

Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

Province, feds pull FNUC funding

Chiefs dissolve board, Lonechild negotiating for restoration of funding

By Warren Goulding
Of Eagle Feather News

With the words most knew were inevitable still ringing in their years, student leaders and Federation of Saskatchewan Indians Chief Guy Lonechild say school is not out for troubled First Nations of Canada University (FNUC).

First Saskatchewan's Advanced Education Minister Rob Norris announced the Province was withdrawing \$5.2 million in annual funding.

"Our government has lost confidence in the governance and management of First Nations University," Norris said. "This is a regrettable but necessary decision."

Federal Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl followed suit five days later when he told the University the federal government would not be providing \$7 million in anticipated funding, effective April 1. But the dramatic announcements don't mean the final bell has rung for the university that has been plagued by allegations of financial mismanagement and political interference for several years.

"We have had lots of conversations with Minister Chuck Strahl at (Indian and Northern Affairs) and with Minister Norris," Lonechild said. "We all agreed that the status quo was unacceptable."

Key to delivering on what Lonechild promises will be a new era for FNUC was the announcement from the FSIN on February 9 that an interim board of governors was being put in place. That followed the FSIN's move to dissolve the university's board of governors and to put the senior administration on leave. That action took place at the FSIN's legislative assembly in Saskatoon.

Lonechild said the chiefs of



Chief Guy Lonechild says government has a treaty obligation to provide funding for First Nations University. (Photo by Jennifer Dubois)

FSIN showed accountability by taking action and dissolving the board.

"We did our part by listening to the students and the grassroots people. It's the government's time to act responsibly as well," said Lonechild.

"The new board's terms of reference will be decided by the interim board of governors. They will have at their access the Meyers Norris Penny financial review and the Manley Begay governance report which is due on February 18," Lonechild said.

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DIANE ADAMS

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That place is home: Cadmus Delorme



Students' Association Vice-President Cadmus Delorme

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The Chief was referring to a review of allegations made by former chief financial officer Murray Westerlund and a study being prepared by American academic Dr. Manley Begay.

The new members include Bonita Beatty of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation; Don Pinay of the Sakimay First Nation; Diane Adams, president of the FNUC students' association; Sidney Fiddler of the Waterhen Lake Cree Nation; and Joely Big Eagle of the Whitebear First Nation. Saskatoon lawyer Donald Worme has been named legal counsel to the board of governors. Additional board members will be named soon.

Student leaders expressed support for the developments that will see a new board in place and negotiations to restore funding take on a new urgency.

"I am confident in a bright future for the University. Our first goal is to reinstate funding obviously so that next year students can go to FNUC like they did this year," says Adams, the students' association president and new board member.

"This is new board will be professional and accountable and I look forward to the work."

Cadmus Delorme, vice-president of the students association says students are determined to see FNUC continue to meet the needs of Aboriginal students.

"Education is the key out of poverty. We don't want scraps. Our education is treaty right," Delorme said.

"Sadly, people are often afraid of change, but last week, action was taken and the future is bright. We do not accept that the school will be gone next year. Our fellow students are like brothers and sisters of ours and the instructors like our parents. That place is home."

Lonechild agrees both levels of government have a duty to provide funding for post-secondary education.

"The province and the federal government have to honour treaty," Lonechild said. "We need to have meaningful discussions which will be the first step in many discussions."

Lonechild says negotiations need to take place in the short-term, suggesting it will happen in the next few weeks.

There were several events that led up to the funding cuts. In December, the university's chief financial officer, Murray Westerlund claimed he was fired from his job, although university president, Charles Pratt, said the decision was mutual. Westerlund alleges he was released from his duties after presenting documents highlighting inappropriate spending. Westerlund's memos alleged that Pratt had received \$98,000 for unused vacation pay and Vice-president Al Ducharme was paid \$82,000. Both were over the course of four years. Among other things, Westerlund highlighted costly trips to Montreal, Las Vegas and Hawaii.

On February 3, students from the Prince Albert, Regina, and Saskatoon campuses organized a trip to the FSIN legislative assembly, where they were given the opportunity to address the assembly.

Five presenters spoke, asking for the board to be dissolved. During a closed-door session of the assembly that lasted about seven hours, the announcement came that Norris had withdrawn funding.

The debate went into the next day and sources say 46 chiefs voted in favour of dissolving the board in a unanimous display of support for the resolution. There were eight abstentions.

- With files from Delaney Windigo

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Genealogical Centre will assist in registration process

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

February is registry month for citizens of the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan. To kick off the month of awareness, the MN-S announced the grand opening of Saskatchewan's newest Genealogical and Archival Research Centre.

Loaded with historical documents, maps and text books, the centre will be pivotal for people looking to find out about their family trees and personal history.

One of the biggest assets of the centre is the microfiche collection of all of the Scrip land documents given to Métis people for land payoffs during the expansion into the Canadian West.

"The grand opening today symbolizes the continuing reestablishment of the Métis Nation Saskatchewan as a legitimate third order of government which will lead to the realization of our self-governing aspirations as a positive, productive contributing sector to the province and this great country," said MN-S President Robert Doucette.

The Genealogy and Archival Centre will assist those in tracing their family roots and preserving parts of their history that in the past have been lost. To assist those, there is a genealogist and assistant genealogist on-site should anyone require help in tracing family lineage.

The registry will formalize and clarify citizenship requirements, aid in the accurate return of statistical data on Métis citizenship, and provide a basis for improving quality of life for all Métis people in Saskatchewan.

"The history of the Métis people in Canada is little

known," said Doucette, himself a history buff who has collected thousands of historic documents and materials over the years.

"These documents and maps show that this area around

federal government. We want to build some momentum because this is the most important initiative the MN-S has undertaken.

"We need to register people and get them citizenship cards and get both the federal and provincial governments recognizing the Métis. When we know how many people we have, it is powerful."

The old MN-S registry had 21,000 members. Doucette, on the other hand, estimates there are 100,000 Métis in Saskatchewan.

"This centre is our effort to help people understand their history. Other than some big institutions, this is one of the best collections of documents for Métis people going back to the 1700-1800s," said Doucette who expects the registry process to be ongoing for several years.

"This will be important for us to get people to register. We have to have a credible and verifiable registry as we negotiate harvesting agreements.

"This centre will help. We need to establish in the minds of government that we are a legitimate people."

The Genealogy Centre will ultimately help people prove their connection to the historic Métis communities of the homeland. To qualify for a Métis citizenship card you must: Self-declare, prove historic tie to one of the historic Métis communities, be accepted by the community and be distinct from First Nation and Inuit people.

"This is a very pragmatic research room with lots of resources for people to discover their past and move into the future," said Doucette.

"It is our goal that there is no question in the minds of any government about the legitimacy of our registry."



The four MN-S executives, Treasurer Gabe Lafond, Vice President Alan Morin, President Robert Doucette and Secretary Max Morin were the first to get their Métis citizenship cards.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

Saskatoon was heavily settled by Métis people before Chief Whitecap and John Lake came anywhere near here. The settlements were all up and down the South Saskatchewan River. Many of these settlements are unknown."

To supplement the Genealogy Centre registry work, the MN-S has hired several staff to reach out and make the process accessible.

"We have seven full-time intake officers and ten mobile ones. They will be out going to the regions to help the regional people work on the registry process," said MN-S Secretary Max Morin who holds the Registry portfolio.

"The goal this year depends on the budget from the



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Editorial

Courageous leaders stepped forward for First Nations University

The untold story of the First Nations University of Canada crisis has been courage. Chief Guy Lonechild stood up in front of the Chiefs in Assembly in his first duly called Assembly as Chief and poured his heart out. His address stressed the importance of post-secondary education to himself.

"Where would I be without post-secondary education?" he asked.

His passion shone through and his courage came out when he resigned from the board of governors of the University. Great leaders take risks, sometimes make unpopular decisions and lead by example. Chief Lonechild did all that in the span of two days.

The Chiefs showed courage by changing the status quo and dissolving the University's board of governors. The dissolution has been long in coming ... some would say it was too long, but finally, on a motion from Muskeg Lake Cree Nation Chief Cliff Tawpisin, they finally made the right decision to dissolve the board.

Sadly, the government had waited too long for this decision and the plug was already being pulled at that time.

The student leaders from the University also showed courage, more than most people know. No one has reported this yet, but some members of the Students Association in Regina were facing threats. Some of those threats were apparently delivered by Ross Pratt, the son of the suspended FUNC President Charles Pratt.

Following the board of governors meeting with the students, allegedly this young lad was driving his fancy Hummer around and around the traffic circle outside of Kokum Beas ... he then parked, entered the University and proceeded to call out names of student association leaders and label them as "blacklisted" while he was in Kokum Beas.

There were also veiled threats towards students to not get on the bus to attend the Chiefs Assembly in Saskatoon. A member of management sent out an email questioning the Student Association insurance to try to prevent them from renting a charter bus to attend the Chiefs Assembly in Saskatoon.

They also they tried to get all the students to sign waivers to get on the bus and he also questioned whether the funds were properly authorized through the Student Association. There was also a direct threat to a Student Association representative who asked a professor to address a class about the trip to Saskatoon. A person in management threatened him with non-academic misconduct, a very serious charge that stops you from attending any university.

Regardless of the threats, the students came to the Assembly and spoke with passion and respect to the Chiefs. That took courage.

Now the provincial and federal governments have to show some courage and trust and restore the funding to the First Nation University of Canada in whatever shape the newly named board of governors creates. Hopefully as a peaceful and accountable school that encourages freedom of speech, family and excellence in education.

Just like it did prior to February 2005.

Registry month for Métis

Attention all Métis people. The MN-S needs you to register and get a proper Métis card.

This objectively verifiable registry will prove your ancestry and allow the Métis Nation to lobby on your behalf.

The old registry had 21,000 names but with all the crooked elections and the carpetbaggers that are still on the list from when Métis Local presidents were selling cards so people could hunt, this list is corrupted and no good to anyone.

In order to be a Nation, you have to know your citizenship. President Robert Doucette estimates there are almost 100,000 Métis in the province.

Help him prove it by signing up.



HONOURING JOSEPHINE GREYEVES

Josephine Greyeyes, of the Muskeg Lake First Nation, passed away on Saturday January 9, 2010. Above, Muskeg Lake Cree Nation Chief Cliff Tawpisin holds the photo of Ms Greyeyes that hangs in the hall of their band office. Muskeg Lake has a grand legacy of leadership that has followed from the massive number of people in their community who have volunteered for the military. Photos of all their veterans adorn the walls of the band office and also of the building on the urban reserve in Saskatoon that houses the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. Ms Greyeyes joined Canadian Women's Army Corps, at the age of 21, on March 31, 1943. She served until 1946 at various locations across Canada. During the course of her three-year service, M. Greyeyes was awarded the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and the War Medal. The passing of Ms Greyeyes brings the number of First Nation World War II veterans, who are members of the Saskatchewan First Nations Veterans Association, down to four. Read more about Ms Greyeyes and other amazing women in our March edition which is always dedicated to the people who hold our communities and families together, women.

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THIS ISSUE...LAST ISSUE...PAST ISSUES.

FNUC a beautiful dream that shone brightly

Effective April 1 the First Nations University of Canada will no longer receive funding from neither the Province of Saskatchewan nor Indian Northern Affairs Canada. The reduced funding will mean the beleaguered institution will lose half of its funding. The decision effectively means the end of FNUC and its possible rebirth as a much smaller Tribal College. It is a considerable irony that the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations which found and nurtured FNUC during its early years should become the agent of its decline 34 years later.

It all began with a hopeful dream and commitment to make Indian control of Indian education a reality. During the 1960s, Indian Affairs controlled First Nations school boards, hired teachers and determined curriculum. It was a time of boarding schools, assimilation and powerlessness. Some First Nations had no Chiefs and were controlled instead by clergy.

When First Nations children failed it was agreed the Indians themselves were to blame and little criticism fell on Indian Affairs. In those days First Nations leadership were more accountable to the Indian Act than their own people. The goal of Indian control of Indian education was not to successfully mimic the mainstream but to also meet First Nation standards.

The 1970s were about change. Indian control of Indian education was spearheaded by the chiefs and some remarkable FSIN executive. Chief David Ahenakew deserves a lot of recognition and respect for his forceful leadership in that pivotal time.

He was followed by Chief Sol Sanderson whose aspirations for his people knew no limits.

These were not the meek leaders who came to the Indian agent hat in hand. Dr. Lloyd Barber, the former head of the old Indian Claims Commission, supported the dream and became a leading advocate in creating the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College at the University of Regina.

There were others whose commitment and skills broke the tired ineffective Indian Affairs mold and made real progress happen. There was Mr. and Mrs. John Macleod, FSIN Senator John Tootoosis, Sharon Carrier, Wes Stevenson, Dr. Oliver Brass, Ida Wasacase, Dr. Richard Katz, Del Anaquad, Dr. Blair Stonechild, Dr. Eber Hampton and Carol Sanderson, the mother of Indian control of Indian Education, to name but a few.

SIFC became a successful institution attracting students and faculty from across Canada. Some faculty were graduates of such prestigious universities as Oxford, Harvard and McGill. There was a time when the SIFC had more First Nation PhD faculty than any other university in Canada. The college had become an institution of considerable reputation among its peers.

FNUC, like other First Nation institutions, had a national outlook and a local hiring practice. The initial turmoil within FNUC likely began when faculty were hired from outside the country. Some local candidates felt entitled to these positions and were soon backed up by their respective chiefs.

The dream was betrayed when Vice Chief

Morley Watson set in motion the train wreck that followed. This eclipse of reason had devastating consequences. Good people were hurt. FNUC's reputation was shredded and with the exception of a few, the brightest and best left, enticed by other Universities eager to recruit their expertise. The FNUC became subject to the lowest form of band office politics. It lost its hard-earned reputation and a bloated board of governors, mired in politics, lost sight of what an institution of higher learning really meant.

Vice Chief Watson may have been the hammer but it was the collusion of a 28 man board that allowed the

collapse to happen. Like a turtle pulling into its shell they simply refused to act. Enrollment dropped to half. The Canadian Association of University Teachers placed FNUC under censorship. The FNUC's academic reputation was all but destroyed.

The disintegration of the college was further eroded by allegations of misappropriations of funds. The president, Charles Pratt, was implicated as was his right-hand man Al Ducharme. Some very serious allegations of theft were made against Yvonne Howse former head of Indian Social Work.

A glimmer of sanity emerged on the second day of the FSIN Chiefs Conference on Feb 4. Five years of procrastination had resulted in a showdown. The Chiefs agreed to dissolve the FNUC board of governors and place disgraced FNUC President Charles Pratt and Administrator

Al Ducharme on administrative leave.

The new 12 person board was to be composed of First Nations academics. The move was a sudden reversal of the FSIN's past position. The Province of Saskatchewan announced the same day, it would stop funding effective on April 1. The federal government followed and six days later announced that it too would stop funding FNUC. It now appears FNUC students will be transferring to either the University of Regina or the University of Saskatchewan.

It wasn't the students nor faculty that failed the FNUC. It wasn't First Nations citizens who brought the issue to the fore and who consistently tried to halt the death spiral of the institution.

In the end was a dysfunctional First Nations leadership and to a degree, hostile federal and provincial governments who killed it.

There was a time when the FNUC was an internationally recognized and respected college. Its graduates have gone on to great things and it is in their success that the FNUC's legacy will be found. The pain, confusion and astonishment that it could all be lost so sudden comes as such a shock.

If only the First Nations politicians could have transferred the board over to First Nation academics at an earlier time, things may have become so different. The FSIN would have been honored and remembered instead of vilified and disgraced.

It's true there were some First Nations leaders who tried, but they were outnumbered by the many who failed their own people. The lesson in this debacle may very well be it is best to allow the people who can do the work do the work and leave the First Nation politicians out of it.



Canadian democracy skating on thin ice

We live in historic times. Aboriginal peoples, not only in Canada, but around the world, are developing new insights and ways of defining and protecting their own interests.

Aboriginal people are beginning, after a long period of darkness, to participate in public life and are making contributions to the development and welfare of the states in which they live.

Recent events remind us of the fragility of democracy, and of the need for Aboriginal people to pursue their interests in all available venues and forums.

Indigenous peoples around the world lost a champion on February 1 with the death of Miguel Alfonso Martinez, a Cuban official who has acted as chairman of the United Nations bodies that have been at the centre of UN attention to indigenous interests over the last generation. Martinez also authored an important study on Treaties and had visited Canada. Our condolences go to his family and friends.

The most recent assertion of unilateral prime ministerial political power by the prorogation (ending of a session) of Parliament is also an important reminder of the fragility of democratic institutions. The action is given disconcerting sharpness because Parliament, which is made up of the elected

representatives of the people, was dismissed by the leader of a minority government who is not chosen by the people.

Whether we like it or not, the fate of Aboriginal peoples depends largely on the fate of the states in which they live, and we all have a stake in striving for stable and democratic institutions. Parliamentary reform is the most pressing agenda in Canada, which is known as the least democratic of democracies because of the centralization of political power in the prime minister.

Regrettably it is difficult to see how that sort of reform might come about, given the control of the agenda for change by those in power and the wisdom that those who gain power by a system are not likely to be keen to overturn it.

The courts have said that the entire theory of Aboriginal rights has to do with the reconciliation of the interests of Aboriginal people with the interests of others in Canada. That sort of reconciliation requires strong and visionary leadership. But workable institutions that dull the potential for the exercise of arbitrary power are also a key. A quick and cursory look at the

roles and workings of the three branches of government in Canada is useful.

Let us start with the official mandates according to the formal Constitution. The Parliament, or the legislative branch, has power to make laws. 'The government of the day' or executive branch, has the power to administer those laws. And the court, the judicial branch, has the power to interpret the laws. As soon as we look at this structure we see that this Constitutional formality does not represent reality in Canada.

The prime minister has roles that are found nowhere in the written Constitution. Parliament never exercises certain powers that are clearly written in the Constitution. And since the amendments of the Constitution Act 1982 the traditional role of the courts in the British system has altered significantly.

The unelected judges are 'interpreting' the Constitution in ways never intended by the politicians who drafted the Constitution. The judges are reviewing legislation and striking it down, and ordering governments to take remedial actions.

The interests of Aboriginal peoples are

entangled right in the middle of this muddle, but unfortunately, mostly as observers on the sidelines rather than as political actors whose actions do decide what is lawful and what is not.

The prorogation of Parliament has caused consternation among First Nations because of the context of uncertainty and potential anarchy that the late return of Parliament may have for some essential changes to the Indian Act membership code that was required by the judges in the McIvor case.

The quest to test the limits of power between the courts and other branches of government was illustrated in the 1999 Marshall treaty case where the Court issued a quick 'explanation' of its decision once it saw the uproarious political action and reaction.

The recent Kadhr case involving one of the members of a Toronto terrorist family shows the delicate balance between judicial and executive power. The court was reluctant to order the government to act. It was the same in the McIvor case: the court deferred to Parliament, which is controlled effectively by the prime minister.

Perhaps the justices remembered the words attributed to American President Andrew Jackson, (aka 'the Indian Fighter') who said in reply to a decision in favour of the Cherokee: "The judge has given his decision: now let him enforce it."



Storytellers were held in high esteem

There was no television in our community when I was a child and no radio until I was about six years old, so storytellers were important people and storytelling was still the core of our lives.

Everything came from these stories. Our creation narratives, our history, our heroes, be they long ago people like Gabriel Dumont, Joseph Vandal and Big Bear or new ones like our uncle Ambrose who had been wounded in a far away war or auntie Betsey who had taken on a bear over a berry patch and won.

Some of the stories were serious, others hysterically funny. Some were accompanied by songs others with prayer. Some were recent news from other communities carried by travelers and others were just plain gossip carefully edited so persons were protected.

"Kah kiyew miyo achimona," my nokom would say. "All good stories," teaching us from infancy to old age how to live in a good way and give us tools we would need in our life's journey.

Some storytellers were family members like my chapan (great-grandmother) who was respected for her ability not only in our community but also far away. She knew not only the ahtyokewina the creation stories, but also the family histories. There were also hunters, trappers and gatherers who knew the land intimately and could recount the history and stories of all the places on the land as well as their own adventures on it.

Protocols and rules were carefully observed. It wasn't like someone said, "you have to do this before you can hear or have a story," but the rules and protocols were a part of your life and you just did them. To not do them was to let people know you had been very poorly raised.

For example, storytellers, especially the old ones, were well taken care of by family members and community. To have one in your family was a great source of pride. They were provided with a special place in the homes they visited, with choice food and many gifts, like my chapan and our old uncle Pah chah neese.

They both moved among our extended family circle staying with each family for a week, a month sometimes a whole season. The old people who still lived independently were provided with food, there was always a big stack of split wood by their door and kids like myself who would gladly gopher for them, running errands, hauling water and washing dishes just to be privileged to their stories. When older people wanted a particular story they would come with bigger gifts like several freshly baked bannocks or cakes, a moose tongue or the very best of all, a moose nose. Old Pah chah neese especially would tell stories all night for a moose nose or boiled whitefish.

I remember a story as I write this and I'll share it with you. John Lagimodiere didn't give me a moose nose but he and his daughter Willow did give me a box of home baked cookies.

Old uncle Pah chah neese was my nokom's oldest brother. He was probably in his seventies when I was a little girl. Not really old but one of those people who was born old.

Pah chah neese had long grey hair and a handlebar moustache. He wore moccasins and rubbers, old grey suit pants, a blue shirt and a red scarf around his neck. He wore a

fur hat all summer and winter and he always smoked a old crooked brier pipe. I don't think he even took it out of his mouth to sleep. Well, when we went traveling to pick Seneca roots and berries for the summer Pah chah neese, riding his old grey horse, would lead us out on to the land.

What an exciting time that was for all of us kids and how noble our old uncle looked. We would be so proud of him. He was like the

grand chiefs of olden day buffalo hunts thus sparking our imaginations and giving us endless hours of buffalo hunt games which came, of course, from the stories he had told us.

As we traveled, the old ladies would tell us about the places where our people had camped for hundreds of years. Look! See that hill, that was where aunty Lisa had Chi Boy. She was picking raspberries you know ... and by that creek over there, that's where your moshom skinned that duck and when he put it down for a minute it flew off. All it had was feathers on its wings and tail. Hey! Hey! He thought it was dead.

And the stories would go on. Later, after we camped for the night and had eaten our supper, Pah chah neese would tell us a story about the buffalo who danced for the people on this very spot maybe 200 years ago.

Our kokom's people were traveling through this territory, he said, hunting buffalo, deer, berries, nuts, anything they could find. They were near starvation. There was hardly any water and the land was blowing away. There would be huge electrical storms at night, he said, but never any rain. One night the lightning was so wild that

as it streaked across the sky it turned into balls of fire rolling across the dry woodland and setting fires.

He said the horses all ran away and the people were terrified, sure that they were going to perish, when suddenly an old bull buffalo stepped out of the smoke and began dancing. Pah chah neese said it was a pitiful looking old animal with a scruffy coat and almost as "skinny as the people." When he finished dancing the buffalo spoke. "Hahow ni too tame tik, my relatives I have great pity for you and I will not let you die in this fire or starve. Follow me and I will see that you are looked after."

Pah chah neese said the people followed the buffalo through the smoke and on the other side was a small green valley and a camp of people who were happy to see them and who fed them soup, blue berries and wild mint tea. When they had eaten their fill the old buffalo danced for them again and told the men to remember him by telling this story and doing this dance.

Pah cha neese said the people all fell asleep when he finished dancing and when they woke up it was raining gently and nearby a herd of buffalo grazed. After a few days the land that had been burned black was green with new grass and the people grew strong and healthy.

When he finished his story Pah cha neese would get up and dance for us.

"Kisaynew pasqua moostoos oma oneemetowin," he would say when he finished.

"This is that old buffalo's dance." And we would go to sleep dreaming about that old grandfather spirit who saved our people in that long ago time.

Hiy hiy ikosi, merci.



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Storytelling seen as valuable teaching tool

By **Andréa Ledding**
For **Eagle Feather News**

Almost 400 youngsters from local schools attended the provincial launch of Saskatchewan Aboriginal Storytelling Month on February 2 at the Saskatoon campus of First Nations University of Canada by the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre. It was a feast of cultural storytelling to entertain, remember, and teach.

After welcoming remarks from Sylvia McAdam of Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre, Miriam McNab of First Nations University, Carole Vandale of the Saskatchewan Library Association, and Ross Gardipy of the Cultural Centre with a greeting on behalf of the Premier, the crowd was treated to storytelling from Barry Ahenakew and Regina Shingoose, drumming and song from Marc Longjohn, and a multimedia children's book read in Cree by Darryl Chamakese.

Adults joined Sylvia McAdam and Elder Mary Lee for Teepee Teachings and discussion of the SICC's new and popular "Cultural Teachings" book.

"The inherent sovereignty of First Nations people is unique, and our ability to transfer and transmit stories as First Nations people in the way we always have done since time immemorial is important," McAdam said.

She spoke about traditions such as the use of tobacco as rites of access to sacred teaching and sacred knowledge, and respecting and keeping an open mind to stories and teaching from Elders.

"This is for anyone who wants to learn, not just First Nations people."

"Our people learn through storytelling," McAdam added, talking about how rewarding it is to learn First Nations laws and respectful ways of

relating.

"Elders should share this knowledge with the generations to come ... they will be the leaders and they need a way to look for living in a peaceful manner."

Discussing the Pipe Laws, not all of which are recorded in the book as it is a very sensitive thing to record sacred material in print and oral teachings are still crucial, McAdam said the person gifted with the Pipe is also given the sacred teachings.

"Anyone can make war: the greatest warrior is the one who has the strength to make peace," shared McAdam, giving the example of Poundmaker, and the foundation of treaties being signed nation to nation.

She also spoke of the profound role First Nations women traditionally had as clan mothers or "warrior women" – gifted and powerful women with authority in councils and leadership roles.

"Much of this knowledge is still too sacred to print," said McAdam.

Women were lawkeepers. The closest in today's standards would be judges with knowledge and education and ceremonies. She noted that in Cree tradition, the drum was gifted to the men so that they could keep up with the women.

Mary Lee, Elder at Oskayak High School, gave tipi teachings to the gathering, agreeing that women are very powerful, spiritually.

"I always fast before I teach, to have permission to talk about what the old ladies left behind. I can talk about the knowledge, but we don't own anything. What you took and what was left behind, wasn't yours," explained Lee of sacred knowledge and story.

She also emphasized the importance of honouring your womanhood by



Students and teachers from the Confederation Park Community School participated in a round dance at First Nations University's Saskatoon campus.

wearing skirts to emphasize dignity and pride, and remaining concealed and modest, every day or when nursing infants. "A concealed package is more powerful than an open package."

Chamakese said events will be held at Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre throughout the month and can be found on the website: www.sicc.sk.ca or phone (244-1146).

"February is the perfect month – it's cold outside, you gotta reach kids on the inside somehow," said Chamakese, who grew up on Pelican Lake First Nation, listening to stories and learning his language that way.

"We need to keep our traditions going and try our best to include the old with the new in a way that holds the kids and works, but still respects the past. Our Elders are integral," he says.

The Saskatoon Public Library, like many libraries, will also be hosting events. At the Mayfair branch, Wilfred Burton will do a Friday afternoon presentation on February 12.

Paula Howe will do adult storytelling on Wednesday, February 24th at 6:30 p.m. at the Library on 20th, and the following Saturday morning Pooh Corner at the Main Branch will feature storytellers, fiddlers, and Inuit throat singers.

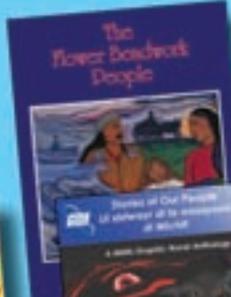
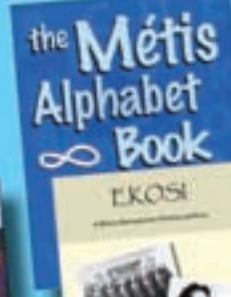


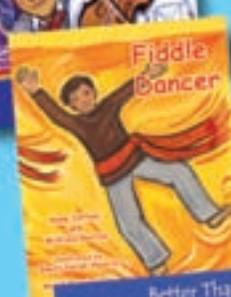
Mary Lee (left) presents Victoria Stevens with SICC's Cultural Teachings book. Sylvia McAdam (right) was an integral part of the development of the book.



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Suicide on First Nations a growing concern

By Jessica Iron
For Eagle Feather News

Silence is the enemy that feeds the social stigma of suicide. In Saskatchewan, most suicides occur among the youth, particularly those that are 'at risk', leaving family members and entire communities lost and confused, feeling powerless and guilty – wondering if they could have prevented the tragedy.

In northern communities where suicide is more prevalent, the despair can be over-whelming.

It is chilling to just glimpse the graphs comparing the rates of suicide in Saskatchewan to two of the main health regions in the North. Athabasca, Keewatin Yatthe and Mamawetan Churchill River Health Regions are all north of Meadow Lake and Prince Albert.

The numbers of suicides per 100,000 people were disclosed on both Keewatin Yatthe and Mamawetan Churchill River Health Region websites.

Although suicide does occur in Athabasca, the numbers are not publicly released if the population and occurrences per capita are too small because privacy and confidentiality become an issue.

"Health Canada is concerned about suicides and suicide attempts in First Nations communities. It is an urgent and complex matter and finding solutions takes time and a concerted effort from all partners," Christelle Legault, a spokesperson for Health Canada says.

"The Government of Canada has invested \$65 million over five years to implement the National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy," she

notes.

"The Strategy is helping to increase protective factors, such as resiliency, and reduce factors associated with suicide by focusing on mental health promotion, prevention and public education for Aboriginal youth.

"The Strategy provides direct support to First Nations and Inuit to improve the mental health of youth and to design and deliver community-based suicide prevention plans. It also improves crisis response actions and increases the knowledge base around effective suicide prevention strategies," says Legault.

"Suicide affects everyone in our communities. It is not our way. If someone is considering suicide they should talk to someone they trust," says Vice-Chief Dutch Lerat, who has the FSIN's health portfolio.

"Sometimes you may feel that there's no other option, but the crisis will pass," Lerat advises anyone considering suicide.

"Ask for help, you deserve it. Solutions can appear just by talking. Stop blaming yourself. If you think the way you feel is your fault, you are wrong. Your community needs you and you have a role to play."

Most First Nation communities have a first responders team trained to respond to suicidal situations. Get a listing of emergency contact numbers in your community to always have on hand in case of situations that may arise by contacting your Band Office or Health Clinic.

If you are unable to contact anyone in your community, you can phone

Melanie Cook at the FSIN during regular office hours at: (306) 667-2685 or the Kids Help phone 24 hour line 1-800-668-6868. All calls are confidential.

Communities Taking Action

In June 2009, Northern Health Strategy helped organize the Northern Saskatchewan Suicide Prevention Forum in Prince Albert as a way to address the alarming suicide rates in the North.

It was a gathering of northern Saskatchewan mental health and addictions front line workers and youth, along with other community members, leaders and officials.

As noted in the Northern Saskatchewan Suicide Prevention Forum Report, "The issue was examined by all forum participants and information was gathered and shared.

"Participants identified and addressed needs, and links between community development and suicide were explored. Participants declared their intention to engage in more specific planning and plan implementation in their communities."

The 78-page report covers trends, observations, action plans and priorities, comprehensively detailing all the events at the forum.

What can I do about suicide intervention and prevention?

Doug Kinar, the Executive Director of the Canadian Mental Health Association, Prince Albert branch, is a trainer of the CMHA suicide intervention program. He describes the Applied



VICE CHIEF DUTCH LERAT

Suicide Intervention and Skills Training (ASIST) as "a first-aid course.

It's not to provide long-term counseling. It's to keep the person alive right now, for the immediate future, until we can get them the help they need."

"It's a two-day workshop which teaches people to recognize when people are having thoughts of suicide as well as what to say to them, what to ask them and how to get them the help that they need," said Kinar.

"It's for everybody – not just professionals, but housewives, volunteers- anybody can take the workshop."

He also explains that they will drive out to bands who are interested in training members.

They do training sessions for groups with a minimum of 14 people to a maximum of 30.

Upcoming workshops in Prince Albert are being offered February 24 and 25 and March 24 and 25.

To register, phone: (306) 763-7747, fax: (306) 763-7717 or email: pacmha@sasktel.net.



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Family creates memorial fund to honour Kate Monture-Okanee

On August 16, 2009 Kathleen (Kate) Monture-Okanee lost all hope in the world and took her own life in Saskatoon. Her family and friends struggled to understand how such a talented and loved person could be silently suffering before their eyes.

Monture-Okanee was an excellent student, an accomplished soccer player, powwow dancer and ballerina. At age 15, she published her first piece of writing, titled 'Brown Girl Dancing.'

Monture-Okanee welcomed challenges, continually amazing those around her. Her family believes she had so many dreams yet to fulfill.

Those who knew her remember her well. Her funny, sweet, good nature made her popular with everyone she met.

She was caring, empathetic and passionate about showing the positive sides of groups that have largely been misunderstood, such as Aboriginals, females and youth.

Unfortunately, her family believes, as a result of all the racism she confronted in Saskatchewan, Monture-Okanee no longer saw the world as a good place.

In her honor, her mother, Dr. Patricia A. Monture, along with a board of directors, created a memorial fund to help other Aboriginal youth pursue their dreams so that no others lose their hope or will to carry on.

The Kate Monture Memorial Fund has two basic objectives: to assist Aboriginal youth to reach their dreams in the arts with a particular emphasis on dance, and to recognize youth achievement in the province of Saskatchewan.

Recently Athabaska University donated a tuition award to the Kate Monture Memorial Fund. Essentially they will pay for one six-credit course or two three-credit courses (approximate value of \$1,200).

First Nations women enrolled in an undergraduate degree program will be eligible for this award. The board of the Kate Monture Memorial Fund is developing the call for applications and hopes to give out the award soon.

The Kate Monture Memorial Fund is a non-profit organization. All the money they collect goes back to Aboriginal youth. Donations can be made to the Kate Monture Memorial Fund c/o Don Worme, Barrister and Solicitor, Semaganis Worme, 300-203 Packham Road, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7N 4K5. *— By Jessica Iron*

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United front on health care makes sense

Throughout history, events have occurred that have caused people to stand up and pay attention. For example, in the 1960s in the United States, there was the civil rights movement where the world saw black people stand together in peaceful solidarity demanding an end to segregation.

In the early 1990s the Mohawks of Kahnésatake gathered to protect their traditional burial grounds from being turned into a golf course.

Most recently, students from the First Nations University took a stand to save their institution from imploding. For each group and event the people were moved to action because it was something they believed in.

When it comes to the health of Aboriginal people in this province we need to stand up and take action. Aboriginal people have the poorest health of all groups in the province.

The rates of diabetes and heart disease are going through the roof and we are seeing more incidents of cancer in the communities. There are steps that we can take to improve our health; diet and exercise, regular check-ups with our doctors and dentists and limiting the

amount of alcohol we consume. Is it going to be easy? No. Is it worth it? Absolutely!

You don't have to go to a fancy gym to get exercise; you can walk around the reserve, or a few blocks in the city. Ask a group of your friends to start walking a couple of days a week for starters and keep track of your progress. Be proactive about your health and make yearly appointments with your physician and dentist. Often they can spot changes in your health before you display symptoms.

When it comes to alcohol consumption choose to take it easy. Drink a lot of water and tea, eat less potatoes and pasta and more vegetables and choose whole grain cereals and bread.

These are small things that we can do to better our health. It's all about making the right choices.

To hear me talk you would think that I should be a healthy person. Not! I am a ten-year breast cancer survivor, recently

diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, I am overweight and I smoke cigarettes. Not exactly the picture of good health but I am determined to make the changes that

I need to make. The advice I give is from my own doctor.

Believe me, I know how tough it is to make these changes but as I mentioned in the beginning, many

people have faced adversity and overcome obstacles and I know that I can to.

I'm not going to divulge neither my weight nor the circumference of my waist. Suffice it to say that both numbers are rather generous. I will let you know throughout the year what progress I have made and encourage those of your on the same journey to let me know how you are making out.

Being healthy involves being balanced in all aspects of our beings; physical, mental, emotional and spiritual so work at nurturing all parts of your being.

On March 11th the Saskatchewan Breast Cancer Network is funding a one-day seminar for Aboriginal people dealing with any type of cancer.

The event will be held at the Delta Hotel in Regina and provides an opportunity for Aboriginal cancer patients or their family to connect with other cancer survivors and share their experience with each other.

If you are interested in participating or want more information send me an email Sandra.ahenakew@gmail.com

Gentlemen, I remind you to have an annual check-up of your prostate and testicles. Regular check-ups can ensure that if cancer is found it can be easily treated in the early stages.

Women, you should be seeing your doctor for annual pap tests and breast examinations. If you are 40 years or older participate in the breast cancer screening programs in your area.

Until next month, play safe and have fun. It is always nice to hear from our readers keep your letters and emails coming. Sandee Sez C/O Eagle Feather News P.O. Box 924 Station Main Saskatoon Sask. S7K 3M4 or email Sandra.ahenakew@gmail.com



Cameco Chair in Aboriginal Health



The Opportunity

Clinical departments in the College of Medicine represent a partnership between the University of Saskatchewan and a health region, with provincial responsibilities for the academic mission. Both community and university clinicians, educators and researchers are involved in the academic mission of clinical care of inpatients and outpatients, education of undergraduate and postgraduate trainees and research.

At present we are seeking a junior academic physician with a special interest in one or more areas of Aboriginal Health. The founding Cameco Chair in Aboriginal Health will have an exciting opportunity to develop expertise within the broad areas of research, education and/or clinical skills pertaining to the health of Aboriginal peoples.

The Candidate

The successful candidate will be licensed in Internal Medicine, trained in general internal medicine or an internal medicine subspecialty, and hold or be eligible for a Saskatchewan medical licence. Additionally, the successful candidate for the Chair will have an established relationship with Aboriginal communities. Preference will be given to those of First Nations, Inuit or Metis heritage. A detailed description of this new position is available on request.

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The University

A publicly funded institution established in 1907, the University of Saskatchewan offers a full range of curricula, both academic and professional, with students registered in 13 colleges, including health sciences and veterinary sciences. The College of Medicine has an intake of 84 students per year with a commensurate number of positions for residency training. This intake will soon increase to 100.

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Healthy eating may be easier than you think

By Jessica Iron
For Eagle Feather News

Take a fast-paced lifestyle, add fast food, large quantities of technology and sprinkle it with laziness and you will have created a recipe for poor health ... fast! It can't be an easy fix, can it? But maybe it's simpler than you think.

First, we must become conscious of our choices and commit to small changes in order to see our health improve.

"A lot of times in our life we think we have to make drastic changes and I think it's more about committing yourself to making small changes," Don Bear, a Community Developer for Saskatoon Health Region says.

"Also, there's a dietician at the Westside clinic every Wednesday. You could do a walk-in or book an appointment and there's no cost. A lot of tribal councils have dieticians available, and more First Nations people should phone and say, 'How can I see a dietician?'"

He also recommends that people switch to whole grains and incorporate fiber into their diets by eating more fruits and vegetables.

"These naturally make you feel fuller, longer," he says.

People should pay attention to the amount of starch foods they consume, claims Bear. Instead of making a soup that has potato, rice and macaroni in it, he recommends using only one starch.

Evelyn Linklater, a peer leader for the Live Well With Chronic Conditions program, recommends that people use their hands to measure proper portion sizes for their bodies. She explains that a closed fist represents one serving of breads or starches. The palm of your hand represents meat – its size and thickness.

Vegetables are measured by filling

two cupped hands or half of your plate, while a day's worth of oils/fats should be no more than the size of your thumb.

"You have to incorporate activity,"



Delicious frozen purees: (clockwise from top) pears, broccoli, cauliflower, peas, yams, blueberries, mangoes and mixed veggies. Center: carrots and saskatoon berries.

Florence Highway, a volunteer at the West-Side Clinic and a resident Elder for the Community Diabetes Outreach program stresses.

"You can't just sit back, eat and play videos all day. We have to put fun into activity – not because you have to do it, but because it's fun and relates to your health."

Some Tips to Try

- Indian Tacos: Instead of using a head of iceberg lettuce for a topping, which has very little nutritional value, use

spinach or green leaf lettuce – both of which are packed full of nutrients and vitamins.

- Bannock: Add whole wheat to your

bannock, instead of just using white flour. You could also try using olive oil instead of lard. It's much better for

your heart and arteries.

- Cut down on salt by using frozen herbs: Clean and chop herbs. Place them in ice cube trays with a little water and freeze. Then place your frozen herbs in a labelled plastic bag and they'll be ready to toss into your stew, chili, pasta or mashed potatoes. They'll add plenty of flavor and save you prep time!

- Purees: Purees add tons of nutritional value to almost any dish you make. Boil potatoes, yams, turnips or peas. Steam carrots, cauliflower or broccoli. Fruit should be ripe. Use a blender or a food-processor and puree your fruit or vegetable(s).

Line a cupcake tin and pour in your purees. Freeze them and then place them in labeled bags. Experiment and try different combinations in your main dishes and soups. The fruit purees are great in fruit-flavored teas as a filling snack.

- For more uses of purees, try Missy Chase Lapine's, Sneaky Chef: How to Cheat on Your Man (in the Kitchen) or Jessica Seinfeld's, Deceptively Delicious.

- For some traditional and contemporary Aboriginal meals, join Rezipes on Facebook.



Florence Highway, Don Bear and Evelyn Linklater shared their expertise in the field of nutrition.

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Lonechild's leadership put to the test



FSIN CHIEF GUY LONECHILD

By Warren Goulding
Of Eagle Feather News

Guy Lonechild is no political neophyte, even though he just marked his 37th birthday on Jan. 31. The newly-elected Chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations has been on the political scene since 1999 when he was first elected as a Vice-Chief for the organization. Prior to that he held a number of key leadership positions and boasts a resume that has provided experience in economic development and

other areas.

Nonetheless, the White Bear First Nation member, who is proud of his Saulteaux, Cree and Assiniboine ancestry, knows he is being watched and his relative youth is only part of the reason.

"The one thing that stands out for me is that, for the most part, people are really watching me in terms of how well I can do the job," Lonechild said in a recent interview. "They want to see if I can be the Chief of the FSIN."

The first crucial test of Lonechild's leadership mettle came in early February, barely three months after the FSIN leaders from 74 First Nations elected him to succeed the often-controversial and combative Lawrence Joseph. With the federal and provincial governments pulling more than \$12 million in annual funding from First Nations University of Canada, Lonechild found himself fighting for the beleaguered institution's very life.

With Lonechild leading the way, the FSIN assembly voted unanimously to dissolve the existing board of governors at FNUC and work to restoring the critical funding arrangements that had been withdrawn when the two senior levels government evidently lost faith in the university's ability to manage its finances.

The action by the FSIN was widely praised around the province.

"From the phone calls and emails I received from people from all over Saskatchewan, it was something they were very proud of," says Lonechild.

"That gives me a real sense that the FSIN has reconnected with Saskatchewan First Nations people in a mean-

ingful way. I'm very satisfied on that front that the voices were heard from the grassroots level."

The response to the FNUC crisis could be significant in terms of arming Lonechild and his executive team with the confidence to move forward on other files, now that their leadership style has met the test and passed with what appearing to be flying colours.

"I would say that I'm extremely happy that a long overdue process of looking at board re-structuring of FNUC is a milestone, but it's just a start of what can happen."

Following his Oct. 29 victory, Lonechild articulated the goals he set for himself and the four-man executive team in the first 200 days.

"I really took a look at the lay of the land," says Lonechild, adding he listened carefully to what the other three candidates in the race for the chief's office had to say.

"I promised a new era of leadership and primarily it had a lot to do with everything we all had to say. In the end we all migrated to the same thing. We all want the same thing," he suggests.

"My message was that in the first little while I was going to make some changes and start looking at revitalizing and reorganizing the FSIN.

Our organization needs to be looked at critically in terms of the role it plays.

"We have to look at how to make FSIN more relevant to Indian people: women, youth and children, seniors and urban First Nations people."

• Continued on Page 13

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Economic development, justice, women's issues top Lonechild's agenda

• Continued from Page 12

A strong proponent for seeking economic development opportunities for First Nations communities in his days as vice-chief, Lonechild has already begun work in that area. Most notable is the plan to work with the Province and Sask Power to create a new energy body that would see First Nations involved in power generation.

"We're talking hydro, co-generation and wind for First Nations projects around the province," Lonechild says.

"We're really looking at getting to the heart of participating in the economy with cultural and environmental con-

cerns of First Nations as part of it. We have never been involved in any coordinated province-wide structure before."

Ongoing justice issues are also on Lonechild's mind. Troubling accounts of shootings and baffling RCMP tactics – such as a recent weekend at Stanley Mission that saw undercover cops target residents during a snowmobile rally – need to be addressed, he says.

Lonechild would also like to see more work done on the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

He would also like to encourage the Province to consider establishing facilities that stressed healing rather

than the conventional prison techniques.

"The good sign is that we have a relatively new deputy premier in Doug Moen who is extremely committed to partnering with First Nations," Lonechild says.

"Doug is very highly respected in our circles. That signals that we can do something positive."

It's early in his term, and Lonechild says the pace is a challenge but he's encouraged by the progress being made.

"Our responsibility on the issues, like FNUC, is to stop the talk and really do what we say we're going to do."

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2010 - The Year

Capote making keeps tradition alive

Making a Hudson's Bay blanket into a coat on a cold January afternoon, 20 women gathered for Gabriel Dumont Institute's traditional capote making workshop with Suzan Lagrove. Capotes are associated with Métis communities – and warmth.

Lagrove has years of experience with the Hudson's Bay Company, doing capote workshops for HBC's Heritage Department across Canada.

"The points indicate the size of the blanket, not the price," explains Lagrove in her intro.

Points are the black lines on the edge, which Métis women would incorporate in designs.

"The blanket provided women with a large piece of warm ready to use fabric. And the white was great for hunting in winter," says Lagrove.

At one time, each point was worth a beaver pelt or two. But GDI accepted \$250 – the all-wool blankets normally sell for a hundred more in-store. Lagrove can obtain "seconds" with unnoticeable flaws, from HBC.

Made in Great Britain, the wool blankets haven't changed for centuries. The unmistakable HBC green, red, yellow, and dark blue stripes are featured in various ways. After deciding on length, size, and style the women cut, hand-sewed, and visited. In the end, every jacket was slightly different, but all beautiful and incredibly warm.

Making only a few cuts, the women used most of the blanket – body, sleeves, and the pointy hood "big enough to hold a baby". Pieces are blanket-stitched together (arms, tasseled hood) the fringes cut at seamed areas to wick water away, and, tada! It can be buttoned but is usually tied with a Métis sash.

Rose Fleury, an Elder from Duck Lake, worked with experienced capote-maker Joanne Potyondi, whose son Andrew had brought his beautiful red and brown capote which he hunts in.

Lagrove supervised before cutting – a little scary taking that first snip into these beautiful blankets but you could also, for a straight edge, snip and then tear along the selvage.



Elder Rose Fleury shows off her blanket-stitching skills. (Below) Suzan Lagrove helps Jennifer from Suntepe make her cuts.

Kimber from the Nipawin area made a shorter coat to wear to the Winter Olympics, representing Métis youth at a pavilion. She said she'd never sewed before but in no time was hand-sewing away with her chosen colour of yarn, GDI's music selections playing in the background.

And by the end of the day, most of the women were done – just in time for the blizzard that shut Saskatoon down. Toasty warm and greeted with compliments by strangers who wanted one too!

- Written by *Andréa Ledding*

Métis Did you know?

* Did you know? For Métis freighters who transported goods from one place to another, it was commonplace to carry a minimum of two packs (80 kilograms) when walking. While two packs was a common packing weight, some men carried in excess of 170 kilograms at a time!

* Did you know? The fiddle is the main instrument used in Métis music. Many Métis played the fiddle. They were often handmade from maple wood and birch, as most Métis did not have the money to buy ready-made ones.



Year of the Métis



Pride and Prowess:

A Métis Classic

The 2010 Olympic Games have received a lot of coverage in the last year, not the least of which is the Torch Run which has promoted the games as the Olympic flame made its way across the country, passing through many communities and in a number of cases, being carried by Métis torch bearers.

The Games assemble the world's best athletes at a competition that will showcase the results of their training and diligence.

For the Métis, feats of strength and skill are nothing new. Out of necessity, our forebearers were self-reliant and became known for their strength and endurance right from the birth of the Métis Nation. The rugged lifestyles of the Métis in early Canada called for those who wanted to survive and thrive, to be "faster, higher, and stronger."

The Métis garnered a reputation as being the "one-and-a-half men" for the amount of freight they could haul and the work they could accomplish compared to others. This compliment should also have been paid to the women and children who worked equally hard to maintain their lifestyle and standard of living.

In later years, when living became easier for people, the need for such strength and endurance was less critical, but the pride in it remained. The Métis

hosted their own games named voyageur games and trappers' festivals. At these events, speed, skill, and endurance were highly prized. Some events celebrated champions who would be the first to drive a dog team over the finish line or pack a heavy load the farthest.



(Above) Feats of strength were an exciting part of Voyageur Games. (Right) Dallas Fiddler Boyer, Bradley Brown, Kymber Palidwar, and Daniel Olver will be the Métis Youth Ambassadors at the Olympic Games this month. (Photo by GDI)



Leave it to the Métis to make play out of the very skills they needed for work and survival. Today's Trappers' Festival in The Pas, Manitoba reflects the broad range of skills admired by the Métis. Some of the festival's events include ice fishing, canoe packing, animal calling, axe throwing, wood sawing, snowshoe racing, bannock making, trap setting, flour packing, and leg wrestling.

Most contemporary voyageur games include some of these events while some have slightly different activities depending on the season.

Only time will tell if the events common among Métis games will become part of the Olympics. Our belief about the level of skill and commitment required to excel at either of these prestigious events is not in doubt and will remain something that the Métis continue to prize.

During this Year of the Métis, the Olympic Games are being held in Vancouver, and Canada will play host to the world's competing nations and will showcase our beautiful land, our athletes and our hospitality.

In anticipation of there being a great interest in Canada's Aboriginal Peoples, the Four Host First Nations and Vancouver Organizing Committee are bringing more than 300 Canadian First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth together to participate and perform in cultural activities and youth leadership gatherings during the 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

The Saskatchewan Métis delegates include Bradley Brown, Dallas Fiddler Boyer, Daniel Olver, and Kymber Palidwar. The four applied last September and were selected to represent Saskatchewan Métis Youth. They will spend a few days in traditional dress, some of their own, and some provided by the Gabriel Dumont Institute. They will all wear traditional Métis coats – capotes – which were made a few weeks earlier at a capote making workshop hosted by the Institute. Brad and Kymber made their own coats!

The four will be sharing the highlights of their trip in an upcoming feature.
- Written By Karon Shmon of GDI

Chronology of the 1885 Resistance

1878 (August 1)

Cypress Hills Métis sent a two hundred and seventy-six signature petition to the Northwest Council.

1879

Amendments to The Dominion Lands Act acknowledged that the Métis had outstanding claims to their lands in the North-West Territories. Section 42 indicated that the federal government had a responsibility to protect Aboriginal rights (for both Métis and First Nations), and thus had a duty to limit non-Aboriginal settlement in a region until the local First Nations and Métis inhabitants had their Aboriginal title extinguished through Treaty and Scrip. Section 125 of the act granted occupancy to those who lived peaceably and continually on a piece of land. However, the act, even with these amendments, did not guarantee the Métis title to their lands. Therefore, Métis living in what is now Saskatchewan sent dozens of petitions asking that their occupancy and title to their lands be recognized.

To be continued next month ...

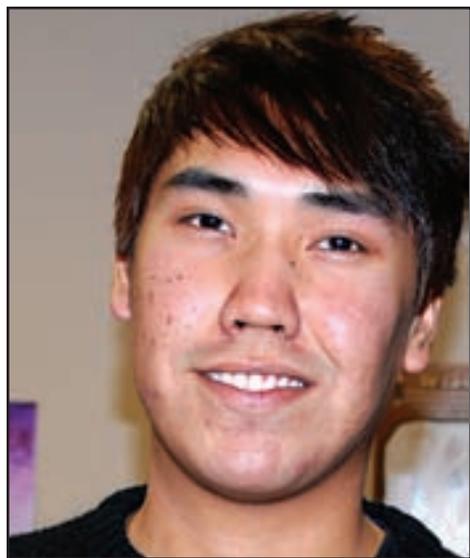
Prepared by the Gabriel Dumont Institute with material developed by Darren Prefontaine, Leah Dorion, Ron Laliberté, and Father Guy Lavallée.

Cameco supports Credenda

By Fabian Ratt
Of Eagle Feather News

Everybody wants high school to be an interesting, enjoyable and a groundbreaking experience. For four people from different cultures, vocations, and parts of the province, Credenda Virtual High School certainly was all that, and more.

Gary Merasty, of Cameco, Vince Hill, director, Gerry Grandey CEO at Cameco, and Edward Benoanie, a graduate, have all found a role at Credenda, ones they all have avidly filled.



EDWARD BENOANIE

They all explained how they played parts in the forming of the high school, its success, and its continued growth at a luncheon held in January.

The luncheon was an opportunity for Cameco to announce that they would provide Credenda with \$2 million over the next four years.

Gary Merasty, former Grand Chief of the Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC) and vice-president of corporate social responsibility for Cameco, has played a big part in the formation of Credenda.

"In early 2000, while I was Grand Chief at the PAGC, we did an Education Indicator Study for all 28 schools in the PAGC, and some of the high schools as well," Merasty explained.

"We found there was a huge gap in the math and sciences that were being made available to our students in the North."

With this development, the PAGC hired Vince Hill to continue research, conceive, and ultimately create a solution. After thousands of kilometres, attending many meetings, and tons of research, that solution turned out to be Credenda Virtual High School. With all this knowledge regarding the school, Hill was a natural choice and has the director position at the school.

In 2005 PAGC launched Credenda Virtual High School, a school where students take part by logging online at a computer, either in classrooms at various schools around Northern Saskatchewan, or at home. The teacher also is usually at home. Through the use of webcams and other technology, the students can take part, much like a conference call, in classes that are not usually offered at their own school.

"We encourage the students to take these classes at the schools, because we do not want to take the place of the school. We want to supplement the schools," explains Hill.

Since Credenda started the numbers have been adding up.



Gary Merasty of Cameco, Jessica Constant, Credenda student from James Smith First Nation, and Gerry Grandey CEO Cameco. (Photo by Fabian Ratt)

"When we started in 2005 there were 40 students, now there are about 200 high school students, and 131 college students," Hill added. "Another item we are proud of is 62 per cent of our students are First Nations."

The school evidently is succeeding and growing, so it now brokers classes from Lakeland College and Red River College. This influx of qualified people in the North is what Cameco is after with their contribution to Credenda.

Cameco's CEO Gerry Grandey, was at the luncheon to announce that Cameco is pledging \$2 million over the next four years.

"We are always looking for quality people, and not just at entry level positions, we want to move them up to higher skilled positions where they will need math and sciences," Grandey said.

"Over 50 per cent of our workforce is from Northern Saskatchewan, and we have a longer term goal of 67 per cent.

"The only way we are going to meet that is to make sure they get the skills they need beginning at an early age that puts them into that stream for highly skilled,

highly paying jobs."

The continued success and growth of Credenda Virtual High School will help northern students get the prerequisites they need to be able to further their education. Opportunity is knocking and apparently Cameco is trying to hold some of those doors open.

Thanks to Credenda, Edward Benoanie, originally from Hatchet Lake Dene Nation, has graduated from Grade 12 through its virtual classroom. He was one of the original students taking part in the 2005 Credenda Pilot Project that has grown into a self sustaining non-profit institution. Plus Benoanie has ripened as well.

"I am in SUNTEP, taking my fourth year to get my Bachelor of Education, and I will graduate this spring," said Benoanie.

It seems he soon will be skilled enough to apply his math and science skills in the teaching arena. With Credenda growing, and hoping to enrol 300 high school students next year, they will more than likely be looking for more teachers.

With Cameco always looking for qualified people, the future seems bright for other Credenda students as well.

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\$5 million employment program

By **Andréa Ledding**
For Eagle Feather News

Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) will be providing job planning assistance and training to 280 individuals using over \$5 million dedicated by the Government of Canada. The money is a part of the Economic Action fund designated as the Aboriginal Skills and Training Strategic Investment Fund.

“Aboriginal people are an integral part of Canada’s society,” noted Kelly Block, Member of Parliament for Saskatoon-Rosetown-Biggar, speaking for the Government of Canada.

“Our goal is to have the best educated, most skilled and flexible workforce in the world.”

GDI’s Health Sector Aboriginal Human Resources Initiative and Strategic Partnership Initiative will prepare most individuals for entry-level jobs in the health sector, while just under one-third will be matched with small and medium-sized employers across Saskatchewan.

Métis Nation – Saskatchewan (MN-S), Treasurer Gabe Lafond credited GDI for their successful program application, and their relational approach with all levels of government, business, and community. Lafond is optimistic this guaranteed employment will help the economy, the country, and the Métis and Aboriginal job recipients.

“GDI staff and programs are respected throughout Canada, and the leading edge of Métis development,” Lafond noted, adding they were a model of best practice in action.

The program eliminates barriers, allowing Métis to use existing skills and learn new ones, while health

and business sectors gain access to a large and eager labour market: a win-win scenario.

“Métis are the fastest growing population,” added Lafond.

The Province is also taking part in the initiative, and Rob Norris, Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour, said his Ministry will contribute almost half a million dollars over two years in Provincial Training Allowances to assist in training more health care workers.

“Recognizing the significant role First Nations and Métis will play, this investment by the provincial government signifies our commitment,” Norris said, adding all people should have equal opportunities to participate fully in the labour market.

“This largely came about because of the positive relationship of our staff at GDI in maintaining a positive relationship with the levels of government,” said Lafond, noting health care is one area that is recession-proof and always in demand.

“Our focus as Métis people has always been one of relationship, and connection – a collaborative approach between parties.

“Following discussions, to be able to deal with this in the year of the Métis is a very good kick-start.”

“My grand-daughter is trying to find good work, and she is a single parent,” noted Elder Michael Maurice who opened and closed a recent media event with prayer. He said programs like this which provide skills, training, and connections and relationship with employers are just what is needed for the Métis and Aboriginal people.

“I will be glad to see her get what she needs to provide for herself and her own.”



Rob Norris, Gabe Lafond, Kelly Block announced a \$5 million training program aimed at improving access to the workplace for Aboriginal workers.

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MP Maurice Vellacott and SIIT President Randell Morris announce the aircraft training agreement.

Careers take flight at SIIT

Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT) will build a new training facility and offer an Aircraft Maintenance Engineering Training Program in Saskatoon thanks to investments from the governments of Canada and Saskatchewan, the Saskatoon Airport Authority and private industry.

The announcement was made in Saskatoon by Maurice Vellacott, Member of Parliament on behalf of the Lynne Yelich, Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification, and Rob Norris, Saskatchewan Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

The announcement includes Government of Canada funding of \$1.6 million dollars through Western Economic Diversification Canada under the Western Diversification Program for construction of the facility, combined with donated aircraft worth \$200,000 from the Government of Saskatchewan.

"Today's announcement is another example of our government's commitment to creating jobs and opportunity for Saskatchewan students," said Vellacott.

"The Aircraft Maintenance Engineering Program will be an important part of our community, providing students with important skills training to help them succeed and prosper right here in Saskatchewan."

SIIT's new training program is supported by the Saskatoon Airport Authority and Saskatchewan Advanced Education, Employment and Labour. The Saskatoon Airport Authority has agreed to a free land lease on the site of the training facility, valued annually at \$100,000. Saskatchewan Advanced Education, Employment and Labour has agreed to provide operating funding of \$350,000.

With the combination of Government of Canada funding for construction of the new training facility, the Government of Saskatchewan's support in operating funding and donated aircraft, the Saskatoon Airport Authority's provision of land, and the private companies' support in funds and training aircraft, SIIT is now able to build the new training facility and plans to offer the new program starting in August 2010 for 15 students for the two year course.

"We are very excited about this opportunity and very pleased that the Government of Canada and the Province of Saskatchewan have taken a financial supporting role in this endeavour," said Randell Morris, President of SIIT.

"The Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies has been working on this project for a while now and it's great to see it take the next steps towards delivery."

Partnership stresses cultural pride

By Andréa Ledding
For Eagle Feather News

It was an inspiring moment as dozens of children from the nehiyawak bilingual program at St. Francis School sang "Oh Canada" in Cree to open the "mamawohkamatowin" signatory event.

St. Michael Community School hosted the February partnership event between Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, Saskatoon Tribal Council and the Central Urban Métis Foundation Inc. (CUMFI).

"Our children are what we live for, what we wake up for each day," said Alma Kytwayhat, an Elder with Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools and 2009 recipient of a Saskatchewan Order of Merit.

"This word mamawohkamatowin speaks of connectedness."

Elders from all three organizations chose the Cree name mamawohkamatowin, which means co-operation or mutual assistance. She described it as three hands, shaking hands together in partnership.

"We are all together, all connected together, and all related," she explained.

Saskatoon Tribal Chief Felix Thomas said that Métis and First Nations represent growing percentages of Saskatchewan youth, underscoring the importance of collaborating and pooling expertise and resources to maximize learning, achievement, and success for First Nations students.

"Saskatoon Tribal Council believes aggregate partnerships can be more effective in the development and implementation of sustainable services to address First Nation education disparities, to increase First Nations student success across Central Saskatchewan, and to close the gap between non-First Nation and First Nation learners," Thomas said.

"It will mean greater self-esteem, a greater desire to learn."

Thomas said afterwards he wants a future where First Nations students can ask, like every other Canadian youth, "what university should I go to, what career path should I choose," rather than the limited and negative options many now face.



Tribal Chief Felix Thomas, Diane Boyko and Shirley Isbister celebrated their partnership.

CUMFI president Shirley Isbister said she was honoured to join a partnership working towards student success for Aboriginal students.

"Pride in one's culture is a large component of success in education and achieving life's goals," said Isbister.

"Our goal is to promote an inclusive, respectful, and welcoming environment that is conducive to learning, parental involvement, and community engagement."

She spoke of going to elementary school in Saskatoon, hiding her bannock sandwich from the other children, and feeling ashamed of her difference. Poverty, health, and racism need to be addressed.

"Not one child should be allowed to fall through the cracks," said Isbister.

"We want education to be a powerful experience to transform the lives of all our children," agreed Diane Boyko, Chair of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

The event concluded with entertainment from St. Mary Community School's Song and Dance Troupe including an Honour Song, Grand Entry, shawl dancers, jiggling, and blacklight hoop-dancing.

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Two students from Minahik Waskahigan School in Pinehouse Lake enjoy the ride on a hovercraft they built. (Photo by Kurt Touet)

Young female students discover the fun side of science and engineering

By Blue Pelletier
For Eagle Feather News

Discover Engineering has been around for over ten years. The annual conference is held at the University of Saskatchewan's engineering facility.

This all-female conference is designed to help show young girls the fun side of science and engineering, hopefully gearing them towards a career in those fields.

Numbers peaked in the early '90s when 30 per cent of the enrolment was females in the engineering college at the U of S. That has plummeted to 20 per cent now.

Compared to other sciences that is just not up to par. For example the Agriculture and Bio Science College is at about 55-60 per cent.

"The discrepancy in colleges like Computer Science, Physics, and Engineering needs to change, they are currently predominantly male," says Kurt Touet one of the organizers of the event. "The idea of the conference is to create a fun atmosphere and hopefully everyone gains something from the experience."

Of the 75 participants, 35 of them came from Northern communities like Pinehouse Lake, La Ronge, Cumberland House, and Beauval.

Most of those girls are in Grade 8 and

are starting to choose electives for high school.

"It's important to show them their options before they choose their classes," and Touet says.

Participants all did various projects while in attendance. One of those projects is a chemical engineering project where the end product is a golf ball sized concoction that they can place in their bath and let dissolve. Another popular project saw the girls build and then ride on hovercrafts.

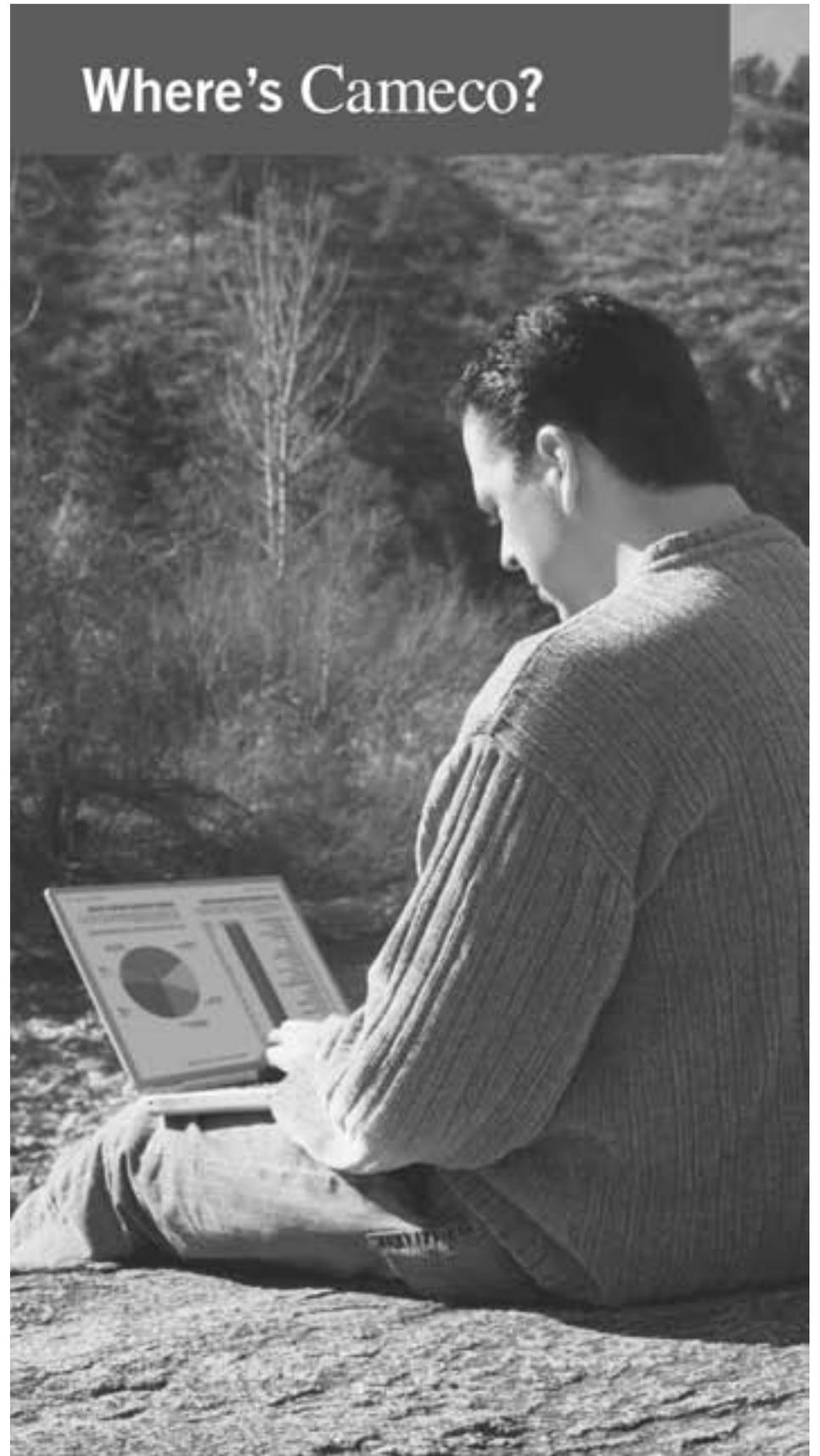
They were also able to enter the anechoic chamber which is soundproof. It is a room that cancels echoes and shows how sound travels.

There was also a speaker's panel where female engineers came to speak about the fun and exciting field of engineering and why it's a career worth pursuing.

The girls were also taken bowling Friday night by females from the engineering college. And there was a banquet on Saturday giving all those in attendance a chance to meet and gather in a social setting away from the classroom.

All the girls seemed to have a great time and enjoyed the experience.

"The idea is not necessarily to convert but to show people what science truly is. Teaching kids and stop the science bias when picking classes for high school," said Touet.



Where's Cameco?

Supporting students

Cameco supports projects that contribute to quality of life in our communities. That's why we donated two million dollars to Credenda Virtual High School. Credenda helps young northerners get the education they need to grow and prosper.

Cameco and Credenda Virtual High School – working together for northern communities.



Making the grade on Muskoday FN

By Creeson Agecutay
For Eagle Feather News

It's a dawning of a new day for Katherine Bear. She recently returned home to Muskoday First Nation but that's not all. She has earned her Grade 12 diploma.

"I feel like I accomplished a lot," she says. "I'm actually grateful for Muskoday First Nation and the Cumberland College to come out here and give us this opportunity to finish Grade 12."

Bear is among 14 graduates of the Muskoday Adult Basic Education Program offered through Cumberland College. This is a first for Muskoday but the program has been offered before, Cumberland CEO Valerie Mushinski says.

"We also had one at Red Earth. Provincially I believe we are the only college that has ever graduated basic education Grade 12 on reserve so we're really excited about today."

Students from Muskoday and area spent up to two years in class earning all the necessary classes to graduate.

Muskoday Chief Austin Bear welcomed the opportunity and looks forward with optimism.

"We will continue to provide opportunities for our people to become educated, be educated and other training and employment opportunities. I think for our First Nation and perhaps most First Nations there lays the answer to some of our dilemmas," he says.

Russel LeBoeuf is also a graduate and is already planning his future.

"I'm going to take small business entrepreneurship at SIAST in September and hopefully run my own business," he says.

The Cumberland College plans to continue to work with First Nations communities in the province to ensure anyone who desires a high school education can get one.



Katherine Bear of Muskoday First Nation accepts her Grade 12 diploma from Chief Austin Bear. (Photo Creeson Agecutay)

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Activist began helping when she was only ten

By Jessica LaPlante
For Eagle Feather News

Jessica Yee, a 23-year-old Mohawk woman from the Akwesasne First Nation in Ontario, is a self described “Indigenous Feminist Reproductive Justice Freedom Fighter.”

She is an organizer, educator, and facilitator who is committed to supporting youth sexual health through feminist and Aboriginal activism. Yee was a keynote speaker at the third annual HIV/AIDS & HCV conference that was put on by the All Nations Hope Aids Network in Regina in November.

At the age of 20 years old, Yee founded the Native Youth Sexual Health Network. It is the only organization of its kind run by youth working to build strong, comprehensive, and culturally competent sexuality education programs for Aboriginal youth across North America. She is also heavily involved with many organizations including The Emergency Native American Task Force, Canadians for Choice, The Highway of Tears Initiative, The Law Society of Upper Canada, and she teaches for the Alberta Society for the Promotion of Sexual Health.

Yee has been an activist since she was ten years old, when she began seeing youth not much older than her becoming pregnant and being abused. At 12 years of age, Yee applied for a volunteer position at a woman’s shelter. She must have sounded older on the phone, because when she went to volunteer, she was told to come back when she was 18 years old, the minimum age for volunteers at the shelter.

“That was my first experience ... it was doing something that was outside of myself, for something that I cared about.”

Yee says it was very important for her to pick something that she was really good at. She explained that she has always been fascinated with sex and sexuality because she considers it something that connects human beings.

“I’ve always joked that I never had a choice in the things I wanted to be passionate about because my mom was such a life force,” says Yee, who credits her mother for being a huge source of inspiration, and the reason why she is so passionate about certain issues, specifically sexual and reproductive health for Indigenous people.

There were other strong women in her community for Jessica to learn from: Katsi Cook, a midwife and environmental justice leader, Lee Maracle, a Native feminist and Winona Leduke, who is the founder of Women of all Red Nations, the female equivalent of the America Indian Movement.

“I work with young people across Turtle Island every single day and I feel like those are also my everyday teachers. There’s no way I would be in the position I’m in now, teaching others, if I didn’t learn from them,” says Yee.

Yee shared two Mohawk teachings that were instilled in her.

“You have to speak up because if you don’t speak up, people speak for you.”

Yee explains that being loud is not something that is seen as a negative thing in her community.

“I always find that funny because in mainstream society, you know, being loud as a woman is not really a positive thing.”

The second teaching Yee values is that you have to lead in other communities before you can lead in your own.

“You go. You help out. You learn. You visualize. You see what’s going on in other communities before you bring it back to your community.”

Yee said that her position of executive director of a North America wide network is continuously questioned because she is only 23 years old.

“There’s still a lot of ageism that goes on.”

Despite the fact that the field she works in is dominated by people who are 40 years old and up, Yee stands out as an inspiring and outspoken activist. She believes that sexual education programs that are not culturally sensitive are not working for First Nations youth because they fail to incorporate traditional knowledge and teachings.

Yee sends a strong message to youth that now is the time to be developing leadership qualities because Aboriginal youth are the fastest growing demographic in Canada .

“If you can’t be that person who is on the podium, or on the protest, or on the picket line, or president of the country. look at the different ways that you can become a leader,” Yee confidently states.

“If you are somebody who is coming from a long line of people who have suffered abuse or harm and you break that cycle that’s a form of leadership.”

Yee challenges young people to look beyond the box, just as she has been doing for over half of her life.

The Native Youth Sexual Health Network is available online at

<http://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/> and the organization also can be accessed on Facebook and Twitter.



Jessica Yee founded the Native Youth Sexual Health Network at the age of 20.

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Eagle Feather NEWS

February 2010

Dear Minister Chuck Strahl and Minister Rob Norris;

RE: Why First Nations University of Canada is important to Eagle Feather News

Many of Eagle Feather News’ reporters, writers, and readers have walked the halls of First Nations University of Canada. The cultural and practical education and resources available at this University are important for telling our stories.

We want to see changes too. The status quo has not been acceptable.

Please consider re-instating funding as the First Nations University of Canada rebuilding process begins. It’s not just important for Eagle Feather News, it’s important for Canada.

Respectfully,

John Lagimodiere
President, ACS Aboriginal Consulting Services
Publisher/Editor Eagle Feather News

If you want to show your support for the First Nations University of Canada, please contact:

Chuck Strahl, Minister Indian Affairs & Northern Development House of Commons Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6 Email: ottawa@chuckstrahl.com	Rob Norris Minister Saskatchewan Advanced Education Room 203 Legislative Building 2405 Legislative Drive Regina, Saskatchewan S4S 0B3 Email: norris@mfa.legassembly.sk.ca
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Lafond carrying Liberal banner in the North

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

The lure of the North was just too much for Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Treasurer Gabe Lafond. With the MN-S on solid economic ground and with stable and accountable leadership, Gabe Lafond was convinced to resign his post and to accept the Liberal nomination to run for Member of Parliament in the Desnethé-Missinippi-Churchill River riding, the largest riding in all of Canada.

“I grew up in the North, I understand the North, and I want to give Northern people a strong voice in Ottawa,” said the newly nominated candidate.

“This is a massive, diverse riding with strong First Nation, Métis and non-Aboriginal populations. We need a representative who can unite rather than divide.”

Liberal Party Foreign Affairs Critic Bob Rae was present at the nomination event in Meadow Lake to show his support and spoke of the strength of Lafond’s leadership and why he thinks Lafond would be an exceptional MP.

“He knows his constituency, he’s not only shown his ability to lead but also to listen,” said the Toronto MP.

“I have confidence that he’ll be the type of MP who can bring people from every part of the riding together and tackle serious issues like job creation and skills development.”

Lafond brings with him years of experience as an elected representative for the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, where he has acted as treasurer since 2007. He is currently the chair of Gabriel Dumont Institute working on skills training, job opportunity assistance and building partnerships between employers and Métis workers.

He says he is sad to leave the MN-S, but is confident that it is the right time.

“The Métis Nation has never been in better shape politically or financially,” said Lafond who still had two years left on his elected mandate. President Robert Doucette, Vice President Alan Morin and Secretary Max Morin all have mandates until 2012.

“The remaining executives have a great plan and will absorb some of my job duties until a replacement can be named. I talked to all of them in regards to my decision and they supported me.”

Born and raised in Green Lake, prior to holding elected positions, Lafond was the Regional Manager for the Canadian Executive Service Organization and worked for the Government of Canada for several years. But he was also into politics and has been with the Liberals for many years.

“I helped organize for John Manley when he ran for leader. I got involved in the grassroots level with them. Now, from working with the Métis Nation, it gave me a better understanding of policy and the impact of making policy. Members of parliament make policy. If I become a member of Parliament I can have a better impact.”

He also has the backing of his wife Andrea and children Olivia, Mathew and Rylan.

“My wife and I had a good discussion six months ago. It is not an easy decision to make as there is a lot of traveling, but my wife is the backbone of the family,” said Lafond.

“I rely on her. I got her blessing and talked to my elders, political advisers and other leaders. The Liberals know what needs to be done in the North. Create economic development, engage in duty to consult and get education opportunities.

“We have to identify rights bearing communities and include them. If we succeed in these areas, it will all fall together.”



Desnethé-Missinippi-Churchill River candidate Gabe Lafond (centre) with Senator Bob Peterson and Ontario Member of Parliament Bob Rae. (Photo supplied)



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Vancouver Aboriginal Child & Family Services Society

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Arts Board Grant Deadlines

The Saskatchewan Arts Board announces the following deadlines for grant applications in support of the work of Saskatchewan artists and arts organizations:

- Independent Artists Grants**
Deadline: March 15, 2010
- Project Grants: ArtConnect, ArtInquire, ArtVenture**
Deadline: March 15, 2010
- SaskFestivals Annual and Multi-Year Grants**
Deadline: April 15, 2010
- Culture on the Go: Touring and Market Access Grants**
Deadline: May 3, 2010
- Indigenous Pathways Initiative Arts Grants**
Deadline: April 15, 2010
- Creative Partnerships - Innovations Grants**
Deadline: May 17, 2010
- Premier's Centennial Arts Scholarships**
Deadline: May 17, 2010
- Prince Edward Drama Scholarships**
Deadline: June 1, 2010

For grant descriptions and applications, visit:
www.artsboard.sk.ca/grants

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

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- Practical skills in areas of mechanics, agronomics, and welding are preferred assets.
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Williams scores a double

In a time when newspaper headlines are dominated by the current debacle regarding the First Nations University of Canada, it is darn refreshing to remove one's self from the hullabaloo and escape, for at least a couple hours, to the friendly confines of the Persephone Theatre for a night of entertainment.



Kenneth T. Williams' newest play, *Bannock Republic*, is the sequel to *Thunderstick* – a play that had its run at Persephone last fall – and marks one of, if not the first time (in Saskatchewan, anyway) a play and its sequel were produced by a professional theatre in the same season.

"Having two shows produced in one season is one thing," said Williams over lunch in Saskatoon recently, "but having a show and its sequel produced in the same season by the same theatre is pretty much unheard of."

Not to mention the fact that the two plays are written and directed by and star people of Aboriginal ancestry. And it's not as if Williams is bragging. He said this with genuine disbelief, almost like he's still getting used to the idea. But judging from the full house on opening night, he may have unwillingly started a trend.

Bannock Republic had everything theatre audiences crave: gut-splitting laughter, troubling heartache, intricately woven stories and seriously ballsy subject

matter. Not only does Williams tell stories of love, forgiveness and letting go, he also cleverly delves into the world of corruption and mismanagement by some First Nations leaders.

Quite fitting considering the province's cut of funding to FNUC was the top story on the noon, six o'clock and 11:30 news the day his play premiered.

And Williams pulled no punches in letting the audience know First Nations people are aware there are problems – sometimes seemingly insurmountable ones – present on some of our First Nations around the province. But Williams did this with tact and offered a sense of hope without getting too preachy or standing on the quintessential soap box.

But he (jokingly) accepts no responsibility for what his characters say and do.

"First of all I had been threatening to write a sequel to *Thunderstick* for quite some time," he says with a chuckle.

"But I had no story and I tend to write with a process where I let the characters and their stories emerge."

Ten years later, the characters and their stories finally emerged to kick Williams in the butt and get him writing. But needless to say, it was worth the wait.

Bannock Republic characters Isaac and Jacob Thunderchild are expertly played by Curtis Peeteetuce and Mark Dieter respectively. Jacob reluctantly comes back to his home, Thunder Cree First Nation, as an APTN video journalist doing a boring, run-of-the-mill story when he discovers Isaac, his cousin, has become Chief of the financially troubled community.

Added to the mix is Destiny, a sexy in-your-face third party manager sent to

assume control of the Band's finances after Isaac's successor left in a flurry of corruption. Paula-Jean Prudat shines as Destiny and greatly complements Peeteetuce and Dieter's effortless on-stage chemistry.

Although it felt as if Jacob was used as more of a supporting character in *Bannock Republic* (*Thunderstick* featured only Isaac and Jacob), Dieter's performance was as close to perfect as an actor can get.

His comic timing was impeccable and he was able to display superior ability in playing a recovering alcoholic who is as funny as he is complex. It is also worth mentioning this is Dieter's first time on stage in over five years.

With little-to-no glitches, bang-on timing by the actors and a story that keeps audiences wanting more, *Bannock Republic* is a hilarious, thought-provoking, sometimes tear-jerking play that runs on all cylinders for nearly two hours.

When asked if he'd ever consider exploring the possibility of a 'three-quel,' Ken Williams raises his eyebrows, takes a deep breath and exhales.

"I'm not sure. Who knows where I'll be in another ten years."

More importantly, where will Jacob,



KEN WILLIAMS

Isaac and Destiny be a decade from now? It'll be a long wait but surely worth it.

Reminder: *Cashing In* Season 2 Premiere

Just a reminder to all you faithful APTN viewers that *Cashing In* Season 2 premieres March 2 (check local listings). *Cashing In*, a half-hour drama (with a little comedy to boot), depicts life in the crazy, twisting world of a First Nations casino.



Paula-Jean Prudat, Mark Dieter and Curtis Peeteetuce have a hit with *Banana Republic* playing at Persephone Theatre. (Photo by Michael Gosselin)

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We're honoured to be one of the official broadcasters of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games. Join us for 10 hours of coverage each day, in Aboriginal languages, English and French. Watch Team Canada make us all proud.



APTN speaking your language at the Olympics

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

For the first time ever, Aboriginal people in Canada are going to be able to watch and enjoy the Olympics and listen to broadcasters speaking in their own language.

APTN, the first ever Aboriginal network worldwide to broadcast live coverage of the Games, has rallied a 36-member broadcast team to deliver 214 hours of coverage in a mix of English, French and eight Aboriginal languages on its standard definition channel and in High Definition on APTN HD.

"To find our 36 multilingual broadcasters, APTN embarked on a nationwide search for talent fluent in their native languages who had some broadcasting experience; some didn't but had the will to learn and become part of the team," said Jean LaRose, APTN's Chief Executive Officer.

will broadcast downhill skiing as well as ladies aerials. Charles has several years experience in radio as a Cree language broadcaster. He has worked extensively with the Government of Saskatchewan and Missinipi Broadcasting Corporation, but this is his first foray into sports broadcasting. Ahenakew has been a public speaker and Chief in his home community for 18 years.

Opikowkew, from Canoe Lake Cree Nation, and Merasty, from Ile a la Crosse, will be broadcasting a mix of various Olympic sports for APTN including speed skating, Nordic combined and men's curling.

Merasty has worked for CBC and was the first CEO of Missinipi Broadcasting Corporation.

Opikowkew has worked in radio for 14 years, including two years with NCI in Thompson, but this is his first time calling the play-by-play for live sports.



This is the language delivery crew for APTN's Olympic coverage. (APTN photo)

2006 Olympic Games to study and rehearse their own presentations.

APTN then brought the entire group back to Winnipeg in mid-November for another session headed up by Van Horne. This included rehearsing in three mock

VO booths and recording on-camera openings and closings. Van Horne continues to work with these first time commentators leading up to the Games, and will also be on hand at APTN's Broadcast Centre to help out.



Asia Youngman and Phillippe Candeloro carried the torch at Wanuskewin.

"We held several training sessions with successful candidates – many of whom are brand new to sports broadcasting. The scope of this undertaking was enormous, and we're thrilled with the result," Larose says.

"It is truly our privilege to share some of our languages and cultures with all of Canada and to provide the world's first Aboriginal language coverage of the Games live and in HD."

There is a strong Saskatchewan team assembled for these Games, including Barry Ahenakew, Alan Adam, Abel Charles, Rick Harp, Robert Merasty and Harry Opikowkew.

"It was real interesting setting it up," Ahenakew said about the process of broadcasting in Cree and describing the events.

"We had to meet and all the Cree announcers had to agree on what words we were going to use to describe a specific sport so that our terminology is consistent."

Charles and Ahenakew will be covering sports in the Cree language. Charles, from Grandmothers Bay, and Ahenakew, from Ahtahkakoop Reserve,

Adam will call play-by-play for APTN's cross country and biathlon broadcasts during the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. He will be behind the microphone for two cross country events: the men's and women's individual sprint, the women 15k team pursuit and ladies 4x6k relay biathlon competition.

Adam, from La Ronge, Saskatchewan, will be broadcasting in the Dene language. He has spent 11 years with CBC Radio in La Ronge and Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.

Harp will be the host of the Aboriginal languages show. A member of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, he has more than 15 years of media experience in journalism and communication including host/producer roles with the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network.

To facilitate training, APTN brought in Canadian sports broadcasting icon Jim Van Horne. More than two dozen applicants were brought to Winnipeg for a two-day training session in August 2009. The applicants left that first session with an extensive outline of APTN's coverage plan as well as a better understanding of how to call sports. They were given DVDs of contemporary professional sports and the

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Olympic hockey teams full of Saskatchewan talent



A Canadian athlete has never won a gold medal on Canadian soil at the Olympics. In Vancouver the Men's and Women's Canadian Hockey teams just may change that. Both teams are favourites to win gold. And both teams are full of Saskatchewan talent.

The men's team has Brendan Morrow of Carlyle, Ryan Getzlaf of Regina, and Patrick Marleau hails from Aneroid. Marleau is expected to be on the team's top line.

Also representing the Saskatchewan will be coach Mike Babcock who is a native of Saskatoon.

On the women's side there is Gina Kingsbury of Uranium City, Megan Mikkelsen from Regina and Colleen Sostorics of Kennedy.

The team will be led by team captain and Shaunavon's hometown hero, Hayley Wickenheiser. She has been playing in European men's leagues the last few years and is widely regarded as the top female player in the world and maybe ever.

The men will look to bounce back from a shameful experience and the embarrassment of Turin where they finished out of the medals.

The Olympics run from February 12-28.

Senior night for Huskies

The Saskatchewan Men's Huskies squad has nearly clinched a home playoff date with their stellar play down the stretch. This year's team has been recognized as one of the most talented in years.

The team has a dynamic backcourt of Shawron Glover and Mike Linklater. The two are the team's top scorers and cause fits for opposing teams.

Linklater recently set a Canada West and school record with 10 steals against



Mike Linklater's career with the U of S Huskies will soon be coming to an end.

the Manitoba Bisons.

"I was fortunate enough to be named team captain and I do my best to lead by example," says Linklater.

Linklater will be paying in his last home game along with seniors Troy Gottselig and Clint Unsworth. Senior night is February 13 and it's a good chance to come see a team that many believe has a chance at Nationals this year.

Twardzik misses chance

Boxer and Big River native Stu Twardzik was unable to compete at National's due to his hand injury. He was hoping to fight but the doctor told him the break was too bad.

He hopes to fight next month at the Battle of the Prairies in Regina.

"I was pretty disappointed about it I was looking forward to fighting. But it will make me want it more next year," Twardzik says.

Huge trades for NHL's Leafs and Devils

The New Jersey Devils are the big winners in what was a historic week of trades in the NHL.

Ilya Kovalchuk is a game changer and I can't remember the last time a player of his stature was traded nearing the trade deadline.

The move makes the Devils that much better.

They were already considered a Cup contender, I don't know if they can get by Washington or Pittsburgh but they are definitely a scary team come the playoffs.

The Toronto Maple Leafs made a

huge splash acquiring J.S. Giguere and Dion Phaneuf.

Now I doubt it will make them much better I give credit to Brian Burke for making the trades.

It will definitely please the fans to add superstars to a talent depleted team.

Random thoughts

UFC needs to step their game up. The last few cards have been pretty weak ... Everybody in Rider nation needs to stay calm. Every team will lose free agents and every year the Rider brass seem to find diamonds in the rough ... Lebron James is gonna win his second straight MVP pretty easily it looks like but I still see Kobe and the Lakers lookin just too good to beat this year ... My favourite sports to watch that I normally wouldn't, but do cause they are at the Olympics are the luge, ski jumping, and aerials.

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Soldier cousins reunited in Afghanistan

By Jennifer Dubois
For Eagle Feather News

For soldiers away at war it is highly unlikely that they will run into their cousin at the store. For U.S. soldier, Greg Rosebluff, and Canadian soldier, Mahekan Ahenakew, the unimaginable came true.

The two men grew up together on the Saskatchewan prairies. Rosebluff is from Muscowpetung First Nation. Ahenakew is from Ahtahkakoop First Nation.

"I knew Mahekan was coming, but I just didn't know if I was going to get the chance to see him because Kandahar is a huge base and they have a huge boardwalk there and there's so many different nations it's like a little city," said Rosebluff.

"I was in the German PX the day before I decided to come on leave. I saw a guy having ice cream at the Canadian PX and he was a pretty happy guy and he looked Indian but I wasn't too sure it was him, so I was kinda doing my own thing. Then this guy comes and grabs me and was, like, hey, Greg, and then I realized it was him, and it felt great to see him," he said.

He has been enrolled with the U.S. military since 2006. Rosebluff said his goal was to be trained in Airborne Infantry. For the last three months he has been stationed in Afghanistan.

"I wanted to join the U.S. army because there are certain things that I wanted to accomplish and do that the Canadian army didn't have. There is just different training," Rosebluff said.

Ahenakew, Canadian light machine gunner, has been in Kandahar for four months. With all his time there the two cousins did not cross paths until the last day before



Mahekan Ahenakew (left) and Greg Rosebluff are cousins from Saskatchewan who met up in Kandahar.

Rosebluff was to go on leave.

"It was great to see Greg in Kandahar. The meeting was totally by accident. I walked in the Dutch PX before heading out and lo and behold I see my cousin way in

the back. It felt good seeing family over there. It made me feel good that our family still has its warriors," said Ahenakew.

One of the youngest in his family, Ahenakew has been a part of the Canadian military since 2006. He enjoys what he does. "I'll stick with (the army). After all it's gotten me this far," he said.

The two men grew up close to each other and are very much in tune with their First Nation culture. Rosebluff said he recalls how being young, traveling from one powwow to the next contributed to his military life.

"You see so many elders out there that are getting older and older. When you go to the powwows you don't see very many of them anymore you know. And now I have three cousins that are in (the army), Joey Kaiswatum, Mahekan, and my cousin, Robin Cote, so it feels good," he said.

Rosebluff wants to contribute to history like the elders before him.

"I know the life that I was leading before wasn't going anywhere that would make me proud or my family proud. So I can't wait to come home and go to the powwows and to enter grand entry as a veteran," Rosebluff said.

Though Rosebluff was able to come home to Regina for a short while, he will finish off in Afghanistan this June before heading to Germany for six more years in the military.

"It's hard being away from family, but I am proud to be doing what I am doing. It's hard to explain but it gives me a sense of pride," said Rosebluff.

2010 Saskatchewan First Nations Winter Games

April 5-10, Saskatoon



For more information...

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