaces and wrapping oneself in hanging fabric.

Achieving the flexibility to do many of the tricks and poses took years of dedicated practice.

"It kind of made me mad because I'm one of those people who don't like doing things unless I'm good at them right off the bat," she said.

"I was so ready to be a Cirque du Soleil performer until I (realized), as a beginner you definitely do not learn that. You go on beginner things, basics of moves, the transitions into moves, the foundations.

A year and a half into training, she started taking gymnastics, where stretching, walk-overs and balance beam increased her flexibility while building core strength, helping her feel her centre of gravity and learning where her "body was in space," she said.

As much as she loves the activity, Sinclair no longer wants to join Cirque du Soleil and will likely be a writer, she said.

Van der Most says Sinclair brings a determination to learn everything that comes at her, often practicing on her own for hours.

"She has a style like nobody else. The first time I saw her do a "star" movement... she had her way she did it, which was to flow. It made it look so different and it looked amazing. It's beautiful... It's poetry



Mercedes Sinclair regularly hangs out many feet above the floor and upside down. Safety is a priority in aerial silks though, and rigid standards are upheld to ensure the athletes stay in the air. (Photo supplied)

watching her move."

The business is moving to a new space on Millar Avenue in the north end, where an engineer has been consulted and trained theatre riggers are installing the hardware that holds the hanging apparatus according to circus industry standards. For information about classes, check out Fly Studios YXE on Facebook, Instagram.

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StickItToCOVID.ca

Saskatchewan

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Indigenous coordinators champions of softball for all

By NC Raine
for Eagle Feather News

If the benefits of sports were in a pill, we'd down them by the handful.

A very short list of the social, physical, financial, and psychological benefits for youth include: reduced rates of diabetes and obesity; lower rates of depression, suicide, and cigarette smoking; increased confidence and focus in school; and increased likelihood of attending post-secondary education.

Jason Johnston and Kevin Roberts, two familiar faces in youth sports in the province, have been brought on by Softball Saskatchewan as Indigenous Sports Coordinators; working as softball ambassadors in order to bring more Indigenous youngsters to the sport. And both know the benefit of having kids in sports is nearly limitless.

"Any sport is a great opportunity for a young person to grow as a person. That's what all of this is about. Growing confidence, being mentally and physically healthy, and developing skills that will help you succeed in life," said Roberts.

Softball Saskatchewan is the provincial governing body responsible for the development, promotion, and regulation of softball in Saskatchewan. Roberts, who also works as Director of Sports and Recreation at Lac La Ronge Indian Band, and Johnston, a sessional lecturer at SUNTEP and long-time softball coach, will essentially be the go-to-guys in the province for everything youth softball – communicating with First Nations, teams, coaches, and

umpires about clinics and tournaments, while doing whatever they can to promote and grow the sport.



Kevin Roberts (L), Indigenous Sports Coordinator at Softball Saskatchewan and Director of Sports and Recreation at Lac La Ronge Indian Band (credit: JRMCC Sports and Recreation) Jason Johnston (R), coach and Indigenous Sports Coordinator at Softball Saskatchewan (credit: Softball Saskatchewan)

"It's about people in the communities having a level of comfort with us," said Roberts. "People will more readily reach out to someone they know, one of their Indigenous peers."

The opportunities for young people are vast,

and can take young people around the province, or even the country, said Johnston. He has had several youth go on to play for provincial or national teams, including the gold medal winning 2006 Team Saskatchewan at the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) in Denver. And players he's coached have even received scholarships to play softball in the States.

"It's allowing First Nations kids to see what that higher level of competition is. You want to be Michael Jordan? You have to see what steps you have to go through, like (Saskatoon basketball player) Michael Linklater, to be ahead of the curve," said Johnston.

"We are the message gatherers. So the goal is to ensure First Nations and Métis communities know that Softball Saskatchewan is working hard at this. We want to increase the numbers of (Indigenous) athletes by as much as we can."

Needless to say, the challenge this year is having teams actually get on the field. Restrictions currently only allow for groups of eight to practice within their community, and no travel for games or tournaments. But with the Tony Cote Summer Games and NAIG tentatively on the horizon, Johnston and Roberts will be working hard to get youth out and playing ball.

"We're trying to develop at the grassroots, so even the little guys can play in their own communities," said Roberts.

"Regardless of what happens this summer with Tony Cote or NAIG, we're still trying to promote the game while keeping people safe."

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A few observations

The first Treaty Indian to play in the NHL, a beautiful person who gave back to the community in so many ways, is being duly honoured this month. The Province of Saskatchewan has named May 18th Fred Sasakamoose Day, the same day the book on his life "Call Me Indian" is released. And fittingly, that day there will be a ceremony announcing an eight-foot bronze statue of a 19-year-old Freddie will be joining Mr. Hockey himself, Gordie Howe, in front of SaskTel Centre in Saskatoon as a lasting tribute to this Indigenous legend and trailblazer.

It is because of gentlemen like Freddie Sasakamoose that so many Indigenous hockey players are flooding the elite levels of the sport. There are legions of Indigenous hockey players that made the big time, and we are in an era now where those early Indigenous hockey players are seeing their children make the big leagues. Recently, Garrett Pilon dressed for the Washington Capitals, following his dad, Rich, a former New York Islander. With Garrett playing on the same ice as legend Zedeno Chara, Rich and Garrett become the only father-son duo to play on the same team with the great big beast. That's cool.

Team Canada Under-18 was led by dynamic First Nation player Conner Roulette. Brigette Lacquette donned the Maple Leaf for Team Canada at the last Olympics. The Bear sisters, Kyla and Jordyn from Ochapowace First Nation are off to play Division 1 college hockey in New York. In the WHL bubble in Regina you heard a lot about Roddy Ross, goalie for the Regina Pats and Philadelphia Flyers prospect and rookie sparkplug Dallyn Peekeekoot of the PA Raiders. The list could go on.

They will also launch the Fred Sasakamoose Elite Athletic Sport Recreation Program that will see a mobile training centre go to member First

Nations of the Saskatoon Tribal Council to run summer sports camps. That means even more young people hooked on sports and the ever-lasting benefits one gets from being on a team or challenging oneself in an individual way. Kudos



Councillor Troy Davies and his Freddie jersey.
(Photo BATC)

to Saskatoon City Councillor Troy Davies who is a member of Synergy 8, one of the charities sponsoring the mobile centre, and was also instrumental in the dedication of the statue at SaskTel Centre. Great allyship.

And the roster will grow in hockey now that Courage Bear, an elite level hockey player and coach in his own right, is kick starting the Indigenous Sports Academy, a training and education program for elite level Indigenous hockey players to get coaching, competition and exposure to

scouts and big games like they have never seen before. The legacy of Mr. Sasakamoose will continue to grow and that means more healthy happy people, just like Freddie was. Excellent.

Indigenous led vaccine sites

Well hasn't this project turned out to be a revelation. The sites were originally set up to be culturally safe to encourage Indigenous people to come and be comfortable getting a vaccine so we can beat Covid-19 back. The centres have done a great job of that. But the welcoming attitude and ability to provide vaccines to essential workers like police, fire and teachers in Saskatoon has turned this story into one of the Tribal Councils being lauded. Non-Indigenous people are praising the experience on social media and sharing pictures of the gift box of safety and cleaning supplies they received. The BATC site was innovative and took left over vaccines out into the community and delivered vaccines to homeless and other vulnerable people down by the river.

Many are saying this is reconciliation in action. That's the wrong way to see it. The Tribal Councils are just showing ordinary Saskatchewanians, that have never had much interaction with them, how caring, welcoming, and hospitable the Indigenous community is. That is a good thing, but not reconciliation. Really good to watch. And hey, go get your shot. Hurry.

Métis election

This is one of the most important Métis Nation-Saskatchewan elections in ages. Lots of info out there for you to make your decision. Check out the Eagle Feather News candidate's forum, live online and on our Facebook on the evenings of May 18 and 19. The president and vice president candidates are on the 18th and the secretary and treasurer positions on the 19th. Please vote.

And please be safe and vigilant. Peace.



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eaglefeathernews

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on our website

www.eaglefeathernews.com

CHECK OUT OUR LATEST TOP STORIES



Memorial scholarship among honours for respected Cree educator

Victor Thunderchild's dedication to welcoming Indigenous students at Prince Albert's Carlton Comprehensive High School will be remembered and honoured.



Fox up for six Saskatchewan Book Awards

"We are celebrating 28 years of excellence in writing and publishing in Saskatchewan," says SBA Executive Director Kam Teo. "Once again, we are very proud of this year's nominees which reflect the diversity of our authors and publishers."



Public invited to opine on future of John A Macdonald statue

The City of Regina is gathering public comments about the future of the city's statue of John A. Macdonald, which was removed from Victoria Park after a City Council vote in April.

Indigenous women among all-women team of organizers for Sask Winter Games

By Julia Peterson
for Eagle Feather News

For 50 years, the Saskatchewan Winter Games have been an opportunity for young athletes in the province to test their skills and advance to higher levels of competition. And even though there are months to go before the athletes lace up their shoes, sharpen their skates and buckle their ski boots, the upcoming Games are already breaking records and marking milestones.

Next year's Saskatchewan Winter Games will run from February 20th to the 26th, and will be the first time the Games have been hosted in Regina. Also for the first time this year, the Games' Host Society is fully led by women, including many Indigenous women.

Crystal Longman is the Vice Chair of Athlete Experience and Inclusion, and the first Indigenous Vice Chair in Saskatchewan Winter Games history. She hopes young Indigenous athletes and sports enthusiasts will see how they are being represented at every stage of the planning process and feel welcome.

"We want other First Nations and Métis people to see us and to want to come to our games and feel comfortable," she said. "Sometimes, when you see someone of Indigenous ancestry doing something positive, you want to cheer them on and be happy for them. And I hope we'll get some cheer and some support from our community when they see us at the games."

Reila Bird, Vice President of Athlete Experience, says the Saskatchewan Winter Games can be a "stepping stone" for Indigenous athletes to take on other challenges and competitions.

"This can set the foundation for our athletes to be able to participate in the Tony Cote summer and winter games or the North American Indigenous Games or to join their community teams and become participants in various areas of sports," she said.

One of the ways the Host Committee is planning to make next year's Games a welcoming experience is through cultural programming. Gaylene Anaquod is the Vice President of Ceremonies and Culture, and in that role, she has been encouraging volunteers to come up with new and memorable ideas.

"With respect to culture and ceremonies, a lot of the work is about being able to have and represent what Saskatchewan is in terms of culture and nationalities and all the diversity that we have," she said. "So that is a really good challenge."

Looking to the Games' next 50 years, Bird hopes future cities can take some lessons from this year's planning process, where Games Chair Valerie Sluth prioritized diversity and inclusion from the start.

"I think that future host cities can definitely watch what we're doing with our mission and vision and values this year, and move that into the years coming up, keeping in mind that inclusion of many different people - the balance of gender, having more women and Indigenous people in leadership roles," Bird said. "I think we need to start thinking in terms of diversity and inclusion of all, not just having the same people in the same positions year after year."



Crystal Longman is the first Indigenous Vice Chair in Saskatchewan Winter Games history. She hopes to see more Indigenous athletes come out and compete at next year's Games. (Submitted by Crystal Longman)



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Twin sisters receive matching hockey scholarships to the U.S.

By *Melanie McKay*
for *Eagle Feather News*

Twin sisters Kyla and Jordyn Bear's hard work and dedication to hockey has paid off. The 17-year-olds have received scholarships to play Division 1 hockey with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Rochester Institute of Technology in New York.

Tim Bear, the girls' father, says they have worked hard and sacrificed a lot. "Schools only have so many scholarships to give out. It was a dream for both of them to make it to that level and the work and commitment they had to put in."

Kyla and Jordyn are from Ochapowace First Nation just south of Yorkton. They started skating at a young age and spent a lot of time at the rink growing up. They followed in the footsteps of their parents and brothers, Kirk and Josh, who also played hockey.

The sisters had to move away from home in order to play at a higher level. They played hockey together at Ochapowace and on teams in southeastern Saskatchewan towns, Churchbridge, Whitewood and Melville, before playing with teams in Penticton and Kelowna.

"At first it was difficult moving away in grade 9, but keeping ourselves busy helped with it, we had friends and the academy to focus on and then it distracted us from being homesick" Jordyn says.

"The girls have sacrificed a lot to get this. I wish people knew how much hard work they've put into it," their mother, Cindy Bear, said.

The pair will graduate in June and are looking forward to the next level of their hockey journey and college in the fall.

They are excited about receiving scholarships and being able to continue playing on the same team.

"The coaching staff was really good and when we had a Zoom meeting with them they actually had a virtual video walking around the rink and around the campus so we were able to get a virtual look at it,"

Kyla said.

"This is exciting for both parents, not only the parents but the kokums, mushums, the grandpas and grandmas and everybody else that had that little bit of influence along the way to get them where they're at," Tim said.

Kyla plays defence and Jordyn is a forward. The sisters support and encourage each other to be their best.

"As twins they are always together, they push each other. One thing I thank the Creator for (is) they are never walking into a dressing room alone. When they have an issue, they have each other's shoulder to lean on," he said.

Playing hockey has given the two many opportunities.

"One of our best experiences was with NAHC, the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships, we traveled all over. Our first year we went to Halifax and that was really fun. We won bronze that year and then we went to Whitehorse in the Yukon and that was probably the best experiences we could have had." Kyla said.

They also took part in APTN's show Hit the Ice three years ago, where they met Canadian Olympian, Bridgette Lacquette. She has become their mentor in their pursuit of their hockey dreams.

"She's been there for the girls and has always been there to answer their questions or offer advice," Cindy said.

They hope to one day play together in the Olympics.



Sisters Jordyn Bear #10 and Kyla Bear #5 have earned themselves scholarships to play Division 1 hockey for Rochester Institute of Technology in New York. Their hockey highlight so far has been playing for Team Saskatchewan at the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships. (Photo supplied)

The sisters' the relationships with their teammates mean the most to them.

"As soon as we hit the ice we are all a family," Jordyn says.

Jordyn and Kyla encourage girls to get into hockey or any sport.

"If you have the support or anything behind it, you should definitely get into the sports." Jordyn said.

"It's so much fun when you start getting out on top and being on the ice with friends you don't know but then are soon to be best friends, like it all just comes together and it's such a good feeling in the end," Kyla said.

Kyla is planning on law school, while Jordyn is considering becoming an anesthesiologist.

2021 CIVIC SATISFACTION & PERFORMANCE SURVEY

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HOW ARE WE DOING?

The City is conducting two public surveys in the first half of 2021:

- Civic Satisfaction & Performance Survey #1 open April 19- May 23
- Civic Services Survey #2: Performance, Priorities & Preferences June/July

From these two surveys, we'd like to hear from Saskatoon residents on a wide variety of topics including the City's performance in communications, engagement, online services, community safety, mobility and growth.

- How satisfied are you with the quality of City services?
- What is your perception of quality of life in Saskatoon?
- What do you believe is the most important issue facing the City?
- How is the City doing on delivering 29 different services?
- Additional questions on your priority areas and more

Survey #1 takes about 10 minutes and is anonymous. Public input will be used for future planning and service adjustments. Complete **Survey #1 April 19 - May 23, 2021**, at saskatoon.ca/engage.

Watch for Survey #2 in June! Phone inquiries can be made to **306-975-2476**.

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New Indigenous basketball league includes culture and life skills

By Suliman Adam
for Eagle Feather News

When Mike Tanton was growing up, basketball was his sanctuary from stress and he wants today's urban kids to have access to it too.

"It helps you build confidence, gives you a sense of identity, and contributed to my character development," said Tanton who is a co-founder of One Love Basketball, a non-profit that celebrates the sport.

"I just want kids to play and experience everything that comes with the rewards of putting that time into the game," Tanton said.

One Love is collaborating with Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan to create the Living Skies Indigenous Basketball League (LSIBL), which launched its website registration in April 2021 for camps and tournaments for girls' and boys' teams in two age groups, Juniors (11-14) and Seniors (15-17).

The initiative is funded by the Federal Government and community stakeholders.

Paige Crozen, league manager, said they want to provide a project that



Founders of One Love Basketball, Mike Tanton (Left) and Mason Medynski (Right). (Photo credit: One Love Basketball)

celebrates Indigenous cultures throughout Saskatchewan. There will be cultural activities, tournaments, and games for Indigenous youth, she said.

"We want to focus on the holistic athlete, so we want to take care of their physical health, but also offer resources to take care of their mental, spiritual and cultural well-being," she said.

To that end, youth will participate in workshops teaching communications, teamwork, and leadership, resume writing, interview skills, resiliency, and mental wellness adapted from an Indigenous way of knowing.

An Indigenous Elder or Knowledge Keeper will deliver cultural education for the youth.

"We integrated workshops to build their skills and a cultural component integrated into all aspects of the league," Crozen said. "How can they help

a friend, we want to provide the tool."

The league needs coaches and will certify coaches to run the tournament. They'll receive a coach's manual that has been created grounded in Indigenous culture.

"We will be calling on volunteers to help coach, and schools to provide access toward their facilities," Crozen said. "Sport has done a great job in creating unity."

"We want all athletes to come together and create connections."

While the program launched in November 2020, spring camps are organized across Saskatchewan and the league recently opened its website for the fall 2021 recruitment.

A practice plan and a training agenda for strength and conditioning have also been devised for the league.

"We are working or talking to a strength and conditioning coach to talk about the fundamentals of weightlifting and physical activity," Crozen said.

Girls who participate in sports in high school are more likely to be physically active later in life and into their 40s, Crozen said.

"One of our goals is to increase participants' well-being towards physical activity," she said. "Our goal is for them to be active for life."

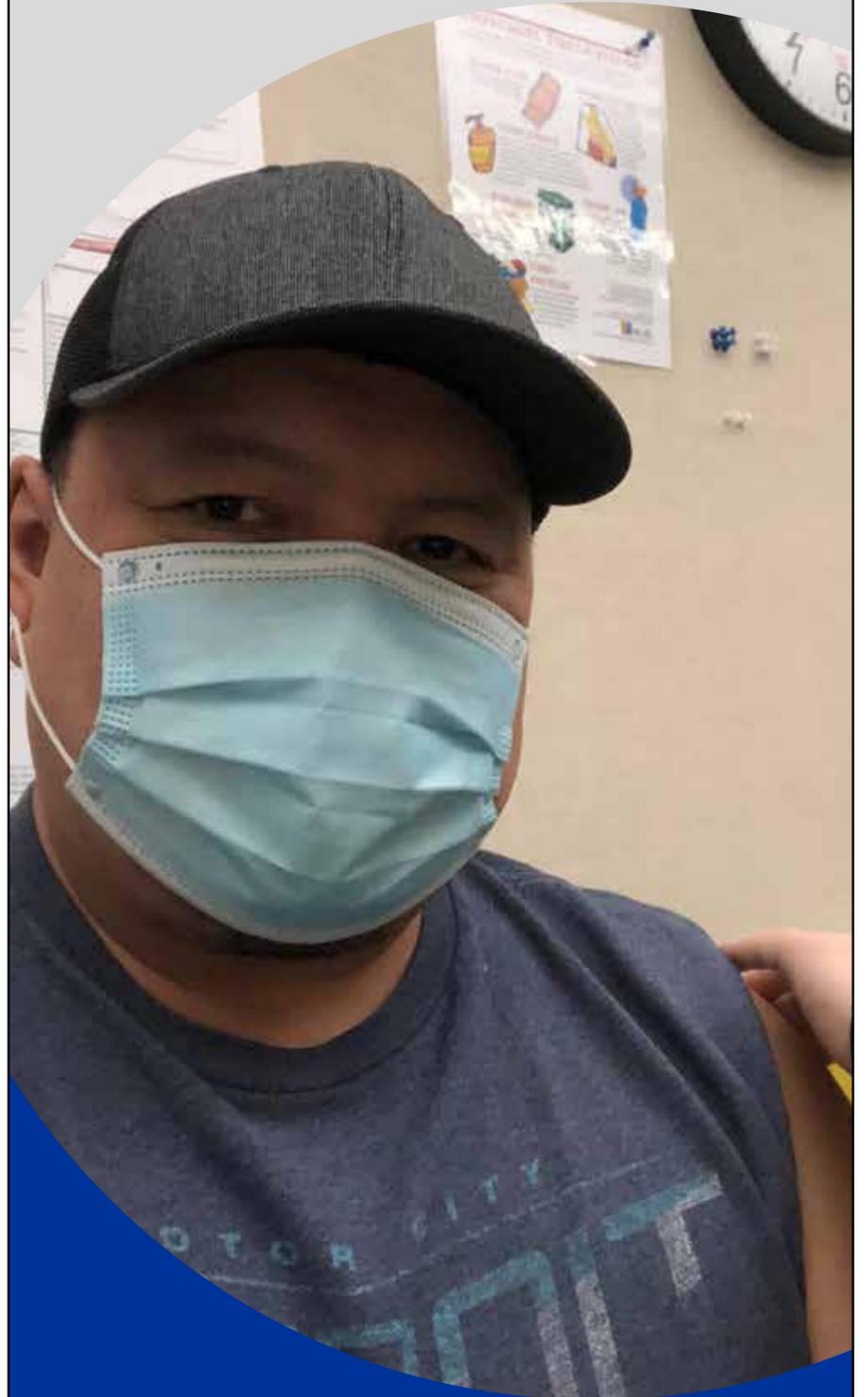
To register and for more information on the Basketball league, visit www.livingskiesbasketball.com.

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Rick Robillard -
Black Lake Community
Liaison



Cameco is encouraging its workforce to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Rick Robillard is sharing his reasons for getting the shot.

www.cameconorth.com/community/stories

Reclaiming our health through holistic wellbeing with Newo Wellness

By Ally Bear
for Eagle Feather News

The founders of Newo Wellness are an impressive team of four young Indigenous women. They are Kennedy Monych from Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Kayla Ahenakew from Ahtahkakoop First Nation, Lovina Tootoosis from Poundmaker Cree Nation and Shayna Thomas from Kinistin Saulteaux First Nation. Their company's mission is to nourish all aspects of self, integrating culture, such as the medicine wheel teachings, into everyday life, creating balance.

The purpose of Newo Wellness is "to inspire other individuals to live a holistic life, to nourish oneself, through the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual wellbeing through the medicine wheel teachings," Ahenakew said.

"If we are neglecting one quadrant of our medicine wheel, then the medicine wheel is not balanced and neither are we," Thomas added.

Newo Wellness kicked off an eight-week spring challenge on May 1, with more than 150 participants. It offers guided home or gym workouts designed by the team. The daily fitness challenges are complemented by daily challenges to grow holistically, beyond the physical.

Participants have access to the coaches through a private Facebook group, where members can also support one another and an online app with exercise demos and progress tracking. The program awards prizes too.

The founders have all been involved in sports and fitness since they were young.

"We are all similar in ways and also different in our experiences, so we bring a lot to the table and to the team," they said.

Ahenakew grew up with the Saskatchewan First Nations Summer and Winter Games, which

had a huge impact on many lives and creating lifelong friendships. She also played in the North American Indigenous Games, played soccer with the U of S Huskies and recently signed with the MSC Peoria Women's pro-am soccer team in Illinois! Her message: "To put the love and intention into myself before trying to put anyone before me. If I love myself first, I can love those around me."

Thomas also played in the First Nation games



From left, Newo Wellness was created by Lovina Tootoosis from Poundmaker Cree Nation, Shayna Thomas from Kinistin Saulteaux First Nation, Kayla Ahenakew from Ahtahkakoop First Nation and Kennedy Monych from Opaskwayak Cree Nation. (Photo supplied)

and played hockey in the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships (NAHC). She is also an educator and recent Master's degree graduate.

"Something I always struggled with was my self-esteem. I wish I could tell my younger self to believe in yourself and lean on community for support, whether that is your family or the wider community. People are in your corner and want to see you succeed, so do not be afraid to reach out for help, believe in yourself and your abilities," Thomas said.

Monych is a certified fitness coach who

spoke about being a shy youth and how being active in sports such as gymnastics, figure skating, tae kwon do and pole dancing has helped her blossom into the compassionate mother and woman she is today.

"I was such a shy kid that I wish that I would have just went for it because I would have been really happy if I did. I never would have thought I'd end up where I am today, but I'm finally stepping into my own light."

Tootoosis's story started with powwows every summer. With a background in track, volleyball and powwow dance, she spoke to how movement has always been a big part of her life, intertwining culture and fitness in one. Tootoosis is a student at the U of S and is doing all this while juggling motherhood, which is extremely impressive.

"The situation that you are in right now is not going to last forever. Put yourself into new things and try your best to meet new people and always believe that moving forward, there is going to be a better future there for you!" she said.

This is a super team to keep your eyes on. These four women are proof of the difference that can be made when we come together and empower one another. Newo Wellness incorporates culture, empowerment, Indigenous sisterhood and the holistic approach that allows us to see how everything is interconnected, all while creating a movement of change and balance.

Sometimes we all need that extra encouragement and inspiration to go out there and push ourselves to new limits we never thought we were capable of. Teamwork makes the dream work. Together we rise.

Want to be an informed voter in the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Election?

The Spring edition of



The New Nation
La nouvel naasyoon

is dedicated to providing readers with profiles of the candidates who are running for office to serve the Métis people and communities of Saskatchewan.

Election Day is May 29, 2021

The online edition of the *New Nation*—la nouvel naasyoon is available May 10, 2021 at gdins.org/metis-culture/the-new-nation



Words from our Elders: Floyd Whitecap

Words from our Elders: Floyd Whitecap, from the book These are our People, Carry the Kettle. The elders were recorded, photographed and published by Ted Whitecalf and a team, including Marilyn Poitras, Debra Ram, Jacqueline Gabriel and the late Pamela Whitecalf, Sweetgrass Records. Check back monthly for words from our elders.

I was born on February 7, 1934. I started Day School here on the Carry the Kettle First Nation, for about two years. At that time my mom was very sick and my dad was in the army. I was seven years old and my sister, Arlette, was four years old when my mom died. We had a mud shack close to the Day School here on Carry the Kettle and from there we were placed in my auntie's home.



Elder Floyd Whitecap, Carry The Kettle First Nation. Photo by Ted Whitecalf

But all of a sudden they whisked us off to the mission school. We were put in Lestock, Muscowequan Residential School, 1942, I believe...

We went to school when we were young but at the age of 12, we had to work half days at a little farm at the school. Do chores. A few of us boys used to work, do chores. Clean the chicken barn, pigpen, cow barn, plus we haul wood, we split wood for the furnace. And

sometimes we'd have to go and get some hay feed for the horses and the cow barn. Used to milk cows. I liked it. I liked my job at that time because being out was a learning lesson I guess for some of us. Always working shifts. We work in the morning and sometimes work in the afternoon besides being school days.

....
(My language was) Nakoda Indian...Assiniboine Indian. There were just a few of us, but had another boy from White Bear I guess, but he left school before all of us. Before the age of fourteen I was one of the big boys there. And we couldn't speak our language at school, we couldn't even talk to each other in our language. Well, some do speak out, playing in the yard they talk, but I didn't know this was against the school rules and they notified us but we learned later on when we left school. That was pretty tough at the school.

...
There's a few of them that's (speaking) in the language. I don't know, I think we're losing out but we got one of the boys here, he's teaching the younger kids. And lots of them are interested. Those younger kids are interested, those bigger kids, I don't know, as long as they keep learning. They keep going younger years when we learn more and understand your language. It's been over fifty years since I lost my language. Just now today I'm kind of beginning to understand, but to speak it, that's hard. It's hard for me to speak it.

We're allowed our regrets but I guess life is life, you know. I don't know why (the Residential School) wanted to look at it that way when we spoke our language, you know. That's something that I never bothered doing. So today, it's not the case. Kids are learning to speak the language. I only say a few words, it's hard. I got a book here I'm trying to read but the language is hard to read, how to say this. You've got to have somebody who knows how to say it.

In my day, when I left school, my dad had some Elders come over sometime to have a meeting about what's going on the Reserve here. In them days it was pretty hard for them because they weren't understanding. They couldn't have a meeting. ...be put in jail for having a meeting...

But anyway, I'm trying to get on to say words in Assiniboine language, the Nakoda language.

(Check out www.eaglefeathernews.com later in May for a full transcription of this interview)



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NAIG cancellation disappoints athletes

By Julia Peterson
for Eagle Feather News

In 2020, hundreds of young Indigenous athletes across Saskatchewan were gearing up for the North American Indigenous Games, which were scheduled to be held over the summer in Halifax.

But weeks before the games were scheduled to begin, as COVID-19 continued to spread throughout the country, NAIG was cancelled.

"I was pretty upset, pretty devastated," said Willow Tanton, a 15-year-old basketball player who would have been attending her first Games. "I was really excited to go and travel to Halifax."

Mike Tanton, Willow's father and the Chef de Mission for Team Saskatchewan, said many athletes shared that experience this year.

"A lot of our athletes were training hard and preparing themselves to represent our province at the Games," he said. "For them to have that pulled right out from underneath them with the global pandemic was hard."

For older athletes, NAIG's cancellation came with another set of worries - that they might not be able to compete at all in the future, if they were to pass the competition age limit during the pandemic.

"Maybe I'll have to go as a coach," said 18-year-old lacrosse player Anna-kah Ratt. "We'll see what happens the next time NAIG takes place, which is kind of unpredictable during the pandemic."

Since the cancellation, the NAIG Council and the host society have agreed to raise every sport's age limit by one year, so athletes like Ratt will have the chance to play in the next Games.

And while athletes are looking forward to that future date, during the pandemic, training has also been a challenge.

"Basketball is a pretty hands-on sport," said Willow. "Everyone's sharing a basketball and different teams are mixing, so it's not very COVID-friendly."

"But it's been pretty weird not being able to play basketball as much as I used to and being forced to sit at home and watch old videos of people playing basketball."

Team Saskatchewan did run some online programming for athletes, but Mike said it was hard to reach all the athletes who wanted to participate.

"It was tough because we tried to do that when school wasn't even in place, and [in] a lot of our Indigenous communities, a lot of the time the school is the main community hub," he said. "That's where our young people access the internet and all those types of things."

Still, the pandemic has created some opportunities for NAIG athletes and supporters. In this unexpected off-season, Team Saskatchewan has been working on a coaching program to get older athletes certified, so they can keep attending the Games and sharing their expertise in the future.

And with many athletes forced to train on their own, Mike says he has seen these young competitors learn important lessons about self-motivation.

"Sometimes you need to learn how to push yourself internally," he said. "You'll have kids that learn and develop when the coach is there, but sometimes they are not able to push themselves to do that practice away from the court and on their own time."

"And ... you see the kids that are able to do those things usually start to excel and build a better understanding and knowledge of whatever game they're involved in."



Willow Tanton is one of many NAIG athletes that have kept working out and pursuing the passion for their sports despite Covid-19. (Photo by One Love Basketball)

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Saskatchewan

Sports and Healthy Money Moves for The Win

By Cate Morris,
"Scout Financial Solutions"
for Eagle Feather News

Han/Hello! So, I heard it in the wind that your youngster is a play-making star athlete who's shining bright and will continue to rise.

That is fantastic news! Congratulations! We Indigenous people are always happy for and proud of all who excel! And bravo to you for committing the time, energy and money to help junior/juniorette reach such levels. Travelling down the sports highway is rewarding but is no easy task and is especially difficult on the wallet.

In support of Indigenous excellence in sports, this column will share healthy money moves to help rising sports stars break records without their grownups having to break the bank.

The amount of money required for athletes to participate and excel is significant. Evaluations, league fees, team fees, equipment, supplies, training camps and tournament fees can easily reach thousands of dollars per athlete in a very short time.

If talent leads to representation on elite competition and travel teams, more financial commitment is required. That means money will very likely be scarce right up until the big leagues come calling. If money is no issue when it comes to raising the next Great One, carry on. But if it's a concern, read on!

One of the first things to consider is making adjustments to the household budget. Don't have a budget? Now is a great time to create one.

A standard budget lists all income sources on their deposit dates and minuses all expenses on their due dates. List regular expenses like shelter, utilities, and food (to name a few) but also include Sports/Activities as a regular expense. Work the numbers well to make sure extra money is set aside each month for this expense. And keep at it during months without Sports/Activities so that you can build up a good amount. Think of the last point as off-season training for when it's Go Time.

Don't keep the monthly savings for sports in your regular day to day banking account where it could mistakenly be spent. Instead, move it to a savings account so it will be out of sight, out of mind until the activity related costs arise.

Contact your financial institution about opening this savings account and make

sure it is free to use. Most financial institutions have several free options and some even pay a small amount of interest. Nicknaming accounts in relation to the savings purpose encourages healthier savings activity.

I use a free e-savings account nicknamed "Activity/Sports/Travel" but feel free to choose one of your own liking – perhaps "All Star Savings"?

Another option to financially support youth sport is through fundraising – both individually and as a team or other defined group. If this sounds like a good option, be sure to check with local regulations. Some activities could be considered illegal without proper permits.

A benefit of proper permit issuance is the bonus of top-up grants based on sales. And don't forget to check out the many sponsorship programs available: KidSport, JumpStart, Dream Brokers and Creative Kids Saskatchewan, to name a few. It's also worth looking into Jordan's Principle and asking the various corporations that do business with, in and for First Nations communities.

As well, some First Nations and Tribal Councils provide programs for minor and elite levels of sports. These are all worth looking into. Perhaps do it while waiting for youngsters' training or practice sessions to finish.

Our Indigenous athletes deserve recognition and support. Whether it's those young and brave enough to start a new-to-them sport or those who have put years into reaching elite levels, they should all be celebrated. Through hard work, commitment, sacrifice and initiative, dreams for our naturally talented

athletes are being realized.

Introducing healthy money moves will make for an unbeatable team. How can I be so sure? Because this Money Scout (as a solo parent) was able to meet all household expenses while still providing unconditional support to my own athletes involved in multiple activities and elite level

sports.

Make healthy money moves because they're worth it.

That's enough knowledge sharing for now! Stay safe, make good money decisions and act in the best interests of you and yours. For more financial wellness knowledge sharing, find Money Scout at www.moneyscout.ca, like us on Facebook at Scout Financial Solutions or follow us on Twitter @MoneyScout4U.



Here is some handy financial advice for sports parents from Scout Financial Solutions. (Photo supplied)

WOT

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VOTER INFORMATION: mnsselection.ca

Indigenous yoga teacher training and classes go online

By Errol Sutherland
of Eagle Feather News

When the pandemic forced a shutdown of Dawn Deguire's yoga classes last year, she thought it might also prevent the Indigenous Yoga Teacher Training program she has run for two years.

But her business, like so many others, adjusted and took many of its activities on-line.

"We've used Zoom all the way," she said. "We already had an account we'd been using for training last summer, so we took significant portions of programming online."

Now her yoga classes and the first 50 hours of her 200-hour instructor training take place in a meeting-style, viewable layout on Zoom, with instructions and demonstrations.

She is able to reach more people every week, since many classes were shut down.

"The online is keeping us with a strong basis of peeps signing up each week...its been really great for us," she said.

The instructions are popular because they're easily accessible in the privacy of participants' homes, she said.

"People don't want to go to yoga studios, especially during COVID. Indigenous people, particularly, not too many go to yoga studios. And this is a way to bring it into your homes and they can try it that way."

"Yoga is a really privileged thing here in the west. Studios are not made in an accessible way for Indigenous people, representation-wise, (and are) usually in higher-end parts of city. The rates, and all of it, there's no indigenous instructors, there's just nothing there that resonates as a practice," she said.

Deguire wants to make the benefits of yoga accessible to Indigenous people.

"We train yoga instructors to take yoga back to their communities and embed the practice of yoga in their communities. Zoom makes that a lot easier... We actually attract people from wherever they are, they don't have to travel.

Deguire's instructor training introduces Indigenous world views by in-

cluding First Nations elders and knowledge keepers to talk with participants, in addition to having Indian elders teaching about the yoga perspective on life and practice.

"Yoga is all about, not just exercise, it's a way of life, it's like the red road, it's the equivalent. Then we compare them and students take whatever they want and put them into their classes. We don't try to create Indigenous yoga but if a student wants to include it in their class, (they can,)" she said.

The online segment of the instructor-training course has shortened the stay in Saskatoon for out-of-town students, who will still do 150 hours of training in the city.

"We would definitely keep online instruction as part of our plan, now and after COVID is done," Deguire said.

"It was actually a gift to have it roll out the way it did, because we're always like, 'how do we make yoga accessible to Indigenous people?' Our model was to bring yoga to the people rather than try to attract people like traditional studios do."

Providing the classes and teacher training online has turned out to be easier than Deguire expected.

"It was really, actually, our thinking around the whole thing that made it most difficult," she said.

Those interested in yoga classes or in becoming a Yoga instructor can contact Dawn Deguire on facebook.



Dawn Deguire's transition from in-person yoga training to online has taken her company many steps forward. (photo submitted)

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Ahenakew's soccer journey

By Betty Ann Adam
of Eagle Feather News

At 28, Kayla Ahenakew is still living her soccer dream life.

The game she started playing at age five in North Battleford, and which drove her through high school and five years of varsity play, has now taken her to a professional soccer team in Peoria, Illinois.

"In the past six months I've created a business, and I finished school and now I'm about to play pro soccer. I feel so good," she said recently from the Peoria apartment she shares with some of her teammates.

From the time she was little, Ahenakew loved kicking the ball, she "liked to be tricky, doing that kind of street-style soccer," she said. She started playing in the Saskatchewan Indigenous summer and winter games when she was eight and continued through her teens. At 15, she played soccer at her first North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) in Denver.

Indigenous-organized sports events played a significant role in her development as a competitive player and introduced her to many Indigenous athletes. She played on eight FSIN soccer championship teams.

She also played in all the school sports and fell in love with TaeKwon-Do when she was 13, which took her to tournaments all over Canada until giving it up at 15.

Ahenakew has learned in adulthood that she has attention deficit disorder, which helped her understand why being active has always given her such joy, while sitting in class has always required full-on effort.

"I wasn't the best kid... cause I wasn't good in school, but sports and soccer has always kind of made me work hard toward that. Doing that gave me opportunities for good things.

"If I would get into the wrong crowd, or get into the alcohol, then I would go back to sports because that was what made me feel good and then I'd be doing good things.

"Having my grandparents' support always put me back in there. That's re-

ally what helped me keep going because if I didn't have that support, I probably wouldn't have got on the teams and got to go to the places I got to go to."

Ray and Judy Ahenakew paid her enrollment fees, bought her gear, drove her to practices and to tournaments in Denver, B.C. and the Northwest Territories. At 16, she moved with them to Saskatoon, where she enrolled in the soccer academy at Centennial High School, which she saw as a stepping-stone to college play.

That year, one of her best friends on the team died by suicide. The loss was devastating. Ahenakew organized a team in memory of Kate Mountour, which raised funds to donate to suicide awareness and prevention programs.

Sadly, Ahenakew has



Kayla Ahenakew with her Grandma Judy Ahenakew, GRANDMA. Ahenakew at one of her many soccer events. (Photo by [unclear])

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... took her to the pro leagues



Ahenakew, Grandpa Ray Ahenakew and Aunt Donna (photo supplied)

known other Indigenous youth who have taken their own lives.

After graduating high school, she took a year to upgrade her English marks and the next year played college soccer with Lakeland College in Lethbridge, where she won Rookie of the Year.

The next year, she played with Hills College in Texas.

In 2015 she registered at the U of S, where she played the next three years with the Huskies - "We were the first team to make nationals in their soccer program, which was huge for them," - and ended her five-year eligibility to play varsity sports.

During that time, she studied Education for one year, then switched to Kinesiology, which is a perfect fit for her.

"It was to do with sports and your body, with training and working out and physiotherapy. I was like, 'man, if I know this stuff, I can help other youth become athletes.' Or I could become a phys-ed teacher because that was the only thing I loved in school."

"I found such passion for physical activity and what it does for your body and makes you feel. I love that."

When the Huskies soccer season ended in November 2017, she felt worn out and left school, just before the semester final exams.

"That was me not relying on my support system, not listening to my mom... I wasn't in a good place."

She got a construction job as a labourer, building the Saskatchewan Hospital in Battleford. For eight months, she carried bricks and drywall, moved debris and installed bathroom fixtures. When she got laid off, she started thinking about what she wanted.

"I've always been a person who... made the goals, I would figure out what I had to do to get there... I always based my work on what success I would hit, what accomplishment I would get.

"I was thinking about my life and I (realized,) 'I have to go back to school.' I don't like school. I'd experienced construction and I could have easily gone down that road and went into the trades, but I just had so much passion for things I wanted to do with my Kinesiology degree.

"I'd finished soccer, but I wasn't done school."

Back at U of S, with varsity off the table, Ahenakew played with local soccer teams. In February 2020, she started talking with a coach in Peoria about playing in the UWS, a national pro am league.

He wanted her to come there in May, but COVID-19 hit in March and the league was cancelled.

"I thought I was done playing soccer because I was 27. I was going to finish my schooling, start at square one, saving for a house.

She began a personal holistic journey that included therapy and healthy living.

"It's been an awesome year... Once COVID hit us, even though it ruined my traveling and adventurous side, it really made me sit with who I am... my body and mind feel better. I like what I'm doing right now."

In December, the coach from Peoria invited her to come for the 2021 season.

It was another chance to fulfill her soccer dream, but she hadn't played in months.

"From then until now, I trained my ass off," she said.

She trained five times a week and got into "wicked shape," at the same time as she and three Indigenous women friends created Newo Wellness, a holistic fitness business. And she finished the final semester of her degree.

"I felt that I had to make a decision. I'm either all in or I'm not.... I thought, 'I need to focus and see what I can do for my life.'

"I feel so good. I feel like I've worked so hard in these last six months... Even spiritually, emotionally, I worked hard.. I learned a lot about boundaries, my trauma, those unhealthy patterns that kept happening in relationships."

Ahenakew spoke with Eagle Feather News from Peoria. She's clicking with her teammates and looking forward to their first training game.

"I missed being on the ball and playing with girls."

Ahenakew said she has often been the only First Nations player on a team and sometimes faced negative stereotypes and racism, even in the college sports world, but she doesn't want that to stop girls who dream of college sports.

"I powered through because I love soccer and I believe I deserve to be there and I'm just as good."

Nicole Shingoose
Hometown and band: Cote First Nation, SK
Program: Medical Radiologic Technology diploma

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Numerous honours for Sasakamoose

By NC Raine
for Eagle Feather News

Fred Sasakamoose's family and friends often share a particular sentiment: as great as his accomplishment were in hockey, it was off the ice where he made his most important impact.

When Sasakamoose, the first Indigenous person to lace up skates in the NHL, passed on November 24, 2020 from COVID-19, Saskatchewan didn't just lose an icon in the hockey-verse, it lost a man who dedicated his life to making his community and country stronger, healthier and more inclusive.

For his contributions, Saskatchewan is immortalizing Sasakamoose with several distinctions – an annual day in his name, an eight-foot statue in Saskatoon and summer camp program inspired by his dedication to wellness through sport.

"It would've fulfilled his life (to see these honours). He would have figured, 'I've done lots, I've completed my life,'" said his son, Neil.

"My dad worked really hard up until the end of his life to uplift people and speak at events. He wanted his image to represent race-relations between non-Indigenous and Indigenous people. He wanted to promote people being healthy through both lifestyle and sports."

Approved by Saskatoon City Council and the Sasktel Centre Board of Directors, an eight-foot bronze of 19-year-old Fred Sasakamoose will be placed this autumn at the front entrance of the Sasktel Centre, across from the sculpture of Gordie Howe. The statue, which will be created by Studio West Bronze Foundry in Cochrane, Alberta at a cost of \$180,000, will be paid for and donated to the city by the Dakota Dunes Development Corporation, Battleford Agency Tribal Chiefs, and Synergy 8 Community Builders.

"Fred had just as much respect and leadership qualities off the ice as he had on, if not more. No one will ever match what Gordie Howe did on the ice. But with what Fred overcame, surviving residential schools to eventually make that impact of becoming the first Treaty Status First Nations NHL player, those impacts off the ice are truly amazing," said Saskatoon City Councillor Troy Davies.

"He was a pioneer. You look at people like Jackie Robinson in baseball. That's what Fred was for First Nations people," Davies said.

"With Gordie Howe on one side and Fred on the other, they will be like the two pillars of the building. I think we'll see people showing up to take photos with the statues."

As well, the Saskatchewan government has decreed May 18th as annual Fred Sasakamoose Day.

To celebrate, Synergy 8 will be unveiling a 30-foot truck and trailer,



Neil Sasakamoose, with his father, Fred, at the Fred Sasakamoose Chief Thunderstick hockey tournament (photo: Neil Sasakamoose)

wrapped with images of Sasakamoose and equipped with sporting and exercise equipment, to run summer camps at all seven Saskatoon Tribal Council First Nations. The Fred Sasakamoose Elite Athletic Sport Recreation Program will begin this summer and run over the next five years with sponsorship of Synergy 8, Dakota Dunes Development Corporation and STC.

"We want to show Fred as an example to First Nations youth, that the sky is the limit for them," Davies said.

May 18 will also mark the release of Sasakamoose's memoir, Call Me Indian, through Penguin Random House publishers. Sasakamoose worked closely with his grandson, Zane, over an 18 month period, recording hundreds of hours worth of stories of his life from residential school student to Elder.

Celebrating Sasakamoose is an honour, said Neil, but the loss of such a great man remains very present for his family.

"In Indigenous culture, you wait until about a year before you start talking more about the person. There's that period of grief, first. We are still in grief mode," said Neil.

"We know he would have marvelled at all of this. He would have been there, shaking hands with everyone and thanking everyone. Never in his wildest dreams would he ever have imaged having a Fred Sasakamoose Day and a statue in Saskatoon."

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The Chief Electoral Officer for the Métis Nation - Saskatchewan accepted the following nominations for the May 29, 2021 election. Métis citizens of Saskatchewan will be able to vote in their Regional Returning Office (RRO), beginning May 14, 2021 with advance polls in select communities May 22, 2021. Election Day is May 29, 2021 from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm.

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REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

NR1

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NR3

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Mervin (Tex) Bouvier
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ER3

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WR1

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Loretta King
Melanie Pritchett

WR1A

Carol Delorme
Billy Kennedy
Crystal Miller

WR2

Darlene Berube
Curtis Duane Blanchard
Darlene McKay
Sherry Ann McLennan

WR2A

Penny Hurton
Kathie Pruden Nansel
Cheryl Reed

WR3

Wendy Gervais
Wayne McKenzie
Calvin Racette

VOTING OPPORTUNITIES

Regional Returning Offices, May 14 – 21
10:00 am – 6:00 pm Closed Sunday

Advance Polls, May 22
12:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Election Day, May 29
9:00 am – 8:00 pm

* you must vote in the region where you live

* you must bring your (1) Métis Citizenship card or letter from the registry, (2) valid Health Card and (3) documentation of name and address (see website for examples)

* polling locations will be posted on the website

REGION TYPE	LOCATION	ADDRESS	VOTING LOCATIONS
NR1			
RRO	LaRonge	408 - 412 LaRonge Avenue	
Adv	LaRonge	408 - 412 LaRonge Avenue	
Mobile	1pm-5pm	Weyakwin	Mochikun Hall
Mobile	1pm-4pm	Uranium City	Ben McIntyre School
Mobile	1pm-4pm	Stony Rapids	Stony Rapids School
Election Day	LaRonge	408 - 412 LaRonge Avenue	
NR 2			
RRO	Buffalo Narrows	1204 Buffalo Street	
Adv	Buffalo Narrows	Buffalo Narrows Friendship Centre, 500 Buffalo Street	
Adv	LaLoche	Community Hall - Montgrand Street	
Mobile	1pm-4pm	Turnor Lake	Community Food Centre Turnor Lake/Birch
Election Day	Buffalo Narrows	Buffalo Narrows Friendship Centre, 500 Buffalo Street	
Election Day	LaLoche	Community Hall - Montgrand Street	
NR3			
RRO	Beauval	CIPJ Boardroom	
Adv	Beauval	BDI, 308 Lavoie Street	
	Green Lake	Green Lake Community Hall, 315 North Street	
	Ile-a-la-Crosse	Sakitawak Events Centre	
	Pinehouse	Pinehouse Arena - L1 Hilltop Ave	
Mobile	12pm - 3pm	Jans Bay	Northern Hamlet of Jans Bay, Board Room
Mobile	4:30pm - 7:30pm	Cole Bay	Cole Bay Community Hall
Election Day	Beauval	BDI, 308 Lavoie Street	
	Green Lake	Community Hall, 315 North Street	
	Ile-a-la-Crosse	Sakitawak Events Centre	
	Pinehouse	Pinehouse Arena - L1 Hilltop Ave	
ER 1			
RRO	Denare Beach	1700 Wigwam Drive	
Adv	Cumberland House	Veteran's Memorial Hall	
Election Day	Cumberland House	Veteran's Memorial Hall	
	Creighton	North Sask Seniors 401 Main Street	
ER2			
RRO	Nipawin	210 - 2nd Avenue East	
Adv	Hudson Bay	Street Patrick's Anglican Church, 218 Churchill Street	
	Wadena	Community Legion Hall, 254 Main Street North	
	Tisdale	Tisdale Alliance Church, 1321 - 96th Street	
Mobile	12pm - 5pm	Norquay	NICE Hall #12 Railway Avenue West
Election Day	Porcupine Plain	Sunset Club, 207 McAllister Avenue	
	Melfort	Melfort Legion, 101 McLeod Avenue East	
	Nipawin	Nipawin Fish & Game League (by Regional Park) #10 Gordon Street	
ER2A			
RRO	Yorkton	38 Smith Street	
Adv	Yorkton	Yorkton Public Library North (Back Entrance) 93 Broadway Street West	
Mobile	12pm - 5pm	Melville	Melville Community Works Building, 800 Prince Edward Street
Mobile	12pm - 5pm	Esterhazy	Town Office Council Chambers, 600 Summer Street
Election Day	Yorkton	Yorkton Public Library	
	Langenburg	Langenburg Community Centre, 101 Carl Avenue West	
ER3			
RRO	Indian Head	430 Grande Avenue	
Adv	Estevan	South East College, 532 Bourquin Road	
	Weyburn	South East College, 633 King Street	
	Carlyle	Carlyle Legion, 319 - 5th Street West	
	Moosomin	Moosomin Armoury, 709 Mark Avenue	
	Lestock	Lestock Community Hall, 322 Touchwood Hills Avenue	
Election Day	Indian Head	Indian Head Heritage Club, 505 Otterloo Street	
	Lebret	Village of Lebret - Senior Room, 12 Place D'Eglise	
	Weyburn	South East College, 633 King Street	
	Estevan	South East College, 532 Bourquin Road	
	Moosomin	Moosomin Armoury, 709 Mark Avenue	
WR1			
RRO	Meadow Lake	307 Centre Street	
Adv	Meadow Lake	Senior Citizens Activity Centre, 406 - 5th Avenue West	
	Leoville	Senior Centre, Main Street	
Mobile	12pm - 5pm	North Battleford	Frontier Mall, Old Dollarama, 11426 Railway Avenue
Mobile	12pm - 5pm	Loon Lake	Loon Lake Seniors, 502 Railway Avenue
Mobile	12pm - 5pm	Dorintosh	Dorintosh Hall, 101 - 2nd Avenue SW
Mobile	12pm - 5pm	Pierceland	Josie Britton Centre, 198 First Avenue South
Election Day	Meadow Lake	Senior Citizens Activity Centre, 406 - 5th Avenue West	
	Turtleford	Good Shepherd United-Anglican Church	
WR 1A			
RRO	North Battleford	Frontier Mall, 11426 Railway Avenue East	
Adv	North Battleford	Frontier Mall, Old Dollarama 11426 Railway Avenue East	
	Lloydminster	Lloydminster Royal Canadian Legion, 4505 - 49th Avenue	
	Unity	New Horizon Senior Center, 420 Main Street	
Mobile	12pm - 5pm	Frenchman Butte	Frenchman Butte Seniors, Main Street
Mobile	12pm - 5pm	Maidstone	Maidstone United Church Corner of 1st Avenue East and 2nd Street
Election Day	North Battleford	Frontier Mall, Old Dollarama 11426 Railway Avenue East	
	Lloydminster	Lloydminster Royal Canadian Legion, 4505 - 49th Avenue	
WR2			
RRO	Prince Albert	Bay 5 - 1499 - 10th Avenue East	
Adv	Prince Albert	Prince Albert Exhibition Centre Board Room, 815 Exhibition Drive	
	Big River	Big River Community Centre, 606 - 1st Street North	
	St. Louis	St. Louis Community Hall 179 - 3rd Street	
	Duck Lake	Duck Lake	
	Shellbrook	Shellbrook Legion: 102 - 2nd Avenue East	
Election Day	Prince Albert	Prince Albert Exhibition Centre Board Room, 815 Exhibition Drive	
	Birch Hills	Birch Hills Legion, 114 Bellamy	
	Duck Lake	Duck Lake	
	St. Louis	St. Louis Community Hall, 179 - 3rd Street	
WR2A			
RRO	Saskatoon	61 - 300 Confederation Drive - Confederation Mall	
Adv	Saskatoon West	Confed Shopping Centre, Unit 42-300 Confederation Mall	
	Saskatoon East	Market Mall, 32 - 2325 Preston Avenue	
	Martensville	Heritage Centre, 416 - 6th Avenue South	
	Warman	Brian King Centre, 202 - 8th Ave	
Mobile	12pm - 5pm	Watrous	Watrous Civic Centre - Heritage Room 404 Main Street
Mobile	12pm - 5pm	Kindersley	Canalta Hotel, 1302 - 15th Street West
Mobile	12pm - 5pm	Biggar	Westwinds Motor Hotel, 126 Main Street
Election Day	Saskatoon West	Confed Shopping Centre, Unit 42 - 300 Confederation Mall	
	Saskatoon East	Market Mall, 32 - 2325 Preston Ave	
	Martensville	Heritage Centre, 416 - 6th Avenue South	
	Warman	Brian King Centre, 202 - 8th Avenue North	
WR3			
RRO	Regina	2745 Elphinstone Street	
Adv	Regina	Victoria Square Shopping Centre, 26 - 2223 Victoria Avenue East	
	Regina	Northgate Mall, Unit 46 - 489 Albert Street North	
	Moose Jaw	Heritage Inn, 1590 Main Street North	
	Swift Current	Lt. Colonel Clifton Centre, 350 - 6th Avenue NE	
Mobile	12pm - 5pm	Maple Creek	Maple Creek Elks Hall, 521 - 5th Avenue
Mobile	12pm - 5pm	Assiniboia	Prince of Wales Cultural Recreation Centre, 201 - 3rd Avenue West
Election Day	Regina	Victoria Square Shopping Centre, 26 - 2223 Victoria Avenue E.	
	Regina	Northgate Mall, Unit 46 - 489 Albert Street North	
	Moose Jaw	Heritage Inn, 1590 Main Street North	

AN ADVOCATE FOR MÉTIS PEOPLE

Michelle LeClair, candidate for VP of MN-S

I have worked for many years as an advocate for Métis people. And have been involved with the Métis Nation for most of my life. In 1993 as a young Métis woman in my early 20's, I was elected to the Métis Women's Board and was involved in the Charlottetown Accord discussions. During this time, I was elected as the Area Director for Northern Region 1 and held many portfolios, including that of the Veterans. One of the lasting impacts of holding an elected position is the continuing need to work together as one people and not give way to partisan politics within our Nation.

"We need to protect our community. We need to protect our people. We need to protect our children."

As a Métis person that comes from a small Métis community. It is imperative to support our communities. I have seen over the last few years our locals and our individual voices go largely unheard. The foundation of our fight since we began as a Nation comes from the voice of the people. I have seen the attempt to disenfranchise our locals, regions, and individuals and I want to work to ensure that all our voices are heard.

We are not defined by the size or shape of our Nation, or our voices against one another, we can disagree because we have passion for our Nation. I know it is sometimes difficult to find common ground, but with respect and transparency, we will all succeed and grow our Nation together.

I believe in the Métis Nation and its people. I believe that I possess the technical skills to negotiate on our behalf and know the daily struggles many of our people face.

I humbly ask for your support on May 29, 2021. Let's make a change. This is OUR Métis Nation.



∞ MAY 29TH ∞

VOTE LECLAIR

FOR Vice President
OF MN-S

306-260-2242

VoteLeClair2021.com

Growing OUR Nation Together

Nominations set for upcoming Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) election

*By NC Raine
of Eagle Feather News*

The race is on for the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan election. Chief Electoral Officer Gwen Lafond has accepted 20 nominations filed for the four executive positions and 34 nominations for the 12 Regional Representative positions.

Two positions have been acclaimed.

Métis Citizens of Saskatchewan will be able to vote in their Regional Returning Office, beginning May 14, 2021 with advance polls in select communities May 22, 2021. Election Day is May 29, 2021 from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Presidential Candidates:



Clément Chartier – former President of MN-S and Métis National Council (MNC)

A career-long leader in Métis politics, Chartier's priorities as MN-S President would include land rights, urban governance and empowering the MN-S Locals.

Chartier has also been outspoken about citizenship issues with the Métis Nation Ontario (MNO), which has caused the MNC to temporarily suspend them, leading to a tri-council between the MNO, MN-S and Métis Nation of Alberta.

"The future of the Métis National Council (MNC) is hanging in the balance. Either we go with Métis Nation citizens only, or if the incumbent wins, we'll continue on the path that they're going on of becoming a pan-Aboriginal organization with all these people from Eastern Canada and Eastern Ontario who are not part of the historic Métis Nation," Chartier said.

"If I get elected, we will be able to move forward with the Métis National Council as a continuation of where we are now, in terms of form and substance."

Chartier has also been outspoken regarding voting access in Saskatchewan, which he says has become unconstitutional, and that voters should be eligible by self-declaration. He is currently engaged a legal bid to stop amendments by the MN-S requiring voters to be registered.



Glen McCallum – current Métis Nation-Saskatchewan President

Prior to the election of incumbent President Glen McCallum in 2017, the MN-S never had more than 3,000 registered members. Now, they have over 15,000 he said. His case for re-election should look to that very progress, he said.

"The most important thing is registering our people. For many years, we never had the kind of interest that our Métis citizens now have. That's the heart-beat of our government in Saskatchewan. We have 80,000 Métis (people) in the province, and we want to register as many as we can, as quickly as we can."

McCallum calls his four year term a 'great ride', and cites relationships built with the federal government, increased funding for the MN-S, development of programs such as housing and education, and the COVID-19 response as some of the administration's proven strengths over the last four years.

And McCallum is not short on priorities for the next four:

"Establish strong community, healthcare, and wellness programs, expand culture and language programs, strengthen Métis rights and land claims, continue to engage in duty to consult, implementation of Métis section 35 rights to harvest, continue building a strong and transparent government, reform our Constitution and finalize our governance recognition, establish a judicial tribunal, and continue to build and strengthen our Métis institutions, locals, and regions."

"It's important for our citizens to see how our Métis Nation is looking after them, and has their best interest as to how we move forward as a government."



Karen LaRocque – CEO of Les Filles de Madeleine, former MN-S regional director.

As runner-up to Glen McCallum in the last MN-S general election in 2017, LaRocque hopes to finally oust McCallum this election if voters feel they need to 'hit refresh' on the current MN-S regime.

"The democratic rights of our people (is what's most important). When you look at what transpired this last MNLA, we now have to register in order to vote," said LaRocque.

"When some of those resolution came out in 2021, that was really what spurred me to come out and run again. I understand the push to get people registered, I'm not against that, but we have to have a process."

LaRocque's priorities as MN-S President would include: Constitutional and electoral reform, emergency preparedness and health, hunting and harvesting rights, land claims, family and child welfare, and Elders.

"The MN-S was built by our people. It's always been community driven," she said.

"I think there's a disconnect between our grassroots communities, the Locals, and the Métis-Nation Saskatchewan. I've always felt strongly about keeping people in the loop and empowering them to have a voice in the way our nation goes forward. Our Locals are struggling right now, we've gotten some money over the past few years but not much of it is being spent on building capacity."

"In order for us to go back to government and start defining our rights, we need to have those people, those grassroots communities, behind us."



Mary Ann Morin – current (disputed) MN-S Treasurer, Accountant. Morin said she "can see a need for change" in the MN-S. Elected Treasurer in 2017, Morin was removed four months after being elected for stating in a written letter that she would resign if alleged transparency concerns in the MN-S were not addressed. A provincial court ruled in May 2020 that Morin would remain Treasurer.

"I'm running on integrity. I've always run on accountability, communication, transparency and financial fiscal responsibility," she said.

Morin will base her platform on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, a psychological theory which suggests people are motivated to fulfill basic needs before moving on to more advanced needs. She wants a more concerted focus on diabetes, mental health problems, youth suicide, and education.

"I want to make change for the future of our children and the people of Canada. We need to be responsible and enter into good business with people, and have people trust us (as an organization), because right now it is not that way," she said.

Morin also said the government structure needs to change, alleging the current administration allows constitutional change at the Métis Nation Legislative Assembly (MNL), rather than democratically at the Annual General Assembly (AGA), where all voices can be heard.

Vice-President Candidates



Darrel Burnouf – Manager of Business Development and Northern Affairs at Cameco Corp.

A proud native of the Northern village of Beauval, Burnouf says one of his strengths as a leader comes from an acute connection with the people and issues in the north.

"The reason I'm running, I'm seeing my family, my friends, my community up north – it isn't sustainable. It sparked an interest in me to make a difference. There's addictions, mental health and suicide issues, gangs. I feel for them. I'm passionate about that I really want to make a difference."

Burnouf also said his experience in business would be an asset to the MN-S. He currently works with assisting Indigenous business to provide goods and services to Cameco – a position he would leave if elected Vice-President.

"I bring a lot of professionalism and integrity to the position, and in terms of nation-building, economic development is a major part of my background."

His priorities would also include: Métis land, fishing, and hunting rights, producing a resolution for the

Île-à-la-Crosse boarding school, empowering locals, and developing a post-pandemic recovery plan for MN-S citizens.

"Empowering our Locals and Regional government is essential. We do this by updating the Constitution, legislation, and policies based on input from the members throughout the province."



Darren Deschambeault – former Communications at Reconciliation Pipeline, former Saskatchewan Party candidate for Cumberland

Deschambeault wants to be a voice for the people. In preparation for Vice-President, Deschambeault has been asking people around the province what their biggest issue is.

"The biggest battle is poverty. We have a lot of poverty out there. It's really sad when our Métis Elders, the builders of our nation, have to decide if they are going to eat or pay their bills," he said.

The primary role for Vice-President, said Deschambeault, is to look at the Constitutional and inherent rights, and engage in consultation with members around the province.

He also believes it is imperative to provide more support to the Locals.

"The locals, those are our rights-bearing communities. That's where our rights should flow from," he said.

"When we're going to be sitting down and negotiating with the Crown on our Land Claim, it will come from the Locals. It's not going to come from the MN-S. It's going to flow right from the communities, that's where the power lies."

Gerald Morin – current MN-S Vice-Presi-



dent, former President of MNC and MN-S

Morin, who has been MN-S Vice-President since 2012, said the next few years are critical for the MN-S. After a history of Canada denying essential Métis rights, Morin said they are making historical breakthroughs.

"Our collective political efforts have resulted in our rights and nation being fully recognized... equal to that of First Nations and Inuit rights," he said.

He said it's important for the MN-S to have knowledgeable and seasoned negotiators at the table when it comes to continued implementation of Métis rights.

"The focus of my leadership going forward would be of nation building, the pursuit of rights and going further down that road of greater Métis self-determination."

Morin also said the MN-S needs to focus on establishing a specific land and resource base for the Métis people of the province.

"We are still are landless people... As long as we remain a landless people, the progress we make on behalf of our people will be limited in terms of positive changes we can make in our communities and reversing some of socio-economic circumstances in our communities," he said.



Michelle LeClair – current Director of Policy, Development, and Human Resources at Central Urban Métis Federation, former MNL Speaker of the House and MNC Chief of Staff

Self-described as someone involved with the Métis Nation her entire life, LeClair said she is now vying for Vice-President because there are issues the MN-S has failed to move on: the self-government agreement; lack of support of the Locals; and issues around identity.

She has a four-pillar platform: Métis rights; supporting families; good governance; and economic prosperity. She is disappointed by the lack of action on a 2019 memorandum of understanding signed with the Government of Saskatchewan on traditional harvesting rights.

LeClair said families also need multi-layered support.

"Supporting families encompasses culture, art, education, language. And a huge one is family and child care services within our nations. Our people are suffering, our kids are getting apprehended and I don't see that there's a lot of focus on that," she said.

"In regard to good governance, there's a lack of capacity in our Locals. It seems to me their voices aren't being heard."

LeClair would also like to see more negotiations and set-asides for COVID-19 vaccines for Métis people.



Dale McAuley – former MN-S Area Director, former Mayor of Cumberland House, carpenter

Leadership is about listening and understanding the needs of the people, McAuley said. He said for too long has he watched the Nation become idle.

"We need to move our nation forward. We're too stagnant," he said.

"We have to uphold and protect our Métis rights like fishing, trapping, hunting and harvesting. We have to start getting recognized rights across the provinces, not just in certain areas."

McAuley said his priorities as VP would include completing the citizen registry, focusing on land claims and improving governance and economic development.

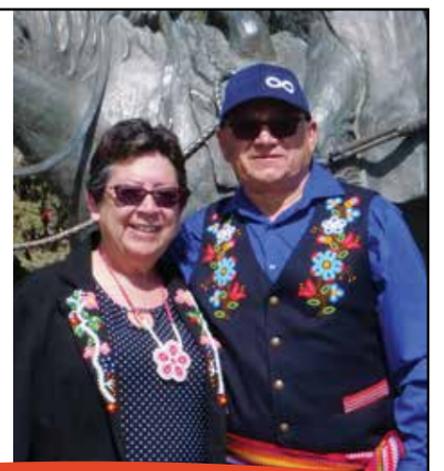
"I'm not going into this position very lightly. I want to start making movement. I understand the governance, the regulations, policies and our constitution. I believe I will be a strong leader for the grassroots people, and I will listen and have an open heart for my people."

∞ Métis Rising ∞

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MÔSWA radio: a voice for Elders and youth

By INCA staff
for Eagle Feather News

"I'm blessed to be able to record these Elders, to hear our languages being spoken again," says Lana Littlechief. "It does something to your spirit inside, so our kids can hear that language and want to speak it someday."

Lana Littlechief has been on-air on "97.7 FM The Moose--serving the beautiful Moose Mountains" for almost 20 years. Her passion for training youth and recording Elders speaking their languages is inspiring.

The Moose broadcasts in southeast Saskatchewan to White Bear, Carlyle, Arcola, Pheasants Rump and Kenosee Lake, and livestreams at www.themoosefm.com.

In 2000, the president of White Bear Oil and Gas (where Littlechief worked) wanted "to use some of that money to produce something that could help the community into the future," she said.

In April 2001, White Bear Children's Charity was incorporated. "We always wanted to give back to youth," says Littlechief. "That is one of the reasons our radio station was created, so we could make our youth proud of being First Nations and give them something to look forward to."

In October 2001, they got a CRTC licence and took a year to set up their tower, renovate studio space, purchase equipment and train DJs. The Moose went on-air December 4, 2002.

Unfortunately, the DJs left, so in January 2003, Littlechief took her place behind the microphone.

One of their license requirements was broadcasting in Indigenous languages.

Littlechief recorded White Bear kids in language classes, and still broadcasts a prayer recorded almost 20 years ago: "Oh Great Spirit, whose Voice I

hear in the Wind."

"If one person can hear that prayer and get strength, that's what the radio station is for," she said.

White Bear members speak three languages--Nakoda, Plains Cree and Saulteaux, and a few speak Dakota. "It's so important to me to have those languages recorded from the speakers that are here, so we can pick up those tools someday," Littlechief said.

She works with Nakoda Language Keepers Elder Sara McArthur, Elder Peter Bigstone and Plains Cree Elder Nora Kakakeway. Sadly, the community recently lost Nakoda Language Keeper Elder Armand McArthur and Saulteaux Language Keeper Margaret Rose Cote.

The Moose broadcasts public service announcements, advertising and sponsorships. "There's not a lot of money in First Nations radio," Littlechief says. "It's a struggle, but it's worth it. I love my job. I love recording Elders. I love sharing who we are as a people."

Littlechief runs the youth broadcasters program, getting kids to record safety messages and traditional teachings. Carlyle high school students can do work experience at The Moose. "I get them to do bullying commercials, safety commercials and station IDs.

2022 will be the 20th anniversary of the The Moose. Littlechief is already applying for grants for another "Moose Fest." The first was held at Hotel

Beach at White Bear Lake Resort in 2017 to celebrate 15 years.

"I think we can make our First Nations youth feel so proud of who they are," says Littlechief. "We have a voice on the radio. I see such a resurgence, it makes my spirit soar."

(The INCA program at First Nations University received InSpirit Foundation support to research Indigenous language radio and alert youth to opportunities in broadcasting.)



Lana Littlechief has been on-air on "97.7 FM The Moose--serving the beautiful Moose Mountains" for almost 20 years. (Photo supplied)



MUSKEG LAKE CREE NATION
Investment Management Corp

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
3 YEAR TERM

OUR BUSINESS

MLCN Investment Management Corp (MLCNIMC) oversees the management of a diversified and successful portfolio of commercial real estate and business entities.

The Muskeg Lake Cree Nation (MLCN) is a progressive First Nation government that owns and manages a total of 35,123 acres of urban and rural lands. MLCN is the sole shareholder of MLCNIMC.

MLCNIMC's mandate includes seeking out investment, partnership and development opportunities for MLCN lands.

BOARD PROFILE

MLCNIMC is governed by an independent Board of Directors. The Board is comprised of seven (7) members: three (3) non-MLCN Board members, and four (4) MLCN citizen Board members. MLCN strives to ensure that the MLCNIMC Board is comprised of financially literate community and business leaders that, collectively, have a mix of valuable industry knowledge and business experience applicable to the business of MLCNIMC and its related entities.

The areas of knowledge and experience sought include: working in senior management, investments, financial services, accounting, economic development, property management, human resources, commercial law, and construction.

BOARD MEMBER SOUGHT

This position is for a Director to serve as one of three (3) non-MLCN Board members. The candidate sought for this position must be financially literate, and experience with corporate governance is welcomed.

The preferred candidate should also have significant experience in the area of human resources, including related policy development and knowledge of employment law. Experience in other areas relevant to MLCNIMC's operations would also be helpful. These areas include: accounting, finance, engineering (civil, mechanical and structural), commercial law, business administration, communications and marketing, skilled trades (particularly construction related), information technology, and cyber security.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants need to submit a resume detailing their education, work history and previous Board experience, and provide at least two (2) references or letters of recommendation, by **August 1, 2021** to:

MLCN INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT CORP
Attention: Governance & Nominating Committee Co-Chairs
112 – 335 Packham Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7N 4S1
Email: info@mlcninvestment.ca Fax: 306-955-8814

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Some amusing, not-so-news-worthy stories which never made it to print

I was once a press officer to a vainglorious Grand Chief. I often wrote his speeches and regularly accompanied him. A situation developed in the north where the Métis were protesting a railroad and had been tearing up tracks. I can't remember why. It was all over the provincial news at the time. Although it had very little to do with us, the Grand Chief decided we must get involved. His plan was to join their protest in solidarity. He would take the lead away from the Métis, kidnap the railroad vice-president, then if things didn't work, out blame the Métis.

Those privy to the small meeting were incredulous and voiced their objections, but since the Grand Chief wielded so much power, the plan went ahead. The Métis provincial president was a nervous wreck and so it wasn't all that hard to sit as equals. There was a meeting of all involved. The rail vice-president readily agreed to the demands and all was well until the Grand Chief's plan fell apart. He wanted the protesters to burst into the meeting. My job was to tell them to leave and have a protester push me. When the time came, they walked listlessly into the meeting. I told them they must leave which they ignored and I found the big guy who was supposed to push me. He just stood there. I whispered, "push me." He didn't get it until the third time, when he finally realized his role and gently pushed me. The vice-president was stunned and dropped his pen. The Grand Chief seized the moment and gave a planned most diplomatic response. I forget the exact words but it was impressive. The meeting ended with everyone happy and the Grand Chief had found the attention he craved.

When I was a reporter with the old Métis Society of Saskatchewan (MSS) I was called upon to attend

an area meeting. It was anything but. When I arrived, I met the one who called the meeting. He and a couple of his friends had shuttled people in and fed them. Most attendees were close relatives. He was quite open about his intentions. He wanted their vote to create a new MSS area with himself as area director. The twelve members readily agreed. He was the only candidate and as a result, was duly elected. The only problem was he occupied the turf of an existing area director. It was quite apparent he was after a relatively well-paying job. His rambling acceptance speech was



Breaking Trail

John Cuthand

continually interrupted by a heckler who demanded the house she said had been promised her. She was merciless and kept demanding her house. His speech faltered. Finally, he came over and whispered in her ear, "mom would you please shut up."

In the early 1980s I attended two First Ministers Conferences hosted by the Prime Minister with all provincial premiers. These were arguably the most important meetings since the signing of Treaties. The

meeting was intense, especially since it involved the Canadian Constitution and the First Nations place within it. One of a Grand Chief's assistants went missing. No one knew where. Anyway, following the meeting, the Grand Chief lay down to relax and watch a Montreal Canadiens game taking place in not so far away Montreal. The camera panned the audience and there waving wildly to the camera was the missing assistant and other staff. Shortly after, the disgraced assistant was shuffled off to a lower paying job, some distance from head office.

I was once at a culture camp. A buffalo was to be shot to feed the people. One was eventually separated from the herd. It ran back and forth within a corral. In a solemn moment a speech was given telling how the buffalo was sacred to the plains Indians. A long prayer followed. A bullet was smudged and then the First Nation Chief shot its nose off. The chief wasn't much of a hunter. The poor buffalo was peppered with bullets until it mercifully died.

Every summer the Opaswayak First Nation in northern Manitoba host a festival. People come from all over the north and the hotels quickly fill up. The festivities begin with the shooting of a flaming arrow over the north Saskatchewan River. One year a large crowd was gathered to watch the memorable event. The chief was resplendent in buckskin, wearing a Chief's headdress. He was given the honor to shoot the arrow. The arrow was lit, the Chief drew the bow, and the arrow flew. Trouble was there was a stiff wind that day and the event should have been postponed. The arrow was caught by the wind and sent flying back at the crowd. Everyone panicked and went running, including the Chief. It landed and fizzled out close to shore.



Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation Inc.

Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation

SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS BUSINESSES

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, **SASKATCHEWAN INDIAN EQUITY FOUNDATION INC.** through assistance provided by the Government of Canada, is taking action to ensure that Indigenous business owners impacted by Covid-19 have access to support. The emergency loan program is a component of the Indigenous Business Stabilization program.

The Emergency Loan Program (ELP) is designed as an emergency measure to support small business owners in meeting their immediate operating cash flow needs. These funds are not intended to replace or duplicate government or other bank/lender emergency financing/funds that are available to businesses in Canada.

The application deadline for the COVID-19 Financial Assistance for Indigenous Businesses has been extended to June 30, 2021.

If you are an Indigenous-owned business and have been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, contact SIEF for more information by phone 306-955-4550 or email info@sief.sk.ca.

Visit our website for the emergency loan program application at www.sief.sk.ca

Benjoe aims to grow Indigenous business opportunities as Chamber chair

*By Brad Bellegarde
for Eagle Feather News*

The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce is turning another page in its history books by choosing its second First Nations person to lead the board of directors.

Thomas Benjoe, president & CEO of FHQ Developments Ltd. has become one of the youngest individuals ever to be elected to the position of chair and he is eager to continue creating opportunities for Saskatchewan's Indigenous peoples.

"What I'd like to see is more Indigenous leaders in our business community stepping up and joining the chambers, and providing voice and guidance around policy," said Benjoe.

Benjoe, 35, said he always wanted to help strengthen First Nations economy and this appointment is another way to do it.

"I've been clear right from the start what my passion is," he said. "It's to help our communities and advance our communities in business."

Outgoing chair, Monica Kreuger, said Benjoe is young, has excellent experience in governance and leadership and that perspective and experience is needed.

"(His) whole focus of entrepreneurship is going to serve the board well as we transition into a new economy. And I know Thomas is going to be great at leading the charge on that."

Saskatchewan Chamber CEO Steve McLellan has no doubt that Benjoe will strengthen the work of the organization.

"He is tied to the land, tied to the community, he understands the culture and the importance of it," said McLellan.

"He walks in all spheres from business to culture to non-business, he embodies all elements."

Building better working relationships and creating opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses is a key focus of the Chamber and Benjoe has been instrumental in pushing that agenda forward, McLellan said.

"He's a champion of one of our most important files and that's Indigenous engagement," said McLellan. Prior to his appointment to chair, Benjoe spent

two years on the board, where he helped develop the Indigenous Engagement Charter – a first for a provincial Chamber in Canada.

It was developed to facilitate non-Indigenous businesses developing relationships with Indigenous-owned entities like FHQ Developments Ltd.

McLellan said the mining sector is critical to helping build those relationships and the chamber has worked hard at trying to strengthen them.

For four years, the chamber visited Northern communities, from Buffalo Narrows to Stoney Rapids, meeting with community members, business owners and leadership. A report on those consultations showed people are concerned about education, Internet access and highway improvements.

"Lots of that work has been done. We're proud to have played a role in advocating for it," McLellan said.

The Chamber also has created an Indigenous business directory with more than 500 businesses and posted it to their website.

Benjoe is a great role model, McLellan said.

"I want young Indigenous people to look at him and say, 'Wow, I can be a CEO!' I want young people to say, 'if he can be the president of the largest business group in the province, the chair of that board, so can I.'"

Benjoe's advice to youth is simple. "Find what your passion is...as long as I stuck to (mine), I knew that I was going to find success in some way."



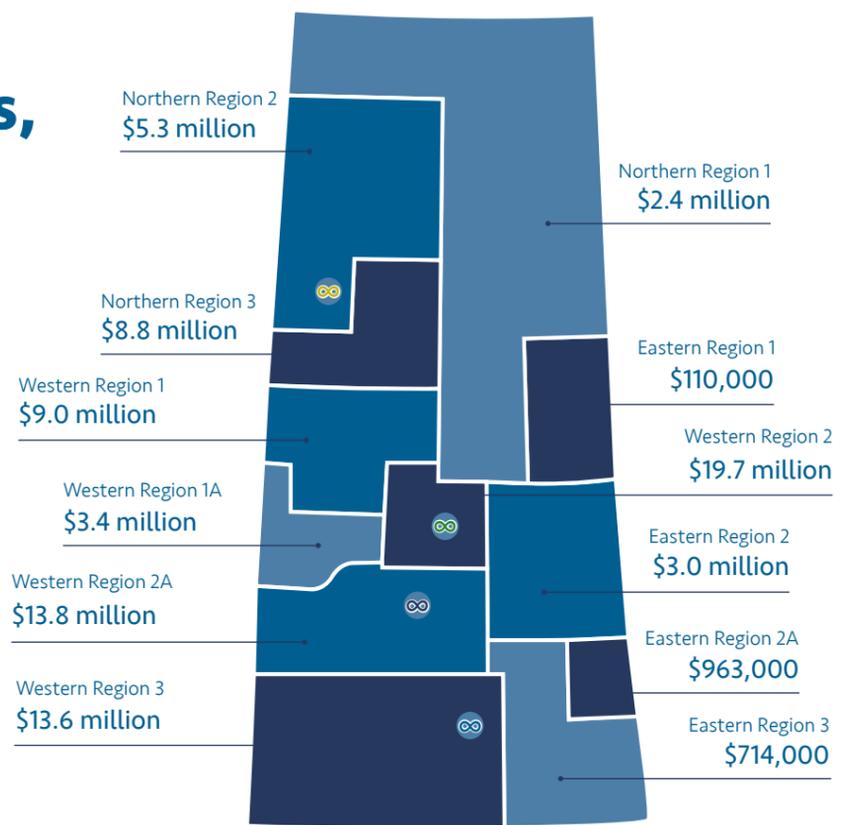
Thomas Benjoe, president & CEO of FHQ Developments Ltd. has become one of the youngest individuals ever to be elected chair of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce. (Photo by Brad Bellegarde)

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Mining industry scholarship attracts women and Indigenous students

By Julia Peterson
for Eagle Feather News

Corine Strube had always been interested in chemistry and lab work. But when she enrolled in the Chemical Technology Program at Saskatchewan Polytechnic, she wasn't sure what support there would be for a Métis woman, mature student and single mother like her.

Then, in 2019, Strube was one of the first winners of the iMpowered Scholarship, a program from the International Minerals Innovation Institute (IMMI) which supports women and Indigenous students enrolled in post-secondary programs relevant to Saskatchewan's mining industry. She won a \$25,000 scholarship which she could use to pay for everything from books and tuition to childcare and rent. For Strube, it was a game-changer.

"It was amazing," she said. "I've been completely set up for success. I don't have massive amounts of debt and I didn't have to worry about emergencies. I could just focus on my studies and taking care of my daughter and doing the best I could."

"And now that I've graduated, I feel like I've really accomplished something, and I'm just so honoured to have the support that they gave me. I don't think I could have done it, as a mature student and a single parent, without that help."

For the 2020-2021 academic year, IMMI awarded \$100,000 in scholarship money to four recipients. Vonda Roberts, a mature student from the Wahpeton Dakota Nation enrolled in the Exploration and Mine Engineering Program at Northlands College, was one of them.

"This scholarship is a symbol and an indication that age is not a factor when it comes to education," said Roberts. "You can return to school regardless of your age. ... My family and children are all very proud of me, I can see it in their eyes."

Al Shpyth is IMMI's Executive Director. He says the iMpowered scholarship serves multiple purposes

"We don't want talented women and Indigenous people to not complete their post-secondary education and pursue a career in mining because of the



Northlands – left to right – William Thomas, Co-ordinator, Exploration and Mine Engineering Program, Northlands College and Vonda Roberts. (Submitted by IMMI)

cost," he said. "We always want to see talent succeed."

"[And] all of our members have made commitments to increase participation of women and Indigenous people in their workforce. So we thought this scholarship could help send the message that the industry is looking for more women and more Indigenous people."

IMMI has committed \$500,000 over five years to the scholarship program, and Shpyth says he hopes to be able to carry it on in some form beyond that.

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Security guards' part of the mine site "family"

By Betty Ann Adam
of Eagle Feather News

When Cigar Lake security officer Catherine Nagus saw a wolf attacking a man on the ground at the northern mine site, she jumped into a truck and drove at them, scaring the wolf off in the process.

She radioed for backup and helped the 26-year-old man press on his bleeding neck as the wolf stared at them and three more watched from the trees on that August night in 2016.

"I never took my eyes off that wolf," she said.

Help arrived just minutes later.

"I have four boys myself and I just wanted to protect him. Any mother would have done the same," she said.

The man recovered from his injuries and Nagus received the St. John Ambulance Life Saving Award from the Lieutenant Governor.

She seldom needs her first aid skills but, in those moments,, she remembered her training.

Nagus, now a supervisor, says she has enjoyed her 15 years in the security field, which has allowed her to own a house and pay the bills. She works for two weeks on site and then has two weeks off.

"I love my job," she said.

Her employer, Ron Hyggen CEO Athabasca Basin Security, said Nagus is a great example of security guards.

"She's a grandmother so you don't need to be really young and ultra fit, you just have to be the right kind of caring person," he said.

"She doesn't stand down from things."

About 80 per cent of the security staff they employ at Saskatchewan mines are Indigenous.

Security guards are an important part of mine personnel, said Dan Decker, Human Resources Superintendent at Cameco's Key Lake and McArthur River mines.

They control access at the entry gate at the federally licensed nuclear facility, help check in passengers at the mine's airport and do regular patrols throughout the site.

More than half the security staff are Indigenous people from the north.

"These are part of our site families. They're very important to our success as an organization," Decker said.

His counterpart at Cigar Lake, Kevin Edeen, said the security staff have built good relationships with everyone they interact with.

"We don't run into problems a lot of the time because they've built those relationships. People feel comfortable coming and talking with them.

"It's invaluable what they provide to us. They've always been a bright spot for us to have as part of the team," Edeen said.

The Indigenous Community Safety and Security Program delivered by Joel Peterson's Security 2J2 Fitness, has trained 88 Indigenous security guards in the past year alone.



Cigar Lake mine security guard Catherine Nagus and Athabasca Basin Security CEO Ron Hyggen with Nagus's St. John Ambulance Life Saving Award. (photo submitted)

His preparing people for the security industry includes the 40-hour standard training that is required for security guard certification in Saskatchewan, but also includes a second 40-hour week training in tactics and techniques such as communication for de-escalation, use of force and handcuffing techniques, self defense and safety awareness.

"That higher level of training is helpful for the Indigenous participants and their communities. It's job creation," Pederson said.

Security staff are in a leadership position when something goes wrong. They've been trained in how to react and what to do and how to stay calm and rational and apply what they know, he said.

A person who has learned to take leadership in stressful situations can move into leadership roles in other areas of life and are needed in all communities, Pederson said.



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Reconciliation Ally: Nick Wright

Learning history led to reconciliation journey



By *Sophia Lagimodiere*
for *Eagle Feather News*

Nick Wright is committed to reconciliation in his work and personal life. The VP Marketing & Technology and one of three owners of the Saskatoon engineering firm, Engcomp, was born and raised in Saskatchewan. Growing up in the 80s and 90s, Wright didn't learn in school about Indian Residential schools, treaties or the Sixties Scoop. He learned that history when his company took John Lagimodiere's Indigenous Awareness Training course.

"I walked out of there thinking like, holy. It was disappointing because there was so much stuff that as a Saskatchewan settler, a white person, I just didn't know," Wright said. "I didn't know how this all worked, and it was in my backyard."

It really hit home when he shared his family origins with Eugene Arcand. Wright's dad was a musician from Illinois in a band called Freddy and the Freeloaders and they sometimes toured in Saskatchewan. When he mentioned his dad's band, Arcand knew who they were.

"This guy who is this huge figure in reconciliation, this guy that I was working up the nerve to talk to... he was like, 'Oh yeah, I remember seeing them back in the day.' It was just cool, because it's not two separate things. We are all a community. We are all one world. Residential schools were here, it was part of everybody's history... Moments like that you're just like, 'oh my god, this is all linked together,'" Wright said.

After the initial awareness training, Engcomp leadership began to explore and meet with people to figure out what Indigenous engagement could look like in their own work.

In 2018, Engcomp formally signed a Legacy Partnership with the Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC). Engcomp staff have volunteered at and the company has sometimes invested in STC events. Wright has presented for STC's students or career people on what careers in engineering look like and STC has found students interested in engineering for summer jobs with Engcomp.

Engcomp's client Nutrien played a huge part in helping them develop an Indigenous Engagement strategy, which includes eight commitments that require and allow for growth.

As Wright met more people involved in the movement, he got Engcomp involved

with Reconciliation Saskatoon, a project of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner. In October 2020, he joined the group's monthly business engagement action group, in which different businesses and organizations find ways to engage with Indigenous workers and businesses.

Wright says active listening and learning from people has been important in his reconciliation journey.

He remembers being invited to Muskeg Lake Cree Nation and talking to a lady of the community. When she asked Wright what a legacy partner does, he tried to explain, but wasn't entirely sure. She said they wanted the same thing for their kids as everybody wants – a bright future and meaningful jobs and employment.

This lady he briefly interacted with simplified things for him. It helped establish what his journey could look like, as he found meaning in helping high school students become aware of STEM careers.

"I love to talk about Iron Man and engineering and stuff, and I can totally do that. And that's reconciliation, that's part of it. And that was something that I would have never known had I not tried something new," he said.

Wright encourages people to find those moments that, "put the spark in your step and give you that motivation," to figure out what reconciliation means for them.

"Be aware, and then figure the rest out as you go. Meet people, have an open mind and listen. And then you'll start to find yourself in a place of reconciliation, and maybe you didn't even know it happened, but you're in it now," Wright said.



Nick Wright (submitted)

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