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**By Kerry Benjoe
of Eagle Feather News**

Merelda Fiddler-Potter, a former CBC journalist turned university professor, can now add doctor to her growing list of accomplishments.

“The struggles to finish my program were there, but they were definitely worth it,” she said.

Fiddler-Potter believes the best part about the experience is being able to show other Indigenous students that any goal is attainable.

“Sometimes you can’t always see yourself somewhere if you don’t know anyone who’s done it before you,” she said reflecting on her educational milestone.

Fiddler-Potter’s education journey began with a journalism degree from the University of Regina (U of R). After graduation, she landed a

job at CTV before starting her career at CBC.

Around 2000, she was recruited by the First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv) to be a mentor to up-and-coming journalists in the Indigenous Communications Arts (INCA) Summer Institute.

“Being part of that program does not stop when the class ends,” said Fiddler-Potter. “I still have former students who contact me and we talk about what might be a good move and what they want to do in their career.”

After her time at INCA, she decided to pursue a Master of Arts in Canadian Plains Studies at the U of R while being a full-time journalist.

In addition to her already heavy workload, Fiddler-Potter began working as a sessional lecturer for the Indigenous Studies department at FNUniv — a position she held for 18 years.

continued page 2 ...



Indigenous Engagement Charter

“I think what SGI is doing is really important because it sets the stage for other large businesses like SGI to do the same...”

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September 2022 is our

Education, Truth & Reconciliation

October 2022 Issue:
ROLE MODEL



Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation (PBCN) CONSTRUCTING SOLUTIONS

“So we see a huge opportunity for not only bringing certification and quality homes to First Nations, but tapping into the youth at a very impressionable age.”

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Indigenous 1st Designs CREATING CULTURE

The idea to open Indigenous 1st Designs started as a way to share culture and educate.

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A love of storytelling has led to a career of teaching

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Fiddler-Potter's former colleague, Stefani Langenegger, says while her presence in the journalism field is still missed, Langenegger is proud of her former colleague's accomplishments.

"Merelda Fiddler is the hardest working person I have ever met in my life," she said. "She's done more at five in the morning than most people will do all day. She'd probably be wasted being a regular journalist like me because she's able to put together with her work some important knowledge about the way we tell stories and how that shapes the world we live in."

Fiddler-Potter juggled her two passions for several years, but reached a point in her life when she needed to make a decision on where to focus her energy.

"I left CBC and was working at First Nations University when a discussion with a colleague made me realize that our work should give back to the community," she said. "(As an academic) you're constantly trying to find ways to be of assistance and make things better, add value, and build bridges."

Fiddler-Potter began the doctor of philosophy program four years ago at JSGS with a focus on Indian Residential Schools and public policy.

"When I was looking for a Ph.D. program, I really looked at what I had told for stories (as a journalist) and the kind of things I wanted to do in the community," she said. "And probably more than anything else, I told stories about public policy and government and when we think about it, public policy affects all aspects of our lives."

Fiddler-Potter said for Indigenous people, public policy has a deeper significance.

"The history of public policy are things like Residential Schools, the 60s' Scoop, the forceful movement of Métis communities from the south to the North, the policies around relocating Métis people out of Red River, and other policies of that nature that traumatically affected Indigenous people in this country," she said.

Being able to understand policy and how the government works is essential for the community to change things for themselves and ensure their voices are heard, said Fiddler-Potter.

Her research work dissects the role of the media in helping Canadians to better understand public policies dating back to colonial times and how that has shaped the Indigenous realities of today.

"Public policy for me has been a continuation of my journalism career," she said. "It's not that I left journalism, it's that I continued to pursue areas where I hope to make a difference."

For her, this means building a bridge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.



Merelda Fiddler-Potter. (Photo supplied)

On a personal level, being a mom of two kids and a wife has sometimes proved tricky but she has been able to make it work with her family's support.

"My husband is amazing and he has been a huge support through all of this," said Fiddler-Potter. "He's always cheering me on and always available to take the kids if I need a day to write or something."

However, she worked doubly hard to make certain she completed her work in three years, which was a heavy load but she's happy it's done.

Another major challenge was finding a way to incorporate Indigenous methods in a respectful way.

Knowledge translation sessions are what's next for Dr. Fiddler-Potter.

"Taking my work out into the community, whether that's in the form of a TED talk or panel, is the next step and those plans are underway," she said.



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Walking the line

By NC Raine
of Eagle Feather News

“My goal is to raise consciousness and have people think about the future,” said Beeds. “Our children desperately need us to pay attention to the earth and waters, to the crisis we’re collectively facing. That’s what drives me.”

The Indigenous scholar from Trent University is of nêhiyaw, Scottish-Métis, and Caribbean ancestry and her thesis is on water walking and Indigenous peoples’ relationships and knowledge of water.

“Basically, I’m looking at how colonial processes are linked to the destruction of the waters, the earth, and the rest of Creation,” said Beeds. “But, as Indigenous people, our ancestors have left us with knowledge and stories that show us how to shift our consciousness to help us remember our responsibilities.”

Water walking, according to Beeds, is a contemporary application of age-old ceremonies, traditions, and cultural understandings of the land and being responsible for the earth.

Water walkers will start at the source of the water (a glacier, for example) and walk, with a copper pail filled with water from the source. They will continue to travel the entire length of the body of water. As they walk, prayers and songs acknowledge the water is life and deserves our respect, love, and protection.

The practice was created in part by Beeds’ mentor, the late Josephine Mandamin.

“I see it as a research methodology as well, because when we’re walking, people know who we are now,” said Beeds. “Almost every Indigenous community we pass by invites us in. They recognize our movement is for them and their children.”

Last year, Beeds water walked about 1,100 kilometres (kms) in 36 days. Twice she’s made the 3,000-km trek around the Great Lakes. She thinks she’s walked 7-to-8,000 kms, for the water, which is a drop in the bucket compared to her mentor who walked about 30,000 kms.

“Ultimately, what my work is about is an urgent cry of warning,” said

Beeds. “Once the water is gone, it can’t be replaced. My work is sounding the alarm, saying to our own people, ‘We have literally everything we need inside our own ways of knowing and being.’ The Elders that came before us, our ancestors who have walked the earth left us everything we need. We just have to pick it up.”

In Saskatchewan, the most significant water-related issue is water scarcity as a result of climate change and human neglect. Water scarcity and food scarcity are closely connected because humans and wildlife all rely on clean drinking water.

Beeds says each community needs to start implementing a climate change emergency plan.

“I ask people if they remember what it was like when people were going crazy over toilet paper,” she said. “Now, what are people going to do when it’s not toilet paper that’s disappearing, but water? It’s going to be a thousand times worse.”

Following the completion of her dissertation, Beeds will be doing anything she can to raise awareness of water-related issues, be it speaking engagements, working with youth, attending ceremonies, or even helping to promote the revitalization of language and culture, which holds many of the keys to our survival, she said.

“We need to put aside our differences and begin to genuinely work together, because there will be a time when our children will depend on the plans and movements we will put in place now,” she said.



PhD candidate and water walker Tasha Beeds has walked over 7,000 kilometres to raise consciousness of the water crisis we are facing. (Photo supplied)



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Indigenous students benefit from Mosaic Company's \$1 million investment in training

By Adeoluwa Atayero
for Eagle Feather News

On August 17 The Mosaic Company announced that their latest investment would be into their Digital Transformation in Potash Mining training program. This program is the company's action towards economic reconciliation and would be carried out in collaboration with Morris Interactive.

The Mosaic Company would be investing \$1 million in the Potash Mining training through Morris Interactive. Mosaic's President and CEO Joc O'Rourke says that the company feels the obligation to take on projects like these because they understand their role in the community.

"Mosaic's role in Saskatchewan is far bigger than just the potash we produce. Investing in the community is a cornerstone of how we do business," he said. "We believe it is our responsibility to be true partners to the Indigenous communities near our operations. This is an investment in Saskatchewan, the potash industry and in Indigenous people and the communities they call home."

The course was fully developed in 2020 by International Minerals Innovation Institute (IMII) in consultation with Mosaic, Cowessess First Nation and surrounding Nations, various Indigenous scholars, and Morris Interactive's Benjamin Williamson.

Morris Interactive's CEO, Mathew Cey, says that the program has gone a long way in helping those who went through it successfully secure job positions for themselves.

"The program's pilot, hosted on, and in partnership with Cow-

essess First Nation in early 2022, included practicum at Mosaic's Esterhazy operations and resulted in nine Indigenous graduates, five of which have acquired mining-specific jobs," he said. "The course's early success is the result of collaboration and various perspectives coming together with one common goal— student success."

The upcoming edition of the Digital Transformation in Potash Mining course will be administered in partnership with the Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI). It will run from September 26 to December 11, 2022 in Saskatoon, Treaty 6 Territory and Homeland of the Métis.

Robert Kay Junior, a beneficiary of the program, says that being part of the program has been a huge opportunity for him.

"It was actually phenomenal. It got me a job and a good career," he said. "Opportunities like these give Indigenous folks a fighting chance to be able to have and work in careers which we did not have for years."



Announcement of Digital Transformation in Potash Mining training program. (Photo supplied)

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Determination and desire to create change is what fuels Cassandra Wajuntah

By Crystal Greene
for Eagle Feather News

After seven years of “going over and beyond,” raising five children and fostering hundreds of animals, while working on her doctorate, Cassandra J. Opikokew Wajuntah is set to defend her dissertation in July.

She’ll argue Indigenous people can better address their own health issues when they make the policies themselves.

“Indigenous people have literally been framed as a problem,” said Wajuntah.



Cassandra J. Opikokew Wajuntah. (Photo supplied)

She said the current policy system is racist and paternalistic, which is the real problem.

Her thesis, *The Indian Solution to the Policy Problem: Articulating Indigenous and Colonial Policymaking Models Using An Indigenous Lens*, takes a look at how Indigenous people create policy and how it’s different from a western, colonial policy-making system.

“We have the same goals to make a better life for our community, but we go about it in very different ways,” said Wajuntah.

A member of the Canoe Lake Cree First Nation, she’s overcome many obstacles to accomplish her goals. Wajuntah said she dealt with the intergenerational trauma caused by Residential Schools and, when she was 17, she suffered a brain injury but still graduated from Meadow Lake High School in 2004.

Her educational career began with the Indigenous Communication Arts (INCA) program at First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv), which led her to work for CBC television by the time she was 19.

“They told me I would only be an editorial assistant, but within two weeks, I was doing on-camera reporting,” said Wajuntah.

In 2009, she graduated at the top of her class from the University of Regina’s School of Journalism with a bachelor degree along with an INCA certificate from

FNUniv.

Wajuntah was also an active leader in the on-campus student movement, pushing for post-secondary education funding for Indigenous students.

Ironically, the funding limitations she spent much of her undergrad lobbying against impacted her personally when she dropped out of law school because her band was unable to fund her for a second degree.

“Being a northern community, they prioritized grade 12 grads for funding, so that they are able to pursue an education right after high school,” said Wajuntah. “If they don’t, we can lose them from post-sec forever.”

She secured scholarships to pursue a graduate degree in public administration at Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, where she studied post-secondary funding for First Nations students and continued her lobbying efforts.

During her studies, Wajuntah was hired as the research assistant for the late Jo-Ann Episkenew at the Indigenous Peoples Health Research Centre (IPHRC).

A four-month contract turned into 10 years.

“I went from being research assistant to research associate, to associate director, and then director of the centre,” she said.

She was then awarded \$108,000, a Canadian Institutes Health Research (CIHR) Doctoral Research Grant, to research Indigenous health organizations in Saskatchewan and Hawaii.

As a visiting scholar in Hawaii, she worked with community health organizations throughout the Hawaiian Islands.

Her husband, Justin Wajuntah, says Cassandra has the ability to look at the bigger picture, which has opened doors of opportunity for her.

“She gets into the zone and she can just run,” he said.

The couple lives on an acreage in the Qu’Appelle Valley, near Justin’s home community of Standing Buffalo First Nation where they’re raising their children and saving animals.

“She’s very caring, she’s very loving,” said Justin. “She’s the better homebody, the better multitasker ... she’s the one who will go over and beyond.”

After 18 years of post secondary studies, Wajuntah is looking at completing her PhD, so she can have more time to spend with her family.



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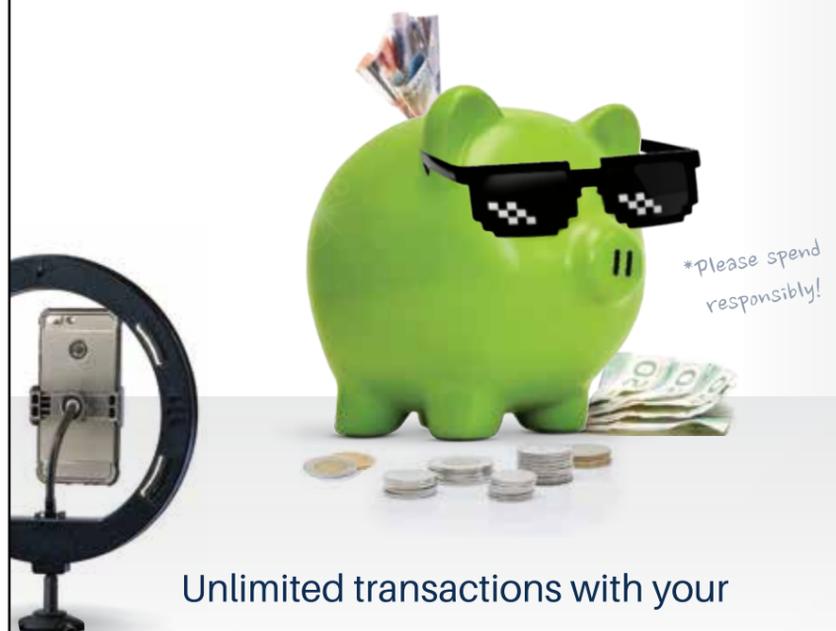


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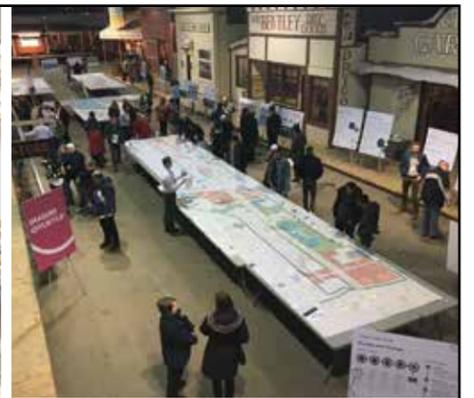
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Students and apprentices team up to build tiny log cabins for the north

By NC Raine
of Eagle Feather News

A group of young people are constructing solutions for the housing issue at Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation (PBCN).



High school students and apprentices at Southend in Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation spent 12 weeks this summer constructing two tiny log cabins. (photo supplied)

A total of eight high school students and five apprentices from PBCN in Southend have participated in building two tiny log cabins at their First Nation. The project serves several meaningful purposes, said PBCN Chief Karen Bird.

“We have a lack of resources to build homes for our First Nation. It’s a crisis for housing in our community,” she said.

Bird explains that PBCN, a nation of about 12,000 people throughout

eight reserves, only has about 900 total houses, which has led to overcrowding in houses and some members unable to find a place to live. This project aims to tackle that problem.

“This is a way to get young people involved,” said Bird. “They not only get a sense of pride out of it, for seeing a project through from beginning to end, but it gives them the skill and confidence it takes to go out and build their own home. It’s not as hard as they think.”

The students and apprentices acquired Construction Safety tickets through a 12-week Practical and Applied Arts program. They also took part in an apprenticeship exercise program on learning how to construct homes.

The project was facilitated by Your Choice Homes, a community partner organization who deliver education through workshops, training, programs, and activities, focused on building housing. Funding for the project came by way of the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship Trade Certification Commission (SATCC).

“There’s a huge opportunity for construction trades. Lots of journeymen are retiring, and there’s not enough people registering for apprenticeships to take those positions,” said Jay Noel, Business Development for YC Homes.

“So we see a huge opportunity for not only bringing certification and quality homes to First Nations, but tapping into the youth at a very impressionable age.”

According to Noel, the two tiny log cabins – chosen for their durability – constructed by the group of students and apprentices will be used as transitional housing on the First Nations. There is a long list of people waiting for a home who are transitioning to the community, so these tiny homes provide a place for them to stay until they can find permanent housing, he said.

The project also brought immediate benefit to many individuals in the community. YC Homes was able to employ local journeyman Craig Larson for the project, as well as each of the apprentices, who received hours to top their blue book. And, each of the high school students received a bursary at the end, as well as a high school credit and 350 future apprenticeship hours.

“We need to utilize our members,” said Chief Bird. “We don’t have a lot of journeymen in our First Nation reserves, but who we have, we need to use and support. We need them to pass those skills on to the youth, or anyone wanting to learn.”

Bird said that anyone struggling with housing or interested in building their own home or cabin should contact PBCN leadership to help getting housing.

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Editorial

*By Kerry Benjoe
of Eagle Feather News*

As students return to classes, it's usually a time of excitement and back-to-school photos.

However, this year September is starting out with grief and sadness. The recent tragedy on the James Smith Cree Nation has sent a shock wave through our Indigenous communities that will be felt for years to come.

It's so horrifying I still have difficulty grasping the sheer magnitude of it all.

Unfortunately, as we put the finishing touches on this edition, the man-hunt continues for the person responsible for Saskatchewan's largest mass murder in recent history, which has resulted in 11 dead and an additional 18 more injured.

We may never know the reason behind the violence; I doubt

even the suspect has a clear answer as to why it happened.

As a journalist, I know it's important to get the story because it's what the public wants. However, as an Indigenous person I can't help but feel the weight of such a tremendous loss.

We at Eagle Feather News send our heartfelt condolences to all those impacted.

Within the pages of this edition you will not find any stories about James Smith because we respect the community's need to heal.

What you will find in this edition are positive things happening around the province, such as Indigenous women receiving their doctorates, new Indigenous businesses opening, young people pursuing their dreams and communities working to help one another.

Sometimes we need to remind ourselves that we as Indigenous people are more than just the sum of our tragedies. We are people who love, who aspire, who dream and who succeed.



Editor In-Chief
Kerry Benjoe



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Young entrepreneurs on a mission

*By EFN Staff
of Eagle Feather News*

Just before the start of a new school year, a group of high school students and recent graduates had a chance to jump start their brains by spending their days learning how to launch a business.

After a three-year hiatus, the First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv) revived its highly successful Entrepreneurship Camp.

Jason Bird, camp coordinator, said it was great to have the youth back on campus for the five-day camp.

“Essentially the idea is to introduce them to business because usually in high school you don’t get that kind of exposure to business concepts or to business programs, so that was our goal for the week,” he said. “How we did that was to run a pitch program, so over the week they would develop a project and at the end they would present that project to a panel of judges.”

Bird was impressed with not only the quality of the pitches and ideas but the dedication the youth displayed during the week.

“The students were really gung-ho,” he said. “We tried to get 20 but some couldn’t make it, but the 14 we had were really excited.”

The students stayed on campus and went to class every day and learned from business experts. Because the camp has established a good reputation, many students who attended the camp already knew what to expect and many came prepared like Amy Lavallee.

Her older sister attended the camp previously and her goal was to do better than her sister.

Lavallee’s idea is to create a recycling business, EHIO (Earth Honoured in Our Hands).

She was partnered with Serenity Dueck, Jonah Durnin and Patience Benjoe. The four worked out the details of their business plan and pitched it to a panel of experts.

Durnin said business is not only focused on making money but creating social change.

“We centered it on Indigenous people who are coming out of the justice system,” he said. “To help rehabilitate them and get them started so they can move on to join the workforce again and get their lives back together.”

Durnin said with proper funding the model can expand to northern, rural and Indigenous communities.

Lavallee came up with the idea because she had trouble finding recycling depots

in the city.

What would make their depot different is they plan to take in food waste to create compost and accept electronics as a way to reduce overall waste in communities.

The four members enjoyed working together but Dueck said the evening activities like canoeing are what she is going to remember most about the experience. She said not only was it a great learning opportunity, it was also a lot of fun.

Patience Benjoe, a Grade 11 student, said she was just happy to finally be old enough to be a participant. She has attended many of the previous camps but only as a visitor.

Benjoe’s dad Thomas created the first camp when he was a summer student. He is now the president and CEO of FHQ Developments.

“It’s nice to see the kids all back. It’s like we didn’t skip a beat,” he said.

When he put the camp together, the ultimate goal was to encourage high school students to pursue a post-secondary education.

“It’s exciting to see how far it’s come and the amount of support from the business community that we have here,” said Thomas. “I think the sponsors really value a lot of the uniqueness that we have.”

This year’s camp was even more special because his eldest daughter was a participant.

“It’s a pretty cool little cycle to see,” he said.

Everyone involved in the camp say they would recommend it to others because it’s a fun way to learn about business.



Team EHIO (left to right) Amy Lavallee, Patience Benjoe, Jonah Durnin and Serenity Dueck stand together on the closing day of camp. The four pitched a recycling business project that received positive feedback from judges. (Photo by Kerry Benjoe)

NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH & RECONCILIATION

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

Just one: Jana Sasakamoose leads the way for Indigenous women studying mathematics

By NC Raine
for Eagle Feather News

Numbers and complex equations are her speciality, but there is a specific number that has particular importance with Jana Sasakamoose: one.

That's how many Indigenous women have accomplished what she's currently setting out to do.

"To my knowledge, Jana is the first Indigenous female in this graduate program. I don't know of any others who have completed a Masters degree in this area," said Dr. Arzu Sardarli, Professor of Physics and Mathematics at the First Nations University of Canada (FNUUniv).

The naturally gifted Masters student has been drawn to numbers for as long as she can remember. There is something rewarding in the clarity they bring.

"I think there's something about being able to solve problems, and knowing there's more than one way to solve it. Then, once you've solved it, you can do it from forwards to backwards, to make sure you've done everything right," said Sasakamoose.

Sasakamoose's trailblazing academic career has been anything but a straightforward equation.

From Ahtakakoop Cree Nation, and raised in Prince Albert, Sasakamoose said from an early age she was aware of the intergenerational trauma around her as a result of Residential School and Day Schools. As she grew up, she experienced mental, physical and emotional abuse in relationships with partners, forcing her to move around to escape the abuse.

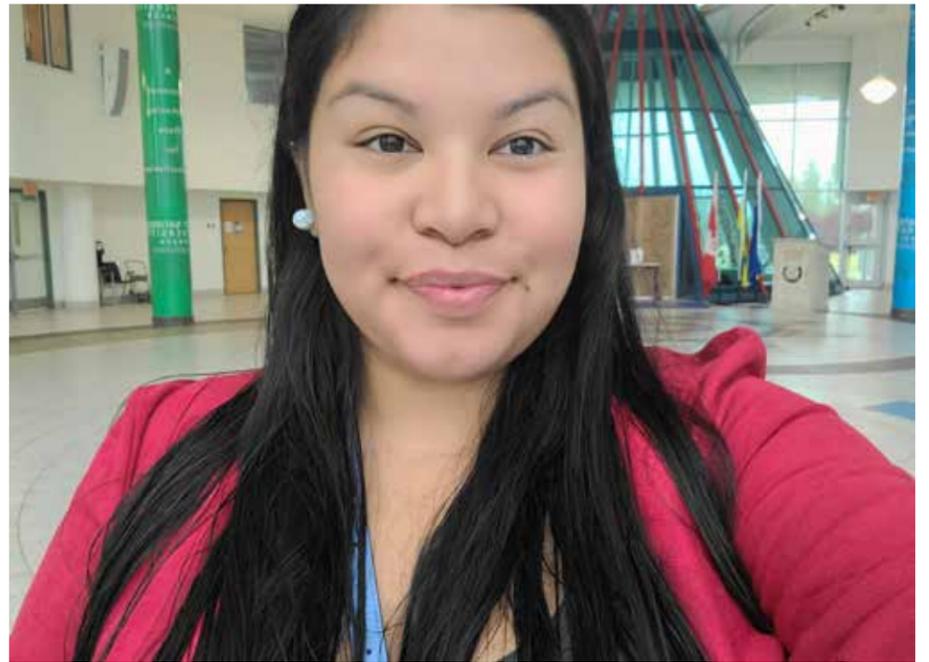
Knowing she had a gift for numbers throughout elementary and high school, Sasakamoose believed her best and only option to apply her talents would be to pursue a degree in business administration at Saskatchewan Polytechnic (then SIAST). But even completing her business administration degree came with its share of complications.

"I was having a kid each year of my degree. Sometimes I would breast feed during exams. Or (be) going back to school three days after giving birth," she said.

Presently, Sasakamoose is the mother of five children. Step-son Kaze, 8; Rocky, 7; Tony, 5; Gracie, 3; June, 2. And, she is currently pregnant with her sixth child.

"After the first two years of school, and after two boys, I took a year off school. I picked berries that summer. I had no other income. I would pick enough that day to go to town and sell them, then do it all over the next day," said Sasakamoose.

"Picking during the hardest time in my life was what I needed at that time.



Jana Sasakamoose. (Photo supplied)

And it was really healing. It made me reflect on my life and where I see my people going, and how I can change that. How you can help your kids walk a different path."

Sasakamoose's partner, and the father of her children, was an addict and involved in gangs at the time (he's now sober and in his second year of University at FNUUniv). She describes their relationship as very toxic. But she knew she had to do everything she could to provide a better life for their kids.

Returning to finish her degree, Sasakamoose caught the attention of Dr. Arzu Sardarli during the mathematics, calculus, and statistics classes of his she attended.

"She was the best in all of my classes, always at the very top of her class. I realized she had a real talent in mathematics," he said.

Sardarli, who has been teaching since 1985, said Jana's talent in mathematics is only found in about one or two percent of the population. Upon Sasakamoose finishing her degree, he encouraged her to pursue mathematics in her Masters degree, an option she hadn't considered possible.

With some guidance from Sardarli, she applied and was accepted to do her Masters at FNUUniv. She is now teaching and tutoring math, raising her kids, and working towards her Masters, which she'll complete next spring.

She is also working on a research project with Sardarli where she is looking at utility expenses on her home First Nation, Ahtakakoop. As someone who is very invested in her culture and heritage, finding a cross-section between her passion in mathematics and her Indigenous identity is exactly what she aspires to do in her career.

"I want to be able to take this kind of work further so I can create energy management projects that will be beneficial for communities. With numbers, you can project and have an estimation of what's going to work and what won't, and create a picture of how communities can be better shaped for the future," she said.

Sardarli calls Sasakamoose a "very inspiring young lady" and hopes her story of perseverance can encourage other young Indigenous people not to give up on their dreams.

Sasakamoose herself said it's very humbling to be thought of as the first Indigenous woman to do what she's doing academically.

"I'm very excited because I'm doing something I love and opening doors for my career. And I can talk to other students. A lot of them know my story and know nothing was handed to me," she said. "You have to work hard, but you can do what you love."



September 22, 2022, 7pm
Broadway Theatre

Get the story behind the story as local authors Sharon Butala, Paul Seesequasis, and Lisa Bird-Wilson share inspiring and intimate stories from their travels and life as an author.

Interviews by special guest host Shelagh Rogers and Poet Laureate Peace Akintade

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Treaty 4 business has popped up in Treaty 6 Territory

By Amber Bear
of Eagle Feather News

The Piapot Cree Nation celebrated the grand opening of the Cree Land Mini-Mart II in Prince Albert in August. Piapot First Nation Councillor Crystal Crowe was on site to officially open Cree Land Mini Mart II, which is located at 600 17th Street West.

The store opened earlier this summer but on August 24 management hosted an official grand opening at the new location that included a free barbecue, guest speakers and a traditional ribbon cutting ceremony.

Shortly after the launch of their first Mini-Mart business, Piapot leadership realized they not only had a successful business structure on their hands, but they also created good business relationships over the years so it was decided to develop a second business.

“We wanted it to be really convenient for people to come and get what they needed when they needed it,” said Nicole Zajac, Chief Financial Officer at Penner Oil Winnipeg.

Cree Land Mini-Mart is a full-service gas bar, offering tobacco products, select groceries and confectionary snacks.

At Cree Land Mini Mart II, they are proud to offer the same great service you would find at their Regina location. The new location has gas jockeys and friendly clerks ready to help customers.

“I have been working with Piapot since 2008 when I joined Penner Oil,” Zajac says. “We have always had a great relationship.”

She was there when Piapot First Nation opened its first location.

They knew they wanted to expand but first the First Nation needed to find the ideal location that turned out to be on 17th Street West and 6th Avenue in Prince Albert.



Grand opening of the Cree Land Mini-Mart II in Prince Albert. (Photo supplied)

Once Piapot purchased the land it had to be converted into urban reserve land. The process took a while but was worth the wait. This is the third urban reserve located within the city limits.

Prince Albert residents have welcomed the new gas station to the neighbourhood.

During the soft opening the gas bar had the lowest price gas in city which attracted a flood of customers.

The hope for this store is that it has the same success as the Regina location.

This week Cree Land Mini-Mart II hours of operation are Monday to Saturday 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. but starting on Sunday they will be open 24 hours with service at the window after 11 p.m.

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Creewegian

*By Eric Standing
of Eagle Feather News*

As many people in the community know, I am roughly half Norwegian and half First Nations, my band or tribe being that of the Cree people.

It is for this reason that I have created a new ethnicity, that of the Creewegian, or Norwindian, if you prefer.

So far our numbers are fairly low, as it is just me and my friend Steve. We alternate Presidency based on other commitments and, so far, most of our nation building time has been taken up with arguments over what our flag should look like. I want a bearded buffalo with a shield and Steve prefers a feathered axe.

Through my own research, I have discovered that the Cree, though a plains people, were known canoe makers and often excellent swimmers. This, combined with the fact that the Norse were well-established seafarers, is what I feel leads to our love of all things water, especially swimming, boating and fishing.

However, Steve and I's expeditions to sail off and conquer new lands by either force or diplomacy have not been very successful.

At one point we were chased off by an angry herd of cattle and our only claimed territory is a sandbar on the Souris River that may no longer exist.

The Creewegian Empire is a work in progress.

I was delighted to learn that funeral processes of both cultures (as I learned them) both involved fire and a water vessel.

Norse mythology indicates that persons of high status, such as the current vice-president of the Creewegian nation, would be laid in a ship with their riches and most treasured items then a flaming arrow would be shot into the ship and it would be set to drift and burn in the sea.

Ideally, the ship should be of one's own design and build, howev-

er, that sounds entirely too labor intensive.

I have decided that my funeral, hopefully many decades from now, should consist of me being coated in barbecue igniter, placed in my plastic canoe with my treasured hammock from Menard's and lit on fire to drift into Skjerme Lake.

I might need to reconsider this as the time draws nearer, however, as melting plastic would most certainly be bad for the perch and frowned upon by local fish and game officers. Also, kids swim in there.

Saskatchewan is unique as it is the one place where I am recognized as being Norwegian, and I was actually asked to join the Sons of Norway chapter here.

It is safe to say that, based on appearances alone, I do not look very Norwegian.

Regardless, it is a heritage I am quite fond of, even if it does make it hard to decide between lefse and frybread sometimes.

My attempts to introduce a lutefisk on fry-bread sandwich were shot down at the restaurant I once worked at.

With the introduction of such genealogy sources as 23 And Me and Ancestry.com, I expect the Creewegian nation to expand rapidly and, as a result, I had better start planning a meeting hall of some sort.

For now, we settle for the Tim Horton's in Moose Jaw.



Eric Standing. (Photo supplied)

Municipal Funding Opportunity to Strengthen Saskatchewan Communities

Saskatchewan municipalities are encouraged to apply for funding under the Targeted Sector Support (TSS) Initiative for projects focused on regional co-operation, capacity building and good governance.

Applicants must be a municipal government and partner with at least one other community. Applications will be accepted from September 1 to November 15, 2022.

The TSS Initiative is a partnership between Saskatchewan's Ministry of Government Relations, SUMA, SARM and New North.

For more information, visit saskatchewan.ca.



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Saskatchewan 

Op-Ed

*By Marty Seymour,
Chief Operating Officer, Caron RX*

Truth and Reconciliation's Call to Action 92 highlights the need for Indigenous peoples to participate in new economic opportunities and the long-term sustainable benefits from these activities. A sleeping giant is creeping up on our communities and will prove to be a major revenue stream and fundamentally shift the balance of power to First Nations people.

It's known as the carbon economy.

The carbon economy refers to the buying and selling of carbon credits as a measure of pollution. Large factories and the cars we drive release carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that cause the surface of the planet to trap sunlight in and cause global warming. Conversely growing plants such as trees, grasses, grains and vegetables remove carbon dioxide from the air and offset the harmful pollution caused by the consumption of fossil fuels. You don't need to be a scientist to know having more plants is a good thing.

To grow plants, there must be land.

First Nations in Canada are the single biggest land holders in the nation.

As a collective, First Nations occupy over 150,000,000 acres of land in this country. These lands are covered in growing plants that capture carbon and trap it away just as they have done for generations. Companies and governments are willing pay for management practices to encourage regenerative land manage-

ment strategies and maximize the amount of carbon dioxide removed from the air annually.

Indigenous people WILL set the weather when it comes to the carbon economy and the revenue streams associated with locking carbon in the soil. First Nations leaders have an opportunity to influence the carbon economy and take control of what has always been their inherent right; environmental sovereignty. And carbon is the vehicle.

***The views and opinions expressed in this opinion-editorial are those of the writer and not that of Eagle Feather News. If you have an opinion piece you would like us to consider email contact@eaglefeathernews.com*



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Deadlines

SK Arts announces the following deadlines for applications to programs that support the work of Saskatchewan artists, organizations, schools and communities wanting to engage in arts activities:

- EQUIPMENT PURCHASE FUND***
September 19, 2022
- INDEPENDENT ARTISTS**
October 1, 2022
- INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ART AND ARTISTS**
October 15, 2022
- SASKFESTIVALS* – PROJECT**
October 15, 2022
- MICRO-GRANT PROGRAM**
October 1, 2022
November 1, 2022
December 1, 2022
January 1, 2023
- ARTISTS IN COMMUNITIES* – PROJECTS**
November 1, 2022
- ARTISTS IN SCHOOLS* – PROJECTS**
November 1, 2022
- SHARE AND CONNECT-INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY ARTS***
January 7, 2023
- ARTISTS IN COMMUNITIES* – DEVELOPMENT**
January 15, 2023
- ARTISTS IN SCHOOLS* – DEVELOPMENT**
January 15, 2023

For applications, visit: sk-arts.ca

(306) 787-4056 (Regina)
(306) 964-1155 (Saskatoon)
(800) 667-7526 (Toll-free)
grants@sk-arts.ca
sk-arts.ca

**Supported by funding from Sask Lotteries through the partnership between SK Arts and SaskCulture Inc.*

APPLICATIONS AND SUPPORT MATERIAL MUST BE SUBMITTED ON OR BEFORE THE DEADLINE DATE.

SGI embraces Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce's Indigenous Engagement Charter

By NC Raine
of Eagle Feather News

Reconciliation has been a prominent topic in social, cultural, and corporate spaces for several years, and a few major organizations in the province are ensuring Reconciliation doesn't get pushed to the back-burner but stays on the forefront.

This fall, Saskatchewan Government Insurance, SGI, will be adding two full-time Indigenous Relations positions to their staff. The two positions, of which SGI is currently accepting applications, will be tasked with finding strategies and solutions to better serve the Indigenous population in Saskatchewan.

"We really want these two positions to work closely, listen and meet with Indigenous communities to hear what the issues are in the programs and services we offer, and work with us to build our strategy on how we can make improvements," said Karol Noe, VP Corporate Auto Fund at SGI.

The two positions are a result, in part, of SGI signing on to the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce's Indigenous Engagement Charter in 2020. The Charter, of which SGI was one of the first signatories, serves as a roadmap to provide businesses with the tools to achieve Indigenous engagement, and assist the business community in demonstrating the role it must play in Reconciliation.

"As signatories, we are really committed to Truth and Reconciliation, and we're really wanting to do what's necessary to build, strengthen, and really improve our relationships. I think by creating these positions, it could really help us do that because we're really looking for people who understand Indigenous culture and traditions," said Noe.

Gaps in SGI's service that the new positions could potentially address, said Noe, include working on traffic safety and education in Indigenous communities, licensing, and providing access to car seats for families in need.

The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce hopes other large organizations are able to take note of SGI's efforts in Reconciliation.

"I think what SGI is doing is really important because it sets the stage for other large businesses like SGI to do the same. And it's a significant commitment," said Prabha Ramaswamy, CEO of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce.

And the Chamber's Indigenous Engagement has begun making waves since its introduction. From 2020 to 2022, the Chamber has seen a five percent increase in those who have engaged in personal training or training through work on Indigenous history and culture, a 10 percent increase in businesses having relationships or partnerships with Indigenous organizations or institutions, and 23 percent more businesses have an Indigenous engagement strategy.

"Of course there's a social and moral imperative to bridge the education gap and bring more Indigenous people to the economic table, but there's also an economic imperative. As a result, the Indigenous Engagement Charter was created," said Ramaswamy.

According to a 2011 University of Saskatchewan report, fully engaged Indigenous peoples in Saskatchewan's economy is a \$90 billion opportunity.

"I think we're at a point in our province and in our history when Reconciliation is top of mind, and we do have a level of awareness and impact in a way that never existed before. And I think the time is ripe for us to really push Indigenous engagement and get people's buy-in," she said.

Ramaswamy said she believes they are finally moving the needle in the Saskatchewan business community, but that there's plenty of work left to do. She'd like to see the Indigenous Engagement Charter as a staple for all Saskatchewan businesses.

"We would like this Charter to permeate all businesses in our province. Ideally, all business will be a signatories and we will have integrated Indigenous people into our province," said Ramaswamy.

"That we as a province would have leveraged the resources and talent of our Indigenous people and fully integrated them into the workforce."



Tamara Therrien, SGI Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer with a signed copy of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce's Indigenous Engagement Charter. (Photo supplied)

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sgi.sk.ca/stickwithsafety

Take care out there.

More than a storefront: New Prince Albert business focuses on language education

By Kaitlynn Nordal
for Eagle Feather News

Mindy Kaling once said “If you don’t see a clear path for what you want, sometimes you have to make it yourself,” and that’s exactly what Andrea Custer H. Clarke and her partner Randy Clarke did opening Indigenous 1st Designs.

“kistapin□nihk, or as it is known in English, Prince Albert, did not have a store that was designed for our needs and wants specifically,” said H. Clarke. “I always think of the things I want to see but they’re not available anywhere, so we made a place for that.”

“You need blankets for ceremonies, we have them. You want cloth, we have that. You want cool Indigenous shirts, we have that. You want earrings? We have long, short, and feathery ones. You want those Orange Shirt Day hoodies, we carry them too,” continued H. Clarke. “Almost everything we carry is made by or designed by Indigenous people and they’re not just for Indigenous people but they’re for anyone who is interested in supporting Indigenous people by purchasing and wearing or gifting those items.”



Randy Clarke and Andrea Custer H. Clarke.
(Photo supplied)

“Indigenous people are still firmly grounded in their identities, and this comes through in the products we sell, which range from the traditional arts to more modern styles of expression such as the moccasins, clothing, paintings, blankets, and carvings,” said H. Clarke.

The pair are excited to be able to provide another creative outlet for people. “Indigenous people are some of the most creative people out there and now they have an outlet that is 100 per cent First Nations owned that they can gain recognition from,” said H. Clarke. “It’s also a reminder to everyone that we are not static; we grow with the times yet remain connected to our identities. It’s beautiful to be able to share this.”



Grand opening. (Photo supplied)

“These cups are unique. Not only do they include a pronunciation guide but there’s a QR code you can scan, which will take you to a Cree lesson,” said H. Clarke.

The idea to add a pronunciation guide for the mugs came to her after someone commented to H. Clarke they adored the signs she was making but did not know how to properly pronounce the words.

The idea to open Indigenous 1st Designs started as a way to share culture and educate.

“There were no stores that served the needs of First Nations peoples and a place for people from all walks of life to go in and see authentic Indigenous items,” said H. Clarke. “People love our culture and have a desire to not only support but learn directly from us.”

“We wanted to showcase how proud we are of our history, culture, and language while also supporting other businesses, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous,” continued H. Clarke.

Regardless of if someone is shopping for something a little more traditional or modern, there is something for everyone.

The Grand Opening was held on August 19, at the South Hill Mall starting with Elder Leonard Ermine smudging the store while he said a prayer before officially opening and letting everyone in.

The gift shop will host designers, such as Dene Cree Designs, Red Rebel Armour, Sequoia, Charlene Drygoose and Sandra Clarke, and Birch Bark Baskets by Mitch Fineday to name a few.

One of the most interesting things in Indigenous 1st Designs is the “wahk□twin” cups that H. Clarke did in collaboration with a First Nations University student Natasha Wolfe.

“A QR code was what came to mind because I could link those to anything. I didn’t want to create YouTube videos because they’d be too long, so TikTok was the perfect avenue for mini Cree Lessons and they’d be more accessible to the wider public,” said H. Clarke.

As she jokingly says, this is the educator in her coming out and wanting to have something more than just a coffee mug.

“In those videos, I incorporated some of the things I wanted to get across including proper use of the terms, a pronunciation guide, and how to spell the words in SRO (Standard Roman Orthography) properly. On social media I sometimes see people misusing the terms and I wanted to be able to help teach them properly,” said H. Clarke.



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