

# Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE



## Oskayak powwow unites community

A usual part of back to school is the annual Oskayak High School welcoming powwow. This year they had the best powwow in a long time.

“The powwow really took over the school this year,” said Jeannie Auramenko, the cultural coordinator at Oskayak.

“We have a point reward system for the students for when they accomplish tasks and the reward is school clothing so the students were really involved in planning and working the powwow because they want those points.”

The powwow had lots of grass root dancers, elementary students and the most dancers ever that actually attend Oskayak High School. The increased attendance can be credited to the amount of partnerships that Oskayak enters into in the community.

“One of our many partnerships is with Sherbrook Home,” said Auramenko. “The students get to know the

Aboriginal residents over the year through lots of visits and we invite the residents to our feast, round dance and of course the powwow and we feed them and the students help them out.” According to Auramenko, the benefit to the students is learning respect and the value of relationships.

Marcel Petit had a great time photographing the powwow.

“The weather that day was beautiful, like Mother Nature was trying to make up for the miserable summer. It was an exciting time for all who stopped by to watch the jigging, powwow dancers and hoop dancers,” said Petit.

Auramenko and the students will certainly be remembering this event for a long time. “You know, everything worked out that day,” said Jeannie. “It was a beautiful day, there were lots of dancers, spectators and food and everyone was happy. I believe the day really strengthened our students to be culturally responsive.”



### INSIDE



#### WISE WORDS

North Battleford councilor, Ray Fox has some sage advice for candidates.

- Page 4



#### NWAC PRESIDENT

Jeannette Corbiere Lavell has been elected president of the Native Women's Association of Canada.

- Page 11



#### C-31 CONCERNS

Sandra Millar sees trouble coming down the road and it all dates back to Bill C-31.

- Page 12



#### HARD WORK

Marlin Legare's formula for success is simple ... just work hard and stay humble.

- Page 21



#### BALL-STARS

The Gurski sisters are making their mark on the softball diamonds of the world.

- Page 27

Welcome to our  
Our Role Model Issue  
Coming In November :  
Warriors  
CPMA #40027204

# Prince Albert youth impress Elders

By Fabian Ratt  
For Eagle Feather News

Fall is usually a time when people are harvesting, but some are planting seeds. These seeds appear to be growing well with nurturing, and positive reinforcement, and hopefully they will provide some nurturing when they reach full maturity too.

Marlene Bear, counselor, mentor, and role model, is well on her way to cultivating a few rows full of excited, and gifted youth into aspiring role models. She literally beams with pride whenever speaking of "her" youth, at St. Mary High School, in Prince Albert.

The youth showed why she feels this pride, to some Elders and the press, by following Bear up onto the stage on Sept. 24, during a show they performed in the school theatre.



Dakota Bear performs.

The show was filled with dancing, singing, and thanks to Marlene Bear herself, comedy. But the evening did not stop with the final performance. The show was the first part of a whole evening the youth had planned, prepared, and performed for some lucky Elders from the community.

Following the show the Elders were presented with a delicious meal, which was prepared for them by the students. This was followed by a friendly game of Bingo, with prizes that included blankets, as well as artwork and crafts, also prepared by the students. The evening was collectively called "Respecting the Harmony Between Generations".

Bear is the first to share credit for the well planned and thoughtful evening, with the students. She says the students were the real stars of the show. They thought of the ideas, planned the evening, cooked the food, performed the show, helped with the Bingo, and even cleaned up afterwards.

She is very proud of the youth, and hopes that a bond is formed between the youth and Elders. As some youth are in need of a "grandmother" or "grandfather", an Elder might have some wisdom they would like to impart to the younger generation.

"It's good to see the youth doing something good and behaving in such a mature way. These youth will go far, if they keep it up," says Elder Rose Umpherville of Prince Albert.

She is also very proud of the youth and thankful she was invited.

Martha Constant, is another Elder who is very proud of the youth for the show they put on, and the good meal they cooked.

"I hope the youth here continue to use the gifts they have been given, and continue to live in a healthy way," Constant says.

She says this, because some of the youth have to follow a healthy path if they are to perform the way they



Elder Rose Umpherville of Prince Albert was very proud of the youth and thankful she was invited to the event. Martha Constant another Elder was impressed with the show the youth put on, and the good meal they cooked. (Photos by Fabian Ratt)

do, like the powwow dancers.

"It's good to see dedication in a young person."

Marlene Bear agrees with these sentiments, and is hoping this idea of youth and Elders getting together catches on at other schools because often there are youth or Elders that need someone to hear what they have to say, or someone to visit and listen to.

If someone has something to say, it really helps if there is someone there to hear, and help nurture their ideas, by providing some positive reinforcement.

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## Editorial

### Aboriginal vote missing in action in municipal elections

The time has come for Aboriginal People to become engaged in civic politics. We are now at a point where half of all First Nation people live off-reserve and of course Métis live in municipalities.

Many communities in the North have Métis people as mayors and councilors, but in most other areas of the province the participation rates and share of power for Aboriginal People is negligible. But signs point to a critical mass building up from frustration and education.

In Saskatoon, we have a Métis person, Johnny Melenchuck, running for mayor for the second time and Derek Rope is running in Ward 3. Doreen Day Wapass is running in Ward 2 which is the inner city ward.

Now, being Aboriginal does not automatically guarantee you the Aboriginal vote, but even if it did, like most urban voters, Aboriginal people hardly turn out to vote for city council or mayor. Don't care. Couldn't be bothered.

In Saskatoon, Jim Pankiw came second one year. Second, for goodness sake, and he trounced the incumbent. Someone call the cops.

In Regina, we only have one Aboriginal contender and that is Donna Standingready in Ward 8. We have to do better than just one candidate in Regina. That is ridiculous. There are around 20,000 Aboriginal people in that city.

In Prince Albert, a city where 33 per cent of the population is Aboriginal, we have three people who have put their names forward. They are incumbent Darcy Gervais and newcomers Jim Tsannie and Darren Whitehead. That is something, but it would sure be nice to see way more Aboriginal involvement in this race.

In the cities we have housing issues, health issues, gangs, big business, small business, school children and mortgages just like everyone else, but the age 40 and up crowd are a bit disengaged from the leadership and power issue perhaps because we are a bit too busy trying to keep our heads above water.

But the younger generations is really building up a head of steam. We are seeing student protests again! Yippee! And they go after Métis, First Nation, federal and provincial leadership alike and with the same vigor. Activism is rising again and we have scores of young people just out of school or who are one of the 7,000 plus students that are taking some sort of post secondary training this year across Saskatchewan. Smart and angry. A formidable combination and they are on our side.

Ray Fox, last year's Citizen of the Year in North Battleford, is a two time city councilor in North Battleford and he is running for his third consecutive win. He is being challenged by one Aboriginal candidate, Skyler Whitefish, and several others.

Fox said in a chat that he thinks we are making strides in getting more Aboriginal people involved in the civic political realm. The more we see someone from the community achieving something or showing leadership then they can believe they can do it too he said.

Also look at the First Nations University students in Regina. They recently held a rally to help protect the Treaty right to education. It was a cold day so they marched throughout the University of Regina campus buildings. Along the way people were clapping for them and joining in the march. The crowd grew with students from all different races as it went, gathering momentum and showing unity. This bodes well for our future. For the Pankiw types, not so much. Get out and vote.

### What's next in Eagle Feather News

We know we promised an article about a photo sleuth and an historical inaccuracy. Due to the depth of the article, we still need to talk to a few Chiefs before we bring it out, so please be patient as we will uncover the mystery for you in November. Also in November we will look at the record year that SIGA enjoyed and show some of the programs that gaming dollars support on reserve. And, of course, we will have profiles of veterans and current soldiers, our warriors, as We Remember.

# Readers Forum



Ray Fox offered the sage advice that in order to win your election you need two things, a great motto and a good campaign manager. Ray's motto is, "Mark the box for Fox!" This guy is a two-time winner so he must be on to something. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

## Letter to the Editor ...

Dear Editor:

David Ahenakew opened many doors on many fronts for all Indigenous People!

I remember as a young boy my kokum not being allowed in a Jewish owned store in Prince Albert in the late 1950s.

Signs also were posted throughout my province "No Indians Allowed" ... that meant 'visibly' Indigenous as a whole.

Respectfully,

Dave Clinton  
Mistatim, SK



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

# We need to get beyond the hysteria to prevent AIDS

I sat down with a cup of coffee and a newspaper, the headline jumped out. "The Aboriginal AIDS Epidemic is spreading!" I put the paper down. I didn't want to know anymore.

My history as an Aboriginal person and the nature of my work is already one of crisis and this stereotypical and alarmist coverage of HIV and AIDS did nothing to encourage me to want to do anything but shut my eyes and pretend I hadn't read that.

Later, when I felt stronger, I thought about this and the paralysis I felt when I saw that headline. If it could do that to me what does it do to the people who have HIV or AIDS? And what does it do to their families and communities?

AIDS is a preventable disease and we need to be both open and sensitive to understand the things we need to do to prevent it. Fear mongering does nothing to educate but creates shame for those who have it and fear and denial for everyone else.

It's true that the rate of HIV infections is rising in Saskatchewan. This year alone the numbers have almost doubled from the rest of Canada with the highest numbers in Saskatoon. The ages of those infected begin as young as ten years and as old as 70.

Most of this can be attributed to injection drug use. And whether we want to believe it or not, injection drug use is

rampant in our communities. People share needles and that can mean a death sentence not only for those who are addicted but also for innocent people.

One worker told me she knew of a whole family who had been infected because they had shared a needle at a house party.

Here in Saskatoon, I know of two women who have been infected by husbands who are not addicts, but who had also shared a needle.

Marjorie Beaucage, an AIDS activist, said that the numbers of HIV and AIDS would probably be much higher across the country if people would voluntarily go in for blood testing. But they don't because of the stigma associated with the disease.

"There is so much shame," she said. "The hardest thing about our work is knowing the disease is preventable but not being able to get people to talk about it or even listen because of that shame and stigma."

"Education is vitally important and is the key to prevention and, there is lots of excellent information and material out there but communities need to use it.

"But even with all the good information there is always a need for material that does away with the belief that HIV is only transmitted sexually or by injection drugs. We need to be reminded that one can get infected from a piercing at a Sundance, for example, if the tools used have not been properly sterilized."

Along with HIV and AIDS information, we also need to do simple things like make condoms available in elementary and high school

bathrooms so our kids can practice safe sex.

I know that in my own work I've never met kids who didn't have sex or any who didn't want to practice safe sex. But they didn't practice it because they couldn't afford to buy the condoms or "they were in a place in the store where everybody could see you buying them or you had to go to the Nursing Station to ask for them."

Another kid said to me, "in a small place everybody knows what you're doing and talks about it. There is no anonymity."

I know that many people say there should be no needle exchange, that we encourage drug use by supplying addicts with needles. But how else can we ensure

that HIV is not spread by needle sharing.

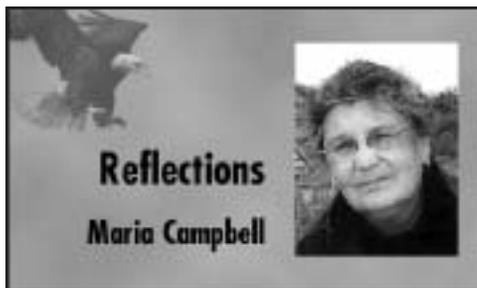
When we use words like epidemic we need to be prepared to do everything in our power to stop it. Not only should condoms and needles be readily available, mandatory testing should be done. If you go to a clinic you should be tested for HIV the same way that you are tested for other things to ensure your good health.

And if someone is infected, their spouse or family should be informed so that a support system can be put in place to help them to build healthy lives. This can become controversial and infringe on human rights but the good health of our people and communities should come first and the cost of maintaining that should be a priority.

Yes, poverty is to blame for much of the hard times, colonization, racism, residential schools. The list is long but at some point we need to realize that perhaps our worst enemy is a "keyam" attitude. "What's the use?"

And instead liberate ourselves by saying, "no more, this is enough." We can educate ourselves, teach our children and have empathy and caring enough for our people.

We can face the fear that causes us to deny or paralyze us. It's not easy but we can do it.



## Blood Quantum: The Dracula Factor

In this month's commentary I discuss the 'blood quantum' factor which is part of the approach to defining Aboriginal people in Canada, the USA and other places that are former British colonies.

The discussion is part of a series of commentaries I have undertaken on the question of defining First Nations, Métis and Inuit people in Canada.

Why must Aboriginal people be defined or identified to start with? There can be bad reasons for doing that, but generally in our times it is necessary to identify those who, because they are Aboriginal people, are entitled to special legal protections or rights.

If a group of people has rights that not all citizens have then it is necessary to identify these folks in order for the government to respect those rights. In Canada the Constitution, which is the fundamental law that binds governments and courts, guarantees aboriginal and treaty rights.

The tough goal, then, is to define a human group in such a way that it is recognizable through time and generations. I am aware of only four factors that have been used to define human groups. Not one of them is practically or politically easy to design and apply and usually a combination of factors is used.

These four factors are the charter group, blood quantum, lifestyle, and kinship.

The blood quantum factor is sometimes called the 'Dracula Factor' in American academic literature on the issue of American Indian Tribal membership codes. The expression is used, as you will have guessed, by those who do not like it.

Those who like it have given reasons such as their preference for physical resemblance among relatives, or 'those

who belong'. Another reason is because they value a common ancestral link. Such views are held by people in Canada and as far away as the south Pacific.

The opponents of blood quantum have many swords for their attacks. They can point to the unsavoury racist origins of the idea of 'blood', which no longer makes sense in the modern world of DNA and the human genome. (By the way, DNA cannot determine who is an Aboriginal person.) Modern myths are being built upon ancient myths.

The idea of 'race' has no scientific basis. 'Race' belongs to the history of ideas. It rested on the idea that some folks

were naturally superior to others because of their physical attributes passed on from generation to generation. Today 'race' is best understood as a word that is used to single out a group of people for political purposes. These purposes can be good or bad.

A quick look at some of the practical results of trying to include a blood quantum factor into a membership or 'citizenship' code for an Aboriginal

group can be useful and interesting. It works to keep in both your cherished and your rat bag relatives and to keep out all the folks who have been adopted, who live in and work for the community.

It puts no value on the ways of a people or their preferred values, substituting a factor that is more suited for animal husbandry. It can reward the takers without regard to the givers, giving membership by accident of birth and refusing it to those who willingly wish to give to the community.

The most interesting thing perhaps about the Dracula factor is its difficulty of application. An example is the

American policy on admission of 'Indians' into the United States on account of U.S. obligations in the Jay Treaty. Many people, by the way, mistakenly think that the Jay Treaty has legal force in Canada.

The official policy is to let in all persons who are 'half-blood' or more 'Indian'. No one can know what that means and in practice American officials let in status Indians who are identified, not by blood quantum, but by 'treaty cards' (cards which actually identify persons as Indians under the Indian Act, without regard to treaties)

In this short introduction it can be stated that those who want to set up a membership code to decide who belongs to the community (later we will look at ideas like 'Nation') might start by deciding first on their basic political and social objectives for their community.

A definition makes sense only in relation to a goal, so one way of explaining this process is to say that a decision has to be made on a vision of a happy neighborhood or community, or 'nation'. Who belongs? Is Dracula welcome?

The heart of the right of self-determination is the right of a people to decide what its vision of the good society is, and to be able to put it into practice. Perhaps poets can inspire and lead the way?



## De-colonizing ourselves may be the most profound act of healing

Some very vulnerable people are reaching out to Aboriginal Elders for personal healing. Some have found solace and personal growth while others have experienced shame and degradation.

Elders are not the same. Some have and are healing from pain filled experiences. Others are in denial and are unable to address their own pain let alone the pain of others.

Some years ago an impressionable young woman, eager to learn Aboriginal culture, met a man she felt was wise in the ways. He agreed to teach her but he didn't tell her he was married.

They soon developed an intimate relationship which abruptly ended when she found out he was married. She then phoned and asked him to come over to her place. When he arrived he found her hanging by a rope around her neck with a note stating if she couldn't have him she didn't want to live. She had died.

The man promptly left with his wife back to North Dakota leaving a family and community in mourning. Instead of helping her he destroyed her.

Another woman suffered from schizophrenia and was heavily medicated. She heard some women proclaim that real Indian women did not use birth control. She went off birth control and became pregnant. The doctors told her because of her medications the baby would be born deformed and mentally incompetent. They advised her to have an abortion.

She agreed and the abortion was done. She was emotionally traumatized and in her anguish approached an Elder for emotional support. The old man bawled her out stating the Creator would punish her severely for killing her baby.

Some battered women, their lives endangered, have been told they must stay with their husbands no matter what. Sexually abused people have been told to forgive and forget while their abusers are left unchallenged and continue to abuse others.

There are also Elders who stand up to abusive people and won't be intimidated. They protect the victim and refuse to remain silent. These ones walk a straight path.

The personal healing movement has come from within the Aboriginal communities across Canada. The distinction is important, for, unlike the imposed colonization of a people, this movement belongs to the Aboriginal people. It is strong and growing. The act of decolonizing ourselves may very well be the Aboriginal peoples most profound act of healing.

Mental health professionals are not the same. Therapy without cultural competency is limited at best and debilitating at worst. There are skilled therapists who have become accepted and welcomed into the First Nations communities. Many of them are Aboriginal people.

Beardy's First Nation is an example of a community that has done a lot of healing work

and is deserving of recognition.

In Anne Cameron's book *Dreamspeaker*, a foster child with a long history of abuse, runs away, deep into the forest where he meets an Elder and his apprentice. The old man takes



him in and the boy for the first time in his young life finds a home where he belongs.

They become close and the kind old man teaches the boy the ways of the Kwakiutl and along the way some very important life lessons. One day they are by the sea shore. They come across a twisted tree. The old man says there is a spirit so terrifying that the tree, upon seeing it, tried to rip itself from its roots and became twisted in fear.

He calls this spirit *Sisuitil*, a sea serpent with two heads, one at each end. He says it takes tremendous courage to stand and face its approach. Many have died who could not stand to face it.

Those who can, witness each head turn and face the other. In that moment *Sisuitil* sees itself and finds truth. *Sisuitil* is always searching for the truth of its being and in finding it rewards the person who can face its awesome power. The book does not state if the old man experienced this transformation himself.

*Sisuitil* comes to the boy, who with great courage stands his ground. Both the spirit and the boy see truth and *Sisuitil's* gift becomes the boy's personal healing for he who sees the truth of themselves finds healing. The book ends tragically but each in his own way is set free.

The story is, of course, a metaphor. It takes great courage for people to face the truth of themselves. Many can't. Those who can, find their reward can be life transforming. It is this inability to see the truth of themselves that limits the openly wounded Elder.

Therapists talk about the healing spiral or helix. This is a life long process in which the individual repeatedly faces the truth of themselves, learns from the experience and keeps growing. It is a far more gentle approach than the extremes of inner child work.

I have heard the vision quest described as a death and rebirth experience. The person who goes out alone is not the same person who returns. Again there is personal transformation.

There are two events in life we each must experience alone. One is the act of being born and the other is the act of dying. Both happen on the hill top.

The healing path is embedded in the language, stories and legends of Aboriginal peoples but it is up to each of us to find its meaning.

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# FSIN will elect new leader this month

When nominations closed for those wishing to run for three elected positions for the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, eight brave souls had stepped forward to offer their leadership.

There are four candidates seeking the office of the Chief, two candidates seeking the office of the First Vice Chief, and two candidates seeking the office of the Third Vice Chief. During the election period, FSIN Second Vice Chief Delbert Wapass will serve as acting Chief of the Federation.

FSIN incumbent Chief Lawrence Joseph, from the Big River First Nation, is challenged by Muskowekwon First Nation Chief Reginald Bellerose, former FSIN Vice Chief Guy Lonechild, from the White Bear First Nation, and Red Pheasant First Nation Chief Sheldon Wuttunee.

FSIN First Vice Chief incumbent Morley Watson, from the Ochpowace First Nation, is challenged by Robin McLeod, a member of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band.

FSIN Third Vice Chief incumbent Glen Pratt, from the George Gordon First Nation is challenged by Cowessess First Nation band councilor Edward (Dutch) Lerat.

Each of the candidates met the eligibility requirements set forth by the FSIN Election Act. The FSIN Legislative Assembly is scheduled for Oct. 28 and 29 in Saskatoon at TCU Place.

Candidate speeches are scheduled for the afternoon of the 28th with polls opening on the 29th at 9 a.m.

The history of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations dates back to 1982 when a massive re-organization of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians

was undertaken.

On April 16, 1982 Saskatchewan Chiefs agreed to form Canada's first Indian Legislative Assembly. The political convention they signed restructured the FSI. As a result, the provincial governing body was no longer a non-profit organization but a true Federation of Nations. It was at this time the FSI expanded its name to the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN).

Sol Sanderson, who had been FSI chief, became the first chief of the FSIN and held the position until 1986.

He was succeeded by Roland Crowe, who served two terms over an eight-year span.

Former Poundmaker Cree Nation Chief Blaine Favel, followed Crowe and served the FSIN as Chief from 1994 until 1998.

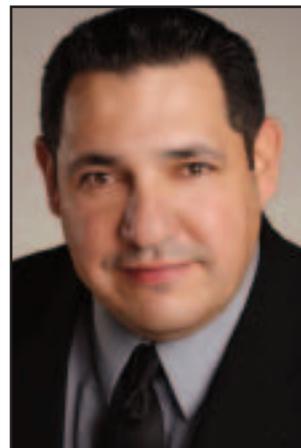
Perry Bellegarde, who recently made an unsuccessful bid for the position of Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, was FSIN Chief from 1998 until 2003.

Alphonse Bird of Montreal Lake was elected chief in 2003, and served one term before being defeated by current chief, Lawrence Joseph in 2006. In that election it took two ballots for Joseph to emerge victorious over Bird and Delbert Wapass.

Joseph had served as a Vice-Chief of the FSIN for almost a decade. He was first elected as the FSIN's fourth Vice Chief in 1997.



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# Amnesty International official criticizes Canada for failing to sign UN declaration

By Cassandra Opikokew  
For Eagle Feather News

“Untruths” and “fear-mongering” were some of the words Alex Neve used to describe Canada’s actions surrounding the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples when he spoke at the University of Regina recently.

About 200 people showed up to hear Neve – the Secretary General of Amnesty International Canada – speak out about Canada’s refusal to sign the declaration. Neve is an international human rights lawyer and was appointed as an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2007.

“My own government (has) chosen to stand on the wrong side of human rights history,” Neve says.

Neve’s presentation focused on the reasons why Canada was one of only four countries including Australia, New Zealand and the United States that did not sign the declaration in 2007. Since then, the Australian government changed its position and now supports the declaration. New Zealand and the United States are also said to be reconsidering their positions.

“It is only Canada now that remains implacably and aggressively opposed, isolated and defiant. Canada refuses to support or even acknowledge the declaration.”

The non-binding declaration sets out the global rights of indigenous people including rights to culture, identity, language, employment, health and education. It also prohibits discrimination and stresses the right to economic and social development.

Indigenous and human rights groups

have heavily criticized Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Conservative party for refusing to sign the declaration.

The federal government maintains that the declaration conflicts with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and that they are concerned about the possibility of reopening settled treaties and land claims.

Neve says Canada’s reasons are both flawed and vague.

“They offer no details or legal rationale for such a dramatic assertion. It’s very difficult to see the ways it might infringe the constitution, especially given that it’s an aspirational, non-binding document,” he says. “A joint letter signed by more than 100 constitutional and legal experts from across Canada in May 2008 unequivocally rejected and put to bed this claim.”

As for the declaration’s ability to reopen treaties, Neve argues “(It’s) quite the contrary. The declaration validates and upholds treaties between governments and indigenous peoples.”

He speculates that the real reasons behind Canada’s refusal to sign the declaration concern articles 10, 19 and 32. These articles urge governments to get the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous people when taking any action that could impact their rights or interests. Such actions include forcible relocation and adopting laws or pursuing projects that could affect indigenous lands, territories and natural resources.

“Canada likes to talk about consultations with indigenous peoples ... but not consent,” Neve says. “But Canadian law – Supreme Court of Canada decisions – talk about consultations including a duty to accommodate. Pretty



Amnesty International Secretary General Alex Neve addresses an audience at the University of Regina.

similar language to consent. And the principle of free, prior and informed consent appears elsewhere already in international law.”

Métis rights activist Jim Sinclair attended the presentation and spoke during the question period of the evening. He stressed the need for Canada to sign the declaration as well, and the need for more people to start pressuring the federal government.

“We need young people and people from white society to sound the drum too. This is our homeland and we’re not going to sit back and take it forever.”

Neve seconds Sinclair’s sentiments.

“We got it wrong in September 2007 but we are a country with enough wisdom to get it right now by declaring our support for the declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. There’s no other answer.”

## Aboriginal youth modeling program underway in Yorkton

By Desarae Eashappie  
For Eagle Feather News

A six-week modeling program is underway at the Yorkton Métis Youth Cultural Centre.

Every Saturday, Aboriginal youth will be meeting to learn basics of modeling. They will participate in workshops that focus on building and maintaining skills in areas such as runway, photography, fashion and design, as well as self-esteem and confidence.

Chelsa Reil, of Glacys Model Management in Regina, is the program’s organizer. She said the program will give youth the opportunity to focus on their talents and strengthen their confidence.

“I just want them to be who they want to be. Everybody’s got a gift, whether it’s modeling, acting, singing, doing hair and make-up or something else. I just want to help them discover their talents,” she said.

Each workshop will focus on a different aspect of modeling. There will also be a photo shoot and the youth will put together their own fashion show for their family.

Thirteen-year-old Anna Boucher, attended the first workshop held on October 3. She said she is looking forward to attending all the workshops.

“(The workshops) might give me an idea of what I want. It will help me to learn who I am and what I want in life,” said Boucher, who is interested in career as a beautician.

The workshops also stress on the importance of education for the young people, as well as the importance of their Aboriginal culture.

Robert Lafontaine is the eastern regional director for the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. He works closely with the youth at the Cultural Centre. He said the modeling program provides a positive alternative for the youth.

“The program is a safe and culturally appropriate place where (the youth) can enjoy working towards their education or a career. It encourages youth and family to explore their cultural identity,” he said.

The Aboriginal youth modeling program is held every Saturday from October 3 - November 7 at the Yorkton Métis Youth Cultural Centre. It is free, and open to everyone.

## Sakewew powwow celebrates success

By Doug Collie  
For Eagle Feather News

North Battleford’s Sakewew High School held a Thanksgiving powwow on Oct. 1. Invited guests included Education Minister Ken Krawetz and councilors from the city of North Battleford and town of Battleford.

The purpose of the powwow was to celebrate the success of the school, now in its eighth year; and to give thanks for a new funding agreement with INAC and the province, hammered out in the spring.

Jon Sloan is chairman of the joint board of education which operates Sakewew. He says now that the board has secure funding for the school, they’ve been able to bring back two programs that were cut due to lack of funding – a Cree program and a program that encouraged students to attend school.

Sloan says the school board’s next job is to look at constructing a new building for the school. He says the current building wasn’t designed as a school. It’s actually the old Battlefords Indian and Métis Friendship Centre.

John Wandzura is the director of education for the joint board of education which oversees the school. He said the federal and provincial governments now pay \$12,000 a student to help the school operate. Krawetz toured the school. He said it’s a great success. That’s why the province is happy to help fund it.



Janisha Lewis of Onion Lake dances during the Thanksgiving Powwow at Sakewew High School. (Photo by Doug Collie)

# Breast self-exam key to survival

**T**ansi. October is here again and this month is all about the breasts. Have you done a breast self-exam? If not, why not? In 1999, while I was performing my routine breast self-exam I found a lump in my left breast.

That lump turned out to be cancer and the diagnosis was devastating but the cancer was found in its early stages. I subsequently had both of my breasts removed, chemotherapy and reconstruction.

That was ten years ago. I truly believe that I am alive today because I was diligent about doing my monthly breast self-exam.

At the time I was diagnosed I was so scared. Was I going to die? My mother had died of breast cancer in 1978 and that was a factor in what I was feeling at that time. I left the surgeon's office with a sense of doom. What I needed was information. I needed to know everything about this disease.

Of particular interest to me was finding other Aboriginal women who had survived breast cancer.

To my surprise I couldn't find any materials or support groups specifically for Aboriginal women. The support

groups I did find were not talking about issues relating to me as a Cree woman.

What about social disparities, geographic isolation and cultural differences? Why were these topics not considered? Now I was on a mission to find out why.

About one year after my surgery I was invited to participate in genetic testing, where it was discovered that I had a mutant gene called BRCA1.

I am a mother to four beautiful daughters and the knowledge that I had a mutant gene was so upsetting. Had I passed this gene onto my daughters?

I became determined to get the message out to the cancer community that they needed to consider developing resources to assist Aboriginal women dealing with a breast cancer diagnosis. Our voices and concerns needed to be heard.

I began volunteering with local breast cancer organizations, because I thought that was the only thing I could do to bring our issues to the forefront or at the very least get on the radar.

That was eight years ago. Today I am the president of Breast Cancer Action Saskatchewan. To date I am the first and only board member who is Aboriginal. In my current position I advocate for information and materials for Aboriginal women and all women dealing with this disease.

In June 2008, Doubling Thomas Productions Inc. and producer Tracy Stevens recorded my story on film in a documentary called, One of the One Percent – The

Sandy Ahenakew Story.

I wanted to share my family's experience with breast cancer in the hopes of starting a dialogue with other Aboriginal breast cancer patients. The documentary was shown at the 2008 World Breast Cancer Conference in Winnipeg and at various other events over the past year.

My hope is that this film will assist Aboriginal women or at least give them some peace of mind knowing that someone "like them" has gone through this and survived.

Too many women are suffering in

isolation. Why are social disparities and cultural differences adding to our dismal survival rates? I don't have the answer but I do have a passion to make things different for my daughters and granddaughter.

This past September I was thrilled to learn that I had been chosen to sit on the planning committee for the next World Breast Cancer Conference which will be held in Hamilton, Ontario June 7-11, 2011. My role is to ensure that Aboriginal peoples' issues are brought forward and that we are represented at this global event.

Then, of course, there is the challenge of finding Aboriginal people to volunteer their time over the next two years (I don't know too many folks who will work for nothing).

Something close to home is the Breast Cancer Action Saskatchewan Women's Cancer Conference coming up October 16 and 17, at the Ramada Hotel in Regina. Registration is only \$40. You can register by going online to [www.bcask.com](http://www.bcask.com) or call the office at 596-2121.

Thanks for your letters and emails. I have a new email address [sandra.ahenakew@gmail.com](mailto:sandra.ahenakew@gmail.com) hope to hear from our readers.



Sandee Sez  
Sandra Ahenakew

Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada

## New Horizons for Seniors Program Call for Proposals

The Government of Canada is accepting applications for Capital Assistance funding under the New Horizons for Seniors Program.

This funding helps non-profit organizations renovate the facilities or replace the equipment they use for existing seniors programs and activities.

The deadline for applications is **November 6, 2009.**

1-800-277-9914  
TTY: 1-800-255-4786  
[www.hrsdc.gc.ca/seniors](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/seniors)

Canada



3rd Annual Aboriginal HIV/AIDS & HCV Conference

"In the Spirit of the Family"  
Women: Keepers of the Tipi

November 15-17, 2009

Ramada Hotel and Convention Centre  
Regina, SK



### WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Frontline workers, professionals, students, youth, people living with HIV/AIDS, and/or hepatitis C, addiction counselors, Chiefs/Council members, physicians and any community member who wants to make a difference.

### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

- ▶ **LaVerne Monette - "Tired of Waiting"** - This keynote presentation will cover historical and current reasons why Aboriginal women are at risk for HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C, and what we, as Aboriginal peoples need to do about it.
- ▶ **Jessica Yee - "Young Aboriginal Women: Empowering Ourselves for the Next 7 Generations"** - This presentation will focus on the voices and experiences of young Aboriginal women on where we are being silenced, so we can work collectively to take our power back for the next 7 generations.

**Banquet:** All Nations Hope AIDS Network is pleased to present Sierra Noble, a 19 year old Métis girl from Winnipeg, MB as your entertainment for the evening. "Possibility" is her debut vocal single and the video for this song is being played on CMT Canada and MuchMoreMusic. One of her most recent and exciting performances was opening for Sir Paul McCartney in Halifax in July 2009.

*Don't miss out on the opportunity to see Sierra, get your ticket for the banquet.*

### Features:

- ▶ Traditional teaching & ceremonies
- ▶ Displays with current resources
- ▶ Grand Entry
- ▶ Honor songs for people living with HIV/AIDS and/or HCV

### For more information contact:

All Nations Hope AIDS Network ♦ 2735 5th Ave. Regina, SK S4T 0L2  
Toll free: 1-877-210-7622 ♦ Phone: (306) 924-8424 ♦ Fax: (306) 525-3698  
E-mail: [allnationshope2@sasktel.net](mailto:allnationshope2@sasktel.net) ♦ Visit our website for updates: [www.allnationshope.ca](http://www.allnationshope.ca)

\*\*\*\*Scholarships will be available for populations at risk.\*\*\*\*



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## SaskEnergy Commodity Rate Application

### Call for Public Comments and Submissions

The Saskatchewan Rate Review Panel is asking for public comments and submissions on SaskEnergy's application to reduce the price it charges its customers for natural gas from the current \$5.96 per gigajoule to \$5.21 per gigajoule, effective November 1, 2009.

SaskEnergy's commodity rate application:

- reflects the lower price of gas for the forecast period from November 1, 2009 to October 31, 2010; and
- will clear the forecasted balance of \$16.7 million in the Gas Cost Variance Account (GCVA) owing to customers at October 31, 2009.

The GCVA is a mechanism that tracks the difference between actual commodity sales revenue and actual gas costs. The net differences are accumulated over time and the balance owing either to SaskEnergy or to its customers is applied to a rate adjustment or a future commodity rate. The current balance owing to customers in the GCVA is the result of the lower cost of gas relative to commodity sales since the last rate adjustment in Spring 2009. If approved, the lower rate will mean a 7.9% reduction for average residential customers, an average saving of \$6.63 per month. The reduction for General Service II customers will be 9.1%, and for General Service III customers, 10%.

Following standard regulatory practice, SaskEnergy passes on the cost of natural gas to its customers at the same price it pays suppliers, including all expenses. There is no profit component in the commodity price that SaskEnergy charges its customers.

Through Minister's Orders, the Saskatchewan Rate Review Panel (the Panel) has been asked to:

- review SaskEnergy's proposed commodity rate adjustment; and
- provide its recommendation on the fairness and reasonableness of the proposed commodity rate adjustment, considering the interests of the customer, the Crown corporation and the public.

**All interested persons and organizations are invited to provide comments or submissions on the rate application to the Panel no later than 4:00 pm on October 16, 2009 in these ways:**

- Online at: [www.saskratereview.ca](http://www.saskratereview.ca) in the "Voice Your Opinion" section
- Email: [input@saskratereview.ca](mailto:input@saskratereview.ca)
- Telephone Voice Message: 1-877-368-7075 (toll-free) or in Saskatoon 934-1948
- Mail: P.O. Box 1301, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3N1

#### For more information:

- Visit [www.saskratereview.ca](http://www.saskratereview.ca) for full details, including SaskEnergy's commodity rate application in pdf format, information about the Panel and its role, recent updates and reports on previous applications.
- Visit: [www.saskenergy.com/About\\_SaskEnergy/News/news\\_releases/2009/Rates\\_Fall\\_CommodityDelivery\\_2009\\_NR\\_Final.pdf](http://www.saskenergy.com/About_SaskEnergy/News/news_releases/2009/Rates_Fall_CommodityDelivery_2009_NR_Final.pdf) for SaskEnergy's news release regarding the application.

**Saskatchewan Rate Review Panel**  
P.O. Box 1301, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3N1  
Toll-Free: 1-877-368-7075 (Saskatoon 934-1948)  
[www.saskratereview.ca](http://www.saskratereview.ca)



Violet Sanderson (centre) holds a picture of her mom, Cynthia. The marchers were participating in the Stolen Sisters/Sisters in Spirit Awareness Walk in Saskatoon. (Photo by Andréa Ledding)

## Awareness Walk brings families of murdered, missing women together

By Andréa Ledding  
For Eagle Feather News

The Stolen Sisters/Sisters In Spirit Awareness Walk has grown every year – both in number of walks held nationally, and in the number of supporters.

In early October, people gathered in numbers larger than ever, crowding the gymnasium at the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre before walking through downtown Saskatoon. About 60 walks were held across Canada this year, raising awareness for Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women, and supporting the grieving family members and communities left behind.

After gathering at the Friendship Centre, a police escort led the walk. Many vehicles honked and waved to display support, and the procession paused for a moment outside Jax Nightclub in memory of Daleen Bosse Muskego.

The popular downtown club was the last place she was seen alive.

When the walk ended at the Centre, soup and bannock were provided and then a panel spoke, beginning with a representative from Saskatoon Police Services.

He said that while many things had changed, it still wasn't enough.

He added his hope that attendance would swell to the thousands over the next few years.

Many families shared tearful memories of loved ones who had been found dead, including Daleen's auntie, Linda Bignell.

Erin Wapass spoke of her sister being found buried in a shallow grave outside Saskatoon.

"Since then it's been a search for justice," she said. "You feel very alone, I can't describe the helplessness, the hurt,

and the pain."

As she searched for answers Wapass says she found only more questions – and learned of other missing and murdered women. Some have been gone for decades, and the cases stretch from coast to coast.

"First Nations women have been discriminated against for so long, we have to put a stop to that," Wapass said, describing the painful legacy of bitterness, hatred, loss, and pain made obvious by the high representation of First Nations people in jails, and the foster care system.

"Our mothers are dying. So I want to say to all of you, go home, tell your daughters, mothers, sisters, aunties, your women to take care, respect themselves and be proud to be a First Nations woman."

Joanne Ahenakew spoke of her two murdered aunties, one discovered by a cross country skier west of the city, and another left naked in a ditch near Sherwood Park, Alberta. They left behind a daughter, and three sons. The killers are still at large.

"These women did not deserve this. I'm so tired of hearing of these beautiful women described as prostitutes, hookers, streetwalkers, addicts," she said, sharing her love for her aunties who were role models and older sisters to her.

"I feel robbed. I didn't have a lot growing up, but I had my aunties."

Linda Pechawis is now raising the son and daughter of her sister Cynthia Sanderson.

A man in a truck yelling racial slurs physically knocked her down and ran over her in Prince Albert, and received three years jail time for it.

"She died because she was a First Nations woman," said Pechawis. "It all stems from racism and violence that should never be inflicted on anyone, regardless of skin colour or gender."

# NWAC President honoured

Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, presented Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, the newly elected President of the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) the Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case. President Corbiere Lavell was one of six receiving the award at Rideau Hall in Ottawa on Oct. 1.

The award is presented annually to honour individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the advancement of women's equality and have celebrated Canada's evolution as an inclusive society.

For decades Corbiere Lavell has been a champion for the rights of Aboriginal women and fought a landmark court challenge to regain her First Nations status.

"It means a lot to win this award and to know that my commitment towards the equality of Aboriginal women has been recognized," remarked Corbiere Lavell.

"I thank my family that has stood by me all these years, knowing that the work I did has helped improve the lives for all Aboriginal Peoples."

A well-known role model and advocate for Aboriginal women, Corbiere Lavell is a fluent speaker and teacher of Ojibway language and culture and a member of the Anishinabek Nation.

In 1970, she married a non-Aboriginal man, resulting in loss of her Indian status. In a landmark court challenge, she fought to regain her status, losing the final case by a single vote in the Supreme Court of Canada.

Corbiere Lavell was instrumental in founding the Ontario Native Women's Association, the Native Women's Association of Canada and Indigenous Women of the Americas. With Bill C-31's passage in 1985, Corbiere Lavell's status was reinstated, along with that of her three children, to the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve.

Corbiere Lavell, who was elected President of the Native Women's Association of Canada in September, is looking forward to her new role leading one of Canada's National Aboriginal Organizations.

She says will ensure that the issues that affect Aboriginal women and their families the most are heard at key government tables.

"I thank all of our grassroots women from our Provincial Territorial Member Associations who endorsed my candidacy. Marilyn Buffalo and Nahanni Fontaine were excellent candidates for the position of President and I thank them for presenting their candidacies," said Corbiere Lavell.

"I also thank outgoing President Beverley Jacobs for her five years of service to NWAC."



Jeannette Corbiere Lavell with Gov. Gen Michaëlle Jean at Rideau Hall. (Photo credit: Sgt Serge Gouin, Rideau Hall. Reproduced with the permission of the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General)

## On October 29th, Vote **SHELDON WUTTUNEE**

for **CHIEF** Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations



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- Our Repatriation & Language Revitalization**
- Our Healing Foundation**

*"I want to see all of our people achieve, attain and possess the skills and tools necessary to be prepared to control what is rightfully ours and defined in our Treaty Rights. It is up to us to affirm our Treaty Rights by optimizing all opportunities so that we can move forward as a strong Nation"*

Contact Sheldon Wuttunee:  
(306)481-3555 or sheldonwuttunee@hotmail.com

# Aboriginal Women's Circle meets to discuss issues affecting women

By Andréa Ledding  
For Eagle Feather News

At the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation "Call to Action" Conference held in early October, treasurer and founding member Sandra Millar gave a presentation on the 2009 "Sharon McIvor" case which affects the definition of Status Indians, particularly second and third generations.

It is a subject that doesn't yet have much attention in the mainstream of society. Millar was made aware of it by their national group, Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) – and newly elected national president Jeannette Corbier-Lavell.

Corbier-Lavell took the Government of Canada to court back in the 1970s, on the basis of gender discrimination when she lost her status for marrying a non-Indian – First Nations men did not lose their status no matter who they married – so this is familiar territory for her.

McIvor argued to the B.C. Court of Appeal that her brother's children and grandchildren would be considered differently than hers would, as a female, even under the revised act and definitions – something that wasn't foreseen when Bill C-31 changes were made. It is clearly still gender-based discrimination, and both judges ruled

in her favour – the B.C. Court of Appeal has given the Government of Canada until April 6, 2010, to change the discriminatory legislation.

If this is not done, all Status Indians in B.C. will be unclearly defined – and nationally it is also problematic, although a province-by-province court challenge may have to take place.

If the Supreme Court of Canada decides in October not to hear the case – which would freeze the entire process including the B.C. judge's ruling and timeline – the government will be giving First Nations and communities across Canada until November 13 to prepare position papers and submit input towards amending the act. More information can be found on the INAC website by searching "McIvor vs. Canada".

Millar and Corbier-Lavell point out it is this same rush to change under a tight deadline without adequate thought and consultation that caused the faulty legislation in the first place. But, given no alternatives, they hope to at least spread the word so as many as possible can give feedback to INAC before changes are made.

Corbier-Lavell's attendance of the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation conference, which highlighted action items such as youth leadership, economic development, nuclear repositories sites, and missing and murdered women, was her first official event since the recent election.



Sandra Millar is concerned about the future implications of Bill C-31.

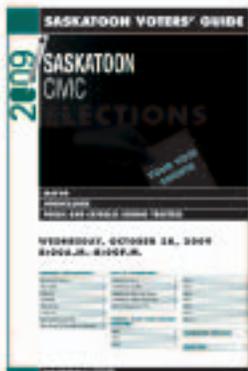
An Anishanabe originally from Wikwemikong, the only unceded reserve in Canada, she is also the first Anishinabek Nation Commissioner on Citizenship – undergirded by the belief that it is the right of each First Nation to determine its own membership rather than the government's right. She was also recently one of five women across Canada awarded a Governor-General's medal.

**2009 SASKATOON CIVIC ELECTIONS**

**YOUR VOTE COUNTS!  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2009**

On Election Day, eligible voters will vote for Mayor, City Councillors for the city's ten Wards, ten Trustees for the Public School Board and seven Trustees to be elected at large for the Catholic School Board. Find the full list of candidates in your Saskatoon Voters' Guide and online at [www.saskatoon.ca](http://www.saskatoon.ca)

**VOTING HOURS ON ELECTION DAY,  
OCTOBER 28, ARE FROM  
8:00 A.M. TO 8:00 P.M.**



## SASKATOON VOTERS' GUIDE

The Saskatoon Voters' Guide was delivered on Sunday, October 11 with the Saskatoon Sun, and includes information on who can vote, where to vote and when to vote. Ward listings and candidate profiles are also included. The Saskatoon Voters' Guide is available online at [www.saskatoon.ca](http://www.saskatoon.ca), and at public libraries, Leisure Centres and City Hall.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
WWW.SASKATOON.CA OR 975-3240.**

## WHERE TO VOTE

Not sure where to go to vote on Election Day? Visit [www.saskatoon.ca](http://www.saskatoon.ca) and use the online form to find your Polling Station. Enter your home address and you'll get your Ward number and Polling Station location and address. Your Saskatoon Transit trip options are listed so you can catch a free ride to your Polling Station. Information on where to vote is also included in your Saskatoon Voters' Guide.

If you are unable to vote on Election Day, Advance Poll voting is available at:

City Hall - Committee Room E (October 19-23, 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.)

Midtown Plaza, The Mall at Lawson Heights, Confederation Mall, Market Mall, The Centre (October 17, 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.; October 21-23, 1:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.; October 24, 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.)

University of Saskatchewan - Place Riel (October 19-23, 9:00 a.m. – 4 p.m.)

## FREE RIDE TO VOTE

The City of Saskatoon is offering a free bus ride to Polling Stations on Election Day, as well as to the Advance Polls. Clip the coupon from this ad or from the back of your Voters' Guide. The coupon is also available online at [www.saskatoon.ca](http://www.saskatoon.ca). A return ticket will be provided to you at the Polling Station.

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**CHECK YOUR VOTERS' GUIDE THEN GET OUT AND VOTE ON OCTOBER 28.**

# New Era, New Leadership

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# Journalism interns gained practical experience

By Jennifer Dubois  
For Eagle Feather News

Journalism students from First Nations University of Canada have been chasing news and following current events across the province this summer. Nine students were hired as summer interns after they completed the Indian Communication Arts Summer Institute.

The seven week institute offered training in print, radio and television reporting. Following the institute the students were placed in the field to gain experience within organizations including CBC, Global television and Missinipi radio.

Two of those students, Desarae Eashappie and Diane Adams, did their internships at CBC in Regina. Eashappie worked at the Afternoon Edition.

"When I was told that CBC was interested in hiring me, I was super excited, because I've only done one year of university so far," said Eashappie.

"I've only taken a few of my INCA courses, so being able to intern right away, off the bat, is really helping to set me up for the rest of my journalism career."

Adams interned with CBC doing radio news and current affairs.

"It's been really enriching. What I learned in INCA, if I didn't have that, I don't know what I would have done," said Adams.

"And you know I look around and see people who've been here in the newsroom for years and there are interns who spent a couple years in school to get the skills we learned in INCA in seven weeks."

Shannon Poundmaker interned for



Student Diane Adams, instructor Merelda Fiddler, students Shannon Poundmaker and Desarae Eashappie spent the summer working in radio newsrooms.

(Photo by Jennifer Dubois)

CBC Radio from Regina and in her hometown of Saskatoon. She says the traveling opened her eyes to see what reporters do on a daily basis.

"They have to travel to places, get their information and get their stuff and book it back and get their story done. So I had an experience of a traveling reporter. So that was pretty cool!"

Paul Domstauder is the CBC's executive producer of Radio Current Affairs. He said he was very pleased with the ideas the students brought to the news room.

"The students are doing exceptionally well. They have strong story ideas. Based on their skills and life experiences they are able to broaden their range of

storytelling to people who are listening to the radio."

Stewart Manhas was hired at Global Television as a summer intern. Manhas said he wanted to learn to be a news cameraman and was excited when he found out his employment will continue through the fall.

"I'm now hired as the weekend shooter. I get to shoot everything on the weekend and run the studio cameras for the 6 o'clock show. I looked at it as taking the next step in journalism, obviously getting hands-on technical camera training so it was just something new and exciting for me."

Brent Williamson, news director at Global Regina, says Stewart is a quick

learner.

"He's doing very well. He was really quick to pick up our concepts in our newsroom and that really surprised me because he had extremely limited experience in a newsroom before."

Miranda Hanus, Nicole Bear, Deana Francis and Chris Tyrone Ross interned for Missinipi Broadcasting Corporation. They worked as a team to file news stories from Regina for MBC.

Hanus says the internship is giving her a lot of new and useful skills in the news room.

"It's going really good. I'm getting a lot of experience. I'm doing everything from producing to editing, helping others, writing my own stories meeting a variety of people, getting a variety of stories."

Bear says she is grateful for the skills she learned in the INCA summer institute.

"I love it, it's very exciting. If I hadn't taken the institute and fallen in love with it I would not be doing what I'm doing right now."

Pauline Van Dresar-Lonechild had the opportunity to intern closer to home with the Weyburn newspaper.

She said her internship inspired her to want to learn more about journalism. One of her goals is to speak to her idol.

"What I want to do is meet Doug Cuthand (columnist for the Saskatoon StarPhoenix). Go and talk to him about when he worked for the newspaper and if there's any tips he can give me."

Van Dresar-Lonchild will continue her education in journalism.

She hopes, like many of the other interns, to work towards a career in journalism.

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# SICC plays integral role in keeping languages alive

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

**S**askatchewan Indian Cultural Centre (SICC) has been in business for 35 years, and it has become a tradition to hold a gathering every fall. This year's First Nations Language Keeper's Conference takes place Dec. 8 and 9 at the Saskatoon Inn.

"SICC is really the heartbeat of language and culture for Saskatchewan," observed Iris O'Watch, SICC's director.

"Many universities are now collaborating with First Nations to create certified language learning programs."

Administrators, chiefs and councillors, students, Elders, language instructors, early learning education instructors, and teachers are just some of the four to six hundred people who attend the conference. The majority are educators working with youth in schools and cultural programming.

"In previous years we've been trying to have an array of different language culture groups in presentation workshops themselves," she noted, adding they've been busy promoting the conference locally, provincially, and nationally.

"All First Nations languages in the province have been represented in previous workshops."

This includes Cree, Dene,

Dakota/Nakota(Assiniboine)/Lakota and Nakawe (Saulteaux).

They still have a call out for presenters, with a deadline of mid-October to get abstracts in. The focus is on language methodologies and assessments, language and cultural group teachings, learning through technology, and cultural arts.

Registrants pay only \$200 if they sign up before Nov. 6 and after that the fee goes to \$300. Tradeshow booths are also available for \$300. The event begins with a sweat and a pipe ceremony at Wanuskewin on Dec. 7. There will also be an Elders room provided.

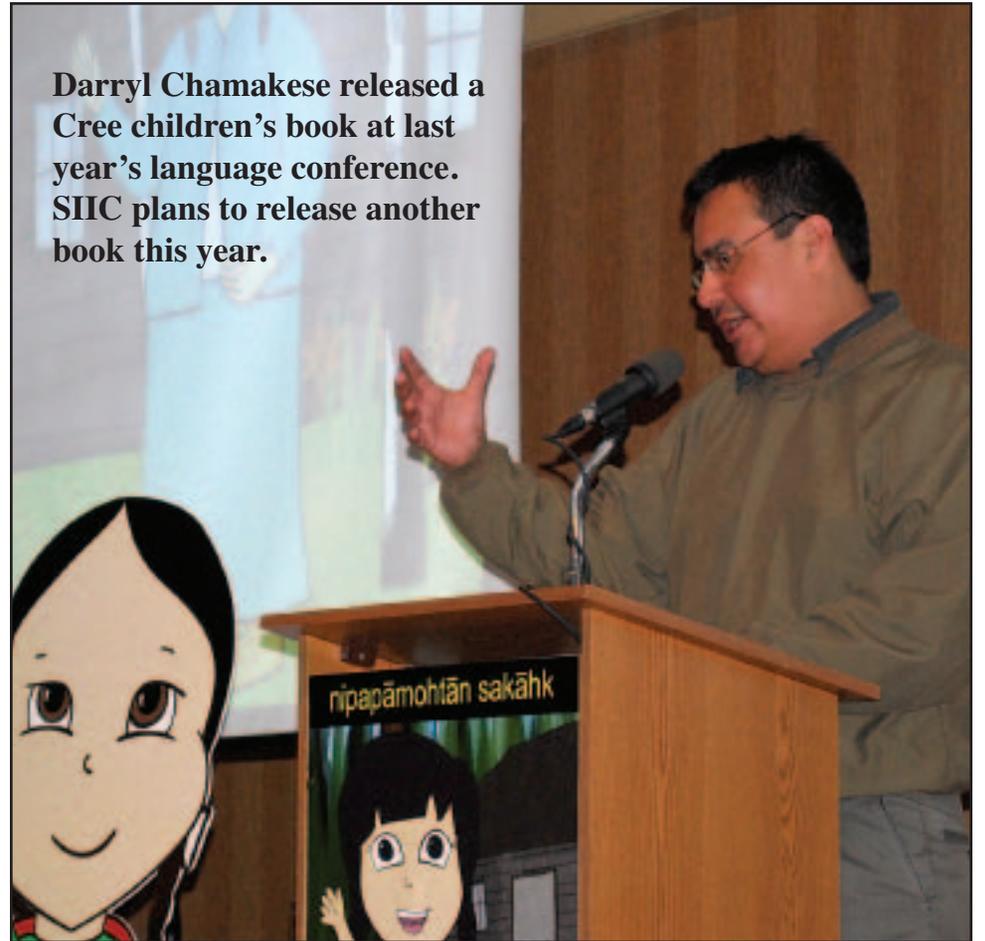
Another exciting event will be held a Dec. 7 evening book-launch – during registration – of an SICC developed book on Language and Cultural materials. SICC will also be unveiling a general and youth-specific language and cultural strategy and looking for feedback from the public.

They hope to book entertainment, and are asking for sponsorship as well as community volunteers to help support the language conference.

On Dec. 8 all are welcome to attend a round dance at White Buffalo Youth Lodge. A free shuttle service is provided from the Saskatoon Inn.

"We are still awaiting confirmation from keynotes but we have been saying

**Darryl Chamakese released a Cree children's book at last year's language conference. SICC plans to release another book this year.**



to keep posted for more info on our website," said O'Watch.

"This conference is to promote the languages – to strengthen, support, preserve, protect promote, and revitalize them. People who work in language pres-

entation enjoy this time – there are many old friends and participants who come year after year.

"We've managed to create a family atmosphere – it's really a celebration of our languages."

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Jo-Ann Episkenew with her granddaughter, Paulina, at the McNally Robinson Booksellers launch of her new book, *Taking Back Our Spirits – Indigenous Literature, Public Policy, and Healing*. (Photo by Andréa Ledding)

## Episkenew book examines healing through arts

By Andréa Ledding  
For Eagle Feather News

Jo-Ann Episkenew, associate professor of English at the First Nations University of Canada (FNUC), recently launched her new book, “Taking Back Our Spirits – Indigenous Literature, Public Policy, and Healing” at McNally Robinson Sellers’ Saskatoon location.

Reading excerpts from the book, which examines Canada’s colonial history and the process of Indigenous healing through literature, theatre, and the arts, Episkenew shared stories from her own life, fielding questions from the standing-room only crowd.

Addressing community division in the Aboriginal groups, she recalled Chief Lawrence Joseph’s past dismissal of Métis as “could-be’s, wanna-be’s and shoulda-been’s”, later observing this jockeying for position is generally tied to protecting rights and resources. She holds responsible governmental and colonial policies which create and foster animosity, competition, and self-protective drive for limited resources rather than a sharing and pooling of what everyone has – the traditional way.

Working on founding a transitory home for women in Prince Albert, her group was told unless the Métis and First Nations stopped working together, no level of government would support it.

“It’s ridiculous,” she noted. “Divide and conquer. It’s the inequitable division of inadequate resources to people that cause division.”

Her mother is from the Pasqua Reserve, where Chief Ben Pasqua predicted a time would come when people would forget they were related, and forget to tell each other they were related. Pasqua held out on signing treaty until assured his Dakota and Métis brothers would be guaranteed hunting and education.

“We need to heal from the division of these policies,” she observed, adding it is complicated but while the government should fix it, “they haven’t done a good job so far – why turn it over to those who have kicked us?”

Her book supports Indigenous communities finding their own solutions.

“The discussion of Indigenous literature and drama ... reveals that the Indigenous people have learned the creative process has restorative powers. Today’s Indigenous writers use the power of narrative and drama to heal themselves and their people from the trauma that colonial policies have inflicted.”

As a Métis woman, she noted the Indian Act’s 6.1 and 6.2 definition politically bankrupted the Métis because they had at least had a shot at band funding for university if they took treaty, so treaty children often denounced their Métis heritage in hopes of receiving benefits.

“We’re detached from our own relations – it’s incredibly divisive,” she said. She listed many influences, some of whom are examined in the book itself – Maria Campbell’s *Half Breed*, *In Search of April Raintree*, and Richard Wagamese’s works.

She noted that the mainstream population, and artists, are able to work across imposed barriers effectively and collaboratively, much more than at institutional and governmental levels, and it is the sensible way to do things.

“Anything else is illogical,” she said, joking that she self-identifies as a “beige person of indeterminate origin” to try and dodge boxes.

“It’s important to have someone looking at the obvious flaws and saying, ‘Holy \_\_\_ that’s dumb.’”

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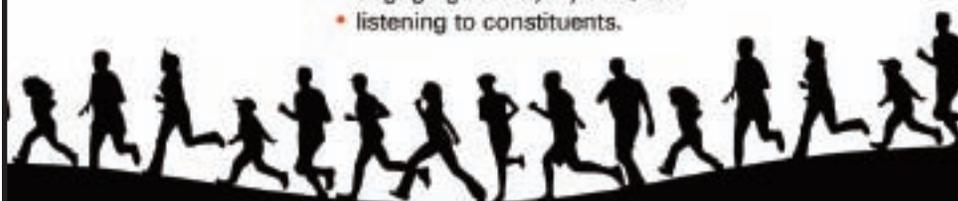
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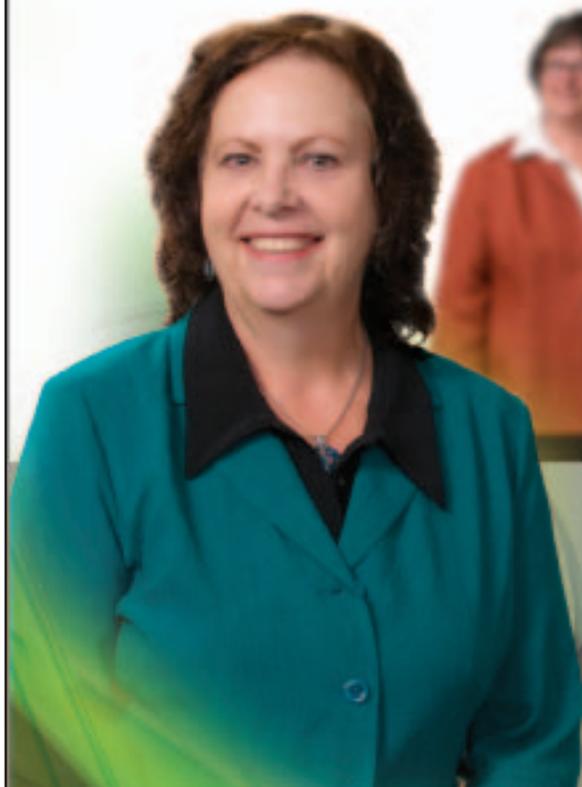
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## New business found capital and wise counsel at CCDF

*Mirage Woodworks is a Saskatoon based company that is a kitchen, bath and furniture manufacturer. It was opened in July 2008 by two young entrepreneurial couples, Martin and Shelley Bettker and A.J. and Crystal Itterman. Shelley and Crystal are Métis sisters from Leoville. The business has been a resounding success and they have already shared that success by making numerous community donations including redoing the entire kitchen at the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op to bring it up to code to allow the Co-op to continue its important work. We cornered Shelley and asked her a few questions about being in business.*

### Why did you decide to go into business for yourself?

We had the experience and the background to start our own business and run it the way we wanted to. We saw a niche in the market that was not being filled. We wanted to offer environmentally friendly products with extremely sturdy construction which no one was offering locally in Saskatchewan.

### How did you prepare?

In our case it was a very quick process. We committed to the idea of starting our own business in December 2007 and we had a target date to be open for the spring building season of 2008. We started with researching machinery, products, and locations. It was a full time job putting all the pieces together for our business. Financing and budgeting was time consuming and sometimes overwhelming. Using our contacts and relying on our experience in the industry and in business moved our plans forward. We looked at what our competitors were doing and focused on how we would do things better. We did research from our home office and spent hours planning the operation of Mirage Woodworks.

### How did the staff at the Clarence Campeau Development Fund help you?

Clarence Campeau Development Fund (CCDF) provided us with funding to purchase modern machinery that allows precision woodwork and excellent craftsmanship. The funding opened doors for us to purchase a building instead of leasing one. This has given us the freedom to set roots in Saskatoon and make a home for Mirage Woodworks. Beside the financial support, the staff went above and beyond to provide us with guidance and professional advice. Our Business Development Specialist, Monica Brunet, helped us follow our dreams while reminding us to keep our feet on the ground. She looked at us as people not just another file on her desk. It was this personal attention and encouragement that motivated us to continue when things got tough. The business is growing faster than we could have every imagined thanks to the help we received. CCDF did not stop helping once we opened our doors, they have continued helping us with financial support through their aftercare program. They also sponsored the refreshments for our grand opening. Our families would like to thank CCDF for all that they have done. CCDF helped us reach our goal and they will continue to help our business grow.

### What is the most challenging thing about self employment?

You always have to be thinking of your business and what is the best for it. You represent your company and you want to put forward a strong image. Our business never really goes on holidays. The most challenging part is defining yourself as an owner and as an employee that works for the company. It is important to remember to work on your business and not just to work at it.

### Most rewarding?

It is great to come up with new and innovative ideas. It is nice to allow your creativity to shine. We really have a great management team everyone brings something different into the business so our business is truly unique. Seeing a finished product installed in a home and watching the client's happy response to seeing their dream kitchen come true is the most rewarding.

### Any tips for new entrepreneurs?

Be ready to work twice as hard as you anticipate! Don't sweat the small stuff and be prepared for bumps in the road. Never stop thinking of new ways to do old things. Change is what keeps a business current, fresh, and modern.



Sisters Shelley Bettker and Crystal Itterman, along with their husbands, have created a successful business in the last year.



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# Logo contest part of planning for 125th anniversary of Battle of Batoche

By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News

The Métis Nation – Saskatchewan has awarded the management contract of the 125th Anniversary of the Battle of Batoche to the CNT Management Group from Regina.

“We have worked closely with the CNT Management Group in the past, this team has demonstrated transparency and diligence in their management style” says MN-S President, Robert Doucette.

“We like to think big and we need passionate people to work with us and make it happen.”

The year 2010 will be a year of commemoration, a year of celebration, a year of reconciliation and honour for the Métis Nation. Thousands of people are expected to travel to Back to Batoche Day in July 2010. This anniversary of the battle defines the history of the Métis Nation not only in Saskatchewan but the rest of Canada and United States.

“The scope of our involvement is not limited to Back to Batoche Days, we are looking at events taking place every month in 2010” says Claire Bélanger-Parker, Event Manager of the 125th Anniversary.

“We are truly honoured to be working side by side with the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan”.

Several announcements will take place this fall, including a logo contest to commemorate the Anniversary. The logo will be used on programs, posters, brochures, stationary, video clips, and on clothing and other memorabilia made to celebrate the year. The key objective of this competition is to obtain the art and logo that will signify the pride and survival of the Métis and commemorate the anniversary of our most famous struggle for rights, the Northwest Resistance of 1885.

The logo will clearly illustrate and refer to Métis history and culture in the context of 2010 marking the 125th Anniversary of the Northwest Resistance. Elements of Métis culture and history should be incorporated.

Prizes totaling \$3,500 by Gabriel Dumont Institute will be awarded to first (\$2,000), second (\$1,000) and third place (\$500) winners. As well, the first place winner will have the esteemed honor of having their design become the logo of this Historic Anniversary.

Details of the contest and all other events surrounding the 125th Anniversary Celebrations can be found at [www.mn-s.ca](http://www.mn-s.ca).



ROBERT DOUCETTE



First Nations University students stress the need for education funding.

# First Nations students remind gov't education is a treaty right

By Jennifer Dubois  
For Eagle Feather News

More than 200 people gathered at the First Nations University in Regina last month to protest the transfer of the Post Secondary Support Program to Student Loans.

Cadmus Delorme, second year student, delivered an emotionally driven speech about how education is extremely important for First Nations people.

“A lot of our young generation is turning to gangs and staying home on the reserve. It’s hard to break the cycle of welfare. It has hit very hard in our home communities and education is the key to get out of that,” said Delorme.

Students marched through the U of R campus and dropped off a letter to Chuck Strahl, Minister of INAC. It said: “PSSSP is the backbone of our institution. We will protect it.”

Guest speaker, Perry Bellegarde

showed his support.

“It’s not a protest what you’re doing here, it’s political activism. Education, awareness leads to understanding leads to action. So I applaud you for what you’ve done in terms of your letter to Indian Affairs here, and don’t stop there,” Bellegarde said.

“We are slowly losing our rights to post secondary (education). On a personal note, it’s hard to walk around in the urban areas and be proud of being an Indian, and I don’t even know my culture,” added Delorme.

“In one year, education has brought all that back to me.”

Delorme says that students will continue to voice their concerns..

“Our forefathers suffered for us to have what we have today, and we will not lose that. We will not ever say we give up – we will only get stronger from this day on,” said Delorme.

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## Francophones invited to attend Back to Batoche in 2010

By Doug Collie  
For Eagle Feather News

**A**s a result of a roundtable discussion in North Battleford, francophones have been invited to attend the next Back to Batoche Days Métis celebration in Batoche.

Peter Bishop of Saskatoon extended that invitation during the final roundtable discussion at the Don Ross Centre on Sunday.

“What I would like to see is have one day set aside at least to bring in the francophones, bring in their entertainers and their dancers, square dancers,” he said during an interview with Eagle Feather News. Bishop said they could bring along their own distinctive food that could be served out of booths on the site.

Bishop said the idea of inviting the francophones to be a part of the next Back to Batoche celebration should be taken for approval to the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan as well as the Métis National Council.

Francophones say they're interested. Bernard Levasseur of North Battle-

ford, a deputy of the Association Culturelle Fransaskois (ACF), the association of French Canadians in Saskatchewan, says he plans to take the idea to a meeting of ACF deputies Oct. 2-4 in Ponteix, near Swift Current.

Levasseur noted the idea fits in well with his ACF portfolio, which includes arts performances and sports.

He said he also wants to see the francophones and Métis meet more frequently so they can understand each other better.

Sister Rita Bisson, of the Battlefords, also applauded the idea of inviting Francophones to Back to Batoche.

“I suggest we have two participants from each group meet to create and set up some activities,” she said.

Viola Allan, who co-chaired the organizing committee for the three-day roundtable with Henri Bouvier, praised the idea.

“That's very positive because that's (the Fransaskois) a part of us,” she said.

Bouvier agreed.

“We would be honoured to be present at Back to Batoche,” he said.

Bouvier said he would take the idea back to ACF executive. Allan said she'll take the idea back to the Métis as well.

Levasseur and Bisson, were just two of the people in the roundtable who represented the Battlefords and area. Others included Gil Bellavance of Prongua and Marcella Ross.

Ross liked the roundtable, but described it as “too structured.” She said although she learned a lot via roundtable discussions, she learned as much – if not more – while having coffee and/or meals with others.

Bellavance agreed with other speakers that francophones have endured much prejudice and discrimination over the years, and have had to struggle to keep their identity and culture alive. But he said things are getting better. He noted in the Battlefords, it's much easier to learn the French language in school than when he was growing up.



Bernie Levasseur of North Battleford ties a sash given to him by organizers of the Travelling Roundtable of Metis and Francophones as they wound up their three-day gathering at North Battleford's Don Ross Centre Sept. 13.

(Photo by Doug Collie)

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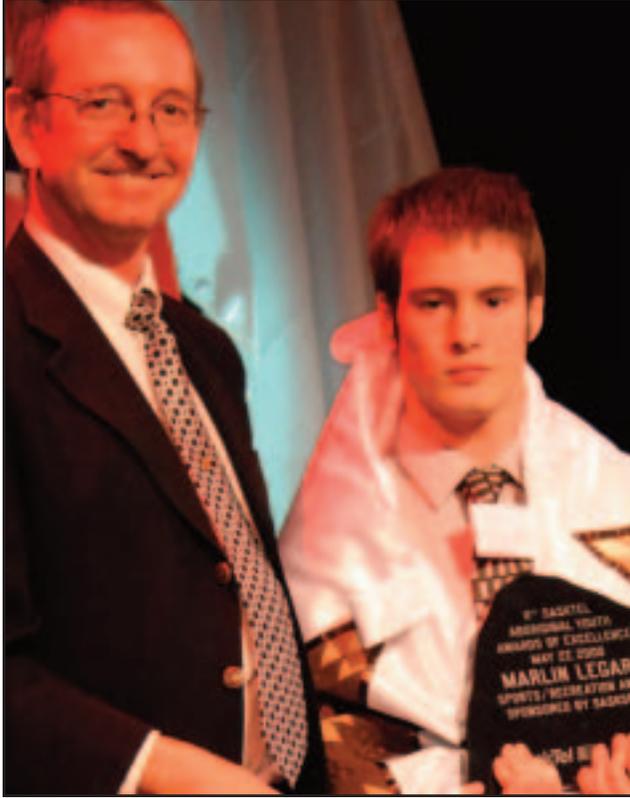
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# Hard work propels young wrestler to the top

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

**M**arlin Legare, a graduate of Hudson Bay Composite School, was the Sports and Recreation Award Winner for the Sask Tel Aboriginal Youth Awards this June.

The second oldest of five boys, he's now moved south to Regina to do his Bachelor of Kinesiology, but says while he was anticipating being homesick, so far



Marlin Legare accepts his award and a blanket at the SaskTel Aboriginal Youth Awards.

he's so busy he almost doesn't have time to notice.

Of course, he's done so much travelling with sports competitions, particularly in wrestling, over the past few years that he's also used to being away from home. Most recently, Legare represented Saskatchewan at the Canada Summer Games in Prince Edward Island.

"It took place in August. It was a really awesome experience," Legare said, adding he was really the only small-town person on the team. Most athletes were either from Saskatoon or Regina.

"There was some friendly teasing, but it was all good."

He's busy not only with classes but with training – his major is fitness and lifestyle, and a position on the university wrestling team makes sure he lives up to the course description. He's busy training, weight lifting, running, and attending team practices.

Legare says the scholarship was unexpected. He can still recall the surprise of having his name called while his parents looked on, after enjoying a banquet he could only describe as "wicked good."

Not only has the scholarship been useful financially, receiving it has opened other doors.

"I can put it on resumés, applications for other scholarships. It just really looks good, and it's an honour to have."

Culturally, he notes that his Métis roots are important to him.

"I'm proud of who I am, but sometimes it's hard to fit myself into a place because I'm a Native among white people and a white person among Natives," he notes.

"But other Métis people know where I am."

Legare credits his family and community for their tremendous support. Growing up in the North, he's seen some of the needs; what he describes as epidemics for the Aboriginal population, of diabetes or alcoholism. But

he wants to go back and set up sports programs for the community.

"What I'm hoping is that prevention is worth a thousand pounds of cure," he said, noting that sports, recreation, and physical fitness brings both physiological and psychological health to the aboriginal community.

"I see myself going back up later in my life, for sure."

His advice for other students?

"Really the bottom line is hard work ... and stay humble. Best advice I can give."

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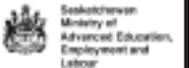
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# Proud Northerner overcame obstacles to find fulfilling career as instructor at SIIT

By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News

You can hear the loud classroom down the hall. You wonder how they can learn with the racket. As you near, you understand it is laughter, not horseplay.

The joy is coming from the class led by Carol Mackey, an Instructor of Management Studies at the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies.

The laughter is genuine as the students and instructor interact in this algebra class on the fourth floor of the downtown Saskatoon campus.

Mackey was born on reserve at Loon Lake in a Red Cross outpost. She was the youngest of nine children who grew up in the North and off and on-reserve. She is from Loon Lake but points out that she is not of First Nations ancestry.

"My identity is tied to the northern landscape. Growing up, our lives were intertwined with the people of Makwa First Nation, and we were never taught that there was a difference," Mackey explains.

Her students agree. She is one of them. They were even begging her to come back to class after a short break so they could work on more math. And they were having a great time. In math class for goodness sake.

Her wit and energy have made her one of the institution's most popular teachers since her arrival 14 years ago after recovering from, as she puts it "a life that was a false vision quest ridden with addictions, abuse, and violence that should have left me dead.

"At the bottom, the Creator lifted me up and placed me on the road home... a journey filled with challenge and a fiery determination to become a teacher, silencing the voices that said I couldn't ... that past mistakes meant I shouldn't dare to seize a new reality. I graduated with distinction at the age 40."

Mackey had to hustle back to the avid math students so we emailed her five quick questions and here are her thoughts.

**What is the most rewarding aspect of teaching at SIIT?**

- Graduation hugs ☺
- The students, the staff, and supportive administrators who inspire me daily.
- Making a difference in the life of students ... seeing them grow into the purpose the Creator has for their lives.
- Getting a visit or email from

former students ... a loan's officer at work for RBC, a student just returned from work experience in New Zealand, a bride and groom on their wedding day, a network administrator at Northlands College, a manager in a California laser tech company.

**What is most challenging part of being a teacher?**

- Keeping students encouraged, motivated, and able to find humour in a math or grammar party or a word problem that took two hours to solve
- Not being able to protect students from the death of their loved ones or the effects of the city's way of using concrete and anonymity to separate them from the land and self-identity.

**What do you want your students to take away when they graduate?**

- Passion, Pride, and Purpose
- A passion for learning, working, and giving back to the community.
  - Deep pride in their accomplishments and cultural identity.
  - A strong conviction that they have a valuable purpose in life and have the power can change their personal world by making good decisions.

**How do we get more Aboriginal people into business?**

- Those who have become successful returning to classrooms to inspire students.
- More entrance and performance scholarships to assist and recognize the effort of students.
- Open doors in the workplace to seek out and mentor students by providing meaningful work experience.
- Strong connections with students in high schools ... many students do not have parents in the workplace for "Take a student to work day." We need workplaces to step up and ask schools for students who would like to visit their workplace for the day.
- Partnerships with Industry and governments to create and sponsor bridging programs to provide students with the skills they need to be successful in their academic pursuits.

**Who was your role model growing up?**

- My dad worked hard, possessed a gentle spirit, and taught me to respect and love the land and all living things.
- My high school teacher who committed suicide ... he was kind and fair ... no matter who you were ... he not only believed that I could become a teacher but that I had a purpose in becoming one.



Carol Mackey is a popular instructor at SIIT. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

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# He knew what to do, even when he was new

By Fabian Ratt  
For Eagle Feather News

**N**ew school, new town, new home. How do you stay inspired, interested, and involved?

Well, Clinton Ekdahl is making use of the Aboriginal Student Activity Centre at SIAST Woodland Campus. He also takes part in other extracurricular activities.

From Sept. 21 to 24, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technologies, celebrated Welcome Week. On Monday, Ekdahl took part in the Tug of War competition with fellow student Jason Bobb. Both are first year students in Corrections, and admit that they are enjoying their program a lot more than they thought they would.

Bobb says that he is learning a lot about himself in the classes. Ekdahl agreed, and said that he is really glad he made the choice to come to school.

On Tuesday, the Aboriginal Student Activity Centre organized the Aboriginal Relay. Shelly Belhumeur, facilitator at the centre, says that the Aboriginal Relay

has been a part of Welcome Week for the past six years. The relay is based on the skills needed by the Aboriginal People as they aided Europeans when they first landed in Canada.

Here at the relay, a ten-person team has a long distance runner, two canoe paddlers, three sprinters, a horseback rider, a pack carrier, a log cutter, and a fire starter/ water boiler. Fun is had by all, and the main idea is to get out and meet people, get involved, and feel like you're part of a team and the community.

Originally from Saskatoon, Ekdahl says that being in Prince Albert alone is okay. He stays busy with school work, and getting involved with other activities. While he and his teammates did not win the Aboriginal Relay, Ekdahl had fun participating.

When Welcome Week is over, he says he will continue to be involved. He is planning on volunteering at the Aboriginal Activity Centre. By staying active, striving to succeed, and continuing to get involved, then he will surely succeed in his academic career and in life.



SIAST Woodland students look on at the log cutting competition. (Photo by Fabian Ratt)

# Chartrand book about Métis songwriter a hit

By Doug Collie  
For Eagle Feather News

**T**he Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) held a book launch during the traveling roundtable of Western Canadian Métis and Francophones in North Battleford Sept. 12. The book, called Pierriche Falcon, The Michif Rhymester, written by Paul Chartrand, has been a great success, says Darren Prefontaine, GDI's curriculum development officer in Saskatoon.

"The response to the launch was really good," Prefontaine says. "We sold many copies. The response in general has been really good; we've had lots of media interest."

He says GDI chose to launch the book during the roundtable because it was a gathering of Métis and Francophones.

"The content in it is very much Métis content of course, Michif content, but it also has a strong francophone flavour," Prefontaine says. "The songs are in a type of French, Métis French or Michif French."

"I think there's an interest amongst Métis people in Pierriche Falcon because he was the first known Métis person to compose songs, either in the oral tradition or he wrote them down, we're not quite sure."

Prefontaine says one of his songs, composed after the battle of Frog Plain, was written and sung as far back as about 1816 and first transcribed in about 1819. He describes it as a Métis anthem.

He says the project began in about 2003.



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# Was half-naked Indian inspiration for Act of Elusion?

By Mike Gosselin  
For Eagle Feather News

The idea for Curtis Peeteetuce's latest play, *Act of Elusion*, a mysterious story of a man trying to figure out his traumatic past, came to him in a very unlikely fashion. He wasn't on a writing retreat, deep in thought or even thinking about writing a play at all.

"Basically it sprouted from watching *Wayne's World 2* when he (main character Wayne Campbell) was dreaming of Jim Morrison and suddenly this half-naked Indian guy appears," Peeteetuce said with a grin. "I was thinking 'what's that all about?'"

With his interest piqued, Peeteetuce did some research and discovered there is a spiritual/dark connection between Jim Morrison and the aforementioned half-naked Indian guy. And his story was born.

"*Act of Elusion* is a story about a young man who's really looking for answers about why he is where he is. But there's a big dark secret to it."

Although Peeteetuce remained tight-lipped on how exactly *Wayne's World 2*, Jim Morrison and a half-naked Indian guy connects to his play, he did offer some juicy little tidbits on the process of writing it.

"Two years ago it (*Act of Elusion*) started out as a story about a man who was a patient and he really thought he was somebody else, he had an alter-ego. But I kind of scrapped it and put it on the shelf."

It was only after seeing *Wayne's World 2* and getting into *The Doors* music that he re-discovered his early version of *Act of Elusion* and knew he had found his story. From there it was a matter of starting the long, arduous task of writing and re-writing the script.

"We workshoped the script back in March through the Saskatchewan Playwright's Center. We held a staged reading and then I made my application to Live Five and they said yes."

Live Five was founded in 2004 by five independent theatre companies who produce their own work. Each season, independent theatre companies join forces to promote their distinctive productions



Actor Robert Benz (left) and Lance Laroque in a scene from *Act of Elusion*.

as part of a full theatre season in Saskatoon.

Director and producer Allan Long, who founded the Press Play Players in 2005, had worked with Peeteetuce at the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company and was instantly attracted to his latest script. So interested, he offered to help Peeteetuce out any way he could.

"There was a really good response to his play at the staged reading through the Saskatchewan Playwright's Center," Long said. "After the show I said to Curtis we should apply to Live Five. Curtis said he didn't have a theatre company name. But I did."

With a theatre company behind the project, *Act of Elusion* was a lock for the Live Five season. Peeteetuce and Long hired director Kenneth Charlette and actors Robert Benz and Lance Laroque. Together they formed a co-op.

"What that means is we are all going to contribute equally to the production and share whatever we make."

*Elusion* and feels theatre goes, both seasoned and new to the scene, will thoroughly enjoy the show.

"There's a real sense of mystery to it that's sustained throughout the play. There's also a meeting of the spiritual world and the Western world in an interesting way."

Even more interesting and heart-warming, Peeteetuce recently became a father for the first time and *Act of Elusion* marks his first professional play aside from his days at the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company.

*Act of Elusion* has all the ingredients to be an enjoyable, thought-provoking, mysterious play written, produced and directed by some of Saskatoon's finest theatre professionals. And to answer your burning question, there is no half-naked Indian guy in the play. At least that's what Peeteetuce says.

*Act of Elusion* will hold a preview at The Refinery (609 Dufferin Avenue) on Oct. 22 for a fee of 'pay what you can.' The World Premiere will be on Oct. 23, also at The Refinery, with additional shows on Oct. 25, Oct. 29 and Nov. 1. A student matinee was also added on Oct. 29 at 1:30.

For more information, including show times and tickets, please call 653-3549 or visit [www.livefive.ca](http://www.livefive.ca)

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# Aboriginal Music Festival seemed out of tune

was empty for most of the night.

Although each and every performer tried their best to connect with the crowd, the sheer amount of distance between them made it very difficult. And if you weren't sitting in front of the stage, simply seeing was nearly impossible and many spectators were forced to watch their favorite performers on big screens.

This made me wonder why organizers would hold the event here. Last year it seemed to work well and most of the audience stayed until the end. But this year people seemed to tire of six hours of performer after performer. Even most of the vendors selling various products complained of a slow night. Was it just a bad day for everyone? Were people mad there were no free appetizers this year?

Because I often think I have the answers to questions like these (until I am asked to put my money where my mouth is), I am going to offer a possible solution:

Music festivals should be held at music venues.

I know and understand the IPP holds the music festival in conjunction with a Career Fair and look to expand and grow each year. They also sell a lot of tickets to corporations who purchase entire tables.

But this year it almost seemed like they got too big. Lost was the charm and intimacy felt at past festivals. And the big screens on either side of the stage seemed more of a distraction than a visual aid.

Now I know what many of you are saying right now: "why rain on a parade?" Well, it's because I'm a devout music fan who absolutely loves live shows. For many years I have been discontent with large venue shows where big name acts charge an unbelievable amount of money to sit in a huge arena and watch an uninspired performance.

The Tragically Hip, for example, are one of Canada's best bands. In smaller theaters, clubs or auditoriums they are one of the best live acts ever.

See them in an arena or stadium, however, and their performance suffers ... severely.

Lost is a connection to the spectators because the size of the venue makes it impossible to make their fans feel special.

I had the distinct pleasure of attending the U of S Indigenous Peoples Program's (IPP) 6th Annual Aboriginal Music Festival recently and, as usual, I expected to be awestruck with the amount of talent, energy and inspiration in the room.

But this year something wasn't right. The Festival seemed different, less inspired and a little boring. This isn't to say organizers and/or the musicians did a bad job – the setting was exactly the same as last year – but something was off and I couldn't quite put my finger on it.

As usual, I was able to snake my way into the Green Room where performers get to eat snacks, relax and visit. The Baker Twins, famous in a kind of Paris Hilton type way, emceed the event and were in and out of the Green Room between introductions for each performer. On their way to and from the stage, they were mobbed by young autograph seekers and did their best to accommodate. George Leach was there, as was Leela Gilday, Billy Joe Green, Star Naia, Tracey Bone ... the list goes on and on.

Between delectable bites of fancy cheese, spinach dip and an impressive array of fruit, I tried to put my finger on what was wrong or different about this year. I journeyed back out to the stage where I took pictures of each performer and it suddenly hit me – the music festival, held at TCU Place, felt like a conference.

Here in a grand expanse of a room, usually used for conventions and conferences, were Canada's best Aboriginal musicians playing out their hearts and souls in front of a dwindling audience. Honestly, the room was full of spectators for about an hour before they seemed to get bored and leave.

As the night dragged on I realized this was the worst place this type of festival could be held. The room is big, massive big, and isn't exactly the type of venue conducive to an intimate setting. The stage was far from the tables and the dance floor



Billy Joe Green performs at the Aboriginal Music Festival in Saskatoon.

I have seen them in smaller venues like the Commodore Ballroom in Vancouver and that particular performance changed my life. Then I saw them at Prarieland Park this past summer. Yawn ... It just simply wasn't as good.

The same is true for the Aboriginal Music Festival. Now imagine if you will, a packed venue like the Odeon full of eager spectators watching intently as Leela Gilday, George Leach, Tracy Bone, Star Naia and Billy Joe Green tear through

a full day of awe-inspiring performances. The corporate tables would be gone and fans would be given the chance to get up close and personal to their favorite performers.

Again, my intent isn't to take away from the terrific job organizers do to pull off an event of this nature but, in my opinion, they must get in tune with their audience and provide a venue that allows performers to make it a night to remember.

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# Luc's Gym comes back with a flurry

Those who used to go train at Luc's Gym in downtown Saskatoon were very disappointed when Luc Pivin was forced to close the facility.

But with a little help from the Saskatoon Tribal Council Pivin, was able to get a new gym going. You can now find him at the Four Feathers Boxing Club located next to the Sarcan Recycling Depot on 22nd St.

There have been a lot of new and old faces at the gym.

One of those young faces in the gym is Tyson Acoose. He enjoys coming to the gym and training despite the wishes of both his parents.

Tyson says he likes "training in general and anything he can to get better. I do it to get in shape and eventually want to compete."



Coach Luc Pivin, Len Peters, Tyson Acoose and Murray Melymick at Luc's Gym.

It has been a few years since Luc has been able to have kids and youth come to the club. And he really missed it.

"I could have 50 kids come through here and if I could change the life or the ways of one of them and make his life a better one that's my big paycheque," he says.

Some of the others helping Luc have been Len Peters and Vernon Linklater.

Murray Melymick is another one of the kids in the gym and says he tried a lot of other sports like track and field or soccer but they weren't for him. Boxing is his sport.

He says "there is no greater rush than stepping in the ring and knowing the guy across the ring wants to take your head off."

Luc hopes to get more kids out and even adults.

"It's a great cardio workout for the older ones and it helps keeps kids off the street and out of trouble."

## Linklater returns home for one last shot

Mike Linklater has come full circle once again in his basketball career. During the last six or seven years he has put a lot of miles on his body and vehicles pursuing his dream of basketball glory.

In this, his final year of eligibility, he has returned to the Saskatchewan Huskies for his second stint with the club.

This time around he is one of the leaders of the team and has matured as a player and a man. Coach Greg Jockims rewarded him by naming him a captain.

"I want to lead by example, help distribute the ball to all the players," Mike says.

He is also excited to come home, play in front of a hometown crowd.

"It's nice to go to a game and see my family, having my kids close to me now is huge, family is the most important thing to me."

Linklater has high hopes for team that has a lot of size and is very deep at guard. He thinks they have the talent to go to Nationals.

He says they are coming together as a team, playing solid defense and rebounding well.

"But we have to work hard."



And he must have been working hard in his last game against Lakeland. Mike went for 12 assists, just one shy of the Huskie record for a single game. Look for that to be broken in the very near future!

## NHL Preview ...

This may sound oddly familiar but my Stanley Cup prediction is that the Pittsburgh Penguins will get there yet again but this time be throttled by the San Jose Sharks.

And I know I picked them last year and they fizzled out in the playoffs but come on, they added Heatley and lost Cheechoo. As much as I like the dude (Cheechoo), that was a great move for the Sharks.

The Capitals may give Sid and Co. a run and same goes for Philadelphia (my dark horse to win it all), but in the end I like Andre Fleury and the overall firepower of Pittsburgh to help get them back to the Finals.

Out West I think the toughest opponent for the Sharks just may be the Flames. They are deep and gritty and in my opinion have the best blue-line in hockey.

Other things to look for. Kovalchuk will win the Rocket Richard Trophy. He is in a contract year and basically is the only offence that Atlanta has. Luongo will win the Vezina hands down and will play in every game for the Canucks (joking). Look for Pronger to have a bounce back year with the Flyers but the best defenseman in hockey will be Shea Weber, whether the Norris is given to him or not!

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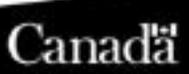
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# Yellow Quill sisters two most valuable ball players

By Deirdra Ness  
Of Eagle Feather News

It has been a busy and rewarding softball season for sisters Megan and Rebecca Gurski of Yellow Quill First Nation.

Megan is the star pitcher for the Bantam Saskatoon Lasers, the 2009 league and provincial champions, an accomplishment that advanced them to the 2009 Bantam Girls Western Canadian Championship which they won with a 8-0 record.

Megan was named MVP after going 4-0 and won both the semi-final and final games.

While Rebecca's team did not qualify to advance to a Western Canadian championship this year, she was picked up by the Saskatoon Raiders to compete in the 2009 Peewee Western Canadian Championship in Moose Jaw this summer. Unfortunately, the Raiders won only two games and lost four in the preliminary round and did not advance to a playoff. Rebecca primarily played third base for the Raiders, but pitched in a 6-3 win over the Winnipeg Angels and a 10-3 win over the Calgary '95 Kaizen, earning her the Most Valuable Player award.



Megan Gurski delivers.

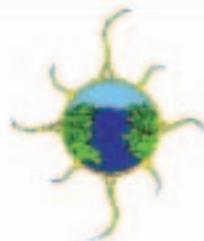
Following the Western Championship, Megan was picked up by the Bantam Regina Lasers to compete in the 2009 Bantam Girls Canadian Fast Pitch Championship in Oakville, Ontario. The Bantam Girls were able to rack up three wins and suffered just one loss. From here, Megan was named to the All Star Team. Megan's outstanding pitching helped the Regina Lasers to finish in 3rd place in their pool, and 5th place nationally – the highest ever ranking for a Saskatchewan team.

Following the Canadian Championship, Megan went to a camp and was selected from 60 players to be on Team Canada. She met the team in Oakville to begin training for the Easton Foundation Youth World Cup in Prague, Czech Republic on August 5.

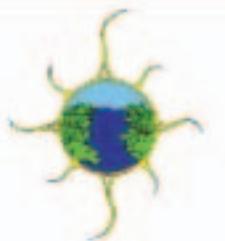
Team Canada was eliminated after a 5-4 loss in eight innings against the Netherlands. Canada finished with a 3-3 record, defeating Italy 5-0, Russia 3-0 and South Africa 9-0 and losing to Japan 1-0 and Puerto Rico 11-10. Canada finished in 5th place.



Megan and Rebecca Gurski had a great season on the diamonds.



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