

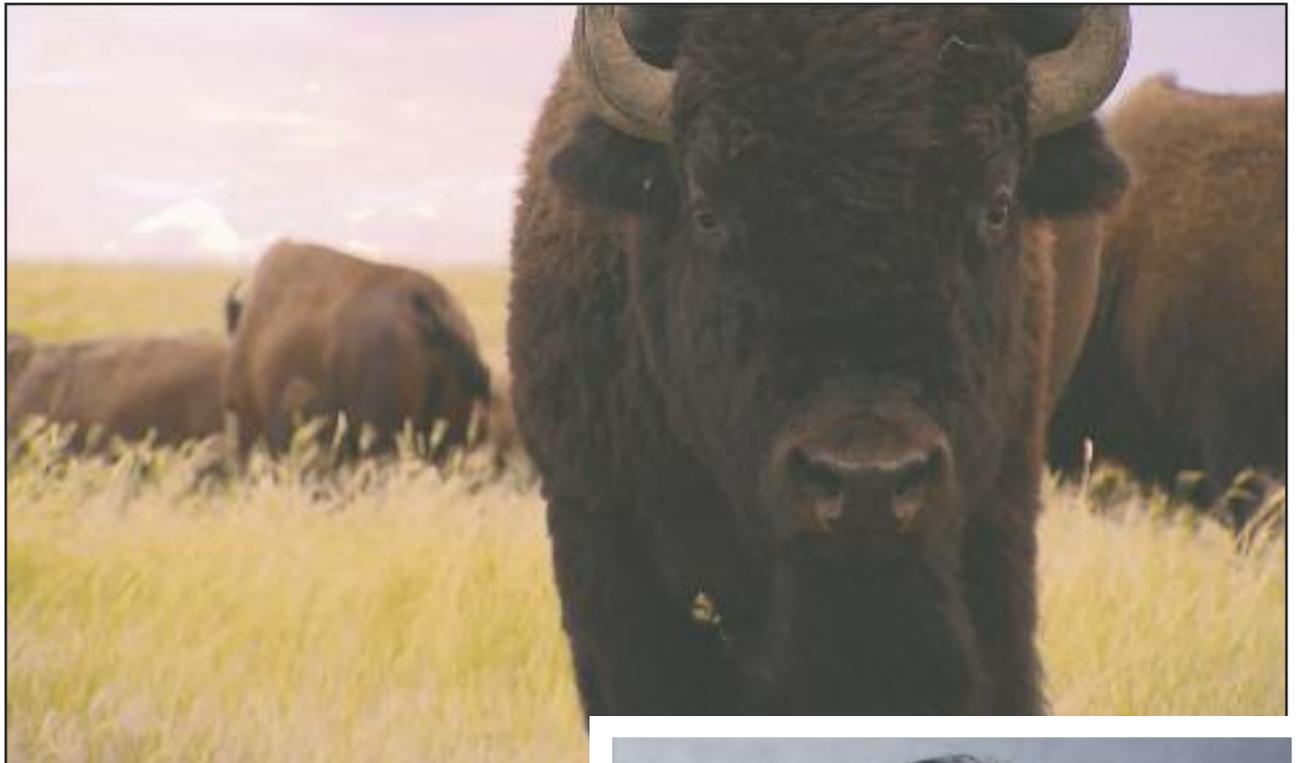
# Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

## Documentary portrays demise of buffalo herds

Award winning filmmaker Tash Hubbard has released *Buffalo Calling*, a documentary that examines the near extinction of the buffalo on the Great Plains and the recovery process that has taken place.

(Photo of Tasha Hubbard by Nadya Kwandibens at Redworks. Damien Kent provided the video still from the film)



By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News

With a tenacity perhaps inspired by her subjects themselves, award winning documentary filmmaker Tasha Hubbard has completed a remarkable movie.

*Buffalo Calling*, a 12-minute film about the demise of the great herds on the plains of North America is a stunning portrayal of a crucial historical period, replete with beautiful windswept landscapes and impressive images of the sacred beasts.

Hubbard was inspired by an article she read about the buffalo in *Canadian Geographic*.

"It made me wonder what the impact had been on plains Indigenous peoples to lose the buffalo so drastically," explains Hubbard who won a 2005 Gemini and Golden Sheaf for *Two Worlds Colliding*, a documentary she wrote and directed.

"I wanted to make a documentary about the slaughter and recovery of the buffalo but then I started my academic work and they became my research area. While I was working on my PhD, I realized I wanted to explore a visual form of storytelling about one particular herd's survival."

At that point, as filming moved to the vast Grasslands National Park in southern Saskatchewan, Hubbard began to learn about patience and persistence as she sought to film the bison herd that now includes more than 300 animals.

"I budgeted for a two to three-day shoot and was confident that we would get the footage we needed in those two days. We spent almost the entire two days walking and walking miles and miles across the prairie, and only getting within a half-mile of the herd," Hubbard says.

"It took two summers and seven shoots to finally get close enough to film them. I can hardly remember the details of the 10-15 minutes we had to film while they were curious enough to stay close, I was so excited. But the whole process taught me to be patient."

The project was truly a labour of love for Hubbard whose research uncovered some startling statistics.

"I think the most revealing thing was exactly how low the population got. Some estimates say 250 or 500. In the 1890s, a conservationist employed by the Smithsonian went out and killed 29 bison in order to stuff the "perfect specimens."

"The subsequent display appears in the film, representing the depth of the destruction and what remained afterwards."



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Muskeg Lake Cree Nation artist **Joi Arcand** credits her family for inspiring her on her creative journey. - Page 2



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**ART AUCTION**  
Without art there would just be white walls says **Ernie Scoles** preparing for a SNTC fundraiser. - Page 15



**JUNO WINNER**  
**George Leach** is thrilled to be a Juno Award winner and he's determined to keep doing what's working. - Page 16



**WILD GAME FOR GAMES**  
The upcoming First Nations Winter Games will feature some special items on the menu. - Page 23

Welcome to our  
Arts & Entertainment Edition  
Coming In May - Sports & Youth Issue

CPMA #40027204

# Arcand disrupting existing stereotypes

Joi T. Arcand creates digital photo work that blends identity and nostalgia, and past and present. By digitally altering outdated imagery, she creates new conversations around Indigenous representation in popular culture. Raised in her home community of Muskeg Lake

Cree Nation, Arcand lives in Saskatoon. She is artistic director and founder of *kimiwan* 'zine, a publication for Indigenous artists. Her mentor, Mary Longman, is a visual artist and a Professor of Aboriginal Art History, University of Saskatchewan. You can see Joi's work at the Mendel Art Gallery from April 11 to June 15 and at Wanuskewin until May 15th. We caught up to Joi between exhibits for a quick Q&A.

**As an artist, what does it mean to you to have a show at Wanuskewin and at the Mendel Art gallery at the same time?**

It means a lot to me to have my work shown in these two places in Saskatchewan. I grew up on Muskeg Lake Cree Nation and moved to

Saskatoon when I was 18 to attend the University of Saskatchewan. I've shown work across Canada but it always means more to show it close to home, near the places that inspire me the most. The show at Wanuskewin is my first solo exhibition of past work in Saskatoon and the show at the Mendel was a great opportunity to show Saskatoon what I've been up to recently.

**This is a difficult question, but what is your inspiration? What pushes you to create what you do?**

My inspiration is my family and sharing our stories. I want to disrupt the existing stereotypes about Indigenous people in the media by sharing my personal stories.

being created by young people is so exciting right now as technology and other media are



**JOI ARCAND**

more readily available to use as forms of self-expression. The opportunities are endless, if you use the tools that you have at your disposal. You don't necessarily need expensive high-tech equipment to tell a story, you can make a short film or animation with a cell phone and upload it to Youtube. Yes to more funding!

**How do we create more artists?**

We are all born as artists; it is usually the school system and external forces that stifle our inherent creativity as

**As editor of *kimiwan* zine, you see lots of artists from different genres. How would you describe the state of Aboriginal arts in Saskatchewan? Healthy? Underfunded? Amazing?**

Indigenous art has always been strong in Saskatchewan, but the arts are always underfunded – which forces artists to work in other professions just to pay bills. Art that is

we grow older. Art needs to once again become recognized as essential to a healthy society – Indigenous cultures have always believed that art and life are not separate. Someone who chooses art as a career is not taking the easy route, so there needs to be support in place to encourage them not to quit!

Website: [joitarcand.com](http://joitarcand.com) [kimiwan-zine.com](http://kimiwan-zine.com)

## THE NATURE OF THIS PLACE



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# Pelican Narrows and Muslim community remember teacher and friend

By Creeson Agecutay  
For Eagle Feather News

Whether it was a warm greeting or just wondering how your day was, Munir Ahmad was a kind-hearted man, who never gave up on his students. He taught chemistry, math and physics for five years at Opawikokan School in Pelican Narrows.

“Munir was an asset to our school. He prepared our students for departmental exams and post-secondary and always told the students to never give up and he always had a smile,” said Susan Custer, a long time educator and principal of the school.

On April 4, hundreds from the community and 60 members from Saskatoon’s Muslim community came together to remember the educator’s life. Ahmad passed away suddenly from a heart attack in mid-March in his home in Pelican Narrows.

“He cared about everybody, it’s so sad that he had to go so soon,” said 16-year-old Savannah Sewap, a student of Ahmad’s. Sewap sang a traditional Cree gospel song, along with her choir class during the gathering.



MUNIR AHMAD

“I was nervous but I did it for him,” she said.

Not only did the community host a dinner with their Muslim brothers and sisters but the gathering was also an educational one, as many experienced for the first time, a Muslim Friday prayer that took place before dinner, called the Jumu’ah prayer. Words of remembrance, gifts and laughter were shared among both communities. Badar Rizwan, Munir’s son was also in attendance and was given a painting of his father by a local elder.

*“He left a legacy of love, caring and being humble. He loved everything about life and saw life as a gift”*

“He was my hero. I was devastated when I heard the news. Now that I feel the support here, instead of feeling grief, I feel more proud,” said Badar.



Friends of Munir Ahmad hold his photo as they remember his contribution to the community. From left they are Librarian Margaret Brass, Office Manager Angie Merasty, Principal Susan Custer, Teacher Lorette Clarke, Teacher Lana Henry and Teacher Lonnie Sinclair. (Photo by Creeson Agecutay)

“(Munir’s life) has created a bond of brotherhood,” said Shamoon Rashid, friend of Munir’s and president of Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama’at in Saskatoon.

“We all feel the love and passion the community had for Munir. When we had the memorial services in Saskatoon, we had 100 members from Pelican Narrows come to visit us. We really wanted to show how much gratitude we had and visit the people of Pelican.”

For many students and staff, Ahmad was like a father figure and community elder. He lived his life by the prayer he had on the wall in his classroom, “Love for all, hatred for none,” a lesson he passed on to many in the community.

“He would ask all the staff and students how their day was, every morning, afternoon and before school was done,” said 17-year-old Austin Dorion, another student of Ahmad.

Born in Pakistan, Ahmad received his education degree from his home country and later taught in Africa for many years. In 1999, he emigrated to Canada in Barrie, Ontario and had difficulty finding a teaching position.

“He would work an odd job here and there. As soon as he found the position at Pelican Narrows, he was so happy to get back into teaching. He always wanted to help, especially those who needed help.” said Syed Shah, a lifetime friend of Ahmad’s.

Ahmad is survived by his wife and children. The school will continue to remember Ahmad through an annual \$1,500 graduation award called the, Munir Ahmad Math, Science and Most Virtuous Award.

The school will also fundraise and pay for Ahmad’s family to travel from Ontario and hand out the first award in June. Custer said it was the least they can do to continue his memory.

“He left a legacy of love, caring and being humble. He loved everything about life and saw life as a gift.

“We will all miss him very much.”



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# Reconciliation is about more than saying sorry

In the shadow of the last national gathering of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, there are still many groups, individuals and businesses out there that are not acting in the true nature of reconciliation.

Take, for instance, the City of Regina. In 2012, an engineering firm surveyed an area on the western edge of the city and found there was a minimum of 22 gravesites and possibly 40. It was the site of the former Regina Indian Industrial School. Buried in the cemetery are the bodies of children from First Nations and Métis communities, as well as the children of the school's first principal.

On Friday April 4, 2014, the Regina Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee sent an email to the generic email address of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada saying that the committee was going to consider a report at its meeting on Monday, April 7. The email invited any interested persons to make submissions to the Committee or to City Council.

Of course the TRC is going to be interested in this. They have a specific mandate to examine the issue of missing and deceased children from industrial and residential schools, the location of the cemeteries and the identification of the children buried there. And the City of Regina gave them three days notice just before a weekend. We wonder what their intent was.

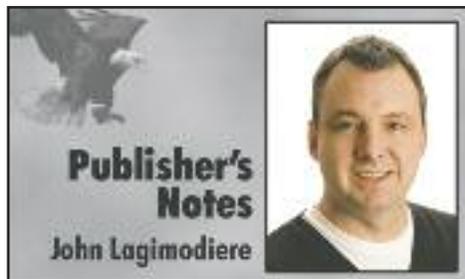
Eventually the City released a report calling for the cemetery to be maintained in the same way as dry land vegetation. In other words, the owner has to cut the vegetation in the cemetery "a minimum of once per year in late July or August to a height of 8-10".

The report also mentioned costs several times. It seems as though there is

no intent to step forward with a solid offer of reconciliation by offering to preserve the cemetery. Reconciliation is not just saying sorry. It is also about actions.

Regina dropped the ball on this one. The outcry has been fast and furious and the committee has now decided to delay making a recommendation until they hear from other groups. Nice backpedal.

TSN also slipped up recently. They were the feature broadcaster of the March 30 Edmonton Oilers and New York Rangers game from Edmonton. The Oilers had dedicated that game to the survivors of Indian Residential Schools and those that played hockey in the



The Oilers made a classy move to recognize these survivors and it was a great chance for people across Canada to learn about residential schools.

Survivors across the nation turned in to see the show.

Hockey greats Stan Hodgson, Freddie Sasakamoose, Eugene Arcand and Willie Littlechild were honoured, as were young hockey players. They even had the national anthem sung in Cree. Well, imagine everyone's dismay when halfway through the anthem, they cut away from the presentation of colours and the eagle staff and went back to the studio and their analysts, thus leaving

and Willie Littlechild dropping the puck for the opening faceoff.

This was an excellent chance to showcase Indian hockey players and the legacy of the residential schools. The snub upset many survivors and the people at TSN have some explaining to do and maybe even some work on their end to help tell the stories of these schools and the people in them. CBC did it, why can't TSN? Time for them to man up.

It was not all bad news out there in wonderland. The TRC gathering in Edmonton was the largest ever and several cities including Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary and Wetaskiwin all declared next year to be a Year of Reconciliation. Toronto Mayor Rob Ford even signed the declaration.

The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations also found a way to keep going forward. After moving around some money and with the Vice Chiefs all taking \$15,000 pay cuts, it turns out that less than ten employees were actually laid off.

And to round it off, this paper goes to press as the Prince Albert Grand Council Fine Arts Festival is switching into high gear. The beloved festival has become a showcase for First Nations students wishing to display a wide range of artistic talent. Students participate in visual arts, drama, dance, music, literature, and learn hands on skills to enhance their talents.

Go to Facebook and check out the videos. The place is packed and people are having a roaring good time at the dancing competitions. The power to engage those young people through the arts is amazing.

Good for them. Let's have more of that!



Prince Albert Grand Council Fine Arts Festival brings out the best in our artists. Here is a group of performers from the Wapanacahk School at Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation. (Photo by Sheryl Kimbley)

schools. The last National Gathering of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada had been in Edmonton and the last day coincided with the game.

survivors and fans and Canadians who have lots to learn about Indian Residential Schools watching talking heads instead of the public education offered

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# Taking pride in proper cleaning good for all of us

A national health survey recently completed about the state of ‘cleanliness’ in Canadian hospitals reported that “nearly 40 per cent of hospital infection control experts believe their hospitals aren’t clean enough to prevent the spread of the toxic gut infection *C. difficile* and other potentially lethal organisms and that about 220,000 Canadians will be sickened this year with an infection they picked up in a hospital.”

Those are pretty scary statistics but not surprising to anyone who has spent time in a hospital. I recently spent several weeks in one with a relative and was appalled at what I observed.

The floors, for example, although they looked clean and should have been as a man was diligently moving from one location to another either on a cleaning machine or with a mop and pail all day long.

But on closer observation, the edges of the floors, against the walls, and piled in the corners were dust balls and accumulated dirt.

The kind that only comes off when scraped and scrubbed which means it has been accumulating for a very long time. As my mom, who was a clean freak would have said, “That man gave the pretense of working very hard giving that floor a lick and a polish but cleaning he was not.”

It was even worse in the hospital room, the staff walked into the private room once a day pushing a cart full of important looking

cleaners. Using a damp cloth they wiped off the table, but they didn’t move anything. They wiped off the windowsills then with the same cloth they went into the bathroom where you could hear the water being turned on, but not once did I see them touch the cleaners on the cart nor did I see them wash the cleaning cloth or change it.

Now imagine how dirty that cloth is by the time it has gone through the room and, one can’t help but wonder how often it is sterilized or changed as it goes through the entire ward.

The nurses walked in and out adjusting tubes, administering medicines, giving needles, emptying bedpans etc. and most of the time they wore gloves to protect themselves but they didn’t change them to protect the patient.

Sometimes instruments were dropped on the floor, picked up and used but not cleaned. I became quite alarmed after the doctor told us he was concerned about the patient contacting infections after his surgery so I reported what I was observing to the head nurse.

She was not very happy about the report and I was reminded that I too brought germs

into the room and could just as easily infect the patient.

They were all, she said, “doing their best”. I was not complaining about their care giving as they were kind to the patient and they were all working hard, however, I was concerned just like the doctor, that the patient could contact

an infection and he did and yes, it could have been anyone of us bringing it in.

The anti-bacterial machines, which are placed through out the hospital, were always empty and although we were constantly washing our hands I doubt it would have made much difference.

By the way, we were told by one of the nurses that people came in several times a day and stole the anti-bacterial bags.

When we asked what on earth for we were told that people drink it. I can’t even imagine what that must taste like but somebody certainly has clean guts in this province!

I have spent many weeks in and out of hospitals in the past 50 years, with the old people in my family and also with family members who have been terminally ill but what I have seen and experienced in these last few years are a real cause for concern

and it is for other people as well. The national health survey report just confirms what we already know.

We may have advanced as far as medicine is concerned but when it comes to basic things like cleanliness we have gone backwards and we all have to take some responsibility for this. Administrators say they need more money so they can hire more people but if those people do not know how to clean nor care about it then what is the point of bringing in more of them.

Cleaning is no different then any other work. It is about pride in what we are doing and believing that it is of importance and I believe that is what is missing. Cleaning in our society is considered menial work, the lowest of the low so why should anyone take pride in it.

Very few children are taught anymore how to clean their rooms and pick up after themselves much less clean the house or wash up after dinner. And if no one is teaching them then how can we expect them to know how to do it as adults and, as long as it is considered menial work there will be very little pride ever taken in doing it right.

We are all to blame in any number of small ways. Its in the way we teach our children, it is in the things we value and in the way we take care of each other and the way we honor one another and life around us.

All of that is reflected back to us in the behavior of our society, governments and institutions.



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# Making policy

A 'policy' as everyone knows is a guide for action. Governments use policies to guide officials in their actions. It can be said that legislation contains policy but a policy may be applied without any legislation to support it.

Policies usually have some broad assumptions, ideas or values behind them. They will also have a purpose or objective in mind. It is interesting to look at what approaches lie behind current and past policies, and to think about what better ways might be adopted to make better policy today.

Let us look at some examples of policy approaches. Then you can make up your

mind which one you think might be good to adopt today in Saskatchewan and in Canada, by the federal government that is, because Canada is much more than the federal government in Ottawa.

British philosophers tried to identify goals to reach by policy and championed 'utilitarianism' which says you should make policies that bring the greatest good to the greatest number of people.

John Rawls, the American moral philosopher, developed the concept of the 'person in the original position' (POP) to argue for his complex policy approach.

Turning to policy that aims at Indigenous people we start with the memorable phrase I picked up in New Zealand to explain the policy in the British colonies at the height of the British empire in the 19th century: we make good policy because what we do is 'to smooth the pillow of a dying race.'

That idea guided what went into the Indian Act in 1876: 'Indians' were expected to disappear before 'a superior race'.

The mandate of Canada's federal Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1991-1996 (RCAP) was to recommend policies. The approach of the RCAP to policy-making was based upon four principles: mutual recognition, mutual respect, mutual responsibility and sharing.

On the Indigenous side itself, the concept of the 'Seven Generations' has been much-discussed. The RCAP acknowledged it and named some of its work for the approach. The late renowned Anishinabe philosopher and teacher, Tobasonakwut Kinew, explained that the concept is to be applied by each generation as a true

guide to policy. It seeks the best result for the Seven Generations, which go three back and three forward.

Looking back; Nindaanikoobitaaganag, the great grandparents; Nimishomis or Nokomis, the grandparents; Niniigiigoog, the parents. Niin, the present generation inquirer; Looking ahead, Niniichaanisag, the children; Noozhisag, the grandchildren, and Nindaanikoobitaaganag, the great grandchildren.

The usual approach in Canada has been to use economic performance as a measure of good policy. But is it the health of the economy or the health of the people that matters most? There is a wide movement that is

starting to catch on in Canada that measures policy by asking if it is good for the health of the people. A local physician, Dr Ryan Meili has published a book entitled A Healthy Society: How A Focus on Health can revive Canadian Democracy in which he points out that economic measures of productivity include things that are bad for health as well as things that are good for health. He has launched an online movement for what is called 'upstream' thinking at [www.thinkupstream.net](http://www.thinkupstream.net)

At first glance it seems that an alternative approach might be to ask what policy is required for the health of the population, rather than asking if policies that have other objectives are good or bad for health.

I think there might be a difference. Or is there? Why don't we give ourselves some time to think about it and return to this important topic next time? John the editor says I am out of space.

...

NRTA Summit 2014

The third conference on this topic will be held at Tsuu Tina near Calgary on May 7-9 inclusive this year. The first two were held in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

The Natural Resources Transfer Agreement Acts transferred the administration of lands and natural resources from the federal to the provincial governments of the three prairie provinces. The Acts containing the agreements became part of the constitution as the Constitution Act 1930. The agenda is to design a strategy to pursue First Nation goals on topics that involve the NRTA.

Information may be obtained by contacting Patty Beebe at [beebeurrie@gmail.com](mailto:beebeurrie@gmail.com)



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## NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM AROUND THE PROVINCE

### Money in Provincial budget mostly education and training

The 2014-2015 provincial budget allocates \$189.2 million for program funding targeted primarily for First Nations and Métis organizations and individuals. The government says that's an increase of \$4.4 million or 2.4 per cent from the funding in last year's budget.

Included in the \$189.2 million is: \$6 million to double the funding for initiatives in response to the Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment Outcomes for First Nations and Métis People, \$5.4 million for new pre-Kindergarten programs targeted in high-needs areas and \$76.6 million in gaming agreement transfers First Nations and Métis organizations.

Through the Ministry of the Economy, the government is also providing \$1 million to the North American Indigenous Games from July 20 to 27 in Regina this year.

### CIC renews funding for Aboriginal bursary program

The Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan (CIC) will renew funding for its Aboriginal Bursary Program for five years. The program is available to Aboriginal students at the University of Regina, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIASST), and Lakeland College.

The program grants up to 85 renewable \$5,000 bursaries a year, depending on the number of applicants. The projected cost of the five-year renewal is \$2.2 million.

"It's incentive for me when I doubted myself at times, struggling to get where I am in my education," SIASST student and bursary recipient Nicole Horse said. "I get to boast about it to my family, my two sons and the younger sisters, who I try my best to be a role model for. I give thanks to everyone who has given me this opportunity to stand tall."

### Province licenses software on reserve

For the first time ever, First Nation K-12 schools will be included in the Microsoft Licensing Agreement. Recently Education Minister Don Morgan, alongside Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Vice Chief Bobby Cameron, announced that the Government of Saskatchewan will invest \$120,000 to include all First Nation K-12 schools in the provincial Microsoft Licensing Agreement, which will provide students in First Nation schools with more equitable access to technology and resources. This investment responds to the recommendations of the Joint Task Force, by helping to increase technological literacy and meet the learning needs of all Saskatchewan students.

The inclusion of First Nation K-12 schools in the agreement will result in better technology to support both students and teachers in the classroom, as well as administration. It will also provide software purchasing savings and regular software updates. First Nation K-12 schools will have access to the Microsoft software this month.



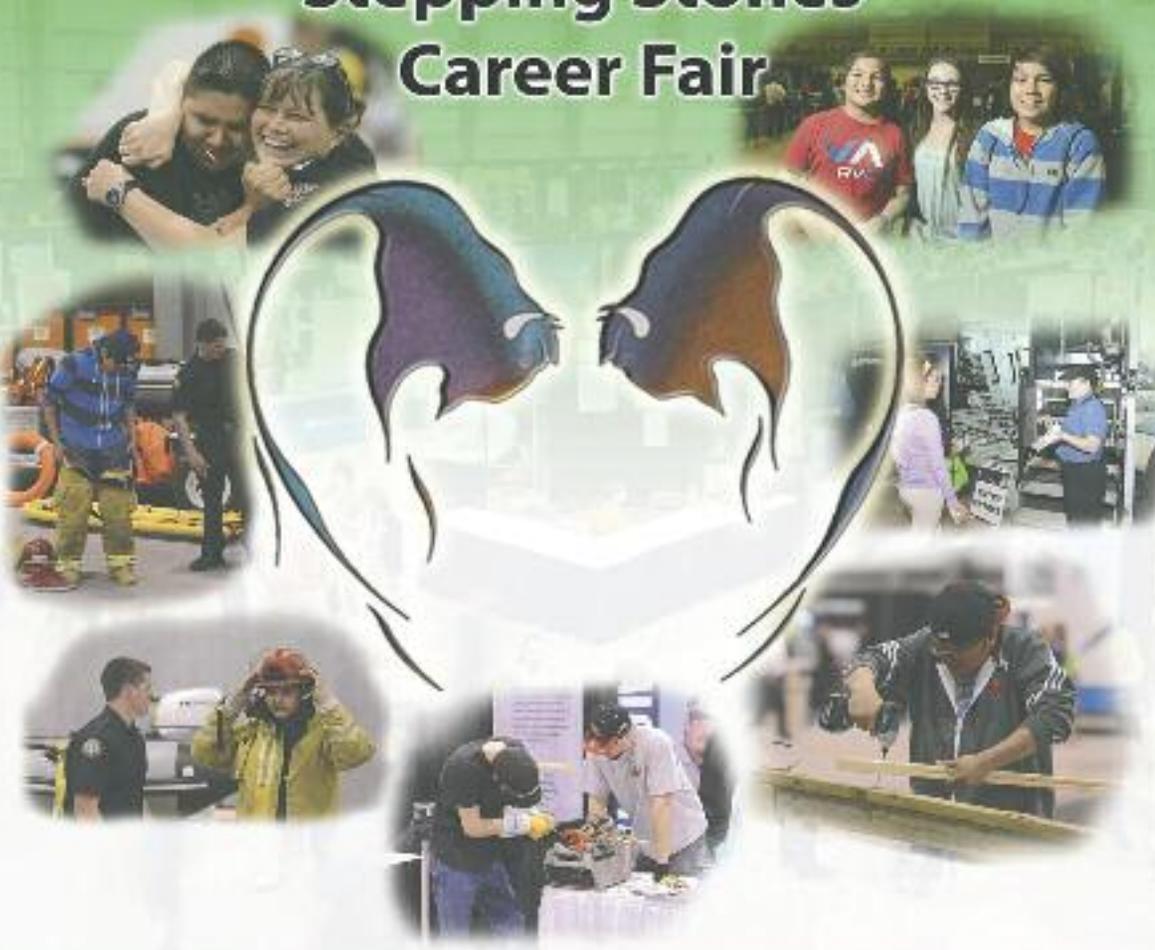
The winner of the PAGC "Name Our Mascot" contest was five-year-old Ada Mirasty from Bell's Point Elementary School in Air Ronge, Sask. She named the SFNWG's mascot "Moshum," meaning "grandfather" in Cree, Sech'eh in Dene and Unkan in Dakota. She won an iPad, which was donated by PAGC's Department of Health and Social Development's Dental Therapy Program. Here Moshum is joined by PAGC Vice Chief Brian Hardlotte, PAGC Grand Chief Ron Michel and PAGC Vice Chief Joseph Tsannie.



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## Stepping Stones Career Fair



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Jennifer Bishop (right) was honoured with a star blanket from SNTC. Jennifer was one of the first Circle of Voices participants and is still heavily involved in the theatre.



## Saskatchewan Native Theatre honours this year's Circle of Voices graduates

By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News

The Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company hosted a round dance to honour the current Circle of Voices graduates.

Eight students graduated this year. COV participants who complete the program receive high school drama class credits in the process. Not only do these youth gain valuable life skills and a stronger sense of cultural identity as First Nations and Métis people, many past COV alumni further their education and are now providing for themselves a positive life.

The main project they worked on this year was the creation and presentation of the play Reunir. This play exposed the trauma and death that faced Métis women and children after the Battle of Batoche. It played to full houses in Saskatoon and was welcomed to communities across Saskatchewan.

On March 29, a pipe ceremony was held and a feast. Several members of the community joined the celebrations. The stick man was Bobby Rainey and the emcees were Dion Tootosis and the always luminous Marcel Petit.

The COV students were honoured and several Métis community members were honoured with star blankets. MN-S President Robert Doucette, MN-S

Secretary May Henderson, Eagle Feather News participant and current employee Jennifer Bishop all publisher John Lagimodiere and former SNTC COV received star blankets for their work in the community.

## 10th Annual Nêhiyawak Land & Language Summer Camp

Come Learn With Us!



The Nêhiyawak Land & Language Summer Camp is holding their 10th annual Cree language camp. The 5 day camp is held in Sturgeon Lake and focuses on learning the Cree language, as well includes blueberry picking, chokecherry pounding, sweet grass picking/harvesting, rot-root picking/harvesting, muskeg tea, mint tea picking/harvesting, rabbit tracking and snaring, rabbit skinning and eating, fishing, swimming, hiking, story-telling, meditation, singing, drumming, dancing, beading, medicine wheel teachings, & elder teachings.

WHERE: Sturgeon Lake First Nations- Amisk Adventures – Sacred Circle Site

WHEN: July 20-24, 2014

HOW TO REGISTER: <http://www.afcs.ca/nehiyawak-land-and-language-camp.html>



For more information contact us at:  
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Elders from around Saskatchewan gathered at Wanuskewin heritage park to participate in an Elders Forum. The Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan consulted with the Elders on cultural direction for Saskatchewan's Friendship Centres programs. (Photo supplied)

## Friendship Centres working hard to bring elders' voices to the forefront

The Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan recently gathered elders from all over the province's friendship centres to participate in a forum.

The staff at AFCS knows that engaging Elders is pivotal in helping designing programs, especially culturally based programs, at the friendship centres around Saskatchewan. The gathering was held over a relaxing weekend at Wanuskewin Heritage Park.

The first day included speakers John Lagimodiere, owner of Aboriginal Consulting Services, and Howard Walker, a well-known powwow announcer and speaker.

Lagimodiere presented topics on Aboriginal history, the Indian Act, Treaties and Aboriginal terminology.

Walker presented some of his experiences and stories within the Friendship Centre movement. They finished the day off with a dream catcher making workshop which many of the elders mentioned they really enjoyed.

"On Saturday the group gathered in a circle discussion to give us feedback on how to get the provincial elders circle developed," said Gwen Bear, Executive Director of AFCS. "As well, we heard many of the concerns and challenges they go through within their communities. AFCS will be working towards developing this elders group/circle

in order to have our elder's voice at our table and to make sure their issues and challenges are being heard.

"They will also be guiding us on how to revitalize culture within our organization as well as within the friendship centres."

Friendship Centres have been active in Saskatchewan since 1963 and since then the movement has grown within Saskatchewan to encompass 11 Friendship Centres who are part of the 119 member National Association of Friendship Centres.

The AFCS advocates for and represents Saskatchewan's Friendship Centres.

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# Guitar instructor needs patience with me

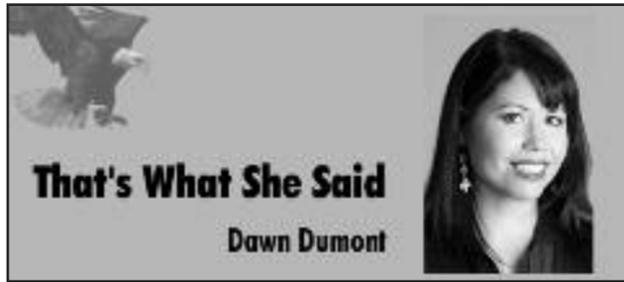
I've been taking guitar lessons. I sat down one day and realized that my hobbies are working out, watching Netflix and avoiding going to dinner with my friends (my logic: why would I spend money on outside food – when I have food at home?!

Also, to my knowledge, no restaurant knows how to make popcorn with Pam spray and chocolate chips sprinkled in, properly.) So to expand myself like a human accordion, I decided to venture into the world of music.

I'm not a complete newbie to the guitar. When I was a kid living on the rez, my Uncle Frank tried to teach me and my cousins how to play. It did not go well. Instead of taking advantage of the fact that we had access to free instruments and a teacher, we took the guitars and jumped around on the living room furniture doing extended air band performances. To us, being a fake Slash was even better than being a real one. (We were not bright children.)

Uncle Frank had learned to play the guitar and the fiddle from my Grandpa Bill. They were naturally talented but they were also good cuz they had lots of opportunities to practise. Back in the olden days, when there was no TV or Facebook, people entertained themselves by "going visiting."

The furniture would be pushed to the edges of the room and people would play their instruments while others would square dance and jig. (For the uninitiated, a jig basically looks like an upright seizure.) Even though they sound lame, these events were very enjoyable, despite the fact that nobody could post a pic and status on Facebook saying, "wow having so much fun atm!"



When my family was in between homes, sometimes we'd stay at Uncle Frank's and I would fall asleep to the sound of Frank playing the guitar. I don't think there's a more peaceful sound in the world. (Except maybe a harp. But you don't see a lot of those on the rez, possibly cuz harp music is too hard to jig to)

Last year I tried to teach myself to play guitar by watching How-To videos on YouTube. This worked for a few minutes until I discovered that YouTube also has videos on how to apply make-up to look like Angelina Jolie. It's pretty simple – you just keep applying make-up to your eyes until you can't see your face anymore.

So realizing that the independent route wasn't working for me, I bought me a guitar teacher. (Technically, I'm only renting him.)

I told my teacher that I had never played the guitar before, although he probably surmised that, when I spent five minutes trying to get the guitar out of the guitar case.

We started with tuning the guitar which was – no exaggeration – one of the most magical moments in my life. We used this electronic chromatic tuner thingy which is like a level but for musical notes.

He: So you see when it goes to the middle, that's when the note is a G.

Me: Cool. Hey wait, my voice is a G.

He: Yes it is.

Me: What's my cough? Cough. – It's a D!

He: We don't need to know that.

Me: What if I whistle? That's an F-sharp!

He: You can stop now.

Me: What if I burp?

He: I'm going to put this away.

My instructor is patient and always attempts to answer my questions like: "can a guitar play the same songs as a piano? What about a jug? Can you play classical music on a guitar? What about on a jug? Also, how come the strings can't be made of something softer – like velvet – because my fingers really hurt?!"

I haven't stumped him yet, even when I asked him, "What is music anyway?"

We are working on the song, "Blowing in the Wind." My dream is to turn Bob Dylan's poetic masterpiece into a parody song about farts. With this goal in mind, I've been practising daily. Because one thing I've learned in life is that hard work always trumps natural talent.

I'm starting to see improvements: like now I don't repeat "ow,ow,ow" in a continuous loop every time I attempt a cord.

The guitar will be challenging because I suspect I am tone deaf. Sometimes my teacher will show me different ways to play a song and then say, "See now, didn't that sound better?"

And I'll simply nod because it would be harder to explain that I can't hear the difference at all. And proclaiming: "It sounds like a guitar! It always sounds like a guitar!" sounds a bit asshole-ish.

But I have figured out how to get around my tone deafness – I stole my teacher's chromatic tuner.

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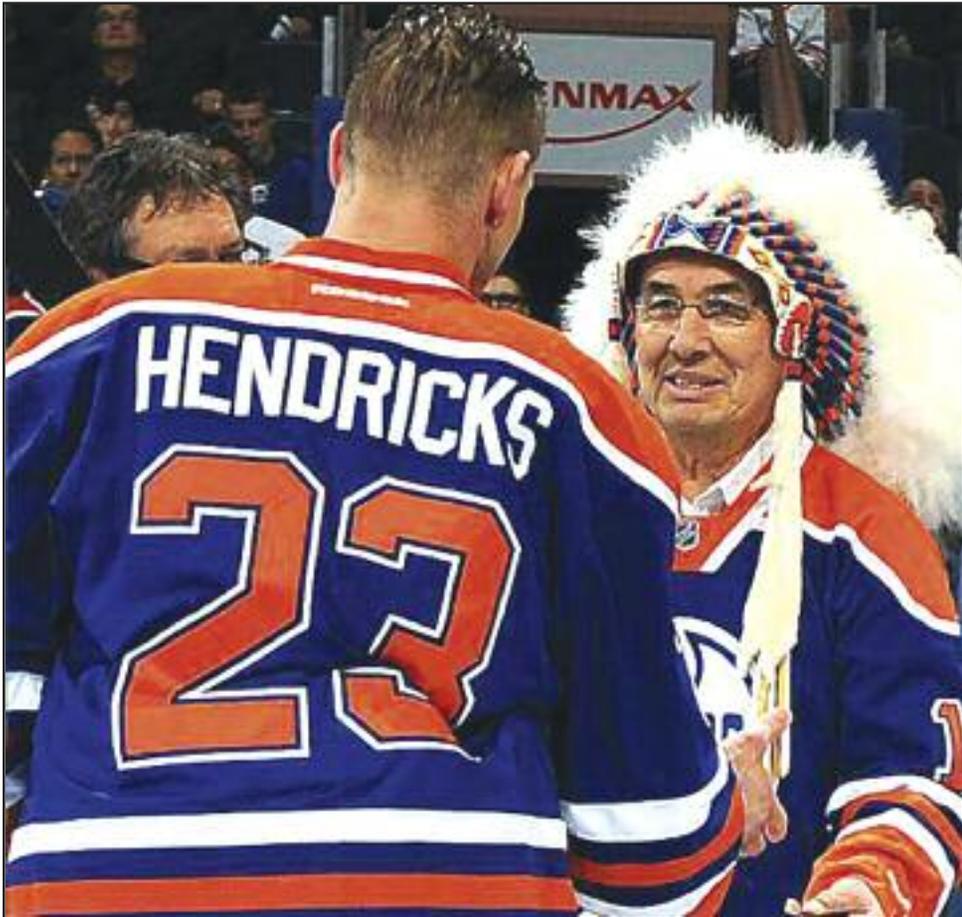
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International Centre for Northern  
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SASKATCHEWAN



Chief Willie Littlechild meets Edmonton Oiler Matt Hendricks prior to a game with the New York Rangers. (Photo by Andy Devlin / Edmonton Oilers Hockey Club)

## Hockey played a positive role for residential school students

By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News

Willie Littlechild is a Chief, an internationally renowned lawyer, a member of seven sports halls of fame and, according to his daughters, a very violent hockey player.

“My daughters pointed that out to me and I never even noticed until they did,” said Littlechild as he spoke at the Muskeg Lake Family Gathering in Saskatoon in early March.

“I thought I was okay, but it was on the ice that I took out my anger from the Residential Schools. And sometimes I took it too hard.”

It is only fitting, now, that Littlechild, who relied on hockey to survive in residential school and is healing in his own way, that he would be asked to drop the puck at the Edmonton Oilers game at the end of the TRC National gathering in Edmonton. The Oilers hosted a Celebration of First Nations Hockey on March 30 as the Oilers took on the New York Rangers.

“The Edmonton Oilers have a special connection with our many fans and supporters throughout First Nations communities in Oil Country,” said Patrick LaForge, Oilers President and COO.

“In acknowledging this terrible chapter in our country’s history, we’re also proud to celebrate hockey as a beacon of light and hope for many First Nations people in our province and across Canada.”

In-game, the Oilers Celebration of First Nations Hockey began with a special rendition of the Canadian Anthem

performed by Asani, an award-winning Aboriginal women’s trio from Edmonton. Three distinguished First Nations leaders then performed a ceremonial puck-drop – Chief Wilton Littlechild, Fred Sasakamoose, the trailblazing, first Canadian of First Nations descent to play in the National Hockey League, and Ted Hodgson, series-winning goal scorer for the 1966 Edmonton Oil Kings Memorial Cup Champion team and First Nations sport advocate.

“It was so good to see and I have to commend Willie and Pat LaForge, the president of the Oilers. Those two men created a lot of public awareness,” said Eugene Arcand, a former Indian Residential School hockey player who was also honoured at the game.

Arcand carried the eagle staff on the ice during the national anthems.

“It was a powerful moment. We were in the green room talking before and we all said how important sport was to our surviving in the schools. When I held that eagle staff, I held it for all the survivors and I thought of all my old buddies and the legends I got to play with and watch,” Arcand said.

“On behalf of the TRC and First Nations people, we would like to thank the Edmonton Oilers for their support and leadership,” said Littlechild, a former U of A Golden Bears left winger.

“Hockey was a common thread of positive experience for hundreds of residential school survivors, including me. The Oilers understand that, and they’re committed to making a difference in the lives of today’s First Nations youth.”

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## Planning to burn debris this spring?

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# Symposium gives artists a chance to talk business, share creative ideas

By Judy Bird  
For Eagle Feather News

Aboriginal artists from around the province will have a chance to network, learn about some of the business-related aspects of art, and of course, express their creative side at an upcoming gathering in Saskatoon.



DAVID GARNEAU

The Aboriginal Artist Symposium will take place from May 22 - 24 at the Sheraton Cavalier Hotel. It is hosted by the Canadian Artists' Representation Le Front Des Artistes Canadiens (CARFAC) Saskatchewan in conjunction with partners such as Tribe, First Nations University, Common Weal, Oskayak High School, and others.

The event kicks off with a gallery tour

on May 22 a banquet featuring guest speaker David Garneau and a performance by a performing arts artist. Friday and Saturday will feature luncheon speakers Marjorie Beaucage and Adrian Stimson.

The three day event will cover a range of topics of interest to artists in various stages of their career, from emerging artists and high school students interested in art to established artists who are looking at marketing on an international scale or looking at contemporary issues on being an artist today. There will be some time for fun too in events such as a hands-on art workshop, and storytelling using visual arts.

Workshops and panel discussions will touch on topics of copyright, artist fees, shows with galleries and curators, art appropriation, and other business-related topics. The First Nations University Indian Fine Arts department is offering Aboriginal Art History 101, a workshop to provide a background history of aboriginal art in the province. Networking time is also included.

"All the partnering organizations will have a table, and everyone attending can sit down and learn what the different organizations do, what they offer, and how they support artists," said Wendy Nelson, acting executive director of CARFAC Saskatchewan.

An important workshop offered by

CARFAC Saskatchewan will look at standards and best practices for aboriginal artists in the province. This workshop, and the symposium are both the result of work done by CARFAC Saskatchewan in 2009, and are in response to feedback from Aboriginal artists in Saskatchewan themselves.

"CARFAC was looking at best practice documents in 2007 from Australia, which was a set of basic agreed upon documents of what artists and others should expect of each other," said Nelson.

CARFAC recognized that there wasn't a great deal of contact with Aboriginal artists, and so in 2009, a project was created to get information and feedback about what Aboriginal artists wanted and needed.

Project consultant Audrey Dreaver was tasked with visiting communities to speak to artists to find out what issues Aboriginal artists were facing, what were the strengths and the weaknesses, which would help CARFAC understand how they could be a better support to Aboriginal artists.

Dreaver visited northern, central and southern communities in the province and learned that many artists wanted to have a set of standard practices, and to have a gathering where they could network. The information gathered was used to create the Aboriginal Arts Industry Standards / Best Practices document that addresses

issues specific to aboriginal artists, such as protocol and appropriation and other concerns. In the workshop, it will be presented back to the artists for feedback, and to seek endorsement to make it a living document.

This set of standards is also drawing attention from other CARFAC groups across the country.

Dreaver says it is being considered by Quebec, Ontario, and possibly B.C. because nothing currently exists that addresses the

issues that Aboriginal artists face. Two people are coming from Quebec specifically to attend the session.

"I'm looking forward to telling the artists that their words that went into the document are now helping artists in other provinces," she said.

The event is free for Aboriginal artists in Saskatchewan, with the only exception being the banquet featuring keynote speaker David Garneau. Those tickets are \$25 to cover the cost of food. For more information, visit [www.carfac.sk.ca](http://www.carfac.sk.ca) or call 1-800-363-9788.



MARJORIE BEAUCAGE

## Aboriginal Artists Symposium

May 22nd, 23rd & 24th 2014

at the Sheraton Cavalier Hotel, Saskatoon, SK



A gathering of emerging and established First Nations and Métis contemporary and traditional artists, curators, cultural workers, community leaders, and funders on issues that affect Aboriginal art practice in Saskatchewan. Sponsored by CARFAC Saskatchewan in partnership with Tribe Inc., Common Weal Community Arts, The Indigenous Peoples Artist Collective, First Nations University of Canada, the Saskatchewan Craft Council, Sakewewak, SCYAP and Mann Art Gallery.

Symposium: FREE of charge - Banquet Tickets: \$25.00 per person

**Key Note Speaker: David Garneau**

**Luncheon Speakers: Marjorie Beaucage & Adrian Stimson & performance by Maria Hupfield**

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Audrey Dreaver - Event Coordinator - 306-202-7654 [audreydreaver@gmail.com](mailto:audreydreaver@gmail.com)



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# Patience a virtue for filmmaker

Rueben Martell is a Saskatoon based filmmaker who is producing, directing and starring in *A Life Less Empty*, a feature film he wrote 20 years ago. *Eagle Feather News* caught up with him recently for the first installment of *Arts Chat*.

**Mike: You wrote *A Life Less Empty* 20 years ago. Did you ever lose hope it would be produced?**

Rueben: Every day. I never produced it on a level of "get it done in this time frame". It was always produced with such a low

budget that is equivalent to most people's water budget on low budget features. I've always been lucky that people were willing to trust me and follow me into shooting this. I never felt it was ever a "never going to happen", and more like a "choose the right time and place to get it done".

**Mike: Why is this story so important for you to tell?**

Rueben: I never seen a native film where I could say "that encapsulated me and my family perfectly". I wanted something with a native feel and less 'woe is me' and more 'who am I?' We haven't found a way to deal with our emotions and we either lash out or praise immediately. I wanted to show people we can be seen as people that love and deal with problems as well.



**Mike: What does it mean to you to finally film your baby?**

Rueben: Everything actually. My sons Nick and Koan have always been on my back about getting it done. I preach get it done and they want me to practice what I preach and how can I disappoint them? And I have a great cast. Sarain Carson Fox, Shannon Baker and my partner with filmmaking courses, Mathew Strongeagle.

**Mike: Is there a grander sense of accomplishment since the government was of little to no help?**

Rueben: It's always a sense of victory when a native can do something without the government involved. Isn't that the native dream?

**Mike: If you had to choose one hero, TV/film or otherwise, who would it be? Why?**

Rueben: My mother Doreen without a doubt. She's been my super hero, my North Star and my army.

**Mike: What movie changed your life and made you want to embark on a career in TV/film?**

Rueben: Pow Wow Highway in 1988. I was in Grade 7 and wanted to rent *Cyborg*, a Van Damme film. And next to it was a contemporary native film. Blew my mind! Natives can be in movies?!



**Mike: You worked on a lot of alternative funding methods, like crowd-sourcing. Do you feel this is a sign of the times in Saskatchewan since the tax-credit was axed?**

Rueben: I was never directly effected by it. But I get hired less because of it. Most of my experience has come from shows such as *Moccasin Flats* and *Corner Gas*. Crowd sourcing for me hasn't been great, and it is a popularity contest. When I tell people about a contemporary native love story, they look at me and say "I don't get it." That's also another reason for me to get it done. This is in a time where 50 per cent of Canada has no idea what a residential school is, and that's scary how much people aren't aware when it comes to natives.

**Mike: Favourite Aboriginal film all time? Why?**

Rueben: *Rhymes For Young Ghouls*. First native voice with balls in my humble opinion. It's playing at the Roxy. Go and watch it!

**Mike: How would you encourage a youngster ready to embark on a heart-breaking career in the industry?**

Rueben: If we're scared to fail in dreams, it makes it harder to do it in reality. Currently Mathew Strongeagle and I are doing film courses that focus on youth developing short films. We're currently in Alberta trying to do Saskatchewan proud and hoping to bring it to Saskatchewan this summer. Book us and we will come!



Actor Mathew Strongeagle and Producer and Director Rueben Martell are working together on a feature film *A Life Less Empty*.

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

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

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

# The Inconvenient Indigenous Musician:

## *Sounding Our Truth*

By Lindsay Knight  
For Eagle Feather News

There's some big changes happening in the Indigenous music scene these days. And like a pair of skinny jeans, the terms that we use to identify Indigenous music just don't fit anymore.

They were never really suitable to begin with. We've gotten so used to separate categories like traditional and contemporary, that we don't realize these divides not only pressure our musicians, they limit young people from access to older knowledge of Indigenous songs.

Let's ask ourselves where the term traditional comes from. It's an expression that makes us think of something that stays the same and involves a strict, set way of doing things. In powwow culture, ceremonies, and even popular music, a small few dictate what is acceptably traditional. When we think back to older days, even before the coming of the European settlers, we had music in all aspects of our lives.

There were songs for everything including plants, animals, births, deaths, mornings, evenings, women and men. Most importantly, it was what connected us to the spirit world. We were given ceremonial songs in dreams and songs for our own strength and guidance. In fact, we were so tight with the spirit world that communication with them was a casual thing. Music was not separate from the way we lived. It constantly adapted and evolved along with our changing environments.

With the arrival of the settlers and all of the messy historical events that took place since then, music followed along, molding with the times. The "traditional" music that we have today could not be uninfluenced by colonial ways. So how traditional can it be?

And I'll guess that around the 1900s, when powwow was introduced into our area, it was probably considered pretty new school. I'll bet all the young kids were into it. In fact, powwow was a means of protecting ceremonial songs under the guise of entertainment.

When the pass system was in place, many of our ancestors could not leave the reserve without good reason. Dancing and singing powwow at the town fair was one acceptable pass, so song keepers from different reserves would meet at these fairs and share songs with each other to keep them alive.

As our languages continue to decline, the songs become endangered, so like the introduction of powwow, we're always looking for ways to protect our music from losing its spirit. It can't stay the same, so we need to rethink what traditional means to our music.

But the big question is: where do these terms originate? Are they ours or have they been given to us as a way of dictating how we identify with the rest of Canadian society?

As Indigenous musicians and artists

in general there's big money in identifying yourself as traditional or contemporary. Government grants and gigs are plentiful.

Let's fast forward to the recent Juno Awards that took place in Winnipeg on March 29. A Tribe Called Red (ATCR) made history by winning an award for Best Breakthrough Artist. This was the first time in the Juno Award's past that Indigenous musicians took an award home other than "Best Aboriginal Artist".



In case you've been under a rock for the last year or so, A Tribe Called Red is a group of three Native guys from out east who create electronic music that includes powwow and roundance samples or live recordings by drum groups.

As artists who don't adhere to traditional or contemporary standards, their music has been both praised and rejected. The thing to consider here is that they don't care. Based on their teachings, they've followed protocols by respectfully asking permission to use certain songs for their albums.

They've been embraced by the mainstream because they broke the mold. If they choose to compete for accolades in the music industry, they identify in categories that are open to all nations, all cultures.

That being said, let's think about this

"Best Aboriginal Artist" category at the Junos. Imagine you are asked to jury the four or five artists picked. One is a country singer, another is a rapper, then there's the powwow group and let's just say a flute player.

Okay, go ahead, compare them and pick the best one. How the heck do you do that? Maybe you start by asking yourself, which one sounds the most Indian? Or which ones look more Indian.

Maybe you'll decide by who lives more Indian; on the rez or in the city. They don't even waste time allowing separate categories for traditional and contemporary! You get the point. That category was created by the music industry to "include" us into the mainstream yet keep us separate from the status quo, normal, real Canadian musicians.

**Breakthrough Juno Award winning band A Tribe Called Red is changing the Indigenous music scene in a big way and rocking what was once known as traditional.**

So whether or not you like A Tribe Called Red, let's just say we're entering new ground in the mainstream.

There are so many different genres, types, styles, protocols, practices and people creating music that the definition of Indigenous music depends on who you are and what you believe in. Indigenous music is any type of music being created by Indigenous people. Whether it's a rock band, a rapper, a country or powwow singer, or a combination of two or three of these, we are maintaining our ways of knowing.

It's all contemporary because it's happening right now. Maybe some music is ceremonial or focused on entertainment. Either way, as Indian people, we are somehow connecting to our spiritual world through the creation and performance of music.

We are keeping language and culture alive by sharing it in new and effective ways with younger generations. Today there are so many young people who are disconnected to their Indigenous history and identity.

Boy you, Facebook, Minecraft and Halo! So with today's Indigenous music, as long as we maintain respect and follow proper protocols, let's not worry too much about different sounds and songs coming out.

It's called taking back our voice in an appealing way... on our own terms. So let's put the "In" back in Inconvenient by making empowering music based on our history and our ways.

# SNTC art auction goes May 8, features great Canadian artists

By Roberta Cross  
For Eagle Feather News

The Saskatoon Native Theatre Company (SNTC) is offering a rare opportunity to own work by leading artists from across Canada and the U.S. at their art auction on May 8.

Hosted and sponsored by Saskatoon artist Ernie Scoles, this lively and energetic event raises funds and awareness for SNTC's upcoming season.

"We expect 30 pieces on the auction block, all new works," says Scoles, renowned for his limited edition prints and owner of Scoles Fine Arts and Framing. He has approached artist friends from across North America to contribute, and does the framing himself with top quality materials, guaranteeing that the pieces will last forever. Scoles will also donate his own work of woodland imagery.

Any kind of art, says Scoles, whether theatre or painting, is about putting the creative mind to work.

"Without art, life would be pretty boring," he says. "Just white walls!"

"We're super thankful to Ernie Scoles for lining up all these artists and donations," says Daniel Knight, responsible for Publicity and Community Relations at SNTC.

"We're part of a brotherhood and sisterhood of artists, supporting each other," says Darlene Okemaysim-Sicotte, Administrator with SNTC. Cameco is also sponsoring the event.

The generous artists and their donations include:

Frank Paul (One Arrow First Nation) – an exclusive hand-pulled print

Fred Anderson (Vancouver Island) – West Coast-style painting

Alan Syliboy (Nova Scotia) – painting blending contemporary and traditional styles



Ernie Scoles invites everyone out to the SNTC Art Auction on May 8.

(Photo by Roberta Cross)

Irvine Head (Manitoba) – known as one of the best stone sculptors

Darren Gowan (Day Star First Nation/Saskatoon) – a moose antler carving

Lloyd Pinay (Peepeekisis First Nation/Langham) – sculpture cast in bronze

Johnny Marcelin (Turnor Lake) – acrylic painting  
Kevin Pee-ace (Yellowquill First Nation/Saskatoon) – one of his distinctive bright paintings

Alex Janvier (Cold Lake First Nations) – considered part of the "Indian Group of Seven", he has been honoured at the auction in the past, and will send another contemporary painting this year.

Starting at 6 p.m. guests can view the artwork, and bid on silent auction prizes. Seven kinds of delicious finger food will be served and there will be a cash bar.

The auction begins at 7 p.m. with MC John Lagimodiere, known for his own style of improvisational

theatre.

"He's a great MC – he's funny, witty, works well with the crowd, plus he's tall and he can see the room," says Knight.

"This is going to be an energetic and classy evening," promises Okeymaysim-Sicotte.

All funds raised will support presenting SNTC's next year of plays, the SIGA 2014-2015 season, which SNTC General Manager Alan Long and Artistic Director Curtis Peeteetuce will announce during the event.

Funds from the art auction will help SNTC meet their mandate of raising awareness of traditional and contemporary Aboriginal culture to Saskatoon, and Saskatchewan, and support powerful outreach to youth, through touring plays and programs like Circle of Voices.

Supporters of SNTC and people who don't want their walls or life to be boring can buy tickets for \$50 from SNTC Board members or by calling 306-385-7727.

## Feature documentary in the works

### • Continued from Page 1

The visual aspect of Buffalo Calling is breathtaking and includes a segment during which the screen goes red, signifying the end of an era and nearly the end of an entire species. There is no narration in the film.

"It is partly my own challenge to move away from narrative filmmaking to a more visual style," Hubbard says.

"But I also thought that many people never actually hear the buffalo so I wanted their voices to be central in the film."

Despite the challenges of making Buffalo Calling, Hubbard says she felt some sadness when the project was completed.

"I felt sad because I had spent so much time out at the Banff Centre, where we did the animation and the audio. The people in the Film and Video department became friends and the little apartment I stayed in, sometimes with my son, was like a second home.

"But it also felt satisfying, because of the length of time it took, both with the filming, but also balancing the film with my other responsibilities."

And the responsibilities continue in Hubbard's busy

schedule as she juggles motherhood, academic life and more filmmaking.

"I am finishing my Ph.D. dissertation, and on July 1, I start a tenure-track position as Assistant Professor in the Department of English at the U of Saskatchewan. I started there in a term position last July, and I am excited that it has turned into something potentially permanent."

Hubbard has also begun to develop the feature documentary on buffalo that she has wanted to do for the last eight years.

"I am working with Wes Olsen and Narcisse Blood, who were my guests at the Broadway-ICCC screening. Along with our producer and my son, we are heading to Montana in May to visit other descendants of the same herd who are at the American Prairie Reserve. And I have some other ideas for combining my research and my film work.

Buffalo Calling is currently doing a festival tour and Hubbard hopes to have community screenings and eventually release a DVD version with an information booklet that will provide background on the herd and an update on its status.

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# George Leach savours Juno Award win, team sticking to game plan

By Judy Bird  
For Eagle Feather News

Hearing his name called as the winner of a Juno Award was nothing short of exhilarating for George Leach.

"It was nerve-wracking and overwhelming," he said. "It was definitely exciting."

The Regina-based singer, songwriter and musician won a Juno for his album "Surrender" in the category of Aboriginal Album of the Year. The 2014 Juno Awards were handed out in Winnipeg March 30th. First Nations group A Tribe Called Red also received the Juno Award for Break-through Artist of the Year.

Leach's debut album came out in 2000, and his follow-up album was 12 years in the making. In that time, he's grown as a musician, songwriter, and a person, all which combine and reflect in the music he creates.

"In the songwriting process, a lot of those songs come from experiences that you've shared with other people, and you write about it," Leach explained.

"All the people that have stood behind me, and even the people that I've had adversity with, because even those experiences can make for really good growth. Realistically, those songs belong to them as well," he said.

So just what does it take to create an award-winning album? Like anyone who works their way to such a status of recognition, Leach acknowledges the team who helped him get there. The list includes business partner Danny Santos, bassist Marty Ballantyne, producer and songwriter Thomas "Tawgs" Salter, songwriter Casey Marshall, and everyone involved in the effort.

"I'm working with a really bright team. The Juno win was for them as well."

His songs Carry Me, Try and You Got It were written in collaboration with Salter, and Walk Away written in collaboration with Marshall.

"The rest were songs I wrote on my own but those songs were crafted after I met them. They taught me a lot about song writing. I really took that into my song writing process, what I learned from these gentlemen and tried to use the tools that I learned.

"They really helped me grow as an artist and to overcome fears and personal hang ups I might have had. My producer Tom (Salter) helped me come out of my shell and helped bring out my sound. He's a really intelligent, deep artist, and a joy to work with," said Leach.

Since the Juno win, life has been a whirlwind of activity with offers, but sticking true to himself, Leach plans to stay grounded, regroup, and figure things out with his team.

"We're going to stick to our game plan, get out there, tour and promote this album and honour these songs and share the live experience as much as we can with as many people as we can," he said.

Leach says he will stay open to opportunities that come his way, but he also wants to get back to writing the next album.

"I probably have enough material for a third and a fourth, and I won't make people wait 14 years, but I have to pass



George Leach, shown here performing in Regina at the AGEN Conference has won a Juno.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

it through my team first, and go from there," he said.

Plans are underway for playing at festivals and other venues. Watch

Leach's website [www.georgeleach.com](http://www.georgeleach.com) and Facebook and Twitter has information on concert dates as they become available.

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# Muskeg Lake residential school survivors ready for healing

By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News

Almost 40 Muskeg Lake Cree Nation Indian Residential Schools Survivors and their families went to Edmonton to take part in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's national gathering in March.

Edmonton drew large numbers from a community that is only an hour away from where a TRC national gathering was held a mere two years ago, because back in 2012, hardly any survivors attended from Muskeg Lake.

"In June 2012, many Muskeg survivors didn't participate. We weren't ready," said Eugene Arcand.

"As we work toward our legacy project, we are trying to catch up. We have avoided it for too long. Good for all of us to come together and it was an awesome experience and the fact was, the survivors listened and engaged."

Muskeg Lake tied the Edmonton TRC Gathering into a process the entire community is engaged in to create a legacy project to honour the survivors and help with healing in the community.

"The centrepiece will be a fire pit by the powwow arbour back home. It will be in the shape of the medicine wheel, surrounded by mature trees, each one representing the families of survivors," said project manager, Lorna Arcand.



LORNA ARCAND

"It will be a legacy for our children and they will have a better understanding of the residential school era than we had as children growing up and as parents. Lots of our survivors didn't know how to parent so this is a way of teaching our children that they don't have to do what we weren't able to do."

To bring the project together a committee was struck including five young people from different families and then the community was consulted. They planned events that included a family gathering over a weekend in



From left Muskeg Lake Councillor Harry Lafond, Saskatoon Tribal Council Vice Chief Mark Arcand, Muskeg Councillor Josephine Longneck, Muskeg Councillor Kelly Wolfe, Chief Willie Littlechild, Lorna Arcand and Saskatoon Tribal Council Chief Felix Thomas.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

Saskatoon where they heard from other communities that had legacy projects like Keeseekoose and Cote.

Survivors and their families also listened to TRC Commissioner Willie Littlechild, watched a video on the residential schools made by one of their members, and they also honoured artists from the University of Saskatchewan who were working on a residential school commemoration project for the Saskatoon Tribal Council. The next weekend they hosted a play for your reserve hockey tournament.

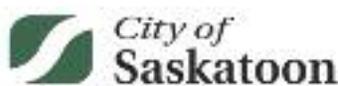
Then, they coordinated some logistics for the survivors and family members to attend the TRC in



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Alvin Claypool, Human Resource Consultant



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Edmonton.

"Just being there and hearing people testify in their own way and tell their stories that is powerful" said Eugene, who is also the Saskatchewan representative on Indian Residential Schools Survivor Committee.

"Survivors realize they are not alone and there are ways of dealing with demons without having to go deep into memory. There are holistic ways to deal with past trauma."

The Muskeg Lake Cree Nation legacy project is expected to begin construction this summer so the community can enjoy some peace this year.

"We have to remember all these events are a culmination of community action and our common goal is the good

health of our community," added Lorna.

"We have 125 living survivors, and we didn't want to leave anyone out. When we first started, people would hear us out then think, oh they will be tired of this in a while. We didn't bother people, but then they realized we weren't going to stop and it was our way of giving back to the community."

"And if the old people wouldn't listen to us, then we went to the children and they listened and came on board and helped us. It is very important to do this right now. Let's do it now while we still have the ability to help in some real way."

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**CLASS OF 2014**

# Kawacatoose sees prosperous future in resource development

**K**awacatoose First Nation has become the first community to take full control over its land and resource money.

Chief Darin Poorman and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Minister Bernard Valcourt joined in Regina recently to announce that Kawacatoose is the first community to opt into the First Nations Oil and Gas and Moneys Management Act and take full control over the management of its land and resource moneys.

"The Kawacatoose First Nation is looking forward to providing a brighter future for our people, particularly in terms of resource development and undertaking that in a respectful and environmentally sustainable way," said Chief Darin Poorman, Kawacatoose First Nation.

"Now we can provide more economic opportunities and benefits to our members, as well as jobs in the future to sustain our First Nation in the long term. I'm proud to be a part of this, and I'm certain that what we're doing today will continue to benefit our members for many years to come."

Kawacatoose is working with North American Resource Partners, a private

investment firm focused on providing capital for First Nations in North America to develop natural resource projects through assistance with the structuring and financing of projects.

"This is an historic day not only for Kawacatoose but for First Nations across Canada. Finally, First Nations will be able to make their own economic development policies based on their own governance systems," said John Jurrius, President and CEO of NARP.

"The Chief, Council and membership of Kawacatoose should be congratulated for their vision in taking this bold step."

Kawacatoose First Nation has over 3,000 members, over 1,100 of whom reside on the community's reserve located 120 kilometres north of Regina.

The First Nation will now be able to explore economic opportunities for the community due to adopting the new Act.

Prior, any money earned from mineral rights on First Nations land was held in trust by the federal government.

The new legislation allows First Nations to opt out of this practice and to receive funds directly from natural



**Through the First Nations Oil and Gas and Moneys Management Act, Kawacatoose can now control the revenue they make off of their lands.**

resource development. The funds will be managed within a trust established by the First Nation for this purpose and administered by The Canada Trust Company.

"Our government knows that the healthiest First Nation communities are also those dedicated to better self-sufficiency. Direct access to these band funds means more economic opportunities for Kawacatoose First Nation, and all First Nations that opt into this legislation," said Valcourt.

"Removing this Indian Act requirement means the First Nation can respond more quickly to community needs and opportunities," he added.

"This is historic for our First Nation and will create many economic opportunities for our community, created by the community," said Poorman.

"Partnering with NARP will allow us to fulfill these opportunities knowing that we have the financial resources available to proceed."

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# Northern officials, Cameco united on collaboration agreement

By Fraser Needham  
For Eagle Feather News

It's been a little over a year since uranium mining companies Cameco and Areva signed a \$200 million collaboration agreement with the Northern Village of Pinehouse.

The deal's proponents say it ensures jobs, investment and a bright future for what has traditionally been an impoverished Métis community.

However, not everyone agrees the collaboration agreement is a good thing and it is currently the subject of two lawsuits. The first lawsuit accuses Pinehouse, the Kineepik Métis Local, Cameco and Areva of signing the collaboration deal under less than transparent conditions.

The second lawsuit has been brought forward by Briarpatch Magazine for failure by the village to comply with a freedom of information request for specific financial details of the agreement.

In a ruling late last year, Saskatchewan's information and privacy commissioner agreed that Pinehouse has been less than forthright in providing details after repeated requests for information.

Lastly, the initial draft of the collaboration agreement was met with accusations in some quarters of containing a "gag" order forbidding local community members from criticizing the uranium industry. However, no such order exists in the final version of the agreement.

In spite of some of the criticism, Pinehouse Mayor Mike Natomagan stands firm that the agreement is a good thing for the community and says residents are already reaping the benefits. He points to the recent \$1.3 million invested in the local hockey arena to install an artificial ice plant and \$6 million in wages, work placements and scholarships as just two of the positive benefits the collaboration agreement has brought to Pinehouse.

"We wanted to sign this agreement to do our capacity building with our young population," he says. "We needed this to give our people hope, to give our people confidence into working for the long term contractors that are in the mine site."

Cameco CEO Tim Gitzel adds his company has no secret motives in signing the agreement. It is just the simple fact that the uranium mining industry reaps many benefits from its activities in northern Saskatchewan and feels it has a corporate responsibility to invest in communities like Pinehouse, he says.

"I think we have a responsibility as a company to give back, to be involved in the areas in which we operate to give back to the communities, to work with the communities, to help where we can develop them," he says.

"We can't solve all the issues anywhere but we can do our part."

Both Natomagan and Gitzel say the signatories of the deal have no problem with discussing the agreement in an open

forum and have done so a number of times at community meetings.

agreement has its detractors but the company tries to focus on the positive things it is doing



Curtis Chandler, the vice-principal at Minahik Waskahigan School in Pinehouse, hands out helmets to students before a recreational skate during a celebration of the one-year anniversary of the collaboration agreement between Pinehouse, Cameco and Areva.



Cameco CEO Tim Gitzel (left) and Pinehouse Mayor Mike Natomagan (right) go for a skate during the one-year anniversary of the collaboration agreement between Pinehouse, Cameco and Areva. The local community recently used funds generated from the agreement to install an artificial ice plant at the local arena.

Natomagan says he takes the criticism in stride adding whenever there is an agreement of this type of financial magnitude, there is bound to be some opposition.

"Soon as you involve money in a little Aboriginal community like this, there's always been lack of trust and we expect that and in fact we encourage that for people to disagree with us."

Gitzel adds Cameco is fully aware the

for the community.

"When I go over to the skating rink here in Pinehouse, see the kids out here, see the families that are enjoying these facilities, see the positive energy over lunch – those are the people we focus on."

On March 19, Pinehouse and Cameco officials held a special local event to mark the one-year anniversary of the collaboration agreement.

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# STC business competition gives entrepreneurs a boost

By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News

**B**randy-Lee Maxie has struggled through homelessness, racism and the trials of being a single mother. That persistence and never-say-die attitude are key attributes of entrepreneurs, and fittingly Maxie recently won first place in the Saskatoon Tribal Council's 3rd Annual Mino-Bimaadziwin Youth Business Plan Competition.

The competition is geared towards First Nations youth to encourage the growth of new and existing businesses.

"Winning the STC business plan competition really helped me realize how much work I have put into my business planning up to this point," said an exhausted Maxie who has been on the road and participating in other business plan challenges since her big win.

"Applying what I've learned after a 1 1/2 years of participating in business plan competitions it was nice to win and to be able to share it with my family. I feel pretty grateful for this opportunity, and for the money."

Brandy-Lee of White Bear First Nation took \$5,000 for first place for AB Original Health & Fitness. The company designs and delivers licensed, culturally inspired, Elder-approved dance fitness classes. Self-esteem and diabetes workshops support individual's fitness goals by providing the education and tools necessary to make healthy, preventative lifestyle choices.

Devon Fiddler of Waterhen Lake First Nation won the second place cash prize of \$3,500 for SheNative Inc., a uniquely local and culturally stylistic leather handbag company. The company will give back to the community by employing women living in Saskatchewan.

Nathan Kaye of Sakimay First Nation took third place cash winnings of \$2,500 for his company, Sports Entertainment Travel Tours, an online sports tourism travel company designed for NBA, NHL, MLBS, NFL and CFL sports enthusiasts.

The event was made possible by the support of the Saskatoon Tribal Council and PotashCorp. "We need to invest in our youth and encourage them to take their place in business in Saskatchewan," said STC Vice Chief Mark Arcand. "And judging by the entries in this contest, the future is bright."

Leanne Bellegarde is the Director of Aboriginal Strategy for PotashCorp and she knows how we all benefit from an engaged Aboriginal business community.

"PotashCorp is always looking to enhance the business community in Saskatchewan and more so now in the Aboriginal community," said Bellegarde.

"We will need more suppliers and diverse suppliers into the future and we believe that investing in contests like the Mino-Bimaadziwin Youth Business Plan



From left, Saskatoon Tribal Council Vice Chief Mark Arcand, Leanne Bellegarde of PotashCorp, third place winner Nathan Kaye, first place winner Brandy-Lee Maxie, second place finisher Devon Fiddler and Rick Stefanowski of SIEF.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

Competition will certainly pay us back long into the future."

Good business people are passionate about what they do, and Devon Fiddler is no different.

"Living in my passion and my vision is the most rewarding for me being self-employed," said Fiddler who wants to sell millions of handbags and to empower First Nation women to own their own businesses.

"I wake up every day since I've started, trying to start up full-time, actually wanting to get out of bed and work. And I don't limit the hours to during the day. I'm obsessed with the business. It's all I want to talk about every day to anyone that will listen! It's exciting and I'm obsessed!"

Maxie's business strikes right to the core of several health issues in the First Nation community.

"North America wide, diabetes and heart disease are ravaging our people's health at alarming rates. I think now is a great time to become a fitness professional in First Nations communities," said Maxie as she reflected on her vision.

"I think this business will succeed because I have enough passion to create healthier First Nations communities. I have really stepped out of my comfort zone to be what I was raised to be, an entrepreneur. I decided that I want to build my own dreams and I have a vision that is now rapidly turning into reality, so hard work pays off."

## CAREER OPPORTUNITY - CEO PRESIDENT Muskeg Lake Cree Nation Investment Management Corporation

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### Position Responsibilities

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### Muskeg Lake Cree Nation Investment Management Corporation

The MLCNIMC has an independent Board of Directors to manage and grow the commercial enterprises owned by Muskeg Lake Cree Nation. The commercial enterprises consist of a commercial/industrial center in Saskatoon, two convenience/gas stores and an interest in the Dakota Dunes Golf Course. The commercial center has serviced and undeveloped land offering potential for substantial growth.

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**MUSKEG LAKE  
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**KCDC CEO Randy Johns speaks at the Saskatchewan First Nations Information and Communication Technology Conference.**  
(Photo by Carmen Pauls Orthner)

## First Nations communities plugging in to IT

By Carmen Pauls Orthner  
For Eagle Feather News

Whether it's robots performing ultrasounds on a northern reserve, or fibre-optics giving schools, clinics and band offices up to 60 times faster Internet connections, information technology is making dramatic changes in everyday life in Saskatchewan First Nations communities.

At the same time, federal funding cuts and shifting governance models are changing the face of how those IT services are delivered.

These were two of the key messages delivered at the 2nd annual Saskatchewan First Nations Information and Communication Technology Conference, held March 10 and 11 at the Dakota Dunes Casino, on the Whitecap Dakota First Nation.

"We're going well beyond smoke signals now," joked Whitecap Chief Darcy Bear, kicking off the two-day event that gathered together IT professionals and service providers, representatives from the First Nations and provincial health and education sectors and businesspeople, including major sponsors SaskTel and Huawei.

Event host Keewatin Career Development Corporation (KCDC), a long-time IT service provider that has worked closely with many Saskatchewan First Nations schools as regional manager for the federal New Paths Education Program, announced that they are stepping down from this role.

Several of the other regional management organizations joined the event via a video link to thank KCDC for their 10 years of service to First Nations schools, from the first satellite installations to the current fibre-optics model.

KCDC CEO Randy Johns highlighted the growing maturity in First Nations country, in terms of understanding and valuing IT, noting that it is now time for bands to handle their own technology infrastructure development.

SaskTel reps James Sather and Grant Garner explained plans the Crown corporation has for drastically improving their Internet services to First Nations, which will see 89 communities hooked up to fiber and 4GLTE wireless. The changes will speed up the bands' connectivity by as much as 60 times.

"Communication is really a critical part of growth," Sather said. "You want to find people globally, and you want them to be able to find you globally, and I believe that's a right."

Sather noted that while technology alone will not solve the world's problems, use of technology by the right people will, and delegates heard about several such experiments.

David Fannon, owner of Sylvan Learning Centre in Prince Albert, shared plans for a customized learning program taught by online teachers, yet delivered in-school with the Birch Narrows Dene Nation, following a successful pilot project that saw some students advance by two grade levels in their math or reading skills.

Staff from the University of Saskatchewan's College of Nursing shared about their experiment in training registered nurses in Ile-a-la-Crosse and La Ronge, using a specialized robot that serves as the off-site instructor's hands and feet. This is the first nursing school in the world to use the robot technology.

That same technology will also soon be applied in an on-reserve setting. Dr. Ivar Mendez, head of surgery for the Saskatoon Health Region, talked about his use of the "doctor in a box" – either a hand-held device or a full-sized robot – as a means of doing real-time diagnostic and clinical work.

"You can look at a baby (in-vitro) from 7,000 km away," Mendez said.

Northern Medical Services is currently developing plans to use this technology in Pelican Narrows, one of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation's northern reserve communities.

Mendez said this is a way for medical care to be administered when and where it is needed most.

Cara Greyeyes, IT program manager for KCDC and co-chair of the conference planning team, said conferences like this excite and motivate First Nations IT people to dream, and also give them both practical skills and people to work with to achieve those goals.

"Networking is key. I believe that having all our partners present (means) that the remote community members can talk, ask questions and hear first-hand what the options are, and who they need to talk to," Greyeyes said.

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On behalf of the Planning Committee for the  
2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Saskatchewan First Nations Information Communication Technology Conference

we wish to extend our sincere thanks to all of our sponsors for the tremendously successful conference and gathering on March 10 & 11, 2014 at Dakota Dunes Casino & Event Centre – Whitecap Dakota First Nation.

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Without your support, the conference would not have been possible. Plans are underway for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Saskatchewan First Nations Information Communication Technology Conference. Please visit [www.skfirstnationsict.ca](http://www.skfirstnationsict.ca) for the live video recording of all sessions.

# It takes a crazy guy who can write to share wisdom

So a few of the larger members of Dirk Nation and I were hanging about, extolling the virtues and vices of various political, economic and social developments.

Without a doubt, members of the Dirk Nation are a wise and virile crew. And that night wisdom was flowing free. Many passers-by would linger longer than needed, hoping to eavesdrop and gather up a stray piece of conversational wizardry they could later claim as their own.

We are not a selfish bunch. We share and inquire for the betterment of each other and the galaxy.

For hours this went on. Some ideas would soar. Others would crash hilariously to the floor.

Until the subject of women came up. It was as though we had been frozen in carbonite, just like Han Solo in the Empire Strikes Back. Only our hair looked better.

We sat there, blinking at each other until one brave soul volunteered, "I have this girlfriend." Pause. "Ex-girlfriend," he clarified. "I have no idea what the hell happened."

It should come as no surprise but the assembled members of Dirk Nation did not attack the woman's character nor her

history. Cowards engage in such activity. Instead, we zeroed in on the story of the relationship, searching for clues to help our valued comrade reclaim what it was he lost ... his confidence.

As you can imagine, there were several little things that contributed to his situation which, when added up, made the end inevitable. And ultimately, desirable.

But one topic fascinated the gang. Male sexual health.

In hushed voices we shared the secrets we had picked up on our respective journeys. Without naming names, we offered up discoveries that made our women giddy and gleam with pride, in the bedroom and out. Often accidentally.

Other revelations were the result of deep research, which surprised many of us that this kind of information existed. An even bigger surprise? None of it involved pornography.

As the evening unfolded we covered an incredible amount of ground. Confidence. Communication. Creating intimacy. Endurance. Technique. Diet. Communication. Patience. Healing.



Exercise. Communication. Vision and mission. Even how to maintain "Johnson" without pills or creams. And then someone

announced, "Y'know, someone should write this down. I learned a lot tonight. I wish I knew this 10 years ago."

"Twenty years ago," another said. "I bet this could save marriages."

"And our sanity," still another added. "This is gold."

The first member of Dirk Nation continued, "If someone had a column he could write about this..."

"Yeah," said a second member, "a guy crazy enough to put this stuff out there."

Staring into the table I muttered, "Yeah, someone with a column. Who can write. Gotta be crazy though. A guy like me."

I looked up, and saw the guys staring at me as though I was their sad idiot cousin.

Then it struck me, "Hey, I'm a guy like me!"

But a moment of clarity descended upon me. "Some of our people are super

conservative. The residential schools did a hell of a lot of damage. You think our people are ready for this?"

Answers to that question went back and forth for awhile until one of the larger members of Dirk Nation replied, "I bet our women would want us to know this."

You may be wondering how our buddy fared after our meeting. That was two months ago. The first couple of weeks were dodgy for him, but things improved. According to him, he applied the knowledge we imparted that fateful night.

While he's not the handsomest stud muffin out there, he went on five dates in the last two weeks and the ladies smile at the mention of his name – I know three of them and asked.

Why are they happy? He is devoted to their pleasure, and treats them with respect, in a manly, honourable way. But most important? He found his purpose, and carries himself like a man.

The question remains, what should Dirk do? Should he share the collective wisdom of the hardened members of Dirk Nation? Send your replies and questions to [dirkdashing@shaw.ca](mailto:dirkdashing@shaw.ca)

*Dirk says, "There is not a shred of evidence to support the notion that life is serious."*

## ABORIGINAL Coaches & Officials Program

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

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## GOLF TOURNAMENT Fundraiser

**Friday, May 30th, 2014**

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**11:00 a.m. Shot Gun Start**

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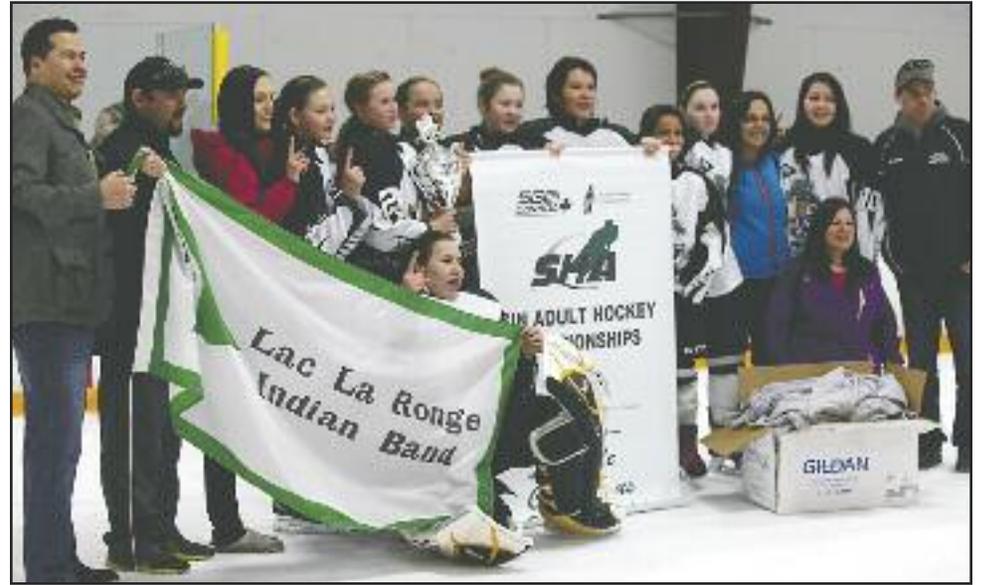
**WILD GAME FOR WINTER GAMES**

Wild game will be a contributor to a strong cultural component at the upcoming First Nation Winter Games. The leadership of Prince Albert Grand Council recently organized an early spring Arctic hunt in preparation for the Cultural Village that will be held in conjunction with the 2014 Saskatchewan First Nations Winter Games. Committee member Elder Phil Morin and PAGC Vice Chiefs Joseph Tsannie and Brian Hardlotte joined with Chief Bart Tsannie of Hatchet Lake Denesuline First Nation and members of their community in a hunting excursion situated in their traditional hunting territory off of the frozen ice of Cochrane River. Along with the caribou, the Cultural Village will serve other traditional foods, including moose, bison, elk, deer, beaver, muskrat and fish to Games participants. The Games will have the five core sports of badminton, broomball, curling, hockey and volleyball with three on three basketball being a demonstration sport. The PAGC is readying to host several thousand athletes, coaches, chaperones and family members for what looks to be, if you consider the food sources, a memorable and traditional Games for the ages. These photos taken by Winter Games committee member Tina Pelletier capture the work and effort involved in preparing some of the caribou foods, some of which will be put on display at the Cultural Village being held on the grounds of PAGC.



# LA RONGE DOMINATES

The FSIN Youth Hockey tournament saw hundreds of people fill Jemini Arena in Saskatoon for an entire weekend. Youth from First Nations all across the province came to compete against some of the same players they will be facing in a couple weeks time at the First Nation Winter Games. If the results are any indication of future results, expect La Ronge Indian Band to be dominant at the Games. La Ronge took first in four of six categories and only missed being top three in the Novice division. Kudos to the sports programs at La Ronge. And kudos to the organizers.



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