Youth gather for historic summit

Who better to discuss the future of Saskatchewan and the challenges of youth than young people themselves? So it was appropriate that more than 400 young people from all over Saskatchewan gathered at Teachers Credit Union Place in Saskatoon recently to discuss the province’s future and their place in it.

Youth were randomly put into groups and then sent to breakout sessions in which they exchanged ideas and thoughts about various topics including:

Youth friendly Workplaces,
Saskatchewan in the Year 2020, and
Cool Communities.

Many of the youth in attendance said they are frustrated at the lack of recognition they receive and often feel their voice on many of the issues affecting them is not being heard.

“You build communities through all of the people in that community and currently the youth voice is not being heard,” suggested Tala Tootoosis, who works with Communities for Children in Saskatoon. “And that’s tragic because we are the future.”

A growing concern in this Saskatchewan is the migration of youth to other places around the country. It was a major focus of the politicians and the business community in attendance. The strategy, one that the provincial government has been aggressively pursuing in recent months, is to showcase the bountiful opportunities that Saskatchewan has to offer.

Premier Lorne Calvert attempted to address such issues and told the youth in attendance that the future in this province is bright.

“Today’s Saskatchewan offers youth unparalleled professional, cultural, and lifestyle opportunities and more importantly it offers the opportunity to build a future,” Calvert said.

Attendees were also exposed to many successful youth who currently reside in Saskatchewan. They ranged from Kaveri Bittira who is a journalist for CBC television and host of the Summit to Jason Louttit who works with the Aboriginal Role model Esteem team and the Government of Canada.

In the end the Summit accomplished many of the goals that organizers had hoped. Youth were talking about the future, not just their future, but their future in Saskatchewan.

The local business sector was able to network with many of the promising youth here in the province. The young people were given the spotlight to voice concerns and opinions on issues that matter.

Perhaps the only thing missing was the fact that more Aboriginal youth were not in attendance. As the fastest rising demographic in the province, it was disappointing for organizers that only a few young First Nations and Metis youth participated in the Summit.

Next year, organizers would like to have at least 100 Aboriginal youth in an effort to be more reflective of the true population in the province.
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The Conservative government recently announced $15 million to improve the long-term economic viability of four Primrose Lake communities that were moved in 1953 to accommodate the weapons range.

The announcement was made by the Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians.

The funding will be used by the four communities of Cole Bay, Jans Bay, Beauval and Île-à-la-Croise to promote regional economic development and create economic infrastructure. The funding is intended to promote development in communities located near the Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range.

“This investment in regional economic development and infrastructure will help to build stronger communities in Northern Saskatchewan,” said Prentice.

“For example, future projects could include the construction of resource access roads or the installation of business-related high-speed internet which will help to create job opportunities and increase economic prosperity. Through this funding, we will help to improve the lives of residents in the Primrose Lake region.”

Gary Merasty, Member of Parliament for Desnêthê-Missinip-Churchill River, welcomed the announcement that the Conservative government will honour the previous Liberal government’s Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range economic development settlement.

“I am very pleased that the Conservatives have finally honoured the agreement reached by the previous Liberal government,” said Mr. Merasty. “Most importantly, this agreement shows the dedication and tireless work by everyone involved, particularly the Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range Settlement Committee and its chairman, Beauval Mayor Alex Maurice. I congratulate them and all the residents of the communities involved.”

Alex Maurice has worked tirelessly on this file and even used to spend time in his youth writing letters for his father for this issue.

“My dad would always say to me to never forget the Elders,” said Maurice. “Well, over the years we received lots of rejection letters, almost constantly. Now that we have finally signed the agreement, I am both sad and happy.

“Sad because we have lost so many Elders since they moved the communities in 1953, but happy that the 15 or 20 Elders that are still alive will get something and their future generations will benefit.”

According to Maurice, the committee insisted on a lump sum payment instead of having the money trickle in. And they also insisted that the $15 million would go right into a trust fund instead of being split into the communities.

Some $4.5 million, which is the provincial contribution, will be in an operating account, which will have a culture fund. From that fund, surviving Elders will receive $10,000 each and have their houses updated and repaired. There will also be scholarships and, of course, economic development.

The funds will be transferred to the community-based, non-profit Primrose Lake Economic Development Corporation (PLEDC) and placement into a professionally managed Trust Fund.

Background of Weapons Range deal

• In 1953, the Government of Canada established a large bombing and gunnery range - the Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range (PLAWR) on Crown land in an area that straddles the Saskatchewan-Alberta border northeast of Edmonton.

• The federal government has provided funding to the Provinces and First Nations to promote economic development in communities located near the Range. Saskatchewan still owns the land and retains the rights to the resources on the PLAWR as well as responsibility for forest fire protection.

• In 1995, the PLAWR Negotiating Committee was created to negotiate an agreement with the federal government. The group represents Métis individuals in four communities near the range: Cole Bay, Jans Bay, Beauval and Île-à-la-Croise.

• In 2004, the Government of Canada and the Province of Saskatchewan reached an agreement with the Primrose Lake communities whereby the two levels of government would invest $19.5 million, over five years, towards regional economic development initiatives. The federal share was $15 million with the Province of Saskatchewan contributing the remaining $4.5 million.

• Ongoing consultations with the affected communities indicated their strong preference for a single-year transfer to Primrose Lake Economic Development Corporation (PLEDC) and placement into a professionally managed Trust Fund.

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For all your concerns...

Gary Merasty, M.P.
Desnêthê-Missinip-Churchill River

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WEDC), with its mandate to develop and diversify the western Canadian economy, will deliver the federal funding on behalf of the Government of Canada.

The Department of National Defence and the Province of Saskatchewan are planning to amend the principle agreement for the use of the Saskatchewan portion of the Range, and to amend the oil and gas access agreement permitting limited access to the Province of Saskatchewan for oil and gas exploration, development and production purposes.

There is a duty to consult with Aboriginal people regarding the access agreement, and this will be undertaken by DND in the coming months.
Holy smokes! That’s my face on a billboard

I apologize for having my big misshapen head over-exposed on buses and billboards throughout the province.

It all started because I quit smoking … again. This summer I hosted a radio show on CBC called ‘As If’ and the premise on the last episode was ‘As If’ I could quit smoking.

And that is and always has been a big AS IF when it comes to me quitting. In fact, I have twice announced that I had quit smoking, right in this very space, and both times went right back to that addictive killer.

I must have quit smoking a dozen times in my life. More if you include the times I woke up after a heavy night and swore that was it … until I had my first coffee and the craving came back.

No matter how repulsive that first taste was or the pain of the initial cough on a bad day, I still choked it down and continued on, forcing my body back to normal levels of poison so I didn’t twitch or bitch too much.

What an awful roller coaster of being sick. Loving the smoking, but hating the health affects led me to quit many times and I have used every single quit smoking aid ever except for those long filters you use to gradually lower the amount of smoke, tar, nicotine and other cancer causing agents.

I figured they looked way too European for me and tried other strategies.

The patch worked once, but the next time I used it to quit, it hurt me. If I wore it on my arm, my shoulder and wrist hurt.

Wear the patch on the butt cheek and my hip, knee and ankle hurt.

That was the end of that … and right back to smoking.

I tried Zyban, which has proven effective for mental patients, but alas, not for me. It did not help me quit smoking, but I was certainly happy, loopy even. And the dreams, I miss the dreams.

The first time I used nicotine gum to quit did not go so well. This was a while ago and though the gum did not help me quit smoking, but I was certainly happy, loopy even. And the dreams, I miss the dreams.

Unfortunately, in December at the age of 72 Allen Carr has the best explanation of smoking, quitting and nicotine addiction in the book ‘Easy way to quit smoking’. I love this book and anyone who smokes should read it.

He makes you realize that it is not a sad thing to quit smoking and that we are not “sacrificing” anything.

We are actually taking control of our health and making ourselves feel better.

I like the book so much I used it to quit three times. Unfortunately, in December at the age of 72 Allen Carr died from lung cancer. He had quit cold turkey 23 years ago, leaving behind his 100 smokes a day habit to go on and write the book, open 100 clinics and help cure over ten million smokers of their habit.

Job well done, Allen.

I talked about all these options on my radio show and pledged that after the show, I was going to have one last smoke and that was it. So I did it.

Carr died from lung cancer. He had quit cold turkey 23 years ago, leaving behind his 100 smokes a day habit to go on and write the book, open 100 clinics and help cure over ten million smokers of their habit.

Job well done, Allen.

I talked about all these options on my radio show and pledged that after the show, I was going to have one last smoke and that was it. So I did it.

A couple days later I got a call from Kelly Pierson at the Cancer Society. She had heard me talk about quitting smoking and suggested I try the Smokers’ Helpline. So I did.

There, I met some really nice folk who coached you, congratulated you and cheered you through your entire quit process.

A friendly voice that would recommend a cool glass of water to beat back a nasty nic fit.

A voice that would tell you to go out and do something nice for yourself after a month of not smoking because you just saved $200 dollars.

So I used the Smokers’ Helpline and I am still quit. They were happy about this and asked if I would do a testimonial for them.

Then they asked if I would mind being in an advertisement because they didn’t have anyone from Saskatchewan for the campaign. They told me it was going to be a mass marketing campaign on billboards, buses and even on bathroom walls. There is even an ad in this paper with my face adorning it.

Anyway, I am still quit. Over five months now and things are going well. I don’t miss it. No more yellow fingers and teeth. The congestion is gone the smokers cough is gone too. Food tastes good. Really good. Fifteen extra pounds good. But that is certainly better than lung cancer and much easier to treat.

Thousands of people will die in Canada this year because of smoking. Over fifty per cent of all Aboriginal people smoke. Over 60 per cent of our youth smoke.

This is not a good thing. Because of this, the Smokers Helpline people have decided to impose my face on the unsuspecting people of Saskatchewan for no other reason than to encourage you to get help in quitting smoking.

I saw one of my billboards the other day and it is quite surreal to see your own head that large, so please use the Helpline and quit smoking.

They promise that if you do, the billboards and bus ads will come down at once.

And, it is the best thing you could do for your health. Ever.

The Smokers’ Helpline number is 1-877-513-5333.
Health is not just about the body. It is about creating a healthy human environment where we can live without fear and violence. Being able to speak out without retaliation, walk down the street in safety, practice our beliefs freely, and be treated with respect and dignity are basic human rights, but we have a long way to go before they will be honored and practiced. We still have a lot of work to do to get there.

The traditional values that our forefathers and foremothers lived by—honesty, integrity, kindness, generosity, humility, compassion, respect, courage, pride—are slowly coming back and many people are working hard to heal themselves and live by those teachings.

On the other side, there is also a lot of lip-service and hypocrisy going on these days. Even worse, “tradition” is often used to cajole, coerce, and bully people into keeping quiet, turning a blind eye, and blindly obeying even when they don’t feel good about it or know in their hearts that it is not just or fair.

Since when did it become “un-traditional” and “white man’s ways” to stand up and ask “how did you spend our money?” When did it become “un-traditional” or “white man’s ways” to speak out against abuse and injustice in our own communities?

As children many of us learned that our “traditional” leaders were kind, generous, and often the poorest people in the community because it was their responsibility to ensure that the people came first. As children we learned that our “traditional” Elders were gentle and non-judgmental, that they respected difference, were open minded and did not preach or impose their ideas on others. People had the freedom to think for themselves, to make their own decisions, to ask questions, to choose how to live their lives.

When everyone lived by and practiced those traditional values there was little room for jealousy, power-tripping, corruption, manipulation, and bullying. If anyone out there can come up with Cree or Anishnabe words that mean the same things as these words mean in English, let me know.

The closest Cree term for “bully” we have come up with so far is émamaskatikootasoot. It describes a person who is acting out of character, someone engaged in outrageous or abnormal behavior.

When did asking questions, and expecting leaders and others in positions of authority to be accountable for their actions to the people, become “un-traditional”? I think we learned a lot from those old Indian Agents and missionaries when our people were rounded up on reserves and denied their freedom.

In the old days our ancient stories held the teachings and laws that kept people in line. The stories our “Older Brother” left for us were often about greed, jealousy, selfishness, violence, meanness, disrespect, incest, and dishonesty and a host of other nasties that created disharmony and dysfunction in our lives and communities.

They are told with humour to remind us that we are only human but can bring great humiliation upon ourselves and families if we behaved inappropriately.

There is also a lot of teachings about how to live in our languages. When we study a word like émamaskatikootasoot it can teach us a lot about how people were expected to behave with one another.

It is important to bring back our “Older Brothers’” teachings in a meaningful way. We need his teachings on how to live a good life more than ever today because if we do not start treating each other with the respect and dignity we deserve, pretty soon some may start saying that abuse of power, keeping quiet, turning a blind eye, preaching and imposing our own ideas on others, is “traditional.”

We need to be clear about what we mean by “tradition” as we strive to live a “traditional” life today. I am perfectly happy to wear a skirt to ceremonies.

But really now, just because I wear jeans or joggers now and then does not mean I do not honor or celebrate my Cree womanhood.

We can still live the traditional teachings, go to ceremonies, practice our language PLUS drive trucks, have cell phones, washing machines, computers and drink Tim Horton’s coffee. I honestly believe we can have the best of both worlds if we work hard at practicing our traditional values.

The best of both worlds is what our ancestors prayed and made sacrifices for, and they had total confidence in us that we would find balance, create a space in this new world, and live good lives. We have a responsibility to those who have gone before us, and those who will come after us, to keep working on it.
Cabin fever and the art of making do

It’s been colder than the dark side of the moon. The snow is deeper than it has been since the sixties but the sun rises mercifully earlier every day.

Not so long ago I was living “La Vida Blizzard”. The snow came big time which thrilled the snowmobiler in me from horn to tail.

Trouble was a pipe froze, the wife and daughter abandoned me for the city and I was left alone with the dog and the cat.

The cat’s incessant meowing for water dripping from the tap was only stopped when I gave her the last of the milk.

I was snowbound four days waiting for the municipality to clear my driveway but they didn’t come so I begged a neighbour with a coveted snow blower to set me free.

My driveway is basically a hundred yard trench that fills in every time a northwest wind blows. Such is life in the country.

Living in the country demands a certain self-sufficiency people living in the city usually don’t have. You aren’t an acreage type until you’ve endured a few winters.

Visitors are many in the summer months but not so many people venture forth when the temperature drops and the north wind blows. Such is life in the country.

Kids are OK with country life until they become teenagers and their city friends become priority one. Bush parties are to country kids what Raves are to their city kin.

Sad to say there is just as much drugs and alcohol in the country as there is in the city.

There is one man from Fishing Lake First Nation who tried to rig up his junction box but slipped and received a blast of high voltage.

He’s in a wheelchair now. Don’t even think about trying this.

One year a pipe froze and burst. I couldn’t get a plumber to come but one fellow told me over the phone how to make an emergency repair.

I got a length of half inch heater hose, two clamps and a jig saw. I cut out the burst section, stuck on the heater hose and clamped it down. Problem solved.

It feels good to problem solve these crisis situations.

Recently in the news there was one old couple stuck on an ice road somewhere up north. Their vehicle ran out of gas and they were literally freezing to death.

The old fellow finally took some old tires he had and started them on fire. They made good heat and sent a black cloud of smoke up which was visible for some distance.

The burning tires saved their life.

Running water is something most of us take for granted until we don’t have it anymore. I replaced a heat tape and tried to thaw the pipe.

Nothing worked until I stuck a sewer snake down a drain pipe. I felt resistance. I pushed and prodded and finally I heard a glug glug and the sound of rushing water.

Despair to elation in one brief moment. I had running water once again.

The blizzard had one good outcome. I finally found the time to get on the computer and set up my own Blog. A Blog is a modern day version of a vanity press without the associated costs.

Anyone with a computer and an internet connection can make, post and update writings and photos. It’s as creative as you want it to be.

I posted most of my old Eagle Feather News columns and some unpublished works.

To check it out, just go to prairiehawk.blogspot.com

I must say I am very impressed with the Kahkewistahaw web site.

Every First Nation should have a similar site. They even have a community discussion board where band members may post their views on any number of topics.

It makes for interesting and healthy debate. Check out at Kahkewistahaw.com

Tansi! Anin Segwa! Edlanete! Hau Koda!

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FirstSask Credit Union
Senior governments walk away from Métis election

BY DAVID SHIELD

It’s been a tough few weeks for the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S). Some could argue it’s been even tougher on the Métis people of Saskatchewan.

For months, the beleaguered MN-S had been meeting with the federally appointed Independent Oversight Committee to set an election date. It’s been three years since the scandal-plagued election of 2004, and in January, everyone involved with Métis politics seemed eager to get on with the business of electing new representatives.

Everything seemed to be going well. As late as Jan. 17, the Independent Oversight Committee sent out a press release saying the group had finished a comprehensive election strategy, and a Métis election could possibly go ahead as early as this June.

Suddenly, on Feb. 2, the provincial and federal governments pulled their financial support for the election. Stating that the Oversight Committee “did not receive the full support it needed from the Provincial Métis Council,” the federal government withdrew its financial support from the election, followed quickly by the Province.

Sadly, it seems like the only people who were surprised by the federal and provincial government’s decision was the MN-S executive.

For her part, Independent Oversight Committee Chair Marilyn Poitras says she’s still not entirely sure how talks with the MN-S went off the rails so quickly. Established last year, the Oversight Committee was intended to act as an independent body to help create a fair election process for the next provincial election.

Poitras says the federal government told her they needed MN-S approval for the recently created electoral plan. After a ‘long and intense’ meeting in December, Poitras said she had difficulty getting hold of the MN-S executive to get their approval for the plan.

“We said, ‘We need to hear back. If you guys don’t agree with it, we need to hear it. If you do agree with it, we need to hear it.’ And we didn’t. So I wrote a letter saying, ‘We really, really need to hear back.’ And we didn’t.

“So I phoned (MN-S President Guy Bouvier) and said, ‘We really, really need to hear back.’ And basically, I was told that they had nothing to report to me and they had no obligation to be in conversation with me at all,” she says.

After that, the MN-S sent out their own press release, stating that the MN-S would be hosting a Métis Nation Legislative Assembly on April 20 and a general assembly on April 21 — without any mention of the Independent Oversight Committee.

That didn’t sit very well with the federal government.

“I had to report that information back to the federal government because all of our work hinges on this. And the federal government says, ‘We tried, they’re not interested, that’s the end of it.’”

MN-S Treasurer Raymond Laliberté has a slightly different take on things.

“It’s shameful that (the federal government) is continuing to play politics with this critical issue that’s affecting people’s lives. Basically, to have no funding to have an election is causing more division within our own community. Obviously, these divide and conquer policies are not new to Aboriginal government but in the end I believe the MN-S constitution will stand, the process will work and the Métis government will be stronger,” he says.

Laliberté says it was the responsibility of the MN-S to become involved with the election.

Basically, the (Independent Oversight Committee), as far as the MN-S is concerned, has the responsibility of operating and managing the election. We agreed with that wholeheartedly. How that gets done within the constitution of the MN-S and respecting the process of the MN-S constitution process is our responsibility,” he says.

At least part of the conflict stems from the Independent Oversight Committee’s plan for calling a general assembly for a new election, rather than a Legislative Assembly. According to Poitras, many people no longer recognize the MN-S after the 2004 election.

“The opinion that the Independent Oversight Committee put together basically said, your constitution says the people change the constitution even if it’s at the (Nation Legislative Assembly) level, it has to be ratified by the people. So we thought that working through a general assembly, we could get directly to the people right away,” she says.

However, that idea didn’t appeal to Métis National Council President Clem Chartier. In a recent interview with CBC Radio, he said the Independent Oversight Committee proposal runs counter to the MN-S constitution, and shouldn’t be followed. Instead, he’s asked the president of the Manitoba Métis, David Chartrand, to try and forge a new agreement.

“I’ve appointed him as lead person for the (Métis National Council) to see if we can’t get the process back on track. He would be the lead person trying to get the parties together."

However, if Chartier’s ‘peace-broking’ deal doesn’t work, what will happen to the MN-S?

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Health & Wellness

Lead Your Way!

Alberta Eashappie-Prettyshield: An inspiration for Aboriginal youth


Each year, 12 Aboriginal role models are nominated by their peers. They are selected for their achievements, leadership, and innovation. Throughout the year, the role models will attend celebrations, school functions, workshops, and conferences to share their stories with other Aboriginal youth.

Twelve strong, accomplished and motivated youth were named Aboriginal Role Models at an award ceremony held at Rideau Hall in Ottawa, Ontario on October 16, 2006. It was hosted by Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada.

A remarkable young woman named Alberta Eashappie-Prettyshield is the Saskatchewan representative this year. A passionate youth from the Carry the Kettle First Nation in Saskatchewan, Alberta is eager to bring the Nakoda language back to her community. At every opportunity, the 19-year-old encourages other youth to speak their language. Alberta is equally passionate about promoting her culture and is an accomplished jingle dress dancer.

Alberta graduated from the Nakoda Oyade Education Centre in 2005 and was named Second Valedictorian of her class. She enjoys working with community groups, and has volunteered as a teaching assistant for elementary students and as a receptionist for the band office and health clinic in her community.

In 2006, Alberta was named the Nakoda Oyade Education Centre Idol. Her goal is to become a marine biologist. Alberta’s message to youth is: “With the power of God, anything is possible.”

Team Diabetes Canada looking for runners for Hawaii marathon in Dec.

There are over 50,000 people in Saskatchewan with diabetes and more than 3,000 new cases diagnosed each year.

Physical activity is one of the best ways to prevent or delay the onset of Type 2 diabetes, which is why an exciting new program is so valuable to the Canadian Diabetes Association. Not only do the participants raise funds for the organization, they also get active and change their lifestyle for the better.

The Canadian Diabetes Association is looking for a First Nations team of 40 people for Honolulu, Hawaii in December of 2007. The Honolulu Marathon is one of the largest marathons with over 26,000 entries participating in 2005. Participants may run or walk the full marathon or 10K – there is no half marathon.

This event is runner and walker friendly with a generous time limit of eight hours for the full marathon. Cooler temperatures for the 5:00 am start soon climb closer to 30°C (mid 80’s°F) by 10:00 am. The Honolulu Marathon course is mostly flat with the exception of Diamond Head. The highest point on the course is 38 metres (124 feet) above sea level near Mile Nine.

This premier destination event incorporates the welcoming spirit for which Hawaiians are renowned. Team Diabetes stays for five days in Hawaii which brings participants’ fundraising amount to $6,100 plus a $100 registration fee.

Along with the Honolulu Marathon, a cultural exchange is being planned with the First Nations people of the Hawaiian islands. This will be a very memorable experience that will last a lifetime.

The Team Diabetes Program is quite simple – you join Team Diabetes by paying the $100 registration fee to walk or run a full or half-marathon. You agree to raise a minimum of $6,200 for the Canadian Diabetes Association (due to the extra nights required in this location). In return, the Association provides travel to and accommodation at the marathon destination. The Canadian Diabetes Association also provides training and fundraising support to help participants achieve their personal goals.

For information contact Michael Horbay at 306-933-1238, extension 231.

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We welcome your inquiries – Call (306) 966-8337 or drop by in its College of Pharmacy and Nutrition, University of Saskatchewan, 110 Science Place (Room 116) Thrivsdin Building, Saskatoon, SK S7N 0C9 or e-mail: pharmacy-medical-society@sask.ca and visit the web site: www.usask.ca/pharmacy-nutrition/ http://www.usask.ca/healthcareers/
Program for brain injured Aboriginal people in jeopardy

BY DARLA READ

February 2007

Eagle Feather

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Program run by the Saskatchewan Abilities Council in Saskatoon. It is the only program of its kind in the province, and it’s geared specifically towards Aboriginal people who suffer from an acquired brain injury.

An acquired brain injury happens after birth, and often happens in a motor vehicle accident, although not always. It is some kind of traumatic injury.

Characteristics of an acquired brain injury can include things like memory loss, a physical disability, speech impairment and inappropriate social behaviours. This program has existed since last July. Initially there were five people. Now there are 11, and there is a wait list of 10. Unfortunately the program is in danger.

It’s a pilot project, and funding runs out at the end of March.

That’s why people like Lana Pillar are working hard to find alternative means to fund the program.

Pillar, who supervises the program, says the cultural component is really important, and that’s why there are things like sharing circles, talking circles and smudges in group settings. But Pillar says the one-on-one time is really important, too.

“Most workers in care homes are female,” she explains. “To go out with one of the guys and be one of the guys is huge.”

Vandale says it’s huge for him, too. He says the job is rewarding and that the best part is seeing the guys happy. He’s pleased to be a companion while helping the men keep in touch with their roots. He says many have lost contact with their relatives, and that some family members don’t even come to visit those who live in institutions, like Ben Cote.

“It’s pretty sad, you know,” says Vandale.

Vandale hopes Aboriginal organizations that can step up to the plate will do so to help this program keep running. He says otherwise these people would “be going back to looking out the window and not getting out.”

And that would be a big disappointment to Ben Cote.

“I like meeting people. I like going out,” he says. “Going out with Vince is a big help.”

Alex Maurice rejects idea of breakaway group that would challenge Métis Nation of Saskatchewan

Veteran politician Alex Maurice says he’s walking away from the organization forever if something substantial isn’t changed during the next election. A candidate for president during the 2004 election, Maurice says an election would be completely useless if it was controlled by the current Provincial Métis Council.

“I, for one, will be walking away from the process if these characters receive funding in 2008 if we don’t have an (annual general meeting) until then.

“I will not be a part of an election under the control of this bunch. We’ve proven time and time again that 2004 resulted in charges and everyone suspending funding for us.”

The question of a parallel governmental body to the MN-S arising has come up in the past. While Poitras says she wouldn’t rule out something like that occurring, Maurice is fairly pessimistic about the idea.

“I think that process would establish an election date and an Métis Nation Legislative Assembly. I think that process would establish an election date that the existing Provincial Métis Council cannot ignore because we’d be abiding by the constitution.”

Whatever happens, it’s clear the nation has been suffering since 2004. With the MN-S in limbo, the federal government has no organization to talk to regarding hunting rights or other issues of provincial significance.

And that might be the biggest problem of all.
February is not only a time for flowers, chocolates and Valentine’s — it’s also Heart and Stroke Month. Did you know thousand of Canadians die from heart attacks every year because they don’t get medical treatment quickly enough?

What are the symptoms of a heart attack?

Knowing the answer to that question can save your life. Heart attack warning signals include: pain, shortness of breath, nausea, sweating and fear.

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms get to the hospital or clinic as soon as possible.

There are a few things we can do to reduce our chances of having a heart attack. For a more complete list see the Heart and Stroke Foundation Website.

Smoking is one risk factor we can do something about. Smoking contributes to the build up of plaque in your arteries increasing the risks of blood clots, reduces the oxygen in your blood, increases your blood pressure.

If you need help to quit smoking check out www.gosmokefree.ca or call toll free the Smokers’ Helpline 1-877-513-3333.

Another risk is being overweight. Almost 60 per cent of Canadian adults are overweight which is one of the major risk factors for heart disease.

By achieving and maintaining a healthy weight you can significantly reduce your risk of heart disease.

Check out www.heartandstrokefoundation.ca

Ladies, while you’re having your doctor check out your heart consider another silent killer. Listen carefully — Ovarian Cancer Whispers — so listen.

Watch for pelvic or abdominal pain or discomfort; vague but persistent gastrointestinal upsets such as gas, nausea, and indigestion; frequency and/or urgency of urination in the absence of an infection; unexplained weight gain or weight loss; pelvic and/or abdominal swelling, bloating and/or feeling of fullness; ongoing unusual fatigue; or unexplained changes in bowel habits.

If symptoms persist for more than two weeks, ask your doctor for a combination pelvic/rectal exam, CA-125 blood test, and trans vaginal ultrasound. A Pap Test WILL NOT detect ovarian cancer.

Gentlemen, I have not forgotten about you. Prostate examinations should begin at around 40 years of age and are currently one of the ways of detecting prostate cancer early.

In the early stages, prostate cancer often causes no symptoms and won’t for many years. This cancer is frequently detected by an abnormality on a blood test, or a lump in the prostate gland. As the cancer grows it presses on the urethra, the flow of urine slows and urination becomes difficult.

Patients may also experience burning with urination or blood in the urine. As the cancer continues to grow, it can completely block the flow of urine, resulting in a painful obstruction and enlarged bladder. So gentlemen don’t die of embarrassment — go and have your prostate checked.

As we near the end of winter let me remind you drivers out there to be careful on Saskatchewan highways. Pack an emergency kit in your trunk.

This is a suggested list of what to put in your kit; flares, large empty coffee can, candles, matches, water and granola bars. Should your vehicle get stuck — stay with your vehicle — do not try walking to get help — you have a better chance of surviving if you stay in the vehicle.

Do you have any health topics you would like to learn more about? Do you have any questions or comments? Write to me at sandee2says@yahoo.com I look forward to hearing from our readers. Don’t have access to a computer — no problem! Our mailing address is PO Box 924, ATTN Sandee Sez, Saskatoon SK, SKT 3M4

Until next month play safe and have fun.
REGINA - The First Nations University of Canada recently announced its new appointment as co-administrator of the National First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program.

“This new agreement demonstrates that our university has much to contribute to the studying and researching of human health issues that affect nearly all of the 600 First Nations throughout Canada,” said Charles Pratt, the University President.

“I congratulate the First Nations University on their commitment to this Environmental Contaminants Program,” said the Honourable Tony Clement, Federal Minister of Health.

“With this announcement, Canada’s new government and the Assembly of First Nations can work together with the University to better address the environmental health concerns of First Nations people in Canada.”

The program is a $1 million a year program funded by Health Canada. Each year, between five and seven projects are funded following a competitive selection process. Funding is provided directly to the selected First Nations communities to conduct community-driven scientific research projects.

The University’s Department of Science, under which the program will operate on a yearly basis in partnership with Health Canada, has an established network of expertise in teaching, research and service in relation to health, the environment, and to the pure and applied sciences. This includes an emphasis on incorporating traditional knowledge and contemporary issues faced by First Nations people.

The University also thanked the Canada Foundation of Innovation’s investment of over $350,000 toward the purchase of new equipment for the science laboratory.

In the past, the main campus was housed in rental space at the University of Regina, which provided limited access to crucial equipment and laboratories. Although research is a top priority for the institution, particularly research related to Aboriginal issues, the scope and quality of research that could be conducted were severely limited by the lack of equipment and space.

The new campus was completed in March 2003, and includes an Interdisciplinary Research Facility for Aboriginal Science and Health, thanks in part to a Canada Foundation for Innovation grant.

“We are thankful to CFI for their contribution,” says Herman Michell, Department of Science.

“Through these contributions, the research facility can provide our faculty and students with access to state-of-the-art research equipment to further their research, teaching, and community service initiatives.”

Herman Michell of the Department of Science says funding from the Canadian Foundation of Innovation will allow the school to offer students access to the latest research equipment.
Historic partnership delivers national symposium on business

BY JOHN LAGIMODIERE

The Province of Saskatchewan, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians and the Clarence Campeau Development Fund, representing the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, recently joined together in Saskatoon for a unique partnership to deliver an impressive economic development conference.

“Almost 700 people from across Canada – including the premiers of B.C., Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nunavut, and the North West Territories, and key Aboriginal leaders – were in attendance for ‘Excellence in Action: Best Practices in First Nations, Métis and Inuit Economic Development.’

“We took a great deal of pleasure working with the Federation and the Province to bring this event together,” said Ron Rivard, vice chair of the Clarence Campeau Development Fund, one of the major sponsors of the conference.

“We just don’t do that (work together) too often. This marks a very positive step forward with the Métis, the First Nations and the Province all working together. Now that we know we can get together, I throw out the challenge that we should do this on jurisdiction, land rights and maybe even poverty.”

Premier Lorne Calvert also had high praise for the event.

“This symposium results from the need to take a practical look at the steps that must be taken locally and nationally to help achieve greater Aboriginal participation in the economy,” he said.

“Given the activity that is already taking place, and the challenges that still face us, we are very confident that the delegates we invited here to meet in Saskatchewan will generate meaningful and significant discussion about what should be done next. We have certainly exceeded our goals.”

The panel presentations included:
- Challenge, Change and Development: Strategies for Success, which identified First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and Aboriginal businesses that have generated, and are sustaining, economic and employment benefits.
- What’s Making a Difference in Training, Skills Development and Labour Market Development, explored approaches to a representative workforce or the “return on social inclusion” that have delivered results.
- “We were all at the table as equal partners in co-operation with society, can use to generate economic and social development for First Nations people,” he continued.
- “I have a really good feeling but we can’t let this end as a feel good fuzzy hug.”
- “This symposium results from the need to take a practical look at the steps that must be taken locally and nationally to help achieve greater Aboriginal participation in the economy.”

“U.S. Tribes have more involvement of provincial and federal levels to drop these pearls of wisdom. We invited here to meet in Saskatchewan, Begay is both the director of the Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management and Policy in the Udall Centre for Studies in Public Policy and senior lecturer/associate social scientist in the American Indian Studies Program at the University of Arizona.

Dr. Manley Begay Jr. delivered the keynote address that closed the Excellence in Action conference recently held in Saskatoon. Begay is also co-director of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He is from the Navajo Nation, one that encompasses 17,000 square miles, has 300,000 residents and a council of 88 people.

“Amazing credentials aside, Begay is one of the most pragmatic speakers on development in the world. He told us he highlighted best practice with the Navajo Nation. We had to drop these pearls of wisdom But there are similarities with the Queen.”

“This is the standard approach, which often fails: 1 strategic, economic development problem; lets others develop agenda; views In stacle to development.”

Keynote speaker urges leaders
Thunderchild signs deal with Savanna Energy

BY JOHN LAGIMODIERE

Thunderchild First Nation also got into the swing of things as they signed a memorandum of understanding with Elson MacDougald, Chief Executive Officer of Savanna Energy Services Inc. Harold Jimmy, a Councilor from Thunderchild sees two major benefits for his First Nation.

“This will enable not only employment for our people, but it will create some wealth. Every day there is hundreds of thousands of dollars leaving our land. By participating in this partnership where we own a service rig we will start keeping that money.

“We have a lot of activity on the land right now so we need service rigs and there is a need. Also our people can be home every night.”

MacDougald is an old hand at this as his company has twelve 50/50 partnerships with Aboriginal communities.

“We expect to have people working by spring,” said MacDougald. “This is our first partnership in Saskatchewan and Thunderchild is very progressive and want to get it done.”

One of Canada’s fastest growing energy services providers, Western Lakota is currently operating 36 drilling rigs, including seven CBM/oil sands coring/preset rigs. The company also operates three-coil service units with an additional five scheduled to be completed throughout 2006.

Western Lakota continues to provide one of the newest fleets of safe and efficient drilling rigs and coil service units in Canada while delivering strong results for shareholders, customers, and Aboriginal partners.

Aboriginal employees make up 20 per cent of the company’s workforce of 650. It plans to increase that number by training an additional 100-150 people in 2006.

Western Lakota’s distinctive Aboriginal training program uses a portable drilling rig platform, that they take right into the community for training. It includes all the machinery and jobs of an on-site rig.

R
d Bruinooge, Parliamentary Secretary to Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, and Frank Suraci, Director of the Aboriginal Sector at Siemens Canada Limited, on behalf of President and CEO Guenther Scholz, have signed an agreement to work together on the development of a partnership for Aboriginal employment.

“Canada’s new government is proud to sign an Aboriginal Workplace Partnership agreement with Siemens Canada, which will recruit, retain and promote Aboriginal employees, said Bruinooge.

Our strategy considers not only the technologies required for clean water, health care, telehealth and wireless connectivity, but also requires Siemens to build local capacities to maintain and operate these systems,” said Scholz.

“We are committed to developing infrastructure that fosters employment, economic development and community growth.”

Siemens is one of the largest and most diversified companies in the world, providing innovations in areas such as automation and control, power, transportation, medical, information and communications, and lighting.

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When Curtis Peeteetuce set out to find storytellers for the 2007 Saskatchewan Aboriginal Storytelling week, he wanted people who told stories in different ways.

“The general belief is that only Elders tell stories,” he explains. “It’s important to me to acknowledge times are changing, and that stories are coming from everyone now.”

As the Writer in Residence at the Saskatoon Public Library, Peeteetuce was responsible for finding storytellers for the week of February 4 – 9 when the Library presented the week of tales. Each day a different storyteller shared at one of the Saskatoon public libraries to full capacity crowds, and it was all for free.

Peeteetuce tried to find a mixture of storytelling, and says the people each added something special. First, Peeteetuce wanted people to see storytelling through song, which is why he asked Joseph Naytowhow and Erika Faith, a duo that goes by the name Mocikun (Cree for having and creating joy) to perform. The two told stories through song or accompanied by instruments.

Cree isn’t Faith’s first language; she told the audience she’s been studying it for three years now. “I encourage everyone to learn languages because it’s a beautiful way to learn about other people.”

The crowd got a kick out of her when she couldn’t translate parts of a Cree story she and Naytowhow told together.

Peeteetuce also wanted children and adults attending storytelling week to see that stories exist in drama, so he invited the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company to present Caribou Song, a story written by Tomson Highway that depicts children who live in the North.

The next storyteller strayed from the tradition of oral history, says Peeteetuce, but he says the children just loved Dieter Braun’s presentation.

Through a series of photographs of clouds, Braun gave his interpretation of what he saw in them, which became the story of the sky thunderbirds. “There were ‘ooohs’ and ‘ahhhs’,” says Peeteetuce excitedly. “[Braun] would say, ‘Look at the thunderbird. Do you see it?’ and the kids would say, ‘Wow, look at that! Yeah, I see it!’”

Thursday was a bit more serious, but still light-hearted. There was an Aboriginal women’s storytelling circle. Women were able to share personal stories of humor and healing.

Tyrone Tootoosis finished off Aboriginal Storytelling Week by sharing stories from Nehiyaw Wasinahinkan: Cree Land Map. Peeteetuce says this was a historical storytelling approach as Tootoosis told stories about traditional Cree places.

Peeteetuce says the response from children at these sessions was great, and he says response from the community in general was, too. He wishes the sessions could have been held in bigger spaces, because he is certain those would have been filled.

While he doesn’t have any particular thing he wanted people to go away with, he says sharing stories is important because all Aboriginal stories, in whatever medium, have significance.

“| I do know stories are an expression of who we are. They are entertainment. They educate. And they empower. If anyone leaves with any one of those, I feel really good about this week.”

Joseph Naytowhow and Erika Faith add song to their storytelling performances.
The Piping Plover — A Species at Risk

The Piping Plover is a species at risk protected by the Species at Risk Act (SARA) under the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA) and the provincial Wildlife Act. It is considered to be at risk because of habitat loss, disturbance, and predation. Piping Plovers are known to nest on open beaches, particularly those with coarse sand, and to have a preference for nesting on islands or coastal areas. They are sensitive to disturbance and require undisturbed areas for nesting and rearing young.

**How do I know a Piping Plover when I see one?**

- **Behavior:** Piping Plovers are active birds that often call out with a distinctive piping sound.
- **Appearance:** They have a black neckband, a black hind toe, and orange legs. They are about 30 cm long.
- **Habitat:** They are found on sandy beaches and coastal dunes.

**Piping Plover Disturbance and Habitation**

Piping Plovers spend their winters along the Atlantic coast from South Carolina to Florida, and along the shores of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean. They breed in the Prairie Provinces of Canada, particularly in the Canadian prairies, and in the United States, primarily in the Great Lakes region. They are known to travel as far as the Pacific coast of North America in the fall.

**Piping Plover Protection and Recovery**

Conservation efforts for the Piping Plover include habitat protection and enhancement projects, such as the establishment of protective exclosures. The Species at Risk Act provides legal protection to the Piping Plover, and recovery plans are being developed to protect and enhance their habitats. The Piping Plover is also protected by the Migratory Bird Convention Act, which prohibits the destruction or disturbance of nesting sites.

**Take Action!**

You can help prevent species at risk from disappearing from the wild.

- Learn more about the Species at Risk Act process by contacting the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources at (204)956-0660.
- Provide feedback to the Government of Canada regarding listing and recovery of species at risk in your area (www.sararegistry.gc.ca).
- Get involved in stewardship initiatives for recovery and protection of species at risk in your area by contacting species at risk Recovery Team Chairs (www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca/recovery/team_ch_e.cfm).

**Credit Issues?? I Can Help!!**

Mainway Mazda is pleased to welcome Jennifer Lejan as our new “ZOOM-ZOOM” Credit Department. Call today, 373-3711 or apply online www.mainwaymotors.com

**News**

- **M A I N W A Y M A Z A D A**
  - 321 Circle Drive West, Saskatoon

**Featured Items**

- **Chicken Pak Specials**
  - 7 Pc. Pak. $17.99
  - 12 Pc. Pak. $20.99

**Mainway Mazda**

- **Credit Issues?? I Can Help!!**
  - Jennifer Lejan
  - 321 Circle Drive West, Saskatoon

**Mainway Mazda**

- **Warranty**
  - Up to 160,000 kms available

**Eagle Feather News**

February 2007

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**BUSINESS / CAREERS**

- **Eagle Feather News**
  - 321 Circle Drive West, Saskatoon

**Mainway Mazda**

- **Credit Issues?? I Can Help!!**
  - Jennifer Lejan
  - 321 Circle Drive West, Saskatoon

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**Mitchell’s Gourmet Foods**

**PRODUCTION LINE WORKERS**

Mitchell’s Gourmet Foods is accepting applications for full-time production line workers in their hog slaughtering and processing facilities in Saskatoon. These are hourly-paid positions with a wage range of $9.30 - $15.35 per hour. We offer a comprehensive benefit package and pension plan. Shift schedules may vary from week to week to include days, afternoons or midnights. Some shifts involve working Saturday and/or Sunday.

**Application Information**

- **Location:** Mitchell’s Gourmet Foods, 3003-11th St. West, Saskatoon, SK, S7K 3V4
- **Phone:** (306) 931-4360 • Fax: (306) 931-4296
- **Website:** www.mgf.ca
- **Contact:** Human Resources, Mitchell’s Gourmet Foods, Box 850, Saskatoon, SK, S7K 3V4

We would like to thank all applicants for their interest but only those being considered for an interview will be contacted. No phone calls please.

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**Science Programs**

SIAST’s Science programs prepare students for careers that often put them at the forefront of discovery and innovation. In each of our nationally-accredited science programs, students learn the practical skills that prospective employers want. In fact, over 92% of SIAST grads are employed within six months of completing their courses.

**Contact Information**

- **Website:** www.goSIAST.com
- **Phone:** 1-866-goSIAST

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**Whitecap Dakota First Nation, SK - Construction and commissioning of the Dakota Dunes Casino is within budget and ahead of schedule according to Zane Hansen, President and CEO of the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (SIGA).**

SIGA is pleased to announce the Dakota Dunes Casino will open to the public on September 6, 2007, almost one month ahead of schedule” said Hansen. “A grand opening gala will be held in September to open Saskatchewan’s newest entertainment destination.”

The next phase of construction is now underway, as the casino building is turned over to SIGA to complete its leasehold improvements, interior design work and installation of equipment. The base building contract between Saskatchewan Tribal Council and Graham Construction, which includes the support area and warehouse, administration, gaming floor and multifunction room is essentially complete.

“The partnership arrangement between Graham Construction and Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology’s (SIIIT) Construction Careers Program has been an overwhelming success with at least 60% of the employees being of First Nations ancestry during construction,” said Saskatchewan Tribal Council Chief Joe Quewezance.

“We’ve reached another significant milestone in this mega project,” added Chief Darcy Bear of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation.

“This casino, once complete, will generate significant employment opportunities, contribute to rural revitalization, and create new business opportunities throughout the entire region.”

SIGA will now proceed with tenant improvements including interior design and theming of the facility.

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**Job Position: National AHRDA Coordinator**

**Salary:** $45,000 – $55,000

**Education**

- A post secondary degree or diploma in a relevant field or equivalent training and experience.

**Experience**

- Minimum of two years project management or supervisory experience in a relevant field; and
- Experience in the non-profit sector, preferably with an Aboriginal organization.

**Specific Knowledge and Skills**

- Strong understanding of principles/values espoused by NWAC;
- Knowledge of issues affecting Aboriginal women and their families;
- Knowledge of Aboriginal employment/training issues;
- Knowledge of relevant legislation, regulations, programs and an understanding of their application to Aboriginal employment and training issues for women;

**For a full description:** www.nwac-haq.org (Careers)

**Apply with 2 recent references to:**

- D. Cossee, Team Lead, Corporate Operations
  1292 Wellington St. W
  Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 3A9
  dccossee@nwac-haq.org
  OR fax (613) 722-7687

**Deadline:** February 26, noon

No phone calls, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.
Cook among trio named to Business Hall of Fame

The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business recently announced that Chief Victor Buffalo of Hobbema, Alberta, Harry Cook of Lac La Ronge, and Garfield Buffalo of Hobbema, Alberta, have been named to the Council’s Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame. Buffalo, 62, Chief of the Council's Aboriginal Business group of laureates to be named to business in Canada as the third lifetime contribution to Aboriginalness in his tiny northern Labrador community over the past four decades.

Flowers, 66, President of Northland Enterprises of Hopedale, Newfoundland and Labrador, is an entrepreneur who has started, owned and operated numerous successful businesses in his tiny northern Labrador community. He was elected to council in 1985.

His remarkable 18-year run as Chief started in 1987. As Chief, Cook was President of the Kitsaki Management Limited Partnership which had been set up to allow the band council to finance their business ventures. Cook was one of the first Aboriginals in Canada appointed to a blue-chip business board. In 1992, he was invited to join the board of Cameco Corporation, the world’s largest uranium producer, a position he still holds.

Despite the fact that the area’s resources are relatively undeveloped, under Cook’s leadership the businesses grew and prospered until, by 2005 when he retired, Kitsaki owned or managed 14 companies engaged in everything from trucking to catering, forestry to hotels, and large-scale exports of locally-grown wild rice. It does about $70 million a year in business and has some 450 full-time employees.

Flowers, who has started, owned and operated numerous successful businesses in his tiny northern Labrador community over the past four decades, has been named to the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business in 2004 to mark their 20th year of operations.

HARRY COOK

Born in 1943 in Stanley Mission in northern Saskatchewan, Cook was trapped and fished with his parents until he was sent to residential school at the age of nine.

As a teenager he realized that his parents’ traditional way of life was disappearing, so Cook went to Prince Albert for high school and then trained as a welder in Saskatchewan. He spent 13 years at an aluminum and steel manufacturing plant in Regina - the last three as foreman.

In 1967 he married Rosie, also from Stanley Mission, and they started a family. Their life in Regina was comfortable, but they both missed their home up north. They moved back to Lac La Ronge in 1978, where Cook took a job as housing coordinator for the band. He was elected to council in 1983.

The Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame is sponsored by ESS Support Services, a division of Concentra Financial.

For more information on what the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association do, check out their website at www.afoa.ca
The Métis People of Saskatchewan have a new baby. Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment Services, an entity owned by the Gabriel Dumont Institute, will now take over any services that Métis Employment and Training Saskatchewan used to provide to Métis people looking to improve their educational and employment situation.

The federal government decommissioned the original incarnation, often known as METSI, after some of the people involved in METSI overspent and improperly spent money that was supposed to fund students to get training.

That lack of good governance and a refusal on many people’s parts to pay back the so-called overpayments led to the loss of this important institution.

Thankfully, there are many people in the Métis community who saw this as an opportunity instead of a loss.

"After METSI was dissolved, we answered the call for proposals and worked hard with our board and senior staff at developing a model that would best serve our clients," said Geordy McCaffery, Executive Director of Gabriel Dumont Institute.

"We want to focus on the clients that need the services. We will have ten regional offices and the staff will travel to outlying communities to make sure everyone gets the services they need." The knock against METSI was that it was an administrative nightmare with administration often eating up 40 per cent of the budget, often leaving students with no funds for training. The new Employment and Training program has addressed that issue immediately.

"We will be more efficient, with less service delivery offices and also we have less staff," said McCaffery. "In the decision-making processes, we don’t have a dedicated board that will oversee the Training and Employment Services.

“Our current Gabriel Dumont Institute Board of Governors will make policies and procedures for this agency. We also have no local Métis management board structure. In its place we have student selection committees. “They will have the important job of allocating funds to students based on labour market needs and trends. “Experts from Regional Colleges and CanSask Centres will advise those committees on training needs and skills required in a certain geographical area and then hopefully move students into those fields and then on into employment.”

Now that the training and employment services are under one roof, the concept of one stop shopping, and the better service that follows will surely show some positive results soon. The Institute used to rely on METSI to provide labour market information to them as they drew up curriculum and decided what fields to offer classes in. Now, they have that responsibility as well.

“Previously, we were running educational programs but we didn’t have the tools to link to the labour force. Now theoretically, we will be able to support a student from the second they enter our door to their career," explained McCaffery. "If they need career guidance in choosing a career, we can help them. More to that, we can give them tuition support, living allowances when they are attending training and in the case of workplace training, we can supply employers subsidies and things of that nature," he added.

“Basically people will be supported in their educational programs right to their job with a client focus. We will be more efficient and client centered. We have to get Métis people involved in training and into the labour force. You will see that soon, and we will be efficient."

There will be ten program delivery offices throughout Saskatchewan located in Ile a la Crosse, La Loche, La Ronge, Meadow Lake, Nipawin, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon and Yorkton.

Explore New Opportunities

As Canada’s first entrepreneurs, Aboriginal people have a tradition of exploring new opportunities. If you’re interested in doing the same today, we can help. We’re business information, a service of the Province of Saskatchewan Business Service Centre, the first step for entrepreneurs seeking information. Our no charge service can help you find what you need to start or grow your business. Call us toll-free or check out our website for a wealth of business information at your fingertips. We can also give you contact information for any of our regional partner offices.

Toll-free 1-800-657-4374
www.cbcw.org/sask

Health care in your future?

Is there a health care in your future? Check out these education opportunities...

Thinking about a career in the health field? Through interprovincial agreements, the Saskatchewan Government reserves spaces for residents to enroll in post-secondary programs that are not offered in the province, and in professions where there are employment opportunities in Saskatchewan.

- Denturist Technology, NAIT, Edmonton, AB
- Dental Assistant, NAIT, Edmonton, AB
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), NAIT, Edmonton, AB
- Nuclear Medicine, SAIT, Calgary, AB
- Occupational Therapy, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB
- Design and Prosthetics, IGT, Victoria, BC
- Respiratory Therapy, SAIT, Calgary, AB
- Sonography, SAIT, Calgary, AB

For more information visit the Interprovincial Health Training area at www.sasknetwork.ca or the Education and Career Planning area at www.health.gov.sk.ca.
The Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority board of directors has named Zane Hansen as president and chief executive officer. Hansen, a member of the Waterhen Lake First Nation, has served as acting president and CEO, since January 2006. He was hired by SIGA in January of 2005 for the position of senior vice president of finance and administration.

Prior to his role with SIGA, Hansen was employed by the Meadow Lake Tribal Council as the director of finance and administration. During this time, he gained extensive experience in the management of public sector programs and commercial business development.

“I am proud of the progress SIGA continues to make,” said Hansen. “I look forward to working with our team as we take on expansion projects and conduct our corporate business.”

Hansen has worked with all levels of government and is an accomplished negotiator.

He served six years on Meadow Lake Town Council as alderman, seven years as a member of the FSIN Treasury Board, three years as a provincial representative on the National Tribal Council Review and three years as Vice-Chair of the Prairie North Regional Health Authority.

Hansen holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Saskatchewan, and has a Certified Management Accountant designation from the Society of Management Accountants.

“Zane has demonstrated the leadership and focus that SIGA needs to succeed in an increasingly competitive market,” added Ray Ahenakew, Chairman of the Board of SIGA.

“The board of directors has been impressed with Zane’s leadership and initiative, and is confident that he is the right person to lead SIGA.” SIGA continues to strengthen the lives of Saskatchewan and First Nations people through employment, economic growth and community relations initiatives.

SIGA operates casinos in Prince Albert, North Battleford, Yorkton and on the White Bear First Nation near Carlyle. SIGA is also developing new casinos in Swift Current and Yorkton.

All SIGA casinos offer a distinctive First Nations gaming experience that reflects the traditional aspects of First Nations heritage and hospitality.

In the 2005-06 fiscal year, SIGA reported net revenues of $112.8 million up from $100.6 in the previous year. The Authority also reported net income of $40 million for the year, an increase of more than $8 million in 2004-05.

A significant portion of SIGA’s net income is distributed to four Community Development Corporations that are managed by Tribal Council partners.

“These funds are a source of revenue that is used to leverage new economic ventures and promote many First Nation cultural and social opportunities,” Hansen said in SIGA’s most recent annual report.

SIGA employs more than 1,100 people at its casinos and that number is expected to increase dramatically when the new casino at Whitecap opens later this year.

SIGA says being a responsible corporate citizen is important. The organization invests $1.5 million as a member of the First Nations Addiction Rehabilitation Foundation. SIGA also provides in excess of a million dollars in financial support to more than 400 community groups and initiatives in Saskatchewan annually through our sponsorship program. SIGA is committed to developing, fostering and reaffirming partnerships in the community.
Oskayak High School has been selected as the new name for Joe Duquette High School. Oskayak means “young people” in Cree. It is felt this name captures the community belief that the school is for all young people.

“This happens as we continue to work on new and innovative programming for the school,” said Oskayak principal Darryl Bazylak. “The name change provides students, parents, community and staff with the opportunity to reaffirm the school’s cultural foundation.”

Oskayak was chosen from more than 30 suggestions submitted to school administration between September and December 2006. A committee representing school stakeholders discussed the submissions at a meeting and Oskayak emerged as the overwhelming choice. The Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Board of Education approved the name change at its regular board meeting in January.

The new name will be phased in over the next several months as the school finalizes plans to implement enhanced programming in areas such as mathematics and English language arts.

Students participating in an academy spend two periods of each school day focusing on a specialized area of study, while the other three periods are spent in traditional classes. The new programming is scheduled to be implemented in August 2007.

School Elders have discussed changing the name of the school with the family of Joe Duquette, who was the school’s first Elder. Joe Duquette’s relatives agreed that the change would allow the spirit of their loved one to now rest peacefully.

“His legacy does not end with the change of name,” said Bazylak. “Our Elders Mary Lee and Simon Kytwayhat brought the idea of a new name forward as they thought that every time we said Joe Duquette’s name, we were holding back his spirit.

The family was very understanding of this and we will make sure that Joe Duquette will always be remembered and honoured during ceremony at the school.”

As the Minister of Learning, I am pleased to proclaim the week of February 11-17, 2007, as Saskatchewan’s 20th Annual National Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week.

This week provides an opportunity to show our appreciation for Saskatchewan’s teachers and support staff, whose work is fundamental to the prosperity of our students. This week is also a celebration of education and its value. Education is an important investment we make in ourselves, and it is an important investment in Saskatchewan.

Education in Saskatchewan schools fosters student success and the success of our province. Staff and teachers provide a learning environment that equips students to become contributing citizens who can pursue their futures here in Saskatchewan.

Best wishes to all Saskatchewan staff and teachers for a successful week.

Sincerely,

Deb Higgins
Minister of Learning

**Minimum Wage for Saskatchewan will be:**

$7.95 per hour effective March 1, 2007

For more information regarding the Minimum Wage or Labour Standards in Saskatchewan call toll-free: 1-800-697-1763 or visit www.labour.gov.sk.ca.
Dirk Dashing is great at reporting on current events. Mr. Answer Guy is not too shabby in dispensing advice. But only Captain Obvious has the stones to point out the painfully obvious.

As Captain Obvious, it is my mission to reveal certain absurdities for what they really are … mind-numbing episodes that make you want to put your head in a vice and say, “Yes, that’s right, gimme some more!”

Our first story deals with Tony Merchant, that down-on-his-luck lawyer who single-handedly took on the federal government on behalf of 8,000 former students of the residential schools.

If it wasn’t for Tony there wouldn’t be a multi-billion dollar settlement for car dealerships to drool over.

This poor schmuck is under siege. Before the federal government dishes out any cash they want to look at his books, to see if his $15 to 40 million legal bill is justified.

Now $15 million to $40 million may seem obscene to the likes of us peasants, but you got to remember that Mr. Merchant is so distraught over the matter he had to flee to the Bahamas where sun-kissed maidens could soothe his wounded soul.

Hang in there Tony, our thoughts and our prayers are with you.

Like you, I thought the matter of Tony’s legal bill could have been severed from the student settlement funds so that cash-strapped dealerships, furniture rental stores and satellite TV outlets wouldn’t have to suffer any more trauma.

The students could probably use the cash too.

Despite all the court appeals, and counter court appeals, Indian Affairs Minister, Jim Prentice says he does not expect any delay in payouts to former students.

Then we get news that the federal government has already looked at Tony’s books – twice!

The only thing that makes sense is that some federal twinkies and assorted fart catchers are on a fishing expedition, looking for fraudulent claims and for ways to chisel down Tony’s fat paycheck.

Even though we are only spectators, you do have options.

The first thing we do is not call Tony's office, looking for information. Every time someone calls a lawyer for an update, even for five minutes, that lawyer gets to charge anywhere between half an hour to a full hour. Even if only 500 people call that can add up to an insane figure rather quickly.

No, if you want an update check out the FSIN website at www.fsin.com/ or call 665-1215 and someone will get you the news you need.

The other thing you can do is attend the regional Residential School Conference at the Travelodge in Saskatoon, February 21 and 22.

While there, demand that an independent arbitrator be set up to deal with Tony’s legal bill as a separate matter from student payouts.

Sadly, some former students have already passed away without have seen one red penny. But that is not what matters to the powers that be. What matters are the real victims of this story – lawyers, twinkies and fartcatchers – who must prey upon the misfortune of First Nations people to make a living. Sure $15 million to $40 million will get you through the week-end, but is that enough?

On a completely unrelated matter you may recall the murder trial in Yorkton. This is where Kim Walker shot and killed James Hayward, the 24-year old man that was merely helping Kim’s 16-year old daughter stay strung out on drugs like morphine.

Kim Walker is being applauded as a hero by some, whereas Hayward is cast as the demon in the story, a fact the Hayward family resents.

Sorry, Hayward family, you’ll get no sympathy from the parents of this country. What Walker did was not right, and he will pay a price.

But no one feels sorry for the demise of a grown man taking advantage of a 16-year old girl. Not going to happen.

Drug dealers are not martyrs. Neither are lawyers who put their interests before victims.

I’m Captain Obvious, and that’s how it is.

Dirk asks, “If you choke a Smurf, what colour does it turn?”

dirkdashing@shaw.ca

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dirkdashing@shaw.ca
Outstanding claims are not only the just thing to do, it is the smart thing. Close to 900 claims sit in the backlog. Things are getting worse rather than better. First Nations have been patient – incredibly pa-
tient – but their patience is wearing thin.

This report proposes a series of ac-
tions the government can take immedi-
ately to improve the process and de-
strate to First Nations that Canada is seri-
sous about living up to its lawful ob-
ligations. It also proposes some longer
term measures that will resolve this issue
once and for all. No-one expects Specific
Claims to be cleared up over night. But
we have to start and we have to start now.

The choice is clear. Justice, respect,
honour or Oka, Ipperwash, Caledonia,
Canada is a great nation in the world
but Canada will only achieve true great-
ness when it has shown that it is prepared
to fulfill its legal and moral obligations to
the aboriginal peoples of Canada, and in
the process demonstrate that all Canadi-
ans, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal
alike, can expect fair and equitable treat-
ment from their government.

Sincerely,
Hon. Gerry St. Germain, P.C.
(Senator St. Germain is the Chair
of the Senate’s Aboriginal Peoples
Standing Committee)

Palpable memories of school linger for half a century

I was born in the town of Levack, Ontario
in the early 1950s. I was branded as a loser,
a trouble maker and a dummy among other
things.

Back in those days the strap was the rule.
Boys, mostly of the lower class, got the strap for
the most part. Class system in Canada ... you
can bet it’s still alive and well throughout
Ontario. This story is about my Grade 3 adven-
ture.

I still remember the day that I started Grade
3. An older boy warned me that a teacher
by the name of Miss. or Mrs. Saultess liked to
give the boys the strap. Well, he was telling the
truth. I had a lot of trouble reading and writing.
I was always being disciplined for not sitting
still and talking in class. It started out by my sit-
ting at the back of the room with my desk fac-
ing the cloak room. Next came the strap. It
seemed that she jumped down my throat any
time if she was given a reason.

It all came to a head one day when I took
off my shoes in class because the nails in the
heels were coming through and hurting the
heels of my feet. She screamed at me to put
my shoes back on. I did try to explain the trouble to
her, but always gave her more reason to take this
further. I was told to come to the front of the
class take off my socks where she proceeded
to strap me on the bottom of the feet. I still remem-
ber as other kids in the class laughing at me. I
guess that’s when this woman broke my spirit
and started throwing them at him to keep them
at bay.

I think that there were a least two more of
my sisters there at this time telling me to come
into the house. I don’t know how long the
ruckus went on, but in my mind there was no
way in hell I was going back to that school.
Well, my mom finally said that I did not have
to go back to school and I put down the stones
and started throwing them at him to keep them
at bay.

The next morning my big brother,
Garfield, woke me up and said that we had
to go to school. He had skipped work to do this
for me. I said to him that it was decided that
I would not be going back to school. He sug-
gested that we should go to the school and talk
to his friend, the vice principal. As we ap-
proached the front doors, many feelings ran
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We went in and asked where he could find
the vice principal’s office. We headed down
the stairs to the basement of the school. The
kids were lining up in the basement getting
ready to go to home rooms as we passed through
them. The vice principal’s office was under the
stairs. Garfield knocked on the door told me to
wait outside.
Sports of all sorts coming up in Saskatchewan

**Saskatchewan scores big**

The National Aboriginal Hockey Championships are coming to our great province. Prince Albert will play host to this prestigious event which takes place from April 2- May 5, 2007.

The Saskatchewan Men’s Team will look to defend the title they won last year in Kahnawake, Quebec. The tournament will showcase the top Aboriginal AAA male and female players from across the country. Vice Chief Morley Watson says that “this caliber of hockey goes a long way in developing young First Nations people both on and off the ice”.

For more information contact Bonnie Braden, FSIN Communications Director at (306) 956-1026 or (306) 260-4706.

**Honouring Kevin Moccasin**

On March 5, the For The Love Community Basketball Event will take place at Bedford Road Collegiate. Participants will gather at 6:00pm and the game will tip-off at 6:30pm.

The game raises money for the Fourth Annual Kevin Mocassin Memorial Basketball Tournament. Past participants have included many of the Saskatchewan Huskies such as Andrew Spagrud, Rejean Chabot and Kerri Leigh-Porter. Look for many local celebrities to take part in the action this year.

For more information contact Mason Medynski at (306) 241-6399 or (306) 683-3516.

**Slamfest rolls through Muskeg**

The Creative Natives continued their dominance of the local basketball scene. The boys from Saskatoon have won several all Native tournaments lately and look to continue their run unless another team steps up.

This time around it was the Siksika First Nation from Alberta, who fell just a little bit short in ending their run. In round robin play Siksika won at the buzzer and looked primed to win it all. However, following the lead of their veteran leader Mike Tanton, The Natives pulled it out once again.

On the girls side of the draw, the Lady Ballaz from Saskatoon took home top prize. These girls have fought hard the last couple of years and it was nice to see them finally win the big one.

With the help of MVP Candace St. Denis, they ran over Edmonton in convincing fashion.

**Curling anyone?**

The 2007 National Aboriginal Curling Championships are set to kick off March 29 – April 2 in Wynyard Saskatchewan. The Men will have three events, the woman will have two.

Top prize in the men’s draw is $3,000 and the women will take home $2,000. Entry fee is $300 per team and must be in no later than March 15.

There will be a limit of 46 men’s and 12 ladies teams. For more information call Curtis (306) 554-2951 or Martin (306)554-2182.
Memories of school

Continued from Page 22

Some time later the door opened and I was asked to come inside. I don’t remember how he said it, but he asked me if I wanted to go back to class. I remember yelling and screaming that I wouldn’t be going back there or to this school and her room. After they calmed me down, they convinced me I should go back to class. My brother took me back to class. I remember him standing at the door as I took my seat facing the back of the room. He closed the door and walked away.

Not long after that a knock came on the door and the teacher went and answered it. She was called out into the hall by the principal or the vice principal. She came in and they asked me if I wanted to go back to class. My brother took me back to class. I remember him standing at the door as I took my seat facing the back of the room. He closed the door and walked away.

Another knock came on the classroom door. This time I was pulled out of line for talking. Everyone was talking as I remember. I was being centered out. I was told to go down to Mr. Kinsola’s room. I was heading down there to get the strap for talking in line. I remember passing Miss. Connelly in the hall and I told her what was going on and continued on my way. This was not the last time that I would be strapped.

After this my life was changed forever. This incident affected me emotionally, mentally, morally. It dictated the way that I met new people, the way I interacted with my family and close friends. Even to this day I will never be the same happy-go-lucky kid that I was back then before Saultess. The memory of that one day is like a millstone around my neck that I have to carry for the rest of my life.

I am now 54 years old and they found out I am dyslexic and I have Attention Deficit Disorder.

The only kind of teachers that used the strap are the incompetent ones; the ones who can’t teach, the ones who are frustrated and have to take out their anger on some innocent child.

The only children that they pick on are the ones that they know they can get away with it. The strap in school? “K.M.R.A.”

There were good teachers in that school, Miss Connelly, Jim Sutherland, if you’re still alive, “THANKS.”

This story I dedicate to my sister Margaret.

Keith Picard