

Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE



Saunders murder in Nova Scotia prompts call to action in Sask.

By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

Hundreds of people gathered across Canada earlier this month to remember, honour, and renew a call to action in the wake of the murder of Loretta Saunders, a student at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The tragic irony is that the Inuk woman was doing her honours thesis on missing and murdered Aboriginal women, focusing on three women from Nova Scotia in particular.

Saunders was missing February 13 and her body was found two weeks later. Twenty-eight-year-old Victoria Henneberry and 25-year-old Blake Leggette have been charged with the first-degree murder in Saunders' death.

Even though the case is on the other side of the country, it has clearly touched people everywhere.

After Saunders' body was found, her supervising professor wrote a moving opinion piece that tried to make sense of the senseless act.

Darryl Leroux reread her thesis and notes Saunders "was aware of being a product of a Canadian society intent on destroying and eliminating indigenous peoples.

"What I do know is that our society has discarded

indigenous women and girls in much the same manner for generations. These people were playing out a script that we all know intimately, but never acknowledge," he wrote. He says non-Indigenous people all too often have a lack of understanding.

"When I discuss these issues with my non-indigenous students in an open, honest, and non-judgmental manner, I am continuously disappointed, though no longer surprised by their lack of knowledge."

Leroux's piece deeply moved and struck a chord with Rob Innes, a Native Studies professor at the University of Saskatchewan.



Kelly Goforth



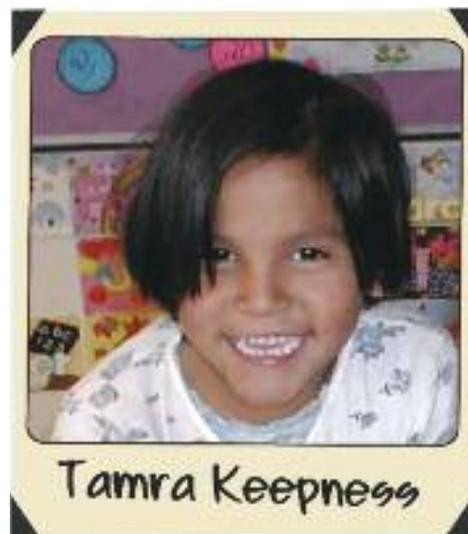
Karina Wolf



Roslyn Gabriel



Jodi Roberts



Tamra Keepness

Speaking at a Saskatoon vigil for Saunders, Innes said he was hit with the fact "that could have easily been me writing that letter," since he supervises many Aboriginal women working on their thesis.

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RETIRING REDMEN

Cecilia Baptiste offers her perspective on the decision to scrap a Saskatoon's school's Redmen nickname. - Page 5



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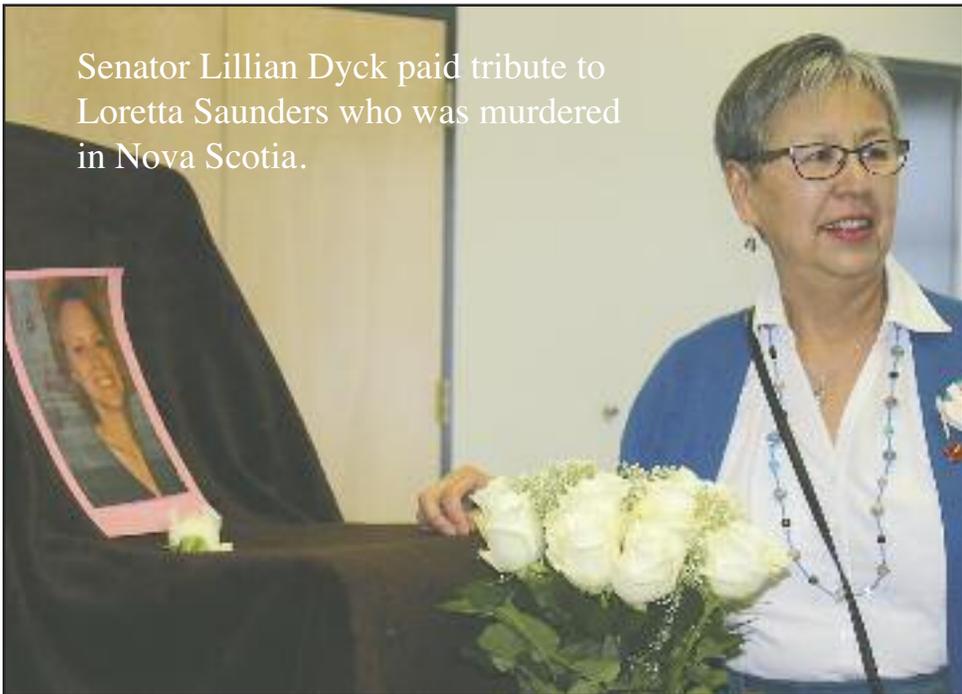
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- 12:30PM - TRADITIONAL DANCE
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Senator Lillian Dyck paid tribute to Loretta Saunders who was murdered in Nova Scotia.

Atleo says it's time to say "enough"

• Continued from Page One

"I think it's important for men to be here (at the rally)," said Innes. "It's important that we stand with our sisters."

Saunders' photo was prominent at the front of the room. Sen. Lillian Dyck placed a bouquet of white roses that contained baby's breath in front of the photo to honour the baby Saunders was carrying at the time of her murder.

Dyck says Saunders has become a recognizable face for missing and murdered Aboriginal women, noting for the first time, such a story is making national news headlines – something positive to take away from a tragic situation.

"She has almost given her life for this issue."

Dyck says Saunders' family doesn't want the public to forget about the hundreds of other missing and murdered in Canada. The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) has documented more than 580 cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, but some say that number is much higher.

In light of Saunders' murder, NWAC is renewing its call for a national public inquiry into the issue and by last month, it had delivered a petition with more than 23,000 signatures to the House of Commons, and since then, more signatures have been added. The organization says it has noted the murders of at least eight Aboriginal women in the past six months.

"These statistics should raise the alarm for all Canadians," says Michèle Audette, President of NWAC.

"Much too frequently, somewhere in Canada, families feel the pain and loss of a loved one who has been a victim of violence.

"This happens way too often for our Aboriginal people, and to the most vulnerable in our society, the women and girls."

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) has joined in NWAC's call for a public inquiry – a call that has been supported previously by provincial and territorial leaders. As well, the Canadian Human Rights Commission called for such an

inquiry in its report tabled to Parliament earlier that week.

AFN National Chief Shawn Atleo spoke at a rally on Parliament Hill where he again urged the government to listen and hold an inquiry.

"Committing to an independent and inclusive National Public Commission of Inquiry would demonstrate a clear and focused commitment to achieving positive change for and with Indigenous peoples. I continue to strongly urge the Prime Minister and Government of Canada to work together with First Nations, the families of murdered and missing women, women's organizations and other Indigenous groups to end violence today.

"It is time for all of us to say 'enough' and for all of us to commit to doing better as a society to keep all citizens safe and secure," he told the crowd that swelled to hundreds.

Seeing all the people coming together across Canada, as well as those who have financially supported the Saunders family has moved Myrna Laplante, who understands the anguish of families whose loved ones have gone missing. Her aunt, Emily Osmond, has been missing since 2007, and her nephew, Cody Wolfe, has been missing since 2010.

Her immediate reaction upon hearing Saunders was missing was she wanted to send money because she knows how expensive it is to search. She says her family has spent tens of thousands of dollars searching for Wolfe.

"My brother (Cody's father) has gone without power in his house. He's had his ski-doo's repossessed," she told the Saskatoon vigil through tears. "It's because that's not his priority. His priority is to look for Cody."

At the end of the Saskatoon vigil, candles were lit and a poem was read as everyone tried to find comfort in standing together in hopes their voices would be enough to pressure the government into calling an inquiry.

"Rest in peace, Loretta," Laplante choked through tears. "Your work is absolutely not in vain."

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Gov't inaction contributes to cycle of violence

The time has come for all Canadians to stand up and demand an inquiry into the tragedy of the massive numbers of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada.

According to the Native Women's Association of Canada, the number is close to 600, but that number is purported to be a low estimate. If it was 600 children, or new Canadians, or middle-class white ladies, there would be outrage, endless media coverage and an all out inquiry.

A parliamentary report tabled March 7 afternoon made 16 recommendations intended to address the violence faced by aboriginal women in Canada, but did not suggest the government set up an independent public inquiry. The behaviour of the current federal government is an embarrassment.

As always they stick to the party line. "We have a program for that!" We will work with those that are "willing"! It is almost like a hypnotic chant. Or as Justice Minister Peter McKay put it in the House of Commons: "I do not want to stop the action and the forward-looking policies of this government to stop and have an inquiry. I want to say we will keep doing what we have been doing."

Which, if you look, the government is doing nothing other than cutting budgets of groups that work to improve the lives of Aboriginal women as well as starving out bands in education, health, housing and other federal responsibilities. This leads to more poverty and the vicious cycle continues.

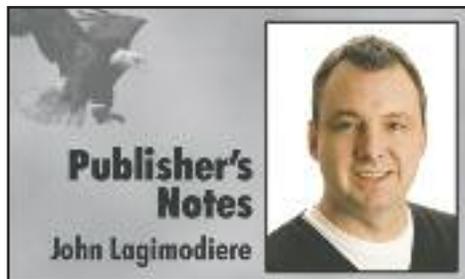
Unfortunately, in Canada Aboriginal women are treated as second-class people. They are victims of the highest levels of domestic violence in Canada and three times more likely to be victims

of violence. Aboriginal women's homicide rates are almost seven times higher than those of non-Aboriginal females.

Remember, these are just reported numbers. How many people are suffering their abuse or violence in silence? Tragic.

So please, dear readers, keep up the awareness and tell all of your friends to sign petitions and reach out to your local Members of Parliament and Members of the Legislative Assembly. They are the ones that can help.

For the record though, don't bother talking to Conservative MP Brad Trost. He is too busy trying to deny women the right to an abortion, rather than doing



Métis women post-Battle of Batoche. Even though the subject is hard hitting – for example, more Métis women and children died in

the battle than soldiers on both sides of the conflict – the story was told with compassion and humour.

The play was the culmination of the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Companies Circle of Voices program. Several high school students and young adults attended evening programs where they learned Métis history and then worked with playwright Prudat to tell the story. It all came together in a mesmerizing hour of laughter and tears.

looted, farms were burned and over 70 Métis were arrested for treason and taken to Stony Mountain in Manitoba to serve their sentences. With the men gone and the community ravaged, the women and children paid the ultimate price.

Stories like these have not been told in our schools, robbing Canadians of understating our true national history. Thankfully, we have groups like Gabriel Dumont Institute and young people like the Circle of Voices working on telling our story. And once that story is told, people will realize the immense contribution and sacrifice of Métis women after the Battle of Batoche, all the way to the present.

Fire support

Another house fire on reserve has led to another tragedy. A federal government study suggests that First Nation people are 10 times more likely to die in a fire than the rest of the population. Four children have died in house fires on reserve in Saskatchewan since September.

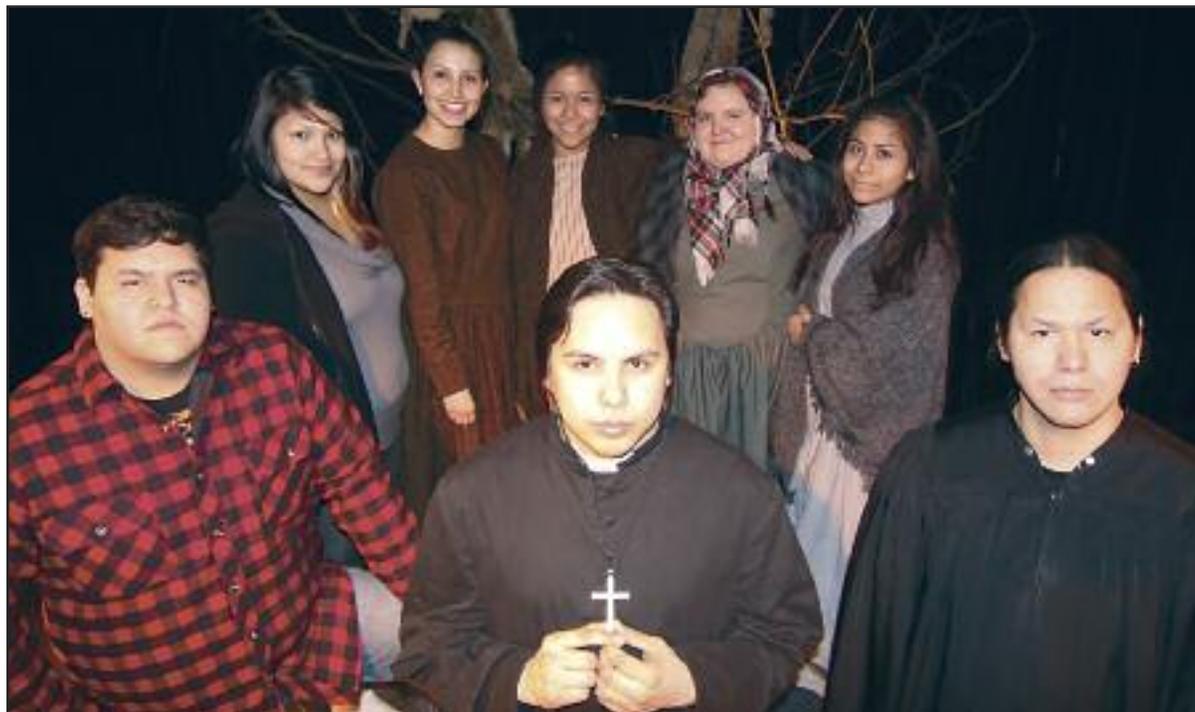
The Aboriginal Firefighters' Association of Canada has come forward and is now lobbying the federal government to implement a Canada wide fire prevention policy that would mandate training fire inspectors at all First Nations.

If proper building codes are followed on reserves and fire alarms were made available, these deaths could have been prevented.

Currently First nations are exempt from national building codes and fire codes.

That makes no sense whatsoever. Please spend the \$50 and get yourself a couple smoke detectors for your house, makes a great gift to your family.

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SNTC cast included back row Kayle Vincent, Sasha Shogga, Ingrid Gomez, Rachel Ducharme and Lia Gomez and in front Morgan Kennedy, Brendan Austin and Waylon Machiskinic. Missing are Adam Eagle and Rochelle Robillard.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

something tangible to change and improve the lives of Aboriginal women.

SNTC play

The play Reunir, written by P.J. Prudat tells the heartbreaking story of

The women and children of Batoche suffered miserably. The biggest causes of death were tuberculosis and starvation. You have to remember that government forces effectively decimated the community. Houses and businesses were

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Redmen retirement a gesture of goodwill

At the Saskatoon Public School Board's March 4 meeting, the motion was put forward to retire the Bedford Road "Redmen" name and logo.

The room was heavy with suspense, and I knew that what was happening would be either another stumbling block, or would stand out as the turning point for not only our community, but for others as well.

After the motion passed, the crowd erupted in waves of applause, cameras flashed, and emotions broke to feelings of relief and elation. The anticipation that captivated us melted away into celebration. This was a victory, but not just for one side. It was a triumph for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, for our educators, and our children. It was acknowledgement by one institution that the time had come to move beyond symbols that embody systemic racism.

We should not have to justify why the use of Indian mascots is inappropriate. According to provincial Occupational Health and Safety Legislation, harassment can exist regardless of the intention to harass or offend. Yet the burden of proof in the case of cultural appropriation continues to be wrongly placed on Aboriginal peoples.

Further, we do not need to show that every Aboriginal student, parent, and Elder is offended. In fact, Elders teachings tell us to avoid offending one another and to make retribution if we've done so. The fact that there are people who do not recognize the effects of stereotypical images does not detract from the many others who are singled out, taunted, and offended.

The use of an essentially beheaded Indian "Chief" symbolizes our history into one dimension, a place



where we are no more than a memory of a long dead war hero. It ignores the many facets of our experience, our rich history and diverse cultures. One cartoon face doesn't represent this diversity, nor does it represent an actual person. Ironically, the logo was chosen in the sixties, the time when Aboriginal peoples could not vote and were subjected to residential schools, the sixties scoop, and the reserve pass system.

Some of our people have essentially given in to pressure, touting their acceptance of these negative stereotypes, because "at least it isn't the usual drunken Indian misconception".

Yet these stereotypes are no less inaccurate or detrimental to our self-image. We are essentially allowing ourselves to accept the minimum, instead of demanding equality in all things. I prefer to have higher expectations of each of us.

Some people are saddened by the decision to retire the logo because they feel it affects their school spirit, but I suggest that this is a weak stance. This is not the first time for an organization to change its logo. Rebranding happens all the time! Saskatchewan Indian Federated

College became First Nations University of Canada. The College of Commerce became the Edwards School of Business. These name changes do not minimize one's memories of attending these schools.

The name change did not detract from my years in either place, nor did it alter my memories of the lasting friendships, the professors who enlivened the classrooms, or the experiences that I had. Bedford Road will still have the same walls, teachers, students, and sports teams.

The backlash has begun as the detractors have, in their minds, lost. Yet this is not a win lose situation, and this is not a game. Saskatoon can now be at the forefront of positive discourse on progressive race relations. The removal of cultural appropriation in our institutions has caused a ripple effect with other cities, schools, and sports teams.

While this may seem trivial to some, this gesture of goodwill is one step on the journey of reconciliation; it shows that our school system honors the feelings of all. The resistance to cultural appropriation does not imply that this is the largest issue we must combat. It is a stepping stone on the journey to move society's perceptions of Aboriginal issues from one of disregard to understanding and empathy.

By making this small change, we are better equipping ourselves to challenge racism on the bigger scale. We can work together towards correcting how our people are perceived and treated. More successes such as this are integral to the larger goals of driving Canada to recognize our rights and place in society.

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Paul's March madness includes One Big Province

Most prairie dwellers are probably handling the long cold winter as well as can be expected. Handling it well enough does not exclude occasional bouts of temporary 'spring' madness does it?

How is one to make sense of Daylight Saving Time starting on Sunday, March 9? Under George Bush the date was pushed back even more into the back porch of Canadian winters. Canadian businesses wanted to go along with their American counterparts and here we are: pretending we want to take advantage of the long daylight in the evenings when actually it is still so cold that no sane person wishes to venture outdoors voluntarily.

I am trying to think of a winter equivalent to Noel Coward's lyrics "Mad Dogs and Englishmen Go Out in the Noonday Sun". Nothing publishable in a family newspaper comes to mind. If you do come up with a good one, contact John at the editorial pages.

DST of course does not apply in Saskatchewan. Not in Arizona either. I lived in the state of Queensland in Australia for many years 'back in the day', and the good people of that state, too, were allergic to DST.

Even now the Premier, who gets the bulk of his backing from the rural electorates, will have none of it. The same good reasons for opposing DST are heard in all the recalcitrant jurisdictions: 'that extra hour of daylight fades the curtains'; 'the cows cannot adjust', etc.

Nevertheless, in Saskatoon there are good reasons to anticipate an early spring: for 'spring', as a local colleague once told me, is the Saskatoon version of a snow street-clearing project.

While on the subject of madness, will Saskatchewan electors ever oppose the idea of its provincial government getting into commercial businesses with a legislated monopoly? Provincial governments monopolize the purchase of wine, beer and liquor and enforce a bizarre system that treats its electors like juveniles. This is far from the norm elsewhere, where you can shop in the wine aisle at the grocery store, or purchase your favourite tippie at your local sports venue or pub.

Well, since I have been critical of the municipal and the provincial governments, I might as well go on and take issue with all the three Prairie Provinces. They ought to do away with themselves and create ONE BIG PROVINCE. This would have many advantages. The increased concentration of hot air might help with cold winters like this one.

With added political clout we might be able to successfully resurrect the notion peddled by a federal politician some years ago, which proposed the annexation of a Caribbean island. Best idea out of Ottawa ever, wouldn't you say?

One Big Province (OBP) would save a lot of money and aggregate resources while lowering taxes. Elections would be a lot simpler. What are the actually good reasons for the existence of each prairie province today?

With a bigger province, we could afford our own police force like Quebec and Ontario, and do away with the RCMP which is uncontrollable by our regional governments. Given the new economies of scale, the idea of an adjunct Aboriginal Police Force would finally make sense, with all the bells and whistles and high-cost features of a modern police force.

What could we name such a blessed regional political entity? OBP would just not have the right cachet would it? Many folks like to hang on to old names. Each set of provincial polities would argue for its own provincial name to form a slice of the new name.

We can test this out: Manalwan, Mansata, Sasmanta, Sasober, Alsaskoba, Alaska? Alkatchman. Look, I am trying here. Do these options not sound at least as good as the actual existing countries of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan? By the way I had to explain to my friend Stan that these places had nothing to do with him.

Next month I shall try to make up for my March Madness and examine an emerging new way of making public policy, focusing upon the health of the population.

Oh, 'Beware the Ides Of March'. (15th)

Happy St Patrick's Day. (17th)



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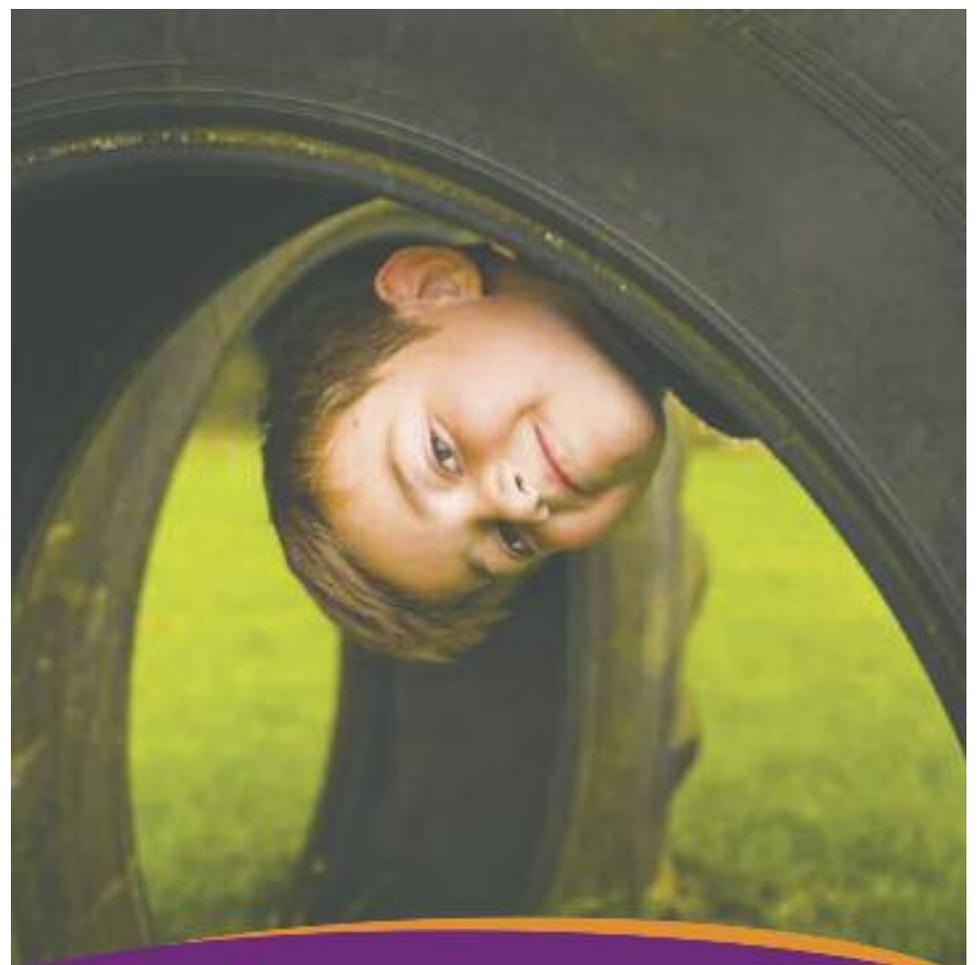
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Program offers opportunity for northern nursing students

For Eagle Feather News

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In order to take the first year of pre-

nursing studies at Northlands College, students must have completed Grade 12 English, math, biology and chemistry.

nurses when they complete their training," said College of Nursing acting Dean Lois Berry.

nursing staff."

Karla Hardcastle, the manager of University Programming at Northlands College, values the opportunity of offering the BSN in northern Saskatchewan.

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"The BSN program was implemented in the North to address the chronic shortages and turnover amongst registered



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Hurry! Apply Now. Applications are still being accepted for September 2014.



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An exchange to Mars for students

By Roberta Cross
For Eagle Feather News

Two powerhouse women – one in Alberta, another in Hawaii – made a life-changing exchange happen for students in their indigenous communities.

Rachelle MacDonald is Senior Advisor, Strategic Development at the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation (AWN), located near Grande Cache, Alberta. In early 2013, she was asked to host a summer culture camp for exchange students from the Hawaiian island of Molokai. She agreed, and then saw a chance for young people from her community to participate.



RACHELLE MCDONALD

“Sometimes you have to be brave,” she explains. “Hawaii is so far away. It was like saying to our kids, ‘hey, do you want to go to Mars next week?’”

McDonald is an expert in seizing opportunities. Under her administrative leadership for 17 years, AWN grew from one coordinator to 14 staff that manage housing, employment and training, consultation and community services. McDonald has been instrumental in establishing two community-owned businesses and supporting the AWN land claim.

The AWN is descended mostly from Cree who moved west and integrated with the eastern Rocky Mountain tribes. The community has no recognized Constitutional status. Their Elders lived traditionally, and the upheaval of mining, oil and gas began only in the 1960s. McDonald quotes one of the AWN Elders, saying, “We went from the stone age to the computer age in four decades – 1969 to 2009.”

Dara Lukonen believes students deserve high-quality education despite living remotely. She is an educational entrepreneur, a Founding Teacher at Aka’ula School on Molokai. This exchange to the Rocky Mountains was essential for her students, she says, “to meet other indigenous people and understand how they live like us and share the

same values.”

Lukonen and her mentor, Vicki Newberry, invested their life savings to start Aka’ula as a private school in 2003. She Aka’ula teaches environmental action, leadership capacity and critical thinking all based on the island’s culture and environment. Lukonen’s work day includes full-time teaching as well as administration, fundraising, and working with community and parents. Aka’ula receives no government funding, and relies on tuition and donations.

The seven Molokai students first flew to Alberta for four days at AWN.

Students made hand drums, participated in round dances and a sweat lodge, helped hand-scrape moose hide, and were taught about local medicinal plants.

“The sense of humour was something in common,” says McDonald, remembering the Molokai girls swimming in a cold Rocky Mountain lake.

The students slept in tipis, and spent time talking around the fire with community members and Elders. This felt really familiar to the Molokai students.



DARA LUKONEN

“A couple of times,” says McDonald, “visitors couldn’t pick out which were the Alberta kids and which were the Molokai kids.”

Culture crossed all boundaries, as both students and community members enthusiastically danced together, and worked together, chopping firewood and putting up the tipi.

They had more than culture in common. “Even though we are so far apart, some of the social challenges we face are identical,” says Lukonen.

“We took the kids to see our development corporation, a big welding shop,” explains McDonald. “We talked about how our community had to work really hard to build what we have. We spent a lot of time talking about having dreams and how going to school and participating on exchanges can help them be

successful.”

Four students and one chaperone from AWN then travelled to Molokai where they were hosted by Aka’ula and the local community for ten days.

Molokai is home for 8,000 people. Sixty-one per cent of the population are full or part Native Hawaiian. Known as “the abundant land” in Hawaiian, many people on the island hunt, fish and farm to provide for their families. There is some industrial farming and ranching, and only one hotel.

“Molokai is a community of people who choose to live their cultural practices, just like AWN,” says Lukonen.

The AWN students learned traditional practices like throw-net fishing, and to dance hula. The Hawaiian immersion teacher taught students to play ‘ukulele and sing in Hawaiian. The Molokai kids taught their AWN friends the ancient traditional warrior exercises called makahiki games.

The AWN students learned to cook imu style, the traditional underground cooking. Molokai kupuna (elders) taught lei-making and pounding taro root to



Cherish learns how to tan moose hide.

make poi. They also learned about Hawaiian healing plants, and worked to remove an invasive species from an ancient Hawaiian fishpond.

Even though the visits ended last summer, the exchange’s benefits continue.

“We got so close so fast,” says Lukonen. “They were our family when we were so far from home.” The Molokai students miss their new family in the AWN community, and often tell stories from their time in Alberta.

“This exchange was a life-changing opportunity for our children,” says McDonald. “It filled me with hope for what the future can hold.”

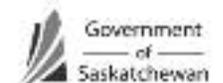


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No one deserves to live in terror

What were you thinking when ...? What drives females to bad boys? Is it our innate nurturing spirit that wants to nurse this man into the perfect partner? Do we really believe that we can love away all the crap he went through to make him who he is now?

Someone once told me that you can't plant a daisy and expect a rose to grow in its place. We can only reap what we sow; the collective "we" have to care enough to stop the violence and lateral violence in our communities. We cannot continue to look the other way and pretend you didn't see the bruises.

There is a mentality out there that if it isn't happening to you then it's none of your business. Really? We need to watch out for our neighbors, elders, children and community members. It's messed up but we can change the way we deal with our relationships.

Hitting, yelling, threatening ... this is not the way to communicate. You don't have to be Einstein to figure out that life feels good when you have love respect and kindness in your life. If this means that we have to take a class to learn how to behave then that's what we need to do.

Men who assault their partners

rarely assault their friends, neighbors, bosses or strangers. If we don't witness the abuse does that mean it isn't happening? I've heard people say, "He's such a great guy; he would never do that to his spouse."

Although some people don't see violence against women as a serious matter, or it is a private matter, we have to change these attitudes. Abuse thrives in secrecy so let's make a collective effort to bring the issue into the open where it belongs; no human being

domestic violence that are filled to capacity and women and children waiting for a safe place to stay.

Let your Chief and Council and other elected representatives know that violence against women in Canada and in

your community is a huge problem. Ask them what they are doing to end violence against women. Ask yourself, "If not you, who? If not now, when?"

So why do women stay in an



Abuse thrives in secrecy so let's make a collective effort to bring the issue into the open where it belongs

deserves to be living in terror.

There are shelters for victims of

abusive relationship? Some women

stay because they have a strong belief

in keeping the family together; sometimes relatives or in-laws blame the woman for the abuse and insist that she stay. Some women even think that the abuse is normal and if her man doesn't hit her then he doesn't love her.

We all need to change the way we perceive violence. Don't turn your head or pretend you didn't hear it – call the police if you witness violence and listen to the victim if they choose to share their experience with you. We all need someone who will listen.

Now fellas don't get your sleeveless undershirt in a knot, I know that not all women are victims; sometimes they are the abuser. Either way let us all recognize that we must stop being abusive to the people we love and begin to take that first step towards healing. There are domestic violence prevention programs out there to help.

We cannot expect that all the social problems can be solved quickly but better that we do everything we can to break the cycle than to do nothing. Please keep your letters and emails coming.

Send your questions or comments to: Sandee Sez c/o

Eagle Feather News P.O. Box 924

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Future leaders learn from inspiring mentors in Indigenous community

By John Lagimodiere
For Eagle Feather News

Several lucky youth from across Saskatchewan were fortunate to spend a week with Indigenous leaders from around Canada as part of a process to mentor future leaders in our country.

The Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan (AFCS), in partnership with the B.C. Centre of Excellence for Young Indigenous Leaders hosted the 1st Annual Aboriginal Youth Leadership Symposium in Saskatoon.

This symposium has run for seven years in B.C. and people in Saskatchewan saw it as a good fit.

“This project supports the work of AFCS, who strive to improve the lives of urban Aboriginal people across Saskatchewan by providing culturally-relevant programs and services,” said Gwen Bear, executive director of AFCS.

The symposium brought 17 Aboriginal youth from around Saskatchewan between the ages of 18-29, to work and learn from successful Aboriginal leaders in areas such as finance, governance, leadership strategies, wellness and traditional knowledge. The week was designed to be intimate, to inspire, and to give each youth the attention they deserve.

Kristen Charles of La Ronge said she appreciated the new and extra friends.

“The best thing I received this week was a sense of knowing that I have a solid network of likeminded individuals around the province that I can turn to in times of need and strength,” she added.

Facilitators included former Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Phil Fontaine, Saskatchewan Party MLA Jennifer Campeau, actor Errol Kinistino, Aboriginal Banking Specialists for RBC David Reid and Thomas Benjoe, and Rick Brant, director of Aboriginal Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity Partners Council. Put together, these people can have a big impact on a young person and their future goals.

“The symposium was more than I expected. The best thing that I took away from last week was the terms “Decolonize, Re-culturalize” and “break the cycle,” said



Youth from around Saskatchewan were inspired by national leaders. (Photo submitted)

Howard Cameron, of Beardy's and Okemasis

“Those two sayings really hit home for me because I needed that reassurance and motivation to pursue my dream to bring change.”

And it may have also inspired the next generation of activists. Naomi Corrigal of Beauval was.

“The best thing would be the “Moose Hide Campaign”. I want to work on getting the word out about the violence against aboriginal women and children and it will be a great start to something new!”

Also on hand were Elders Maria and Walter Linklater who were invited for their teachings and wisdom. Also appearing to support the youth was the

Minister of Advanced Education Rob Norris, and Herb Cox, Legislative Secretary.

“The week had a very powerful impact on myself as I start my own healing journey,” said Michelle Lachance of Big River.

“The AFCS is grateful to our major sponsors Ministry of First Nations & Metis Relations and RBC,” said Bear.

“Thanks also to supporters Cameco, BHP Billiton, SIGA, and Barb Klassen. We also owe gratitude to Paul Lacerte for facilitating and giving the training needed for AFCS to make the symposium an annual event. We are really looking forward to next year.”

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Conference calls for Indigenous control of education

By Fraser Needham
For Eagle Feather News

Surgeon Lake Central School principal Pauline McKay says she couldn't understand why her son was failing high school math during the regular school year but was able to pass the course at summer school.

"I go, Son, 'You did this in a month. How come you couldn't do it in six months?' And he said, 'Mom, because I only had one subject and the teacher was right there whenever I got stuck and was ready to help me and got me through it.'"

This led the educator to spearhead a program, which is now in place at a handful of Saskatchewan schools, that teaches a number of courses strictly in one-month block intensive formats.

McKay was just one of many educators who ran workshops at the 10th Annual Western First Nations Education Administrators Conference held at Teachers' Credit Union Place in Saskatoon. The February conference brought in about 2,000 educators to discuss various methods on how to achieve improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal students. A mid-conference banquet also raised about \$8,500 for a group that advocates on behalf of missing and murdered Aboriginal women. It was hosted by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the Prince Albert Grand Council.

FSIN Vice-Chief Bobby Cameron says the forum allows educators to share ideas on what works and what doesn't.

"After the three-day conference is over that they can go back home and say, 'Here's a new initiative that I'm going to bring into our classroom, it's working over here so let's give it a shot,'" he says.

University of Saskatchewan College of Education instructor Irene Oakes ran a seminar called, "Deficit versus Agentic Thinking." Oakes and a group of Saskatchewan educators recently traveled to New Zealand to study some of the innovative techniques teachers in this country are using to teach Maori students.

She says teachers need to really try and engage their students using agentic –



Walking stick was handed off from the hosts to next year's conference hosts from Manitoba

or positive – thinking as opposed to deficit – or negative – thinking of what can't be done. Oakes adds Aboriginal cultural heritage makes up a big part of the curriculum in New Zealand.

"They don't leave their culture at the door, they don't leave their language at the door, they celebrate it," she says. "The teachers learn the language, I heard teachers and principals actually talk and they didn't just say a few little phrases like a lot of us in Saskatchewan will say."

The Saskatchewan educators are now conducting a research study that tests what they learned in New Zealand at six provincial schools.

Saskatchewan Treaty Commissioner George Lafond, who was one of the conference's keynote speakers, says it also provides important feedback on some of the challenges teachers face in providing treaty education.

"We need to articulate very clearly where we are on the issue of rights but more importantly, the people who are actually in the schools every day," he says.

"We need to hear from them what are the opportunities but also threats they may face regarding funds and regarding school ratios, teacher ratios, teacher salaries."

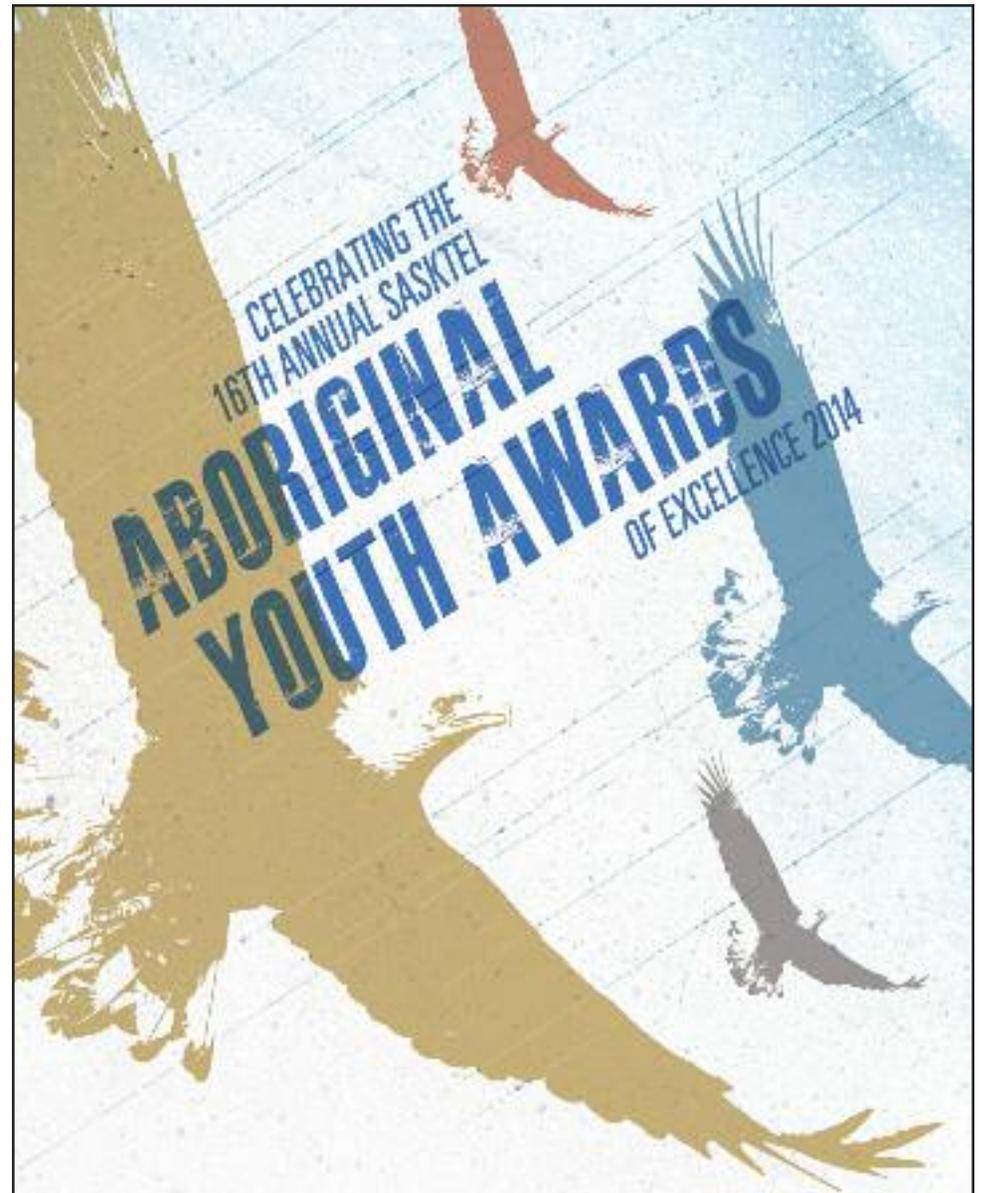
FSIN Senator Sol Sanderson, another keynote speaker, says improving Indigenous education starts with First Nations people taking as much control as they can of their own educational systems.

"The first thing is to take full control,

without that you have nothing," he says. "So, to do that, they need to restructure, implement inherent treaty rights to education under First Nations law and

jurisdiction, not provincial jurisdiction," he says.

Next year's conference will be held in Manitoba.



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STC, PotashCorp Career Fair encourages youth to invest in their future

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

The Future is Yours career fair brought young people and employers from around Saskatchewan together for the explicit purpose of creating more Aboriginal employment. The event was hosted by the Saskatoon Tribal Council and PotashCorp.

STC Tribal Chief Felix Thomas had a simple message for the young participants: "Invest your time into your future," said Tribal Chief Thomas. "Stay in school, work hard and finish your journey."

Riel Fidler and Leah Ahenakew are both Grade 11 students from Ile a la Crosse. They attended the fair as part of their Entrepreneurial class. They see self-employment in the future. "In our town, there are only service related jobs. Cashier, gas bar and low-wage and part-time," said Fidler.

"I intend to go to University and I want to be independent, but first I want to work in the military," added Ahenakew.

For many employers, the fair gives them the chance to explain to potential employees about the job, opportunities and what their expectations are.

"I only ask two things of my employees," explained Brent Scutchings with Coram Construction. "One is to show up every day for work and the other is to try when you are at work." Over 60 employers attended the career fair and the welcomed over 800 students.



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Rita Bouvier's passion for education, writing was nurtured at an early age

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

Writer, teacher, poet, and advocate, Rita Bouvier has made countless contributions locally, nationally and internationally. At the Indspire Awards this month, she will fittingly be honoured with the Education Award.

Born and raised in Ile-a-La-Crosse, she used to play school with her cousin Josie and their younger siblings and cousins.

"We could hardly wait for school to be over so we could start the day all over again with our own school. We would conduct it in this little shed our grandfather had."

She was a born teacher. She would go onto the University of Saskatchewan where she would receive her Master's degree in education, teach in northern Saskatchewan and in Saskatoon, and then become involved in developing SUNTEP, a partnership between Gabriel Dumont Institute and the U of S to educate Métis educators. She eventually becomes director.

She counts this collaborative initiative as one of her greatest achievements. She also held senior administrative positions with the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation and the Canadian Council on Learning's Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre, working at the College of Education, Aboriginal Education Research Centre at the U of S campus.

She currently works as an educational consultant supporting the development of various programs and initiatives. Most recently she served on the Joint Task Force to Improve Education and Employment Outcomes for First Nations and Métis students.

She is also a researcher. Collaborating with others

at the U of S, an area of interest has been on bilingual and bicultural immersion school programs in Cumberland House and Clearwater River Dene First Nation.

She has also published two books of poetry along the way, and has collaborated with others in academic writing – most recently she wrote the foreword for fellow educator Dr. Maria Battiste's latest book, *Decolonizing Education*. She also volunteers on the "SAWCI" (Saskatchewan Aboriginal Writers Circle Inc.) board, and with Iskwewuk-I-Wichiwitochik, Women Walking Together, an organization that advocates for missing and murdered women and their families.

She says not only is it an honor to be nominated for this award, which has gone to many other outstanding leaders, but also very humbling. But she sees this as an opportunity to highlight the importance of education and lifelong learning.

"A strong identity is important to the success of young people and that includes language and cultural identity for First Nations and Métis students," she notes.

She continues to serve her community through her dedication, her gifts, her training, and her quiet passion.

She is always quick to credit others, promoting the importance of relationship, mentorship, leadership, and grassroots efforts. These all serve to promote the importance of her life's work: to support the educational needs of Aboriginal students and to advocate with others for



RITA BOUVIER

systemic changes, specifically in mainstream educational institutions, so the history and knowledge shared reflects and serve all Canadian citizens.

"We need to intensify our efforts, not just for First Nations and Métis people, but for everyone in our province, so we can understand each other and work together."

She will receive the award at the National gala event on March 21 in Winnipeg.

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New program puts first-year U of S Aboriginal students first

By Sarah Taggart
For Eagle Feather News

When Kristina Bidwell took on the new role of Assistant Dean of Aboriginal Affairs in the College of Arts and Science at the University of Saskatchewan, she was asked to answer a serious question: why were so many Aboriginal students in the College dropping out in first year?

“Once they got through that first year, they had a very high graduation rate,” said Bidwell, who is Labrador Métis. “It was that first year that represented the vulnerable spot for most students.”

Bidwell, now Associate Dean of Aboriginal Affairs, discovered that Aboriginal students face multiple barriers, including financial difficulties, family responsibilities, loneliness and isolation. With the assistance of myriad professors in myriad departments across campus, Bidwell developed a program called the Aboriginal Student Achievement Program (ASAP) to address these barriers and provide tailor-made support for first-year students.

Jacquelyne Nokusis is a second-year student in microbiology and immunology, and a graduate of ASAP. Single mom

to a seven-year-old daughter, Nokusis first heard about ASAP from her educational coordinator on Peepeekisis Reserve. Intent on continuing the educational trend her mother started by graduating from the College of Law, Nokusis plans to study medicine, with a focus on holistic healing.

For Nokusis, ASAP was about connection.

“Being in a classroom with all Aboriginal people definitely helped,” said Nokusis. “It gave you a visual. Like, okay, I’m not the only Aboriginal person here.”

The program’s features include small classes comprising only Aboriginal students, regular tutorials, mentorship meetings with upper-year Aboriginal students, and a strong focus on creating ties with faculty.

“The most important thing about the program is the relationships that you establish with your educators,” said Nokusis.

“If you come here and you feel like people care about you, people notice if you’re coming or going, people notice if you’re not there, I think that makes a huge difference in first year,” said Bidwell.

“I have experienced a lot,” said Nokusis, who is now a student mentor in



Jacquelyne Nokusis and Niki Campbell are two students that benefitted from the ASAP program.

the program. “I’ve been on my own since I was about 16, I’ve moved around a lot, I’ve had to raise a child on my own. I want to share that knowledge.”

She added, “But at the same time a student could very well come in and teach me something new. It’s not just about me helping, it’s about us helping each other.”

ASAP is on strong ground in its second year.

“We see it as a success on multiple levels,” Bidwell said. “We had students tell us that ASAP is what kept them here, that ASAP made a difference to them.”

One student said the program was a great way to make friends.

“That’s not very academic,” Bidwell thought at first. “But then I thought, ‘That’s huge.’ If you feel like you have friends here and this is a fun, positive experience for you, then you’re likely to keep coming.”

And that’s what ASAP is all about: keeping Aboriginal students coming to class, in first year and beyond.

Jacquelyne Nokusis and Niki Campbell and two students that benefitted from the ASAP program.

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Scholarship winners include: (standing) Connie Cheecham, Shavonne Custer, Frances Goulet, Jennifer Roberts, Mikhail Vinokurov, Alana Gardiner, Walter Smith, Helen Ben, Simon Bird, Blake Charles. (Front) Brandon White, Tuiara Sivtceva, Clifford McKenzie and Donald Bear. (Photo supplied)

Cameco awards scholarships to Northern students

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

An investment in students will pay dividends for Northern Saskatchewan for decades. Cameco recently awarded \$84,000 in graduate scholarships to students in the International Centre for Northern Governance and Development Master of Northern Governance and Development program.

Each of the 14 scholarships is worth \$6,000, and the funds will be used by the students to cover tuition and other program costs. The announcement coincided with the launch of the MNGD internship program, By the North with the North: Community Building in Northern Saskatchewan.

Shavonne Custer is one of those students. She is a registered nurse from Pelican Narrows and is the Assistant Supervisor for Community Health with the Prince Albert Grand Council. She has taken on the Masters program and worked full time during it.

The travel and time commitment was difficult, but the investment will lead to bigger and better things at work.

"I see this leading to more supervisory options and working more on policy and working with government and with FNIB," said Shavonne.

"Implementing different initiatives with the Grand Council around health and wellness is always changing. This will allow me to be involved with that."

The By the North with the North: Community Building in Northern Saskatchewan research internships are an opportunity for students to apply their MNGD training to build capacity in a

Northern Saskatchewan community by focusing on one of the program's five core areas: governance; health and social development; innovation and entrepreneurship; capacity building; or resource development and environmental management.

The research takes place over a six-month period and results in a literature review, program evaluation, needs assessment, or feasibility study. The project is one of the largest known student-led research projects focused on northern issues.

"We take our direction from northern leaders when it comes to investing," said Sean Willy, director of corporate responsibility at Cameco.

"We all agree building capacity, vision and leadership skills are vital in creating healthy and prosperous northern communities," Willy said.

"These scholarships will make all the difference in terms of ensuring our students' success," said ICNGD Director, Ken Coates.

"Without these sorts of significant funding supports, our students wouldn't be able to undertake all the components of the MNGD program – including the research internships – that make it such a relevant and valuable learning experience for Northerners."

Brandon White, a Métis student from La Ronge and Past President of the Northern Administration Students Association at the University of Saskatchewan, is going to use his internship to undertake a feasibility study for a greenhouse at Cameco's Rabbit Lake Mine.

"Collaborative internships between MNGD students and third parties – industry, communities, health regions, and

others – mean that research in Saskatchewan will remain true to the needs of its people," said White.

"As students, these studies will help

us forge professional relationships and, as researchers, they will supply us with questions that are in need of northern answers."

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Not having kids doesn't make me a bad person

I was on a first (and last) date when I watched the movie, *The Road*. It's a dark movie about a man struggling to keep himself and his son alive in a post-apocalyptic world.

During the movie, my date began to cry and I smiled at him because I find it funny when people cry at movies. (It's my reserve up-bringing.) I guess he was embarrassed because he said to me, "The reason you're not crying is because you don't have any children."

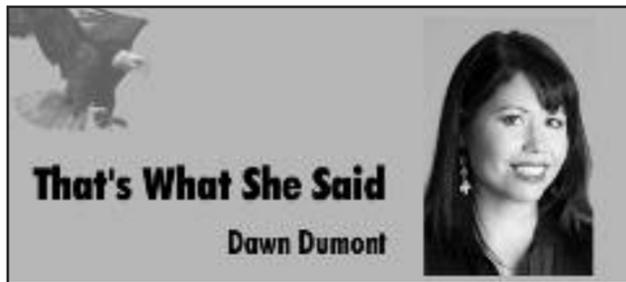
I should have said, "Actually, it's because I'm not a big crybaby," but I was too busy stuffing popcorn in my mouth.

Instead of being saddened by the movie, I was actually disgusted by it. The movie features a fair amount of cannibalism – and much to my annoyance, it's portrayed in a negative way. As a practical person with almost no taste-buds (hot sauce on egg whites is my idea of a fancy meal), I really don't understand the discrimination against cannibalism.

If you have nothing else to eat and you're hungry and the person is dead already – what's wrong with a little filet m'neighbour?

So as you can see, my date was wrong, I wasn't crying because there's something wrong with me but rather because I'm a pro-cannibal movie-goer.

This is not the first time nor likely the last time that someone has assumed that I'm not a good or kind person because I don't have kids. For the record, I really like the little buggers. Most of my favourite



conversations are with kids, like this little exchange: Me: "Aren't you a sweet little angel!" She: "Your breath smells."

I admire and respect parents because I see how difficult it is. When parents tell me how little they sleep, I actually shudder. My co-worker said the other day his sleep was suffering because his son was waking up three times a night. And I was like, "I have sleepless nights too, like when I discover a new series on Netflix." The pained look on his tired face suggested that he didn't appreciate my attempt to empathize.

I'm not childless by choice but I've made peace with it. I wasn't always fine with it. A few years ago, after a night out with my friends, the subject came up and I started crying in the cab on the way home. I cried so loud and so hard that my friends didn't want to leave me alone, even the cab driver didn't want me to get out of the cab.

It was epic ugly-crying. But after that experience, I was okay. There's only so much crying that you can do over things you cannot control.

Of course there are choices for women like me. I could visit a sperm bank- \$127 a pop plus taxes (unless you get it delivered to a reserve). I could lower my standards (not happening.)

Although at this age, even if I got pregnant, I don't know what kind of kids I'd have. Maybe when I was in my twenties, when my eggs were young and fresh, I'd have had bright and shiny, A-personality strivers.

But now, they'd likely be guitar-strumming hippies that I wouldn't be able to connect with. "What do you mean you'd rather spend time with your friends than do an extra credit science project? How are you even my child?!"

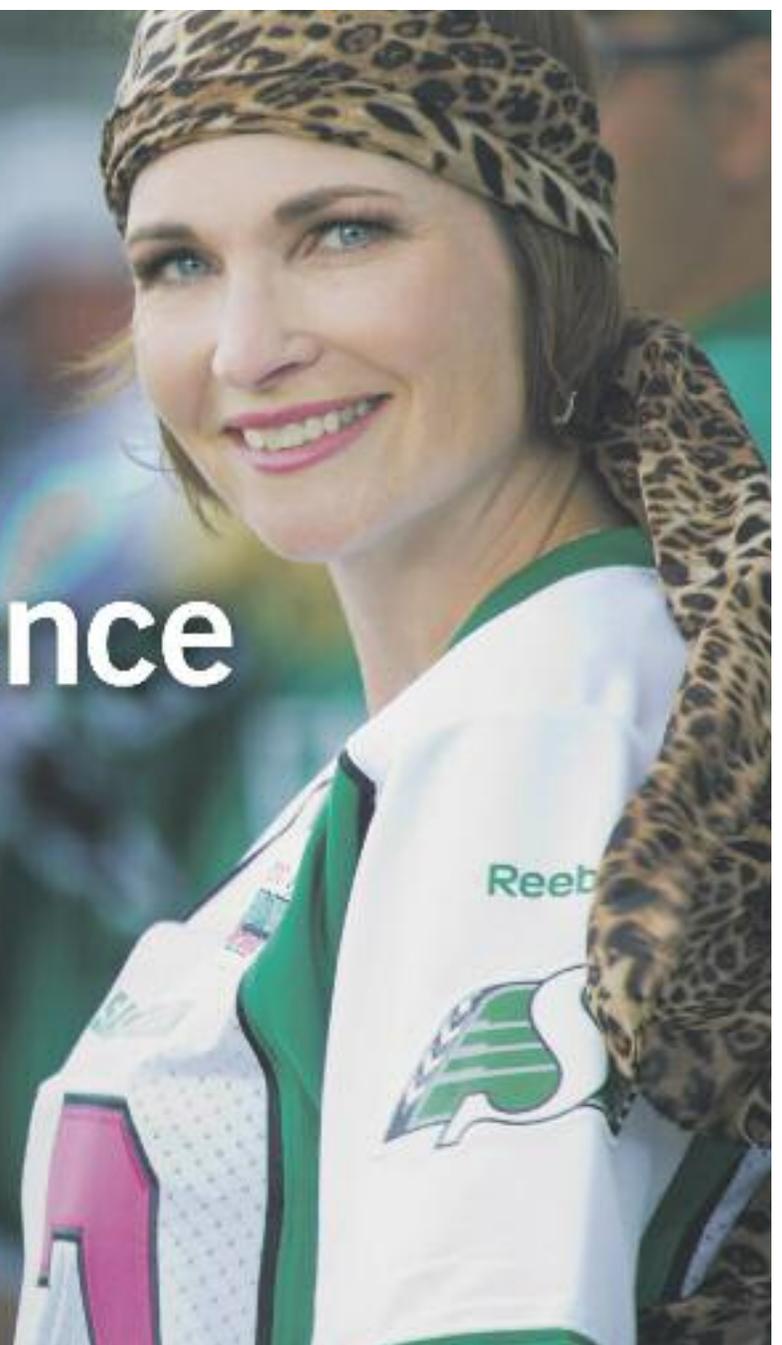
There's also adoption. I always thought it would be cool to adopt a 17-and-a-half-year old. Some kid who thought they'd run out of chances and then out of nowhere, I come running into the orphanage, shouting, "Where are your late teens? I'm here for a teenager!" Although maybe I wouldn't word it quite like that.

When I look back on that night in the movie theatre with my date, I wonder if he even noticed how wrong his assumptions were. Because, at the end of *The Road*, the young boy ends up with people who aren't related to him but who love him and want to take care of him – and fortunately for him, not eat him. Because, hard as it may be to imagine, human beings that haven't given birth are just as capable of love as anyone else.

But my date was probably too busy bawling his eyes out to notice.

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That Rez Dog is making the rounds

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

First the dog is touring schools, then showing up at hockey games and eventually taking over career fairs for goodness sake! Will anyone ever stop this rez dog from getting loose?

At least now when it gets out, we know its name to call it back. Journey. Nice and fitting.

Journey emerged as the best name through a contest that had 1,172 entries from 25 different schools. First place was awarded in best name and in best story. Both first place winners received an iPad as well as a pizza party for their classroom and also got to appear with the mascot at the First Nations night at the Blades game.

Best name went to Kielyn Scott, a Grade 6 student at Westmount Community School who coined the name Journey as a dog she met at a bus stop that went on a journey with her.

The best story award went to Tallyn Eagle, a Grade 5 student at Whitecap Elementary School. Tallyn wrote how Max "Overcame his circumstances and became a stronger dog because of it. He wants others to learn that it doesn't matter where or what you come from. You have the power to change it."

The name "Journey" complements the story of "Max" about perseverance despite real life challenges many youth face. The name speaks to the many different kinds of life journeys/paths such as personal, healing, educational, health, spiritual journeys.

The goal of having Journey is to help engage young people about the importance of staying in school. The rascally pooch has been a hit at the schools and at the recent Future is Yours career fair, he must have been in one hundred selfies and introduced all over Facebook. Journey was almost the most popular attraction at the whole career fair.



STC's mascot Journey enjoyed the game with contest winners Tallyn Eagle, Kielyn Scott and Blades mascot Poke Check at First Nations Night with the Saskatoon Blades. (Photo supplied)

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13-14 (Males)	1000	1400	1400	11,000.00 12,000.00 13,000.00
15-18 (Males)	500	900	900	11,000.00 12,000.00 13,000.00

*Trophy included with all entries

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10-12 (Males)	500	900	Trophy	11,000.00 12,000.00 13,000.00
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*Trophy included with all entries

Daughter on track to emulate Mom's success

By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

Reila Bird sprinted past the competition, literally, when she competed at the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Track and Field Championships (SATFC), and now she sits in the stands, watching her daughter, Juleah Duesing, do the same.

Bird joined track club when she was in Grade 9.

"I had a natural ability," she recalls, and loved running because it was an individual sport and one she excelled at it.

She competed at the 1993 North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) and won four gold medals in the 100m, 200m, 400m, and 4x100m relay.

Two years later, she competed in NAIG again and again won four gold medals.

Unfortunately, the 400m at those games was her last competitive race because she had stress fractures in both her shins, landing her in a hospital in Minnesota.

"It was devastating," she remembers, because she was starting university next year and had wanted to join the University of Saskatchewan track team.

Now she helps coach the Queen City Striders (the club her daughter trains with) and says that helps fill the void of not running and competing. She says even just attending the SATFC helps, and she is considering training and competing in the open category in the future.

For now, the focus is on her 11-year-old daughter. Duesing's favourite sprint is the 150m (because it's "an easy sprint to do"), but she also competes in long jump, 800m, and the 60m, which she won at the most recent SATFC in Saskatoon.

Duesing says she sets goals to keep improving. She usually places in the top three in her events.

Her competitive nature came from a young age. When she was in Grade 1 or 2, she saw her mom's medals, and in a Mother's Day card, she wrote, "I want to be like my mom because I want to win as many medals as her."

Duesing will be competing in NAIG this summer in the 150m, 80m, 800m, and long jump. Her mom says her own father got her involved in sports.

"Juleah's third generation First Nations," she says (they are from the George Gordon First Nation).



NAHANNI ADAMS-LINDBERG

3000m, both of which she'll be competing in at this summer's NAIG in Regina. At the most recent SATFC in Saskatoon, she placed third in the 1500m.

"I was happy with my race," she said after it was over. "The laps went by really quick."

A dedicated runner, Adams-Lindberg lives at Regina Beach, attends Lumsden High School, and three times a week travels into Regina to train with the Queen City



Reila Bird's love of running has been picked up by her daughter, Juleah, who is an emerging track star.

Striders. She also runs on her own twice a week.

Being a long distance runner, Adams-Lindberg has the discipline to work through the pain.

"It's all in your mind," she says, noting she doesn't plan to stop running.

"Even if I don't compete (after I'm done school), I'll just keep doing it to keep fit."

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FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER CONTACT:

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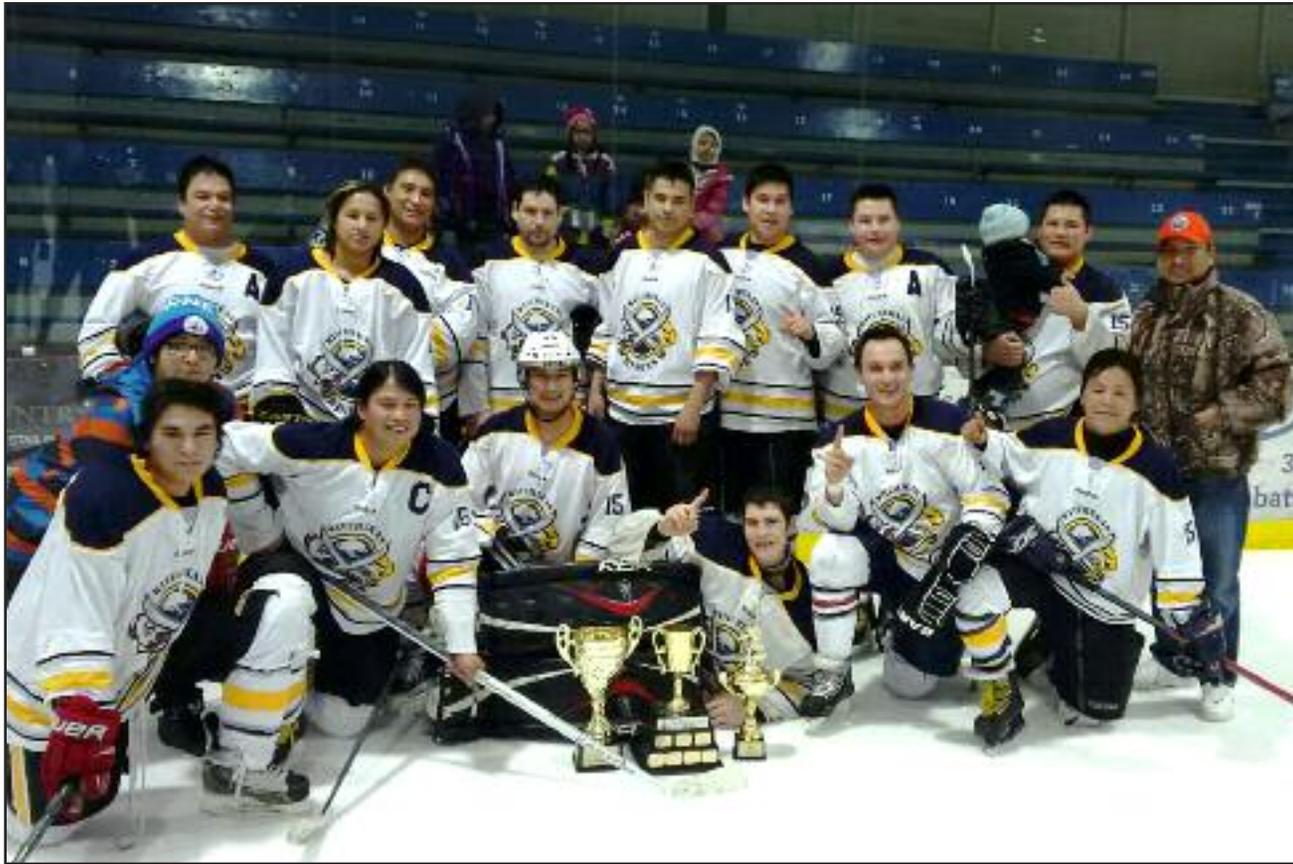
Witchekan edges Crazy Horse to win LWC

Nôtinito sîpî (the Battlefords), Treaty Six Territory – The fourteenth annual Lawrence Weenie Cup (LWC) Tomahockey tournament held in North Battleford and Red Pheasant on February 15 and 16 featured six masters teams and eight Senior Rec teams.

In the end it was the squad from Witchekan Lake that captured the Senior Rec division in an exciting championship game. The competition in the big game was Crazy Horse Riders, a rez hockey club from Alexis, Alberta-Treaty Six Territory.

“This LWC tourney was unique because we attracted the Crazy Horse Riders to come all this way and they certainly put on a great show” said LWC Founder and organizer Milton Tootosis, son of the late Lawrence Weenie.

“We were very pleased with the quality of play, the sportsmanship and competitiveness of all 14 teams this year. It set the



Witchekan Lake Bisons won the 14th Annual Lawrence Weenie Cup held in February.

model for future LWC tournaments” he added.

The Senior Rec final game ended in a tie after regulation time and had to go into overtime. Neither club could seal it away

so it had to go into a three player shoot out. In the end, the Bisons won the Cup, bragging rights and the \$6,000 prize. Trent Campbell, a retired Jr, College, AHL, ECHL and European pro hockey player,

was selected the tournament MVP.

In the masters division it was Big Island Lake Sabres all the way. The Sabres were lead by former Senior league star Travis Cunningham, a Métis from northern Alberta. Cunningham was named the MVP in the masters division for his prolific offensive scoring skills. Onion Lake Borderchiefs were runnerup.

The masters division continues to grow and it’s very encouraging to see so many of the older guys look forward to the LWC each year.

“My late father was all about promoting active physical lifestyles, fitness and sportsmanship. I think my father would be very pleased to see so many guys over 40 years of age on the ice,” said Tootosis.

“With diabetes and obesity a significant health issue in First Nations communities keeping physically active is a major proactive strategy to combating illness,” he added.

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