

Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

Valyncia speaks on the big issue

Valyncia Sparvier's school presentation on missing and murdered Aboriginal women hit home and garnered important media coverage of an important issue.

(Photo supplied)



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FSIN Acting Chief Kim Jonathan was part of an Ottawa roundtable discussing the issue of missing and murdered women. - Page 3



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Candice Pete has created what cannot be considered just another book club. They're talking about change. - Page 16

Welcome to our
Women's Edition

Coming In April - Arts & Entertainment Issue

CPMA #40027204



By Andréa Ledding
For Eagle Feather News

Grade 6 public speaking competitions often involve topics like fitness, music, phys-ed, or the second overall winning speech this year – chocolate.

But when 11-year-old Valyncia Sparvier chose her topic, she was thinking about her cousin Danita BigEagle, missing since 2007, and Tamra Keepness from her home reserve of Whitebear, missing from Regina for a decade since age five.

Or about the time a man in a red truck was trying to lure her into his vehicle at a city park. About how much she loves her mother, grandmother, aunties, and little cousins. And so she carefully researched and went

forward from her class with her topic: missing and murdered Indigenous females.

"She did the research on her own – I helped her write it on cue cards – and she placed first in the whole school," notes mother Brandy-Lee Maxie, who adds the teacher was a bit surprised at the topic initially.

"I posted a video and people have been really responsive, including a CBC article. I talked about it and did a paper in university – it's something we discuss at home – we've had situations where we're walking through north-central in Regina and a car will follow and we have to explain why that's a danger – we need to have heavy conversations around safety."

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T-shirts carry political message

By Linda Mikolayenko
For Eagle Feather News

Can a T-shirt influence political action? April Chiefcalf hopes so.

Chiefcalf, who works in La Ronge, took exception to statements made in December by Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt when he rejected calls for a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women.

"He said that he already knew what an inquiry would conclude and he shifted blame and responsibility to the Aboriginal community," says Chiefcalf.

"By shifting attention from missing and murdered Aboriginal women to property rights on reserves, he ignored the fact that numerous Aboriginal women have been victimized off-reserve by white, male perpetrators, and ignored the studies that identify links to colonialism, racism and sexism."

Chiefcalf is a program coordinator and instructor in the Northern Teacher Education Program and Northern Professional Access Program (NORTEP-NORPAC), as well as a PhD student at the University of Regina. She decided that she wanted to be part of a movement that changes the conversation on this issue.

One way she could do that was to custom order T-shirts with the messages

she wanted to convey. On the front of the red T-shirt, in bold white letters is written WE DEMAND A NATIONAL INQUIRY ON MMIW!, and on the back, JUSTICE FOR MISSING & MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN.

She began with a modest order of 30 and began selling them primarily by word of mouth.

"I am joining other people who are changing the discourse, and I want other people to join me," she says.

Chiefcalf has since invited local artist Harmony Johnson-Harder to create a visual image to convey the same message.

Johnson-Harder looked at traditional representations of Lady Justice with origins in Greek and Roman mythology, and wanted to play on that, but in an

**WE
DEMAND
A NATIONAL
INQUIRY ON
MMIW!**

Aboriginal context. Often Lady Justice is depicted with a blindfold to represent objectivity and impartiality. However, there is no blindfold on the woman in Johnson-Harder's artwork, which she calls Justice for Her.

"These women do not have a voice, so I gagged her," she says.

Both the traditional Lady Justice and Johnson-Harder's depiction hold scales, but instead of the double-edge sword symbolizing power, in Justice for Her, the woman's right hand holds up an eagle feather.

"When you hold a feather, you can only speak the truth, and have good intentions," says Johnson-Harder.

Some ancient images of Justice include a laurel wreath, often seen as a symbol of victory. Johnson-



Harder drew a braid of sweetgrass, as a gesture of "putting your prayers out there."

Through her creativity, she hopes to give Aboriginal women "that voice, that confidence, the respect that they deserve."

Both Johnson-Harder and Chiefcalf believe a national inquiry is needed. Others are joining them in voicing the demand. The student hosts for the NORTEP-NORPAC graduation in May have chosen to wear T-shirts that will bear the Justice for Her design.

Chiefcalf would like to see key political leaders wear them in Parliament in response to Prime Minister Harper's assertion that an inquiry is "not high on our radar."

"Our leaders are to represent us," says Chiefcalf, "not ignore or dictate."

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Harper gov't steadfast in refusal to call national inquiry

By Fraser Needham
For Eagle Feather News

They came, they met and they agreed to meet again.

Indigenous stakeholders from across the country met with federal and provincial government officials in Ottawa in February for the first-ever national roundtable on missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

However, the meeting ended with little in the way of concrete proposals on how best to move forward on the issue other than a commitment to meet again sometime next year.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Minister Bernard Valcourt and Status of Women Minister Kellie Leitch attended the roundtable but both reiterated the federal government's steadfast refusal to call a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women.

The two government ministers also surprised more than a few round-table attendees by failing to attend the closing news conference and instead holding their own news conference at a nearby hotel.

Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Interim Chief Kimberley Jonathan, one of the Saskatchewan attendees at the round-table, says in a press release although the organization is disappointed the Harper government continues to refuse to call a national inquiry, the event provided a positive forum for affected families to share their stories.

"My heart goes out to the Indigenous women that have been stolen from us and to all those family members and communities left to deal with the trauma of losing a loved one," she says.

"We cannot forget the children that have been left with no mother. They are forever impacted and for them we must work together towards solutions."

Government and Aboriginal officials agreed to the need for a Pan Canadian Framework for Action to prevent and address violence against Indigenous women and children.

The framework has three themes aimed at addressing violence against Indigenous women and children: prevention and awareness, community safety and policing measures and justice response.

File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council Vice-Chairperson Elaine Chicoose also attended the roundtable.



The list of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada continues to grow. Despite that, and international calls for a national inquiry, the federal government refuses to budge from its position that it is a crime problem, not a sociological problem.

Like Jonathan, she says in a release the roundtable provided a much-needed opportunity for victimized families to tell their stories.



Acting Chief Kim Jonathan

"It was an honour to listen to the courage and strength of the families of the missing and murdered Indigenous women as well as to hear the commitment from the provinces and the other Indigenous organizations to work together to create safe communities for our Indigenous women and children," she says.

Okanese First Nation Chief Marie-Anne Daywalker-Pelletier spoke to the roundtable about the need for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal governments to address the historic and contemporary systemic violence against Indigenous women and children.

She also stressed the need for governments to take account of the inadequate socioeconomic conditions First Nations people live under and to address these conditions through the support of adequate programs and services provided by Indigenous communities themselves.

"The government and police service should review and amend their policies and practices to contribute to the safety and security of Indigenous women and children to prevent further victimization," Daywalker-Pelletier says in a press release.

"We will work with all levels of government to eliminate violence against our women and children and with true commitment, effort and perseverance we can go achieve this."

Carol Wolfe, mother of Karina Wolfe of Saskatoon who has been missing since July 2010, also attended the Ottawa round-table that was hosted by the Assembly of First Nations.

Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger told the roundtable his government will sponsor a national meeting of police organizations and justice officials to look at different ways of addressing the problem of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

Harper government officials also reiterated the government's promise to move forward on an action plan announced last fall.

An RCMP report released last spring says at least 1,181 Aboriginal women and girls were killed or went missing between 1980 and 2012.



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Relentless photog caught the celebration

Come on down the press release said. The 601 Outreach Centre located at 601 33rd Street West was going to celebrate International Women's Day by providing much deserved pampering to the ladies in our community. I figured that would make for some great photos.

When I arrived at the door, there was a sign saying women only. Feeling fearless, armed with my camera, I barged in. Immediately several women yelled, "women only today!"

I meekly held up my camera and a copy of Eagle Feather News (we give them papers every month so that helped) and begged for a visit.

They welcomed me with open arms. But, for a short time only and limited photos!

The place was buzzing. People sat around a table adorned with \$500 worth of beautiful flowers donated by a florist out of Winnipeg. A couple women were getting their nails done and several were dressing up in funky garb and having their portraits taken.

It was a special gathering for women, some of whom, according to 601 Outreach Coordinator Sarah-Dawn Matthews, face society's toughest challenges.

"We host this day for some of the women who access our services to come and feel beautiful and get to worry only about themselves and not everything else going on in their lives.

"They face challenges that include housing, employment, poverty, and for some that have HIV, the

stigma that goes with it, poor treatment in hospitals, lack of access to medical care and the list goes on."

All too often, Aboriginal women are over represented as clients at the 601 Centre. Aboriginal women are also over represented in the prison system, the bad part of the health system and also, in the missing and murdered category. The statistics all tie together and lead to the fact that our women are the most vulnerable in Canada.

Prime Minister Harper likes to say that missing and murdered Aboriginal women is a crime problem, not a socio-logical problem.

But you will never see the cowardly prime minister debate a sociologist on this topic. Heck, he won't even answer

reporters' questions about it. The systems in our society are set up against Aboriginal women and we have to change those systems.

A national inquiry will not happen as long as the current federal government is in power, even though the United Nations,

multitudes of municipalities, provincial leaders and Aboriginal leaders across Canada are calling for one.

In the absence of an inquiry, why don't we all commit to doing our part to stop this cycle? If you know of a friend in an abusive relationship, help them. Report violent people.

Help (not enable) your friends struggling with addictions or mental health issues. Take care of your family the best you can.

The fine folk at 601 Outreach do just that and more.

"We provide lunch every day, access to the Internet, resumes, jobs, support services that take people to medical and can advocate for them at court, visit people in the hospital and in prison. We have people that say our Christmas dinner here feels like a family dinner," added Matthews.

Lana from Vancouver was really enjoying the little things as her hands were getting lotioned up before her manicure on Women's Day.

"I love this spa day. I think it is awesome getting all the ladies together and treating ourselves. This is like shopping. Actually I won a door prize! I have never won anything in my life."

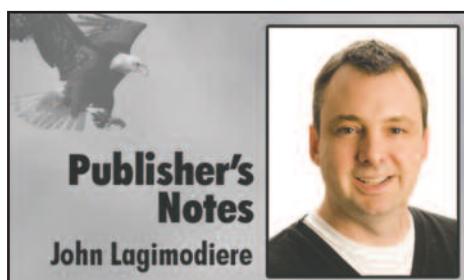
Sometimes it is the little things that people can hold onto, like a new family that shares the same cares and concerns that can help them find their way in life. Other times though, it is really about the manicure, if only for a day.

Soon we can vote!

With the publication of this March Women's Issue, Eagle Feather News completes its 17th year of publication and turns 18! Now we can officially vote.

We want to thank all of the readers and advertisers that have made our paper relevant over the past 17 years. And also thanks to the myriad of writers, photographers and sales people we have worked with over the years.

Your contribution is cherished.



From left, Tiana, Lana, Hilary, Lynn and Summer took part in the 601 Outreach Centre International Women's Day Celebration.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)



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Two months to go, here's my baby birth plan

The baby blogs say that a "well-prepared parent" arrives at the hospital with a birth plan.

A birth plan is a detailed list of how you and your partner want the labour to go and covers things from epidurals (hell, yes) to saving the placenta (an option for only the most extreme hoarders among us.)

The birth plan even asks how you would like to give birth and offers the following options: reclining in bed, on your side, on all fours or squatting.

I want to meet the woman who chooses squatting over reclining – she's got to have some powerful quads and apparently no self-consciousness whatsoever.

Also, there needs to be a fifth option which is "so high that I think that Willie Nelson is my nurse."

This detailed baby-plan advice contradicts other baby advice about how you're supposed to be laissez-faire about the whole birthing process as in "let go of expectations and let the pain wash over and cleanse you." Like an acidic body-wash, I guess.

Generally, all advice on babies contradicts all the other advice. There will be peace in the Middle East before mommies agree on the best way to get a baby to sleep through the night.

The only thing that there's consensus on is that you shouldn't feed babies steak and I'm sure right now Alicia Silverstone is pre-chewing some to spit into her kid's mouth – true story.

I decided to put together a birth plan because "winging it" is how I got pregnant in the first place. Here's what my plan looks like:

We arrive at the hospital at eight p.m. It's the perfect time because it's after rush hour so we don't



have to deal with all of Saskatoon's aggressive drivers and plethora of "Learner" drivers.

And it's not too late that we're stuck in a waiting room full of teenagers with alcohol poisoning.

Check in at the front desk is quick and we barely have enough time to update our Facebook status to, "Baby Arriving Soon!" before being taken to a hospital room.

We share a room with a lovely couple, a lawyer and a women's studies professor, who keep us in stitches with their pregnancy mishaps and we, in turn, regale them with ours.

We make plans to go to Cuba together after all this is over.

My doctor checks in with me. He's the best in "the pulling babies out of the hoo-ha field" (sorry forgot to look up what that area of medicine is actually called) and he looks like George Clooney in his E.R. days.

He can tell just from looking at me, that I am exactly 31 minutes from giving birth.

There's only enough time for me to finish my latte and watch one episode of the Mindy Project before I'm whisked off to a pristine labour room where AC

DC's Thunderstruck gently plays in the background.

Once labour starts, I don't even have to push, the baby sort of swims through the birth canal and then uses his tiny hands to pry himself out, like a smart monkey. (I don't know why more babies don't figure this out.)

Everyone in the room breaks into spontaneous applause at the beauty of the birth.

I say something witty like, "I don't know why they call that labour, that was more like play-bour." Everyone laughs and smiles, even the baby.

Once the baby has been bathed in mountain spring water infused with the scent of Tiger Lilies, my partner is about to cut the cord when an eagle flies in through the window and cuts it with his beak.

Later the eagle helpfully eats the placenta because it's gross and no one wants to look at it.

My baby and I take a selfie and post it directly to Instagram where 200,000 people like it – including Rihanna! Despite just having gone through the birthing process, my baby and I both look calm, refreshed and thin.

Then we go back to the maternity ward room where we eat chocolate chip cookie dough blizzards (the baby just has a smoothie.)

From beginning to end the entire process has taken less than one hour.

Other parents rush up to us, asking us for the secret to our success and I say kindly, "It's really important to have a great birthing plan."

So that's my birth plan, and in less than two months, we'll see how close we get to that.



Nicole Paul created "Keeper of the Voice" to honour and memorialize residential school survivors.

Paul connects with own identity through art

By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

A young artist's research into her own identity was the inspiration behind her winning piece of art.

Originally, Nicole Paul created "Keeper of the Voice" as a way to honour and memorialize residential school survivors. Hers was part of an offering at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada hearings. And while researching the project, Paul also began trying to reconnect with her own Aboriginal identity.

"It is from both these experiences that I really started to take a political stance on my artwork," she says.

"One thing I learned from my time with

the elders was how much the loss of their language damaged their cultural identity and ability to connect with their traditional world views.

"It is believed that we are only able to communicate with the Creator in our mother tongue and without that we lose our connection to the spirits. That is why I believe language is so important to any cultural group (not just indigenous groups) and why I chose to focus on creating awareness to the need to restore and rehabilitate dying aboriginal languages."

Paul submitted her artwork to the annual Aboriginal Arts & Stories competition and won the 2014 Art Category. It was actually her second submission. Her first didn't place, but she wasn't discouraged.



NICOLE PAUL

"To me, it was never about winning," she explains. "It was wanting to spread my message to as many people as I could. I believe it was my passion and message that shone through in the end. If you have something you feel strongly about don't hide it, show it to the world and get your story out there."

The contest is open to Status and non-Status First Nations, Inuit, and Métis between the ages of 14 and 29 years old. There is also a category for emerging writers and artists between the ages of 11 and 13 years old.

Participants are invited to create a piece of art or writing that explores a moment or theme in Aboriginal history or culture. Those who submit are asked to include a 200 to 400 word artist's or author's statement that explains how the piece reflects or interprets the moment or theme they selected.

The contest is a great classroom or workshop activity too since groups of six or more who submit their work together are eligible for an additional group prize.

Paul reflects on the life of her father and his siblings in her artist statement.

"My father and his siblings were all stripped of their language from a young age," she wrote in her statement.

"It was during the time of residential school placement that many Indigenous children, like my father, were separated from their families and forced to assimilate into Eurocentric ideals.

"With this painting I am challenging the institutional racism and ill effects colonialism has had on the people of my heritage. I hope to bring a voice to those who are no longer able to speak. I want my piece to inspire and motivate people to preserve and bring our languages back to life."

"Histories and legends are all passed down through tales and this is the beginning of my story."



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Youngster speaking up for vulnerable Indigenous women

• Continued from Page One

Eventually, at school, Valyncia saw some of the online comments – hateful, ignorant, racist, apathetic, or dismissive – which her dad was concerned about, but maybe those responses illustrate why this problem continues to be a problem.

"She has common sense to solutions – everyone should stick up for each other and watch out for one another," notes her mother, which sounds like a pretty reasonable solution to the problem online and on the streets.

"I'm very proud of her. It is a hard subject to discuss."

After her CBC interview, the teacher was asked if the topic had come up in the classroom and he replied that cultural topics were included but not this kind of discussion, and now kids are asking questions.

"All of the girls in his class are First Nations so that's something they should be discussing," Brandy noted. "A lot of them are starting to hit the pre-teens, and as teenagers, they should know how to keep each other safe."

"I chose the topic because it is kind of a big issue in Canada and I think I can relate to that because I'm getting into the age where I am the target," noted Valyncia, relaying some of her own stories including the red truck.

"My teachers were kind of surprised that I picked that topic on my own. But my mom has never tried to hide anything. I want to warn Indigenous girls what might happen in their future if they don't be safe and look out for each other."

She wants to keep others safe, and she wants it to stop happening.

"There's been a lot of reports of missing and murdered



VALYNCIA SPARVIER

Indigenous women and I'm sick of them. There's new reports every day and I'm sick of that," she noted.

"And when I read some of those comments – I was surprised at all of those comments – I don't really acknowledge them, those aren't the people I know."

A young woman's optimism helps us all see the potential for positive change. She has bright hopes for her future and the future of other Indigenous girls and women in speaking change into existence. She admits to being nervous about public speaking at first but has since presented all the way through the competition but also to workshops, media follow-up, and an invitation to a roundtable discussion.

"With 1,200 cases there are 225 unsolved. That's crazy. I kind of want to make a change to that. I want the kids to acknowledge it. I want Stephen Harper to acknowledge what I have to say. He just says it's not high on his radar. He doesn't really care about my life or the ones I love."

She adds that "people are kind of wrong about all those cases they are blaming on Aboriginal men" as the percentage of solved cases don't generally back that statement up: even though Aboriginal men are important and can be involved in both problems and solutions, they are at risk too.

So what would she say to Stephen Harper's daughter? She would ask her to think about her own relatives being at risk, and encourage her to use her voice too. Women and children should be seen, heard, valued, and respected.

"I would tell her that this is a big issue ... that I have a lot of beautiful cousins and that's why I'm really looking into this and trying to get this going out there. I have a beautiful grandmother, mother, cousins, and aunties I want them all to be safe. And I want to get this out there."

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Women's Day celebrates progress, calls for change

International Women's Day was March 8, and before the men reading this think this is the start of "What about the men" day? There is an International Men's Day November 19 so cool your horses!

International Women's Day is when we get to reflect on progress made, call for change. I have put together a short list of 10 reasons why we need International Women's Day.

- Because of the Highway of Tears where Aboriginal women have gone missing. Highway 16 between Prince George and Prince Rupert British Columbia. Police list the number of victims at 18, Aboriginal Organization range the numbers of missing into the forties.

- Because the two young men that murdered 28-year-old Pamela George only got six and a half years in prison.

- Because on July 5, 2004 five-year-old Tamra Keepness went missing from her Regina home and has never been found.

- Because serial killer Robert Pickton of Port Coquitlam, British Columbia was convicted in 2007 for the second degree murders of six Aboriginal women. He is also charged with the deaths

of an additional 20 women many from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

- Because of another serial killer from Saskatoon, John Crawford who murdered 16-year-old Shelley Napope and Calinda Waterhen and Eva Taysup.

- Because of Tina Fontaine whose 15-year-old body was wrapped in a bag and dumped into Manitoba's Red River.

- Because of Jian Ghomeshi.

- Because of the culture of silence surrounding abusive men and their actions.

who responded to the same poll blamed victims for the abuse they suffered.

In Canada there are over 500 missing and murdered Aboriginal women. It's a

grim fact that violence against women exists and that it is frequently underreported.

The Stolen Sisters website says that Aboriginal women have

long struggled to draw attention to violence within their own families and communities. Canadian police and public officials have long been aware of a pattern of racist violence against Aboriginal

her; she's your grandmother, mother, sister, daughter, wife, friend and she's worth it.

There are so many more cases like these out there. Let's work together to make the necessary changes. Remember that Women are Humans and Humans have rights.

International Women's Day is also about celebrating acts of courage by ordinary women who make extraordinary choices to make our communities better places.

Women are the backbone of our communities and the foundation of our families. Women have always been the life givers and caretakers remember that people. Respect that.

Gandhi said, "Be the change you wish to see in the world."

Thank the women in your life who bring you life, joy and laughter. Thank you to Deborah, Verla, Elaine, Lynda, Kirsten, Celeste and Elizabeth and all the other women in my life.

You are all my "sheros".

Thank you for your emails and letters. You can write to me Sandee Sez C/O Eagle Feather News P.O. Box 924 Station Main Saskatoon Sk. S7K 3M4 or email Sandra.ahenakew@gmail.com

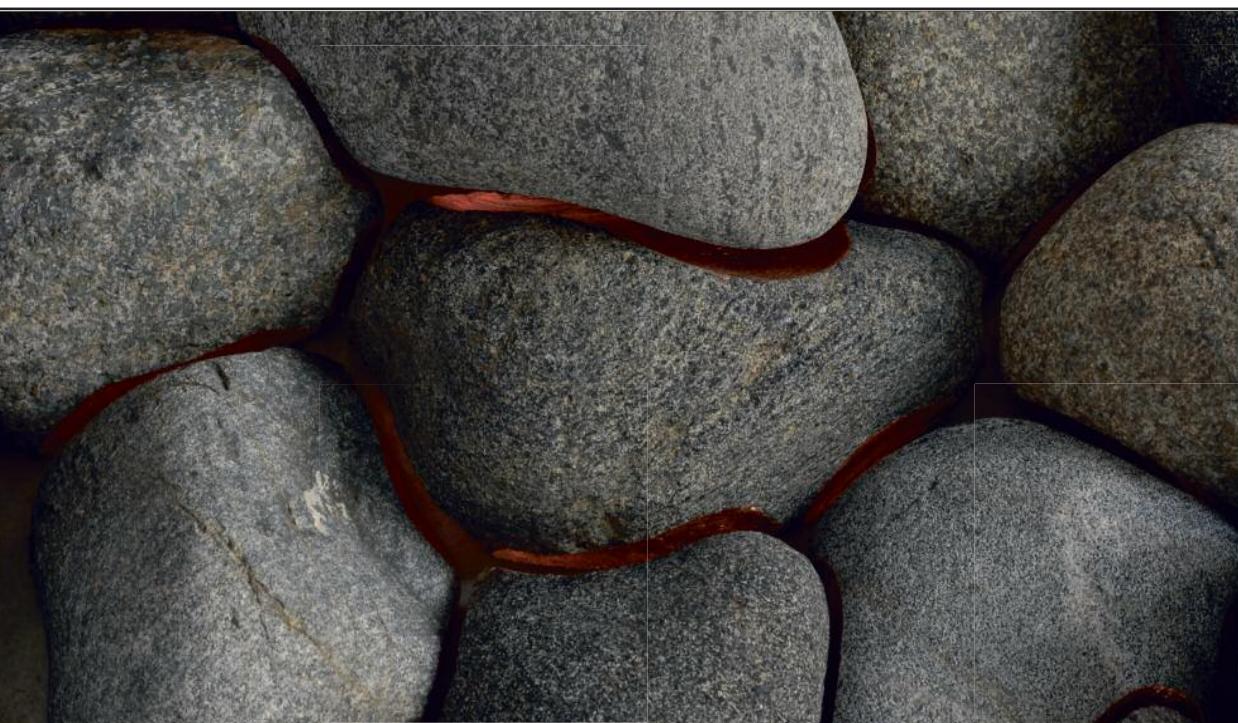
Women are the backbone of our communities and the foundation of our families.

- Because a recent Angus Reid poll found that 24 per cent of respondents think it's possible that domestic violence victims "bring abuse upon themselves".

- Because 33 per cent of the men

women in Canadian cities but have done little to prevent it.

We need to collectively make a stand to end this vicious cycle. It is difficult to ignore the voices of many. Stand up for



Moving Forward, Never Forgetting offers a space for intercultural dialogue and storytelling. The exhibition and related events encourage sharing, empathy, and deeper understanding of what it means for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to co-reside in these territories. Newly commissioned works and performances, as well as significant pieces from the MacKenzie's permanent collection, are accompanied by living speakers—Story Keepers—a new initiative at the Gallery, whose role is to assist visitors in learning about the stories behind the art works, and to collect stories from visitors. This project features residencies with artists Cheryl L'Hirondelle, Adrian Stimson, and Peter Morin.

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Michael Belmore, Smoulder, 2010-2011 (detail), carved stone, gilded copper. MacKenzie Art Gallery, University of Regina Collection, 2013. Image: Courtesy of the Artist.

U of S offers new pathways to nursing career for Aboriginal students

SASKATOON – The University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing created the country's first Aboriginal nursing program, the Native Access Program to Nursing (NAPN), in 1985, when there were only 35 Aboriginal baccalaureate-prepared nurses in Canada.

The program began with a nine-week spring orientation to nursing, modeled after a similar program provided by the Native Law Centre.

In 1997, however, the access program model gave way to a focus on local recruitment directly into the nursing program and retention to graduation through advising and support.

NAPN remained the most successful program in the country for recruiting Aboriginal nursing students, with 29 per cent of all Canadian Aboriginal nursing students studying in Saskatchewan.

When the College of Nursing moved from a two-provider model to an indirect entry Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program in 2012, it was time to re-examine the NAPN program and its name.

After extensive consultations with community stakeholders and students, the College of Nursing decided upon a new, aspirational name to describe the services it offers to its Aboriginal students at its six sites across the province: La Ronge, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Regina and Yorkton.

The University of Saskatchewan Community of Aboriginal Nursing - or UCAN for short – will officially launch on March 13.



The core of UCAN has been and will continue to be student support and advising, and the College of Nursing has been able to attract a student body that is 15.4 per cent self-identified as Aboriginal.

But the new program will also see the College look upstream, by offering services aimed at getting Aboriginal students through the high school science requirements and through the pre-professional year of Arts and Science; and downstream, by offering a mentorship program with the Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada that aims to see successful nursing students become successful Registered Nurses as they transition to the workforce.

"We've never had a problem attracting Aboriginal students to nursing," said College of Nursing Dean Lorna Butler.

"Where we've had challenges, is in getting them successfully through the door with some of the tougher prerequisite courses."

"We're now putting more resources into science and math success at the K-12 level, including easy access to bursaries for tutorial support in high school chemistry and math for rural Aboriginal students."

"We know how important it is for Saskatchewan's health care system to be representative of the people it serves."

"UCAN will position us to get to where we need to be as a province, by offering Aboriginal students a pathway into the College of Nursing and then out into the health care workforce."

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Doctor works to take race out of health care

By Angela Hill
For Eagle Feather News

Dr. Janet Smylie has spent a lot of time in the media spotlight of late.

The family physician and researcher was catapulted from the comfort of her day-to-day work of combining aboriginal culture with health care, when the Toronto-based health research and policy group, the Wellesley Institute, published her paper, First Peoples, Second Class Treatment.

Smylie and co-author Dr. Billie Allan wrote that racism against Indigenous Peoples in health care is so bad that people plan on how to deal with it before going for medical help or simply avoid care altogether.

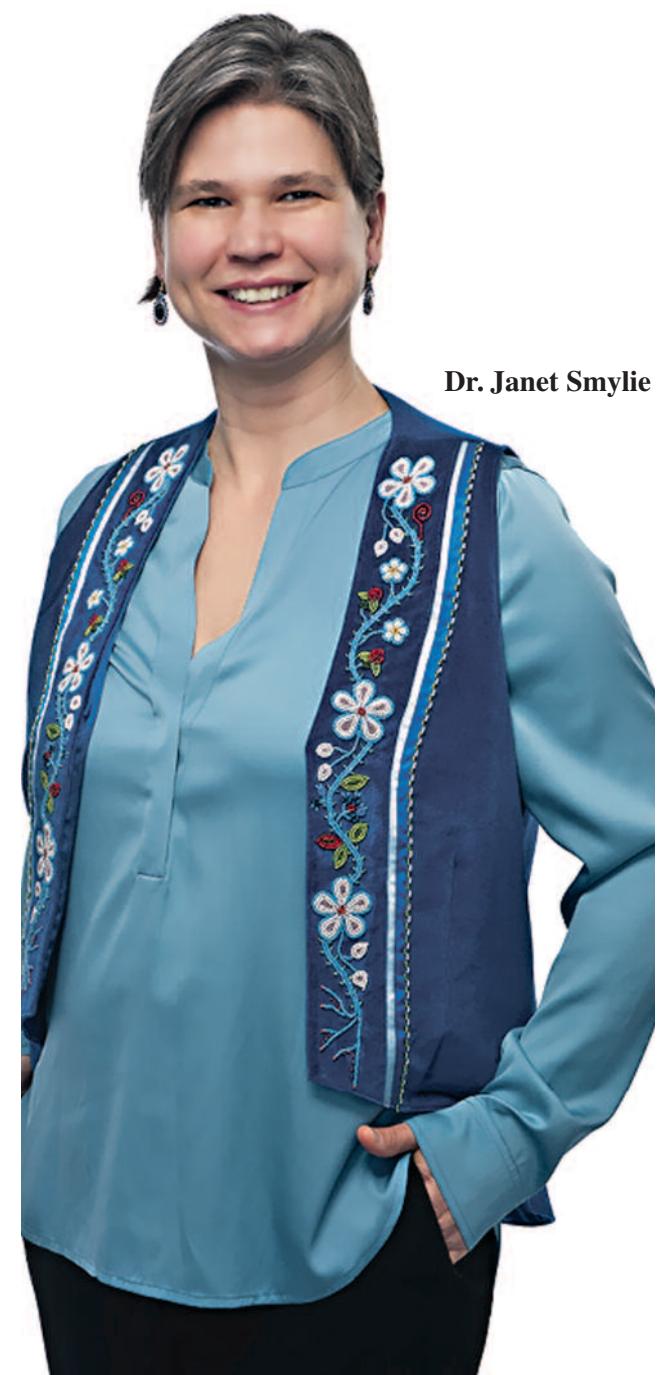
But what she wrote about in that paper didn't come as a surprise to the 47-year-old Smylie, who is one of the first Métis doctors in Canada.

"In my life and medical practice I am aware that racism happens and it's a big deal," she said.

"We used to make a joke when I graduated. I graduated when I was 23, and people were quite shocked to see me and some people got scared. So I used to say, 'I'm Doogie Howser's half-breed sister.'"

She said at points during her medical training she would hear people make assumptions about aboriginal people.

"Like the teaching point of a resident was, 'these people have a lot of babies and don't know how to care for them,'" Smylie said.



Dr. Janet Smylie

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"That kind of shocking stuff would actually come out of people's mouths."

She said she wondered if people were saying things like that around her, how bad they were treating others. Those incidents created the focal point of Smylie's career – to make a change to previously held ideas and create a supportive environment for aboriginal people to access health care.

Smylie has been a doctor for about 23 years. She started her career at the Ottawa General Hospital before moving to be a physician with Anishnawbe Health in Toronto. From being a family doctor, Smylie connected with the University of Toronto to teach family medicine before beginning research projects. She has even spent time in Saskatchewan as the past director of the Indigenous Peoples Health Research Centre and a former associate professor at the University of Saskatchewan.

Her work in connecting aboriginal people with the health system, and her hand in creating the Aboriginal-based birth centre in Toronto earned Smylie the prestigious National Aboriginal Achievement Award in 2012.

Why does she keep fighting for these rights and working to make a difference?

"I come from a long line of ... fairly vocal people," she said, with a laugh.

"Humility is important and sense of humour is important. The drive just was just in me, comes from my family, from my ancestors, my community now."

Smylie doesn't show signs of slowing down. She plans on continuing to gather evidence and cases of racism within the health system to build on First Peoples, Second Class Treatment and looking for ways to challenge the mainstream.

She continues as a researcher for the Centre for Research on Inner City Health, a physician at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, and associate professor at the University of Toronto's Dalla Lana School of Public Health.



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The University of Saskatchewan Aboriginal Achievement Week Student Awards recognize Aboriginal students who have excelled at their studies, undertaken unique or compelling research, made significant contributions to the community, or who have demonstrated leadership.

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Clarence Campeau Development Fund a Métis success story

**By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News**

SASKATOON—The Clarence Campeau Development Fund recently engaged the firms of MNP LLP and Northern Research Group Inc. to conduct two distinct but related evaluations of the Fund and its outcomes.

These reports have recently been made public and the results are staggering and provide further proof that CCDF remains a national leader in Aboriginal financing and economic development.

The results from the activities conducted for the socioeconomic impact study compiled by NRG confirm that CCDF generates tremendous benefits for the province of Saskatchewan as a whole and particularly for the Métis people of Saskatchewan.

The first was an independent evaluation of CCDF's performance during the period of 2009 to 2013 which was compiled by MNP. The second was a study completed by NRG on the Socioeconomic Impact of Métis Entrepreneurship and Economic Development in Saskatchewan from 1998 to 2013.

The results may be surprising to some, but not to CCDF Chief Executive Officer, Roland Duplessis.

"We know CCDF has had a great impact over the last 17 years but when you see it in an independent evaluation it is very impressive," Duplessis says.

"For every dollar CCDF advances, there's \$11.91 in socio-economic benefit created. If you look at just the GDP on the Fund review side, it is \$3.31 created. Both of those numbers are worth talking about," said Duplessis in an interview with Eagle Feather News.

If you spread those numbers out over the life span of the Fund, the impact has been over \$660 million.

"The Fund has been a major player in economic development for Métis people



impact study, conducted by NRG, confirms that CCDF generates tremendous social benefits for the Province of Saskatchewan as a whole and particularly for the Métis people of Saskatchewan in the areas of education, health, sports, leisure and recreation.

The Fund has grown over the past 17 years to an equity base of \$28 million with \$15 million in loan receivables. Remarkably, the Fund has less than a two per cent annual write-off over the course of its 17 years. This is a testament to the work and commitment of the CCDF staff to their clients and the relationships they've built with their clients over the years.

One of the programs that experienced a lot of success in the past four years is the

Métis Energy and Resource Program. Commonly referred to as MERP,

and for the province of Saskatchewan," added Duplessis.

Also the socioeconomic

program that was established as a joint initiative with the federal government, has now expanded beyond just energy and resource projects.

"We now offer support for large scale projects," said Steve Danners, Director of MERP.

"Not every Metis Local or Region is going to qualify since the program is directly related to the readiness of the client and opportunities that are available. We place an emphasis on capacity assessment and business readiness and encourage joint ventures and partnerships.

CCDF, with the support of the Province, is currently undertaking a study to determine the economic development capacity of the Métis in the province. This



Monica Brunet and Georgette Nicolas share information on CCDF with a student at a trade show. On left, CCDF CEO Roland Duplessis and Steve Danners. (Photo John Lagimodiere)



important study is being conducted by Northern Research Group Inc., a Métis owned consulting firm headquartered in Prince Albert.

"We know there are a number of Métis development corporations and communities in the province. What we don't know is exactly what stage of business readiness exists and what is the capacity to do business when opportunity presents itself," said Duplessis.

"Once this study is completed we will be in a much better position to determine what is required and the level of funding needed to assist in preparing our people and communities so that they can access contracts through procurement or direct bid."

Monica Brunet, Director of the Métis Economic Development Sector, reinforces that CCDF is a real Métis success story.

"The Fund has experienced significant growth over the last 17 years creating over 7,400 direct and indirect full and part time jobs." The recent report supports her opinion of the capacity of the Fund.

"CCDF has continued to demonstrate that it has a professional and robust capacity and systems for governance and management. The organization continues to deliver consistent and strong financial results and outcomes. It is well positioned for sustainability in the next few years and is an ideal receptor organization for additional funding" it says in the executive summary.

"What we do has created healthy families and a strong Métis economy in Saskatchewan," added Brunet.

"We are known as Canada's leading Métis financial institution and others have been built on our model, but what made me very proud was when the report pointed out that our biggest strength was our people. Our board and our staff are outstanding and I think the results of this report make that clear."

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The Aboriginal Youth Idea Challenge was won by Devon Fiddler (Left) with second going to Mary-Lou Mintram and Candace Linklater. They received their winnings from Leanne Bellegarde, Director Aboriginal Strategy at PotashCorp.

(Photos by John Lagimodiere)

PotashCorp, U of S help young entrepreneurs to succeed

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – It was fourth time lucky for Devon Fiddler at the Aboriginal Youth Idea Challenge (AYIC) business plan competition.

This was Fiddler's fourth entrance into the highly competitive event and she took first place this year and a \$6,000 cheque from PotashCorp to invest in her business SheNative design company.

"It really means a lot to win this competition since I've participated in it since 2012 when I first started off with a little of inspiration from Neechie Gear and an Idea," said a grateful Fiddler after the event.

"This competition has helped push me forward each year. I've been persistent in trying for the prize money each year to kick-start my idea. This past year, I've had major breakthroughs!"

"I've gotten grants, won my first competition a year ago, small loans, and crowd funded over \$20,000! This money will sure help a lot with cash flow and in developing my sales team."

AYIC is hosted by the University of Saskatchewan's non-profit organization Enactus. The student-run group creates outreach programs to address social, economic and environmental issues. Business plans entered this year included a workout supplement, Cree designed men's ties and socks, panties with a message, personal trainer services, baby clothes and personal protection for women.

"It was so good to see Devon win the competition this year," said PotashCorp Director of Aboriginal Strategy Leanne Bellegarde.

"We support this program because it gives direct mentoring and skills to the

participants. Entrepreneurs like Devon and the other young business people we have here today are going to drive the economy of Saskatchewan in the future and that is something important to invest in."

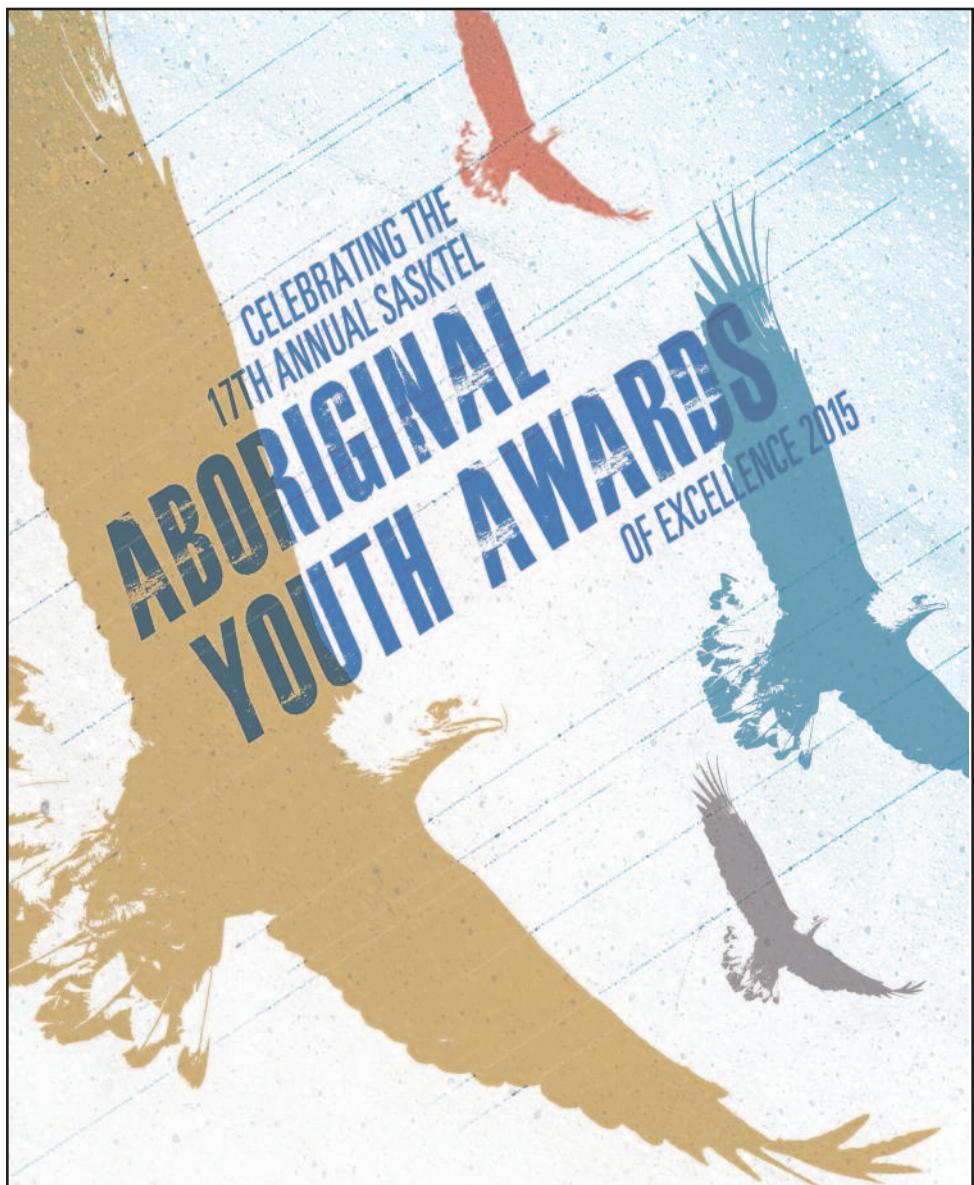


Devon Fiddler of SheNative.

Second place went to Mary-Lou Mintram and Candace Linklater for their fashion line Little Bow-tihk.

"Entering in the Challenge was an amazing experience. The workshops helped us immensely in the formation of our business plan and being a part of this process helped us take a leap of faith in developing our first clothing line together," said Mary-Lou Mintram of her and her cousin's business.

"We have conducted research and improved on our sewing skills, it has been a dream of ours to enter into the fashion world for several years. Our next step is to review our plan and use the funds we generously received from PotashCorp to secure equipment."



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Cree protocol for ceremony

A four part series by Louise Halfe

The colonial disruption of the Indigenous Cree culture led to psychological and spiritual starvation. This article is shared to stimulate healthy reflection and discussion on our traditions, culture and ceremony.

There is a lot of apprehension and misunderstanding about conduct in, and approach to, ceremony.

The help of a language specialist and six female Elders was used to clarify the language and provide guidance in making the following account. Elders teach that words must be used with caution. This article is an exploration of the Plains Cree language in order to highlight the teachings. The word for language, pîkiskwêwin, loosely translates as “taking something apart from the female body that has life of the wind.”

It must be noted that not every Elder practises ceremonies in the same way, nor does one Elder have expertise in all areas of spirituality or medicine. Each one is gifted differently.

A seeker after insights into this wisdom must explore, ask, and discover how a particular Elder should be approached. This exploration is in itself a lesson in humility and respect. In nêhiyawêwin Cree spirituality is not a religion, it is isîhcikêwin a life way or “the way things are done.” kihci-isîhcikêwin which means the “sacredness of the way things are done.”

Protocol nîkân isîhcikêwin, is “the way ceremony was conducted since the beginning of time.” The teachings are as old as our language itself they reach out from the beginning of time. They are elemental, derived from the

wind, the fire, the rock, the earth and all animate and inanimate forms.

When studied closely, these ancient spirits simply just “do” their business. From the Western or European perspective earth based spirituality is paganism. In Latin pagan means “at the hearth.”

Prayer began its origins within the cave. “Spirituality is a journey that is holistic and calls upon both the individual and the community, wâhkôhtowin – “kinship,” or a whole. It is a profound journey that covers the medicine wheel and its four elements: the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual.

The mind, the heart, the gut and desire co-exist and are directly related. This journey opens the door to transformation, if one is open to it.

The Elders encourage lines of inquiry when they teach asking “tâniisi kititêyi-hîtén...” or ‘What does your heart feel?’ saying kiya, “It’s up to you.” mâmitonêyi-hamâso, “You have a mind, think for yourself.”

This journey, at times communal, is also a private one and therefore each person is responsible to both the self and others.

“Ceremony increases one’s knowledge and understanding of self, as well as one’s place and belonging in the world.”

When a person is honored with the right to conduct a ceremony she or he takes a vow – kihci-asotamâkêwin which means “gives their word since they have been blessed with awêyihtâkoswiin, these responsibilities.”

Within these teachings are the values of “respect,” kistêyihtowin, and “caring” kisêwâtítâtowin, of oneself and others. The word manâcihiwêwin implies “respect and the binding of people within this value system.” When individuals honor and respect others, they are in essence showing the same respect toward their individual ahcakwa or “soul.”

The soul arises from the union of wind and spirit. To put this in cultural terms, the nêhiyawak take direction from that place of spirit within the wind.

In recent times there has been conflict and challenging ideas within the Cree culture about dress, protocol, and ceremony in the modern world.

Unfortunately, these conflicts again divide the people in ways the government and other colonial institutions would applaud. These establishments brought damage and confusion to the Indigenous peoples. The conflict within our own community has led to the exploration of protocol means in both English and Cree tradition.

It is essential understand the issue of protocol within a ceremonial context.

(Next month Cree concepts of ceremony and protocol)



LOUISE HALFE

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LISA BIRD-WILSON

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A History of the Gabriel Dumont Institute (Gabriel Dumont Publishing, 2012).

Her work has appeared in numerous Canadian literary magazines, has twice been nominated for the Journey Prize, and included in Best Canadian Essays (2011).

Lisa Bird-Wilson is a Saskatchewan Métis writer whose work has appeared in a number of literary magazines and anthologies. Just Pretending was a finalist for the national Danuta Gleed Literary Award and won several Saskatchewan Book Awards, including Book of the Year, Aboriginal Peoples’ Writing Award, SaskPower Fiction Award and the Aboriginal Peoples’ Publishing Award.

It was also announced that James Daschuk, author of Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life (University of Regina Press, 2013), will be a featured performer at this year’s Saskatchewan Festival of Words.

Clearing the Plains was named a “Book of the Year” by the Globe & Mail, Quill & Quire and the Writers’ Trust.

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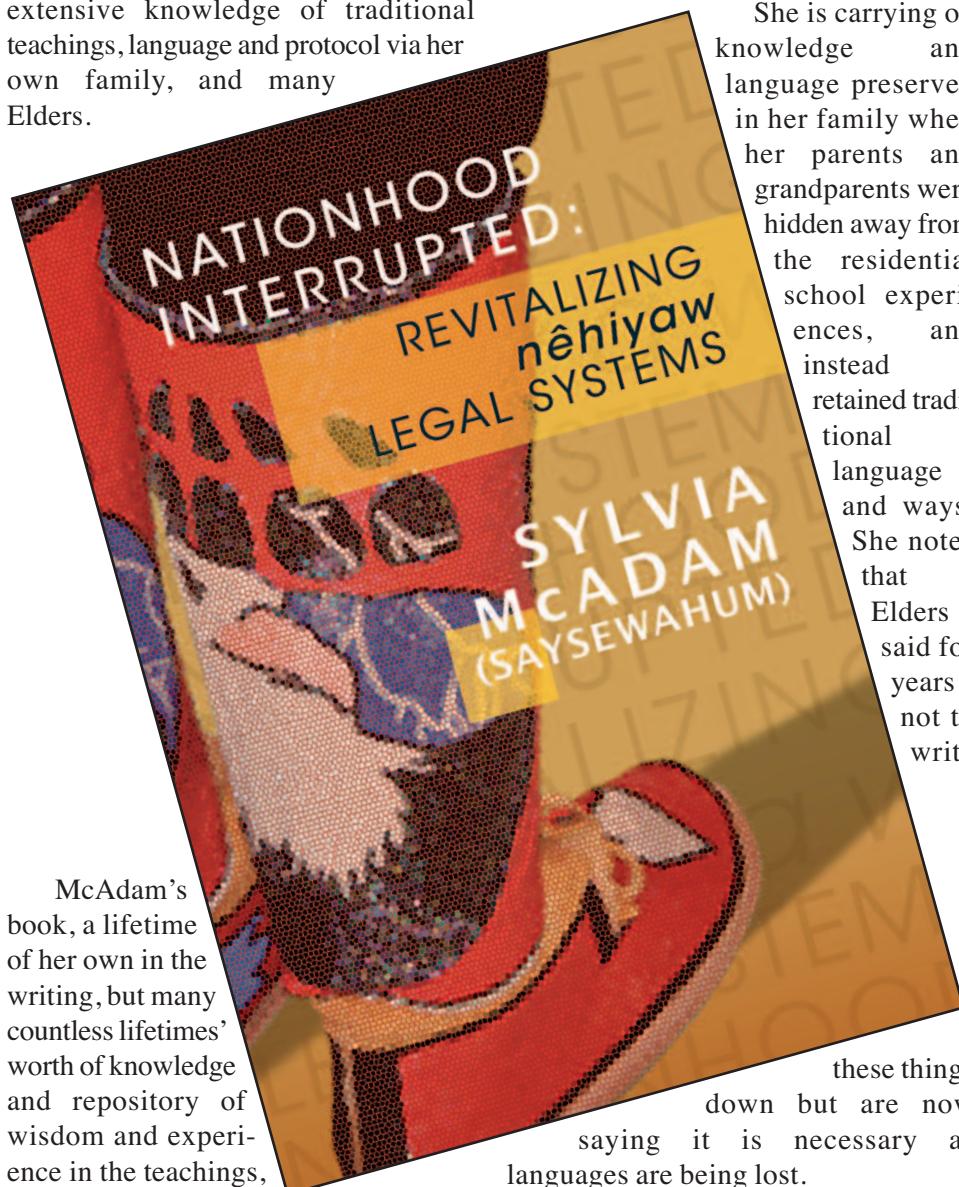
McAdam shares her wisdom, passion

By Andréa Ledding
For Eagle Feather News

There is said to be a tie between how the land, and Indigenous women, are treated in this country right now.

The relationship goes even deeper than colonial treatment, as nêhiyaw author Sylvia McAdam (Saysewahum) explores in her book, "Nationhood Interrupted: Revitalizing nêhiyaw Legal Systems."

McAdam, raised on the lands in the North, and Big River First Nation, is an educator with degrees in law and human justice. More than that, she has an extensive knowledge of traditional teachings, language and protocol via her own family, and many Elders.



McAdam's book, a lifetime of her own in the writing, but many countless lifetimes' worth of knowledge and repository of wisdom and experience in the teachings, in part addresses how everyone in the territory called "Canada" needs to understand the treaties through the laws of the land which pre-date colonial law and co-occupation.

In this process, First Nations will also find their way forward in restoration rather than continued colonization, for everyone's mutual benefit: and women will regain their natural place in home, nation, governance, and negotiation table.

A tall order for any newly-released book, but there is already significant media response, and well-attended book launches underway.

McNally Robinson ran out of chairs on March 5, and March 11 will see the U of S Native Law Centre packed as well. McAdam has been giving many interviews, with an upcoming column in the *Globe & Mail*.

This latest endeavor, on top of all her

other work, including co-founding Idle No More, is not mere activism.

"I am defending and protecting the lands but I'm not an environmentalist. These are my homes. My people are buried out there. If someone broke into your home and you were defending yourself and your property, you wouldn't be an activist," she explains.

"It's a lifelong thing. From the time I was born until I go to my final resting place I will continue this work because it's important that all women understand the role that we have and continue to have."

She is carrying on knowledge and language preserved in her family when her parents and grandparents were hidden away from the residential school experiences, and instead retained traditional language and ways. She notes that Elders said for years not to write

these things down but are now saying it is necessary as languages are being lost.

She also addresses okihc-itâwiskwâwak (no equivalent English word) – warrior women/clan mothers/lawkeepers, powerfully knowledgeable women gifted to provide guidance and direction in law and order for their people.

Women have jurisdiction over the land, air, and water, she explains, which has never been extinguished. So expecting total solutions from the colonizer to missing and murdered Indigenous women is an expectation unlikely to be fulfilled.

The women from treaty lands prior to and during treaty maintain their authority and jurisdiction have never been extinguished – only overshadowed by imposed structures like the Indian Act, and inequitable governance.

"We need to build capacity to be able to revitalize these inherent struc-

tures of leadership."

As she rightly points out, it wasn't Indian Act leadership that took treaty. Women at the time of treaty were instrumental, integral, and essential to sovereignty which was never surrendered.

And so part of the solution to ending colonial violence lies in revitalizing the jurisdiction and authority of Indigenous women in the spirit and intent of Treaty and Indigenous Sovereignty.

"The whole purpose of this, is I want our laws as Indigenous people to be revitalized so that we can begin that process of breathing life back into them.

"Because you can correlate the violence and destruction of land to the violence and destruction of women. That's the reason I wrote this book."



SYLVIA MCADAM



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Not your typical book club

Candice Pete makes a book club part of a bigger picture

By Angela Hill
For Eagle Feather News

It's not your standard book club, but it is a step towards realizing a dream for Candice Pete.

Around a big boardroom table, at an aboriginal law office in Saskatoon, Pete sits with a handful of people. It's a cold Saturday afternoon. Some attendees are lawyers, there's a law student, and at least one person has no background at all on the topic of duty to consult.

But, the titles and backgrounds don't matter – that's not the point.

"The point is, we talk about change," said Pete.

"Dialogue will lead to other positive things ... leads to building capacity in aboriginal communities."

That is her goal: capacity for First Nations communities.

She worked towards that as a manager with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. She's since moved on to being a director with the Indigenous Peoples Resource Management Program at the University of Saskatchewan and is still looking to help communities grow.



Candice Pete believes that books and dialogue are the way to bridge issues.

(Photo by Angela Hill)

"I still like to talk about things like duty to consult, land regimes and systems of policy and how do we become familiar with those systems to that we can maneuver through and within them," Pete said.

"I like to read and so, I thought, I should start a book club."

She talked to some friends and her aunt, and realized there were others who would be interested.

"So I thought why don't we start getting together and start to talk about these things, and maybe by talking about these things we can teach each other and start talking to other people ... and work in some way that will help build capacity within our community and individuals," Pete said.

"It's basically for anyone who is interested and wants to have open discussion."

But the book club, which has met twice with different people attending each time, is just the beginning for Pete.

She sees the information sharing getting bigger going into the future.

Pete sees there being volunteer opportunities for people – policy people teaching communities how to develop process or lawyers taking the time to create briefings from decisions that will impact communities.

There has been a workshop on how to read financial statements, and Pete, in her job, is working on developing an aboriginal executive series to offer training for new chiefs and council.

The time between work and life blurs, but that is the way Pete likes it.

"I like to read and I like to keep myself busy. This is a positive way to keep myself busy," she said.

"That's what I was taught, my dad always used to talk about helping people ... he helped so many people, but he never expected anything back."

The first book is finished, and the group is circulating

emails to decide what's next.

Pete said her aunt suggested a book on administrative law (and she's not sure if it's a joke). It might not be a standard book club pick, but for Pete it's just another opportunity.

"We need to start to build information on getting to know what the systems are."

SWG Aboriginal Storytelling Month Was a Success!

The SWG would like to thank our partners and sponsors for supporting us in bringing aboriginal storytelling to the province.

Thank you to everyone involved and those that attended!

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Dumont's second book making a run for awards

**By Fraser Needham
For Eagle Feather News**

Dawn Dumont's recently released sophomore book is garnering a lot of attention.

Rose's Run, the followup to 2012's Nobody Cries At Bingo, is nominated for four Saskatchewan Book Awards.

Rose's Run tells the story of Rose Okanese, a single mother with two kids.

Although she smokes and hasn't run in 20 years, Rose decides to participate in her reserve's annual marathon as a means of proving herself to local residents.

To complicate matters, Rose soon learns that aside from preparing for the race, she will also have to do battle with an old demon unintentionally called forth by her daughter Sarah.

The demon draws strength from women and is even able to get them to do her bidding.

As the marathon continues to draw closer, the spirit woman makes herself known to the reserve's various residents creating fear, disruption and of course high jinks.

Dumont says the initial idea for the book came from something she has long loved to do – long distance running.

"I've been a long distance runner since I was a teenager but I never really saw how to write about it," she says.

"I never thought anyone would be interested. But then I had this dream about a woman running a marathon and that's where I think it came from. And, also, after running a marathon, I had sort of like a hallucination during my marathon where I could actually hear people's voices as though they were speaking to me and so I

added that as part of it."

You could say Dumont knows all about choosing the paths less chosen.

Aside from writing, she has also earned a living as a stand up comedian.

So what advice does she have for young and aspiring artists who are sure to experience heaps of rejection along with the occasional glimmer of success?



Dawn Dumont's new book, Rose's Run has been nominated for four Saskatchewan Book Awards.

"Always write for yourself, you are your best audience. Because if you try to write for a specific audience and you don't like it yourself, then you haven't won anything. Because you'll notice, if you get a lot of attention for something you're not crazy about, it will just feel empty. So I think the most important thing is to please yourself first."

Holding down a full-time job during the day means Dumont has to be very disciplined about her chosen craft.

She says she is a strong believer in keeping a strict writing schedule and this schedule is what separates those who only talk about writing books from those who actually publish them.

"I believe in daily writing. I don't think you should go a day or two without writing. You should write every single day, that's what I believe."

Nominated in four out of 11 categories for the Saskatchewan Book Awards, one would think Rose's Run would have a pretty good chance of picking up at least one award.

However, Dumont says she's cautiously pessimistic as she lets her comedic side show in a self deprecating way.

"One time, I sent my plays into a playwrighting contest and only 10 people sent plays in. There were only three spots and I sent two plays in and I didn't get in at all."

Rose's Run is nominated for the University of Regina Book of the Year Award, the City of Regina Fiction Award, Rasmussen, Rasmussen & Charowsky Aboriginal Peoples' Writing Award and City of Saskatoon and Public Library of Saskatoon Book Award.

The 22nd Saskatchewan Book Awards take place in Regina on April 25.

Dawn Dumont will be doing a public reading of Rose's Run at McNally Robinson in Saskatoon on Friday April 10.

She will be joined by Ernie Louttit, author of Indian Ernie: Perspectives on Policing and Leadership, who is also nominated for four Saskatchewan Book Awards.



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Strong family values hitting all the right notes

PRINCE ALBERT – Maybe it has something to do with the name. Perhaps it has more to do with the family values that a new generation is picking up from a father who missed out on that vital part of life as a youngster.

Prince Albert's Strong family has forged a bond that provides the focus and the inspiration for the creative Thunder and the Sky Dancers band that is making a name for itself in Saskatchewan.

Father Glen Strong, affectionately known as 'Dadager' is joined by daughters Amanda, 21, Allison Rae, 18 and Rebecca, who is just 11.

Clearly, music runs in the Strong family and for all of them the passion for singing, writing music and performing began early.

Glen didn't really get to know his family until he was in his thirties, reuniting with his mother and sister, Billie Schibler, who is the Chief Executive Officer for Manitoba's Métis Child & Family Services Authority. He has never met his father.

Music was a big part of Glen's young life as he began writing songs and performing as a 12-year-old.

"It was difficult years ago," he explains. "To try to learn one song you had to listen closely to the radio to try to get all the words and chords. The encouragement wasn't there like it is today

"We have computers and the Internet. All we have to do is tap and click to find a song."

And while modern technology has made some aspects of the creative process easier, Glen offers his own encouragement for his talented daughters.

Allison, who was born in Uranium

City and raised in Stony Rapids, began singing at age four and was playing the guitar and writing her own songs by the age of 12. She is now recording some originals with Rich McFarland at Mosaic Music in Prince Albert.

Influenced by Avril Lavigne, Shania Twain and, more recently, Adele, Allison

to being shy and seems to appreciate the fact that the spotlight has found her younger sister Allison. She sings and plays guitar and likes doing cover tunes where she enjoys making them more acoustic. She sings more as a hobby and enjoyment and is quite supportive of the route Allison is taking.



From left Amanda, Rebecca, Allison and Glen Strong make up the band Thunder and the Sky Dancers.

(Story and photo by thatconradguy)

has performed at Casino Regina, Buffalo Days in Regina, Search for the Stars at the Prince Albert Exhibition talent show – where she took first place – Voices of the North, The Points Athabasca Northern Spirits Showcase and other venues.

One of Allison's originals, "Waiting On Your Love" has reached number one on the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Music Countdown and number four in the National Aboriginal Music Countdown.

She will be interning with a local law office this summer and if she likes it she plans to continue law studies at the University Of Saskatchewan.

Twenty-one-year old Amanda admits

she is more particular when it comes to the song "Listen" which they perform as "Thunder and the Sky Dancers" which was written predominantly by Dad but all the girls had a hand in, including mom Joan.

The lyrics have a powerful message for children and adults, Amanda says.

"We should try help those who struggle, who think about suicide, they feel no one is listening."

Allison adds that the song's words, "there's problems all over the globe, starving children here at home and some are missin', when will I find the love I need, and the arms to rock me back to

sleep," resonate with her.

Rebecca is a Grade 6 student in Prince Albert and she has been typing stories on a computer since she was in Grade 3. When a new song comes out, her sisters are amazed how fast she can learn the lyrics and chords. She plays the recorder, the harmonica, the piano and now learning guitar. She is a member of the Prince Albert Children's Choir and her school choir.

When asked about the advocate song, "Listen", she says that adults shouldn't think that kids her age "don't know anything" and that they should be listened to because they do have something to say.

Amanda adds that using an actual children's choir gives the song more meaning, and that no child should be afraid around anything or anyone.

"How are they going to reach their full potential and have positive outcomes in their lives? There are not many songs out there on the topic and our children never be abused and be continually nourished," says Amanda.

Allison suggests it is a two-way path, that we shouldn't undermine our youth.

"They should be listened to, and they have more insight than past generations. They are our future, we need to appreciate, cherish and protect them," offers Allison

The Strong family believes they have a certain respect for each other and if stardom and fame comes, Dad hopes they remain humble.

Allison says that her dad is her true hero, and she very much appreciates all that Dad has done for her and the girls and the family band, Thunder and The Sky Dancers.



Personal Growth

"I used to be shy and unsure of what I wanted to do, but The City of Saskatoon provided me with the right work environment to gain confidence and enhance my skills. I am now setting career goals for a future with the City and feel I can be role model for other Aboriginal girls who are looking to find their way."

Danielle Weenie, Labourer, Parks Division

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SNTC play explores divide between forms of cultural expression

**By Fraser Needham
For Eagle Feather News**

SASKATOON –A new Saskatoon play explores the clash between old and new ways of expressing Indigenous culture.

The House You Build ran February 25 through March 4 at the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company.

It is the product of SNTC's Circle of Voices program where youth work with an established playwright and other performers and artists to create a full-scale play.

Donna-Michelle St. Bernard wrote The House You Build and mentors on the production include hip-hop artist Lindsay Eekwol Knight, poet Kevin Wesaquate and elder John Sugar.

The play has a cast of eight youth and is directed by Charlie Peters.

The House You Build explores the intergenerational

Even 500 years after Europeans first came here, we're still kind of having that little bit of cultural clash.

It also features the use of the traditional First Nations languages of Dene and Lakota.

Twenty-seven-year-old Austin Lee Hunter takes on the role of Dan in the play – a character he describes as



The Saskatchewan Native Theatre Companies Circle of Voices just finished a run of a new play, The House You Build. The play integrated dance, hip hop, Cree language and lots of humour. (Photo by Fraser Needham)

an Indigenous youth so steeped in his cultural identity that he sometimes gets on the nerves of the other characters as he tries to maintain authenticity in every situation.

Hunter says some characters in the play look to express their Aboriginal culture through traditional methods while others prefer to use newer mediums.

"It's more or less contemporary youth who've been involved with hip-hop, that modern day approach, and there's the other side of the coin with youth that are more

interested in the traditionalist aspect," he says.

"At some point it's just going to come to a head and it does come to a clash at one point in the play and we more or less tell a story that is true to everyone's heart. Even 500 years after Europeans first came here, we're still kind of having that little bit of cultural clash."

So, it's good to at least bring light to it and say, 'hey, we work better together.'"

He adds he doesn't really have any expectations in terms of what theatre goers should take away from the play but only hopes they find the experience enjoyable.

"A smile, that's all they can really ask for. A smile and feeling that, 'yeah, that was worth the price of a ticket.'"



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Book explores new age in Treaty relationships

Treaty Land Entitlement corrected historic wrongs from dishonouring Treaties

SASKATOON – The Office of the Treaty Commissioner is busy promoting a book about the largest negotiated land agreement in Saskatchewan history.

The book is about the Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement (TLEFA) and righting historic wrongs resulting from dishonoring Treaties and land allocation.

"The Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement became a watershed, a kind of living proof that the Treaties still meant something, despite the attempts of church and state to erase that knowledge," writes Treaty Commissioner George L. Lafond in *The Land is Everything: Treaty Land Entitlement*.

Executive Director of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner Harry Lafond, acknowledges that the success of the Treaty Land Entitlement story lies in the perseverance, leadership and vision of a diverse group of people.

To succeed, Saskatchewan Chiefs, councilors, band managers, consultants, historians and government officials came together "to ensure the dreams of the

Treaty signers would become a reality," writes Lafond in the book.

Just treatment for land became a reality with the 1992 signing of The Treaty



Tasha Hubbard (left) and Marilyn Poitras are the publishers of *The Land is Everything*.

Land Entitlement Framework Agreement, under late Treaty Commissioner Cliff Wright's leadership and practical approach and the clear vision of many

Elders and politicians.

"It (TLEFA) is the trigger to a new age in the Treaty relationship among the peoples of Saskatchewan.

"Today one million acres of land has been purchased by First Nations under this agreement," Lafond states.

Published by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, *The Land is Everything: Treaty Land Entitlement* provides a wide range of perspectives on the complex history that led to the Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement.

The TLEFA set out terms whereby 33 First Nations in Saskatchewan were able to purchase land in fulfillment of a long-standing shortfall.

The book was published by Tasha Hubbard and Marilyn Poitras.

Hubbard is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at the University of Saskatchewan, and is from the Peepeekisis First Nation.

Poitras teaches at the College of Law at the University of Saskatchewan, and is Michif from Southern Saskatchewan.



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Ojibwe scholar Dolleen Manning Tisawii'ashii recently toured through Saskatchewan to discuss her research on Ojibwe cultural concepts. Here she is joined by University of Saskatchewan Coordinator of Women's and Gender Studies Marie Lovrod (right) at Station 20 West on March 6.

(Photo by Fraser Needham)

Ojibwe scholar challenges what is defined as knowledge

By Fraser Needham
For Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON—Dolleen Manning Tisawii'ashii wants to challenge modern conceptions of what is considered knowledge.

The Ojibwe Anishinaabe scholar, artist and curator was in Saskatoon in early March to talk about her research at both the University of Saskatchewan and Station 20 West.

Manning Tisawii'ashii is a doctoral student at the Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism at Western University in Ontario.

Her PhD dissertation draws heavily on her Ojibwe cultural upbringing focusing on concepts such as Nii'kinaaganan (all my relations/relatives) and gashka'oode (entanglement) to forward a theory of consciousness that is not given to a bounded subject but instead looks at "other-than-human" potencies.

As part of her doctoral research, Manning Tisawii'ashii examines traditional Indigenous language, culture and contemporary art as an alternative to Westernized ways of defining knowledge.

She says what she is studying and defining as knowledge cannot necessarily be found within a university library.

"This is knowledge that I live," she says. "More than I live, it's given to me in life and I feel as though that is a fundamental Indigenous philosophy. The West finds itself in its history of its textual citation whereas my citation is given to me in my birth, it's intergenerational, it's in my blood, it's in my language – in ways that don't necessarily translate into Western thought systems."

Manning Tisawii'ashii's research also draws influence from French phenomenological philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

Merleau-Ponty believed the body was the primary source of knowledge as opposed to the consciousness.

He emphasized the body and what it perceived could not be disentangled from one and other.

"When he (Marleau-Ponty) discusses bodies it's not necessarily a human body or an animal, it can be any kind of an object and what you would say the space surrounding that," Manning Tisawii'ashii says.

"But how those two elements always make up one and other, in a sense they pass to one and other. But there's always a division for him."

She adds she hopes by speaking to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal audiences, within academic and non-academic environments, she will challenge people to look beyond Westernized forms when they define what is knowledge.

"It's really about opening up conversations across disciplines and across communities."

The title of Manning Tisawii'ashii's dissertation is "The Murmuration of Birds: An Ojibwe Ontology of Mnidou-Worlding."

She also holds a Masters in Fine Arts from Simon Fraser University and a Master of Arts in Critical Theory from Western University.



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SIIT looks to increase number of women in skilled trades

By Fraser Needham
For Eagle Feather News

The Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology wants more women to enter training in one of the province's biggest growth industries – the skilled trades.

For more than a decade now, industry in the province has struggled to fill vacancies in skilled trades such welding, pipefitting and carpentry.

In spite of high paying salaries, women continue to be resistant to enter what have been historically male dominated professions.

According to SIIT's numbers, women account for 28 out of 235 positions in its apprenticeship programs or roughly 12 per cent.

The Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission says the most popular apprenticeship trade program for women is hairstylist followed distantly by electrician, cook, carpenter and welder.

The lowest numbers are found in such trades as horticulture technician, locksmith and powerline technician.

Shelley Macnab, the coordinator of the joint training committee at SIIT, says the institution is doing a number of things to ensure more Indigenous people enter and are successful in apprenticeship programs.

This includes the quick-skill or pre-apprenticeship program where those with little or no work experience can apply.

SIIT also manages career centres that have programs directly linked to employment including construction worker preparation, residential renovation and construction and women in trades.

The SIIT-Joint Training Committee is a partnership between the institution and the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission.

SIIT-JTC acts like an employer indenturing Aboriginal people in the construction trades and allowing apprentices mobility within the industry as they maintain their status as registered apprentices in Saskatchewan.

The career centres also provide job coaches to ensure participants have the greatest chance possible of being successful in their chosen apprenticeship program.

Since 1998, the seven career centres

located across the province have registered close to 20,000 people in its programs and found 15,000 jobs for participants.

About 16 per cent of registrants have been female.

Macnab says SIIT is seeing increased female numbers in apprenticeship trade programs but there continues to be a number of reasons why more women are not entering the skilled trades.

"Some of it has to do with the double day for women," she says. "They have their home to deal with, they have children to deal with, a lot of these jobs require people to be away from home for extended periods of time. The culture is very different for women to fit in and some things haven't really changed a lot," Macnab suggests.

"For many reasons women may start in an apprenticeship and end up dropping out because it's not a friendly environment."

She also says the length of time and extensive number of training hours required to become fully certified in a skilled trade can serve as a disincentive to some people.

Most apprenticeship programs consist of about 20 per cent in classroom study time and 80 per cent on the job training.

This means apprentices need to put in thousands of hours on the job in their chosen trade before they are eligible to become fully certified.

Reaching certification and full salary potential can take as long as three years.

"It's a long road, it's not easy," Macnab



Shannon Burns has traded her office job for a career in the oil patch as a certified welder.

says. "Once you've completed your technical training, seven weeks, you go on EI (employment insurance). It's not easy, especially if you are first year, you are making the least amount you will make your whole career. And so you will go on EI, which is half your salary, and that's tough especially if you've got

kids and family."

She says SIIT would like to see more women like Shannon Burns who is the first woman in the apprenticeship-training program in welding to receive her red seal and become fully certified.

Burns travels back and forth from her home on the Muskoday First Nation and Fort McMurray, Alberta where she can earn as much as \$100 per hour working out

of her own truck as an independent contractor.

Burns says she toiled away in an administrative job in Prince Albert for a number of years before deciding she needed a change of pace and the potential earning power a skilled trade can bring.

"I worked in administration for 12 years and I found it really hard to get by," she says. "I wasn't making enough money and I was bored, I hated every minute of it. So I started doing mainline pipeline, cross country pipeline, and I started labouring and did a lot of that for a few years and I was always drawn to the welders."

She says she is fortunate in the fact that she is not married and does not have children which enables her to be away from home for weeks at a time.

Burns adds she thinks women may also be intimidated by working in trades which continue to be largely male dominated but they might think differently if they were more aware of the money that can be earned and the independence some of these jobs offer.

She says she finds working on her own, outside and in remote areas "empowering."

And, for the time being, Burns says she is not contemplating a career change any time soon.

"I'm going to do this for as long as I can. Unless I get sick or hurt or something that prevents me from doing it."

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The committee for the meet consisted of volunteers from left Matthew Dunn, Dennis Perillat, Jordyn Burnouf, Jill George, Holly Kelleher, Gisele George, Kandance Cook and Derek Rope. Kyana Bear (inset) broke the provincial record for the shot put at the track meet.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

Record setting performances

**By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News**

SASKATOON – Hundreds of athletes and enthusiastic supporters filled the Saskatoon Field House for a weekend of competition and camaraderie for the seventh annual Saskatchewan Aboriginal Indoor Track and Field Championships.

Over 300 athletes from around Saskatchewan took part in the competition that brought some amazing personal performances from several athletes.

Shaelyn Whitefish from Big River took gold in peewee girl's high jump and 800 meter run.

Mackenzie Yole from Ile-a-la-Crosse blew away the competition in the midget girl's high jump and Calvin Napope with the St. Louis Eagles won midget gold in the 60 and 200 meter runs and in high jump and long jump. Not bad!

The highlight of the meet was Kyana Bear, a Grade 6 student from Kakiseww Ochapowace School, breaking the provincial record in shot put with a throw of 10.82 meters.

"I didn't think I was throwing far and some other girls were, like, way taller than me and I knew I had a chance of placing and when I was throwing the judges were amazed how far I was throwing the shot put," said Kyana in a Facebook chat.

"And I feel proud that I broke the record there and my goal is to break my record again. I am in non-stop training and other track clubs are asking me to go to

join them. I would love to continue track and my other goal is to go to Bold Eagle."

Derek Rope has been on the committee since the inception of the track meet and he is starting to see positive changes.

"Track and field is an evolving sport within our communities and I love seeing this meet grow year over year not only in size, but in skill development and the level of competition of our young First Nation and Métis athletes," said Rope.

"More often we are seeing provincial records being broken and new mentors emerging which is testament to the support and opportunities our parents and communities continue to provide to our young people. It is great to see."

For the first time this year, the race hosted a battle of the bad and unstretched as sponsors and community leaders faced off in a 60-meter "fun" dash. The goal for some was to just finish. For others it was to not be injured. The wishes almost made it but Saskatoon Tribal Council Vice Chief Mark Arcand pulled up with a strained hamstring as Matt Dunn (he was only in the Canadian Olympic Development program) ran to a first place finish.

"A highlight for me at this meet was definitely the leadership and sponsor race," added Rope.

"Great to see everyone participating alongside our athletes and leading by example, thanks to you all. That race will definitely become a part of the legacy of this meet in the future I am sure."



Thanks for making the 7th Annual Saskatchewan Aboriginal Indoor Track & Field Championships a great success. Congratulations to all participants and a special thank you to all of our sponsors!



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Hosted by Lac La Ronge Indian Band

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PeeWee (14 team limit)	\$600.00 Entry + \$275 SHA Fee
Bantam (14 team limit)	\$600.00 Entry + \$290 SHA Fee
Midget (12 team limit)	\$600.00 Entry + \$290 SHA Fee
Female* (10 team limit)	\$600.00 Entry + \$290 SHA Fee

(* Female Division will be combined Bantam/Midget age group and will have the option of going All-Reserve or Tribal Council)



ENTRY DEADLINE: 4:00 pm, April 10

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La Ronge, Sask
S0J 1L0**

Committee not responsible for any damage, theft or injury that may occur during this event