

# Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

## Jacksons making hay with clay

By Mike Gosselin  
For Eagle Feather News

**M**elanie and Dennis Jackson recently added to their impressive collection of honors. The husband and wife production team were recipients of the 2009 National Aboriginal Achievement Award for the Arts and the experience is one they will remember for a long time.



The husband and wife team of Dennis and Melanie Jackson have added a National Aboriginal Achievement Award to their collection. They were honoured for their work on Wapos Bay. (Photo by Mike Gosselin)

“It was absolutely amazing,” said Melanie. “They treated us like royalty,” added Dennis. And rightfully so.

Their animated series Wapos Bay is currently in production on its third season and has already won three Gemini Awards – making them one of the most successful Aboriginal production teams in Canada.

“Any honour we receive is also a reflection of the hard work of everyone involved,” said the ever-humble Dennis. But one must give credit where it’s due. The Jackson’s success is due in large part to their ability to tell good stories about community, life lessons and First Nations culture in the twenty-first century.

They are also firm believers in the family unit and bring that quality to Wapos Bay.

“It’s humbling to know we’re a part of a history that’s preserving our people for the grandchildren we now have, our great-grandchildren and other people’s

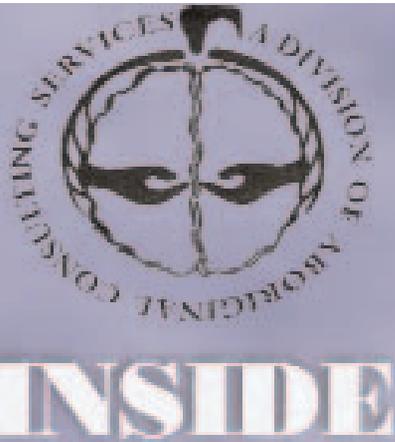
grandchildren that want to know more about where they came from,” Melanie said on their vignette for the broadcast.

Melanie went on to say the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards recognition means the world to her because she gets to share it with Dennis, “her best friend.” This caused the awards show audience to gush with admiration.

After a few awkward seconds, Dennis realized he needed to respond. He looked into the camera and with serious look on his face said: “I agree.”

Needless to say, husbands coast to coast were more than proud.

“I thought they were going to edit that out,” Melanie said with a chuckle from the set of Wapos Bay recently. And as they joked about it, it was obvious Dennis and Melanie Jackson laugh together often. Probably just another reason for their success.



**SOONIAS AT THE HELM**  
Dana Soonias has been named the new CEO of Wanuskewin Heritage Park.

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**SHE'S LISTENING**  
Christine Tell is developing a new strategy for arts, culture and heritage.

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A recent conference stressed the importance of protecting Aboriginal language.

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**SIMON SAYS**  
Patrick Bird plays bad guy Simon Blackhorse on Rabbit Fall.

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**TURNING TO SPORTS**  
Calvin Bird has had his ups and downs but now he's found a new lease on life through sports.

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Welcome to our  
Arts & Entertainment, Education & Training Edition  
Coming In May:  
Sports & Youth  
CPMA #40027204

# New Wanuskewin Park CEO takes the helm

By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News

The press conference was called for the federal government to announce a \$2.2 million dollar commitment to the Wanuskewin Heritage Park, but the star of the show was the newly announced chief executive officer Dana Soonias.

Located just three kilometers north of Saskatoon, Wanuskewin is a designated place of national and provincial historic significance. Its heritage value resides in a unique and outstanding collection of archaeological sites including tipi rings, a medicine wheel, and several campsites demonstrating that First Nations have gathered here for more than 6,000 years.

Wanuskewin Heritage Park is a flagship tourist destination for the province and one of the top 30 Aboriginal heritage sites in Canada.

Unfortunately, the Park has been fraught with turmoil, high turnover, debt, poor community relations and an expansion that was halted due to lack of money.

After 14 months under interim CEO Pat Lorje, who stabilized the organization, the Wanuskewin board hired Soonias, making him the first Cree person to run the Park.



Dana Soonias was recently introduced as the new CEO of Wanuskewin Heritage Park near Saskatoon.  
(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

In an emotional speech, Soonias accepted the challenge of the job ahead of him with pride and determination.

"Those were tears of joy up there believe me," Soonias told the media.

"It is an emotional day for me. I was thinking of the history, the culture, and the people. It all overwhelmed me. My father passed away last year. My family is here. It is a big day for everyone and to be the first First Nation person to be the CEO is an

honour and very humbling. This is a great day."

James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, announced the funding for Wanuskewin Heritage Park Authority for its building renewal project. The \$2.2 million brings the Park out of debt. The construction costs were covered by the provincial government a few months ago, so Soonias has a blank slate to work with.

"Yes there has been trouble here in the

past," said Soonias, a Certified Aboriginal Financial Manager who was previously employed at SIEF and by the Saskatchewan Credit Unions.

"The Elders have challenged us to restore the glory of Wanuskewin. We have to create financial integrity, but there are lots of positives here. We have a great core staff and once these renovations are done, we will be back up and running."

Soonias added that their partnership with the City has been strengthened and that the University of Saskatchewan, a big investor in the creation of the Park, is also going to be doing their archaeology exhibits and displays soon.

"We want to bring the Park back up to where it was and where it should be in the future and we want to be a great partner. I received a Treaty Medal today. The Treaties brought our two nations together. It is significant that way," said Soonias.

When questioned if he was apprehensive about taking this profile job in an organization that has had a rough couple years he was pragmatic.

"A bit worried, but there are so many positives and potential it erases all worry. I am happy to be here. There are so many community partners that want this to go forward. I can't wait to get things going."

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## Editorial

### Wanuskewin, we missed you

**O**ur culture is at the root of everything we do. Culture is behind every single old tyme Métis fiddle tune that Johnny Arcand creates. It is in every painting that Ernie Scoles creates. It is in our languages whether they are Cree, Michif, Dene or Anishinabe.

The importance of culture and the opportunity to foster it struck home recently at Wanuskewin Heritage Park when they introduced their new CEO Dana Soonias.

As he took the podium to explain the integrity and vision he intends to bring to the Park, he was overwhelmed with emotion. He struggled at first, holding back the tears but he soldiered on and inspired the crowd with his words.

Tears of joy, he explained afterward. It was at the podium that he realized the magnitude of the day, of his job and the responsibility that the humble place called Wanuskewin has in preserving and enhancing Aboriginal language, ceremony and culture. He knows the government did a darn good job of trying to erase our culture and impose their own, but due to our persistence and the strength of the old people at the time, the culture has survived. The time has come now when we are seeing our culture thrive.

The two year hiatus of services at Wanuskewin made our community realize how much we need and miss that place. That connection to the land underneath. The peace. The bison burgers.

One of the knocks against Wanuskewin was the static displays of twigs, deer and some birch bark. That will all change with the area for temporary displays and with any luck, a display of fine First Nation regalia, crafts and heritage items.

It has been made public that the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre and Wanuskewin are exploring the idea of getting together and creating a Keeping House at Wanuskewin that would hold all of the SICC's collection of art, regalia and history. If you have never seen the collection, you are missing out. It is vast, diverse and beautiful.

There has also been a relationship building between provincial Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport Christine Tell and the FSIN Vice Chief Lyle Whitefish and MN-S President Robert Doucette.

This makes for some interesting speculation on what good things may be in store for the Aboriginal community and Wanuskewin in particular.

One theme that emerged from the provincial dialogues with First Nation and Métis people on arts, culture and heritage was the importance of repatriation of sacred and ceremonial objects. Perhaps if Wanuskewin and the SICC get together to create this Keeping House, maybe the province chips in by agreeing to donate, share or even give back in perpetuity any First Nation and Métis artifacts that it holds in the Royal Saskatchewan Museum.

That would be an excellent show of good faith in the relationship and would be very much welcomed by the community and would make Wanuskewin even that much more of a must see centre for tourists around the world.

Dana Soonias has his hands full, but he would have it no other way. Wanuskewin, though it will not open for another couple months, has never been in better shape. Pat Lorje, the interim CEO for the past 14 months did a good job settling the debt, arranging money for the future and helped find their CEO, the first Cree person to run the place.

The cultural, kitchen and administration staff are ready to go and the building looks to be beautiful, even as it takes a new form.

Welcome back Wanuskewin. We missed you.

# Readers Forum



## To nuke or not to nuke, that is the burning question

One of the most pressing environmental issues in Saskatchewan these days is the question of whether or not we should welcome a nuclear power plant into our territory, most likely in the Prince Albert area.

Many Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan are employed in the uranium industry. Many people in the North make a good living in uranium mines and or participate in subcontracting work to support that industry. But does this naturally translate into support to build a power plant? Not necessarily.

This province has been divided for decades on the nuclear question already refusing one plant and protesting any more. The complaints are that it is dirty, dangerous and the waste from these plants last for thousands of years and poisons the water. Add on top of that the usual cost over-runs to build these billion dollar plants, costs that often become the burden of taxpayers for generations to come.

But then, there are groups out there that insist that nuclear plants have come a long way and is actually a clean source of power. Go look at the Bruce Power website and it looks like a grass company website it is so green. Nuclear power is obviously cleaner than coal, which we rely on heavily right now so why not go forward?

Environmentalists say we should invest in hydro, or solar or wind farms, but the technolo-

gy on wind and solar plants is still behind, expensive and sometimes there is no wind or sun. And for a dam, you have to find a river suitable and a big pile of money to build it.

What a dilemma.

To explore the issue further, we will have a for and against battle in the May edition of Eagle Feather News. One columnist will explain why we would be crazy to welcome the nukes and one will argue that we are crazy not to go nuclear.

It is a fitting edition to have this debate as the main focus of our May paper is youth, the people who will be living with the choice we make on this huge environmental decision facing our people.

We also want to hear from you in an informal poll. Send you vote in on whether or not you want nuclear power in Saskatchewan. We will supply a tally on our informal poll, print the best letters and post the rest on our website to stimulate the debate. We look forward to your input.

The best letter will receive a grocery gift card for \$25 and four free passes to the Roxy Theatre in Saskatoon.

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# Thanks to the creative visionaries in our midst

I was raised by and among artists, surrounded by them my whole life. Despite these wonderful influences I matured into a nerd. With little understanding of the creative process and lacking the skills of an art critic, all I know about art is how deeply and powerfully it can impact our understanding, outlook, and our lives.

Our late mother began her career in radio broadcasting in the early 1950s as a disc jockey for CFHC, CBC's northern services radio station in Churchill, Manitoba. Her love of music blossomed and we grew up with the folk music of Willie Dunn, Winston Wuttunee, Floyd Westerman, Buffy St. Marie, and the traditional music of Paul Ortega, Rocky Boy, Poundmaker, various flute players and Saami singers.

Mom collected the LP records of every new contemporary musician that popped up on the scene in the 1970s – Shannon Two Feathers, Redbone, Xit and others. Her Indian music collection fit in real well next to Elvis Presley, the Platters, Chubby Checker, Kris Kristofferson and Rita Coolidge. By the time I was five I was dancing the “cha cha cha” on aunty Marji's coffee table and old time shawl dancing in the living room.

Working at CBC Radio's Our Native Land, our mom kept up with cultural affairs across the country. She interviewed almost every Native artist around in the 1970s and since she was a single parent the arts played a big role in our lives. We were dragged to coffeehouse concerts, concerts in the park, book launches and readings, art galleries, and traditional pow wows in “the Valley.”

Our home was filled with framed and unframed sketches, paintings and crafts our mother collected on her journeys. And struggling artists knew they could count on her to buy a piece or two when times were rough.

The first play she took me to was “The Ecstasy of Rita Joe” and from then on Mom's love for the theatre became her passion. She first stepped foot on the stage in April 1983, at the Warehouse Theatre in Winnipeg playing the role of “Ida” in “Climate of the Times.”

Was she ever nervous, but she loved it. From there she played dual roles as Mrs. Dube and Miriam Silver in “Selkirk

Avenue” (Winnipeg, Thunder Bay), in “Ernie” (Yellowknife), four different productions of “The Rez Sisters” as Pelajia Patchnose and Philomena Moosetail (Calgary, Kelowna, London, Saskatoon), and as Anne Wabung in three productions of “Someday” (Montreal,

Thunder Bay, Regina).

Our mother also dabbled in a few film productions – “Muskapitoon,” “The Wake” (written by her son Jordan Wheeler), “The Gathering Geese,” “Honey Moccasin,” “Big Bear,” and did a few on screen narrations like Aunt Anne in “Christmas at Wapoose Bay.” As much as she enjoyed film she always said that it was on the stage where she felt alive with the audience.

She gave up a lucrative career in journalism to live a life of poverty in the arts. Around the same time she left journalism she also became a more vocal community activist. She explained that a political movement is empty without

its creative visionaries.

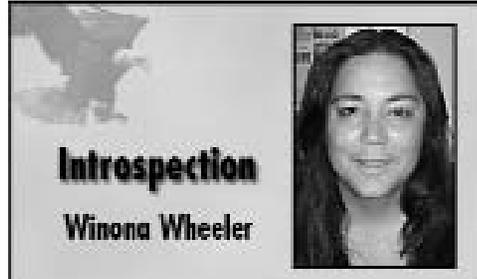
Artistic creations impact people at a deep emotional and spiritual level. Political speeches are empty, lacking spirit, but when the voices of the people are expressed through song, dance, performance, literature and the visual arts, they come alive in ways that deeply affect us.

Modern day artists are strong links and mediators between the past and present because their spirits move freely between the old and the new. They remind us of our past, reflect the realities of our present, revitalize our dignity and pride, and express our collective aspirations for the future.

I still have a few pieces of our late mother's art collections, her library, her old LP record collection, and the posters from the many theatre productions she was in.

These have become family heirlooms, reminding us of the passion she had for the creative arts, and the hopes she had for our futures.

To all the creative visionaries out there whose artistic renditions empower us forward, and to the dreamers who inspire and give us hope for the future, thank you.



## CUMFI, One Arrow strengthen Saskatoon's inner city

Saskatchewan Social Services Minister Donna Harpauer was in Saskatoon recently to help officially open two affordable housing projects in the Pleasant Hill area. The apartments are five blocks apart and unique in that they are owned by Aboriginal groups. The freshly renovated spaces will bring welcome relief for many families caught in the current housing crunch.

Harpauer had close to a million dollars for Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI) to purchase an apartment building located at 103 Avenue T South. The affordable rental project will provide five two-bedroom and seven one-bedroom suites in an building adjacent to three other apartments already owned and operated by CUMFI.

“We are pleased to announce that our CUMFI corner is complete,” CUMFI president Shirley Isbister said. “The addition of this fourth building will allow us the opportunity to provide the appropriate resources and support to families in a caring community environment. Children who are in foster care will be reunited with their mothers to live together as a cohesive family unit.”

This will be the second site of the ‘Coming Home’ program, a community partnership with CUMFI which provides women with children in foster care the opportunity to co-parent with a mentor mom and obtain assistance from the Ministry of Social Services where necessary.

“Our government remains focused on providing families with the opportunity to raise their children within the family home where possible,” Social Services Minister Donna Harpauer said.

“This project will help women and their families build better lives for themselves, and to work toward economic independence and active involvement in their community.”

Further east on 21st Street, Harpauer cut the ribbon on an apartment building to be owned by One Arrow First



Shirley Isbister welcomed the guests to the official opening of the newest CUMFI affordable housing unit. Looking on are Louise Oelke, MN-S Senator Elder Mike Maurice, Social Services Minister Donna Harpauer, Saskatoon Mayor Don Atchison and MP Kelly Block. (Photo by Marcel Petit)

Nation. Fifteen families and individuals now have a place they can call home, a block away from the bustling Fire Creek Gas Bar also owned by One Arrow.

“Meeting the housing needs of Saskatchewan people is a commitment that our government takes very seriously,” Harpauer said.

“Affordable, good quality housing is an important part of the supports that must be in place to ensure that all Saskatchewan families benefit from our prosperous economy.”

The total cost of the CUMFI project is estimated to be

about \$1.2 million. Of that amount, the Province of Saskatchewan, through Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, contributed \$924,000. The Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy provided \$206,000, with the City of Saskatoon adding \$125,000.

The province, through Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, contributed \$891,000 toward the total One Arrow project cost of \$1.1 million, with the remainder provided by the One Arrow First Nation (\$90,000 in equity and \$35,000 in-kind contributions) and the City of Saskatoon (\$99,000).

## Strange tales heard in passing

A school teacher not knowing the spiritual nature of Indian names thought it would be wonderful if some First Nation Elder would come to her class and give her students Indian names.

She made her enquiries and was referred to a local character known for his off the wall sense of humour. He readily agreed saying he would be honoured to name the students.

The big day came. The man arrived, spoke at length, then called the students forward one at a time. In a solemn voice he spoke to the first student, "Your name from this day forward shall be Bingo Dabber. You, young lady, shall be called Fish Lips and you, young man, shall be known as Dodge Dakota." Her students started giggling and the teachers face turned rosy red.

The class room echoed with laughter as a series of silly names was given out. There was Hockey Puck, Windshield Wiper, Running Nose, Droopy Diaper, Piggy Puff and Wonder Bread. When class was over and the last of the giggling kids had left, the frustrated teacher reluctantly gave him his honorarium. She asked, "Who are you?" He replied, "Just some drunk."

In northern Ontario, an Ojibwa with a strange sense of humour and too much time on his hands submitted a small business proposal to the federal government. He wanted to start his own roadside tourist attraction.

His research indicated most people were far more interested in dead Indians than the living. It made good business sense, therefore, to sell tourists access to a genuine ancient Indian burial ground. The only hitch was there were no ancient Indian burial grounds around his reserve so he would have to build his own. For the paltry sum of \$87 he would purchase rubber boots and bury them with the toes sticking out of the ground.

He believed he could make enough to provide for his family without the hassle of ghosts pestering him should he use a real burial ground. It is unknown what became of his proposal.

There was a First Nation councillor from a place best unsaid who was scared silly of flying. Despite being given an airplane ticket, he instead took a bus to attend an AFN Conference. At the close of the conference he got roaring drunk and was hauled aboard an Air Canada flight by his people. He passed out in his seat but woke up mid-flight.

"Hey, this place is getting boring, let's go to another bar," he mumbled as he staggered down the aisle intending to leave. The plane erupted in laughter as his embarrassed friends returned the bewildered drunk back to his seat.

An anthropologist intent upon learning the sacred traditions of the plains Indians wound up on a First Nation in Western Canada. He was directed to the home of an esteemed local Elder.

"I have come to learn from you," the academic said as he presented his tobacco.

"You will learn something," the Elder replied.

The academic was put to work hauling water, rocks and wood. This went on for some time. The frustrated anthropologist confronted the Elder.

"I have been here for some time now and I have learned nothing. When will I learn something?" he asked.

"Tomorrow," the Elder replied.



Common Ground

John Cuthand

The next day they went to town. The anthro was accompanied by his young son. Their walk took them past a bar where a drunk was begging for spare change. The anthro was approached by the drunk who asked if he had any money he could give him.

"I don't have any money," the man replied despite having a wallet with money in it.

"That's too bad and I see you have a young son," the drunk replied as he gave the anthropologist a grubby wrinkled up five dollar bill. "Here buy him something to eat."

The Elder asked the anthro, "Did you learn anything?" The anthro simply nodded.

True story. One year my cousin and I were butchering a cow and preparing the cuts for the freezer. He cut the meat. I wrapped and wrote on packages what kind of meat it was - steak, ribs, pot roast, etc.

Along comes one of our old Elders for a visit. He asks us what we're doing. He offers to help. My cousin cuts, I wrap and the old man writes on the package what kind of meat it is. Our work is soon done. The meat is in the freezer and the Elder goes on his way.

A few days later it's time to get some stewing beef. We go to the freezer and find the old man had written "all good meat" on all the packages.

This friend tells me about the first time he built a sweat lodge. He said a friend of his asked him to help him build one. So they go outside of Edmonton. They are out in a pasture with some horses bending the willows.

This friend thought it was strange this man was building a sweat lodge because he never known him to have much interest in spiritual matters. My friend said he asked him how long he had been conducting sweats.

This person said he had never run a lodge nor had it been given to him to do so but wanted to try it on his own anyway. Monkey sees monkey do kind of thing.

"How was the sweat?" I asked my friend. He said it didn't happen because just when they finished making the lodge a horse came over and sat on it squishing it beyond repair.

"Someone should thank the horse," I said.



### Message from the Minister

As Pow wow season begins, I wish everyone travelling a safe journey. Pow wows are an ideal way to show our children and the world the resiliency and striking beauty of First Nations traditions and culture.

**Honourable June Draude**  
Minister of First Nations  
and Métis Relations



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# Cancer doesn't get to dictate how we live our lives

**D**id you know that April is cancer month? Cancer has been in my family so long that I have decided to call 'cancer' my cousin. Kind of like the cousin who comes for a short visit and never leaves.

I faced my own battle with the disease nine years ago and I'm happy to report that I am in remission. My biggest fear is that the cancer will come back. For that reason I call myself a breast cancer warrior because I know that cancer is not finished with me or my family.

Throughout the years I have tried to make sense of this disease. Cancer has taken so many in my family including children. It's so frustrating – I am not a doctor or scientist that can find a cure for cancer, but I am a warrior and I felt the need to do whatever I could to fight this disease, so I began educating myself.

The more I learned about cancer the less I feared it. I learned to enjoy my time here and work hard at sharing my love of life with everyone I meet. I learned to treat others with kindness because it feels good and I like feeling good.

I realize that I may never know why cancer has touched our family to the extent that it has, and that's okay. I will not live my life waiting for cancer to knock on my door again. Instead I take every opportunity to talk with Aboriginal people about my battle with cancer and hopefully ease some of their concerns with regards to this disease.

People are funny creatures; we often focus on negative things and spend little or no time enjoying life and all the gifts we receive in a day. The best advice I received was from my Auntie who told me, "You don't just lie down and die! You get up and fight!"

Ironically, Auntie was recently diagnosed with inoperable cancer, and while the family tries to deal with this information we find out that her husband also has cancer – what the f\*%!@!

They have been married for 57 years and it appears that they are going to leave this world together. They have been the rocks in our family, the people we turn to for guidance. It is difficult to imagine a world without them in it.

Upon hearing the news, the family held a fundraiser for them so that they could spend what time they have left doing things they like doing such as travelling, visiting, gambling, and shopping.

It was a great opportunity for friends and family to honour them and let them know how much we love and

appreciate everything they have done for us over the years. They have weathered many storms in their lives but they never forgot to enjoy the dance.



It was great watching them dance the night away.

All I can think of now is spending time visiting with them; listening to the stories, eating Auntie's bannock and watching Uncle putter around the house. I am once again reminded to enjoy the time we have here because it seems no matter how long we live it's never going to be enough time. When I was first diagnosed I made myself a 'bucket list' - this list is things I want to do before I leave this world.

I was going to parachute out of a plane, bungee jump over a river, and write a book, to name a few. I never did those things and have since removed them from my list (too crazy). As the years went by I have adjusted my list to include things such as spending time playing with the kids, teaching my daughters how to make bannock, making good memories with the grandkids and, most importantly, being kind to others.

There will always be a 'cancer' in our lives but it doesn't get to dictate how we live our lives – we have the power to choose where to focus our time and energy and it is not going to be on cancer.

Take control of your health and make an appointment for a complete check-up with your physician.

When you notice something different with your body – tell someone and do something about it.

Cancer can be beaten. I and many others are living proof. The trick is to catch it early.

If you are currently dealing with a cancer diagnosis there is help out there. Contact your local cancer agency and ask for any information they may have specific to the type of cancer you have.

Consider attending conferences like the Canadian Cancer Society's Living with Cancer Conference April 25 in Regina.

Thank you for your letters and emails. You can write to me at [s.ahenakew@yahoo.ca](mailto:s.ahenakew@yahoo.ca) or Sandee Sez C/O Eagle Feather News P.O. Box 924 ST Main, Saskatoon, SK. S7K 3M4.



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- MRI Technologists
- Combined Laboratory and X-ray Technicians
- Cytologists
- Physical, Occupational and Respiratory Therapists
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- Dental Therapists
- Social Workers (Clinical) (Graduate Degree)

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*Note: Different deadlines apply for other disciplines.*

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For more information, e-mail [bursary@health.gov.sk.ca](mailto:bursary@health.gov.sk.ca) or call (306) 787-7955

# Duty to consult evolving in Canada

“We will talk to you” has been the heart of Aboriginal policy in Canada since at least the 1880s.

I recall reading a letter from Prime Minister John A. Macdonald to an official in the West explaining what should be the true response to demands by some starving Métis around Swift Current: “Tell them to send representatives to Ottawa (we will pay their expenses).” This policy can be followed ‘until such time as the present effervescence subsides...’

The policy of talking to people whose interests and rights are being overlooked or destroyed has worked well for the government, and now the courts are turning a policy that has been applied only sporadically as political ‘effervescence’ requires, into a legal obligation. Here only the briefest overview of the legal duty to consult may be given, and that will be wrapped up in my own commentary.

Canadians, being very deferential to authority and authority figures and symbols, often refer to government by its formal symbolic British name of ‘the Crown’ and thereby affirm the idea that justice and law has its source not in the people but in higher authority.

‘The Crown’ simply means those ordinary people who act on behalf of

governments, whether provincial or federal.

The law on the ‘duty to consult’ is not fully developed and what exists offers only a rough guide and not a check list of things to do.

The Supreme Court of Canada has started to develop, in the few cases decided so far, the idea of ‘honour of the Crown’ as a device

to require governments to pay attention to the interests and rights of Aboriginal people when any action is contemplated that might interfere with or damage aboriginal or treaty rights.

Such rights are protected by the Constitution and must be respected and balanced against the interests of all Canadians. The process is one of ‘reconciliation’ between competing interests and rights.

The actions that may reasonably be expected to affect aboriginal or treaty rights are often initiated or carried out by private parties such as mining or forestry companies acting under licence from governments. These companies do not have the duty to consult; that is a duty that binds governments although governments may require companies that seek

a licence or approval for a project, to look after procedural aspects of consultations.

First Nations and Métis people do not have to prove their aboriginal or treaty rights in court for the duty to arise.

The duty exists when the government has knowledge of the potential existence of an aboriginal or treaty right and contemplates conduct which may

detrimentally affect the potential right. Aside from the description of rights and interests in claims that may be made to governments by Métis and First Nation groups, it might be noted that governments have knowledge of all lower court decisions on First Nation and Métis rights. Governments cannot argue that there is no potential right where a court has found a right to exist.

The duty to consult arises even without a strong case for the existence of a right. The government must inform itself of the impact of the proposed actions on the exercise of the rights and inform the Aboriginal people affected. If consultations reveal a significant impact then the issue of accommodation arises.

Depending on the facts of each case, action may have to be taken to avoid or

minimize the impact of the actions on the rights or interests at stake. There is no legal requirement that the Aboriginal people agree to the measures to be taken as accommodation. And there is no checklist of things to do. Given the official recognition of aboriginal and treaty rights across the Prairies and the significance of natural resource enterprises one might have expected a blizzard of litigation on the duty to consult.

The Supreme Court has said that consent may be required in some cases, but that is not the law now. Consent is a powerful idea. It is at the heart of the international standard now in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples under ‘free, prior and informed consent’.

Consent is also the foundation of constitutional legitimacy and it is arguable that the Métis Nation and each First Nation ‘people’ can require the federal government to negotiate a constitutional ‘new deal’ in its absence. That is a bigger and more ambitious ‘duty to negotiate’ the place of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. It can be another lever for political action.

Can court actions provide the continuing ‘effervescence’ necessary to overturn historic policy and require governments to pay continuing attention to our rights and interests?



## SHUTTERBUGS

Photographers Marcel Petit and Angela Mae Edmunds check out some of their work on the walls at the Paved Art Gallery on 20th St. West in Saskatoon during their official opening on Friday, April 3. For the past 11 months, they have been traveling regularly to Cumberland House to document a group of Grade 10 students who are building an energy efficient home. The footage from that will form the documentary “The Pisim Project,” which is set to be launched this fall. Petit and Edmunds also took many photographs of their trips to Cumberland House, and those photos now form the exhibit “Our Eyes: Cumberland House, SK.” Both photographers say they’ve realized there is more to the community than meets the eye. The exhibit features shots of the surrounding land, buildings, and structures that make up the northern village of Cumberland House but perhaps from a different angle or a different way than a person would usually see them. The exhibit runs until April 24.

## It’s time to nominate a deserving youth

The 2008 SaskTel Youth Award recipient for Fine Arts/Performing Arts was Dallas Fiddler. Fiddler has gone on to graduate from E.D. Feehan High School in Saskatoon and is still a force at community events when he pulls out his fiddle.

At a young age Fiddler took pride in his Métis heritage after hearing fiddle music at Back to Batoche days when he was a boy and he decided that he wanted to play traditional Métis fiddle and old time fiddle tunes.

At the age of nine he began taking lessons and a few years later he decided to teach himself and he is currently taking lessons from John Arcand, the Master of the Métis Fiddle.

If you know a young person like Dallas who is deserving of being honoured, it is time to get your nominations in for the 2009 SaskTel Aboriginal Youth Awards of Excellence.

Colleen Cameron, chair of the Awards, is looking forward to this year’s event, and to meeting more youth.

“We do follow the progress of our past award recipients and nominees and we are very proud to see many of them have gone on to reach the goals they set for themselves,” said Cameron.

This year’s event will be at TCU place in Saskatoon on May 22 and a big draw every year is the entertainment.

“Our entertainment is based on the nominees who are nominated in the Performing/Fine Arts Category. We always have amazing talent who are nominated and we look forward to this year’s nominees. In the past we had Dallas Fiddler play fiddle music and the crowd loved it,” said Cameron. “We have also had many other amazing young talents perform for us whether it is dance, song, piano or an Elvis impersonator. This is an exciting part of the show.”

For information on the SaskTel Aboriginal Youth Awards, go to [www.sasktel.com](http://www.sasktel.com) or call toll free 1-866-931-6205



Dallas Boyer was a 2008 SaskTel Youth Award winner.

# Duty to Consult process rocky despite Province's optimism

By Warren Goulding  
Of Eagle Feather News

The very phrase: duty to consult, conjures up suggestions of conflict or some onerous responsibility that will be met with a vigorous challenge if the participants are not mindful of the requirements.

And while the concept of 'duty to consult' has edged its way into the forefront in government, Aboriginal and business realms, it need not be a burden, believes Saskatchewan's Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations.

"Our premier has said, and our government believes, that it's not just a duty but an opportunity to see that First Nations and Métis people are involved in the province," June Draude said in a recent interview with Eagle Feather News.

The general principles of the duty to consult and accommodate were laid out in 2004 and 2005 by the Supreme Court of Canada in the Haida, Taku River and Mikisew Cree decisions. The law is clear that the duty to consult is founded upon the honour of the Crown which requires that the Crown consult with and, if

Other Supreme Court decisions have arisen from Section 35 of The Constitution Act of 1982, the section recognizing the rights of aboriginal peoples in Canada.

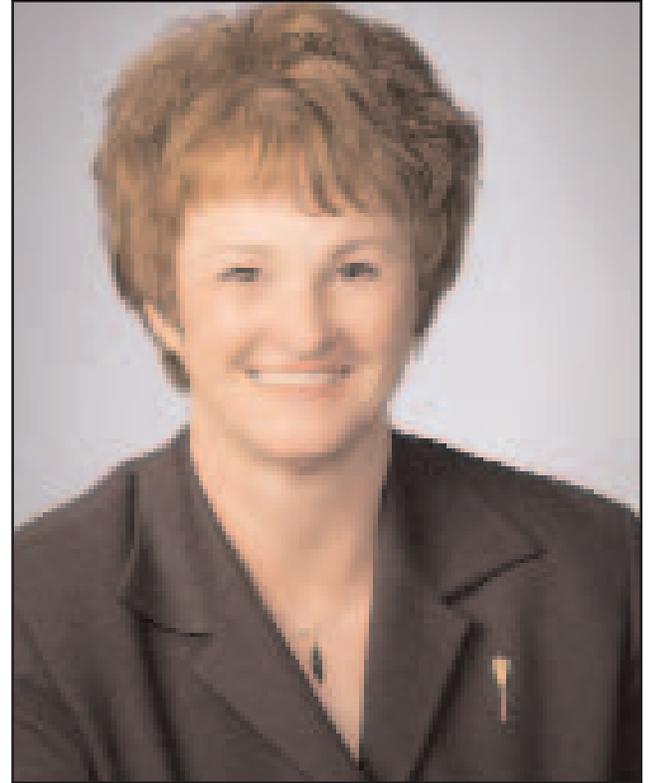
Legal scholar and Eagle Feather News columnist Paul Chartrand offers this explanation of the process.

"First Nations and Métis people do not have to prove their aboriginal or treaty rights in court for the duty to arise ... aside from the description of rights and interests in claims that may be made to governments by Métis and First Nation groups, it might be noted that governments have knowledge of all lower court decisions on First Nation and Métis rights," Chartrand says.

"Governments cannot argue that there is no potential right where a court has found a right to exist.

"The duty to consult arises even without a strong case for the existence of a right. The government must inform itself of the impact of the proposed actions on the exercise of the rights and inform the Aboriginal people affected. If consultations reveal a significant impact then the issue of accommodation arises."

Despite the legal duty that has been established by numerous Supreme Court rulings, conflict has arisen, perhaps most notably for Saskatchewan, when a



**First Nations and Métis Relations Minister June Draude believes the Duty to Consult concept is alive and well in Saskatchewan.**

that blockade was a protest against a private company and government.

"Treaty First Nations have become increasingly frustrated with the lack of meaningful consultation between government and absence of accommodation by Industry," Okanee wrote in a report for Thunderchild.

Enbridge Pipelines is in the process of constructing a pipeline that runs through Traditional Territory and that project has drawn the ire of Chiefs from Treaty 6 and Treaty 4 First Nations. Despite strenuous objections from Thunderchild, the National Energy Board (NEB) ruled in favour of Enbridge and refused to put a halt to construction of the pipeline stating the company had met the conditions of their license.

"Thunderchild views Enbridge's actions, the Provincial Crown's failure to recognize the duty to consult on private land, and the ruling of the NEB as infringements to our Treaty and Aboriginal Rights," Okanee said.

"More development is planned in the near future on our Traditional Territory," adds Okanee. "The Bruce Power Co. plans to build a nuclear power plant in an area between Lloydminster and Prince Albert using the North Saskatchewan River as a water source. Other projects that are planned include the High Gate Dam west of the Battlefords, and another pipeline by Trans Canada Pipeline called the Keystone Project.

"The Chief and council and the (Thunderchild First Nation) Duty to Consult Office will protect our Aboriginal and Treaty Rights and will call for meaningful consultation on these proposed projects," Okanee says.

• Continued on Page 10



**Discussions held earlier this year may have got the ball rolling but it is clear much work remains to be done on the issue of Duty to Consult.**

required, accommodate the interests of Aboriginal peoples when it has knowledge of the potential existence of an Aboriginal treaty right and contemplates conduct that might adversely affect it.

blockade was set up in the Kerrobert area in October of 2008.

Eldon Okanee, who prepared a report for Thunderchild First Nation on the subject of duty to consult, says



Remember...  
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Take care out there.

# This isn't consultation, it's the elimination of Métis/Indigenous rights, MN-S charges

## • Continued from Page 9

Despite this apparent hiccup looming on the horizon Draude remains confident a new era of co-operation and relationship building is occurring in Saskatchewan.

"For many years there was a relationship that went on around the First Nations and Métis communities and there wasn't enough involvement, not as much of a relationship as there should have been," Draude suggests.

"In the last couple of decades there has been a far greater relationship and understanding of working together."

The Supreme Court decisions simply strengthened the resolve for all parties to work together, Draude believes.

"After the Supreme Court made some of their rulings, First Nations and Métis saw that is not just something that should happen, it is a duty to have it happen."

However, following consultations earlier this year involving the Province, the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, it is obvious that not all is well in the Aboriginal community and there is much work to be done.

MN-S President Robert Doucette took issue with the draft of the Province's Duty to Consult Framework presented in December.

"The proposed Provincial Policy is completely contrary to the Supreme Court of Canada decisions on the Duty to Consult. The Supreme Court states that Aboriginal Peoples are to be consulted when there is a potential infringement of Aboriginal Rights," reminds Doucette.

"The Province, through their new policy, is essentially dictating that they will decide when and how the Métis will be consulted. To make matters worse the policy says they have the final word. This isn't consultation, it's the elimination of Métis/Indigenous Rights."

"We need to come together in a manner that satisfies the interests of all parties including the Métis citizens of this Province. Meaningful dialogue and a satisfactory resolution of concerns will provide certainty in the resources sector, economic stability for the Province and the inclusion of Métis citizens as a growth sector of the economic mainstream," said Doucette.

Reaction from First Nations leader-

ship was equally negative. The FSIN and its 74 First Nations unanimously rejected the Province's Consultation Policy Framework, saying they are calling for resource revenue sharing, a meaningful consultation and accommodation process in order for First Nation communities to close the gap on poverty and realize a better quality of life for their First Nations.

"The Chiefs' message is crystal clear: we are not anti-development, we are not anti-business. We want development that is economically and environmentally sustainable," says Vice-Chief Delbert Wapass.

"The Chiefs want healthy prosperous communities. The province's consultation policy framework undermines those objectives and will create uncertainty and instability in the Saskatchewan economy."



FSIN Vice-Chief Delbert Wapass.

Wapass says some of the problems with the government's Consultation Policy include dictating deadlines and priorities, the exclusion of First Nations in the issuance of exploration and mining permits and passing off its legal responsibilities for consultation and accommodation to industry.

"When the government passes off its responsibility to industry it creates a situation that is ripe for conflict. We don't want that," says Vice-Chief Wapass.

"Saskatchewan says it will tell us what is sacred, what is cultural, what is traditional. First Nations must sit back and let government decide. We have had decades of that already, and that plan hasn't worked."

Draude, who postponed an earlier February deadline for a formal response from the FSIN and MN-S, remains upbeat

despite the skepticism that she has heard.

"There is a number of bands and tribal councils, Meadow Lake Tribal Council, for example has been working with the opportunities that have been presented to them with natural resources and their location.

"They have great businesses going on, it's providing an economic opportunity for their people and they have a real interest from their Chief to improve some of the education outcomes for their people on-reserve," Draude says.

Despite some of the adverse reaction, the minister says Saskatchewan is on the right track and the future is bright.

"My dream and the vision of our government is that this is what the Supreme Court had envisioned when it came to say there is a duty here but it's really a duty to build a relationship, so we can change that history. It's going to change the fabric of our society," she predicts.

"When we look back, and ask what was the impetus, it could be this ruling, but it could be seen as something that is positive.

"I think we are in the middle of making important changes in history."



MN-S President Robert Doucette says the Province is dictating how and when the Métis people in Saskatchewan will be consulted.



Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations

## The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN)

under the

Health and Social Development Secretariat (HSDS) Portfolio, administers the First Nation Addiction Rehabilitation Foundation (FNARF) program. The FNARF Board of Directors consists of Health and Social Development Commission Chiefs; the Saskatchewan First Nation Problem Gambling Technical Working Group (SFNPG-TWG) provides recommendations.

The mission of FNARF is to promote and maintain healthy lifestyles that enhance healthy individuals, families and communities. Also, to promote peoples well being through increasing use of social, emotional, spiritual and physical resources, and to provide cost effective, holistic alternatives to deal with problem gambling activity.

Every year First Nations communities across Saskatchewan participate in

## Problem Gambling Awareness Week. This year it is being held from May 3rd-9th, 2009.

There will be various activities held in First Nations communities across Saskatchewan to bring education and awareness of responsible gambling and problem gambling to youth, adults and older adults. Each community will have a different approach and different activities for all age groups to participate in. The overall goal is to raise awareness of the impacts that gambling can have on individuals, families and whole communities.

The activities will also provide an opportunity for individuals to learn about the signs of a gambling problem, the significance of traditional gambling activities and the services available if someone is seeking help.

Be sure to contact your community to see what activities are going on in your area.

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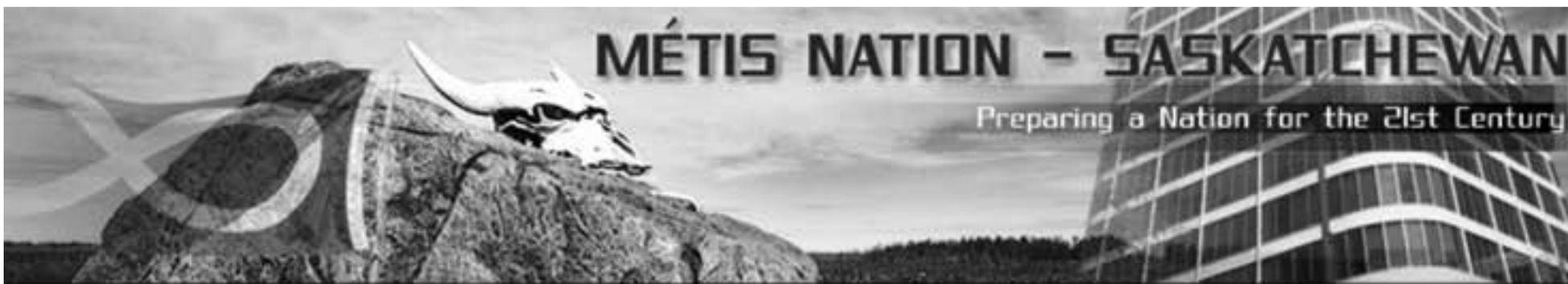
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## Saskatchewan Métis Concerned About Duty to Consult

Métis Citizens were present on March 14 - 15<sup>th</sup> for the Saskatchewan Métis Roundtable which focused on the Government of Canada's *Aboriginal Consultation and Accommodation - Interim Guidelines for Federal Officials to Fulfill the Legal Duty to Consult*. Roundtable delegates expressed concerns about the rush by both the Federal and Provincial Governments to implement Draft Duty to Consult and Accommodate policies without allowing Métis communities an opportunity to respond in a meaningful way.

There were over 145 attendees at the two-day conference including 60 returning delegates from the May 2008 Premiers Roundtable, the MN-S Senate, Elders and Métis citizens from across the Province. The returning delegates from the Premiers Roundtable were taking a second look at the Duty to Consult and Accommodate issue and grading the response from both the federal and provincial governments.

"We are being rushed to make decisions that impact on our Métis Rights," said, Robert Doucette, President of the Métis Nation - Saskatchewan. "The time frames are very restrictive on both the Federal and Provincial draft policies and both levels of government have not taken into consideration our own governance processes. It seems like they would like us to forego constitutional requirements to properly consult with our Métis citizens before providing a response."

The federal government has asked for a response by the end of April 2009. First Nations and Métis Relations released its draft *Government of Saskatchewan First Nation and Métis Consultation Policy Framework* on December 22, 2008 requesting a response by February 28, 2009, but have since extended the time frame to June 1, 2009.

The implementation of Duty to Consult and Accommodate policies by the Provincial and Federal Governments are in response to the 2004 Haida and Taku River Tlingit decisions passed by the Supreme Court of Canada. The court ruled that the Crown has an obligation to consult and accommodate Aboriginal interests when there are perceived impacts to Aboriginal Rights. Provincial government departments have tried to narrow the scope of the Supreme Court of Canada's decision and maintain a "business as usual" approach to land and resource development.

"We're not very impressed with the Federal Government's approach," said one delegate to Gregg Dahl, Senior Policy Analyst with the Office of the Federal Interlocutor. "They don't seem to take the Métis people seriously. We're not being provided financial capacity to deal with these issues, our Métis citizens are not being notified of developments, industry has been more responsive."

Dahl replied that he recognized there were issues, and that funding and capacity were concerns, but he did not have the authority to make commitments on behalf of the Federal Government.

Provincial Government representative



Métis Veterans stand at attention during the Métis national anthem at the Saskatchewan Métis Duty to Consult Roundtable meeting.

James Froh also received a frosty reception. Delegates grilled Froh with questions about specific projects and expressed concerns about the lack of financial capacity provided to address the Duty to Consult and Accommodate issue.

Delegates also noted that while there were invitations sent to both Minister Chuck Strahl of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and Minister June Drouin of First Nations and Métis Relations, both leaders chose only to send out their bureaucrats. Some of the delegates interpreted the Governments actions as a lack of respect and an unwillingness to engage on the issue.

Métis National Council President Clem Chartier also addressed the conference. Chartier reminded the delegates of the list of legal cases won in Saskatchewan, many of them related to harvesting. These cases, he said, form a foundation for the advancement of Métis Rights and could be expanded upon, but it would take years of litigation.

The Provincial Government only recognizes Métis Rights in communities where harvesting cases have been won. Only four of the twelve Métis regions are identified as having traditional Métis communities. Métis traditional territories and land use in southern Saskatchewan are not acknowledged. "I could be eighty years old by the time enough court cases are won to cover the Métis homeland," said Chartier.

Jason Madden, MN-S legal counsel, also disputed the Swiss cheese approach referring to it as pimples on a map. "We can expand on Belhumeur and Goodon," he said, referring to recent court cases that the Métis have won in Fort

Qu'Appelle and in southern Manitoba, "but it takes money and it takes time", he concluded.

Delegates also expressed concerns that many of the issues raised at the Premiers Roundtable in May of 2008 were not included in the Provincial draft policy on the Duty To Consult and Accommodate. In particular, there was a consensus that there was a need for adequate financial capacity at the local, regional and provincial levels to address the issues. Delegates also expressed the views that revenue sharing, mineral rights, and traditional land use mapping also needed incorporation into the policy.

"We need to develop our own Duty To Consult policy," suggested Calvin Roy, Local President for Green Lake, "we need to present it to the governments and industry and they need to work within our policy." The position that the Duty to Consult must be a "Nation to Nation" process was echoed by many roundtable attendees.

"It is time for both levels of government to realize that the MN-S is a distinct Nation that is recognized under Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution Act, and as such must be engaged in a respectful and meaningful way. The Métis citizens in Saskatchewan have many strengths which will add value to the development of this province. We are an important aspect that lends to the diversification of Saskatchewan and will continue to contribute to its prosperity", concluded Doucette.

Written by Duty to Consult Minister Robert Lafontaine after the Duty to Consult conference.



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# SaskCulture listening to the Aboriginal community

By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News

The Government of Saskatchewan has taken a huge step toward developing a new strategy for arts, culture and heritage that is very inclusive of First Nation and Métis people.

A survey was launched in August 2008 along with Reflections: A 30-Year Summary of Cultural Policy Discussions in Saskatchewan. The survey results show that creating a provincial cultural policy is a key first step; to value culture, people must be aware of it, have access to it and appreciate it; government ought to promote culture; stewardship and engaging our youth and Aboriginal people is important; culture is an essential tool for communities; there is a need for greater market access and support for creators; and organizations face capacity issues.

"We heard loud and clear from the arts, culture and heritage sector and we are using that information to develop a plan for a sustainable future," Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport Minister Christine Tell said.

"One of our next steps was to use the information to spark a second round of dialogue focusing on how to further strengthen Saskatchewan's already vibrant arts, culture and heritage community."

That dialogue included 13 meetings around the province. Two of those meetings were with First Nation and Métis people specifically. In order to begin the process in a good way, there was a pipe ceremony conducted at the legislative building in Regina.

"That was, I believe, the first time for a pipe ceremony in our building," said Tell. "Events like that foster understanding and I really appreciated how sacred it was for all of us."

At the first Aboriginal dialogue session, it was agreed upon by all that a second, more in depth meeting was needed. That event was well attended and

Robert Doucette, President of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan was there as well as FSIN Vice-Chief Lyle Whitefish and Tell.

The day began with a circle including Elders, youth and artists. They told the Ministry their thoughts on culture. The afternoon was spent brainstorming action plans to help protect, preserve and promote arts, culture and heritage in the Aboriginal community.

"From listening to the Elders and other participants, you can see that this culture is so heart felt and the fabric of the community and deeply personal," said Tell.

"We learned that to achieve cultural understanding, we have to address issues differently. The most pressing issues I heard were the protection of language, the ability to transfer knowledge from Elders to youth and the repatriation of sacred and ceremonial artifacts."

The Province has already invested a princely sum into the renovations at Wanuskewin Heritage Park which is expected to reopen around June.

"I am excited about the Park," said Tell. "The potential for wonderful things to happen is there. It is up to the board and the Aboriginal community to make it happen."

But as much as the participation of the province was welcomed, Doucette put it eloquently when he said, "This is all well and good and it is great to talk and share, but I will be happy when we see something concrete happen," the MN-S president said.

"I know that we have to make sure that this is not just talk, and that we actually see rubber hit the road," added Tell.

"We want to do something and action is coming, but the process can sometimes be frustrating and slow. But I do guarantee you that this process has ensured that we will create a great cultural policy for all of us in the province and we can continue to work together for a common good."



Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport Minister Christine Tell says she welcomes the dialogue with Aboriginal groups. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

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## Sakewewak Storytellers Festival has a happy ending

By Nathan Devlin  
For Eagle Feather News

“If we don’t do something now, in 50, 60, 70 years, the language will be gone,” said Harvey Knight, a host of the 2009 Sakewewak Artists’ Collective Storytellers Festival. Of all the stories recounted during the festival, the importance of language to maintaining a culture was the most often told.

During the five day event, which lasted from March 18 to 22, there was music, dance, spoken word and storytelling from local and international artists, with various artistic mediums employed to engage a primarily urban audience in thought, expression and dialogue about First Nations culture and traditions.

Robin Brass, co-artistic director of Sakewewak Artists’ Collective along with Edward Poitras, was thrilled with how this year’s festival went.

“It’s just been very exciting. Everyone was sharing their stories, and everyone seems enlivened again,” says Brass.

“I just find it all ... well I guess I’m speechless, but it’s been great to hear such a range of life stories.”

One aspect of this Storytellers Festival that makes it different from others is the main target audience.

“One of our goals is definitely to reconnect urban First Nations to our traditional oral practices, and to show the rela-

tionship between traditional storytelling and contemporary storytelling, like with hip-hop and videographers, because it’s all storytelling,” says Brass.

To provide that bridge between modern and traditional practices Elders were invited to speak. Two of those Elders were Alice Morin and Flora Weenonis, 79 and 94 respectively, both of whom were speaking in public for the first time in their lives on the final day of the festival. Alice and Flora are from Big River First Nation, and speak Cree alone, so it was Alice’s son Lester and his wife Rose that translated for them.

Flora spoke first, and with a loud and clear voice, to a room that was dead silent, asked those who would listen to hold on to the traditions and ways of life that make them who they are.

“The most powerful message I want to give is to respect people and remember our language,” she said. Flora also expressed her gratitude for being invited to speak. “I feel so alone at home,” she said. “I’m always alone. I just want to thank the people for inviting me here.”

Alice’s advice, imparted to her by her father, was about the importance of knowing how to live off the land, and retaining traditional medical knowledge.

“My father said: ‘It’s going to get harder for your people in the future,’ and these things he said are coming true.”

Indeed, some of the lessons taught her



Lester Morin, Alice Morin, Flora Weenonis and Rose Morin participated in Sakewewak.

by her father have now come full-circle, such as the importance of knowing traditional medicines when modern medicines become too expensive.

“I am old,” Alice said, “but not that old, and I still keep the lessons I was taught.”

She passed those lessons on to her son Lester, who has passed them on to his. Lester grew up speaking Cree, and now his boy, Randy, teaches Cree in Saskatoon.

“It (the language) is hard,” Lester said, “but once you learn it, it stays with you for life.”

When the Elders finished speaking, the festival was opened up to a forum in which everyone attending was welcome to speak. This was a good chance for youth to ask questions of their Elders, and 14-year-old Heather O’Watch seized the opportunity. Taking the microphone,

Heather asked of everyone assembled, “I’m around so many people who criticize and stereotype First Nations, and it hurts me, and I’m just trying to find a way to help.”

She didn’t need to ask twice, as one person after another offered suggestions on how to combat the racism Heather sees and experiences. The advice ranged from having teachers address prejudice in the classroom on a daily basis to using technology to set up groups to deal with the problem.

“People listened to me, and it gave me real confidence,” Heather said. “When I got up there I was so shy and nervous, but I found what I was looking for.” In that regard and others, the Sakewewak Storytellers Festival was a success.

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## Patrick Bird used his gifts to overcome

On a recent Saturday afternoon I was bummed out with too much work to do, a grouchy baby and not enough time on my hands.

So, consumed with life's distractions, I didn't notice it was a beautiful day until I arrived in Meadow Green to interview Patrick Bird – who many of you know as bad guy Simon Blackhorse on Rabbit Fall.

Bird welcomed me into the house of his adoptive parents, poured me a cup of coffee and eased into his chair ready to chat.

And chat we did.

Intending to be there no more than half an hour, I was shocked to look at the time after what seemed like 20 minutes and discover two hours had passed!

I learned of Patrick's storied career as a gifted musician and talented actor. I marveled at his impressive list of acting credits – including Big Bear and Stephen King's Dolan's Cadillac, which starred Christian Slater.

"Christian Slater is probably one of the coolest guys I've ever met," said Bird. "I played a Mexican guy who gets shot in the head by him."

Then he slapped down the script for Dolan's Cadillac and proudly pointed to some chicken scratch written on the cover: "Hey Pat. Good to have killed you. Christian Slater."

"I'd have to say I'm the only one in the city with that."

Like a good script will do, Bird managed to hook me in the first few minutes and I wanted to know more. When did he start acting? Where is he from? What's his story?

Then Bird humored me and I was given a copy of a National Film Board documentary appropriately called Patrick's Story.

"Watch it," he said with a smile. "That will answer most of your questions."

The film is used as a resource for teaching suicide prevention and in it, Patrick talks about his difficult and often tragic formative years, which included attempts to end his own life.

But the film also tells his story as a survivor who yearns to heal from his early years by learning about his culture and doing everything he can to "stay on the right road" as he phrases it.

"We're all given gifts. It's matter of whether we're willing to use them to help ourselves."

Patrick Bird has not only used his gifts to help himself heal and overcome the unimaginable, he's turned them into promising careers.

Rabbit Fall is a good example. By all accounts he has nailed the character of Simon Blackhorse for the half-hour crime drama heading into its third season.

When asked about Patrick's performance, executive producer Wally Start provided some excellent feedback.

"The best way I can describe Pat is: still waters run deeper," said Start, fresh off a business trip to Cannes, France where he was promoting Rabbit Fall.

"He has a quiet confidence about him. Every time you talk to him you discover more about his remarkable talents. We (Rabbit Fall) can count on him to deliver what we need every time he's on screen, take after take."

Last season, Simon Blackhorse's fate was left up in the air when he suffered a vicious stab wound while toiling in an ancient dimension. Bird hopes Simon will be back for Season III - and not just because he wants the work, he thinks the character brings a lot to the show.

"I think deep down Simon's a good guy. He's just been corrupted," he says with a chuckle. "It's not really known if he's done what people say he did, like murdering people. We've never actually seen him do any of it."

This is true but feels a little Charles Manson-like when you think about it.



Patrick Bird (right) with Christian Slater on the set of Dolan's Cadillac.

Besides, Blackhorse does use First Nations medicine for his own dark purposes. Which led to my next question: does Blackhorse portray native spirituality negatively?

"I think it's just a reflection of the real world. There are good preachers and bad preachers. Good politicians and bad ones. Simon just happens to use medicine for mostly bad things," he says with another chuckle.

"But if people are going to watch the show and say we're purposely trying to make native culture seem negative, I'd tell them, too bad. These people are out there."

And if he was producing the show, what would he want Simon to be up to this season?

"I'd really like to see him doing something good. It's awesome playing a bad guy but I truly believe he wants to be

good, as I said, he's just been corrupted."

Could Simon really be capable of good deeds? Wally Start doesn't think so.

"If Simon is back, no, he can't be good because Pat's done too good a job portraying him as a bad guy."

As for other projects, Bird says auditions are few right now so he just does his thing in the mean time, which includes a full-time night job as he waits for Rabbit Fall to call.

Needless to say, he's not the type to sit around and whine about lack of opportunities.

"Getting the chance to make money as an actor is a privilege. If I gotta work full time, I don't stress about it. I just wait for my next opportunity to do what I love." I left lighter, elated, impressed. I walked outside and took a deep breath of fresh spring air. And gone were the trivial annoyances I had brought with me.

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Shannon Worme, Kawacatoose First Nation

# Wow, what a show! Aboriginal Achievement Awards nails it

Review

By Mike Gosselin  
For Eagle Feather News

After watching the recent telecast of the 16th Annual National Aboriginal Achievement Awards, I had to pinch myself to make sure I wasn't dreaming.

For as long as I've been watching – and attending when able – I have been overwhelmed, and not in a good way, with the penchant of corporate sponsors to use the show as a platform to pat themselves on the back for all they do for us Indians.

It seemed the award recipients were a mere afterthought as the show went through the paces and screened their respective vignettes.

After a brief appearance on-stage, the recipients were hurried off so stuffy white guys in their expensive suits could sing the praises of their respective companies and their mighty dollars.

But this year things changed ... drastically.

Aside from cheesy banter between



**Over 100 people turned out for the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre Celebration of Culture. It was a fun night that included good dance and food from different ethnic communities. Special guests on hand included a recent National Aboriginal Achievement Award recipient, Dr. Cecil King, who attended with his partner Katherine Littlejohn. The other winners from Saskatchewan were Rev. Stan Cuthand, Dennis and Melanie Jackson, Delia Opekokew.**

hosts Tina Keeper and Adam Beach – which was so painfully scripted it hurt – this year's show absolutely nailed it! The award recipients were, for the first time in my opinion, front and center and their achievements the

clear focus of the event.

As in the past, the recipients were not asked to speak. Instead, National Aboriginal Achievement Awards producers shoot short vignettes on them. Each year the

vignettes are the best part of the show and this go round was no exception. They were creative, moving and inspiring – it seemed each recipient's words were goosebump worthy!

Perfectly complementing the show's theme of Spirit was the entertainment. Eagle and Hawk performed with members of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and it was nothing short of amazing.

Janet Panic rocked the house and George Leach performed in his usual hard-nosed, Springsteen-esque style.

But the closers stole the show.

The Metis Fiddle Quartet screamed on stage as the Asham Stompers jiggled up an absolute storm.

And just when it seemed this year's show couldn't get any better, a group of young jiggers blazed on the stage and garnered the evening's loudest applause.

Whew! What a show!

For the first time in a while, I can't wait to see what NAAA organizers have in store for next year.

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## FSIN SCIENCE FAIR

Amber Mooswa and Tyler Cantre have an interested onlooker in Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Vice Chief Lyle Whitefish. The girls took part in the FSIN First Nation and Métis Science Fair at the First Nations University of Canada, Saskatoon. More than 60 teams comprised of 120 students from across Saskatchewan competed. Amber and Tyler did their project on "The Classification of Animals using Western Knowledge and using Traditional Knowledge." This is the first time the category of Traditional Knowledge was included in a science competition. The projects ranged from a northern Cree fishing gill net to a traditional first aid medicine kit. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)



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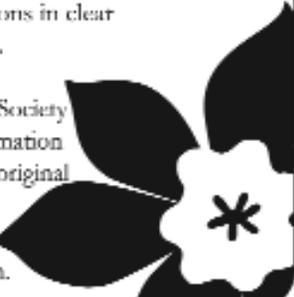

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# Aboriginal women building solid careers in the trades

By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News

Adrienne Bear was the valedictorian of her class. First time ever, she said. She took time in her speech to tease and joke her fellow grads, but she also took time to thank the fine folk at SIIT in the Women in Trades Program for helping her and her classmates so much.

"I know we are going to enter into a male dominated field," said Bear as she was preparing to go back to work after the ceremony. "I got a lot of encouragement and to work with tools. All the trades we needed, we received training in. It gives you confidence."

Bear was the graduate of a program that has been highly successful in getting women into the trade pool, and keeping them there.

"We give them a base of skills. They make friends and confidence with tools and they learn how to do things with their hands, that they never would have had the opportunity to do otherwise," said Shelley Macnab who is a job coach with the

program.

"It is about getting jobs, but also preparing for jobs. We have so many women out there getting hours towards their

over \$25 per hour. How great is that?"

Adrienne Bear is also well on her way to a solid career in construction. And she comes by it honestly.

model and a big support," said Bear.

"I am striving to be a carpentry journeyman and ultimately I want to be a housing inspector. I learned to strive for my goals and to succeed in life as a woman in a man's world."

Bear gave up a career as an outreach worker in Edmonton because there was too much desk work and she wanted a challenge, but at the same time she had the situation of being a single mother of three children.

"It is kind of scary, but I have lots of support from family and friends and from my children.

"My children are very happy and excited for me to be a carpenter. I work, already, for Milan Construction and will be doing my apprenticeship hours there and I am very excited," added Bear.

"I hope other Aboriginal women have a chance to do this and enjoy it. I highly

recommend it.

"If you want to change your life, come here. I was encouraged and supported and I am glad that I succeeded."



Left to right Loretta Baldhead, Michelle Lagimodiere, Denise Wolverine, Adrienne Bear, Jennifer Brandon, Karen Paddy. Missing Bonnie Ameech, Laura Kaye, Belinda Ratt.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

journeymans (accreditation).

"Our role model, Mary Ann Ochapowace, was great in her speech today. She will be a journey person soon making

"My dad is a journeyman carpenter, almost 40 years. I come from a big family ... my dad is getting older and I want to follow in his footsteps as he is my role

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## Our assets are our young people, Roberta Jamieson tells youth gathering in Saskatoon

Comment  
By Dylan Rose  
For Eagle Feather News

The first annual Aboriginal Youth Idea Challenge awards gala recently took place in downtown Saskatoon. The business plan competition – open across the province to all First Nations, Métis and Inuit youth aged 16-35 – received approximately 40 entries, with a multitude of ideas from the participants.

The event itself was an honor to attend. Walking into the Credit Union Centre on March 19, I could only imagine what was about to take place. High school volunteers greeted all guests with smiles and were eager to help by any means. Tanya Dreaver, a Grade 9 student at Tommy Douglas Collegiate mentioned to me after “(It’s my) first time being invited to a professional environment like this ... and I like it!”

Elegant décor and live traditional plains Cree flute provided a nice backdrop during the cocktail hour. Prior to supper proved ample time for all in attendance to network, city officials spoke with aboriginal business student society members, while event sponsors, Rawlco Radio role models and participants intermingled.

During this time I was fortunate enough to speak a number of those in attendance. Christine Kinequon a third year management student originally from Day Star First Nation had this to say of the event “(I think] it’s a really good opportunity to present achievement of role models, it opens the door for high school students so they know they too can do this ... it just opens the door for future generations.”

Heather Crane, a final year accounting student in Edwards School of Business introduced our Master of Ceremonies for the evening, Monica Goulet. Monica passed on the microphone many times during the introductions. Gala attendees heard genuine words from the Dean of Edwards, Grant Isaac, saying,

“He can’t think of anything better to celebrate.”

As well, greetings on behalf of the provincial government from the Minister of Advanced Education, Rob Norris. Saskatoon Mayor Don Atchison and Capital Sponsor for the evening, Proctor & Gamble also welcomed the audience.

During supper, lively discussion took place within each table and Rawlco Aboriginal Role Models in attendance were introduced. The role models’ personal tribulations and success proved to be both an uplifting and emotional experience.

Warmed hearts and full bellies were then treated to the main event, AYIC awards. Mitch Villeneuve a final year finance student introduced judges and event sponsors to help with the announcement of the winning business plans. The evening’s big winners were as follows:

The 2nd Place winner in the Expanding Venture category for the 1st annual Aboriginal Youth Idea Challenge and the recipient of \$2,500 to help expand his business, was Tim Lewis for his business plan tansi clothing.

The 2nd Place winner in the New Venture category and the recipients of \$2,500 to help start their business, was Mike and Terry Shushnoff for their business plan Family Matters recreation facility.

The 1st Place winner in the Expanding Venture category of the and the recipient of \$5,000 to help expand his business, was Tim Hudy and his business plan for Hudy Commercial Cleaning.

The 1st Place winner in the New Venture category of the and the recipient of \$5,000 to help start her venture, was Sherrie Bellegarde and her business plan for the Regina Aboriginal Volleyball Excellence Club.

The evening’s program did not end here, Roberta Jamieson, current CEO and president of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation spoke strong words to complete the evening.



Award winners Tim Lewis, Mike and Terry Shushnoff, Tim Hudy, and Sherrie Bellegarde are joined by a sponsor in this commemorative photo. (Photo supplied)

Jamieson’s keynote was akin to a cherry on top of a hot summer sundae. As this was my first chance meeting Roberta it was an honor to hear her speak of her personal life experience, telling the crowd of her time at McGill University, working for the federal government, leading her reserve as Chief for a time and many other

unique stories of the barriers she has faced as an aboriginal woman and an advocate for change.

The evening cannot easily be summed up in a few words; of the entire night Roberta might have said what we were all thinking, “Our assets are our young people.”

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"Helping families find homes & homes find families"

# Deal will create massive farm

By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News

An investment banker and a former Chief have teamed up with many western Saskatchewan First Nations to create Canada's largest corporate farm. One Earth Farms intends to be a large scale, fully-integrated corporate farming entity, with operations on world-class First Nations' farmland in the prairie provinces.

Sprott Resource Corp. will invest \$27.5 million in One Earth Farms to establish operations, fund working capital and support its initial growth.

"We believe that the opportunities associated with this new venture are unprecedented in the agricultural industry," said Kevin Bambrough, president and CEO of Sprott.

"We intend to build a long-term profitable agricultural business in partnership with the First Nations, which will improve the management and environmental sustainability of First Nations' farmland as well as benefit their peoples through increased revenue and job opportunities," Bambrough said.

"We have assembled an exceptional team at One Earth Farms, which we believe provides the industry experience and operational skill necessary to build One Earth Farms."

Management has designed a program to begin farming operations in a hub and spoke system designed to plant crops and ranch lands in annual increments, beginning with an initial minimum target of 50,000 acres in the first year of operations. One Earth Farms' professional management team, its strong capitalization and its access to large tracts of quality First Nations' farmland, positions One Earth Farms to become the largest, most efficient, operating farm in Canada.

Former FSIN Chief and accomplished businessperson Blaine Favel is the president and CEO of One Earth Resources Corp., and has been appointed director of One Earth Farms and chairman of One Earth Farms GP Corp., the manager of the limited partnership through which First Nations' land will be leased and farmed.

Favel was pleasantly surprised by the interest in Indian country for the proposal.

"We started last June and the uptake was quick. Every band we approached signed on and now that the other bands are aware, the interest is high," said Favel at the press conference that was attended by many Chiefs included national Chief Phil Fontaine.

"We are designed to be open. If we can get every band, we want them all. We have the capacity."

Favel added that many of the bands were not getting fair market value for the rental of their land and that some of the past farming practices had been hard on the soil.

"We will be different than other previous land renters," said Favel. "We promise environmental sustainability of their lands. We promise fair economic treatment. Every band we have done a lease with has seen their rent rates go up.

"We promise fair market value. Every band got a raise in their revenues, some up to 30 per cent more, and we promise employment in rural communities with training for people from a farmhand to an agrolgist."

Thunderchild First Nation has over 159,000 acres in reserve land and they intend to have 56,000 acres of land available for this project. Thunderchild Chief Dale Awasis likes the arrangement so much he wants his band to take an equity position.

"It did not take much convincing for us to join. When we got in as Chief and council, our goal was to make the most benefit that we can from our lands. One Earth Farms came and said they would improve our lands, lease as

much as they can, farm it and pay us," said Awasis.

"There are lots of attractive aspects. When we get our land back, we want it in better shape," Awasis added.

"We also have a training institute on reserve and want to put in a bid to do some of the training for this project. For us, lots of opportunity and we expect an increase in our rental rates to exceed \$200,000. This will definitely enhance our cattle ranching operation as well."

One Earth Farms intends to initiate job training programs for First Nations persons, which will help train the next generation of farmers, provide One Earth Farms with a pool of qualified employees for the future and further strengthen the relationship between One Earth Farms and the First Nations.

Larry Ruud will serve as president and CEO of One

what they are doing.

"It has been a strange project because we haven't had any real challenges or setbacks," said Favel.

"The challenge going forward will be the (human resources) aspect and getting enough trained people working with us. But we have a great



One Earth President and CEO Paul Rudd (left) joined Little Black Bear First Nation Chief Clarence Bellegarde and Thunderchild First Nation Chief Dale Awasis to explain the One Earth Farms venture. Blaine Favel (inset) will head One Earth Farms.

(Photos by John Lagimodiere)

Earth Farms, Fred Siemens will serve as Chief Operating Officer and Eric Sprott will act as chairman of One Earth Farms. They all join Favel who will be headquartered in Lloydminster.

There is a lot to do when you are expecting to start Canada's biggest farm and you are one month away from seeding, but Favel and his team have a strong faith in

relationship with First Nations Agriculture Council, SIIT and the U of S to run training programs so that will be great. The official announcement today was great, but we will have our true smile moment when we have a 100,000 head herd of cattle owned by First Nations who work them ... and people are pulling crops off their own land."

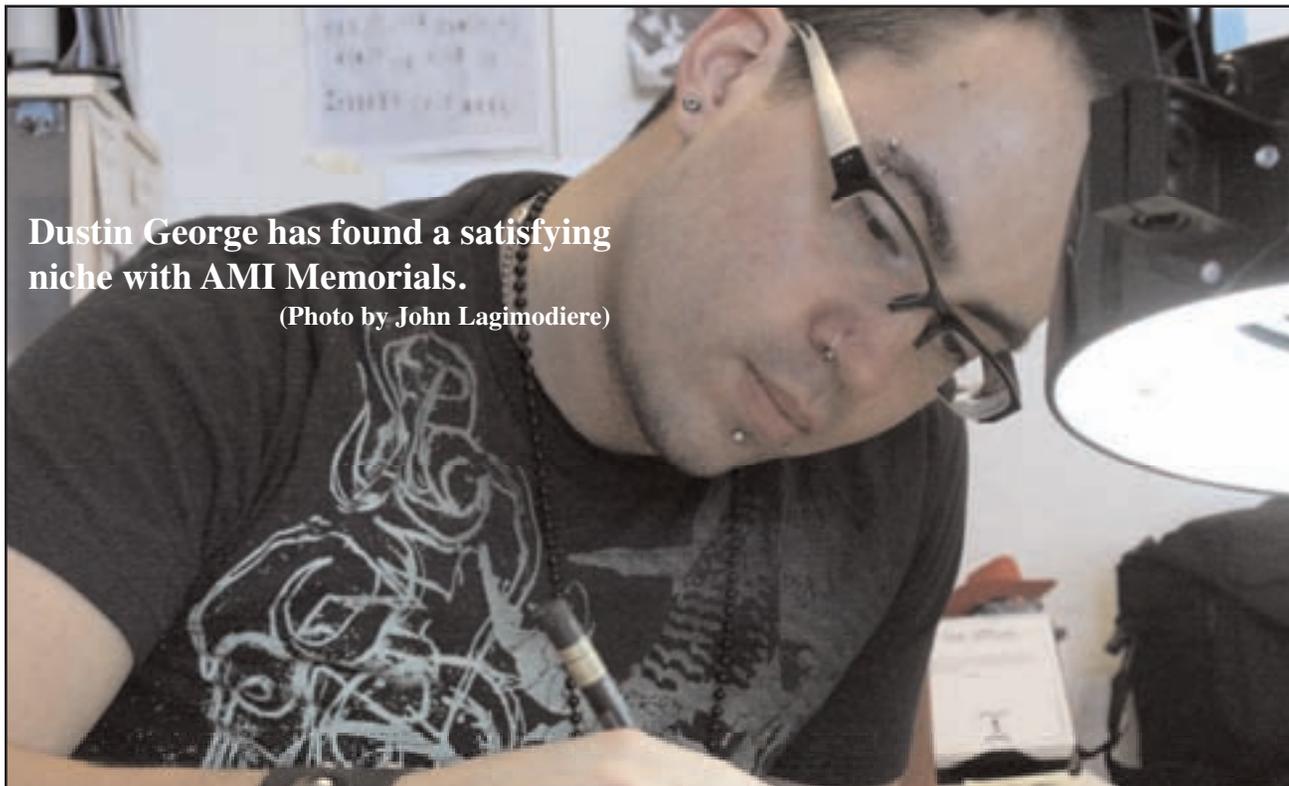
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Dustin George has found a satisfying niche with AMI Memorials.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

## In the big picture, art can be a career

By Andrea Ledding  
For Eagle Feather News

Dustin George has been drawing since he was three years old, and is living proof it's possible to make a career in the arts – not only a living, but a lasting legacy in stone.

“It was something I kept up in school, and then once I graduated I took the Fine Arts program at First Nations University of Canada,” said George in a phone interview from his office in Regina. His four year degree included classes with the late Bob Boyer – an encouraging mentor and visual artist.

“And now I do custom art work and special orders,” George says.

George currently works in the AMI Memorials division of Remco Memorials – an Aboriginal owned and controlled memorial company established by Joseph Bear in 2006. The company provides memorials to the lives and legacies of First Nations families and communities in a culturally sensitive manner. After Bear identified the need for this service, he partnered with Remco, which has

over 80 years experience in the industry.

George works at their head office doing design and graphic art for clients.

“I just happened to see an ad in the newspaper for an artist,” says George, who was doing graphic design at the time for Shout magazine.

“I’ve always loved drawing – I remember being in university and wondering if I could just get a job that required drawing.”

He’s been with AMI for just under two years now, and says it can be very challenging, but incredibly rewarding.

Some of his recent work includes the exterior wall panelings for the Swift Current Casino, and a statue project – right now he’s drafting three dimensional drawings of Chief Pasqua, to be carved out of granite in China.

Sometimes pictures will be provided, or background on the deceased. From that, he provides a rough draft – at times going on nothing but written words or grainy pictures. Once that is approved by the

client, a final full-sized copy is made, edited by computer, and a stencil is cut.

It is applied to the stone using either sandblasting or laser etching.

“I find it can be very gratifying – when you hear back from a family who’s really been touched by the imagery that you’ve provided – and knowing that you’ve maybe helped them, giving them a sense of closure,” says George.

“It’s something that should last the test of time.”

He likes to tell up and coming artists there’s nothing wrong with pursuing the arts as a career.

“People always say, there’s no future in art – I can’t count how many times I’ve heard, ‘nice hobby but how are you going to make a living,’” said George.

His parents supported his dreams, but growing up in Moosomin, he didn’t have a lot of connections to his First Nations culture until he began to explore aboriginal art.

“This is how I’ve been able to find myself with culture, make those lost connections,” he added.

### Winalta Inc.



Gene Ouellette

Winalta Inc. is pleased to announce the appointment of Gene Ouellette as First Nations Business Development Manager, Winalta Homes Inc.

Gene, a member of the Mistawasis First Nation, started his career working in First Nations relations out of Saskatchewan in 1997. By 2002, he took on the role of Aboriginal Business Coordinator, responsible for addressing issues and concerns relating to housing and economic development. Mr. Ouellette moved into the private sector as a consultant responsible for North American Aboriginal Business Development for Stantec Consulting Ltd.

In 2008, Mr. Ouellette was appointed as Vice President of Business Development with Samson Oil and Gas Inc. Among many areas of responsibility, he was in charge of developing business opportunities and as the lead individual working with First Nations.

Gene’s primary focus at Winalta will be developing First Nations relationships for both Winalta’s Homes and Oilfield Rentals divisions.

Gene Ouellette can be reached at [gouellette@winaltainc.com](mailto:gouellette@winaltainc.com) or by phone at 780-960-6900.

Winalta Inc. is a fully integrated company with two main divisions: Industrial and Homes. The Industrial Division manufactures and leases industrial accommodations, provides construction services that include excavating, aggregate trucking and paving. The Homes Division manufactures CSA approved homes, develops land and builds communities.

Winalta Inc. shares trade on the TSX Venture Exchange under the symbol "WTA.A".



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For complete employment details, go to [www.saskatoon.ca](http://www.saskatoon.ca), visit us at Human Resources - City Hall (222 Third Avenue N), or call 975-3261.



While the City of Saskatoon sincerely appreciates the interest of all applicants, only those candidates selected for an interview will be contacted.





Elder Roderick Cote cut the ribbon as other dignitaries look on to officially open the new Painted Hand Casino. (Photo supplied)

# New Painted Hand Casino opens its doors in Yorkton

Yorkton, SK – The official opening of the new Painted Hand Casino was held recently in Yorkton. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held to commemorate the event at the new casino located on Broadway Avenue.

“The Painted Hand Casino has created hundreds of jobs and economic independence for First Nations people,” said Tribal Chair Gilbert Panipekeesick.

“Today, we are celebrating years of planning, the culmination of a vision and of course a renewal.”

Participating in the ceremony were First Nations Elders, Veterans, Kahkewistahaw Chief Louis Taypotat, FSIN Chief Lawrence Joseph, the Honorable Dan D’Autremont, Yorkton Tribal Chief Gilbert Panipekeesick, PHC Holdings Ltd. Partnership Chair Randy Sangwais, City of Yorkton Councillor Bob Maloney and SIGA President and CEO Zane Hansen.

“The opening of the new Painted Hand Casino will modernize the facility in order to serve our customers better,” says SIGA President and CEO Zane Hansen. “As a proud First Nations entertainment business operator, this project demonstrates the evolution of our business model.”

The new \$30 million Painted Hand Casino features 225 machines and seven table games, as well as food and beverage services. The 43,000 sq. ft facility will also offer an entertainment centre for shows, banquets and conferences. The casino employs approximately 275 full-time, part-time and casual employees.

“We are very appreciative of the support our Elders through this entire project,” Chair Randy Sangwais, PHC Holdings Limited Partnership.

“The direction and guidance they provided has ensured the new Painted Hand Casino project was successful.”

## New fund will provide investment capital for Aboriginal businesses

By Eldon Henderson  
For Eagle Feather News

Last month, former Prime Minister Paul Martin and a group of wealthy investors announced they had formed a business entity to invest in Aboriginal business.

The Capital for Aboriginal Prosperity & Entrepreneurship (CAPE) Fund intends to invest \$50 million into Aboriginal businesses across Canada. In May, conference delegates attending the Canadian Aboriginal Business & Economic Development Forum: “The Rise of Aboriginal Business, Enterprise & Corporate Entities” will have the opportunity to listen to Peter Forton, Managing Director for the CAPE Fund.

CAPE Fund Management Inc. is a private equity firm founded by the Martin and his son, David Martin. CAPE opened for business in mid-November of 2008 and was formally announced at a press conference in March.

The \$50 million fund is focused on encouraging Aboriginal entrepreneurship, as well as ownership and control of business, encouraging increased levels of participation and capacity amongst Aboriginal individuals in the management of their portfolio companies, and generating an appropriate risk adjusted financial return on investments.

The CAPE Fund’s mission is to further a culture of economic independence, ownership, entrepreneurship, and enterprise management among Aboriginal peoples, on or off-reserve through the

creation and growth of successful businesses.

“The CAPE Fund was backed by 21 farsighted and socially responsible investors including 17 major Canadian corporations, one individual and three international foundations,” Forton explains.

“We will invest anywhere in Canada and all First Nations, Métis and Inuit are eligible. Investments in gaming, alcohol, tobacco, firearms and ammunitions will not be permitted. However, we are interested in growing or acquiring existing businesses.

“Start-ups are not permitted unless partnered with an experienced, successful operating partner, so we encourage joint ventures or limited partnerships between private industry, Aboriginal groups and CAPE for example,” adds Forton.

“Investment size will be \$1 million to \$7 million and we are active investors that will help our portfolio companies build strong, independent value-added boards of directors. Deal flow is currently quite strong coming from all areas of the country.

“Several are worthy of further investigation and pursuit. These include resource projects, consumer products and health care services.”

There is no word on when the first investment will happen, but according to Forton, they are not in a race against time in deploying their capital but rather in a search for the best opportunities they can

## Now Hiring...

As part of an ongoing recruiting initiative, the Regina Police Service is looking for a number of experienced and non-experienced applicants.

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# Youth voice was heard, respected and appreciated

**Y**outh Board Fights Crime, a project funded by the National Crime Prevention Strategy, partnered with the Aboriginal Business Service Network to launch a Saskatchewan Gathering at Grayson on March 26.

Invited communities consisted of First Nation, Métis and non-native groups who had expressed an interest in the project over a two-year period. This group of community champions had the opportunity to share in the successes, lessons learned and innovative ideas that youth had achieved.

To complement the work and achievements of the youth leadership group, an invitation was extended to the co-operative development program being implemented in Big River First Nation and the Center for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Leadership in Nelson, B.C.

"People learn best from each other and both projects have a lot to say about community development," said Cherylynn Walters of the host Marieval Enterprise Center.

Heard were overpowering stories from youth and community champions representing rural municipalities and First Nation communities.

Anne Margaret Obey of Pasqua First Nation expressed the opportunity eloquently.

"I have come to learn new ideas from these youth that I can take home. I also hope I have some ideas to share that other communities can use."

Obey's innovation in her entrepreneurial class sparked fresh ideas and motivation to move our communities forward.

Anna Planedin of the Center for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Leadership facilitated interactive activities that allowed communities to share their best practices and envision the ideal community. Share they did, as the activities of the day unfolded.

Throughout his powerful presentation, Justin Bear of Ochapowace First Nation illustrated that youth, when given the support and tools, can accomplish great things



A large crowd turned out for what was called a Saskatchewan Gathering in Grayson in late March.

and make a huge difference in their communities. Bear said he felt more empowered from this program and came to recognize the important role model he has become for the younger generation.

Heather Bear, a council member from Ochapowace, stressed the importance of crime prevention as a key component of the long-term strategy.

"Programs like this provide us with the opportunity to lay some important groundwork. We need to continue to support grass-roots programs for our people."

Kahkewistahaw First Nation, Muscowpetung First Nation and Fishing Lake First Nation all felt they were going home with new ideas, new hope and the potential to establish lasting relationships to share ideas and move their communities forward.

The Saskatchewan Gathering brought together like-minded people, potential partners, youth and community

champions.

"There was a tremendous amount learned from the Youth Board Fights Crime project," said Walters, "and there is a lot of work yet to do."

"Saskatchewan is a wonderful place for all people. An inclusive, positive and progressive strategy will ensure that all people excel in the opportunities," said Walters.

"The Marieval Enterprise Center Inc. is grateful to the Nation Crime Prevention Strategy and the Aboriginal Business Service Network for providing this opportunity," added Walters.

"It is rare that a multi-year funding program is available, but when it is, the impact is huge. We look forward to the opportunities to continue to work with these communities and many more."

For further information, you can contact Cherylynn Walters at 306-794-2051.

## Thunderchild joins employment partnership

**T**hunderchild First Nation has stepped up its efforts to prepare its members for the thriving Saskatchewan workforce by signing an Aboriginal Employment Development partnership with the governments of Saskatchewan and Canada and the Saskatchewan Regional Council of Carpenters, Drywall, Millwrights and Allied Workers.

The primary goal of all partners is to recruit and retain First Nation and Métis workers in Saskatchewan's sound economy. The initiative commits all partners to work together to reduce barriers and build strong, welcoming workplaces.

"I would like to share that our group has taken a step closer to achieving our goals and objectives," Thunderchild First Nation Chief Dale Awasis said.

"It is in our best interest to develop an effective working structure that will pave



Representatives of the provincial and federal governments, Thunderchild members and people from the trades organizations posed for a group photo on March 27.

the way for our band members to participate in industry. We believe building this structure will open up economic opportunities and together we can look back and say we've achieved our goals."

"I look forward to collaborating with Thunderchild First Nation to increase the participation of its members in

Saskatchewan's skilled labour force and economy," First Nations and Métis Relations Minister June Draude said.

"Thunderchild's many successful endeavours are a testament to this community's hard work and vision for the future. Thunder Employment and Field Services, partnerships with industry and

government, and the exceptional learning environment of Piyesiw Awasis School are wonderful examples of how this community is moving forward," Draude added.

"For the last several years, we have struggled to recruit enough tradespersons for our busy contractors," Saskatchewan Regional Council of Carpenters, Drywall, Millwrights and Allied Workers recruiter and organizer for the union Kerry Westcott said.

"With this partnership agreement, we hope to recruit workers from Thunderchild First Nation. We look forward to helping First Nations and Métis people achieve their employment and development goals."

The Aboriginal Employment Development initiative is focused on tapping into the emerging First Nations and Métis workforce as a critical component of Saskatchewan's growing economy.

# Mistawasis woman comfortable at WCB

By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News

In this tight labour force market, many organizations are recruiting heavily from the Aboriginal community. They realize that this particular community is underutilized and has a lot of skills to offer the workplace.

sary with WCB and I would like to tell you that my experience has been an exceptional one. When I began working at WCB, I walked into an opportunity with an employer that had established a warm and welcoming corporate atmosphere," said Johnstone.

"There is a well developed level of cooperation and a sense of being an

There are also a number of other initiatives to support their diversity strategy including Aboriginal student bursary and summer student employment programs, enhancing relationships with post-secondary institutions and involvement with programs in elementary schools.

"I would recommend this position to those that are goal orientated, and those who are able to multi-task and enjoy a fast pace work environment. Generally, if you are up for a challenge

this is a great place to work, in any position," said Johnstone.

"I believe that WCB is putting forth a constant effort to uphold a strong culture of inclusion. I am a First Nations woman from the Mistawasis First Nation and I strongly believe that WCB is continually striving toward enhancing its' cultural diversity."

*For further information on employment opportunities at WCB go to their website at [www.wcbask.com](http://www.wcbask.com)*



Lana Johnstone joined the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board two years ago and has found herself at home in a workplace that features a warm and welcoming corporate environment. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

The Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board has been serving employers and injured workers in the province since 1930 and is committed to being a valuable member of community. That commitment to community includes making efforts to increase the number of Aboriginal employees in its fold.

Lana Johnstone is a case manager with WCB and has found it to be a very welcoming environment. "I am approaching my second year anniver-

integral member of a team. When taking on a new position with a new employer there is often an overwhelming feeling, but here there is a feeling of constant encouragement and reassurance."

To be ready to welcome this growing workforce and as part of their commitment to diversity and employment equity in the workplace, all WCB employees will attend a half-day Aboriginal Awareness seminar this year.



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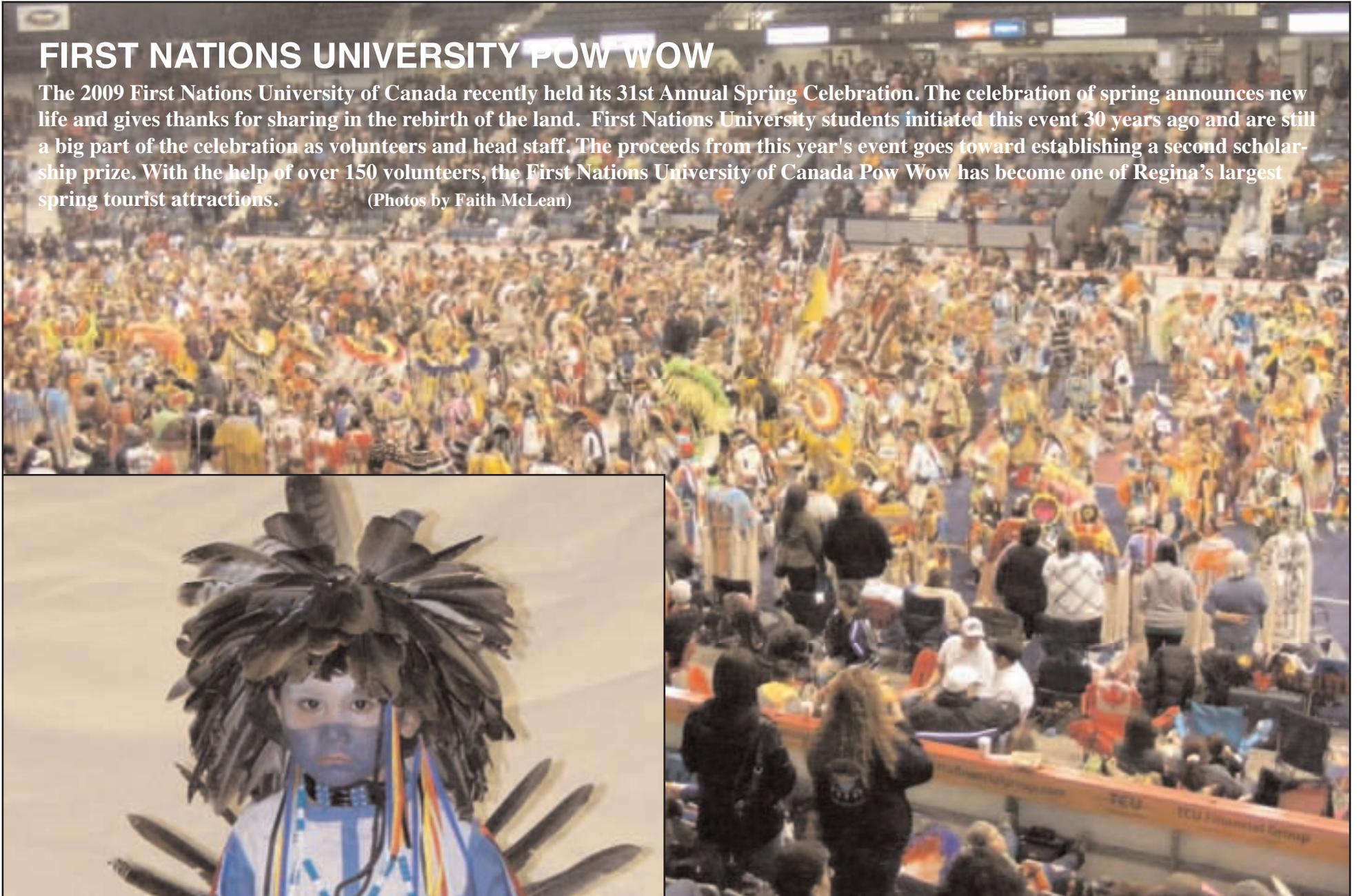
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# FIRST NATIONS UNIVERSITY POW WOW

The 2009 First Nations University of Canada recently held its 31st Annual Spring Celebration. The celebration of spring announces new life and gives thanks for sharing in the rebirth of the land. First Nations University students initiated this event 30 years ago and are still a big part of the celebration as volunteers and head staff. The proceeds from this year's event goes toward establishing a second scholarship prize. With the help of over 150 volunteers, the First Nations University of Canada Pow Wow has become one of Regina's largest spring tourist attractions. (Photos by Faith McLean)



Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada

## Call for Proposals Addressing Homelessness

The Saskatoon Homelessness Advisory Committee invites proposals under the **Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS)**.

The Strategy seeks to prevent and reduce homelessness by establishing structures and supports needed to move homeless and at-risk individuals towards self-sufficiency and full participation in Canadian society.

**Proposals must meet one of the following priorities listed in the 2007 Saskatoon Community Plan for Homelessness and Housing:**

- Emergency Services
- Specialized Transitional Services
- Serving People With Unique Housing Challenges
- Coordination and Navigation
- Building Knowledge Around Homelessness

**Preference will be given to proposals addressing the following priorities:**

- Supporting individuals who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness due to complex needs by assisting them to identify and resolve outstanding issues, to develop life skills and greater independence, and/or navigate into and retain suitable housing
- Developing transitional housing for a diverse population including youth, First Nations and Métis, immigrants and refugees, people facing addictions and families
- Enhancing mobile outreach services to homeless individuals and families
- Provision of specialized supports and follow-up services in co-ordination with community agencies and service providers to assist homeless individuals and families with multiple needs related to mental health &/or substance abuse

The 2007 Saskatoon Community Plan for Homelessness and Housing is the result of a broadly based community consultation process and can be viewed at the following website: [http://www.saskatoon.ca/org/city\\_planning/affordable\\_housing/index.asp](http://www.saskatoon.ca/org/city_planning/affordable_housing/index.asp)

For further information and application packages, you are invited to attend an Information Session on Tuesday, April 21, 2009, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 204, Federal Building (101 - 22nd Street East, Saskatoon), or contact **Shane Stack at 975-4001 or email [shane.stack@servicecanada.gc.ca](mailto:shane.stack@servicecanada.gc.ca)**.

**Deadline for submission of a completed application & proposal: 4:00 pm, May 8, 2009**

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# Gardiner does the dirty work

You may not know about Ty Gardiner and that's just the way he likes it. He stands barely 5-11 and tips the scales at just over 160 lb. But his game is played much bigger than that.

He started out the year as an extra hand with the Midget AAA Beardsy's Blackhawks. Filling in as an extra forward



Ty Gardiner with his proud father, Louis.

or defenseman, whatever the coach asked him to do he did.

But as the year wore on Gardiner found his niche. He would be part of the team's grind line. Checking opposing teams' best players and generally making their life on the ice miserable.

It was not a role he took lightly, and says he "worked hard to get there" and wouldn't let his opportunity slide.

The Blackhawk's went all the way to the league final before losing to the Notre Dame Hounds.

Gardiner hopes to continue playing hockey at the next level. He has a tryout with the La Ronge Ice Wolves of the SJHL in the fall and says he "will work hard all summer and try to get better."

He says he is following in his father Louis' and older brothers' footsteps. He was raised in a hockey family and pursuing his dream is important to him.

And if hockey doesn't work out he says he would be fine with that and put that same hard work into university. He says he would like to go into Arts and Science at the University of Saskatchewan.

## FSIN hockey champs crowned

Saskatoon played host to the 2009 FSIN Hockey Championships. Teams came from across Saskatchewan to

represent their respective First Nations. This year the tournament had four different divisions. There was a Senior Men's, a Legends, a Rec, and a Ladies division.

Games were played at Gemini Four Arena all week before switching to the Harold Latrace Arena for the finals in all divisions.

In the first final of the night, the ladies from Muskeg Lake defeated Montreal Lake to take home the title. It was a tightly contested affair through the first period until Muskeg pulled away in the final two periods.

Over at the main arena the Rec division had its final. It was a blowout from the get go, as the host First Nation, Standing Buffalo, scored three quick goals on their way to a 6-2 win. The team was led all weekend by the solid two-way game of MVP Eddie Tawiyka.

On to the legends, who despite their age still put on a great game! The Onion Lake Border Chiefs battled the Beardsy's Blackhawks all game. In the end the Chiefs pulled out the win. Ironically the MVP of the game was Pete Chief of, wait for it, The Chief's!

In the final and most anticipated game of the evening the Beardsy's Blackhawks held off the hard charging Canoe Lake Young Guns who were led by WHL



Edmonton Oil King Craig McCallum.

A veteran team from Beardsy's was led by tourney MVP Bill Cameron. His stellar play was evident all weekend.

FSIN representative Courage Bear called the tournament "a huge success" and those in attendance definitely saw some great hockey.

## Blades blown out of action by Lethbridge Hurricanes

The Saskatoon Blades had their second best regular season in team history. They tied the league record for road wins in a season with 29.

But they absolutely flopped when the playoffs came, bowing out in a close seven game series to the Lethbridge Hurricanes.

After winning the first game of the series the Blades would lose three of next four before getting a clutch game six win in Lethbridge.

Coming home to play game seven in front of over 10,000 screaming fans should have been all they needed. But the Blades did not show up, and quite honestly, played a brutal game.

## 1st Annual Sasipenita Golf Classic

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This years event will be held **Friday, May 29th** at the beautiful **Dakota Dunes Golf Links.**

**REGISTER NOW** go to [www.sasipenitainc.com](http://www.sasipenitainc.com) or cut out, fill out and send your cheque to Sasipenita Inc., 3130 Laurie Drive, Saskatoon, SK S7L 5J7.

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### April 29-30, 2009 TCU Place, Saskatoon, SK

The two-day seminar, "Nation Building: Leadership, Governance, and Economic Policy," is explicitly designed to equip leaders with knowledge and tools for nation building: enhancing the capacity of First Nations and Métis to determine their own futures, to exercise self-governing powers effectively, and to build sustainable economies. Created and presented by faculty of the Native Nations Institute (NNI), these sessions address core research findings of what works and what doesn't work, as well as constitutions, economic policy, program management, the role of council members, strategic planning, and next steps, to name a few.

**Seminar Topics Include**

- Nation Building and Economic Development
- Making Local Economies Work
- Why Are Some Communities More Successful Than Others?
- Strategic Decision-Making for a Self-Determined Future
- Creating Healthy, Vibrant Communities
- Roles and Responsibilities of Community Leaders
- Managing Social Programs
- Self-Governance

**How to Register (Early bird registration deadline is March 28<sup>th</sup>)**

Registration fees include course materials and conference meals. Please fill out one registration form per participant. Fax or mail a completed form and payment to any of the following:

Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology 118-335 Paskitum Avenue Saskatoon, SK S7N 0S1	Phone: (306) 244-6444 Fax: (306) 244 1381 Toll free: (800) 667-9708	Name: Sherry Krentz Email: <a href="mailto:krentzs@sit.sk.ca">krentzs@sit.sk.ca</a> Web: <a href="http://www.sit.sk.ca">www.sit.sk.ca</a>
Gabriel Dumont Institute #2-604 22nd Street West Saskatoon, SK S7M 5W1	Phone: (306) 657-5719 Fax: (306) 244 0252	Name: Amy Gallagher Email: <a href="mailto:amy.gallagher@gdi.gdins.org">amy.gallagher@gdi.gdins.org</a> Web: <a href="http://www.gdins.org">www.gdins.org</a>
First Nations University of Canada 1 First Nations Way Regina, SK S4S 7K2	Phone: (306) 790 5950 ext3357 Fax: (306) 790-5992	Name: Richard Missos Email: <a href="mailto:missos@firstnationsuniversity.ca">missos@firstnationsuniversity.ca</a> Web: <a href="http://www.firstnationsuniversity.ca">www.firstnationsuniversity.ca</a>

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**Registration Form — Nation Building Seminar — April 29-30, 2009**

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Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

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<b>Registration Fees</b>	Before March 28 <sup>th</sup> <input type="radio"/> \$150 (GST included) After March 28 <sup>th</sup> <input type="radio"/> \$200 (GST included)	Student (Sponsorships Available) <input type="radio"/> School <input type="radio"/>
<b>Method of Payment</b>	Payment Enclosed (Please make cheque payable to SASKLMC) <input type="radio"/> Please Invoice <input type="radio"/> Cancellation Policy: Seminar cancellations received in writing no later than April 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2009 will receive a full refund less a \$50.00 administration fee. Cancellations after this date will forfeit the full registration fee. Program and speakers are subject to change.	



Calvin Bird delivers a rock with the help of teammate Del Huber.

## Calvin Bird fought his addictions through participation in athletics

By Nathan Devlin  
For Eagle Feather News

Calvin Bird had no problem qualifying for the first team from Saskatchewan ever to compete in the National Wheelchair Curling Championship, but it was a long road to get to the point where he was willing to try.

Along with his teammates Darwin Bender, Gil Dash, Del Huber, Marie Wright and coach Lorraine Arguin, Bird helped Saskatchewan finish sixth out of the ten teams competing in the championship, held from March 23 – 28 in Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia. It was a good showing considering the team had never played in a tournament before.

For Bird, the tournament was a particularly commendable accomplishment, as he has had to struggle through a serious drug addiction and depression before he could begin rebuilding his life.

"It was hard. I don't know what more I can say, but it was really hard," Bird says during one of the team's final practices before leaving for Nova Scotia. Bird's brother, Nelson Bird, who was in Nova Scotia with the team, is more direct.

"His addiction to cocaine was so strong he was literally hanging by a thread to his life," says Nelson.

A person would never guess how close Bird was to losing his life if they were to see him now.

"He's laughs a lot now; he's got his sense of humor back" says Nelson. "He's become a real team player. This week proved he can

overcome any odds."

Leading into the tournament, Bird wasn't sure what to expect.

"I think it's going to be fun, and a learning experience for the team. We've never curled against a wheelchair team, so we're wondering how we'll do against them."

They have competed and won against able bodied teams, however, which is impressive when considering the dynamics of wheelchair curling versus traditional.

"Without the sweepers it's a lot more challenging than when I was a boy."

Bird's addiction had little to do with the car accident that cost him his mobility, and a lot to do with family difficulties that went back a long way.

"It wasn't until he finally realized, with the help of his friends and family, but also within himself, the courage to stop this that he got help," says Nelson.

Always a natural athlete, Bird started wheelchair curling while at Wascana Rehabilitation Centre, a place he credits with saving his life.

"I caught on pretty quick (to wheelchair curling)," Bird says. "I didn't know what to expect at the beginning, like if there were sweepers or how we throw rocks, but it's just the same with the in turn and out turn, and you still gotta get the weight."

Curling has assisted Bird to not only find greater happiness in his life, but also to find an outlet that makes fighting his addiction easier.

"There is a freedom from it now that I didn't have before."



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN  
Centre for Continuing & Distance Education



# NAIFS 2009

3rd North American Indigenous Food Symposium



**June 4-6**  
Muskoday First Nation and Travelodge Hotel, Saskatoon, SK

<p>           \$400 After May 20            \$325 Early Bird, April 8 - May 20            \$250 Early Early Bird, till April 7            \$150 (Students, seniors &amp; low income)         </p> <p> <b>For more information contact:</b>            Chair, Alex Munoz at 306.966.2027,            alex.munoz@usask.ca            Co-Chair, Dr. Priscilla Settee at            306.966.5556, priscilla.settee@usask.ca         </p>	<p> <b>Speakers</b>  <b>Chef David Wolfman</b>  <b>Cooking with the Wolfman™</b>            Celebrity Chef and Professor  <b>Clayton Brascoupe</b>            Director of the Traditional Native American            Farmers Association  <b>Elder Dr. Danny Musqua</b>            NAIFS Honorary Chair         </p>
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[ccde.usask.ca/go/indigenous](http://ccde.usask.ca/go/indigenous) • 966.5539 to register





# 9th ANNUAL POWWOW

**May 15, 16, & 17, 2009**  
**Gallagher Center, Yorkton, SK**

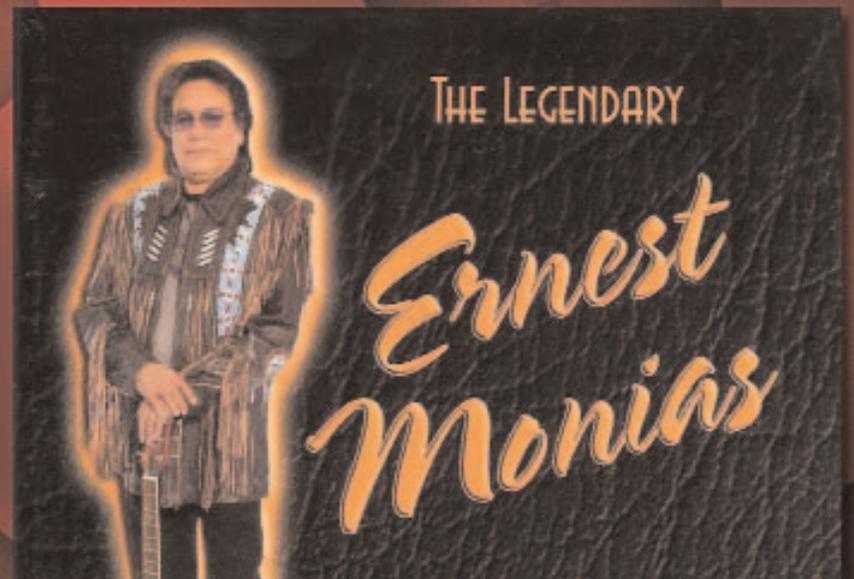
**Friday - Grand Entry - 8 PM**  
**Saturday & Sunday - 1 PM & 7 PM**

**Powwow Poker Classic**  
**May 17**

**Painted Hand Casino Entertainment**



**MAY 14 & 15**



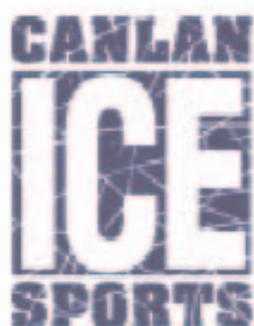
**MAY 16**

For more information contact the Painted Hand Casino at (306)786-6777. The Painted Hand Casino Pow-Wow Committee is not responsible for any injuries, loss or damage to participants or spectators resulting directly in the participation of this special event.

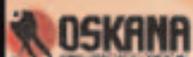
**Host Hotel**

 **RAMADA**  
**1-800-667-6500**  
 ask for the Oskana Cup rate

**Proud Supporters**



**MAY 1-3, 2009**  
 @ CANLAN ICE SPORTS REGINA



Inquiries (306) 522-7494

[www.oskanacup.org](http://www.oskanacup.org)

HONOURARY CO-CHAIRS: Reggie Leach & Mayor Pat Fiacco  
 PROCEEDS: Oskay Saisickwahkewin Fund (the 'O-S. Fund') EST: 2005  
 LOCATION: Canlan Ice Sports Regina - Victoria Ave. East/Highway #1 E., north of CTY

Division/Eligibility	Teams	Entry Fee	1st	2nd	3rd
Sr. Contact All Rez/4 Aboriginal Imports	8	\$1100	\$6000	\$4000	\$2000
Rec - All Aboriginal	8	\$800	\$3000	\$1500	\$800
Masters 40+ All Aboriginal	8	\$700	\$2500	\$1500	\$800
Women - Aboriginal w/3 imports	6	\$600	\$1500	\$1000	\$500

Division Contacts	Contact	Tel/Mobile	Email
Sr. Contact All Rez/4 imports	Milt Tootoosis	(306)341-1876	milttootoosis@sasktel.net
Rec - All Aboriginal	Preston Henry	(306)540-3293	preston_henry01@hotmail.com
Masters 40+ All Aboriginal	Emmett McArthur	(306)949-8566	emo_mcarthur@hotmail.com
Women-Aboriginal w/3 Imports	Shelley Lavallee	(306)537-2791	smlavallee@sasktel.net

SPORTS LUNCHEON KICKOFF on Friday, May 1st at Casino Regina,  
 CABARET on Saturday night...watch for details!