

# Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

## Sometimes, you need to dream out loud

Becky Thomas got help from 3-year-old Cohn Pederson in preparing a Christmas backpack for the charity Stephen's Backpacks. The Christmas gifts for needy kids include toys, clothes, books and school supplies. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)



### Alberta backpack program coming to Saskatchewan

By Darla Read  
For Eagle Feather News

A non-profit organization that helps homeless children in Alberta is now expanding into Saskatchewan.

Stephen's Backpacks Society began in 2005 as the dream of Métis child Stephen McPhee of Airdrie, Alberta, when he learned that there were children who didn't have a home like he did.

"Every child should have their own home with grass

to run on, their own bed to sleep in, and lots of toys," according to Stephen.

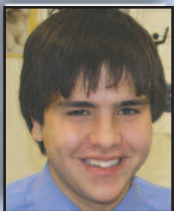
In 2006, Stephen and his family put together 15 backpacks that contained things like winter clothing, blankets, school supplies, books, and supplies specific to infants, children, and teenagers.

Stephen told his mother, Nancy, that the next year he wanted to make 150 backpacks, and she cautioned him that might be too much to take on.

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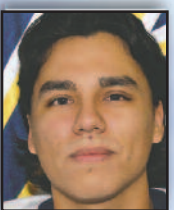
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Brett Lafond is continuing his education and hoping to expand his hockey opportunities at Briercrest College. - Page 28

Welcome to our  
Newsmaker of the Year Edition  
Coming In January - The Year in Review

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- 12:30PM - TRADITIONAL DANCE
- 1:30PM - TIPI RAISING



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# CUMFI CHRISTMAS

The Annual CUMFI Christmas party was all about the children. Tyrece Lafond got his face painted while twins Travis and Hunter Bode got gifts from Santa. Little Riley Knowles was the youngest at the party, getting to meet Santa at eight days old. 175 kids received gifts this year.

(Photos by John Lagimodiere)



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**DEADLINE: JANUARY 15**

# Tough competition for News Maker of the Year

Welcome to the deep freeze of December and our annual News Maker of the Year edition. As always, we do our due diligence when it comes to deciding the News Maker of the Year, a chore we take seriously.

We do things like highly scientific Facebook polls. We ask all our writers for their insight. We direct readers to vote on the poll on our website and we also just ask random people on the streets their thoughts. All of this is duly recorded and sent to the top secret Eagle Feather News Bureau for Statistics and all Things Counting for a thorough evaluation of the results.

Well, our counting monkey had lots of challenges this year and lots of votes to sort through. They were initially overwhelmed by some recent news that has been good and bad.

The good news is the Saskatchewan Roughriders won the Grey Cup! This beloved football juggernaut has become the darling and the envy of the CFL. They have diehard fans, lots of memorabilia sales and a Grey Cup at home. For several voters, it doesn't get much bigger than that.

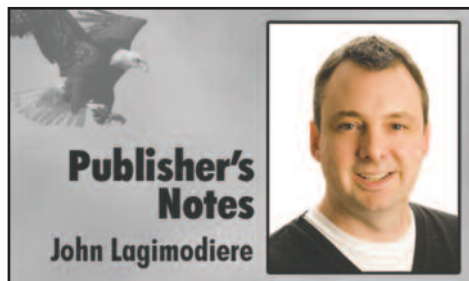
We also have been overwhelmed with skeezy Senators fleecing the taxpayers from their lofty perch in

Ottawa. Senators Duffy, Wallin and Brazeau lived large on our dime and were quite unrepentant about it. Hopefully this is the wart on the nose of Prime Minister Stephen Harper that brings him down. Big news yes, but not big enough.

Speaking of skeezy, Toronto Mayor Rob Ford elevated the use of doublespeak and gobbledegook as he was caught in a crack cocaine scandal as big as the ego of Toronto itself. Good luck with that Mayor Ford; but not big enough news yet.

The passing of Nelson Mandela also raised some serious news coverage, but it was out of honour for the man. Activist Cindy Blackstock, she who is taking on the federal government for fair treatment and funding for Indian and Child Family Services organizations across the country, has drawn the wrath of the government and the hearts of Aboriginal people and several votes as News Maker of the Year, but not enough.

Another voter mentioned that perhaps artist Christi Belcourt should be News Maker of the Year for her work gathering and displaying over a thousand beaded



moccasin vamps that honour and represent missing and murdered Aboriginal women from across Canada. Vote worthy project indeed.

Warming the hearts of Métis across Canada and closing a major historical mystery, the Bell of Batoche came back to the people this year. After being in hiding for over 20 years, Billyjo DeLaRonde, the Keeper of the Bell, finally decided the time was right to give the Bell back to the people.

Billyjo and several other sneaky Métis went and liberated the Bell from a Legion Hall in Millbrook, Ontario in 1991. Since then the Bell was kept under wraps at various locations across the prairies. This year, the solid silver and standing about 30 centimetres tall bell was finally unveiled at Back to Batoche Celebrations in July. It was welcomed with joy and tears. The Bell is made available to the public but is being held by the Union Nationale Metisse St-Joseph du Manitoba. Big news, but not the biggest.

After tallying all the votes and looking at the impact over the year, we have to name the News Maker of the year four



women actually. The four Saskatchewan women who founded Idle No More were recently named by Foreign Policy magazine to its Top 100 Global Thinkers list. The founders – Jessica Gordon, Sylvia McAdam, Sheelah McLean, and Nina Wilson – have motivated and mobilized a huge constituency of people to stand up for the environment.

Originally created to inform people about the Conservative government's plans to gut environmental regulations, they have now refocused on the environment. According to INM, they have over 250,000 followers in their database and even though they are not marching down main streets and round dancing in malls as rabidly as earlier in the year, there is still lots going on.

People are still talking about them and the vibe is alive. Even those people you wouldn't think care are paying attention. Our old pal John Gormley even had a segment on his show about INM and he polled the listeners if INM was still relevant. Surprisingly, his listeners said no, but only by one vote! That says something.

So congratulations to Sylvia, Jess, Nina and Sheelah on their hard work in motivating for change and standing up for our environment and for being our News Makers of the Year.



It's official! The four Saskatchewan women behind the Idle No More movement are the News Makers of 2013.

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# Memories of chapan pleasant at Christmas

Christmas is almost here again and it's time to begin the frenzied scramble of shopping, baking, decorating and eating, lots and lots of eating at least, in my family anyway.

Pies and cakes, cookies and puddings until you're sure you are going to burst. And as your waistline expands and your sugar spikes you wonder why you are doing this to yourself and why is it that it seems Christmas gives us permission to do it.

Perhaps it is nostalgia. I know for myself, and my siblings it would not be Christmas without the smells of cinnamon and spices. (Really, it is no wonder Columbus sailed the ocean blue for it.)

Poor as our reserves and little road allowance communities were, Christmas was not a time of "poor" because our moms, aunties and nokom's had been trading beaded moccasins, braided and hooked rugs at the general store and all over the countryside to buy the ingredients needed to bake mince pies, fruit cakes and "la puchin" or "poo cheen" as some called it. That wonderful steamed pudding that filled our homes and yards with a smell that is beyond description.

"Aye ki way oot sin ow, we are rich." Our chapan would say as we watched them wrap the pudding in cheesecloth, put in a tin and hide it somewhere in the root cellar.

La Puchin was the queen of all the food

and pastries, and as my irreverent chapan (great grandmother) called it, "a son of a bitch in a sack" because it was so expensive to make and it also reminded her of her stingy, mean as hell Hudson Bay Company husband. Sounds terrible doesn't it, but our chapan was an old, old lady and mom or

anybody else for that matter, never ever dared correct her. And today as I watch my daughters mix ingredients and put La Puchin on to steam we chuckle as I tell them about the pudding and about their crazy old lady ancestor of whom there are many stories.

Crazy as she was, she was pretty special and we, my cousins and I learned many things from her.

As children she would take us out for a walk in early November to pick Okiniyak, rose hips, so we could dry them and make Christmas decorations and of course tea and jars of rose hip jelly. So, when I remember Christmas as a kid, I also remember wandering along the back roads looking for the jewel bright okiniyak which were beautiful against the dazzling snow.

We always picked them after they had been frozen for a time. This softened the skins

and made them sweet.

"Mus kee kee ohi, these are medicine," she would tell us as we tasted them, and as I learned many years later, rose hips are full of vitamin C, D and E as well as calcium and antioxidants. No wonder no one

was ever sick with colds, we drank that tea every day after the first snow. When they were dry, we strung them up with strong thread and hung them on the Christmas tree. Admiring their beauty.

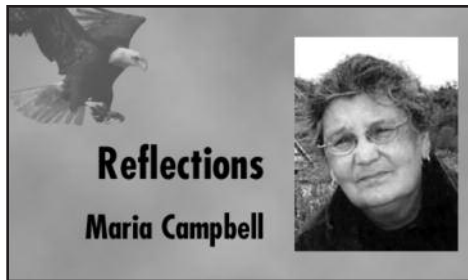
Christmas is a good childhood memory for many people of my generation and good thing too because there was lots of bad ones. Today, as a bit of a crazy old lady, I too, take my great grandchildren out to pick okiniyak in the snow not because they need the tea, their moms give them Flintstone vitamin pills. I take them out because I want them to have good stories to pass on to their grandchildren.

Times have changed so much in the past 70 years and I am sure our nokoms and chapans said the same thing. It is sometimes hard to remember good stories when all around us are reminders that the world, our country and our community are sometimes far removed from those simple things.

How do we shut out the news of horrors brought on by climate change, war, fracking, neglect of children and now the realization that the young men and women whom our government sends out to fight wars are killing themselves. Four suicides this past week. No number was given to the overall suicide rates triggered by post-traumatic stress syndrome both in Canada and the war zones around the world.

It is sad that we raise our children to fight wars when we as parents and governments can't give them, in many cases, a good life as children. And that when they come home we are not able to give them the healing and help they need. Having a Remembrance Day ceremony once a year just does not seem like enough. I know I sound like a broken record but we have to give our children more.

As we begin this celebration of mid-winter and Christmas let us ask our Creator and all the ancestors who have left us to live in the Spirit world, to bring kindness to this "civilization" that was pounded into our "pagan" world and which we have in most instances adopted. Let us say prayers for our babies and for all those young soldiers and ask for peace and love for all of them and the will and courage for us to change the road we are travelling. Miyo Kichi Muntou Kisikow, Merry Christmas and a kind and gentle New Year, and, thank you for reading me.



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## In Memoriam: Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela, one of the greatest leaders of our time died on Thursday, Dec. 5.

His views on leadership should inspire those who aspire to the status of leaders in the Aboriginal community in Saskatchewan and Canada.

Some of his approaches, such as seeking consensus rather than telling people what to do (No. 3) reflect practical approaches that I have also heard promoted by indigenous leaders at the United Nations and elsewhere.

Richard Stengel, one of his biographers and Time magazine editor, published 'Mandela's 8 rules of leadership' in the July 9, 2008 issue of the newsmagazine.

Stengel identifies the first rule as: Courage is not the absence of fear – it's inspiring others to move beyond it.

No. 2 is Lead from the front but don't leave your base behind.

Mandela met his supporters and explained his tactics, bringing them along.

No. 3 is the one about consensus: Lead from the back and let others believe they are in front.

Be the last to speak. This works with No. 2, for the job of seeking consensus includes time for persuasion.

No. 4 is Know your enemy – and learn his favourite sport

The best ideas and strategies are tested against the way they are viewed by rivals you are dealing with, and ingratiate yourself. The movie *Invictus* documents Mandela's use of Rugby to promote reconciliation.

No. 5 is the well-known aphorism Keep your friends close, and your rivals closer.

No. 6 is Appearances matter: and remember to smile!

Not every leader will be born strong, tall and handsome, but any one can smile and visit a good tailor. Style matters in politics, probably as much or more than substance. Notice anything here about Trudeau and recent polls?

No. 7 asserts that nothing is black or white.

I have come to believe that everything in this world contains at least the seeds of its opposite, and I have been stunned by the experience of meeting persons in authority who see things in black and white.

For some, there is only one valid view of the world, and those who happen not to agree with it are people who are wrong, and probably bad

people too.

Let me quote from Stengel on this one: "Life is never either/or. Decisions are complex, and there are always competing factors. To look for simple explanations is the bias of the human brain but it doesn't correspond to reality.

Nothing is ever as straightforward as it appears... Mandela is comfortable with contradiction. As a politician he was a pragmatist who saw the world as

infinitely nuanced..."

No. 8 is: Quitting is leading too ... the tough decision to know how to abandon a failed idea, task, or relationship.

Mandela is a rare instance of an African leader who stepped down from office willingly ... wanting to set an example for Africa: "he would be the anti-Mugabe (the Zimbabwe dictator) the man who gave birth to his country ... and refused to hold it hostage."

Where do our Aboriginal political leaders stand on this one?

Mandela is dead. A man who will be remembered amongst the greats of the 20th century; joining a very small group of leaders such as Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi.

He was an indigenous leader who included everyone in his vision of justice.

**In sports:** Did you watch Australia defeat New Zealand in the Rugby League World Cup in November?

I didn't think so, but I did. Rugby Union, a code with different rules, is the subject of *Invictus*, mentioned above.

Rugby League is non-stop faster action than Union. North American 'gridiron' on the other hand, seems designed for watching commercials. Sorry Rider fans. My bias.

In baseball, American Indian star player Jacoby Ellsbury leaves Boston Rex Sox and signs with New York Yankees!

Now I won't have to watch players with beards who look like the Soggy Bottom Boys. Yanks are clean-shaven, as athletes should be.

**Holiday Greetings:** A friend of mine is fond of commenting on the bizarre political correctness that is so evident at this time of year by saying: "All the best to you and yours throughout this festive season"

Whether you fly solo or gather with friends and family at this time of year I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



## Letter to the Editor .....

### U of S a leader in Aboriginal education

The University of Saskatchewan has embarked on a visioning exercise that places a great deal of importance on the contribution that Aboriginal people play in our province and throughout the country.

The Vision 2025: From Spirit to Action is a work in progress, a document open to change. It is part of an extensive consultation process leading ultimately to a version that will guide the university's plans and actions over the coming years. It is open to varied perspectives and will evolve to reflect the voices in our campus community. It was presented as a draft for discussion precisely so that much conversation and consultation could ensue.

The U of S has the largest fraction of self-declared First Nations, Métis and Inuit students of any research-intensive post-secondary institution in Canada. We have a unique opportunity to improve Aboriginal success within the post-secondary education context. However, it is not a quick fix. We are already making great strides as our enrollment rates and retention numbers continue to increase year after year. There are many obstacles to progress, but as a university we are working together, finding solutions to these challenges.

Professor Wheeler's assertion (*Eagle Feather News*, November 2013) that, "I got rid of the Aboriginal Advisor to the President" is not true. I have two highly skilled individuals coordinating Aboriginal initiatives across our campus.

A Director of Aboriginal Initiatives and a Director of First Nations, Metis and Inuit Relations. I meet with both regularly and routinely seek their guidance in matters of concern to the Aboriginal community. In one case this reflects a change in title to the Special Advisor to the President and a change in formal reporting structure so that we can better coordinate our myriad of activities for First Nations, Metis and Inuit students.

Along with our outstanding faculty, employees and students to influence the academic agenda, the recent appointment of Blaine Favel as our Chancellor will indeed have a lasting impact on our future directions and something that deserves a mention.

I often reflect on the leaders of tomorrow that are being educated at the U of S. I feel keenly the need to prepare them for the kind of world that will exist in the next several decades. Saskatchewan will continue to thrive as a place of ever-growing diversity and the time is now to encourage the talented students throughout the province, certainly including those in our First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities.

Over the past 40 years our university has been a leader in the field of Aboriginal education. Through programs like Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP), the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) and the Native Law Centre the U of S established itself as one of the best places in Canada for Aboriginal research, scholarship and artistic work.

The U of S will continue to support these programs and the important role they play.

We want our story to be about people from around the world working, studying and learning together, respecting one another in a common educational endeavour.

I would welcome your input into Vision 2025: From Spirit to Action.

You can send your feedback by visiting <http://www.usask.ca/president/>

**Ilene Busch-Vishniac**  
President, University of Saskatchewan



# Cree students share cultural gifts with Aboriginal inmates

By Darla Read  
For Eagle Feather News

A group of Saskatoon high school students is giving the gift of language and culture this Christmas.

Along with their teacher, Belinda Daniels, a Cree language and culture class at Mount Royal Collegiate has undertaken a cultural revitalization project, and as part of it, they have created Christmas cards containing Cree stories.

The cards will be delivered to Aboriginal inmates at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre and possibly Kilburn Hall.

The inspiration for the project came from attending We Day in Saskatoon, followed by a two-day workshop about developing a project that would create change in their community. Since then, one of the students has also been offered a position as a We Day facilitator.

“A lot of things we do outside of the walls of the school are enhancement for these guys,” notes Daniels, saying it helps her as a teacher, too.

“I become very complacent when I’m inside four walls every day, every week, every month. If I’m bored, I know my students are going to be bored.”

Daniels and the students came up with the idea and began collecting, listening to, and recording Cree stories, and then learning how to tell those stories



Brandon Bedard and Teacher Belinda Daniels are using a school language project to spread Christmas cheer and Indigenous culture to inmates in Saskatchewan.

(Photo by Darla Read)

by heart – a lesson in oral history.

“For the most part, each and every one of these students can tell a story by heart.”

She says to push the project one step further to create change, and since Christmas was around the corner, “we thought, ‘Why not send these to people

who are incarcerated?’ ... where we can culturally revitalize our stories as Indigenous peoples, because they’re origin stories, they’re creation stories. They tell about how the world first began for us as nehiyaw people.”

The front of the cards feature painted scenes and inside contain the stories, hand written or typed in English.

Sixteen-year-old Brandon Bedard chose the story about how the buffalo got his hump, which is from being unkind to birds – something he didn’t know until he began this project.

He hopes sending cards to people who are incarcerated will help decolonize them and also cheer them up at a time of year when they may be missing their families.

The project is also important to him personally.

“I wasn’t taught much when I was younger,” explaining this is the first time he’s really learned about his culture, including learning to speak Cree.

“My dad used to know how to speak Cree, but he was forced into a boy home and forced to stop speaking his language, so I wanted to learn and help him.”

Daniels hopes to eventually have all the students record their stories and feature them on the website to further share their cultural knowledge with other students.

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# Report on bullying outlines challenges, action plan

By Judy Bird  
For Eagle Feather News

**B**ullying hurts, and for Saskatchewan youth it is an all too common experience. In the world of electronic communication and social media, cyber bullying is also a real threat to the well-being of young people.

As stories of bullying and the tragic consequences make headlines across Canada on a regular basis, the message is always the same: bullying is not acceptable, and won't be tolerated. Stopping bullying, however, is not so easy.

On Nov. 14, the Saskatchewan government released Saskatchewan's Action Plan to Address Bullying and Cyber Bullying at an event in Regina's Arcola School. It's the government's response to growing public pressure to address the issue.

"Our hope and our expectation is that we will be able to provide the support to teachers, to parents and to students that if there is a situation involving bullying, that they will have places they can go to and then they will know where the resources are," said Don McMorris, Minister of Education.

In early 2013, Premier Brad Wall appointed Jennifer Campeau, MLA for Saskatoon Fairview, to spearhead the endeavour, naming her Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Education. The report is the result of months of consultations with Saskatchewan residents. More than 1,000 Saskatchewan people provided input, either in person, online or by written submission, describing their thoughts and experiences on the subject. Consultations were held with individuals, the public and interest groups.

"We definitely wanted to get a picture of the Saskatchewan experience and what's going on in our communities right now," said Campeau.

During the consultation process, steps were taken to



MLA Jennifer Campeau with the two young emcees of Action Plan to Address Bullying announcement. (Photo by Judy Bird)

ensure people felt safe enough to talk about their experiences.

"We had a counsellor on site, we wanted to have measures in place if somebody was to feel like they were re-victimized by telling their story," said Campeau. "We also brought in a First Nations elder from the area to start the consultations off in a good way because people were ... a little bit nervous and antsy because it's a very sensitive issue."

The report acknowledges that bullying is a complex problem without simple solutions. Findings indicate that at least one in three adolescent students in Canada reported being bullied. Campeau said it was evident throughout the consultations that the saying "it takes a community to raise a child" also applies to helping youth deal with bullying.

With that understanding, the government is looking to partner with other agencies, such as the Red Cross, Kids Help Phone and SaskTel's "I Am Stronger"

campaign, to help address the problem. Plans also include developing an anonymous online reporting system for kids to report being bullied.

Students are also key participants in finding solutions. Restorative justice and mediation tools will be available to help the kids come up with solutions together. Campeau said during the consultations, people expressed the need for prevention, holistic solutions and working with the bully.

"It's about getting to the root causes of why they're behaving the way they are, and definitely helping to try to address that because in the end, they're all children, they're all students and we're all responsible for their safety and their education in this province.

The report gives six recommendations and proposed actions. In brief, they are:

1. to update current policies and protocols in the education sector to prevent, intervene and respond to bullying incidents;
2. recognize the need to have 24-hour 7 days a week support for children and youth
3. to work with other ministries regarding upcoming federal legislation and its implications for Saskatchewan;
4. provide students with the proper knowledge and skills to develop appropriate online behaviour
5. recognize that students, families, schools and community members need access to a website with anti-bullying resources; and
6. recognize that young people play an important role in creating solutions.

To learn more about the recommendations and actions, visit [www.education.gov.sk.ca/Anti-Bullying](http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/Anti-Bullying) to read the full report.

## Health Region targets the North

By Darla Read  
For Eagle Feather News

**T**he Saskatoon Health Region (SHR) is working at expanding and promoting its services into Northern Saskatchewan.

Earlier this fall, SHR representatives, including Gabe Lafond, Director of First Nations and Métis Health Services, travelled to La Ronge and Stony Rapids to let northerners know of the services available to them should they have to access one of the hospitals in Saskatoon.

Two of the main services they wanted to promote were translation and navigation, says Lafond.

"First Nations and Métis patients can access navigators, and if families or patients require translation, we have a Dene speaker and a Cree translator," explains Lafond.

He says navigators can help explain benefits to patients and families as well as how to access food services and accommodations.

"When you look at the SHR, we haven't had this service before," notes Lafond.

"Regina had it for the past 30 years. (It creates) a place where people can feel

comfortable and feel a part of the system."

Another program SHR is expanding in the North is its LiveWell with Chronic Disease Management program. Robin Miller is the program's coordinator and says the goal is to make it more accessible to First Nations and Métis people.

To help spread awareness of the program, two peer leaders visit communities where they lead six-week workshops with around a dozen participants. They discuss ways to manage their chronic diseases, such as diabetes, through things such as eating well, being physically active, and generally living a healthy lifestyle.

"Research has indicated (the program) has reduced hospital readmissions and increased self-confidence," says Miller.

Anne Frost and June Wapple, master trainers who recently visited La Ronge, see first-hand how the program makes a big difference in people's lives.

"There's been a real change in people," says Frost. "We see people come in feeling hopeless, and by the third week, they have a more positive attitude and are smiling more."



A peer leading training session in La Ronge earlier this fall. Back row (L-R): Elizabeth Dorion from Stony Rapids, Nola Bear from Sandy Bay, Jackie Natomagan from Pinehouse, Tarene Condie from La Ronge, Christa Ketzmerick La Ronge, Irene Venne Regional Coordinator La Ronge, MaryAnne Sayazie from Black Lake, Blair McKay from Fond du Lac. Front Row (L-R): Doreen Toutsaint from Black Lake, Master Trainer June Wapple from Saskatoon, Sharon Maurice from Pinehouse, Master Trainer Anne Frost from Saskatoon, and Jennifer Bird from Sandy Bay.

Peer leaders help participants develop their own action plans and self-management tools, which could include items such as walking more that week, drinking more water, eating more vegetables, or working on communicating with their families better.

"They come back each week, share

their plan and if they were successful or not," explains Wapple. "If not, the group helps them. You see how good they feel. They are in control. The disease isn't in control."

As master trainers, Frost and Wapple are training future peer leaders, who will then in turn administer the program in their communities.



# What's with all the fur flying, hair pulling?

**Y**ou know you're old when you start a sentence like this, "I remember when I was young." Anyhow, when I was young, I recall watching boys and men get into fights; back in those days it was a one-on-one fight and no weapons were used.

The girls and women stood around and didn't get involved. Those days are gone. Today girl fights are everywhere and they are nasty, hair pulling, clothing tearing, body biting, full on assaults.

Ladies fight so dirty and usually start over some man or their friend's man and now it's the men who stand around watching hoping that one of the girl's shirts gets ripped off so they can see boobies.

Ever sick! The fight never ends there, oh no! It gets posted onto You Tube so the whole world gets to see. Do a quick search of the Internet and you will find titles like, "Girl Fights in the Hood, Girl Fights No Shirts".

Today I was reading the news about a security guard in his fifties who died while trying to break up a girl fight in the halls of the school he was working at. Turns out the girls were fighting over a pair of jeans.

Apparently one of the girls borrowed the jeans from the other girls and wasn't going to give them back. Note to self, return any clothes you may have borrowed from your friends ASAP.

Beware of being the new girl on the reserve because you become an instant target. The women get mad at you when their man looks in your direction. Stay away from the rez parties unless you have full combat gear and make sure you wear headgear that covers your ears! I know one lady who has about half of her ear missing from a fight with another woman. Her ear looks like a cookie with a big bite missing; teeth marks and all.

One time, in my neighborhood watering hole, this woman walked in and went up to another lady playing the VLTs. "You slept with my old man" was all I heard before the full on catfight began.

After all the fur was swept up and the claws were put away it turned out these ladies were cousins. That man

must have felt like the last Coca-Cola in the desert to have two grown women fighting over him.

My friends and I still love dancing, so this one weekend we decided to go to a club. There weren't too many people there but there was a group of nice looking

ladies dancing on the dance floor. Looked to me like they were having good times; dancing and laughing. About 45 minutes later my friends and I went outside for some fresh air and those same ladies were outside beating the crap out of each other! There was hair everywhere and one lady lying in the middle of the street in the fetal position.

My advice to the ladies in the clubs, "Stop shaking your booties and give your head a shake." Run home and check out You Tube because you may be the next ridiculous girl fight on the world-wide web.

You wouldn't want your kids, parents or boss to see you in that

position. If you're one of those girls who loves to scrap then make sure you wear underwear because if your clothes get ripped off everyone is going to see your junk.

The sight of two girls fighting still has the power to shock. Although it often happens between men. Ask yourself why are women doing it and why are we so offended by it? Perhaps because we define women in terms of their relationships as mothers, daughters and wives; whereas men are defined as individuals in terms of work status or what they do.

Society generally doesn't think about how men relate to each other.

On a positive note, things are slowly changing for some girls who say "If you can't fix stuff with words then just go your separate ways. Live your own life. You don't need to physically fight, because it really proves nothing." Wise words from the mouths of 'babes'.

Keep your letters and emails coming. Send your questions or comments to: Sandee Sez c/o Eagle Feather News P.O. Box 924 ST Main Saskatoon, S7K 3M4 or email [sandra.ahenakew@gmail.com](mailto:sandra.ahenakew@gmail.com)



**Sandee Sez**  
Sandra Ahenakew






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# Words spoken from the heart best gifts

Every Christmas people everywhere go into a tizzy. They want to get the perfect gift. They want to spend their money on something that will be memorable, reflect all the emotion they hold for the person and be a keepsake that will endure for years.

It causes a lot of panic. There are never a lot of calm faces as the big day nears. It's more like the hordes of people in the malls are on the last leg of Survivor: Walmart.

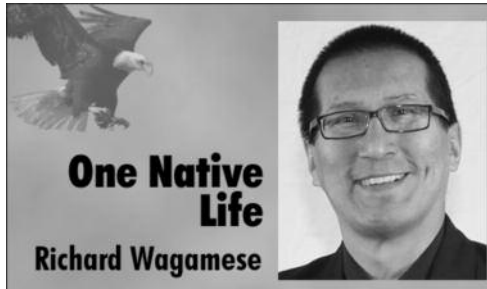
I don't buy a lot of gifts. Generally there's just my wife and I together on Christmas Day, though her kids are on hand for part of the season most years, too. Buying for my wife has always been difficult for me. I know her tastes in jewelry and perfume, sweaters and such but I always seem to drive myself into a frenzy trying to do what everyone else does – choose the perfect, most exceptional thing. Some years I've really blown it.

The years I've bought for other people haven't gone much better. I've been known to wander around lost in confusion as Christmas approaches and sometimes some of the gifts that I have chosen, while well intentioned, haven't exactly measured up in the eyes of those

I offered them to. I shared their disappointment when they saw what I had chosen. It's best if I stick to books and music I think.

It all reminds me what an elder friend told me one year. I told him how the nature of Christmas had begun to really bother me and that I thought I might just boycott the whole thing. He said that the nature of gift giving had changed incredibly since purely traditional times and it was important that we remember how it used to be and maybe rekindle that come Christmas. The story he told me changed everything.

He said that a gift required reflection. He said that instead of fancy wrapping, elaborate cards and fancy presentations, that gifts were meant to be heartfelt and offered with a statement of what was intended. They were meant to be given hand to hand, with a good steady look in the eye and words spoken from the heart. It required humility and truth and acknowledgement of feeling. Given this way neither the giver nor the receiver could be disappointed.



He said that long ago, people would go out on the land. They would be hunting

or trapping, gathering roots or firewood or just being out alone on the land. They would walk and start to consider the person they wanted to make an offering

of a gift to. They thought about their qualities, the things that made them special and memorable moments they had shared. As they walked they would look at things and soon their eye would come to rest on something significant.

They would sit and inspect this object and think about the person. They spent a good deal of time on this because a gift was an honoring and the process of honor was a very spiritual act. They would return consider what they wanted to say and walk directly up to them and say something like: while I was walking today I saw this rock and if you look really closely you can see tiny specks of blue in it. When I saw that it reminded me of you.

It reminded me of the day we sat by the creek when we were hunting. Every-

thing was blue that day; the water, the sky and we saw that blue heron that day too. That was a magical day. I felt really close to you and I realized how much you mean to me. This rock reminded me of how very much your friendship means and how much it fills my life. So I brought this rock to you. When you look at it from now on it will remind you of our special friendship.

It was the words that made the gift resonate to both the giver and the receiver. It was words spoken from the heart that recognized that the true gift was the motivation to seek something special out, to take the time to find something of the world that evoked the nature of the person.

That's what giving meant in the traditional way. It wasn't about how much was spent or how elaborate the gift or even the thrilled face of the person when the gift was opened. It was about the value of the person.

It was about taking time to be on the land and letting it lead you to one special thing that said it all for you. So this Christmas give someone something special – give them part of yourself.

From our house to yours, Merry Christmas.

## Backpacks “a gift of hope”

• Continued from Page One

“He told me, ‘Mommy, you need to dream out loud,’” recalls Nancy, who says her son may only be 12, but is really an “old soul” who is very adamant about helping kids who are in distress.

“He believes if he keeps doing this, one day there won't be kids on the street.”

Stephen is not without his own challenges, as he has autism, but doesn't let that stop him from trying to help as many children as possible. Since the program began,

more than 16,000 children have been helped in Alberta, and when Stephen's Backpacks Society had extras two years ago, they were brought to Saskatoon. Because the program continues to be so successful, it is now opening a Saskatchewan chapter this Christmas.

First Nations musician Becky Thomas will be heading that chapter. She met the McPhees a couple of years ago at a concert and believed in the cause right away.

“It's grown so large in Alberta so that we have enough and decided to expand into Saskatchewan.”

This year, backpacks will be delivered to children in Saskatoon, Regina, and at least one First Nations community.

People interested in dropping off items can do so on December 15 and 16 at the Courts of Praise Church at 2333 Herman Avenue. The backpacks will be put together the following day, and delivery will begin on Dec. 18. Thomas encourages people to email or call her at 1-306-262-2050.

People can also make donations directly to Stephen's Backpack Society, and tax receipts will be issued.

Stephen's mother, Nancy, says the backpacks have become a “gift of hope,” because they are vehicles that can really help kids. Backpacks for teenagers often include literature on how to write a resume or how to find a job.

“Sometimes that's all people need when they are down.”



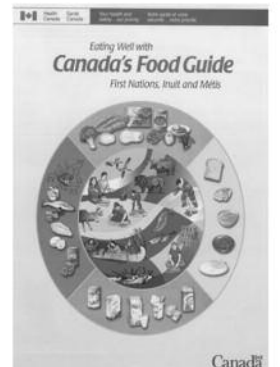
Stephen McPhee's dream was to help kids who are in distress.

## good food bites

### STRETCHING THE FOOD BUDGET

#### Planning Planning Planning!

- Plan before you shop: make a grocery list with foods from Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide: Vegetables & Fruit, Grain Products, Milk & Alternatives, Meat & Alternatives.
- Frozen and canned vegetables and fruit contain the same vitamins and minerals as fresh. Purchase fresh produce in season and canned and frozen veggies and fruit when produce is out of season.
- Purchase unprepared whole grains such as barley, brown rice, oats and whole wheat pasta. Packaged rice mixes and noodles and sauce are usually high in fat and sodium and low in fibre.
- Use powdered milk in your meal planning. Powdered milk can be added to cream soups, pancakes, muffins, mashed potatoes, etc. even for cream on your coffee.
- Go for pulses! Dried beans, peas, chickpeas and lentils are economical, can be prepared in a variety of healthy ways. Add a can of rinsed beans to soup and chili to bump up the nutrition.



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# Kimiwan making plans to celebrate year of telling Indigenous stories

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

**K**imiwan Zine is celebrating a one year anniversary on Dec. 20, launching issue number five at Saskatoon's Amigo's cantina with Bear Witness from "A Tribe Called Red", musician Nick Sherman, and Ryan McMahon, comedian and podcast host extraordinaire among others.

"Since it's our first year anniversary it's a special edition, sponsored by Legacy Interactive, Tribe Inc., and (law firm) Semaganis Worme to do a special issue, this time around the theme of "regeneration," so we put the call out," explained Jarita Greyeyes, one of four young women running the zine.

Founded by Joi Arcand after seeing and working with "Rain Zine" in Vancouver, she returned with a vision and got to work. Mika Lafond signed on as editor in the initial stages, and currently Jarita and Joi along with Leah Arcand, Melody Wood, and language advisor Daryl Chamakese (Kimiwan is Cree for "rain"! ) fill out the volunteer committee which prints the zines on a cost-recovery basis, fundraising to keep it going via shows, special events, and merchandise.

"For us, we do this out of a place of love and a desire to support and promote all of the wonderful work people are doing."

Joi's initial vision included not only a place for Indigenous people to tell their stories and show their art in a way that's really accessible but to make a zine accessible so that every person who comes across it feels inspired to possibly do the same. Every issue features art, photography, short stories, and is a beautiful work of art in and of itself.

There will be a sneak peek of the issue at the Dec. 20 launch featuring songs and poetry and first person accounts, and a fundraiser for their 6th issue in March, on February 19 during Reading Week, featuring A Tribe Called Red.

"We're very active on social media so we put out the call, and it gets shares, likes, retweets," explains Jarita, adding that from New Zealand to the USA and beyond, there is an international Indigenous network of people who post and the social media goes "viral" through those networks.

"Joi's goal was for some young person to look at it and say, I can do this — so that's the end goal, that other people will look to Rain and Kimiwan and go, 'I can do this too,' and the next generation can feel empowered to tell the stories."

Tickets are \$12 in advance for the Dec. 20 Amigo's event, and more info can be found at their website, [kimiwan-zine.com](http://kimiwan-zine.com). The accompanying art show will be on display from Dec. 15 to January 15 at Amigo's.



Jarita Greyeyes on October 17 at Kimiwan's Vancouver launch party.

(Photo by Angeline Nelson)



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# SICC conference focuses on preserving Indigenous languages

By Fraser Needham  
For Eagle Feather News

Pop artist Susan Aglukark believes language and culture are inseparable. "Language is the grounding part of a culture and without that, the culture is broken," she says with conviction.

The Inuk singer, who performs her songs in both English and Inuktitut, was one of the keynote speakers at the First Nations' Language Keepers Conference in Saskatoon last month.

The annual conference, which is hosted by the Saskatchewan Indian Culture Centre, consists of two days of presentations and workshops with the goal of preserving and promoting Indigenous languages.

About 400 delegates from across Canada participated in this year's conference. Some of the Indigenous languages featured included Cree, Dene, Nakota and Lakota.

Aglukark says she feels it is important to use her position as a recording artist to give back to Indigenous communities and participate in conferences like the language keepers. She adds growing up in Arviat, Nunavut, she never really thought it would be possible to pursue a career as a professional singer.

It wasn't until she moved to Ottawa to work for the federal government that Aglukark started to believe she could pursue this dream.

She says Indigenous communities need to do a better job of teaching their young people that it is possible to dream big while retaining your language and culture.

"Another presentation I do is called nurturing the dreamer – we don't. In our communities and northern reserves we're not set up to nurture the dreamer. Had I been asked, 'What would you like to do?' I would have said, 'I want to be a singer.' It just wasn't going to happen, not in my



2012 SICCC Book Writing Contest Winners were on hand to launch their book. (left to right) teacher Jessie Sylvestre, author Chelsea Sylvestre and illustrator Ashlee Bekkattla of Buffalo River Dene Nation School who won for their book *The Giant Mariah*.

mind anyway."

Allan Adam ran a workshop on Indigenous languages and mass media. The longtime broadcaster says he began posting interviews he had done with Dene elders on the Internet about five years ago to help others learn the language.

He now owns and operates his own website – [allanadam.com](http://allanadam.com) - which contains videos and audio files to help people learn First Nations languages.

Adam says people can access files in

eight different Indigenous dialects on his website.

Some of the dialects include Cree, Dene, Saulteaux, Nakota and Ojibwe. People from all over the world are making use of the site, he adds.

"Today, I just got an email from somebody in Vancouver looking at the web page and liking it, and somebody else was asking about it, so they are going to share my webpage information with them," he says. "People from Texas talking Dene languages, related to Navajo..."

The language keepers conference also featured the SICCC annual book writing contest.

The contest, which started in 2011, is open to Saskatchewan First Nations students in kindergarten to Grade 12 who write a book in their own language with English translation.

First place winners receive \$500 and 20 copies of their published book.

This year's book writing contest winner is Krista George from St. Louis School in Patuanak for her Dene book called *What's Wrong With Me?* The 2012 book contest winners were also on hand to talk about their book.

The Dene book *The Giant Mariah* is a joint effort by students Delbert, Chelsea, Jessie and Keitha Sylvestre and teacher Ashlee Bekkattla of Buffalo River Dene Nation School.



Comedian Deric Starlight and one of his funny puppets. (Photo by Fraser Needham)

On behalf of the  
Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations  
Executive and Staff

*Seasons Greetings @  
Happy New Year*

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# Three kohkums a natural fit for SNTC performers

By Darla Read  
For Eagle Feather News

The three kohkums were a hit once again in this year's Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company's Christmas show.

The company was excited to present a Cree Christmas, a play that reacquainted theatre-goers with the Cree language. For those unfamiliar with the language, there were English subtitles.

Mékiwin: The Gift followed the adventures of three kohkums: Zula Merastee, who was expecting her first grandchild; Sihkos Sinclair, hospitalized due to a snow blower accident; and Clare Bear, who was convinced Sihkos' condition is worse they originally thought.

Waylon Machiskinic played Sihkos, and he said, in a way, it was a natural fit. He based his character off of his own kohkum, whom he said is a bit wild.

"I remember as a kid, we used to make fun of



Cory Dallas Standing (Dr. Robillard), Darlene Auger (Claire Bear), Waylon Machiskinic (Sihkos Sinclair) and Lacey Eninew (Zula Merastee) are now touring the SNTC Christmas classic around Saskatchewan. (Photo by Darla Read)



Leanne Bellegarde presents a cheque for \$40,000 to SNTC for its Circle of Voices program.

# PotashCorp comes up large for COV

The Circle of Voices program received an early Christmas present from PotashCorp. when Leanne Bellegarde, Director Aboriginal Strategy showed up with a giant cheque for \$40,000.

The funds will support the COV programming this year as a dozen young people are introduced to the stage and help write and perform a play.

"The donation from PotashCorp allowed us to leverage another grant worth \$12,000 so the contribution is substantial and allows us to deliver the COV program this year," said SNTC General manager Alan Long.

"We are very grateful for their support.

Circle of Voices began as a dream shared by the late Gordon Tootoosis, Tantoo Cardinal, Kenneth Charlette and Dave Pratt while on the set of the movie Big Bear.

Three years later, in 1999, their dream became a reality with the formation of Circle of Voices. This year COV will run from October 2013 to March 2014.

kohkums, because we used to like how they talked because they had bad accent, broken English. We'd make fun of that as kids. I never thought growing up that I would actually be doing that and getting paid to do that!" he joked.

Machiskinic has been with the company now for 10 years, and this was his fifth Christmas production. Being with SNTC has changed his life.

"I came from a dark place. Dysfunctional home, dysfunctional community and I was suppressed growing up," he explained. "I wasn't allowed to express, but I had artistic skills, and therefore, I kind of got pushed away, bullied by my family."

He said being pushed away led him to performing arts and SNTC, where he began his training with the 2003 Circle of Voices program, which produced and toured AWOL.

"From then on, I was bit by the theatre bug."

Machiskinic said performing arts have helped him with personal skills.

"Way back when, I wasn't able to speak out or speak up for myself, or anything. But now I feel like I have the tools."



# Unfinished moccasins speak of unfinished lives

By Judy Bird  
For Eagle Feather News

**D**anette Exner thought about her sister while she beaded a special pair of moccasin vamps this past summer. Exner's youngest sister, Darrelle, was murdered in Regina in October 1996 at the age of 14. She had just started Grade 9, was out with her friends, and walked home along a familiar route. She never made it home.

"I don't know if people realize ... I think about her every single day," she said.

The vamps Exner beaded were part of an art installation commemorating missing and murdered Indigenous women. *Walking With Our Sisters* was shown at the First Nations University of Canada's Art Gallery in Regina from November 25 to December 13. Each pair of unfinished moccasins represented an unfinished life.

Métis artist Christi Belcourt came up with the idea for the art exhibit as a way to honour Indigenous women who have gone missing or were murdered. She put out a call for 600 vamps, and 1,725 were submitted. Most came from Canada and the United States, but some from Australia, New Zealand, Europe and other parts of the world.

When Exner learned of the project, she knew right away that she had to take part. Her sister was on her mind with each bead and stitch. She thought about her mother, and her strength to carry on after losing a daughter. She fought to block the sad memories, instead choosing to focus on good.



The exhibit includes 1725 sets of vamps, each one personalized for a lost or murdered loved one.

"It really got me thinking more about the things that I remembered about her that made me happy or that made me laugh, or made me cry that silly cry or happy cry rather than the heart-breaking part of it.

"I think so much about what kind of an aunty she would have been to my daughter, and for my nieces and nephews," she said.

For Judy Anderson, creating a pair of vamps was a generational tribute. Her son designed them and she beaded them. He also helped with the colour choices.

"They're in honour of my nohkom, my grandmother, her name is Jane Mary, mostly known as Jenny. She was murdered when my mother was 12 years old so I didn't actually get to know her," she said.



Danette Exner, Judy Anderson, Katherine Boyer and Racelle Kooy. Kooy was the keeper of the exhibit while it was in Regina.

"I think about her all the time. I think about what it would be like to have had her in my life and I think about the loss to my mom when she was 12 years old. It was sad (making the vamps) but I really wanted to do it because she's been on my mind for most of my life. I've always wanted a grandmother but sadly she was taken from me."

Visual artist Katherine Boyer created her pair of vamps as a larger tribute. Together the vamps represent a map of central Canada, and each red dot represents a location for the case of a missing or murdered aboriginal woman.

"The red dots become pock marks, it's such a plague on our land. It's part of a disease, part of an injury to our land," she said.

Looking at the exhibit, Exner and Anderson feel a connection to the people who made these vamps, and their loved ones.

"It's pretty overwhelming," said Exner. "Just knowing that none of those women are forgotten. To me, that's really important."

"I have to remember that we also need to celebrate," said Anderson. "If we stay in this role, this really sad, depressed role, it's not going to take us anywhere. I think that this exhibition takes us somewhere because it shows us that we're all concerned about this, and that if we band together, we can make a difference."

For more information, visit the *Walking with Our Sisters* website.

**SEASON'S GREETINGS!**  
*Wishing you peace, happiness and prosperity.*

SIGA.sk.ca Play Responsibly

# Talented Lindsay Knight has no Eekwol

By Dawn Dumont  
For Eagle Feather News

Singer/songwriter, Lindsay Knight or Eekwol, from the Muskoday First Nation, has received numerous awards and accolades including Best Hip Hop Album at the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards.

In November, she was one of two artists chosen by SaskMusic to attend the world music festival - Mundial Montreal 2013. Each week, Knight shares her talents with the Saskatoon community at the Student Wellness Initiative Towards Community Health (SWITCH) located at the Westside Community Clinic as well as via her busy schedule of performances and workshops.

**DAWN: As a performer, what is your soul's manifesto, your raison d'être, and now in Cree – your reason for making raisin bannock?**

LINDSAY: It's a passion. I do this for the next generation. I didn't know that until I had my own kids. And having them has made it important and intense for me.

**DAWN: What CD are you working on right now? Are you doing a video? Do you need a backup dancer? Before you answer, I own hot-pants in every colour.**

LINDSAY: I'm working on fifth album and looking at early spring 2014 for release. Right now I am in the studio, writing and creating.

**DAWN: Will you be performing any of these songs along the way?**

LINDSAY: I've learned that sharing songs with audiences is the best way to write. I can gauge the response and see if people are into it. The theme of the new album is coming from a place of what it means to be humble in this day and age and it's based on ego and what that means and how it affects people and how it works against people in success. I see a lot of rises and falls based on ego.

**DAWN: I see that on Facebook every day.**

LINDSAY: Exactly. Ego is based on self-esteem and where it gets out of control, it shows a void inside of you. I'm also writing about how being born Indigenous means you are born political and how you deal with that. I'm asking questions like how can you live without letting the stereotypes and racism bring you down. Then when you do get some accolades and recognition, some people can't handle the success.

**DAWN: Speaking of ego, have you ever googled yourself? Because I did and there's a Lindsay Knight who lives in a bikini and has an interview titled – "Lindsay Knight on Sexy Body Paint" – is that an alter ego of yours?**



LINDSAY: No, that is definitely not my night job. No body paint for this girl!

**DAWN: I'm not going to ask the stereotypical question about how has motherhood changed your art. But have there been any changes in your life - now that you have two tiny humans living in your house who share your DNA?**

LINDSAY: Everything. It's completely changed my life. I still get my creative work done but now it's really intense. There's no sitting

around making a coffee and doing some stretches. When I get an hour, I throw out a beat and start writing. It's like multi-tasking but I call it multi-thinking. Like I'm doing this interview, watching my two kids, thinking of what I'm making for supper for tonight and I have to use the bathroom.

**DAWN: I'm only doing two things – this interview and I also need to pee. So in the interest of moving things along, which artist do you look forward to hearing from?**

LINDSAY: I love underground hip hop from the West Coast. I like the way the beats and lyrics come together. I relate to a lot of the conscious stuff that comes out that area. There are a lot of similar issues like addiction, and it's not glorified. They are standing up for equality and rights. When I heard that kind of stuff for the first time, it blew my mind and I knew that's what I wanted to do. As far as poetry goes, the stuff close to home hits me hard. Like Louise Halfe and Gregory Scofield. I relate to the locals because they are talented, because they're from this area and they speak to identity. I get it because that's how I feel too.

**DAWN: If you could give advice to young Lindsay, what would that be?**

LINDSAY: Not to let other people get in the way of your success. To always come at it from your own perspective and to be an original. Your work has to be something you've never seen or heard before. Doing something else that no one else has done can be scary but if you do it with confidence, it will be dope.



**In the Spirit of Treaties...**  
Commissioner George E. Lafond and the Elders and Staff at the Office of the Treaty Commissioner would like to express their sincerest wishes for hope, happiness and peace to all during this holiday season. May reconciliation and harmony guide us throughout the coming year.

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# Felix Navi-dud

**T**hey say that it's better to give than to receive and that saying is right on the money when it comes to Christmas gifts from your loved ones because their gifts suck.

They are the people who know you the best, except when it comes to anything about your hopes, dreams or desires. To our family and friends, we are basically people with familiar-looking faces who use those faces to swallow more than our fair share of the turkey stuffing.

One Christmas when I was 11, my grandmother gave me a True Story magazine. To the uninitiated, True Story magazines were dedicated to telling the sad stories of women. Actually the word "sad" barely scratches the surface – these women's lives were like desperation on steroids.

The stories were advertised as true, but I pray that they were not, as they had titles like: "I accidentally Married my Brother" or "My Husband Had Another Family and Now They Live Next Door and They're Always Having Loud Parties!" or "The Alien Who Dumped me: He Star Treked Right On My Heart."

My grandma bought me the magazine because she thought that I was out of the Barbie Doll stage. She was wrong, I was firmly in the middle of my Barbie Doll addiction and when my younger sister unwrapped a doll, my nails dug into my glossy magazine, my expression mirroring the wretched expression of the model on its cover.

I expressed my gratitude to my grandmother but only



after being gently prodded by my mom to: "stop crying you ungrateful brat and go thank your granny."

Once I read my True Story, I enjoyed it a lot. It was basically a printed form of the Maury Povich show and taught me that people can overcome anything: poverty, bad relationships or accidentally getting shot by your cat.

Fast-forward a few Christmas Eves to when my siblings and I were teens. My dad decided that he'd buy us clothes for Christmas. A rhinoceros attempting to drive a car had a better chance of success. I blame his overconfidence on TV dads; perhaps he'd seen one too many Cosby shows?

I opened my gift and knew it was gonna be bad as soon as I saw the glint of tomato red. I hissed inwardly as I unwrapped further and saw that it was jeans. My dad had bought me ... red jeans. It gets worse. They were one size too small, too long, wide-legged and clearly cut for someone who had a waist.

My dad insisted that we wear our new clothes to Christmas dinner and I waddled angrily into the dining room, my pants sweeping the floor and my torso divided

in half like a florid bumble-bee. (All pictures have been destroyed.)

Please note that while I am judging my loved ones, I am no in no way implying that I am better than them – for I, too, am a shitty gift giver. I'm the person standing in Wal-Mart sock aisle on Christmas Eve wishing that I had an imagination or a basic understanding of human desires.

So far, the worst gift I've ever given was to my boyfriend. We were in the early stages of our relationship, at that awkward part where you care, but only as much as they care, because God knows, you never want to be the one that cares more! (That is the worst.)

I didn't know what his tastes were (other than short, sarcastic brunettes) probably because I didn't really pay attention when he spoke. What can I say? He was good looking.

For his gift I combed the entire city for two days before I found something that was nice, innocuous and most importantly, cheap. I still remember my anxiety as he opened the gift and the wonder in his voice as he asked, "A ring?" Yes, I gave a ring to my boyfriend of three months – just in case anyone was wondering if I've always been this socially awkward.

The ring fit but only on his ring finger, ironically. Whenever he wore it, we both felt uncomfortable. This is the mark of a good gift; it shows that our family and friends may never understand us but at least they're willing to try.

## Indspire receives support for national program

By Judy Bird  
For Eagle Feather News

**E**ducators in Canada have a new resource to help Indigenous students succeed in their studies. Indspire Institute launched its Peer Support: Educator Coaching program on Dec. 4 at a special event held at the First Nations University in Regina. The program kicked off with a donation of \$500,000 from Great West Life, London Life and Canada Life, who collectively became the program's National Development Sponsor.

Indspire Institute, formerly the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation (NAAF), supports Indigenous education in Canada, and awards thousands of bursaries and scholarships to First Nation, Metis and Inuit students throughout the country. The organization's name is derived from 'Indigenous' and 'inspire'. The Peer Support: Educator Coaching program is an online resource for all educators in the country who teach indigenous students.

The site features blogs, webinars, and virtual coaching.

"This particular program is to pair a teacher with another educator, a coach, who's been out there working in the field for years, who has ideas to share, approaches, techniques that have worked," said Roberta Jamieson, President and CEO of Indspire Institute.

"We are Indigenous people, we have different ways of looking at the world, even from different nations. There's lots to be learned and shared from teacher to teacher. Some have been in the trenches, some are just coming out of the gate," said Jamieson.

Two years of national consultations were held with educators to determine what elements they wanted to see



**Elder Noel Starkblanet, Roberta Jamieson, President and CEO of Indspire Institute, Rita Bouvier, and Dave Johnston, President and Chief Operating Officer for Great West Life, London Life and Canada Life.**

within the Indspire Institute. Those findings echo some of the findings of a 2013 report from a Saskatchewan Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment for First Nations and Metis.

"I think it's extremely rewarding that an institute like Indspire and Great West Life, London Life and Canada Life are teaming together to provide something that would address one of the needs. It's a beginning," said Rita Bouvier, Metis educator, researcher, writer, community

learning facilitator and member of the former joint task force.

"I also think it'll meet the goal of doing us a sustained concerted effort in terms of understanding and deepening our understanding of what it really means to balance the curriculum with Indigenous ways of knowing and western ways of knowing," she added.

Indspire is currently recruiting mentors and mentees for the program. To sign up, go to [www.indspire.ca](http://www.indspire.ca)



# Bell honoured guest at opening of gallery, museum

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

A long-awaited Métis art gallery and museum was opened by the artists whose work fill its walls and a visit from the most famous historic bell in Canada.

Gabriel Dumont Institute held several days of commemoration around Louis Riel Day by opening their new museum and art gallery showcasing the new Christi Belcourt Gallery along with the Olive Dickason Room and two other historical spaces meticulously curated by Gregory Scofield.

Present for the event was Billyjo DeLaRonde, liberator of the Bell of Batoche, and the bell herself. The bell went on tour to not only elementary schools, but the GDI Friday receptions in both afternoon and evening, and to the Batoche Historical Site on Sunday where wreaths were laid in the cemetery.

On Friday night Billyjo told “the real story” of the repatriation of the stolen bell, holding the audience spellbound as he recounted “Métis Mission Impossible” as only a storyteller can. He imagined Gabriel Dumont and Louis Riel nudging one another and saying, “and they thought it was over now, eh?” to laughter and applause from the gathering.

he was transported to Winnipeg for burial, Freedman called for a united Métis nation working together for Riel’s vision of solidarity against injustice.

On Friday, gifted artists Christi Belcourt and Sherri Farrell Racette shared some words about their own

Gaudet, and poetry/prayers in both Michif and English by Métis veteran and Elders Edwin and Harriet Oakes-St.Pierre.

Donny Parenteau shared his gifts of words and song while spreading his anti-bullying message which he is



Sherry Farrell Racette, Billyjo DeLaRonde, Christi Belcourt and Maria Campbell surrounded by Christi Belcourt’s paintings and with the Bell of Batoche at the GDI Museum and Gallery grand opening. (Photo by GDI, Peter Beszterda)

journeys, praising the work of GDI, while Maria Campbell read “Joseph’s Justice” from Stories of the Road Allowance, and Deborah Lee shared some words about Olive Dickason, historian and leader. Dickason’s daughters were among the many honoured guests, friends, and members of the Métis nation.

Sunday’s festivities took on a more solemn tone, but there was still fiddling by an up-and-comer named DJ

taking to schools everywhere, along with the song that spreads that vision, “Imagine A World.” He also performed a beautiful song written by GDI’s own Karon Shmon about the Bell of Batoche which had come to her when she first heard the news about the bell being returned this past summer.

Now, 128 years later, the artists are leading the way, and our spirits have all been awakened.



**GREGORY SCOFIELD**

At both events, Gregory Scofield shared stories and poetry, and Guy Freedman presented a speech he’d first given 13 years ago, asking what had changed since Riel was hung. Telling the moving story of a young man who guarded Riel’s body from those who peered through the windows of the church amidst footsteps in the night, until



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# Federated Co-op, U of S team up to foster economic development in rural Indigenous communities

By Fraser Needham  
For Eagle Feather News

Saskatchewan Treaty Commissioner George Lafond hopes a new project encourages Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities to work together to meet their economic goals – something that is unfortunately not currently happening.

“My view is that the social capital in Saskatchewan is at an all time low,” he says. “We need to bring that social capital back up. We have to begin to understand each other.”

Lafond was speaking at a major announcement last month between Federated Cooperatives Limited and the University of Saskatchewan.

As part of the agreement, FCL is giving the U of S \$1 million in the hopes of stimulating economic development in rural Aboriginal communities.

Federated Co-op CEO Scott Banda says rural Indigenous communities currently face a number of gaps in services and deployment of the cooperative model



Left to Right: Murray Fulton, Director for the Study of Co-operatives Lou Ketilson, Scott Banda, FCL Board Chairman Glen Tully, U of S Provost and Vice-President Academic Brett Fairbairn and George Lafond.

may just be the answer.

“Our shareholders are here, they’re right here in Western Canada, they’re not transient, they’re committed to their communities,” he says. “So, it’s that local piece and stable piece that allows the co-op model to plan.”

Aside from FCL, other partners in the project include the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, International Centre for Northern Governance and Development, the Edwards School of Business and UK Plunkett Foundation. The project will be led by the U of S’s

Centre for the Study of Co-operatives.

Director of International Centre for Northern Governance and Development Ken Coates adds overall both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in rural Saskatchewan face a unique set of economic development challenges.

“When you get into smaller towns – it’s not so much that they are Aboriginal – they are isolated, they are small populations, there’s uncertain economic activity,” he says.

As part of the project, Coates says graduate students will be going out and

speaking to various rural Aboriginal communities to identify what their economic development needs are and how they may be met.

Murray Fulton, a professor at the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, says use of the cooperative business model could result in a number of economic developments.

“There might be a community that doesn’t have a grocery store and this would be an obvious one,” he says.

The funding will be distributed over two years with the possibility of an extension.

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### For more information visit [jobs.usask.ca](http://jobs.usask.ca) or contact:

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*The University of Saskatchewan is strongly committed to a diverse and inclusive workplace that empowers all employees to reach their full potential. All members of the university community share a responsibility for developing and maintaining an environment in which differences are valued and inclusiveness is practiced. The university welcomes applications from those who will contribute to the diversity of our community. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadian citizens and permanent residents will be given priority.*



## BUSINESS BRIEFS FROM AROUND THE PROVINCE

# NWMO provides funds for four communities

**TORONTO** – The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) has completed the first phase of preliminary assessment for the safe, long-term management of used nuclear fuel. Preliminary Assessments are the third of nine steps in a multi-year process for evaluating potential suitability to host a deep geological repository for Canada's used nuclear fuel and an associated Centre of Expertise.

Creighton, Saskatchewan, and Hornepayne, Ignace and Schreiber in Ontario, were assessed as having strong potential to meet site selection requirements and have been identified for further study. The communities of English River First Nation and Pinehouse in Saskatchewan, and Ear Falls and Wawa in Ontario, were not selected for more detailed study. In acknowledging these significant contributions to the process, the NWMO will provide \$400,000 to each of the eight communities upon establishment of a Community Well-Being Reserve Fund. Administered by the communities, these funds will support continuing efforts to build community sustainability and well-being.

"Each of the eight communities that completed the first phase of assessments has shown strong leadership," said Kathryn Shaver, Vice-President of APM Engagement and Site Selection at the NWMO.

"As we prepare for increasingly more detailed field studies and engagement, it is necessary to narrow our focus to those areas with strong potential for meeting strict safety and geotechnical requirements, and for the project to align with their long-term vision."

## Big River stands on guard

**BIG RIVER FIRST NATION, SK** – On November 6, 2013, Chief Bruce Morin of the Big River First Nation signed a significant Memorandum of Understand-

ing (MOU) with GardaWorld represented by Cy King, Vice-President & Senior Advisor, Industrial Projects, Aboriginal Relations Canada.

This MOU responds to an active pursuit by Chief and Council to create opportunities related to the employment of members of the Big River First Nation.

out potential candidates, employs service providers who deliver professional training to applicants as required by GardaWorld.

Subsequent to training, successful applicants are screened by GardaWorld and upon certification candidates can then join the ranks of GardaWorld to provide



The first class of 19 to graduate from the Garda training program are all employed by GardaWorld.

The agreement stipulates that the Big River First Nation will be responsible for training in the area of security and that GardaWorld will provide all their pre-employment requirements and provide employment for the people who meet them in venues across western Canada.

The agreement recognizes that Big River First Nation will be the sole and official training venue in Saskatchewan for GardaWorld. To begin with, the National Child Benefit Reinvestment Program sources

security services to the many companies that depend on GardaWorld.

To date there have been three graduation classes. The first 19 applicants successfully completed training and are employed by GardaWorld. Two more professional training sessions were delivered to 37 candidates of which 19 are awaiting certification.

Big River First Nation extended an invitation to people in the region to attend security training in the Big River First Nation venue.



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# Saskatoon Tribal Council seeking entrepreneurs with big business ideas

By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News

An excellent business idea spinning in the brain of a young First Nation entrepreneur in Saskatchewan may be worth \$5,000. Actually, over \$11,000 is being made available as prize money in the Saskatoon Tribal Council's Mino-Bimaadiziwin Youth Business Plan Competition targeting Saskatchewan First Nation youth between the ages of 16-35.

The third annual contest is gaining in popularity and is helping to create awareness about entrepreneurship in the First Nation community.

"The population in our communities is so young and we always talk about supporting youth," said Kristina Duffee Youth Entrepreneurship Program Coordinator for the Tribal Council.

"These contests are an opportunity for guidance as well as an economic boost for their business. Here is an opportunity to create business and make their lives and community better."

Last year's winner was Shayne Gladue of the Flying Dust First Nation. He won \$5,000 for his plan to create a trucking company. With a baby on the way this spring and a newly purchased house, he is still a year away from starting the business, but his experience in the contest was invaluable.

"When I heard my name being called I was overwhelmed. I thought the other contestant's plans were far more advanced and or unique than mine," said Gladue.

"To be the first place winner meant the world to me at the time because no matter what anyone said regarding my plan I knew that I am going to reach my dreams soon enough. I left that competition with more confidence and most importantly I believed in myself and what I want to achieve."

The prize money of \$11,000 is made possible through the generous sponsorship of PotashCorp for the STC Youth Entrepreneurship Program.

The competition encourages the submission of new and existing business plans in order to turn those plans into business realities.

"The quality of the pitches gets better every year," said Duffee. "And it is great for these youth to gain valuable experience and confidence in public speaking and in their business."

Gladue says that he learned three simple but powerful things from last year's competition.

"My advice for this year's contestants is never give up, be passionate about what you want to do and know everything possible about your line of business and how you are going to differentiate from the competition."

The judging panel is made up of banking industry representatives and business leaders in Saskatoon. The top plans will win their cash prizes to help turn those ideas into real businesses.

Winners will present a quick overview of their business plans at an award luncheon.



Shayne Gladue is hoping to turn his dream of creating a successful trucking enterprise into reality with the help of a \$5,000 prize from the Saskatoon Tribal Council.

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# First Nations University lays out five-year plan

By Judy Bird  
For Eagle Feather News

The First Nations University of Canada set out its plan for continued growth for the next five years.

Languages, Cultures and Traditions; Innovative Student Learning Experience; Sustainable Growth; and Enhanced Stakeholder Engagement. Each theme has specific goals outlined that the university will work towards achieving over the

Advanced Education, FNU students and other partners. An implementation committee will be created, made up of faculty, staff, administrators, and others to implement the plan and work toward the goals.

to achieving."

Student enrolment and retention are crucial to the success of this plan. In the past year, there has been a 15 per cent increase in student enrolment at the university, and the trend is expected to continue. The university also plans to increase its community-based programming to reach more students.

"We're developing new programs that are very exciting for students, and in addition we're teaching in a number of First Nations communities. We're teaching in four right now, we have plans to go out into several others over the next year," said Dr. Lynn Wells, Vice President of Academics with the First Nations University.

"Students were stakeholders in the plan so we did have a voice in the strategic plan," said Jaqueline Anaquod, president of the FNU Student Association. "We wanted to ensure that we retain our indigenous educators, our professors, staff, faculty, and to ensure that our elders always have a voice. So much of who we are is here. In academia you hear a lot about science, western knowledge and Indigenous knowledge. When you come to university here, you get the best of both worlds."

The strategic plan is available on the FNU website.



First Nations University of Canada Acting President and Vice President of Finance Juliano Tupone announced the University's five-year plan.

Lighting the Path: First Nations University of Canada Strategic Plan 2013-2018 was officially launched on Monday, Dec. 2 at the University's Regina Campus. The plan has four themes: Indigenous

next five years.

The plan is the result of consultation with community partners, elders, faculty, staff, stakeholder communities including the University of Regina, the Ministry of


"It's a work in progress but it certainly sets the road map out for what we're going to do in the future," said Juliano Tupone, Acting President and Vice President of Finance with the First Nations University of Canada.

Sustainable growth includes securing funding sources.

"All signals we are receiving is that funding will remain in place," said Tupone.

The university is working to secure new tenants to replace Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, which revenue represents about five per cent of its budget. More importantly, the university is taking steps to regain administrative control of its finances.

"We've been working with the U of R to identify how we can do that in the short term and do away with the administrator, which are Meyers Norris Penny and the University of Regina. The plan is hopefully next year to have control of our finances back with continued oversight and management by the University of Regina. That's one goal that we're close




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Edmund Bellegarde - FHQ Developments, Sean McCarthy – Lockheed Martin Canada, Donna Dressler – SaskPower, Michelle Rempel, Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification, Ben Voss – First Nations Power Authority and Leah Nelson Guay – First Nations Power Authority. ( Photo Western Economic Diversification Canada)

## Partnership will help First Nations develop renewable energy

The federal government has announced it is partnering with the First Nations Power Authority of Saskatchewan to develop renewable energy products in the province.

Federal funding of \$300,000 will be used to purchase equipment for small-scale demonstration projects, including solar photovoltaic technology, waste heat recovery, solar and microgrid systems, and a grid support initiative for regions that experience higher than average power outages

FNPA will partner with multiple First Nations and private industry to develop new technologies for reliable energy sources that will improve business productivity and support community sustainability in remote areas.

“This project will result in exciting new technologies that provide a reliable energy source to rural and First Nations communities, as well as remote forestry and mining operations,” says Michelle Rempel, Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification.

Ben Voss, Board Chair of the FNPA, says FNPA’s membership is “keenly interested” in matching business opportunities with energy needs.

“WD’s support will enable us to better understand how these systems can provide important infrastructure to improve the quality of life and economic development opportunities for First Nations.”

FNPA is a non-profit entity funded by the federal government Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) department. It was created to develop First Nations-led projects in Saskatchewan’s power industry in order to provide First Nations’ members with financial returns, expertise, employment, and business opportunities.

The first project planned is a solar photovoltaics demonstration in partnership with FHQ Developments, which is the economic development corporation of the File Hills Qu’Appelle Tribal Council, and Lockheed Martin Canada.

# Saskatchewan Trappers Table

“Sustaining Saskatchewan’s Fur Industry Sector”

**Location**  
 Senator Allan Bird Memorial Centre,  
 Prince Albert, SK

Fur SALE!

**Date**  
 Friday, December 20, 2013 (8am - 5pm)  
 Saturday, December 21, 2013 (8am - 5pm)

**Preferred Hotels:**  
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 Ramada (306) 922-1333  
 P.A. Inn (306) 922-5000

**Contact Information**

**Leonard Hardlotte**  
**Robin McLeod**  
**Phone: 306 - 953 - 7200**  
**Fax: 306 - 764 - 6272**

**The Saskatchewan Trapper’s Table is open to all trappers with any valid trapper’s licence. Various Buyers will be on site purchasing various wild fur products.**

**Traps, Snares, and equipment Sales. Display booths on-site.**

# Dirk Nation's annual Christmas wish list for guys

It's that time of year again when the women in our lives turn their thoughts turn to rewarding their man with a gift from Santa. Sadly, our women sometimes miss their mark, and we men are left to shed a manly tear in the shed wondering where we went wrong.

Have no fear ladies, for you are holding your salvation in your hands ... unless you are reading this on-line, in which case your salvation is in your hand.

Um, anyway, to help you hit the mark I canvassed the large members of Dirk Nation for their Christmas wish lists. What I lay before you is what is fit for print in a family-friendly newspaper.

10. Schnasty Jim of Saskatoon wants clothes that, when he puts them on, will make him look and feel pretty, but like a man.

9. The Dream Maker from Deschambault Lake wants to be able to watch the World Junior Hockey Tournament in peace without the 'to-do' list being waved in his face. And no guilt trip. Definitely no guilt trip.

8. The next three wishes come from Ahll-Be-Baaack Royce from Carry the Kettle who wants a butterfly knife hair comb for starters.

7. He also wants a dozen imported wobbly pops.

6. Finally, Ahll-Be-Back wants pickle smelling body wash. He's an odd one, and I hesitated putting that out there in case that stuff exists.

5. The Bird Man from Mistawasis has a strange request. He's looking for a reversible rainbow big boy full body thermal underwear with the extra wide trap-door flap. Makes the ladies swoon, he says.

4. The Answer from Saskatoon was thinking about a hall pass for two nights in Vegas, or a snazzy pair of gloves.

3. Rockstar One from the Peter Chapman Band says his girlfriend nailed it last Christmas Eve. Upon returning from an errand there she was ... seductively sprawled out on a blanket on the floor, wearing a skimpy Santa suit negligee, a glass of wine in each hand, the TV tuned to the channel with the Christmas log, Wal-Mart blanket spread on the floor, and Billy Idol playing in the background.

2. Once again, most of the guys wanted a man-cave. The ideal set-up? A large recliner with a beer cup holder. Universal remote. Posters of his favourite action movies. And a high

definition surround sound speaker system and up-converting 3D Blu-ray player to go with the number one



**The Dashing  
Chronicles**  
Winston McLean

requested item on our gift lists ...

1. A 60+ inch 3D LED TV that features up-conversion from 2D, a contrast ratio of over 1 million and a refresh rate of at least 240Hz. HDCP support would be ideal, and if you want to ace this gift make sure it is a smart TV with built-in web browser and apps for streaming services.

Multiple Input / Output ports are important so we can plug in our Blu-ray player, gaming consoles and home theatre equipment.

The fellas asked me to print these specifications because, and I quote, "I love her but she's as daft as a guppy on steroids when it comes to electronics."

The Dirk Nation's Annual Christmas Wish List For Guys would not be complete without the items we dread the most.

When we get any of these we cannot help but think, "I love you but you're as daft as a guppy on steroids when it comes to buying me gifts."

Avoid these:

10. A framed picture of you. Unless, of course, it's one of those almost naked photos where you're tastefully half clothed and posed in an inviting manner. Then hell, yeah. Giddy up.

9. A framed life-sized picture of your mom for the living room. Unless your mom is Shania Twain. Then again, that would be weird. Or should be. I don't know. It's Shania Twain.

8. A Furby. Creepy.

7. Nothing purple.

6. A vacuum cleaner.

5. Purple vacuum cleaner.

4. Artwork.

3. A sweater using every freakin' colour in the rainbow, including purple.

2. Anything that takes over an hour to assemble.

1. What the Bird Man from Mistawasis wants.

*Dirk says, What's the difference between a Snow Man and a Snow Woman? Snowballs.*



The Kevin Moccasin Memorial Tournament took place last month, ten years after the tragic murder of Kevin, an up and coming basketball player in Saskatoon. To honour his life, his friends dedicated a tournament to his memory for four years after his passing. This year was a special remembrance on the tenth anniversary. This is a photo of the Moccasin family and the 1st place champions – Kanata. (Photo Mason Medynski)

**Gala Evening May 23, 2014**  
**TCU Place, Saskatoon**

Nominations must be emailed or postmarked no later than midnight, April 15, 2014

For more information and nominations visit [www.sasktel.com/saya](http://www.sasktel.com/saya) or contact [aboriginal.youthawards@sasktel.com](mailto:aboriginal.youthawards@sasktel.com) or call toll free **1.866.931.6205**



# Young people making a difference one deed at a time

Oskapios Igniting Change (OIC) is a group of young activists in Saskatoon that intend to change the world one neighbourhood at a time.

They have already formed alliances with the Core Neighbourhood Youth Coop and Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company and have plans for a big Christmas giveaway. Not surprisingly, several of these young people had gone through programs with the people who are now their partners.

We caught up with Mike Scott, one of the spokespersons for OIC, and also a big hit on Facebook with thousands of followers of his always interesting and weirdly amusing posts.

**What brought all of you together to form OIC?**

Mike Scott: It's the desire to want to see a change in our communities, I hosted two events on my own and I found people that were dedicated to wanting the same thing as me! A group of amazing people who are willing to take time away from their own personal schedules and lives to help make that change they want to see! We all sat down and decided it would be amazing if we had something like this for all people not just First Nations and the fact we are all young people is just icing on the cake.

**What is the big project for Christmas?**

Mike Scott: The project for Dec. 21 is the Christmas giveaway 'the spirit of giving' we want to gather as many donations of money, food and presents for all ages and sexes at a community event at the White Buffalo Youth Lodge. We want to show our love for our core community of Saskatoon and let the young people know they are capable of hosting events like this (and) with hard work they can create a change.

**How are you going to pull it off?**

Mike Scott: We will pull it off by the community helping us! We need all the donations we can get from all over! Personal donations, presents, food places, businesses or anywhere that is willing to help an amazing cause.

**How do you inspire other young people?**

Mike Scott: We let the young people of Saskatoon and surrounding communities know that with hard work and perseverance you can accomplish any goal that you have. We need more young people on our team! So if they are

willing to join our cause they can establish their own chapters of OIC in their own communities and we can build a brighter future together by sharing ideas and staying in contact.

**How important is Facebook and social media in your mission?**

change) oskapios is a Cree word for helper. **What can the community do to help? How do they reach you?**

Mike Scott: We need the community's involvement to keep bringing in donations and believe and trust in us that we are only out there trying to make a better



Members of OIC include back row, Kevin Wesaquate, Colin Nataytowhow, Tesler Mosquito, middle Lanny McDonald, Mike Scott, Quinn Guth and front Trisha Gardypie, Myrna Durocher, Rylan Smallchild. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

Mike Scott: Facebook keeps us all in contact and helps us reach a larger amount of people all at the same time. I think Facebook can be used to your advantage if you are trying to spread messages of hope and inspiration and that's what our group is about! Igniting change in the hearts of all that are involved. We have a page as well (oskapios igniting

place. They need to help us become that change we want to see. we can be reached by the Facebook page (oskapios igniting change). Donations can be dropped off at Saskatchewan Native Theatre company 9-5 p.m. Monday to Friday or else I can be reached by email [cree-native@hotmail.com](mailto:cree-native@hotmail.com) for further questions or concerns.

Merry Christmas  
from the Management & Staff

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## Thunderchild dominates volleyball tourney

Thunderchild men's and women's teams smashed their way to titles at the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nation's Men's and Women's Volleyball Championships. Hosted by Sweetgrass First Nation over a frigid weekend, Thunderchild was led by MVP's Skylar and Savannah Walkingbear. Thunderchild Chief Delbert Wapass was also named Best Setter.

### Women's division:

- 1st: Thunderchild (2) First Nation
- 2nd Moosomin First Nation
- 3rd Sweetgrass First Nation
- Best setter: Ashley Weenie Sweetgrass
- Best hitter: Jerrika Wapass Thunderchild
- MVP Skylar Walkingbear Thunderchild

### Men's division

- 1st Thunderchild
- 2nd Pelican Lake
- 3rd Onion Lake
- Best setter: Chief Delbert Wapass Thunderchild
- Best hitter: Richard Thomas Pelican Lake
- MVP Savannah Walkingbear Thunderchild

(Photos by shelley mike photography.com)



## ALPHONSE KNOWS HOCKEY

It's a big win for Alphonse McCallum! Following a gut feeling on the PRO-LINE games he was choosing, he decided to also buy a Combo Play ticket with the same hockey picks. He correctly predicted the outcomes of all six professional hockey games, winning \$17,439.80 on his standard play PRO-LINE ticket and \$50,074.90 on the Combo Play, for a grand total win of \$67,514.70! Alphonse is a regular PRO-LINE player, and when he went to Sylken Confectionary located at 1600-15th Street West in Prince Albert and filled out his ticket, he had a feeling. He decided to play another ticket, as a COMBO PLAY this time, using the same picks. He didn't watch the games, but took his ticket to a lottery retailer the next day. Alphonse was surprised to see he'd won more than \$17,000 on the first ticket. Then he was shocked when he checked the second ticket. "I was happy and surprised," Alphonse recalled. He was so surprised, in fact, that he couldn't believe his wins. He went to another store to check his tickets. Once confirmed at retail, he went straight to Saskatoon to claim his prizes. Alphonse has some plans for his wins, including brightening other people's days. He said he plans to pay some bills and do some shopping. "Especially Christmas shopping," he said.

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# The North catches football fever

By Mike Gosselin  
For Eagle Feather News

It was cold, the teams played tough and the game was a classic football shootout.

In the end, the Pinehouse Lakers defeated the Buffalo Narrows Eagles 50-32 to win the Ralph Pilz Trophy. It was the first ever high school football championship game in Northern Saskatchewan.

And it was exciting for more than just the players involved.

"There's only one road in and out of Pinehouse," said Lakers head coach Curtis Chandler. "When the team arrived back in town from Buffalo Narrows after the win, 50 cars lined the road and shone their headlights on us. In all, about 250 people welcomed us home.

"They were proud of the work their boys accomplished. It was a special moment."

Ladies and gentlemen, football fever has hit the North.

Lakers tailback Johnny Tinker lit up the opposing defence for seven touchdowns. But the one man wrecking crew was quick to credit the community around him for his success.

"I was actually going to quit at the beginning of the season. I just didn't like football. But my family, my coaches and my teammates encouraged me to stick it with it. And I'm happy I did."

So is his community. In total, Tinker scored 15 touchdowns in three playoff games to help his team overcome a losing record in the regular season and win the big game.

"When we started playing we were friends playing football. Now we're family."

In an exhibition season intended to measure whether or not high school

**"Who knows, we could even see some players with the Riders or Argos in six, seven years."**

**- Curtis Chandler**

football is feasible in the North, the seven participating communities proved there's no lack of support.

"Like most communities in the North, Pinehouse is generally supportive of their athletic teams," Chandler explained. "But football was brand new. And most folks here were not familiar with it."

But the Northern spirit quickly kicked in as over 200 people showed up for Lakers home games. Chandler said fan



The Pinehouse Lakers won the inaugural Ralph Pilz Trophy in a big victory over rival Buffalo Narrows Eagles. They were powered by Johnny Tinkers seven touchdowns. (Photo Facebook)

support for the championship was just as impressive.

"About 220 people made the two hour drive from Pinehouse to Buffalo to come watch us. And when they all rushed the field after we won ... Oh man, what a feeling!"

It was an amazing end to a season that, until the playoffs, had more downs than ups.

"We were 1-3 in the regular season but I knew we had the athletic talent to be successful," Chandler said. "It just took the team awhile to figure out how to work together."

With such a successful first season, it seems the sky's the limit for the Pinehouse Lakers and football in the North. Fittingly, Johnny Tinker is starting to dream big.

"I'd like to continue playing football. Maybe even play Junior."

At it's something Coach Chandler loves to hear.

"There are a lot of great athletes in Northern Saskatchewan. And if given the right opportunity in a sport like football, there's no reason why they couldn't play for the Hilltops or Thunder.

"Who knows, we could even see some players with the Riders or Argos in six, seven years."

It takes a community to raise a football player and, by the sounds of it, Pinehouse has the potential to become a gridiron powerhouse.

## ABORIGINAL Coaches & Officials Program

### BECOME A COACH OR OFFICIAL

The Aboriginal Coaches and Officials Program is organizing and supporting training and development opportunities across the province for Aboriginal peoples to become involved in sport as a coach or an official. Becoming a coach or an official is a rewarding experience and helps our young people grow, not only as athletes, but as tomorrow's leaders.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER CONTACT:

**Natalie Lukiw**

**Aboriginal Coaches and Officials Coordinator**

**510 Cynthia Street, Saskatoon, SK S7L 7K7**

**Email: [nlukiw@sasksport.sk.ca](mailto:nlukiw@sasksport.sk.ca)**

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# From Muskeg Lake to Briercrest an education for Lafond

By Levi Fraser  
For Eagle Feather News

Hailing from the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, first year player Brett Lafond is thrilled to be on the Briercrest College Clipper hockey team. The dedicated forward is currently in Open Studies at Briercrest College in Caronport.

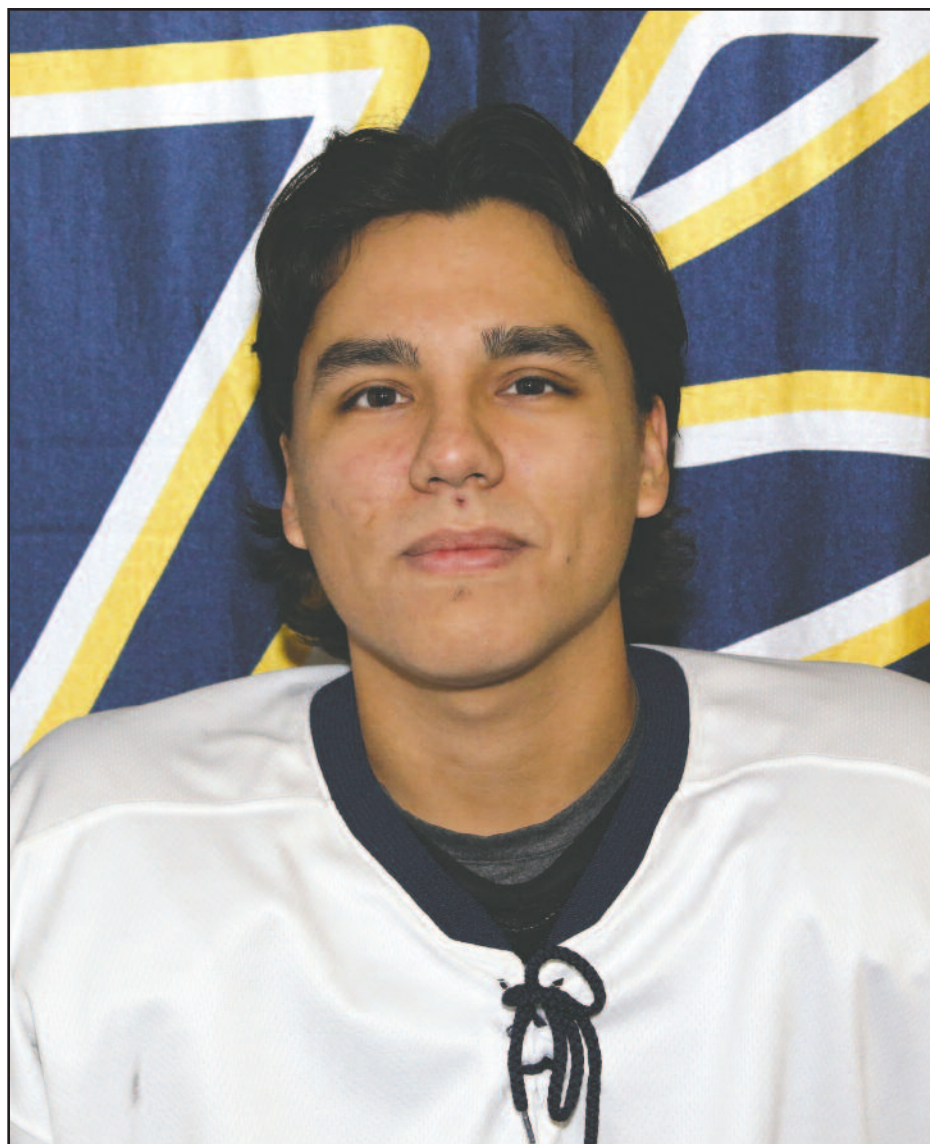
Lafond felt it was his calling to come to Briercrest for the year and play hockey.

"I just felt that this was my calling that I needed to be here!" he said. "Another reason for coming was the hockey program. I wanted to keep playing competitive hockey and get a good education in the process, I had a couple other options to play elsewhere but I just felt that Briercrest was the best choice for me."

Lafond's dedication to his team helps him set an example and be a natural leader.

"My biggest strength as a person would have to be my dedication to always get better, as a player and as a teammate. I always love getting on the ice and it's the way I've always been," Lafond said.

"What I think I bring to the team would have to be offense and leadership, I've always been an offensive minded player growing up, but something I really want to get better at is my



Brett Lafond is relishing the hockey and education experience at Briercrest.

defensive game. Leadership wise, I just try my best to be an example.

"As a rookie you really don't want to say too much, you leave that up to your leaders so I try my best and hopefully people start to notice."

Lafond recognizes the uniqueness of his team's special dynamics this year.

"Something special about our team would have to be how close all the guys have gotten in such a short period of time," he explained. "Everybody seems comfortable with each other and we're only a couple months in. Usually you don't see this until after the Christmas break or maybe later."

The opportunity to meet new people and participate in campus activities have been the highlight of the year for Lafond.

"My favorite moment this year would have to be the Briercrest Olympics, I thought it was a lot of fun getting to meet a lot of new people, people who are outside of the hockey team."

Lafond hopes to continue advancing in hockey after he leaves Briercrest.

"After Briercrest I would love to play pro hockey, it's been a goal of mine since I was 15," Lafond explained.

"If I work hard day in and day out I think that it would be possible to reach one day. I am just happy that I am getting a good education in the process."

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