Santa makes a quick visit to the North

By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

Santa came early this year for nearly 1,600 children living in the province’s far North. Not only did he come two weeks before Christmas, but he traded in his sleigh and reindeer for something much faster: a Saab twin turboprop aircraft.

It was the annual Santa Takes Flight by Transwest Air, a private airline company in Saskatchewan that specializes in flying to northern communities, many of whom actually own some of the planes and lease them back to the company.

For the past nine years, Transwest has loaded up its plane with gifts bought by itself and some sponsors, ‘Santa’s helpers’ (Transwest’s staff), and the media to deliver presents to the children in the Athabasca region.

This year the group traveled to Wollaston Lake, Fond du Lac, Stony Rapids, and Black Lake.

Santa first arrived to a packed gym at Wollaston, where there were more than 400 children and their parents eagerly awaiting his arrival. They sang Christmas carols until they heard Santa’s famous belly laugh, “Ho, ho, ho!”

Santa was also treated to some youngsters singing Oh Come All Ye Faithful in Dene.

The fact that Santa has visited her community for nine years is not lost on Hatchet Lake First Nation Chief Rosalie Tsannie-Burseth.

Children in Saskatchewan’s North were thrilled to receive a visit from Santa Claus thanks to Transwest Air.

Twenty-month-old Kaylan Tsannie from Wollaston Lake let Santa in on her Christmas wish list.

Santa arrives at his first stop up north at Wollaston Lake.

(Photo by Darla Read)
ignitaries and community leaders joined honorary chairman Gordon Tootoosis and provincial Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations June Draude in sharing their vision: a traveling exhibit celebrating the contributions, achievements, and strengths of First Nations and Métis people.

To be known as Sasipenita, the fledgling organization held a fundraising banquet in late November in Saskatoon.

“Our goal is to raise $1.6 million in the next five years,” said Becky Sasakamoose Kuffner, who is the Coordinator for Saskatoon’s Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee, and chair of the Sasipenita Board.

“We plan to have it hit the road in 2013.”

Their hope is to have a premier national or even international exhibit, combining visuals, text, multi-media and artifacts to create a hands-on experience which engages and educates. By appealing to many learning styles and making history come alive, the goal is to promote understanding and respect for First Nations and Métis people and ultimately reduce racism.

Gordon Tootoosis was suggested as honorary chair given his accomplishments and advocacy of native rights, Kuffner said. A recipient of the Order of Canada, like his father and sister, Tootoosis has credits as an artist, a band chief, and a veteran actor sharing the screen with such luminaries as Brad Pitt and Sir Anthony Hopkins.

“I’m proud to be involved in this,” Tootoosis said, adding he’d be trying to make every meeting. “I experience racism still – especially in Saskatchewan. It’s one of the biggest heartaches – but I understand it.”

And, hopefully, understanding is what will ultimately eliminate the roots of racism. As First Nations contributions are brought forth to unlearn stereotypes, build community, and restore and enhance pride in First Nations and Métis communities by “telling their stories”, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginals will increase awareness of their shared and individual histories.

The inspiration for Sasipenita came after the success of the Anne Frank Exhibit in 2005, which broke attendance records at the Diefenbaker Centre. Many organizations and individuals, including Monica Goulet as part of Saskatoon’s Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee, supported the Frank Exhibit. Making an exhibit for the First Nations peoples in the wake of events like the Starlight tours and the disappearances and murders of Aboriginal women and children seemed a logical next step.

Goulet suggested the name “Sasipenita” for the interactive exhibit.

In her regional dialect of Swampy Cree, it means “never give up” – or, “to get back up after being knocked down.” Goulet is one of about 20 board members, including representatives from both school boards, the Western Development Museum, the City of Saskatoon, and the University of Saskatchewan.

“This is an important initiative for our community,” said keynote speaker June Draude, pledging support from the provincial government.

“We need to stop racism and the shadow it casts.”

Draude noted that when the devastating impact of the holocaust was highlighted in the Frank exhibit, many thoughts turned to the Aboriginal people in the province.

“The more we understand each other the harder it is for racism to thrive,” said Draude, citing a 2005 race relations survey where 70 per cent had observed acts of racism against First Nations people.

“The Assembly of First Nations is the national organization representing First Nations citizens in Canada. 473 Albert Street, Suite 318, Ottawa, ON K1R 5H4. Tel: (613) 247-1979 Fax: (613) 247-6839 www.afn.ca

Becky Sasakamoose Kuffner, Michael Bantjes, Dianne Craig, Gordon Tootoosis, Monica Goulet, Shannon Loutitt and Dana Soonias of the Sasipenita board.

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Season’s Greetsings!

From all of us at
Eagle Feather News
Editorial

Plenty to be grateful for in 2008

November was a rather uplifting month. Not necessarily because it is just before December and Christmas, but because of what I witnessed. Many of our people were honoured in for their participation in community, primarily in the sports world. Elder and veteran Tony Cote, the grandfather of the First Nation Winter and Summer Games was awarded the Order of Saskatchewan, our province’s highest honour. He received the honour because of his lifetime commitment to youth through developing programs and infrastructure for them around sports. Who, as a kid, did not like sports? The teamwork that built you up and the teammates who became lifelong friends. The fun travel to a tournament. Getting better and mastering a move. The feeling of accomplishment you get from being healthy and successful. Who, as a youth, once they away from sports, began to smoke, drink, do drugs and hang out and break things? Lots of us have. It is proven that sports can keep youth on the good track. Folks like Tony Cote knew that and he did what he did and has been rewarded.

Eugene and Lorna Arcand also understand the importance of sport for youth. Both of them were entered into the North American Indigenous Games Hall of Fame this summer in Cowichan B.C. Eugene and Lorna have been involved in NAIG since it’s inception in 1990 and have done remarkable things for the Games and for the thousands of youth who have benefited from the programs they have established. The community took time in November to honour them, laugh with them, and to present them with Star Blankets as a small sign of our gratitude for all their hard work. A very deserving couple indeed.

Then the Regina Pats host a First Nation and Métis Awareness night at the Brandt Centre. Events included hoop dancing at centre ice, the national anthem in Cree by the beautiful and talented Stacey Cyr, First Nation politicians at centre ice and hockey legends Reggie Leach and Freddie Sasakamoose in attendance. The place was electric and packed with Indians. Very cool.

And then we get a press release from the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation announcing that six of the 14 recipients in 2009 are from Saskatchewan or have a strong connection to our territory. They are Dennis Jackson from Peter Ballantyne and Melanie Jackson from Sakimay, the creative and award winning duo behind Wapos Bay. There is journalist Carol Morin, originally from Sandy Bay, who is now with CBC in the Territories. Delia Opekokew from Canoe Lake Cree nation was named in the Law category. Dr Cecil King, originally from Wikwemikong, but well known for his work on the Indian Federated College in Saskatchewan is also named. And last but not least, we have Elder Stan Cuthand from Little Pine who is receiving the Lifetime Achievement award.

This kind of news allows all residents of Saskatchewan to puff their chests out a little bit more. We have so much to be thankful for in the province. Yes we do have many challenges, but as we all work together to create solutions to our problems, the province grows together collectively.

And believe me, the list of leaders and achievers above is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to people making a difference in the First Nation and Métis communities of Saskatchewan and beyond. 2008 was a great year. There is every indication that 2009 will be better.

Believe it. Merry Christmas.

Coming next in Eagle Feather News

We have a few changes in store for the paper in January. It will still be recognizable, but due to changes at our printers, we have to change the size of Eagle Feather News just a wee tiny bit. The advantages we get from this change will be many.

First it will allow us to access many more pages of colour. That will make the paper even more attractive and readable and allow our advertisers more options when it comes to colorizing their ads.

Secondly, we will be saving some trees. By shaving an inch and a half off of ten thousand copies a month, there is actually a good amount of tree hugging that we are encouraging. Our forest will be grateful.

Of course we will still have our awesome array of columnists and stories to keep you enthralled, just be warned that their photos will now be in colour.

On behalf of all of us at Eagle Feather News, thanks for sticking with us as we go and grow and we wish all of our readers a fine and fancy, family filled holiday. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.
Christmas traditions keep our families strong

We always hang up our socks on Christmas Eve. When I was a kid we didn’t have fancy socks. We used those old grey work socks and pinned our names to the top of them to tell Santa which sock belonged to who.

First thing Christmas morning we raced to our socks and found all sorts of fun and useful goodies Santa left for us. When I was 12 I stayed up late Christmas Eve helping Mom wrap presents. After everyone else went to bed she handed me some grocery bags, one for each member of our family, and she asked me to fill the socks.

By then I knew there really wasn’t a big bellied white guy in a red suit flying around on a sled pulled by magical caribou giving presents to all the good little girls and boys in the world. So that Christmas Eve when mom passed me the bags of goodies for the socks, I teasingly said to her: “So, Santa Claus is really a single mom from Gordon’s, eh?”

Mom smiled, then she told me a wonderful story about Saint Nicholas. She said St. Nick was an old man who lived in northern Europe many centuries ago. Every Christmas Eve he dressed up in his best winter clothes and delivered presents to each house in his village, making sure every child woke up to a present Christmas morning. Mom said this old man was poor but he had a kind heart and he worked and saved all year long to fill his bag full of presents for the children.

Everyone loved St. Nick and when he passed away the people in his village were very sad. As Christmas grew closer the people missed him even more because there was no one to take over his gift-giving tradition.

Then, that first Christmas Eve after St. Nicholas died, something magical happened. The spirit of St. Nicholas came back to the village and touched every single adult, filling them with joy and love for the children. The spirit of St. Nick filled all the adults and the next morning the children awoke to Christmas socks full of treats.

I told Mom it was a good story but I didn’t believe that the spirit of one man was whirring around the world filling adults with love and joy. What about all the kids who wake up to nothing Christmas morning and all the kids in the world who are starving?

Mom sat down on the floor beside me, put her arms around me and said “close your eyes.” With my eyes closed and her arms around me she quietly whispered, “can you feel it yet?”

I remained quiet and she whispered again. “I feel it, I feel his spirit. Right now, this very minute I feel so much love for you kids. I believe that the spirit of St. Nick touches us all, if we are open to it. But we have to want his spirit touch us.”

“That’s why we put cookies out for Santa Claus on Christmas Eve,” she said, “We’re feeding his spirit and thanking him for blessing us with this wonderful tradition.”

That made sense. I later learned this was a Cree twist on a northern European story but it worked for our family.

Many years later when my daughter was eight years old, we couldn’t get to Mom’s on Christmas Eve. I didn’t bother hanging our socks that night because we were heading to Mom’s first thing Christmas morning. But my daughter insisted: “We gotta put our socks up, Mom, or Santa will miss us, and we just gotta give some food out for him, too!”

So we did. Christmas morning I was surprised to find my sock full of goodies. I looked at my little girl and she had a big smile on her face, then she waived her arms in the air and said “did you feel him母婴?” I did, I felt Santa Claus’s spirit, he was here, and look what he left for us!

Every family has their own Christmas traditions and we pass down to our children. Sometimes they seem silly or time consuming, but they are special. They are part of the bundle that keeps our families strong and keeps the memories alive of lost ones gone.

For example, this Christmas, we wish you all a safe and joyful holiday. And may you be blessed with good health, happiness and good luck in the new year.

Christmas Down Under evokes many thoughts

Christmas in Australia: This was the title of a chapter in my elementary school ‘reader’. I thought of it when I heard that quite a few Canadian teachers are heading south to Australia for a major conference on education and indigenous peoples in December.

Australia is a good place to spend Christmas if you like to open your presents on a hot summer day, the seasons Down Under being the opposite of ours.

I have spent many Christmases in the Land of Oz, and I spent much of the past year there. I was a Visiting Scholar at Australian National University in Canberra, the Australian capital city. My stint was at the National Centre for Indigenous Studies in the Faculty of Law at ANU.

It is easy to think about warm southern places as the ice on the lakes starts to get really solid up here. There is much to think about on indigenous issues in the Antipodes.

Australia did not enter into any treaties with the Aboriginal peoples. Nor did the English colonies that preceded the establishment of the new Australian Constitution in 1900. Six states united in a federal union with a central “Commonwealth” government, the national government in Canberra. They united that way in the 1890s.

There is no room for negotiating separatism in the Australian Constitution.

Australia’s neighbor, New Zealand, which lies three hours jet time southeast of Sydney over the Pacific Ocean, did enter into a treaty with the Aboriginal peoples there.

The first document was signed at Waitangi on the northeastern tip of Aoteaora, the Maori name for the country. It means “Land of the Long White Cloud.’ The Treaty of Waitangi of 1840 between the English and the indigenous peoples of New Zealand, or Maori, as they have come to be called, contains only three paragraphs. The legal and political significance of the Tiriti o Waitangi is still an open question. The Maori side says that sovereignty, or “tino rangatiratanga” was kept.

Meanwhile, back in the Land of Oz, the idea of a national Treaty was introduced into public debate a generation ago but it seems to be going nowhere. It was only in the early 1990s that Australian law first recognized Aboriginal title in the famous Mabo case.

The decision caused a panic that can not be imagined from Canada. The government then set up a Mabo hotline that panicked wealthy landowners, mining companies and the plain stupid could call for reassurance that their property would not be snatched and handed over to the ‘Abos’.

Of course, the response of the Commonwealth government was to pass a Native Title Act the size of a large truck. The Act ensures that land disputes provide a windfall for lawyers and interminable wrangling.

In this, Australia has caught up with New Zealand’s neighbouring Waitangi Tribunal Act which is overloaded with a long list of cases that stretch into the Pacific sunset.

Treaty or no treaty, just as in Canada, all you need to stall real change is to create a way for the lawyers to tie up the process in cobwebs of legal argument.

Australia’s relations with our Aboriginal brothers and sisters is a very unhappy story. The Aussie version of the Indian Residential Schools issue is called the Stolen Generations and can be viewed in part in the movie Rabbit Proof Fence which made its way to Canada quite a while ago.

Until its defeat in the national elections in November 2007, the right-wing Australian government of John Howard attacked Aboriginal rights, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was also rejected by the extremist Conservative government of

Stephen Harper (no relation to Elijah). The new Labour Party government of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has stated it will now sign the UN Declaration and Rudd issued an apology to the Stolen Generations on the second day in office.

Although Harper also issued an apology, Canada’s backing of the UN Declaration most likely rests on prospects for a new government headed by someone else.

This, of course, looks more likely now than it did last month. Expect a January budget with stimulus for the economy.

Obama’s goal of rebuilding America’s inter-state freeways, which have fallen into dreadful disrepair, should be near the top of the list for Canada’s infrastructure spending in recessionary times.

Is it not a great idea to replace our national Pot Hole Trail, which remains single lane in Western parts, with a real national highway? But driving the highways at Christmas time in Western Canada is not a happy prospect.

Better to do that in Australia, where Santa is sometimes pictured on a snowboard, with his Santa Suit pants rolled up.

You never know where your thoughts may wander when you start thinking of being in warm places at Christmas time.

Merry Christmas.
The winter of addiction and the spring time of recovery

I am a recovering alcoholic. I live with regret for things I have said and done and I still mourn for the years lost in the fog of addiction. I cannot boast my recovery of 27 years has been by my willpower alone. I am humbled by knowing something good and strong carried me.

Recovery is like climbing a mountain and watching the sun rise. It’s hard work but work well worth the effort. My ongoing healing comes from facing some personal painful truths and in finding the inner beauty within myself and other people.

It was a year after quitting drinking that I experienced the most memorable dream of my life. I dreamed I was walking in winter and the snow was deep. I came across a frozen slough where I stopped and stood. The trees were barren and there was no sound. The snow began to melt and green grass grew from a renewed earth.

The trees became thick with leaves and the boughs were filled with singing birds. I stood in clear clean water and before me floating were two sweetgrass braids. I saw myself walking cradling the sweetgrass in my arms. It seemed to me that I experienced the most memorable dream of my life. I dreamed I was walking in winter and the snow was deep. I came across a frozen slough where I stopped and stood. The trees were barren and there was no sound. The snow began to melt and green grass grew from a renewed earth.

The dream was not about snow. It was about the grass that grew from the earth with the memory of the trees that had been there. The sweetgrass symbolized the strength of those who had lived in aboriginal traditions and the hope of those who would follow. It was a dream of the life that had been and the life that was to come.

I never knew what his life’s story was but I know it was more than alcohol that killed him. There are the ones who committed suicide and those who died violently at the hands of another. It’s all so depressing. Their life and death must mean something.

There are so many people I have known who have died long before their time. There was the friend who buried his pain so deep within himself. He gave up his career in journalism and became a street person in Calgary. He froze to death drunk and alone.

It can not just be pain nor can they be forgotten. No human is disposable. Recovery is not just about misery but about a renewed hope and a joy in living. I left with good feelings, grateful I had come.

Many years ago when the smallpox epidemics hit the plains people hard, there were those here and there who survived. They were the ones who kept the Nations alive.

When winter came the people followed the buffalo north into the woods and shelter. It was there they hunted and held out during the hardest time of the year. When the buffalo died and the people took Treaty they moved back to their old winter camps. It is there, it may be said, they then held out through their longest winter lasting over a century and more.

It was nice to hear people speaking about the things that really matter in this life. People are finding their voice. There is so much that needs to be told. When we comfort one another we find we are not so alone after all.

Recovery is also not just about misery but about a renewed hope and a joy in living. I felt with good feelings, grateful I had come.

I would also like to thank our NNADAP worker Jerry Sapp, the ladies who cooked the good meal and of course the Elders and Chief and Council. They are among the many good people who have and continue to make a difference.

Jacobs receives Governor-General’s Award

N ative Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) President Beverley Jacobs was awarded the Governor General’s Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case. The presentation took place in November at Rideau Hall, the residence of Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean. She is one of six receiving this award this year.

This prestigious award is presented annually to honour individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the advancement of women. Jacobs, President of the Native Women’s Association of Canada since October 2004, has worked tirelessly and traveled nationally and internationally to educate people about the most critical issues facing Aboriginal women.

“I am humbled to receive this award. It means a lot to me to know that the work I do to benefit all Aboriginal women is being recognized at such a high level,” said Jacobs.

“To receive the same award that has been given to trailblazers before me such as Bertha Allen, Mary Two-Axe Early, and Sandra Lovelace Nicholas is a tremendous honour. She also accepted the award in honour and remembrance of the spirits of those Aboriginal sisters who are either missing or found murdered. With hope and determination, Beverley Jacobs will continue her mission as president of one of Canada’s national Aboriginal organizations to raise awareness on the myriad of issues affecting Aboriginal women, rally citizens, and inspire young Aboriginal women.

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Beverley Jacobs, the president of the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) has been honoured for her work on behalf of Aboriginal women who have been victims of violence. (Photo by Joshua Kelcey)
Ten years ago the Whitecap Dakota First Nation was in massive debt, unemployment and welfare were the norm and there was no economic development at all. Now the Whitecap Dakota First Nation is one of the more progressive bands in Saskatchewan.

They have a land management framework that sees their land held outside of the Indian Act allowing them to develop and implement long term lease agreements so people can own their own home on reserve in fee simple, or lease some land and do some business.

Chief Darcy Bear and his council worked hard to get to where they are at, but they did get some help along the way.

“Over the years we have gone to visit many communities to see best practices,” said Chief Bear.

“Westbank First Nation and Chief Robert Louie opened their doors for us to learn from them. They certainly have a good model with their retail development and their reserve has everything. We appreciated their sharing.”

Chief Bear had Chief Robert Louie and his council from the Westbank First Nation visiting their reserve to conduct some learning the other way.

“Darcy and I have worked closely together for many years and they have visited many times. We share information, knowledge, successes and what can be done better,” said Chief Louie.

“I work with Darcy at the national level. Their community is now self-governing over land and resources and that is great. They also have a casino. We do not have gaming jurisdiction. We do not have a casino.

“We want to learn how it works in Saskatchewan. What regulations and jurisdiction, and we want to bring what we learn home and make an agreement with B.C. so we can have a casino.”

The Chiefs took time to share during a banquet and cultural display hosted by Whitecap at the Dakota Dunes Casino. The event was held to acknowledge the relationship and help that is being shared between the two bands. There was an exchange of gifts and an awesome dance presentation by Buffalo Boy Productions.

Westbank First Nation is one of the most progressive bands in Canada when it comes to self-rule and control over their own land. On April 1, 2005, and after two decades of community consultation and negotiation, their Self-Government Act came into effect.

Westbank First Nation’s band membership totals 647 with approximately 59 per cent residing on-reserve along with 8,000 non-members. To support the needs of the expanding population base there are a number of malls that offer a wide range of retail and commercial services. Anchor tenants include: Zellers, Extra Foods, Blockbuster Video, Capitol Movie Theatre, Home Depot, Canadian Tire and several major fast-food outlets.

Both Chief Louie and Chief Bear want other bands in Canada to succeed.

“We try to get communities across this country into the mode of taking control of the land and resources without Indian Affairs being the decision makers,” said Chief Louie.

“We are self-governing. It took us many years and now coming to Whitecap, watching it grow in leaps and bounds represents a strong signal to other First Nations as to what can be done. We share this information willingly. That is what we are about. The nations that have benefited want it to work for everyone.”

Chief Darcy Bear is a strong proponent of sharing his message with other bands across Canada.

“By protecting your assets, there is confidence. That confidence turns into business on-reserve,” said Chief Bear.

“We have 320 members living in the community. Of that 14 are on social assistance. The casino alone has 470 staff and we have 590 jobs in our community. It should be 1,000 within five years”

And things will continue to snowball for the band as there are plans for hotel construction to begin in the spring and many more development deals coming down the pipe.

“We are no different than Chief Robert,” added Chief Bear. “We share this information across North America. We want to work together. The more of our communities that are successful, we all win. It makes a strong region and it makes a strong province.”
CHEP more than just apples and oranges

By Andrea Ledding
For Eagle Feather News

The Child Hunger Education Program (CHEP) was founded in 1989, responding to the issue of hungry kids at schools. But it expanded as the organization began to look at root causes.

“We realized the cost of income and housing were why kids were going to school without lunches,” noted Karen Archibald, present director of CHEP.

They began to address family needs via other programs: collective kitchens, community gardening, and the Good Food Box, a selection of wholesale produce, much of it local, which anyone can order.

“Our work still includes hungry kids but we began working with moms and seniors too.”

Archibald notes they’ve always worked with Aboriginal families and kids, and collaborate with reserves such as Mistawasis and One Arrow to help them access fresh, healthy foods.

“Currently there are six different First Nations accessing our Good Food Box/bulk food buying,” Archibald said.

They are strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal organizations in the city – over the past five years, they have worked with Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI) in both the office and apartment developments with produce, the Good Food Box, community gardening - whatever was needed.

“Now with their new office on Avenue M there’s a bottomless basket of fresh fruit at the reception desk, done in partnership with CHEP. With more than 100 people a day coming in, it sends the message that CUMFI thinks eating healthy is important,” says Archibald.

“CHEP has been a great partner for CUMFI,” says Shirley Isbister, CUMFI’s president.

They’ve collaborated on several projects including a fetal alcohol partnership, addictions services, collective kitchens, diabetes programs, all of which require nutritional support – and the office itself.

As we are on the phone, Isbister sees a girl enter the building, take an orange from the bowl at the front desk, and then leave again.

“One of the things about CHEP is they truly are a committed community organization. With all of our partnerships in the building and the programs we house, we’re able to provide access to fruits and vegetables and support healthy lifestyles.”

Partnerships also exist at the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre, and CHEP is hoping to hire a cook, together with the centre, to provide meals to the men often there at supper time.

Another initiative just began this week with SUNTEP students at the U of S – Good Food Backpacks. For $10, students get a large bag of fruits and vegetables – prepared, washed, cut, and organized in individual serving-size packages.

Nicole Amiotte of SUNTEP notes it is often a challenge for most people, but especially students, in terms of eating healthy around time and financial constraints.

“That looks great,” were some of the comments Amiotte heard when the first order arrived – fruits, pre-cut veggies, and a mixture of nuts/grains/seeds.

“Something they can throw into their backpacks and start eating more fruits and vegetables at a good cost – we’re excited,” said Amiotte. “Even as a non-student, I don’t always have the time to cut up veggies to put in my lunch – and the temptations around aren’t always the most nutritious – this makes it more accessible.”

Lindsay Sutherland, a community nurse and clinic worker at One Arrow, uses CHEP Good Food Boxes as incentives to members who attend community kitchens, or education sessions for diabetes or breast cancer. Elders, those with chronic illnesses, prenatal women, and breastfeeding mothers are also given a Good Food Box, as healthy eating might not be affordable otherwise.

Many community members purchase their own boxes, which the band picks up in the city every month. Sunderland notes people who might not have enough money to buy vegetables, or settle for cheaper but less nutritious canned or processed foods, get fresh produce at least two weeks of the month.

“We’re an hour away from P.A. and Saskatoon, and many don’t have transport,” she adds; the limited produce in the on-reserve store tends to be pricey.

“The other good thing about the food box is it comes with different fruits and vegetables – sometimes ones they’ve never heard of – and there will be a recipe on how to cook it, and where it comes from, in the newsletter. This way they’re introduced to a variety of fruits and vegetables – it’s not just apples and oranges.”

Other reserves, like Muskokay and Muskeg Lake, are working towards filling the Good Food Box – with organic farming practices and possibly fruit orchards.

With the government withdrawal of funding for Station 20 West, CHEP has been regrouping, hoping they can hang on to their borrowed office space in the St. Paul’s Nursing Residence, which the health region needs. Building will ideally begin next spring; community support continues to pour in. CHEP already has two senior ladies who have pledged enough money for a kitchen facility in the new building – for community kitchens, and made-from-scratch baking and lunches for the senior deli at the ‘Good Food Junction’ – their core neighbourhood grocery store.

“Preparing food is stressful enough for people who have enough money but not enough time – for those with no money, it’s even harder,” says Archibald.

“We all need some support to be able to feed ourselves and our children healthily.”

CHEP can be contacted at 655-4575; website is www.chep.org
Feeling good about yourself is an important part of VITALITY. Self-esteem is based on how you see your abilities and your worth as a person. People with low self-esteem are often shy, anxious, and depressed. They are negative about themselves and their abilities. These words from Health Canada are worth paying attention to.

Because they don’t feel worthwhile, they are more likely to do things that are not good for their health, such as going on starvation diets and smoking. People with high self-esteem tend to be secure and confident. They see themselves and their abilities positively. Because they know it is important to take care of themselves, they are more likely to eat well and to stay active.

Comparing yourself to the perfect men and women you see on television and in magazines and movies is hard on your self-esteem. We all know these images. Ideal women handle their jobs, homes, and kids with ease, and continue to be thin, well-dressed and beautiful. Ideal men are big, strong and successful in life. When we compare ourselves to these ‘perfect’ people, we forget how little appearance really matters in life.

We develop this picture over time, starting when we’re very young kids.

The term self-image is used to refer to a person’s mental picture of himself or herself. A lot of our self-image is based on interactions we have with other people and our life experiences. This mental picture (our self-image) contributes to our self-esteem.

Self-esteem is all about how much we feel valued, loved, accepted, and thought well of by others – and how much we value, love, and accept ourselves. People with healthy self-esteem are able to feel good about themselves, appreciate their own worth, and take pride in their abilities, skills, and accomplishments.

People with low self-esteem may feel as if no one will like them or accept them or that they can’t do well in anything.

We all have a mental picture of who we are, how we look, what we’re good at, and what our weaknesses might be. We develop this picture over time, not good for their health, such as going on starvation diets and smoking.

People with low self-esteem may feel as if no one will like them or accept them or that they can’t do well in anything.

We all have a mental picture of who we are, how we look, what we’re good at, and what our weaknesses might be. We develop this picture over time, not good for their health, such as going on starvation diets and smoking.

People with low self-esteem may feel as if no one will like them or accept them or that they can’t do well in anything.

Two things in particular – how others see or treat us and how we see ourselves – can have a big impact on our self-esteem.

If parents spend more time criticizing than praising a child, it can be harder for a kid to develop good self-esteem. Because teens are still forming about ourselves – particularly when we are little kids.

Unrealistic expectations can also affect a person’s self-esteem. People have an image of who they want to be (or who they think they should be). Everyone’s image of the ideal person is different. For example, some people admire athletic skills and others admire academic abilities.

People who see themselves as having the qualities they admire – such as the ability to make friends easily – usually have high self-esteem. It’s never too late to build healthy, positive self-esteem. Self-esteem plays a role in almost everything you do.

People with high self-esteem do better in school and find it easier to make friends. They tend to have better relationships with peers and adults, feel happier, find it easier to deal with mistakes, disappointments, and failures, and are more likely to stick with something until they succeed.

It takes some work, but it’s a skill you’ll have for life.

Send me an email at s.ahenakew@yahoo.ca. I love to hear from you. Merry Christmas.

On behalf of my family, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations staff in Health and Social Development, the Office of Urban Development and the Saskatchewan First Nations Veterans Association we extend to you warmest wishes for this holiday season and the best throughout the New Year.

As you meet with family and friends take time to consider the triumphs, trials and unforeseen challenges our First Nations face and remember the strength that comes from sharing. At this time and throughout the year, let us share in our successes and together we can find solutions that pay homage to past leaders and create hope for future generations.

I look forward to the opportunities the New Year will bring and I am honoured to contribute to your vision. May the Creator bring you blessings of peace, happiness and prosperity and keep you in the spirit of Christmas.

Glen Pratt, Vice Chief
FEDERATION OF SASKATCHEWAN INDIAN NATIONS

Indian Governments of the Saskatchewan Indians

Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations
Police, volunteers, athletes and leaders honoured at FSIN Pow Wow and Cultural Celebration

The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Annual Pow Wow and educational symposium was again a resounding success.

The Education Symposium featured keynote speaker, Olympic Athlete Waneek Horn-Miller, and her positive message.

Other sessions included healthy lifestyles, careers and cultural protocols.

At the pow wow, time was taken to honour the Saskatoon Police Service, Team Saskatchewan the 2008 North American Indigenous Games Champions, Delbert Wapass and Lyle Whitefish on their elections and all the volunteers that make the pow wow and community events possible.

(Side) Police, volunteers, athletes and leaders honoured at FSIN Pow Wow and Cultural Celebration

Saskatoon Police Service Chief Clive Weighill receives, on behalf of his department, an Eagle Staff from Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Chief Lawrence Joseph. The police service was honoured with the Eagle Staff as an acknowledgement of reconciliation, inter-governmental progress and continuing commitment to First Nation and Metis communities. The Police Service had a big presence at this years pow wow as members of Peacekeepers Pedaling for Aboriginal Diabetes were also honoured with a special. (Photo Saskatoon Police Service)

(Below, left to right) Elisse Obey/Lavallee, Nadine Obey and Chantel Redman are regular visitors to the FSIN Pow wow. (Photo Faith Mclean)
Justice conference tackles problem of youth gangs

By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

A man trying to find solutions to the gang problem in northern Saskatchewan says we need to look beyond our province. Howard Halkett works within Justice for the Prince Albert Grand Council and has first-hand knowledge of the devastating impact of gangs.

A year and a half ago, his brother was murdered in Edmonton because of gang involvement. That incident has spurred him to do something.

This year he was one of the organizers of the second annual National Aboriginal Justice Conference in Saskatoon. For three days, people from across the country made presentations about what their communities are doing to make them safer, with a lot of focus on gangs.

Halkett says it’s a very real issue, and of the 27 communities the PAGC represents, he says all of them have gang activity.

“Pelican Narrows is one of the ones that is higher. They have a really high gang activity going on right now,” Halkett notes.

“Also Black Lake, one of our Dene communities, they have extremely high gang activity up there, too. It’s hard to address these issues when you don’t have proper programming in place. How do you deliver them? How do you help them out?”

Halkett says more money would be useful, but also communities just recognizing there is a problem and banding together to do something about it would help tackle the problem. He pointed to a northern Manitoba community that made a presentation at the conference.

He says the youth chief and council of the Pukatawagan First Nation are an example that people here should use because what they have done has been successful.

The council is made up of 10 councilors and one chief who go through elections similar to those at the band level except they are voted in by their peers. The council runs a youth drop-in centre that has activities and a place for the youth to hang out. Seventeen-year-old Tim Jorgenson is currently the chief.

“All my friends used to be a little on the bad side, I guess. We used to try and form gangs and stuff. After we started going to the drop-in, and started keeping ourselves occupied, we didn’t have no time for that.”

Jorgensen says he’s fine with being a role model. He hopes he can teach the younger children in his community to be responsible and healthy.

That’s why the program works, says Valerie Whyte, a band councilor who volunteers to help out the youth and works at their drop-in centre.

“They can impact their peer group, too. That also gives them an opportunity to keep youth out of trouble as well because they can talk to their young people at their level, right? So the benefits are really enormous,” Whyte says.

Pukatawagan, a community that has been plagued by addictions and social problems like many other remote reserves, has seen real results.

Youth violent crime has dropped by 66 per cent, and youth offenses overall have dropped by 44 per cent. Whyte says the RCMP in her community credit their program, which has won awards.

Halkett says a program like this is doable in Saskatchewan and says it would help in reaching the youngest children, whom he says are already impacted by gangs.

“It’s unreal how knowledgeable they are in this whole area of gangs. In one of the communities that we visited, they actually gave us a number. You know, a little seven or eight-year-old boy gave us a number of how many active members they have in their community.

“We don’t even have a number. But they knew,” he marvels.
Strong Saskatchewan showing in National Aboriginal Achievement Awards

Fourteen exceptional achievers, coming from diverse backgrounds, both culturally and geographically have been named recipients of the 2009 National Aboriginal Achievement Awards, the highest honour the community bestows upon its own achievers. Six of those outstanding recipients have strong roots or ties to Saskatchewan. They include Denis and Melanie Jackson, the Gemini Award winning couple who produce animation and documentaries, lawyer Delia Opekowek, Rev. Stan Cuthand, journalist Carol Morin and educator Cecil King.

“Every year the jury selects an extraordinary group of recipients who reveal such outstanding talent and dedicated service,” said Roberta Jamieson, President and CEO of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation.

“I know that by honouring their achievement we will continue to inspire many others, just waiting to demonstrate their potential – that’s why the work of the Foundation in providing bursaries to First Nations, Inuit and Métis students is so essential.”


The 14 recipients will be honoured at the 16th Annual event, on March 6, 2009 at the Centennial Concert Hall, in Winnipeg, Manitoba taped live, to be televised at a later date on both the Global and APTN television networks. It will be hosted by Adam Beach and Tina Keeper.

Voice of the North, award-winning-journalist Carol Morin is best known as a television host on three major broadcast networks. CBC, CTV and APTN. Becoming the first Aboriginal woman to anchor a national news broadcast in Canada on CBC NewsWorld, Morin has helped make First Nations peoples of Canada more prominent and visible to the general public. As an avid drummer, visual artist and writer, Morin uses these forms of expression to build connections with her culture and her community.

Writer, director, and editor of animation projects and documentaries for Dark Thunder Productions, Melanie Jackson is breaking ground for a new generation of storytellers. Contributing to different productions such as Voices of Aboriginal Youth, Ekoips Namew - At the Time of the Sturgeon, and the 2007 Gemini Award winning Wapos Bay, Jackson’s natural storytelling talents are creating valuable outlets for First Nations narratives and dialogue.

A lifelong educator, Cecil King has fought hard to see his beliefs that First Nations children need not sacrifice their culture and teachings in school begin to come to fruition. Retired Professor Emeritus of Queens University, King became Dean of the Saskatoon Campus of the First Nations University of Canada. He currently works as a resident Elder, teaching Ojibwe and writing and translating Ojibwe texts.

Delia Opekowek was eight years old before she learned English, making her current private law practice in Toronto a testament to her ability to adapt. Meshing urban lawyer and scholar with tradition, Delia has used her upbringing to ground her work as she furthers the cause of justice for Aboriginal people, and the civil liberties and human rights for all Canadians. Representing Dudley George’s family, fighting for the compensation and redress of First Nations land claims as well as First Nations war veterans, Opekowek’s work speaks for itself in its scope for change.
She says it means so much to the entire community because of its isolation, and she says Santa’s visit makes them feel a little less isolated.

“First when they came in, it was quiet. And I told them Santa landed, and they all were so excited and singing. I said, you know, ‘I’m not going to allow him in until you’re singing loud.’ So that’s what they did. You can feel and see the excitement here.”

That same excitement was evident in all four communities. When the plane landed in Fond du Lac, children were waiting outside the terminal building, eyes glued to the plane for Santa to step out. When he was inside the terminal, a throng of children rushed him, nearly pinning Santa and his helpers against the wall.

Children stood behind the fence at Stony Rapid’s runway, chanting “Santa! Santa! Santa!” once the plane landed. And, Black Lake’s packed gym was bustling with energy and carols when Santa arrived, more than an hour late.

Lisa Macdonald is a teacher at Black Lake and says the 784 children who showed up to see Santa had been waiting for a long time but it didn’t matter because the trip is so important to them.

“It means a lot to the community in general. We’re pretty isolated, so this is a big deal. Most of the community is here,” Macdonald said.

CASH FOR THE FOOD BANK

Chief Lawrence Joseph of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations once again hosted the Nehiyaw Chiefs Gala in support of the Saskatoon Food Bank. The evening of songs and fun was held at the Dakota Dunes Casino. Entertainment was provided by the Voices of the North. The food was top notch and there was a huge amount of money raised. Last year it was around $50,000 and this year the total was even more amazing and came in over $90,000. Chief Joseph has hosted the event for two years running because he knew what it was like to be a kid and to not have enough food at Christmas time. Obviously, his efforts to give back have been very successful. From left to right are Vice Chief Morley Watson, SIGA CEO Zane Hansen, Chief Lawrence Joseph, Food Bank CEO Paul Merriman, Vice Chief Delbert Wapass and Vice Chief Glen Pratt.

Thank you northern Saskatchewan

The partnership between northern Saskatchewan communities and Cameco has made Saskatchewan a world leader in uranium mining. We have been working together for more than 20 years to build the skilled work force and capable businesses needed to prosper in a challenging industry.

Cameco was awarded the first-ever Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce Aboriginal Business Award. This would not have been possible without the years of support we have received from northern Saskatchewan communities.

Happy holidays and best wishes for 2009.

cameco.com
A VISIT WITH SANTA

Three-year-old Stacy Joseyounen is just a little apprehensive during her visit with Santa Claus. Jolly St. Nick made a special trip throughout Northern Saskatchewan recently, paying a visit to communities including Wollaston Lake, Black Lake, Stony Rapids and Fond du Lac. The trip was made possible by the good folks at Transwest Air. The Saskatchewan airline promises to make the trip again next year, when it will be the tenth anniversary of Santa’s jaunt around Saskatchewan’s North. (Photo by Darla Read)
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1908 - 2008
A lump of coal in the Christmas stocking? It happens far more often than one would think. All decked out in pretty packaging and appealing claims, your lump of coal hides in cosmetics, lotions, hair products, skin care, nail products, toothpaste, and deodorant.

Take a look at the ingredients list on your personal care products; chances are you will need a dictionary to understand what they are. Here’s a headstart, a list of common ingredients to avoid:

THE NO-NO LIST
Toxins & Chemicals to Avoid Ingesting!
- Alcohol, Isopropyl (SD-40): drying, irritating solvent
- Mineral oil: pore clogging
- Propylene glycol: synthetically derived from petroleum, highly toxic
- Lanolin: pesticide
- Sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS, ALES, TEA, DEA): strong detergent
- Cocomide DEA: possible carcinogen
- Tallow: animal
- Collagen: animal
- Isopropyl myristate: pore clogging
- Talc: possible carcinogen
- Imidiazolidinyl & Diazolidinyl urea: formaldehyde preservative, carcinogenic, toxic by inhalation, contact dermatitis
- Camphor: irritant
- Bovine extracts: animal
- Perfumes/Fragrance: irritant
- Walnut shell/apricot pit: irritant
- Mercury: banned by order of the FDA!
- Toluene: POISON! DANGER! Fatal if ingested
- FD&C synthetic based colors: from coal tar, carcinogenic
- Formaldehyde: known carcinogen, irritating to skin and mucous membranes
- Dibutyl Phthalate: linked to birth defects in males
- 1,4-dioxane: carcinogenic
- 2-bromo-2-nitropropane-1,3-diol (Bronopol): toxic, causes allergic contact dermatitis
- Anionic Surfactants: possible carcinogen
- Benzalkonium Chloride: highly toxic, skin irritant
- Paraben Preservatives (methyl, propyl, butyl and ethyl): highly toxic
- Polylethylene Glycol (PEG): petroleum derived, potentially carcinogenic
- Quaternium-7, 15, 31, 60 etc.: toxic, irritant

We are all familiar with ‘the patch’ used for replacing nicotine while trying to stop smoking as well as for medications both prescription and over the counter. What we put on our skin goes in. Why pay good money to poison our bodies and tax our immune system? This year I’m asking for lipstick (unleaded please!)

Terry is an owner of Boutique BeYouTeFul in Saskatoon.
Lt.-Gov. Dr. Gordon Barnhart recently invested eight people into the Saskatchewan Order of Merit in Regina.

“It is a tremendous privilege to present Saskatchewan’s highest honour to such outstanding citizens,” Barnhart said.

“Each of the 2008 recipients has made remarkable contributions and is most deserving of this prestigious provincial award.”

The 2008 recipients are:

• Mr. Edward D. Bayda, Q.C., LL.D., retired Chief Justice of Saskatchewan, Regina;
• Dr. Eli Bornstein, Professor Emeritus and Artist, Saskatoon;
• Dr. Elizabeth Brewster, C.M., Professor Emeritus and Poet, Saskatoon;
• Elder Antoine (Tony) Cote, Veteran and retired Chief of the Cote Nation, Regina;
• Mrs. L. Irene Dubé, LL.D., Business Entrepreneur, Saskatoon;
• Mr. Leslie D. Dubé, LL.D., Business Entrepreneur, Saskatoon;
• Mr. Bob Ellard, Architect, Calgary;
• Mr. Gavin Semple, Business Entrepreneur, Regina.

The Saskatchewan Order of Merit is the province’s highest honour. It recognizes individuals who have contributed significantly to the social, cultural and economic well-being of the province and its residents.

Tony Cote receives province’s highest honour

Robert Cote Jr. (Tony’s Grandson), Premier Brad Wall and Elder Tony Cote after Elder Cote was invested into the Order of Saskatchewan.  (Photo by Rob Cote)
CONGRATULATIONS!
2008 SIGA FIRST NATIONS SCHOLARSHIP
AWARD WINNERS

$5,000 WINNERS

Jennifer Campeau
Yellow Quill
First Nation
MBA, University of
Saskatchewan

Gabrielle Scrimshaw
Hatchet Lake
First Nation
Edwards School of Business, Marketing,
University of Saskatchewan

$2,500 WINNERS

Cassandra Opikokew
Canoe Lake First Nation
BA, Journalism,
University of Regina; Indian Communication Arts Certificate, FNUC

Heather Crain
Muskoday First Nation
Edwards School of Business, Accounting,
University of Saskatchewan

$1,000 WINNERS

Amanda Armstrong
Red Pheasant First Nation
Education, U of S

Anthony Blackburn
English River First Nation
Nursing, U of S

Carrie Isbister
Muskoday First Nation
Indian Social Work Program, FNUC

Christopher Chipak
Red Pheasant First Nation
Education, U of S

Jessica Wesquette
Piapot First Nation
SUN/SEP, U of R

Kendra McKay
James Smith First Nation
Nursing, U of S

Lisa Francis
Piapot First Nation
Nursing, SIAST

Omasoo Butt
Saddle Lake First Nation
PhD, Indigenous History, U of S

Rhonda Wuttunee
Red Pheasant First Nation
Education, U of S

Shane Keepness
Muscowequin
Sauksetu First Nation
Pre-Dentistry, FNUC
The future of the University of Regina’s Aboriginal Student Centre is still unknown. The centre was created in 2006 and is 100 per cent funded by donor funding from the Crown Investments Corporation and CIBC. The donors' financial commitment to the centre is scheduled to end in 2009.

There are no clear plans about what the centre will do when the funding runs out.

“Right now with our funding, who knows what’s going to come around the corner? I’ve been told that we are guaranteed that there will be an Aboriginal Student Centre at the University of Regina next year but you never know,” said Sabrina Sparvier, the centre’s manager.

“Base funding would give us some stability and legitimize our position on campus as a crucial service.”

While the U of R student centre relies completely on donations, at the University of Saskatchewan, the Aboriginal Student Centre is funded by both core university funding and donor funding.

“We have always been core-funded since the centre was created and then we have been able to grow our budget through donor funding,” said Kathleen Makela, manager of the centre. “I think right now the funding is split between both sources about 50/50.”

Makela understands why a lack of core funding for certain university services can send a negative message.

“I think there’s a concern that it seems like it’s not a priority. It’s the whole idea of an institution putting its money where its mouth is.”

At the University of Manitoba, the Aboriginal Student Centre is funded mainly by the university with only an estimated 15 to 20 per cent coming from donors for special events.

“If a university doesn’t fund its centre, I would say that university is not committed to Aboriginal education,” said Kali Storm, director of the U of M Aboriginal Student Centre.

“You can’t do long-term planning or leadership if you don’t know what’s happening year to year.”

After the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, now known as the First Nations University of Canada, moved to its new building in 2003, there was a gap in Aboriginal-specific services for students registered only through the U of R. The Aboriginal Student Centre was created to fill the gap and provide services for Aboriginal students at both campuses in a culturally supportive environment.

Since then, the university admits it is playing catch-up in providing services for Aboriginal students.

“Yes, I do think we’re a little behind. I think we need to get in step with what other universities are doing,” said Judy Amundson, associate vice-president of student affairs.

“I agree that it really demonstrates a university’s commitment to Aboriginal growth. This university will really have to go (toward core funding) to demonstrate its commitment, in my opinion.”

Amundson says the U of R plans to explore providing some base funding. Meanwhile, the university will continue to look for outside funding opportunities, although how much money can be raised is still unknown.

The centre’s budget for 2008-09 is $261,600.
Métis talent honoured at ‘08 Saskatchewan Book Awards

By Sylvia Peequaquat
For Eagle Feather News

 Aboriginal writers were prominent at the recent 2008 Saskatchewan Book Awards held on Nov. 29, in Regina. There were 14 categories, including First Peoples’ publishing, scholarly writing, fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Aboriginal writers were nominated in almost every category.

The guest speaker was Maria Campbell and renowned Métis fiddler John Arcand, who fiddled the nominees into the awards ceremony and provided Campbell with background music during her speech.

The Saskatchewan Book Awards are in their sixteenth year, and this year Métis people were being recognized for their achievements and contributions to Saskatchewan. There was a silent auction in which Red River carts, made out of glass with a Métis sash attached, were auctioned off in the silent auction. There were 400 writers, sponsors, publishers, and community members in attendance.

With the Métis theme, it was fitting to have a representative from the Métis community as the guest speaker. Maria Campbell is an accomplished writer, playwright, storyteller, activist and Elder.

Even as an accomplished writer and activist, who has received recognition by receiving many awards throughout her career, she still gets nervous “in front of her people, the Métis people, and in front of writers,” she said.

She addressed the listeners in a clear, soft spoken voice, with the accompaniment of John Arcand’s fiddle and laughter from the audience as she shared her stories. Along with her speech, she incorporated a very funny story called “He’s a hell of a song” from her 1995 book “Stories of the Road Allowance People.”

Her storytelling was enriched by fiddle music by John Arcand – sultry during one stage of her reading and upbeat at another to emphasize the tone of her story. Her blend of storytelling with John Arcand’s fiddle music was a great mixture of Métis heritage and culture for the audience.

The evening was elegant and graceful.

Seeing so many supporters; writers, sponsors, publishers, community members and their families was exciting.

Campbell was gratified to be a part of a night that was dedicated to Métis people, and she noted that Gabriel Dumont Institute Publishing was one of the sponsors.

“(I was) proud to showcase my people because we (Métis) are always invisible people in the milieu of things.”

“Writing … storytelling is one of the most important things for us. When you look at the oral traditions of our people, the keeper of these oral traditions is the old first grandmother. So I think that stories really belong to the women. It was how they … how our old people taught us and so they are an important part of our culture.

“I think if stories are gone and women stop telling stories, I think then we’ll really be lost,” she said.

Aboriginal award winners were former Saskatchewan Poet Laureate Louise Bernice Halfe who was a double winner for her book of poetry, The Crooked Good, which received both the Saskatoon and First Peoples’ Publishing Awards. Veteran writer James Youngblood Henderson received the Scholarly Award for Treaty Rights in the Constitution of Canada.

Journalism student Sylvia Peequaquat meets her hero, legendary Métis author Maria Campbell who signed a copy of her book, Half-Breed. Campbell was the guest speaker at the 2008 Saskatchewan Book Awards.
Eight First Nations languages heard loud and clear at conference

After months of hard work the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre wrapped-up its annual Language Keepers Conference in December. From the opening reception and book launch, participants were immersed in language and cultural programming ranging from the latest in language technology to workshops facilitated by Saskatchewan Elders.

Authors Regina Shingoose and Darryl Chamakese, read aloud their newly published books to a receptive crowd.

The illustrations from the books formed the basis for a silent auction, with proceeds going towards the SICC Adopt a Family Fundraiser. This unique program provides Christmas gifts and Christmas dinner for two single mothers and two Elders.

On Thursday, Dec. 4, the opening set of workshops focused on this year’s theme of ‘Kinship.’ Each of Saskatchewan’s eight First Nations’ languages resonated throughout various locations of the Saskatoon Inn, as Elders stressed this very important First Nations concept.

Plenary and keynote addresses highlighted themes such as, ‘Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage’, ‘Kinship and Teachings’ and ‘Best of Both Worlds’.

Each year this annual conference grows and plans are already underway to make next year’s conference bigger and better.

(Above) A large crowd participated in the SICC’s annual Language Keepers Conference. (Right) The books were brought to life through the artwork of illustrator Joi Arcand. That’s her on the left joined with author Regina Shingoose. (Left) Isaac Chamakese had the highest bid of the night at the silent auction. Could it be because it is a picture of his wife? His son Darryl wrote the book and one of the characters is his mother, Isaac’s wife. Here he receives the art work from SICC President Dorothy Myo.

(Photos courtesy SICC)
Tkaronto, a debut feature film by Métis director and writer Shane Belcourt, was recently screened at Aboriginal Film Focus at the Broadway Theatre. The University of Saskatchewan’s Native Studies Department, in partnership with Gabriel Dumont Institute, presented six days of unique Aboriginal film from Nov. 28 to December 4.

Other films featured were The Exiles and Club Native.

“The subject matter has special interest for us, so we are more than happy to be a partner in this wonderful event” said Roger Maaka, department head of Native Studies at the University of Saskatchewan.

Although I wasn’t able to attend the Saskatoon event, I was in Toronto recently and was able to attend a screening and question and answer period with Belcourt, followed by a workshop with the and his distributor the following day.

Tkaronto explores a profound sense of loss by its two main characters – both Ray and Jolene (played by Duane Murray and Melanie McLaren respectively) are dealing with confusion regarding identity and their place in the world.

Ray is a light-skinned Métis guy who is also struggling with the upcoming birth of his first child – a problem for him since he has yet to realize his dreams of being a successful screenwriter. Like many new fathers, Ray feels being a parent will ultimately end his creative life and he’ll have to get a ‘real’ job in order to survive.

Jolene is a First Nations artist whose work is highly touted throughout North America. When she’s given sweetgrass by an Elder she’s working with (played by Lorne Cardinal), Jolene is unsure what to do and is devastated when she realizes she has no idea how to pray.

Their lives collide when Ray ends up staying at his friend’s apartment on a trip to Toronto to pitch his TV series Indian Jones to Ignatius. Belcourt and his good friend Duane Murray (who plays Ray) came up with a story idea that fit their budget and schedules.

“It was four months from the time we decided to write Tkaronto until we started shooting. A lot of writing of the script also spilled over into production … I didn’t really get much sleep.”

In the end, Belcourt and his team managed to stay on budget, with most of the money being paid to the actors. He is the first to admit the film had glitches and sound problems but you don’t need to ask him if its success surprised him. You can see it in his eyes.

Not intending to make a dime at first, Belcourt was happy with paying his crew and, if possible, paying back the line of credit both he and his wife took out – anything else was gravy. Now sold to Air Canada, Tkaronto is also creating quite a buzz at film festivals and theatrical releases across North America.

Aboriginal Film Focus at the Broadway Theatre was excited to host one of those releases.

“This is the right time and the right city to present such special films. We’re excited that Gabriel Dumont institute is also involved, making it possible to have Shane Belcourt, the director of Tkaronto, join us on opening night,” said Broadway Executive Director Kirby Wirchenko.

The Exiles, a 1960s film about Indians leaving reservations to live in ‘glamorous’ LA, and Canadian filmmaker Tracey Deere’s documentary, Club Native, an award-winning National Film Board production, were matinee screenings.

In case you were wondering, Belcourt not only paid back the lines of credit, he also started making a little money of his own.

Moccasin Gets Impressive Gig with Native Earth

Playwright, actor, teacher and director Simon Moccasin recently got a role, perhaps the biggest of his promising career, with Native Earth’s production of A Very Polite Genocide or the Girl Who Fell to Earth. The play is about a young woman’s struggles with identity as a result of residential school. It runs from Dec. 6-21 at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre in Toronto. If you know Simon but can’t make it to Hogtown, send him an email of encouragement. (I think he’s nervous). On another note, I meant to congratulate my old friend Mr. Moccasin on winning the pitch event at the Mispon Aboriginal Filmmaking Festival. He received some cash and the use of pro equipment to shoot scenes for The Scoop, a story about First Nations children adopted out from their birth parents in the ‘60s and ‘70s.
SAEN providing an artistic outlet

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

The Saskatoon Aboriginal Employment Network (SAEN) is a group of employment development practitioners who work with First Nations and Métis clients in Saskatoon.

The practitioners of the group each provide labour force development programs and services to individual clientele groups in the city.

Each year, the good people at SAEN plan and deliver job fairs and the Artisan’s Craft Fair. This year was SAEN’s fifth Annual Artisan’s Craft Fair.

For the craft fair, SAEN takes over the main floor of the SITF building in downtown Saskatoon and they turn it over to local artisans to come and sell their goods.

The artisans are provided a table to show their wares, and the tables are provided free of charge, certainly a hand-up to artists who often do not make a lot of money.

“I do this for my livelihood and this is a great promotion,” said artist Darren Pratt. “Each community that you go to is a bit different, but coming here is great. Lots of people shopping and I get to meet and discuss business with other artists.”

Myrna LaPlante has taken the lead on the craft fairs for the last five years.

“We at SAEN also consider the self-employed and by bringing the self-employed artists together, we can help them network or increase their sales,” said LaPlante.

One aspect that stood out this year was the number of youth that had goods for sale. There were students from a beading program, Nutana High School and Oskayak High School.

“I love to see the youth out,” added LaPlante. “It is a great opportunity to meet the more established artisans and see what they do, and also just to sell their stuff and make some money for Christmas. Their high schools are doing a great job for them.”

This year’s craft fair was a great success with a few artisans selling their entire stock, and many asking to come back next year.

In between shooting movie roles, a half hour TV show series and co-hosting national award shows, Andrea Menard took some time recently to write, record and launch a new album. It is a Christmas album, no less, that will be accompanied by a three-city tour.

“I called this album Sparkle, because that is my prayer for the winters ahead - to allow the spark within us to burst into flames and ignite a grand illumination all across the globe,” says Menard. “So sparkle, my friends.”

Menard, an acclaimed singer, writer and actor, often finds her summers dedicated, fortunately, to shooting TV shows. This leaves a bit of a gap in her agenda to pursue her true love of singing and performing.

“What better way to spend my winters and Christmas time than going on the road and touring with a Christmas theme show, but where I can also mix in some of my favourites,” said Menard.

“People celebrate Christmas all over the world and maybe I will be taking this overseas or to Australia in the following years.”

The original songs, written with long-time collaborator Robert Walsh, cover a wide spectrum. Sparkle describes the crisp, clear winters, “full of icicles, stars, snow, tinsel, and crackling fires,” she says.

Yet it also contains songs for all seasons including Evergreen, which will be released as Menard’s first music video. The title song, Sparkle, invites all of the human family to unite. My Winter Song has been translated into Cree by award-winning writer Maria Campbell.

A humorous, jazzy duet with actor Lorne Cardinal (Corner Gas), called The Christmas Slump, will surely become the next ‘Baby, It’s Cold Outside.’ And parents of all ages will relate to Santa, I’m Broke.

Sparkle showcases Menard’s powerful, lyrical voice and is a refreshing change from the same Christmas albums and standards that we listen to every year.

You can see Menard live in concert during her three stop tour Dec.17 in Prince Albert, Dec. 18 in Yorkton and Dec. 19 at the Dakota Dunes Casino on Whitecap Dakota First Nation.

For ticket information go to www.andreamenard.com

Whitney Daniels was representing the Oskayak High School travel club. They sold treats they made themselves to raise money for a trip to Disneyland. She was cheered on by Maureen Belanger who was cutting crafts.
Don’t be shy, just keep writing advises Lisa Wilson

Lisa Wilson has been on a bit of a tear lately. She recently won first place in the Saskatchewan Writer’s Guild Short Manuscript Awards for a short story she wrote about a Métis guy, known only as Mister X, and the girl he leaves behind when he unexpectedly gets killed. She also was accepted into the Aboriginal Emerging Writers program at the Banff Centre last year, through the Canada Council for the Arts, and this year she has a Canada Council grant to finish her book. For a writer, that is a phenomenal year. Our Andrea Ledding caught up to Lisa between gigs to find out how this Métis writer feels about her recent success.

EFN: Tell us about yourself...

LW: I consider myself an urban Métis. I was born and raised in Saskatoon with a family that adopted me. I’ve worked at the Gabriel Dumont Institute now for over 11 years and am really blessed to have the opportunity to work in a Métis environment on Métis issues every day. I’m married now to a guy who’s an Irish immigrant and together we have seven kids, which keeps me busy enough.

EFN: What first drew you to writing...

LW: Most recently I won first place in the Saskatchewan Writer’s Guild Short Manuscript Awards (Oct. 2008) for a short story I wrote about a Métis guy, known only as Mister X, and the girl he leaves behind when he unexpectedly gets killed. When I got the call about winning that award I literally did a little dance. I’ve had stories accepted to literary magazines like Grain, spring, and Dalhousie Review. I have a story in an anthology of Aboriginal love stories called Zuag底win is a Many Splendoured Thing. I was lucky enough to get accepted into the Aboriginal Emerging Writers program at the Banff Centre last year, through the Canada Council for the Arts, and this year I have a Canada Council grant to finish my book.

EFN: Writing accomplishments so far...

LW: I’ve been writing on and off for years, but not very seriously. Every now and then I’d jot down a (usually bad) poem or dust off a long, in-progress story I’d been working on forever. But then day-to-day life would take over and it would all go back into the drawer. Then about six years ago I took an extensions class at the U of S in creative writing. After the class was over a few of us started a writing group. That writing group is really what has kept me writing and kept me involved in writing.

EFN: Favourite writers/influences...

LW: The first books I ever read by Aboriginal writers were critical to me. Of course Maria Campbell’s Halfbreed, and Beatrice Culleton’s April Raintree were big ones, when I was younger. I remember “discovering” The Rez Sisters by Thompson Highway and wanting everyone I knew to read it. More recently, Joseph Boyden’s Three Day Road made a big impact on me. There are just so many great Métis and First Nations writers; I could go on all day.

EFN: Any comments about the writing scene in Saskatoon/SK?

LW: For a while I felt like there wasn’t enough support for a Métis writer like myself. I want to write contemporary literary fiction, and I like to sometimes experiment with format and structure. I sort of felt like maybe editors either wanted you to not write Aboriginal content or they wanted you to do it a certain way. I found it kind of discouraging. But then I started to find out more about myself as a writer and decided to just let the writing speak for itself. And I received good advice along the way from other writers that has given me more confidence. Now I repeat to myself advice given to me: even if only one person “gets” what I’m trying to do with a story then it’s a success. As for the writing scene in Saskatchewan, I’m pretty new to it, but my impression, it is really strong here. We’re lucky to have so many talented writers in Saskatchewan and in Saskatoon. One thing I’d like to see more of my Métis counterparts – there are so many talented writers and story tellers out there whose stories really should be published.

EFN: What are you working on so far… your favourite genres… goals?

LW: I love the short story. It’s such a challenge to get it right and to apply just the right economy of words without cutting away too much. Future goals include getting my first book (collection of short stories) finished and finding a publisher for it. I would love to continue to write only short stories but getting a novel out there is what most publishers expect. So I’ve started a YA book about an urban Métis girl who finds out about her culture through an encounter with Rougarou. So far, that one has been a ton of fun to write.

EFN: Advice for writers, young people, and especially First Nations/Métis writers...

LW: My advice is, first of all, keep writing and don’t be shy about it. Find a writing group. Submit your writing to magazines and other places. It’s hard, but you have to figure out how to promote our own writing because, for the most part, no one is going to “discover” how talented you are. Apply for the writing mentorship program through the Saskatchewan Writers Guild. Apply for the AEW program through the Canada Council. Get involved in the writing community by going to workshops and retreats. But most of all, keep writing!

Lisa Wilson has been writing for many years but only recently began to take it seriously. She enjoys penning contemporary fiction.
SCYAP ART FOR THE PUBLIC

The Saskatoon Community Youth Arts Programming (SCYAP) Inc. is a not-for-profit charitable organization established in order to address the social, educational, and economic needs of youth who face multiple barriers to employment. SCYAP receives numerous requests to undertake community art projects. Murals have replaced former eyesores with attractive works of art. The Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan, and Boychuk St. Pump House mural, as well as the downtown-muralized City of Saskatoon traffic control boxes are just a few examples of SCYAP's anti-graffiti initiatives. Murals at the Mayfair Lawn Bowling Club and the Saskatoon Tribal Council were designed in conjunction with community groups and individuals. Photo at right was taken in front of a mural that Affinity Credit Union commissioned and was donated to the City of Saskatoon for its 100th birthday. That mural is on the back of the Starbucks building in downtown Saskatoon.
The Mosaic Company, one of Saskatchewan’s largest potash producers, was named Saskatchewan’s “Business of the Year” at the 25th Annual Achievement in Business Excellence (ABEX) Awards Dinner.

The Mosaic Company was also the winner in the “Community Involvement” category.

“We are proud to name the Mosaic Company as Saskatchewan’s Business of the Year,” noted Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce CEO Steve McLellan. “The “Business of the Year” is an exclusive award recognizing success and potential in a variety of areas.

Mosaic has both of these qualities in spades and we are eager to see what their future has in store.”

Over 800 people from across the province attended the 25th Annual ABEX Awards which were held in Regina on Oct. 25.

The ABEX Award for the Job Creation Category was awarded to SIGA for demonstrating exceptional performance in creating new permanent jobs, taking into account the relative size and nature of the business.

Operating in five Saskatchewan markets, the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority employs 1,700 people having added 500 full and part time jobs in 2007.

With their expansion into the Swift Current market occurring late this year, the company will employ over 2,000 people of which over 70 per cent are First Nations.

SIGA is currently ranked 33rd in Saskatchewan’s top 100 companies with annual revenues of $190 million and net profits of $60 million.

The Aboriginal Business Award is presented to a business or individual who has demonstrated leadership and commitment to the growth of Aboriginal businesses in Saskatchewan.

Primary emphasis is given to businesses or individuals with established practices, a record of support, proven accomplishments and a commitment to the highest ethical standards and practices.

Cameco Corporation, this year’s Aboriginal Business recipient, is the world’s largest uranium producer with most of its production coming from Northern Saskatchewan.

Cameco strives to create opportunity for northern residents – the majority of whom are Aboriginal.

They have achieved this in such ways as giving northern residents priority when hiring, supporting projects and programs in the community, supporting education and training, and giving preference to northern companies.

Cameco is proud of its Aboriginal connection and proud to be celebrating 20 years in Saskatchewan.
The son of a prominent First Nations leader, Ron Crowe has been named deputy minister in the department of First Nations and Métis Relations.

Crowe named deputy minister for FNMR

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

Ron Crowe comes from a long line of leaders. His father, Roland Crowe, was Chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians at the time of the Treaty Land Entitlement signing and is still a Senator. Ron followed his father into politics. At one time he was the Tribal Representative for File Hills Qu’Appelle Tribal Council. His career also included service with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations as Chief of Staff. Crowe’s experience in Indian government gave him a solid base that made him desirable to the province. He joined the First Nations and Métis Relations Ministry in 2007 as an Assistant Deputy Minister and in October he was named Deputy Minister of First Nation and Métis Relations. Ron Crowe is a member of the Piapot First Nation. We cornered him at a conference recently to see how the new gig is going.

What is the biggest difference between working in Indian government and the province?
I think it is the perspective that the province has on issues. Much is derived from legislation and policy. There is a different environment and I am trying to understand the process and make it meaningful for First Nation and Métis communities.

What is the biggest challenge in the new job?
The biggest challenge and opportunity is the duty to consult. How are we going to engage First Nation and Métis communities in consultation to make sure they are involved in the economy. This is a good way to achieve outcomes if we do it right.

What are you going to do different from the rest?
I want to engage the leadership. We are open to work with the leaders. There are areas we can do a better job, but where there is a willingness … we have to ensure there are good relations as that leads to dialogue.

From your background, did you ever see yourself as deputy minister of First Nation and Métis Relations?
To be honest, no, I did not. If I look back on experience and roles I had, I would never expect to have this post, but I also look at the environment today and there is an opportunity. There is genuine sincerity from government to change the kind of relationships that happened over the years. I hope to be part of developing that relationship for the long term. Sometimes it will take tough discussions and decisions but at the same time we have to ensure the relationship goes the best that it can.

As our economy thrives due to the strong demand for our resources, it is crucial that Métis and First Nations communities are involved in the developments occurring across the province.

“We are very pleased to receive this funding from the Province,” MNS president Robert Doucette said. “This money will assist the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, and the regions in providing additional capacity to participate in the consultation process.”

The Supreme Court of Canada’s rulings on Duty to Consult said the Crown should provide reasonable capacity to enable a First Nation or Métis rights-bearing community’s participation in government-initiated consultation.

Province provides consultation funds to MNS

The Government of Saskatchewan is providing a $200,000 grant to the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan (MNS) and its regions to ensure participation in activities surrounding consultation. The government has a responsibility to ensure that Métis people have the capacity to express their views during the consultation process.

With limited human and financial resources, it is difficult for the MNS to effectively engage government, its 12 MNS regions across Saskatchewan, more than 100 Métis locals, Métis citizens and industry to discuss consultations and other strategic interests.

“The Province is pleased with the co-operation and respectful relationship we have with the Métis in our province,” First Nations and Métis Relations Minister June Draude said.

“It is essential that the views of the Métis people are heard in the consultation process.”

Looking for an Exciting Career? - SaskPower has it!

POWER LINE TECHNICIAN APPRENTICESHIP POSITIONS

SaskPower’s Power Line Technicians play a vital role in bringing electricity to homes and industry in Saskatchewan.

Would you like to work outdoors, learn to climb power poles and become part of our team at SaskPower? SaskPower is looking for people interested in joining our team of Apprentice Power Line Technicians.Successful apprenticeships will result in journeyed status and allow for a variety of career opportunities within SaskPower.

Minimum qualifications include: Grade XI with Grade XII Math and Science or Grade XII equivalent with Grade XII Math and Science. You must be physically fit to meet the challenge of physically demanding work in all types of weather, be capable of working at heights on poles, willing to relocate anywhere in the province, and possess a valid Class 5 Driver’s Licence.

Apprentice salary for this position starts at $22.45 per hour plus benefits. Journeyed status salary starts at over $37.00 per hour.

SaskPower offers challenging careers, attractive benefits, workplace development and great opportunities for employees to become involved in their communities.

We thank all applicants for their interest; however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

The closing date for this competition is January 12, 2009.

Please submit applications online at saskpower.com or send to: SaskPower Recruitment, Attention Sheila, 10th Floor, 325 Victoria Avenue, Regina, SK S4P 0S5, making clear reference to Position #LP-154381.

To be considered for this opportunity, a copy of your high school transcripts and an extra set of reference letters are required.

SaskPower values and supports employment equity and workplace diversity. SaskPower hires on merit and welcomes applications from all interested and qualified individuals.
Hockey legends share their special memories

By John Lagimodiere

Of Eagle Feather News

Freddie Sasakamoose was the first Canadian Aboriginal player in the National Hockey League. He grew up in Ahtahkakoop and learned to play at the Indian Residential School at Duck Lake.

In 1953 he was named the most valuable player in the Western Canada Junior Hockey League. He made his debut in the NHL for the Chicago Blackhawks at Maple Leaf Gardens in 1954. He played with the Blackhawks during the rest of the 1953–1954 season, and in following years in the minor leagues. In 2002 he was honoured by the Blackhawks at a home game.

After retiring from hockey he became a band councillor on his home reserve and later chief for six years. He has also been extensively involved in the development of sports programs for Aboriginal children. We caught up with Freddie at the Regina Pats First Nation and Métis Appreciation Night and surprised him with a quick quiz; on everything we wanted to know.

What is your favourite music or band? Country! I like Hank Williams.

Favourite hockey team when you were a kid? I would say the F.A. Minors.

Who is your favourite hockey team now?
The Chicago Blackhawks

Describe your biggest sporting achievement. Being in the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame.

Describe your best goal ever.
That would have been at New Westminster when I was playing semi-pro. I scored two in a game and I remember them both.

Who would win a fight between former Regina Pat, six foot seven inch Derek Boogaard now of the Minnesota Wild or Dave Schultz formerly of the Philadelphia Flyers? Probably the six foot seven guy.

Ever get into fights when you played?
I actually only fought ten times in the NHL but I used to fight a bit in junior. The poor guys I fought in junior, I ruined their career cause they broke their hands hitting me!

Who is the best player that you ever played with?
Bobby Clarke hands down.

Who is the best hockey player ever?
Gordie Howe and Wayne Gretzky are close, but it goes to Gretzky.

What is the craziest thing that you ever saw a teammate do?
I hit my fellow teammate Larry Goodenough with a slap shot in the bun in front of the net and he shit his pants on the ice at the Montreal Forum. True story. It was messy.

Who is the best player in the NHL?
I would have to go with Crosby. He is good and good for the game.

Who is going to win the Stanley Cup this year?
I would like to see Montreal win because of their 100 year celebration, but it is probably going to be a toss-up. Probably someone no one would expect. I would like to see the Flyers win, as it has been a long time … it is a toss-up between them, the Blackhawks and the Toronto Maple Leafs. I’ll pick Toronto.

Who was your fiercest rival when you were a player?
Probably Montreal. Their 1976 team was the best team I have ever seen.

Any tips for young guys who want to make it to the big leagues?
In hockey, to play the game, you have to be in shape. You can have all the talent in the world, but if you are not in shape, you will not play in the NHL. 75 per cent of it is conditioning. When we played we smoked between periods and would not have survived in this era … all that.

What is your favourite band or music?Band?
But I would say an overtime goal against the Toronto Maple Leafs in the 6th game in Maple Leaf Gardens in 1975.

Who would win a fight between former Regina Pat, the six foot seven inch Derek Boogaard now of the Minnesota Wild or Dave Schultz formerly of the Philadelphia Flyers?
(b) The Riverton Lions

Who is your favourite hockey team now?
The Manitoulin Islanders

Describe your greatest sporting achievement. Probably winning the Conn Smythe Trophy in 1976 after leading the National Hockey League in goals.

Describe your best goal ever.
I had a whole bunch and can’t remember them all! But I would say an overtime goal against the Toronto Maple Leafs in the 6th game in Maple Leaf Gardens in 1975.

Who would win a fight between former Regina Pat, the six foot seven inch Derek Boogaard now of the Minnesota Wild or Dave Schultz formerly of the Philadelphia Flyers?

Who is the best player in the NHL today?
Who is your favourite player of all time?
Bobby Clarke hands down.

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Best hockey player of all time?
Gordie Howe

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The Brandt Centre was packed with Indians the other night and it wasn’t the First Nations University Pow Wow like you thought. It was actually First Nation and Métis Awareness Night at the Regina Pats Western Hockey League home game against the Spokane Chiefs. And the Pats went all out in welcoming the community.

They opened the game with a centre ice, ten minute display of hoop dancing by the legendary Terrance LittleLent. Hockey dignitaries like Freddie Sasakamoose and Reggie Leach made their way to centre ice on the red carpet. They were joined by other dignitaries like First Nations and Métis Relations Minister June Draude, Tribal Rep Edmund Bellegarde, and Regina Mayor Pat Fiacco.

Then Stacey Cyr, a fourth year student from the First Nations University of Canada, blessed the game by belting out a stunning rendition of O Canada in Cree while Elder Howard Anderson, stood by her side, headdress on, eagle staff in hand, proudly at attention. “It was Howard that made this happen,” said Cliff Mapes, director of corporate sales and marketing for the Pats.

“One game last year he came to me and asked why we sang the anthem in English and French but not in Cree. I said, ‘I don’t know but tell ya what Howard, when the season is over come talk to me about next year.’ Well, the day Howard Anderson came to me and said, ‘I want a Cree version of the anthem at a Pats game. All I really wanted was the anthem sung, but the Pats and I are working together more and you see it in events like tonight.’”

Leach and Sasakamoose also spent time signing autographs near the giant teepee that was on the concourse. The ceremonial faceoff at centre ice took place after a ten-minute display of hoop dancing by Terrance LittleLent.

“Howard beside me and to sing the anthem in Cree, it allowed me to share that pride in Cree really started something and in the process created memories for many that will last a life time.”

“I never would have seen a night like this,” said Sasakamoose. “We had nothing but great for them now, Times have changed. You see those sticks they use. Light as a feather. I wish I had that when I played,” he laughed.

Leach, who coaches junior hockey in northern Ontario, says the opportunities are there for the kids today, but they have to take them. “It is a long process. I coach a junior team and we started with ten or twelve native kids and I am now down to three. The ones who make it are dedicated. It is what is in your heart that is what you have to do. Many want to take the easy way out and you can’t do that in life anymore.”

Leach, aside from coaching, also tours and talks to youth, and is a regular visitor to Regina where he is the co host of The Oskana Cup Reggie Leach Hockey Challenge. “It is my pleasure coming back to Regina, with the Oskana Cup every year raising money for inner-city kids to play sports,” said Leach.

“We have a great time at the tournament and I talk with kids. With the youth, it has to be positive for them. They are our future. It is different now. The world has changed. Within the Aboriginal community, we are working together more and you see it in events like tonight.”

Leach and Sasakamoose also spent time signing autographs near the giant teepee that was on the concourse.

“The night of Aboriginal all-stars, culture and friendship was a huge success for the Regina Pats.

“We wanted to bring a little bit of the First Nation culture to our hockey fans and hopefully educate them a little bit,” said Mapes.

“I know through this process I have been educated a lot. I have a much better understanding of their culture and lifestyle. We have two players with Aboriginal ancestry, Graham Hood and Damien Keeto. It is tough for First Nation kids to get to this level of hockey and if there is anything the Regina Pats can do to be involved in the future, we want to do it.”

Howard Anderson and his simple push to have the national anthem sung in Cree really started something and in the process created memories for many that will last a life time.

“When I was a kid, I watched Hockey Night in Canada with my dad,” said Stacey Cyr. “And then to stand at centre ice with Howard beside me and to sing the anthem in Cree, it allowed me to share that pride that exists in a nation. It was so nice of the Pats to make a night like this happen. We really feel a part of it.”
Corey Matthews helps boys meet the world

He may not be a famous TV star but this Corey Matthews is definitely a celebrity at Scott Collegiate. When he showed up at Scott Collegiate in 2003, the school didn’t even have a basketball program. It had been defunct or 15 years. Matthews immediately turned that around. He started up the junior basketball program and has since gone on to win two city basketball titles.

In addition to the team at Scott, Matthews also coaches and runs the North Central Lakers community basketball program. This program has been very successful and allowed Matthews to dream bigger. He is in the process of developing an Aboriginal Basketball Academy, which would be the first of its kind for the province. A sort of top 50 camp, with kids coming from all over the province.

Matthews has numerous goals he hopes to attain through the program. He hopes to provide many of the youth he knows to learn from others. “It’s nice to take a step back, sometimes, and learn different things,” he explains.

Matthews says he has always felt at ease on the basketball court, it is a place where he belongs. And through sports he hopes to provide many of the youth he works with that same feeling. A sense of purpose not related to struggles off the court or off the field. He is helping to build better human beings, not just better athletes.

Through all that he does, this Laker is becoming a real Trailblazer. If you would like to contact Corey he can be reached at the North Central Lakers Club at northcentrallakers@yahoo.ca.

Rabbit on the Loose in Providence

Former Saskatoon Blade Wacey Rabbit has been playing with the Providence Bruins of the American Hockey League for the last three seasons. His career since going to Providence has been a steady climb up the team’s depth chart. And he still has his sights set on making the big club, the NHL’s Boston Bruins, some day.

Following his stint with the Blades, Rabbit was in Providence for the first 22 games of the 2006-07 season before being sent back to the WHL and his new home in Vancouver where he wound up playing for the Giants.

It was there that Rabbit won the Memorial Cup and was the club’s second leading scorer during their playoff run. The time on the West Coast, he says “was great for my playing career”.

Rabbit says he plans on working hard and doing his best this year. Hopefully he can get the call-up some time in the next few years. Until then he’ll continue to work hard in hopes of fulfilling his dream of playing in the NHL.

Dixon and the Bisons Storm in and out of Saskatchewan

Nathan Dixon has found success in his first full season of Canada West Basketball. The first year Manitoba Bison Saskatchewan at the 2009 Canada Summer Games. The opportunity is not lost on Matthews and he is looking forward to the coaching, but more so the learning. He says he would like to “take the knowledge he has learned from this experience and take it back to the Aboriginal community programs.”

Despite being just 31, Matthews has been coaching for about 15 years and enjoys the time he has to learn from others. “It’s nice to take a step back, sometimes, and learn different things,” he explains.

Matthews says he has always felt at ease on the basketball court, it is a place where he belongs. And through sports he hopes to provide many of the youth he works with that same feeling. A sense of purpose not related to struggles off the court or off the field. He is helping to build better human beings, not just better athletes.

Aboriginal Community Sport Grant

The purpose of the Aboriginal Community Sport Grant Program (ACSP) is to provide greater sport participation and development opportunities for Aboriginal youth in Saskatchewan. The program will assist and support the implementation of organized community sport programs to increase sport opportunities for Aboriginal youth in the Aboriginal communities in the rural, urban, reserve, isolated and northern communities.

Applicants must have appropriate levels of participants insurance covering events, services and activities that fall under its mandate.

Eligible communities, organizations may partner with eligible community/organizations to apply for support and deliver activities that meet the objectives of the program.

Individual and provincial organizations may not apply for funding assistance through this program.

What is the Aboriginal Community Sport Grant?

Who can apply?

- Organizations that provide services with First Nations and Métis people and are registered under the Saskatchewan Non-Profit Corporations Act are eligible to apply (these organizations must have been incorporated and in existence for a minimum of one year). or
- Communities are eligible to apply provided endorsement is received from a Band/Affiliated Office (i.e. Band, Rez or Chief). or
- Applicants must have appropriate levels of participants insurance covering events, services and activities that fall under its mandate. or
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How much funding is available?

- Recipients are permitted to apply for more than one community sport initiative, however, a separate application per initiative is required. if an organization or community is submitting more than one application, consideration will be given to the second or subsequent application(s) after all other community submissions have been reviewed.
- The maximum eligible amount a community can receive per initiative is $5,000 per year. The minimum application amount is $500, per initiative, per year.
- For approved sport initiatives, grant recipients will be eligible to apply for additional funding support in subsequent years. Initiatives can be funded for up to three years but the maximum eligible amount a grant recipient can receive is $10,000 per initiative, over the three years.

Upcoming Grant Deadlines

- Fall Programs: November 1st, 2008
- Winter Programs: January 9th, 2009
- Spring/Summer Programs: February 1st, 2009

For more information or to receive your application form/workbook please contact the Saskatchewan Sports Council 975-0305 or saskatchewansport@council@sask.ca.
Lorna and Eugene Arcand have played key roles in the world of sports.

People often say the Aboriginal community is great for honouring its people, but it is often after they have passed. Sometimes we forget to thank people for their great work when they can feel the appreciation.

Well, the community recently took steps to honour two of its living and breathing sports ambassadors, Lorna and Eugene Arcand.

This dynamic duo has been involved with sports their entire life. They are often the driving force behind the incredible success of Team Sask at the North American Indigenous Games. In British Columbia this year, Lorna and Eugene Arcand were presented with an Award and honoured for their contribution to NAIG and their involvement since 1990. Eugene and Lorna joined the ranks of other founding members Willie Littlechild, Charles Wood and John Fletcher in being honoured.

Eugene was the first Aboriginal person to be named citizen of the year in Prince Albert. His skills in organizing big events and bringing in sponsors is legendary. He is also a member of the Saskatchewan Indian Sports Hall of Fame as a builder.

Lorna is the busiest woman around. Her energy helps bring to life the FSIN Annual Pow Wow, the First Nations Summer and Winter Games and of course, the North American Indigenous Games where this year, she fittingly carried in the Saskatchewan sign. Her hard work is greatly appreciated.

It is through the tireless efforts of people like Eugene and Lorna Arcand that many of our youth in Saskatchewan have excelled in sport and have gone onto bigger and better achievements in their careers.
The mission of the CCDF is to improve the economic circumstances of Saskatchewan’s Métis by providing funding for business development, community economic development and development of management skills and assistance to new and existing Métis owned businesses.

Loan/Equity Contribution Program
Community Business Development Program
Support for Aftercare Program
Development of Management & Marketing Skills Program
Business Plan Assistance Program
Large Scale or Joint Venture Project Program

Please contact us at:
www.clarencecampeau.com
email: info@clarencecampeau.com
2158 Airport Drive
Saskatoon, SK S7L 6M6
(306) 657-4870
Fax (306) 657-4890
Toll Free: 1-888-657-4870