

Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

Young archer sets an ambitious target

Randall-Dre Friday proudly wears all of his medals he's won over the years competing in archery and baseball. (Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)



**By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News**

A young rising archer has hopes of one day becoming a world champion shooter just like his role model, Levi Morgan.

"He's the best shooter in the world," said Randall-Dre Friday, who is a member of Cote First Nation but resides in Fishing Lake First Nation.

Friday, 14, has been participating in archery for two years but the passion was lit when his older brothers gifted him with his first bow as a Christmas present at the age of four. Fast-forward ten years later, when he asked his mother, Sheryl Kayseas, to buy him a new bow from Cabela's to reignite that passion for the sport.

Right off the bat, he taught himself how to play the sport at home, creating his own targets in his backyard. His two older brothers, Jon and Jeff, would play with him as well.

"He now has three (bows) and loves his custom made Elite bow from New York," Kayseas said. "I worked very hard seeing that Randall-Dre has a passion for archery. It's absolutely exciting Randall-Dre has a lot of potential to offer the world."

Since then, he has taken his passion serious and started competing in various provincial competitions including the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) and the Tony Cote Summer Games.

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Sports & Youth Edition

Coming In June - National Aboriginal Day Issue

CPMA #40027204

Friday works hard to honour sister's memory

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Friday represented his community and Indigenous youth when he competed in the National Field Archery Association (NFAA) Vegas Shoot 2018 which was held in Las Vegas on February 9-11. It was there that a scout spotted him and invited Friday to an archery academy in Yankton, South Dakota for the upcoming fall season.

With the short notice, Friday might not accept the opportunity but hopefully he will once he's finished high school, said Kayseas. Friday was scooped up by Team Saskatchewan to compete in national competitions and plans to compete in the 2018 Canadian Target & Field National Championships in Nova Scotia in August.

In his spare time, Friday enjoys playing volleyball, hockey, baseball, basketball and hunting. Kayseas said her son is very active in hunting for the Elder's in Fishing Lake First Nation and even off-reserve Band Members.

"He hunts deer and moose. He and his brothers disperse the meat to elders in the community," said Kayseas.

Friday faced the hardship of losing his oldest sister, Jackie, seven years ago to suicide. It was a trying time in his family's life losing someone they were all close to. When Friday competes, he always thinks to himself that he will play his hardest for his sister.

"He shut down after she passed. They were really close," said Kayseas. "Then he turned the negative into a positive. He said 'I'm going to do



Randall-Dre Friday is an elite archer, dedicated hunter, outstanding pitcher and a straight-A student with dreams of becoming the world champion archer.
(Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)

good for my sister."

Kayseas and her two oldest sons are always encouraging Friday to continue persevering to reach many more accomplishments as an archer, an elite pitcher on his baseball team and a dedicated hunter.

"Randall-Dre wants to continue his goal he strives for excellence in all that he does," she said. "He's a very good young man. He's very respectful,

kind and values life."

Friday's goal is work hard to go to the Olympics in two years to compete in Japan with hopes of inspiring other youth to work hard at what you love doing.

"I want to go to university in South Dakota and still do archery around the world," said Friday. "Work hard and anything is possible. Never quit what you started."

Youth and sports a winner all the time

I was very fortunate growing up to be able to have the opportunity to play many different sports.

I honestly do not know where I would be without sports in my life. I think it is important for our youth to be able to play sports and create friendships and have other adult figures as mentors and role models.

Unfortunately, there are many roadblocks to have that opportunity to play sports as well. Not everyone has the same opportunities nor the same number of obstacles to achieving something that some might be born with.

Speaking from experience, sports or arts is something all youth need to have in their life. Sports have always been healing in my life.

I grew up playing hockey, soccer, karate, basketball, volleyball and track & field. I have made numerous friends who I am very grateful to have met and created some lifelong friendships.

Hockey and soccer were my main sports and one thing you learn to do on a team is be a team player, which is something truly important to learn for life in general. Learning how to win humbly and learning how to lose without being bitter is not always easy and not all teams you play on will teach you

that, but it is a very important lesson to be learned nonetheless.

Life is full of ups and downs and unforeseen circumstances which is exactly what playing a sport will usually show us that you need to be prepared for whatever might happen, because we have no control over the other team we only have control over ourselves.

This is exactly like life. We have no control over other people we only have control over ourselves and our own choices.

When we hold expectations too high in life or for a game we usually wind up disappointed but when we take a step back and look at the bigger picture, we understand that there can be many different outcomes and it might not be the one we planned but most of the time when we learn to take a minute to appreciate it all we find out we got a lot more out of it.

The friends we have made, the skill we have gained and the discovering of our own self and what we like and do not like and what we are capable of. It

is so much more than just a game and for me it was a place I could try my hardest and release a lot of built up emotions I did not know what to do with.

Now it is time I pass the baton onto my children. I cannot wait to be a soccer/hockey mom. As busy as I know my life already is and will definitely continue to get, there is nothing that compares to witnessing my children light up when they score their first goal and being there for them when they lose their first big tournament.

Teaching my kids to skate, snowboard and golf is all on the agenda and I cannot wait for my babies to be shredding next to me on the mountain. The ultimate goal is to be able to coach at least one team both my kids play on.

It is nice to see my brothers coaching together in the winter games as we all grew up playing in the Winter and Summer Saskatchewan Indian Games.

The only thing I ever really regret in my life was when my focus of sports shifted to a focus of partying in my teen years when I really could have kept go-

ing if I choose to focus on healthy choices for myself.

I was in a near fatal car accident at 17 where the driver was drunk and I had to quit all the sports I was playing. It was devastating. Sports have never been the same since, but that does not mean you give up the stuff you love, you just find another way.

If you have the opportunity to join a team, do not pass it up. It might be hard to start out because you are shy or do not have too much confidence in yourself in that certain skill but I can guarantee you will not regret joining that team and the friendships you will make or the skill you will attain and that is something you can take with you forever.

Every child deserves to enjoy those kinds of moments, memories and friendships made through the love of a certain sport.

I just wanted to acknowledge the tragedy that happened last month and our thoughts and prayers are with the Humboldt Broncos, those who have passed on to the spirit world, those who are healing and those who have lost their family member or friend, my heart aches and it is something I could never imagine.



Comment

Alyson Bear

FSIN youth reps determined to be a voice for their peers

By Angela Hill
For Eagle Feather News

Rollin Baldhead and Darian Lonechild are the two recently elected youth representatives for the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations.

For the next two years they are charged with representing the views of Indigenous youth in Saskatchewan to their leadership.

come and give their experience,” Lonechild said.

Baldhead and Lonechild grew up in an urban setting.

“I can speak to the issues that are affecting our young people, but I can’t speak to what it’s like to grow up on a reserve,” Lonechild said.

“FSIN as an organization

“There is almost a hesitation to reach our goals,” Baldhead said, and he wants to change that.

Part of his platform was based around showing youth that despite goals seeming overwhelming, “we can get there.”

Both youth delegate positions are unpaid, but that isn’t slowing either of them down.

The pair was in Ottawa in early May for the Assembly of First Nations gathering, where they met with Indigenous youth from across the country to compare strategies and hear success stories.

And they have much more travel coming up. Lonechild says planning is underway to start visiting communities across the province.

Both representatives will con-

tinue their studies at the University of Saskatchewan.

Baldhead said he wants to walk the talk, that being elected by his peers means something.

“The youth believe in me,” he said.

Planning for their next two years is well underway, but Lonechild says she understands the amount of work they will have.

She has watched her father in politics as vice-chief and chief of the FSIN.

“Watching him do that has inspired me a lot,” she said.

Her father was initially surprised that she wanted to pursue politics, Lonechild said.

“He’s been very supporting ... his calming hand and guiding voice.”



Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations Vice Chief David Pratt and FSIN Youth Representatives Darian Lonechild and Rollin Baldhead at the AFN Assembly in Ottawa.
(Photo supplied)

“We’re supposed to advocate for young people ... we’re elected in to be that voice,” said Lonechild, 20.

She says they have a reminder for youth also.

“They are leaders in their own way and the lands are theirs as well.”

The first priority for Baldhead, 24, and Lonechild is creating a youth council.

The goal is to have diversity in voices and experiences on-and-off reserve, LGBTQ youth, and from the many nations within Saskatchewan including Dene, Saulteaux, Cree, Dakota and Nakota, said Baldhead.

“I think as young leaders we can create more leaders and provide that opportunity for young people to

would best be led in the direction by young people, so to expand the place of youth in this organization is really important. Creating a youth council, I think would do that.”

They want to create an annual youth summit to have a place where youth can learn how to have their voices heard through the political system like the creation of and voting on resolutions.

The pair also wants to tackle the issues they see at the forefront for Indigenous youth, including mental health and language revitalization, Baldhead said.

He says too often he sees youth that seem to wait for approval.

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Now I'm a sports reporter!

Throughout the years in this business, I always felt intimidated covering the sports beat. I never thought I knew enough or that I was 'sporty enough' to report on sports.

That was the situation up until a few years back when I was the Eagle Feather News summer intern, and I was assigned to cover everything about the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) that were held in Regina.

I profiled dozens of NAIG athletes from near and far and continued to do research about Indigenous athletes and founders of sport programming in Saskatchewan to expand my knowledge. I learned about how people started from little to nothing to kickstart a program for youth in sports. As years passed, those sport initiatives continue to evolve and excel even to this day.

Last summer, I covered (formerly known as) the Saskatchewan Indian Summer Games in Regina. While conducting interviews with numerous athletes, a thought crossed my mind 'do these kids know who Tony Cote is?' So, I threw that question into my interviews. Surprisingly, most of the athletes were clueless. I explained who he is.

Tony Cote, from the Cote First Nation, is the founder of the Saskatchewan Indian Summer and Winter Games. He held the first Saskatchewan Indian Summer Games in Cote First Nation 1974.

Fast-forward 43 years later, and the Games were renamed to the Tony Cote Winter/Summer Games last year to honour the sports enthusiast.

In the early '70s, Cote established the first all-Native Junior 'B' Hockey team in Saskatchewan, managed a women's fastball team that took them as far as the National Indian Activities Association championships and he formed the first all-Native Old-Timers hockey team called the Wagonburners where they competed in Alberta, New Brunswick and even as far as Florida.

Cote has many accomplishments that earned him awards to recognize his contributions. He received the Tom Longboat award in 1974 for outstanding sportsman, the Saskatchewan Order of Merit in 2008, he was inducted into the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame in

2011 and received the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in April 2013.

That's a lengthy list and it begs the question, would Indigenous sports in Saskatchewan be so popular without Cote's contributions?



Jeanelle Mandes and Fred Sasakamoose after completing an interview at the Fred Sasakamoose "Chief Thunderstick" Invitational Hockey Tournament.

Without a doubt, there are others who dedicate their time to invest into sports for Indigenous youth.

For instance, Fred Sasakamoose from Ah-tahkakoop Cree Nation is well-known as the first Indigenous hockey player in the NHL playing for the Chicago Blackhawks in 1953-54. He helped form the Northern Indian Hockey League, he established the



Comment
Jeanelle Mandes

Fred Sasakamoose All Star Hockey Week and the list goes on.

He was acknowledged by being inducted into the Saskatchewan First Nations Sports Hall of Fame, his home community named their arena after him, and this month, Sasakamoose will be honoured with the Order of Canada – one of the highest honours in the country that recognizes those who've made significant contributions to Canada.

Recently, I did an interview with him at the Fred Sasakamoose "Chief Thunderstick" Invitational Hockey Tournament and throughout the interview, he had this smile when he spoke passionately about Indigenous youth and sports.

It reminded me of when I did a story on his grandson, Landon Sasakamoose who pushed himself to achieve greatness in track and field. Landon spoke how his grandpa would commit his time to fully support him in his track and field endeavours.

It's amazing how the trailblazer continues to promote excellence in Indigenous sports.

The generational ripple effect continues with Saskatchewan Indigenous professional athletes Ethan Bear and Brigette Lacquette. There are so many kids that look up to these two young athletes with hopes of making it big one day.

Covering a widespread of Indigenous sport stories over the years left me with a sense of pride for the athletes.

Kudos to their parents/caregivers, mentors/role models and all those who organize a game, tournament or a sporting event. You've all made it possible for the youth to excel in sports.

From Tony Cote to Fred Sasakamoose and many more who contributed to Indigenous sports, there will always be people stepping in to ensure that Indigenous sports will continue to prosper.

I would like to wish all the best to the Indigenous athletes who are competing in this year's National Aboriginal Hockey Championships in Nova Scotia.

Good luck and most importantly, have fun!

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Sasakamoose tourney showcases Indigenous talent

Former NHLer, teams from Quebec participated in event that honours hockey legend's historic achievement

**By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News**

The third annual Fred Sasakamoose "Chief Thunderstick" Invitational Hockey Tournament kicked off with an opening ceremony to honour one of the biggest Indigenous hockey legends – Mr. Sasakamoose himself.

Sasakamoose, from the Ahtakakoop Cree Nation, is well known as Canada's first Indigenous person to play in the NHL. All his life, he dedicated his time in sports whether if he was playing, coaching, training or mentoring. He continuously leaves an everlasting impact in budding and long-time hockey players lives.

"The name itself I'm proud to be part of this. I've always dreamed about the future for our people," said Sasakamoose. "It's great hockey. There were some NHL players that participated in this tournament."

no team entry fees but it's invitational only. We guarantee all the prize money through corporate sponsors which the total prize is \$42,500."

Teams travelled from near and far to compete in the tournament. A team from Waswanipi in northern Quebec travelled the furthest to play. Big NHL names such as former Los Angeles Kings player Dwight King also played in the tournament. The event is a First Nations tournament and players on teams have to be from that community and each team was allowed three player imports.

The excellence of Indigenous hockey talent is what drew a huge crowd of spectators. Each year, the "Chief Thunderstick" Invitational Hockey Tournament grows bigger and has picked up its pace, said Sasakamoose.

"It's come a long way and it picked up so fast. Teams come in from the North and it's just unbelievable," said



Freddie Sasakamoose accepts a cheque from Gary Daniels, General Manager of the Dakota Dunes Casino, a sponsor of the Chief Thunderstick Hockey Tournament.
(Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)



Teams from across Canada came to participate in the invitation only tournament playing for a prize pool of over \$40,000 dollars.
(Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)

His son, Neil Sasakamoose, who is the chairperson of the event wanted, to honour the former Chicago Blackhawks' player by naming a tournament after him and inviting teams to compete each year.

"In 2015, we wanted to figure out how to honour him and we thought 'why don't we have a contact tournament and honour him through hockey'," said Neil.

"This year, we wanted to create a national championship for Indigenous talent. We ended up with 28 teams. The difference with this tournament is there is

Sasakamoose. "It shows our younger people there is a future for them instead of drugs and alcohol."

The Sasakamoose family and tournament organizers hope next year's tournament will be just as much fun and even bigger.

"The name itself came into focus and being much involved with the youth, I want to continue that journey for as long as I live," said Sasakamoose.

The champions of this year's tournament are the Norway House Bruins,

coming in second place is Cross Lake Islanders, third place is Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation STARS and Canoe Lake Young Guns placed fourth.

Judd Black Water from Norway House was named the MVP, the top for

ward went to Konrad McKay from Cross Lake Islanders, Nathan Bruyere was named Best Defense from Cross Lake, Rene Hunter from Cross Lake earned the Most Sportsmanlike player spot and Norway House team won Best Goalie.



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We're resilient, like the hot chick in Kama Sutra

Years ago, I watched a movie called the Kama Sutra. It took place in India and had some pretty graphic sex scenes (which is not even the point here but I thought I'd mention for those of you interested in that kind of thing.)

The heroine of the movie is married to a rich guy but ends up falling in love with a poor dude. And he ends up getting punished for this with an elephant squashing his head with its foot: Judge, jury and elephant-executioner.

I went to the movie with my East Indian friend and as we were leaving the theatre I was like, "Wow, India sure has some interesting punishments. I know crime would go way down here if we had moose crushing people's heads."

She was not impressed and pointed out that the movie was a movie, not a documentary and it was based in, like, the sixteenth century.

Anyway, other than being told off for being racially ignorant, a line that stuck with me was from the main character. This woman had lost her home and the love of her life.

In a stereotypical movie, she would have been leaking tears like a rez car leaking antifreeze. But she wasn't. The movie ends with the heroine walking down a trail by herself and saying: "Knowing love, I will allow all things to come and go, to be as supple as the wind, and take everything that comes with great courage."

To me this fit the definition of what it means to be resilient, a quality which all people must have in order to survive and thrive in life.

We moved around when I was little as my mom searched out a good situation. She and my dad had broken up and she was running short on cash. Also, she was in between homes, so my mom had to split up her four kids. Two of us stayed with one aunt to be closer to school, the younger two stayed with a different aunt on the reserve. My mom

stayed at her work, working double shifts while she looked for a place for all of us. Being a mom now, I can imagine her walk to the car and how scared she must have been.

I still remember when she walked back into my aun-



tie's house with my siblings. Her face was glowing and they spilled into the door beside her, their little faces fat with happiness. I know that I pretended to be grown up (I was six) and didn't run to her but it was one of the happiest moments in my life.

When you hit hard times, you have to use whatever tools are at your disposal to survive and in my mom's case it was her family, her job and her faith that we'd be okay without her. And we were, though throughout my childhood I brought it up in order to score extra treats, "Remember that time you left us and I was so very sad? 'member that?" Children are monsters.

I had my own moments to learn resilience. When I was in my twenties, I moved to New York City. There were free concerts and movies in the park.

You could go kayaking on the Hudson River for free on Saturdays. If you were fast and sneaky, you could score free food at craft services tables set up on the many movie sets around the city. I am pointing out the free stuff because I spent a lot of my time there unable to find a job in the most ex-

pensive city in the world.

When I finally returned to Canada (Edmonton to be specific), I was deeply in debt and contemplating bankruptcy. I even went to the library and read, "Bankruptcy for Dummies."

It was a title I found especially fitting.

In order to find a job in Edmonton, I had no car so I had to walk to the nearest strip mall for work. I found jobs at HomeSense and Starbucks but got fired because I kept wearing navy slacks instead of black ones.

So, I found another job at Linens'n'Things stacking coffee makers on top of one another about 20 feet in the air while standing on a staircase with no sides. If it sounds dangerous, that's because it was.

I was making enough money to keep my debt from getting worse but no more than that. So I started looking through Native newspapers for conference listings. Then I would call the organizers and offer myself as an MC. This helped bring in some cash and even led to a job offer which I accepted.

During this time, I felt like humiliation was my best friend because I hung out with him so often. I focussed on the positives. I appreciated how the hard labour took the place of a gym membership and when bosses and the public were rude to me, I blogged about it like my favourite writer, humourist, David Sedaris.

This allowed me to see the situation outside of myself. It allowed me to turn a shit-day into a funny story.

The best part of resilience is that it's a quality that everyone can have. Although I'd argue that First Nations, just by virtue of our history and the colonialist shit we have to face on a daily basis, have bucket-loads more than average.

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Ex-hockey player happily trades stick for whistle and stripes

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

Growing up around the hockey rink is this young girl's everyday life.

Coming from a hockey family, Charish Cameron-Gamble from the Beardy's and Okemasis Cree Nation, played the sport her entire life but decided it was time for a change. She had never seen a young female Indigenous referee and wanted to take up the challenge of officiating a hockey game.

"It feels quite the same because you're still in the game but it feels kind of weird. It's a lot of pressure to be a good ref because it's really up to you where the game will go. But I like it," she said.

"I've never seen a female Indigenous ref before. Personally, I don't take it as a big thing but I guess it is."

The 16-year-old girl, who has been reffing in her first season, had to take an in-class course in Delisle to be certified and to receive her Saskatchewan Hockey badge. Cameron-Gamble went straight into the intermediate class and had learned about the basic ref calls.

There are some challenges that come with officiating a hockey game, such as missing a call, but Cameron-Gamble said you must not let it bring your motivation down as a referee.

"At FSIN (youth tourney) it was a two-man system we were working and reffing the atoms division. It was challenging to catch every little thing and not being able to (make) those calls.

"You sure get questioned by the coaches and the players," she said. "It is eye-opening when I do miss a call but it just makes me want to be better and keep an eye out for every little thing. It's not defeating."

In her home community, people would tell Cameron-Gamble how proud they are of her which gives her even more motivation to continue reffing. Although she hasn't played hockey for two years now, she hasn't lost interest in the sport.

She wants to continue reffing until she figures out what she wants to do after high school graduation. But the idea of entering into medicine is an appealing thought to Cameron-Gamble.



Mom Crystal Cameron-Gamble and dad Donald Gamble Jr. play a big role in Charish's officiating career providing regular rides to the rink juggled with the demands of the other hockey players in the family. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

"I knew of the hockey rules so it was kind of easy," she said. "I've learned what kind of calls to make in certain situations on the ice. If you're in a game and missed a call, you have to discuss it."

After receiving her referee certification, Cameron-Gamble is able to ref hockey games up to the midget division. She spent her entire season officiating games in her home community and felt right at home.

Her first out of town games were the Federation of Indigenous Sovereign Nations (FSIN) Youth Hockey Tournament on April 27-29 in Saskatoon. She refereed 30 games that weekend leading to numb feet but a big pay cheque.

"I want to go into the medical field, a nurse maybe. I like everything about medicine," she said. "I was thinking of attending school in B.C. but I'm still not sure yet."

She hopes her story will inspire other young Indigenous girls to try something new and to break the stigma that reffing is only meant for males.

"Try something new. It really is nice and different to have women on the ice especially reffing," said Cameron-Gamble.

"It's nice to come out of the comfort zone because they don't treat you like you're a woman but the same as everyone else."



Charish Cameron-Gamble is one of the only First Nation women hockey referees in the province. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

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Northern Sask darts champions keeping their lives on target

By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

In a competitive game of darts, the object is to reach a total sum of zero, counting down from 501.

Because values on a dart board range from 1 to 20, with small target areas for doubles, triples, and bulls-eyes, elite dart players must command a high level of concentration, precision, and skill to go along with constant strategic calculation in the race to zero.

It's certainly much more involved than the "pub game" it's often characterized as. Just ask provincial champions Georgina Ratt and Ashtin Bear.

Ratt and Bear are the respective 2018 Women's and Men's Darts Champions. The two aren't strangers to hoisting their victory trophies – Ratt has won two consecutive provincial titles, while Bear is now on a three-peat.

Ratt, 46, from Stanley Mission, is about as naturally gifted as they come. She played recreationally in Stanley Mission for a few years until family and friends persuaded her in 2000 to enter the provincial tournament. In her inaugural tournament, she placed top 8 and was on her way to nationals with the provincial team.

"After that first tournament, I was hooked," said Ratt. "I guess you could say I was a natural."

Since then, darts has taken Ratt from coast to coast in Canada, and all the way to the World Cup in Japan where she competed for Team Canada, establishing a second sort of family along the way.

"When you travel for tournaments, you get to know a lot of people in the dart community. Everyone shares the same passion, it's like a dart family," she said.

The confounding thing about Ratt's success is that she's attained it with essentially no practice. Until last year, Ratt had been on a four-year dart hiatus in order to concentrate on work. Her first tournament back was provincials – which she won.

"People think I practice ten hours a day," she laughed. "When they find out that I don't practice at all, they say 'can



Georgina Ratt and Ashtin Bear and their championship trophies at the provincial dart tournament in Saskatoon. Photo by Wayne Hudson.

you imagine what would happen if you actually did?"

Ratt plans to commit to practice with the goal of winning Nationals in Quebec this June. She has also helped to start a dart club in Stanley Mission, with the goal of encouraging young people to discover the benefits of darts.

One such young man experiencing those rewards is three-time provincial champion Ashtin Bear. Bear, 23, from Prince Albert, is fast becoming a force in Canadian darts. Along with his provincial titles, he has won senior boys provincial championship and runner-up in nationals in the mixed youth division.

Like Ratt, Bear had modest beginnings with his darts career in 2011.

"After my first ever day of youth provincials, I thought I was sitting fifth and I was sitting first," said Bear. "I psyched myself out and ended up not even making the team. But I came back strong next year, and now it's my sixth year on the team."

Bear credits darts with keeping him on the straight and narrow during some difficult times in his youth.

"Darts got me out of bad scenarios,"

he said. "I was going through a rough patch in high school and starting to misbehave, but darts always kept me level headed."

That level-headedness has also allowed Bear to travel across Canada to compete against the nation's best. With ambition to compete on the world stage, Bear is well on his way to achieving darts greatness.

But Bear also hopes his success inspires others to chase after their goals, as unconventional as they may be.

"Just pursue what you love to do. I thought darts was the weirdest thing, but I pursued it and probably had the most fun I've had in my life," said Bear.

"Start as young as you can and stick to it. I'm glad to say I'm still doing it."

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Is Dirk on the right planet?

You might think race relations are getting better or worse in Saskatchewan. I'm here to add to the confusion.

First up, the Dirk worries for a certain celebrated Saskatchewan radio personality. To protect his identity, we will call him J. Gormley. No, that's too revealing. We'll call him John G. Yes, that will work perfect.

Dirk is not worried for John G's soul. This guy is a Christian, or a Muslim, so he'll not go to hell, but to that other place. Cupar.

No, I worry for his well-being, for I fear the antics of a certain population in this province are giving him ... issues.

He has a tough job. To stay relevant, he reads the mood of his constituency – a constituency that has hardened opinions of a certain population in this province.

So far, he has been up to the challenge.

Consider his deft handling of the murder of a dreaded Indian. Celebrated radio personality verbally stickhandled around the truth and, like a champion, he cherry picked facts to embed the dead firmly in the role of villain, and the murderer as righteous.

Of course, his constituency agreed. And there is a certain satisfaction that comes when ones' half-assed pronouncements are validated.

I wouldn't know. When I make lofty statements I tend to make them whole-assed.

Second, we have the "joke" at a recent country music show.

For the Humbolt Broncos benefit the organizers hired a comedy duo, The Indian and the White Guy. All is well until the dynamic duo whip this gem from their back pocket: "Shake it from the river, shake it from the trees, shake it for the Indian with STD's."

Now you might think, "THIS is outrageous! How can entertainers rely on stereotypes to reinforce ugly perceptions of an entire population? Using racism for a cheap laugh?"

Apparently, concert goers went bananas with laughter. I have taste in music, so I wasn't there.

Even better? Part of the comedy duo was an Indian! They're doing it to themselves, just like that Chief in B.C.

who revels in playing to the mainstreams' perceptions and stereotypes. Laughing at Indians is fun.

The third thing that had me wondering if I was on the right planet concerns the Pope's refusal to apologize for the residential schools. It seemed a no-brainer.

On the one hand, Matthew 18:5-6 says "And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. If anyone causes one of them to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."

On the other hand, we got no sea on the prairies, so no worries there.

On the third hand, apparently Jesus said, "Yea, go out to the hinterland and reap artworks, land and sculptures, and there will be a thing called FacePlace. Hoard these investments, 'cause I dig the gold!"

Some will say, but the Catholic church did apologize. And it did issue a statement of regret and sorrow, like,

"Hey, sorry things went down back there, but we're not sorry, so, yeah. We good now?"

And finally, we have that tormented black kid in Balgonie who took his life after being bullied and teased for being black. When the kid stood up for himself the RCMP bravely stepped in to arrest him because bullying classmates must be kept safe and snug.

The message seems to be, don't you dare interrupt other kids from having their fun. Congrats Balgonie.

Now I am sure Balgonians are hoping this issue goes away. It doesn't look good and its making people have uncomfortable conversations. It's inconvenient as hell.

Clearly, we have work to do in this province, and this country. You're damn right its inconvenient, awkward, and there are those who will defend their privileged positions to have their fun and sense of peace.

Thankfully I happen to know the majority in the mainstream realizes this and they are wanting to take up the challenge. As allies.

Dirk says, "This is the tame version of what I originally had in mind."



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Coaching is proving rewarding for award winning mentor

**By Chelsea Laskowski
For Eagle Feather News**

Hockey has been good to Courage Bear, so he's good to it.

That's the driving force behind the Ochapawace-raised Saskatoon man's decision to coach not one, but three teams this year.

Bear coaches the city's Bantam Flyer Warriors, Midget AAA Contacts and is a coach taking Team Sask to the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships in early May.

The mentality behind Bear's current coaching schedule is two-fold. As a parent coach for two teams, he said he'd be in the arena anyway to support his kids and if he has something to offer he might as well get involved, and as a non-parent coach he said "I owe it to the game."

This year the Saskatoon Minor Hockey Association (SMHA) is naming Bear the city's Coach of the Year. By virtue of that win, he is up for nomination at the provincial level later this year. The SMHA win had nothing to do with how many wins Bear's teams tally up, said the association's executive director Kelly Boes. Parents of kids on Courage's teams made a large number of submissions to support his win.

"What they almost all speak to is how much of a good, positive influence he is about life, not just hockey, but gen-

eral life. And being a positive role model and being there for the kids on and off the ice," Boes said.

Bear moved to Saskatoon for university long ago, and he started his 13-plus years of coaching because he always enjoyed working with kids. He cares about his players, asking

person then they're not going to perform at their optimal state."

The time he invests in his players pays back, as they keep in touch with him when they get older, going from being athletes to becoming his friends. Some stop by to visit with Bear when they're in the city, or he keeps up with them from afar on social media.

"If an individual had success, obviously they had lots of influences in their life, but hopefully you had some sort of a lasting impact in a positive way," Bear said.

Bear received his SMHA honour on April 24 at the association's annual general meeting. As a man who credits his ability to do what he does to his supportive partner and workplace, where he knows leaving work early for practice or a game is alright and that his partner will cart his kids around when he's away, Bear was not ready to be in the spotlight. He describes his reaction to going up on stage to be recognized as "sheepishly embarrassed."

He said the coaching he does comes because of the

mentors and positive influences he's had in hockey over the years and doesn't want to take sole credit for the work he does now.

In fact, he said he is constantly learning, not just from coaches but from the very athletes he works with on a daily basis.



Courage Bear, middle holding the plaque, was joined by Brett Baron, Chris Nomeland and John Linklater, all from sponsor of the award Al Andersons, and on right SMHA President Terry Wisse after the award presentation.

(Photo by Brad Klebaum - www.klebaumphotography.ca)

them how they are doing in school and what they want to do in life, he said.

"At the end of the day you're just coaching people and they want to be treated as people," he said. "X's and O's are part of it, and strategy and tactical stuff are all part of it, but unless your kids you coach believe you care about them as a

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Jordyn Burnouf paying it forward in sports world

By Angela Hill
For Eagle Feather News

Many youth across Northern Saskatchewan know Jordyn Burnouf and when they see her, it's all smiles.

In fact, through her involvement with Saskatchewan Aboriginal Track and Field (SaskATF), Burnouf has directly coached about 80 kids and oversaw the training programs of far more.

"It makes me feel very, very fortunate to be able to impact kids in that way," said the 27-year-old.

By day she works in cultural and community engagement at Northlands College in La Ronge and the rest of the time she is organizing track and field meets, peer-based training clinics, and chatting with the rest of the SaskATF team.

"We've been slowly but surely building the sport up over the past 10 years, it's been incredible," Burnouf said.

Burnouf's love for track and field started when she was in a kindergarten gym class in Ile a la Crosse. The passion grew from there, and Burnouf went on to win awards and medals for long jump, triple jump, running, and javelin, including two golds at the North American Indigenous Games in 2008.

Her talent and excitement for the sport was noticed by her coach Derek Rope and he invited Burnouf to join the SaskATF board. She and other youth talked about what track and field should look like for Indigenous youth in Saskatchewan.

There was no looking back. After graduating high school Burnouf became an assistant coach for the North Ameri-

can Indigenous Games Saskatchewan team, then she became the head coach.

joined.

"It was great to have the student

is super supportive, a network of people that are there for you."

The support is not just there for the athletics but also to help tackle the barriers that prevent youth from getting into athletics, Burnouf said.

"It's started to bridge the gap between Aboriginal communities and the sport."

Burnouf says that mentorship is the most important part of her work. Among Burnouf's mentors she mentions her former coach Rope as well as Jocelyn Chandler, a physio therapist who encouraged Burnouf and other youth to learn to swim and train as lifeguards (the Ile-A-La-Crosse aquatic and fitness centre is named after her). Rope, in particular, played a significant role in Burnouf staying in sport and in university, Burnouf said.

"To have that support and to have those people there helping me, makes a world of difference. That's why I always pay it forward because I know the positive impact it had on my life," she said.

"I really have to pay tribute to those incredible people in my life."

And through coaching Burnouf sees the positive cycle continue, as youth she has coached are coming forward to become coaches themselves.

"It just becomes a sustainable cycle, then you can step away and people keep doing it on their own," she said.



Jordyn Burnouf places a medal on the winner of the youth race at a past Saskatchewan Aboriginal Track and Field Championships in Saskatoon. Mentoring and coaching track athletes has been Burnouf's way of returning the guidance she received from her sports mentors.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

"I think I was one of the first head coaches of women," she said.

SaskATF started organizing clinics for remote communities that might not get access to any coaching or to the range of sport track and field offered, Burnouf said. The University of Saskatchewan Huskies track and field team members

athlete mentorship for the younger kids," she said. "We've built a community that

Community-minded Burnouf about more than track and field

Along with Saskatchewan Aboriginal Track and Field, Jordyn Burnouf has a lead role in coordinating Vibrant Roots, a two-day conference for Northern youth happening May 16 and 17.

Students from communities across the North are invited to attend workshops, cultural sessions, and be exposed to the great work that people from their communities are doing.

"It's a time when students can learn about culture, education and leadership," Burnouf said.

The idea is to encourage Northern youth to pursue their goals.

"Think outside the box, think about that one thing you would love to do and you can do it," she said.

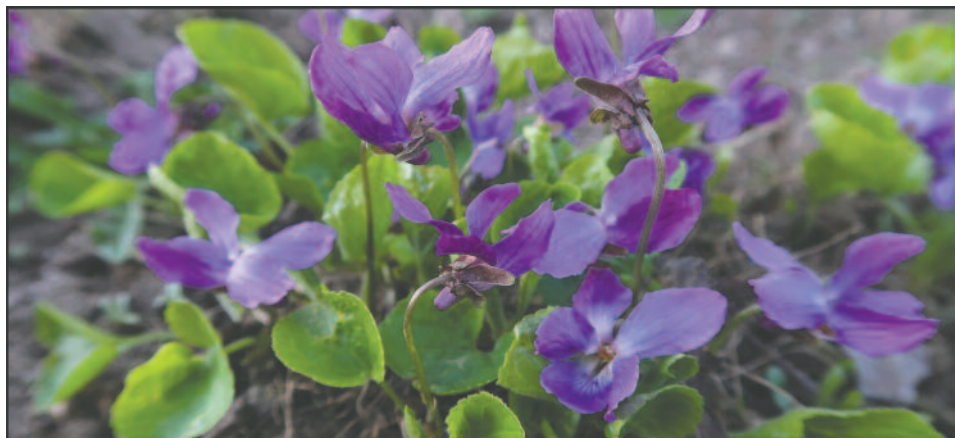
This is the second year of the conference and will include sessions on jigging and powwow dancing, youth parliament, environmental sustainability, and discussion on culture with Elders.

Of note, Burnouf says the artists Snotty Nose Rez Kids are coming from Vancouver.

"They are going to be able to talk in a way that will reach kids," she said.

Organizers are expecting about 300 youth to attend. Burnouf says she sees the youth come together over the two days and last year's closing ceremony was amazing.

"The Round Dance was incredible, it was so powerful," she said, all the youth felt it and all of them eventually joined in.



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The East Central U15 Female Volleyball team will compete in the nationals held in Edmonton this month. (Photo supplied)

East Central volleyballers heading to nationals

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather
News

The East Central volleyball team consists of 10 passionate U15 female players from Standing Buffalo, Carry the Kettle, Kawacatoose, Kahkewistahaw and Standing Buffalo Dakota Nation and its a team that is making its way to the nationals in Edmonton this month.



One of the team captains, Tavah Delorme, travels 2-3 times a week to Standing Buffalo from Regina for volleyball practices. (Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)

"It's going to be fun because we're one of the top ranked teams in Canada," said head coach Faron Mckay.

"I'm totally amazed because you'd never think a team would do so well in their first year."

Making it to the nationals was a huge eye-

opener for many communities to see the skills of these 10 volleyball players. But it didn't happen overnight.

The East Central girls' volleyball team got its first shot playing the sport back in January. They have competed in nine tournaments since. They placed third in their first Sask. Cup and have also placed second in their second and third Sask. cup. In the big Cougar Invitational Tournament in Regina, they placed 2nd as well.

The East Central team recently played in the provincials in Saskatoon placing second out of 40 teams in Saskatchewan.

"We did really well and as one of the top teams in Saskatchewan, I believe we have a lot of talent," said Mckay.

"We pretty much started from scratch. It was amazing how we put together a team, it was more like a jigsaw puzzle where we fit the pieces together and it turned out awesome."

One of the team's captains, Tavah Delorme, 14, from Carry the Kettle but residing in Regina, travels weekly to Standing Buffalo for volleyball practices at the school gymnasium. She has been playing volleyball for four years and grew up playing with her parents who ignited her passion for the sport.

"I look up to my mom and dad because they influenced me to

play," said Delorme.

With the nationals coming up, Delorme hopes to make the experience memorable.

"I'm excited to go to Edmonton to compete," she said. "It's fun and nerve-racking at first but once you play together as a team, it's good."

Mckay sets up practice for the girls two to three times a week in Standing Buffalo. He, the assistant coaches and the parents are fortunate to have this recreational activity for their girls since it gives them something to do.

"We put structure into our youth's sports where we give them a chance in that support system," he said.

"At the same time, to show them what they are capable of doing and where they can take their sports level to a new high where they can play university or college volleyball.

"With this club, I wanted to show that we have First Nations athletes that can do really well."

When travelling to some tournaments, the parents and coaches chip in money from their own pockets to ensure the girls' can play. It's not only about competing that drives them to these levels but it's the passion that players of the East Central team show for the love of the game.

"In our club, we didn't want to make it all about finances. We wanted to make it afford-

able for everybody to play," said Mckay.

"We just wanted to show that we as First Nations do have a good team and if they give us a chance, we could do really well and we have."

Once they finish playing at the nationals, the girls will venture off into soccer, fastball and beach volleyball until they are back in full throttle for next season.

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Felix Merasty finds his niche in mining industry

It's difficult to find an industry that Felix Merasty hasn't worked in.

The Ile-a-la-Crosse product started off his career in the Armed Forces in the late 1970s, and several years later he moved on to work as a surveyor assistant at Cluff Lake mine and at Key Lake as a pipefitter's helper.



Felix Merasty is back working at a job he loves.

He ended up pursuing teaching, influenced greatly by the role models who helped him finish high school. Back in

the 1970s Ile-a-la-Crosse didn't have a high school so it was a struggle when he had to go away to Prince Albert for school. He credits those teachers with giving him a base to get into the workforce.

While Merasty taught all over the North after completing his education at NORTEP, even influencing two of his own kids to get into the profession, he had another interest brewing.

"I always wanted to get back into the mining sector," he said.

However, the mining work Merasty did in his younger years didn't interest him this time around. Rather, he found himself wanting to do the work he'd seen recreation technicians do when he worked stints at Fort McMurray in between teaching jobs.

"They were helping people out, keeping them motivated," he said. "I kinda thought maybe that's what I'd like to get into too."

The work involves organizing activities outside of work hours that keep mine staff busy, entertained, and active. It was a perfect fit for Merasty, a lifelong athlete and coach who runs marathons, plays hockey, and is going to the Masters Indigenous Games in Toronto to play doubles badminton this summer.

Orano ended up hiring Merasty several years ago to work at the McClean

Lake mine. His job is an important one, as the remote northern operations see staff work long shifts for seven days in, seven days out.

There are full-scale events like National Aboriginal Day where Merasty is introducing hand drummers and hoop dancer visits for the first time. It's easy to get staff together and fill a bus for outings like inter-mine hockey tournaments, curling bonspiels, and picnics.

"Just to get them out of the mine site, get them not thinking about work," he said.

"It's just mental health. A lot of people have issues at work or at home and it's good to instill a positive mental health and the balance in mental health and just to have fun."

The mine offers up a lot of ameni-

ties to provide that balance: a sauna on site, pool tables, a full-size gym, pool tables, bicycles, canoes, paddleboards, kayaks, and boats for fishing.

"People love to fish in the summer because most of us are from down south and city dwellers," he said.

Despite the leisurely activities Merasty facilitates, he said it is a lot of work to come up with new ideas, facilitate events, get people to come out, and make sure everything is in working order on site.

"It's a lot of work. People think we don't do that much work but" Merasty said he is there from start to finish with things like bingo.

He said this line of work keeps him motivated to stay active with running and badminton.



"If I can go home every night knowing what I did that day helped in any way, small or big, I will be happy."


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Ahenakew earns Economic Developer Award

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

The Saskatchewan First Nations Economic Development Network (SFNEDN) celebrated Indigenous Economic Development Day by hosting the annual SFNEDN Economic Developer of the Year Awards at Wanuskewin Heritage Park.

The Government of Saskatchewan has proclaimed May 7-12, 2018 Economic Development Week in Saskatchewan and May 7, 2018 has been proclaimed Indigenous Economic Development Day.



Lee Ahenakew received his Individual Economic Developer Award from SNFEDN Executive Director Shaun Soonias. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

The 2018 Saskatchewan First Nations Economic Development Awards, proudly sponsored by the Business Development Bank of Canada, showcases the work, passion and outcomes achieved by an individual First Nation citizen and community that builds positive business relationships, employment for First Nations and incorporates traditional values into mainstream business practice.

The Individual Economic Developer Award went to Lee Ahenakew.

A unanimous selection, Ahenakew has had input in some major economic growth including being one of the founding board members of SIGA and ushering First Nations into the gaming sector, Vice-President of Member Relations for the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) and Chief Executive Officer for BATC Investments Ltd, a development corporation owned by member First Nations of Battlefords Agency Tribal Chiefs

Ahenakew saw that the Duty to Consult was driving business relationships and opportunities for First Nations economic development and was looking for an opportunity to learn in a practical sense how resource companies and First Nations worked through the Duty together to create these opportunities.

Ahenakew found an opportunity at BHP Billiton Potash to do this. During Lee's time at BHP he managed a team of three, overseeing relationships between BHP Billiton's Potash business and local First Nations and municipalities for Jansen Project.

He supported planning and First Nations engagement for a port solution and planned and managed integration of socio-economic studies into two mining project studies. In this position he won BHP Billiton's 2015 Health Safety and Environment Awards (Community category), an international award, for negotiation of best case practice opportunity agreements with Kawacatoose, Day Star, and

Muskowekwan First Nations.

Ahenakew took his economic inspiration from his father Willard, legendary artist and political cartoonist.

• Continued on Page 15

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First Nations finding their place in mining and resource sector

• Continued from Page 14

“My dad took his art and that concept and helped create national organizations like Canadian Indian Artisans to sell crafts. They took that it turned it into a business that employed people,” said Ahenakew in his acceptance speech.

“He told me that if you have gifts, you have to share it with the community.”

Ahenakew has also been a director for the First Nation Power Authority and the Board of Governors for the University of Saskatchewan where he became president, the first Indigenous Chair of the Board for a medical-doctoral University in Canada.

The Community Economic Developer Award went to STC Industrial. STC Industrial is owned by the Saskatoon Tribal Council and was formally launched April 1, 2017 with a basic business plan and goal to leverage the interests of the Saskatchewan resource sectors Aboriginal engagement initiatives.

With one staff member, no work, and limited capital, STCI began its plan to recruit staff, secure clients, and move its brand forward into the market. Through focused development of relationships with major Saskatchewan players such as Nutrien and SaskPower Corporation, STCI was able to land and grow a book of work within the first six months.

After their first year in business, they had zero injuries and sixty per cent Indigenous employment. The award was ac-

cepted by STCI President Brad Darbyshire.

“We see a huge upside to Indigenous economic development. It is a great way to improve the quality of life of our citizens. The Tribal Council team is responsible for this award and our success,” said Darbyshire.

“But we wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for our clients. They are the key. At Nutrien, Leanne Bellegarde and Tim Herrod have been big advocates of ours and have provided opportunity. Nutrien is providing a way for STC and the entire Indigenous community and beyond.”

Nutrien and STC have partnered to host an event that brought together dozens of Nutrien suppliers to meet with leaders and economic development people of the seven member First Nations to talk about potential business ventures and partnerships.

STCI also supports many community initiatives including the White Buffalo Youth Lodge Vampire Gala, the Annual Saskatoon Tribal Council Future is Yours career fair and the back to school back pack program with sponsor Nutrien.

“STCI employees First Nation people from across Saskatchewan from Fond du Lac to Cowessess,” added Darbyshire. “We have grown immensely and paid over one million dollars in wages into the community. It is a huge win thanks to Nutrien and SaskPower.”

All that is music to the ears of



Jason Smith of Business Development Bank of Canada presented the Community Economic Developer Award to STC Industrial. Accepting the award was STCI President Brad Darbyshire.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

SFNEDN Executive Director Shaun Soonias.

“Lee Ahenakew has done a lot from an institutional standpoint and his work at the First Nation Power Authority and BATC from a business standpoint. And STC Industrial has created wealth and employment, said Soonias.

“And both speakers today spoke to the mining and resource sector with opportunity in the supply chain. Our First Nations are maturing and becoming more

sophisticated with structured organizations. Today showed there is a lot of support for our First Nations. We see in this room a great diversity of business and industry representatives and more of the mainstream than of First Nations.

“And I think that’s a good thing when we are doing these types of awards because it speaks to the kind of relationships and clients and customers and partners that our First Nations are developing in this province.”

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From shoes to moccasins, local running store highlights Aboriginal community

By Tara Campbell
For Eagle Feather News

The owner of one of the largest footwear companies in the world is now the proud owner of his very own Saskatchewan-crafted moccasins, thanks in large part to the province's premiere running store, Brainsport.

New Balance owner Jim Davis was in Saskatoon in April to visit Brainsport, where he was presented with an evening highlighting Saskatchewan's aboriginal community that including being gifted with a pair of moccasins featuring the New Balance logo, crafted by Cree artist Katelyn Paskemin of Sweetgrass First Nation.

"Every year Jim Davis does a cross-country tour of Canada and this was his first-ever stop in Saskatchewan. I wanted to give him an experience he'd never forget," said Brian Michasiw, Brainsport founder and owner.

"I think that a lot of times he'll go into a shop and they'll talk about some basic fundamental business things like margins or discounts, or procurement, and I thought those are all important things that need to be discussed, but this wasn't the time or place."

"I thought this was about an education about what Brainsport stands for and how New Balance has supported that," explained Michasiw.

"Saskatoon is Canada's youngest city and that is because of the First Nations demographics. I think it would be naive and irresponsible if we didn't discuss the most up and coming demographic in this province," said Michasiw.

"On one hand there's opportunity there for a business like mine, but there's also a responsibility for a business

like mine to accept some truths and responsibilities on how to do this in Canada and specifically Saskatchewan with regards to First Nations people."

To provide Davis with an entertaining and informative presentation, Michasiw turned to his network of friends and associates. The New Balance guests were greeted with a welcome song to Treaty 6 Territory and the homeland of the Métis performed by Marc Okihcihtaw and incorporated special presentations featuring guest speakers, Jason Warick, Tarrant Cross Child and Derek Rope.

"The Brainsport presentation was very meaningful in that it clearly demonstrated their incredible culture and commitment to their community," said Davis.

"It is also one thing to recognize New Balance's involvement by writing an email, or even talking about it on the phone, but to actually meet the people responsible, and hear firsthand about the impact we are having, was very emotional and touching."

Both Brainsport and New Balance are supporters of Tarrant Cross Child's Child of the Cross Running Clinics, which reaches communities in Northern Saskatchewan and beyond with its message of hope and restoration.

"New Balance has always believed in giving back to our local communities where we do business. Tarrant and his outreach to some of the most highly affected areas of North America is a great demonstration of these valuable efforts," said Davis. "Anne (wife) and I are extremely proud of the New Balance culture that supports working together with great people like Tarrant and Brian to truly



New Balance owner Jim Davis was in Saskatoon recently to visit Brainsport, the province's premiere running store. He was gifted with a pair of moccasins with the New Balance NB Logo beaded into them. The moccasins were created by Katelyn Paskemin of Sweetgrass First Nation. (Photo Brainsport)

make a difference in the world."

As for the moccasins, Davis said he was "honoured and delighted" to have received the "special gift" and that he's taken them home to "enjoy."



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First Nations University powwow reaches 40-year milestone

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

The First Nations University of Canada (FNUUniv) reached a 40-year milestone celebrating its annual spring powwow in Regina.

Organizers worked hard to make this year unique from previous years. Richard Missens, the Chair of the FNUUniv Spring Powwow Committee, said this year's event was bigger than any other powwow they've ever had.

"Over the 40 years, the event has grown. We no longer have the powwow at the campus anymore. We have to hold it in a big facility like this at the Brandt Centre," he said.

"It's one of the longest running powwows in Saskatchewan and it's probably the biggest in Canada now. It's really grown each year. This year, we've had more registered dancers than we've ever had."

Missens said there was over 800 registered dancers, 19 drum groups, 47 tradeshow booths and 240 volunteers who participated in 40th anniversary powwow. It isn't known what the number of spectators is for this year but Missens said every year averages from 7,500 to 8,000 people.

This year's event was unique as the powwow committee honoured all FNUUniv students, past and present in the last 40 years. FNUUniv alumni were invited to walk in the four grand entries according to designated decades the students attended the institution.

Another important aspect of this year's event was the creation of a magazine put together by Shannon Avison, head of the Indian Communication Arts (INCA) program. She brought along various writers who wrote stories about the annual powwow's evolution over the years, taking a look at the courses and projects at the FNUUniv.

The FNUUniv Princess Pageant is a contest that is held every year. Jessie Kaiswatum handed down her crown to the newly crowned princess Britney Oakes from Nekaneet First Nation.

"I'm very excited and I'm now realizing how big of a responsibility it is to carry this title," said Oakes who has been preparing herself for the pageant for a few months.

Her duties consist of representing the FNUUniv as an ambassador and a mentor on the powwow trail throughout the year. The traditional dancer is a second-year FNUUniv student enrolled in the elementary education program. She plans

on proudly representing the one of a kind Indigenous educational institution in the powwow circles.

Her message to younger women who want the chance to win the title of Miss FNUUniv Princess is to work hard at obtaining an education and not to lose focus on your culture.

"Keep up with your education and finish high school," she said.

"Education is important but also learning your culture, your language, your roots and who your family is. That's all important."



Britney Oakes, above right and inset below left, was crowned the First Nation University of Canada Powwow Princess for 2018-2019. (Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)



Veterans including Tony Cote were honoured at the powwow and included in each grand entry. (Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)



This years FNUUniv Powwow was the largest ever with over 800 dancers, making the 40th annual event a very memorable one. (Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)

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Manitoba team scores Oskana Cup novice title

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

Sixty-seven teams travelled from near and far to compete in this year's 13th Annual Oskana Cup Aboriginal Youth Hockey Championships held at Regina's Co-operators Centre.

There were 53 youth and 14 adult teams that registered and some came from as far as northern Ontario and Manitoba.

Madden Tymchak, 9, from Oakbank, Manitoba was named the MVP of the Championships. A member of the Springfield Icehawks team, Tymchak said he was honoured to bring home the title as the MVP in his division.

"It felt amazing because other kids don't have that opportunity to do that," he said. "It was fun and cool. I'm taking home the MVP award that looks like an eagle."

Tymchak has been playing hockey for over five years and loves being able to play the sport that he loves.

"It's fun to get exercise and stuff," Tymchak said.

One Nation Warriors team from Man-



Madden Tymchak from Oakbank, MB was named the MVP of the Oskana Cup Aboriginal Youth Hockey Championships.

(Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)



One Nation Warriors from Manitoba were champions in the novice division.

(Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)

itoba were champions in the novice division. The team's coach, Jordan Armstrong, said this was the One Nation Warrior's first time travelling out of their province to compete in a tournament and he was surprised they won the championship considering they barely practiced.

"We don't have practices. Basically the tournaments (in Manitoba) is all we got for practices," said Armstrong.

"We just put this team together this winter. We pushed hard to get the championship at the Oskana Cup. It feels pretty exciting seeing all the kids coming together. It was a pretty intense weekend of hockey for the little guys. Just glad we came up on top. The boys worked hard and came together as one to work as a team."

All the team players come from different corners of Manitoba which made it difficult to gather for practices but Armstrong said the boys worked hard when they got together for tournaments. It was a fun and memorable experience for the One Nation Warrior's to not only take the title as novice champions but to enjoy a weekend of playing great hockey.

"Hope to be back next year. We won't be able to defend the novice title as the boys move up to the atom division. So,

we're going to push hard for the atom championship," he said.

Shelley M. Lavallee, president of Oskana Minor Hockey Development Inc., said the organizers have learned a lot in the 13 years since the tournament started.

"We've learned something new every year so we're always constantly refining our rules or the way we do things," she said.

"We did do something special this year though. We decided to add some teams to a few divisions so we added an initiation team with a novice and atom team and we called them the Oskana Broncos as a way of honouring the Humboldt Broncos."

The Oskana Cup Aboriginal Youth Hockey Championships took place on May 4-6.

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Over 180 teams competed in FSIN Adult and Youth Hockey Championships



The Canoe Lake Young Guns won the FSIN Men's Adult Hockey Championships in April beating out the Ochapowace Thunder in the final. They received their trophy from tournament chairperson, Clay DeBray on right.

(Photo by Milton Tootoosis)

By Jeanelle Mandes Of Eagle Feather News

Indigenous hockey dominated the spotlight in Saskatoon on the last two weekends in April with the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) Adult and Youth Hockey Tournaments held at Jemini arena.

Clay DeBray was the FSIN Adult Hockey Tournament coordinator/chairperson. He said this year's adult tournament had 86 teams, which is on average based on the previous years.

"On daily, there were 3,000 people coming through the doors in the rinks," said DeBray. "It was an overall success. We were proud to host as Flying Dust First Nation. We utilized it as one of our fundraisers because we're hosting the 2019 Summer Games."

Each division won prize money, a championship provincial banner with jackets along with nine awards given to individual players.

The Canoe Lake Young Guns won in the senior contact division with the Ochapowace Thunder as the runner-up. Stanley Mission won in the recreation 1 division, in the recreation 2 division James Smith won, the Legends 35+ Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, in the 45+ Masters division PAGC and in the ladies' division Cote First Nation were the champs.

Team Canada Hockey Olympian Brigitte Lacquette played for her community Cote First Nation.

"It was an honour to have Brigitte play, with her playing experience. She's such a great role model for the youth," said DeBray.

"That brought exposure having Brigitte play in our tournament and it also showcases that our First Nations are

excelling more and more in the sport of hockey."

Ken Thomas, FSIN Director of Sport, Culture, Recreation and Youth, coordinated the FSIN youth tournament which was on April 27-29. He said there were 109 teams that registered and 106 teams showed up. It was an opportunity for Saskatchewan's Indigenous youth to showcase their skills and have fun playing a sport they love.

"Looking at the attendance we've hosted in the previous years for the (FSIN youth), we're above what we made which is a good sign," said Thomas. "This year, we added a female atom and peewee division to coincide...female hockey is growing in Saskatchewan so we figured we'd add that division into this tournament which is why there's an increase in teams this year."

The FSIN youth hockey tournament coincided with the Fred Sasakamoose "Chief Thunderstick" Invitational Hockey Tournament on the same weekend.

"It's good that both tournaments are great but it's unfortunate they are both on the same weekend," said Thomas. "But First Nations people are supporting each tournament which is great."

With the three Indigenous hockey tournaments, it was an economic boost in Saskatoon but Thomas said he wished the FSIN youth tournament received support from the city.

"We would like more support when Indigenous organizations are hosting in the city," he said. "Both tournaments are bringing millions of dollars into the city, we haven't seen a dime from (the City). Hotels and restaurants were packed and full."

Spectators enjoyed watching great

youth hockey and witnessed the FSIN youth hockey champs who were given trophies, bunnyhugs and banners.

The FSIN Youth champions were Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation for the Bantam division, Midget - Onion Lake,

Peewee - La Ronge, Atom - Stanley Mission, Novice - Muskeg Lake, Female Atom/Peewee - Yorkton Tribal Council, and lastly the Female Bantam/Midget champs went to Team Easter Sector.



(Right) Kali Whitehawk hopes to play professional hockey and follow the footsteps of her mentor, Team Canada Hockey Olympian Brigette Lacquette. (Above) Team Canoe Lake Captain Rico Opikokew played his final year in the FSIN youth hockey tournament. He hopes to attend college and continue playing the sport he loves. (Photos by Jeanelle Mandes)

Young players participating in FSIN youth tournament hope to emulate the success of their hockey heroes

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

The Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) youth hockey tournament was an opportunity for Saskatchewan's Indigenous youth to showcase their skills and have fun playing the sport they love.

The FSIN youth tournament brought thousands of people through the doors to witness future heroes take the ice.

Kali Whitehawk, 10, from Cote First Nation played with Team Yorkton Tribal Council (YTC) who were champs in their division. Whitehawk, who plays defence said she has been playing hockey since she was six-years-old. It was her first time playing in the FSIN youth hockey tournament and said the experience was fun.

"It felt great. I feel so happy playing and winning," she said.

After high school, Whitehawk wants to continue playing hockey with hopes of making it big to follow the footsteps of her mentor, Team Canada Olympian Brigette Lacquette, who is also from the Cote First Nation.

On the male side, Rico Opikokew played with Team Canoe Lake in the midget division. He isn't a stranger when it comes to the FSIN youth hockey tournament. He's played in the FSIN youth hockey tournament for the past seven years with this year as his final competition.

Opikokew, 17, has been playing hockey for over 10 years and loves everything about the sport.

"I love the feeling of meeting new people and being around family and friends," he said.

Over the years, he said his team has won a few tournaments and that kept him coming back each year. This year, Team Canoe Lake took a loss to Team Ah-tahkakoop. The soon-to-be high school graduate hopes to go to college and continue to play hockey.

"I look up to Connor McDavid (from the Edmonton Oilers)," said Opikokew who was also the captain of Team Canoe Lake.

The FSIN youth hockey tournament gave athletes such as Whitehawk and Opikokew a memorable experience to take home.

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