

# Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

## Seeking justice for Chief Poundmaker

Floyd Favel, curator of the Poundmaker Cree Nation museum, and band councillor Milton Tootoosis on the opening day of the Poundmaker museum's exhibit, which hosted some of Chief Poundmaker's belongings. (Photo courtesy of Milton Tootoosis)



By K.D. Sawatzky  
For Eagle Feather News

While the fight to have treaty rights recognized is a continual battle for First Nations across Canada, Poundmaker Cree Nation has taken on the added task of exonerating its namesake chief in its quest for justice.

This year, band council members wrote a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, asking the federal government to grant clemency to Chief Poundmaker, who was imprisoned in 1885, following the Battle of Battleford.

Accounts of Poundmaker's influence and actions at the time consistently depict a chief committed to

peacemaking and taming the hostile spirits of his younger warriors, not a war leader in league with the Métis resistance.

Poundmaker signed Treaty 6 in 1876, but not before demanding that the government provide for his people in times of famine.

Nine years, later, when it was clear Ottawa was not fulfilling its duty, Poundmaker and his men travelled to Battleford to ask for rations. The town was deserted so they took what was in the warehouses. In response, Colonel Otter descended on Poundmaker's camp at Cut Knife Hill with 325 soldiers.

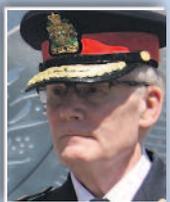
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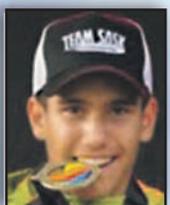
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Justice Edition

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# Women address trust issues with Prince Albert cops

By Chelsea Laskowski  
For Eagle Feather News

Velma Buffalo knows where her distrust of police officers was formed.

She was a girl living on Wahpeton Dakota Nation when RCMP officers showed up at her home.

“They threatened my mother (and said they were going) to take us away whether she wanted it or not. The school-aged children were going to be brought to residential school.

“The children under school age were going to be apprehended and put into homes. And they said that my mother was going to be incarcerated,” Buffalo recalls.

That first impression was hard to shake, and it bred a distrust and fear of police that grew deeper later in life when she was stopped and ticketed by police in Saskatoon on two separate occasions for “no reason, because the judge tossed out the tickets that I received.”

The many barriers to Indigenous women’s trust of police in the province are documented in a June report released by the Human Rights Watch.

The report contains allegations of police abuses from across the province, perpetrated against Indigenous women and girls.

Within Prince Albert specifically, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations Vice-Chief Kim Jonathan points out “this is the prison city.

“People that may not have had positive experiences or things to say about the police – I mean that’s who put them in the jails or the penitentiary.”

However, both she and Buffalo, who is Jonathan’s mother, have faith that city police are listening to their concerns and trying to improve relations.

Both women, along more than a dozen Indigenous female community leaders from the region, attended a late July meeting at Prince Albert’s friendship centre to create an advisory board called the Indigenous Women’s Commission of the Prince Albert Police Service.

Police Chief Troy Cooper initiated the meeting as part of his response to the Human Rights Watch report.

“In policing, every day when we come to work, the issues we deal with on the forefront are all around Indigenous women.

“The Indigenous women missing and murdered, we talk about domestic violence, recruitment issues; there are so many things every day that involve that group and yet we haven’t gone to them and asked their opinion on it and gotten their advice,” he said.

Cooper calls the aftermath of the first meeting “overwhelmingly powerful.”

“They shared their own experi-



Angie Bear, Police Elder Julie Pitzel, Kim Jonathan, Georgette Arcand, Elder Velma Buffalo, Ryan Levesque and Police Chief Troy Cooper chat after the first meeting of the Indigenous Women’s Commission of the Prince Albert Police Service.

(Photo by Chelsea Laskowski)

ences, both with police and with justice-related issues.

“It was an incredible day and I’m really glad that we started on this road. These are women telling you from their heart what their experiences have been.”

Muskoday First Nation’s Angie Bear and other women who attended the meeting said they appreciated how cultural protocol was followed.

Not only was there a presentation of tobacco and sacred honouring, but women were also given the floor as the only two men present – Cooper and one of his missing persons investigators – listened to their stories.

“Traditionally, our women were the matriarchs. We were the ones that, when there was problems in our community, traditionally our women would come to the table and we would gather and we would discuss what needed to happen,” Bear said.

“It’s really good to go back to that way of doing things in that way. It’s really important because then we can address all of the trauma people have been through, the reconciliation that needs to happen.”

The importance of following Indigenous protocol to make meaningful changes between cultures has been in the spotlight lately.

Early in June, Saskatoon-based Marilyn Poitras with the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls National Inquiry, resigned from her position as commissioner, citing issues with what she considers a top-down approach that doesn’t properly integrate Indigenous ways of knowing and healing.

With the initial meeting of the Indigenous Women’s Commission now complete, the group is planning to get together in September to finalize their terms of reference and to officially declare an oath to the commission.



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# The Indigenous Truth is Bleeding Through our Canadian Frontier



Comment  
Alyson Bear

I am an Indigenous student who is searching for justice in a world that has been built on injustice.

If we take a look at history and the founding of our own country, it is this history of colonialism that has led us to being the prosperous country of Canada today.

Therefore, it is very important to not deny and hide the truth of our history, because if we do not know where we come from we will never be able to find where we are going.

Residential schools, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, the suicide epidemic in Indigenous communities, overrepresentation in the justice system, the '60s scoop, the child welfare

focus being on our missing and stolen sisters.

These direct consequences of colonization, such as MMIWG, tends to make people feel uncomfortable to speak out, and people still tune out the conversation when you stand up for the truth and realities of the lives of Indigenous peoples.

More profoundly, the lives of Indigenous women and what has been happening since the establishment of Canada.

The stealing of Indigenous women's children is a weapon that has been used by the state, historically and contemporary. Residential School was akin to ripping the hearts out of Indigenous communities.

*There seems to be no escape from the stigma of ideologies that were created by settlers who were threatened by Indigenous women who continue to not be safe in society.*

system, and the ongoing environmental damage being done to the land is all interconnected and a continuous path of destruction through a colonial settler system where social injustice continues to happen to Indigenous peoples today.

I will argue that Canada was built on the suffering of Indigenous peoples and this directly links to the systemic oppression that continues to live in our world with the

After the heart was stolen everything else connected to the heart began to shatter.

The elders no longer had anyone to teach, the women had no one to take care of, and the men had nothing to protect and provide for.

Kinship is at the core of our Indigenous cultures and traditions, but we have been so engrossed and devastated by the settler-colonial society we no longer know our own Indigenous values, culture, tradi-

tion, languages, and therefore we act in ways foreign to us. We end up hurting each other and ourselves in an endless cycle.

The target has been Indigenous women as they are primarily the hope and strength of many Indigenous communities and households.

Indigenous women were once respected and held power in their communities in pre-colonial times and this was foreign to settlers and it threatened their patriarchal hierarchical system.

Indigenous women experience discrimination in society as a double-edged sword from the stigma and discrimination of being a woman in a patriarchal world and the stigma and labels from being First Nation in a white settler world.

Indigenous children continue to be stolen from their mothers by the child welfare system, and Indigenous women are labeled as unfit mothers, and targeted and victimized by society, and continue filling the prisons of the country; our Indigenous women are shoved to the bottom of the patriarchal hierarchy.

It is the unfortunate truth that many of our own Indigenous peoples are entrenched in these settler-colonial ideologies and Indigenous women are the scapegoats in their own homes. Indigenous women also face the highest rate of domestic abuse and single motherhood.

Many of our Indigenous men have internalized these Eurocentric patriarchal ways.

Parenting skills were not retained because of this system,

where children are ripped from the communities from generation to generation and have had heinous acts inflicted upon them and left to manage in a society that was never built for us.

Indigenous men were once the protectors and providers.

The book Restoring the Balance highlights this shift from Indigenous worldviews to Eurocentric ways, "Native men adopted the oppressor's way of operating: power through control, intimidation, manipulation, lack of respect for equality and nurturance of women, abandonment of family and responsibility, and lack of honesty."

There seems to be no escape from the stigma of ideologies that were created by settlers who were threatened by Indigenous women who continue to not be safe in society.

I demand awareness in our time and in the raising of the future, so the future is decolonized and raised aware of our true history.

I have daughters who have to grow up in this world and I will raise them strong, because no matter how many times I have been knocked down I keep rising. And that is what I see, Indigenous women, Indigenous people, on the rise.

There is a need to come together and take care of each other and live by the Indigenous values that have been lost through colonization.

The truth is alive and the people are finally starting to see, the Indigenous truth is bleeding through our Canadian frontier.

**Eagle Feather  
NEWS**

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# Restoring Poundmaker's reputation part of reconciliation

• Continued from Page One

Poundmaker's warriors, who caught wind of the attack, forced Otter's men to retreat, but Poundmaker convinced the warriors not to pursue them. The chief also made sure prisoners on a wagon supply train captured by Métis days before the Battle of Batoche were treated well.

He then willingly walked to Battleford after General Middleton rejected his offer of a peace settlement.



Despite his role as a peacemaker and the fact he did not take part in the Battle of Batoche, Chief Poundmaker remains a convicted criminal in the eyes of the Crown. Poundmaker Cree Nation has asked Prime Minister Trudeau to exonerate him. Photo courtesy of Library and Archives Canada

Poundmaker was found guilty of treason and spent a year in Stony Mountain Penitentiary in Manitoba. He died four months later, while visiting his adopted father Crowfoot on the Blackfoot reserve.

"(He was) falsely convicted of treason," said Floyd Favel, curator for Poundmaker Cree Nation's museum. "Mistakenly the Crown associated him with Louis Riel's activities but these were two separate incidents."

"We weren't resisting anything. We were asking for the promises due," said Favel, who added the exoneration is important because it would get the government to admit there was a wrong committed against the Nation's leader.

Exonerating Pound-

maker would be "a simple act of justice and reconciliation," said band councillor Milton Tootoosis, who helped draft the letter to the Prime Minister.

He said official resolutions by the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations and the Assembly of First Nations in support of Poundmaker's exoneration were passed last fall. The Prime Minister's office replied to the letter, saying the matter would be referred to three ministries: Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, Heritage and Justice. Tootoosis said none of the departments have responded yet.

"If they don't we'll move on. We'll rewrite our own history books and we're going to embark on a new chapter to tell the story that Canada did it wrong and that Poundmaker was actually unjustly tried and unjustly charged," said Tootoosis.

Tootoosis said the letter is a test of how serious Canada is when it comes to reconciliation and it's timely, given Canada 150 celebrations.

"If the Prime Minister is talking about ... the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and the TRC Calls to Action, then this is our call to action: exonerate Chief Poundmaker," he said.

Poundmaker Cree Nation's museum hosted a few of Poundmaker's belongings, on loan from Parks Canada. His gun and ceremonial staff were on display in July.

Favel said the experience was humbling and empowering. The gun represents livelihood and the staff represents good governance, qualities, he said, his people need to survive as a nation.

"Having those objects within our homeland once again reminds us of the strength and purpose that we need, just like our ancestors had," he said.

Favel hopes Poundmaker's possessions will one day belong to the Cree Nation. He said he's working



Band councillor Milton Tootoosis, stands in front of Chief Poundmaker's gun and ceremonial staff in the Poundmaker Cree Nation museum on July 18. The belongings were on loan from Parks Canada for short exhibit. Tootoosis helped draft a letter to the Prime Minister asking for Poundmaker's exoneration. (Photo courtesy of Milton Tootoosis)

with Parks Canada in the spirit of reconciliation.

"Only by developing good relations and dialogue can we get things to happen," he said.

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# Tubal ligation a sad example of systemic discrimination

By N.C. Raine  
For Eagle Feather News

A recent report documenting unwanted tubal ligations in the Saskatoon Health Region has exposed the “inherent racism” ongoing in the province's institutions.

The external report, released in July by two health-care researchers from Manitoba, detailed trauma suffered by several Indigenous women who were pressured, shortly after childbirth, into tubal ligation – a procedure which involves clamping or severing the fallopian tubes. The report identified women seeking healthcare in the Saskatoon Healthcare Region (SHR) who felt “invisible, profiled, and powerless.”

One woman shared a story of an unapproved tubal ligation, where a doctor performed the procedure without her consent, telling her after its completion, “you’re tied, cut, and burnt; nothing will get through that.”

Representatives from the Saskatoon Health Region issued an apology immediately following the release of the report.

“I’m sorry that you were not treated with the respect, compassion (...) and all of the support that you needed and deserved,” said Jackie Mann, Vice-President of the Integrated Health Services during a press conference.

“No woman should be treated the way you were treated.”

“(Tubal ligation) must be free and informed consent – and that wasn’t the case

in these situations,” added Leann Smith, SHR director of maternal services.

The report has sparked outrage and gained national attention, causing leaders from a wide range of disciplines to speak out against the injustice.

“It is a breach of our treaty, our rights to protection,” said Bear.

“It’s a breach when it comes to our values, customs, traditions, and the teachings of our people. We have to put an end to this.”

said Lafond.

“What was suggested is that we work with the community to look at enacting that policy to make it more culturally safe, competent, and reflective of the Indigenous voice and population.”

The report presented several recommendations, including mandatory cultural training, advisory council, policy revision, a reproductive centre for vulnerable women, to name a few.

The report also calls for “adequate funding and support” for provincial restructuring of health services to Indigenous people.

But the impact of systemic discrimination will certainly linger, and as such, both Lafond and Bear have support and advice for any impacted

or concerned individuals.

“Please have the courage, if there are any concerns, to come forward and share those stories,” says Lafond.

“Without the healthcare professionals knowing what those concerns are, it’s difficult to respond to any concerns pertaining to individual or community care.”

“Know your rights. No one has the right to tell you how many children to have or whether or not to have children,” says Bear.

“We need to turn to our traditions and cultures, and we need to heal. Enough is enough. You have your rights.”



From left, Director of Maternal Services Leann Smith, Vice-President of Integrated Health Services Jackie Mann and Director of First Nation and Métis Health Services Gabe Lafond all of the Saskatoon Health Region addressed the media over unnecessary tubal ligations done on Indigenous women.

“This is systemic racism and marginalization,” said Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations Vice-Chief Heather Bear.

“It is simply wrong, and one of the most horrible things I can imagine as a woman. Taking away what the Creator has bestowed upon us – our gift as women, the gift of life.”

According to the report, most of the women who underwent the procedure did not know it was permanent, thinking it was only a form of birth control.

The report serves as evidence of the continued racial discrimination perpetrated against Canada's Indigenous women.

A Saskatoon woman has since considered filing a lawsuit against SHR, stating she was sterilized against her will in 2008.

The researchers responsible for the report believe a national review is required to determine if other Indigenous women have experienced similar trauma.

Gabe Lafond, SHR director of First Nation and Métis health services, says that there are trust issues in some individuals seeking access to healthcare, and policies need to be improved.

“Part of the action-plan going forward is to work with women, community leaders, First Nation workforces to look at policy we currently have in place,”



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Dorthea Swiftwolfe, Missing Persons Liaison Officer, SPS and Vernelle Swiftwolfe, Building and Grounds Labourer



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From Truth to Reconciliation

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# Families share stories at MMIWG

By K.D. Sawatzky  
For Eagle Feather News

On July 26, the second day of the Assembly of First Nations 38th Annual General Assembly in Regina, things were running two hours behind schedule.

The delay might be expected for a three-day national gathering of chiefs and Elders, but one scheduled item the organizers didn't budge on was the plenary session on the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

When 4 p.m. arrived affected families lined up behind the microphones on the floor. They stood for 30 minutes while National Inquiry Commissioners, Michèle Audette and Brian Eyolfson spoke to the assembly about how the hearings work and how to register.

Audette, who is from the Innu community of Mani Utenam, Quebec, said that while the commissioners have studied the appropriate legislation on federal inquiries and met with families from across Canada over the past year, there's been a lack of communication.

"I have been anxious for this moment because we were too silent and that needs to stop," she said.

Audette explained the inquiry is not like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She expressed that in order to be neutral, like a judge, she cannot speak to media or go to events like the TRC commissioners did.

Her speech did not placate the family members who spoke in response.

Gerri Pangman, from Peguis First Nation, spoke on behalf of her family about her sister Jennifer McPherson, who was killed in British Columbia in April 2013 by her husband who had killed another Indigenous woman seven years earlier. She said the inquiry must involve the police and RCMP.

"To leave out the police in the terms of reference, it's a failure and it's a dishonour to my sister," said Pangman. "The police failed my sister. How are you going to fix that?"

"If you want to help us, educate the police on how they should treat us Indigenous women and

men," Pangman's mother, Betty, added.

Hilda Anderson-Pyrz, co-chair of Manitoba advocates for missing and murdered Indigenous women, simply told the commissioners they had failed

## MMIWG WOES

**Update: The Inquiry is in bad shape as more community members are again calling to disband the Inquiry and another staffer, Waneek Horn-Miller, director of community relations has resigned.**



Commissioner for the National Inquiry for MMIWG Michèle Audette addressed the assembly at the 38th AFN AGA on July 26. (Photo by K.D. Sawatzky)

and asked for them to step down.

"You failed in communications, you failed to bring trust, you failed to build relationships with families," she said. "I'm calling for a hard reset as a family member."

Bernice Catchway spoke through angry tears about the way the RCMP didn't take action soon enough after her daughter Jennifer went missing in June 2008. She said the first officer she spoke to in Portage la Prairie said Jennifer was probably just drunk and would come back in a week.

"Right across Canada there's broken hearts, broken spirits because nobody's listening to us," said Catchway.

Since it began in 2016 several staff members, the executive director, and one of the five commissioners, Marilyn Poitras from Saskatoon, have left the

two-year-mandated Inquiry. Only one hearing has taken place in Whitehorse, Yukon, with more hearings set to start in the fall.

Chair of the AFN Women's Council Chief Denise Stonechild, who opened the session, said the Inquiry must have a families-first approach.

"If the Inquiry isn't done right, it will damage the families and our people further," she said.

The National Inquiry released a statement the next day explaining that the inquiry will consider police conduct across the country, but that there are limits as to which commissioners can make findings of misconduct (the B.C. commissioners cannot, while Ontario commissioners can). The statement also explained that there is currently a forensic team examining police files.

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# Chief Weighill got Police Service on the right track

By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News

Saskatoon Police Service Chief Clive Weighill announced his retirement, 11 years to the day when he took the top job.

The service he inherited, in his words, was facing some extreme challenges.

"It was a very demoralized service. Certainly, relationships with the community as a whole were bad. Surveys showed the number one issue facing the city was crime and policing. It was way out front of all other issues," said Chief Weighill in a recent interview.

The force had been under intense scrutiny since 2000 when two officers were caught after they dropped Darrell Night off outside of city limits on a cold winter night. The force also went through the Stonechild Inquiry and faced public outrage about the "starlight tours" and a loss of trust. Relations with the Indigenous community were fractured at best.

But Chief Weighill says there was a factor that helped bring change.

"The organization was ready for change and wanted change. It made my job easier."

A priority for Weighill was strengthening relations with the Indigenous community.

"We did consultations right away to see where we were. Then we also implemented all the Stonechild Inquiry recommendations as well as the ones from the First Nation and Métis Justice Reform Commission," said Weighill.

"We sent letters to the Indigenous groups in our area with what we are doing and have done so they can see it. The first year I was here I gained ten pounds going to community events and the rubber chicken circuit. I went anywhere and anytime to tell people the plan. It made people comfortable to have it communicated to them."

Saskatoon Tribal Council Chief Felix Thomas is direct when asked what Chief Weighill did right in establishing relations with the community.

"He phoned us," said Chief Felix. "He called and kept regular lines of communication. We would meet and eat together and keep that informal communication going beyond what was said at the formal tables."

"He brought stability and professionalism and honour back. He was there at the right time with the right personality."

Once Weighill had the trust of the community, people began to help him shape a plan.

"Elders Walter and Maria Linklater very key mentors for me. They chair the Chiefs Advisory Committee on First Nations and Métis. They were instrumental with working with the Elders, hearing what their concerns are and the advice they gave," said Weighill.

"The 12 elders on the advisory committee meet every quarter and have a talking circle where they bring forward concerns and advice. Then we have a feast and head out to Whitecap First Nation for a sweat. What strikes me is the elders want to help. They don't want to criticize, they want to offer a suggestion and they have been very honest and forthright. They are not scared to bring up an issue. But they also don't tell me what to do. They are a really good group to work with."

Since Weighill arrived on the scene, the Saskatoon Police Service has seen 43 per cent of Saskatoon citizens saying crime and policing are main issues drop to nine per cent saying it is an issue. Morale has improved internally from 23 per cent to 90 per cent.

The cultural unit has grown from two officers to nine and they have doubled the number of Indigenous officers to 80 members. They also have a brand new state of the art headquarters.

But for Weighill, one of the highlights of his career was the realization of the memorial to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls that has been

ering place for marches, ceremony and reflection.

"We realized that something needed to happen," said Chief Felix Thomas about the statue.



Saskatoon Tribal Council Chief Felix Thomas and retiring Saskatoon Police Service Chief Clive Weighill at the unveiling of the monument to missing Indigenous women and girls in front of the police headquarters in May.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

placed in front of the police service building.

"It is so important to share with the community that we do care and are trying our best. I was so lucky that Chief Felix Thomas came along and helped me out with it. He has been a great mentor to me. He's not scared to tell you how it is. We have a great working relationship," said Weighill.

The monument was created by artist Lionel Peyachew and was unveiled in May. The stunning statue and area around it are hoped to be a community gath-

"And on that project, we worked as equals and supported each other. I think Chief Weighill's legacy is deep. He started reconciliation between First Nations and the police before we started using that word. And that monument will have social elements to it as well."

"When the service members and the new Chief see the monument, it will always be a reminder that they can be a part of the solution as well, just like Chief Weighill was."

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# RCMP asked to review Nadine Machiskinic case

By Jeanelle Mandes  
Of Eagle Feather News

The Chief of the Regina Police Service has asked the RCMP to review the Nadine Machiskinic's case. Machiskinic died January 2015 from a 10-storey fall in a Regina hotel's laundry chute.

Regina Chief Evan Bray reached out to the Assistant Commissioner of the RCMP to request a review of the two-year-old case not a re-investigation.

According to Elizabeth Popowich of the Regina Police Service, the idea to have a review stemmed from Chief Bray in hopes to bring the family some closure.

"Chief Evan Bray made a public commitment to the family of Nadine Machiskinic that the Regina Police Service would welcome an independent review of its investigation," said Popowich in an email statement.

"Chief Bray felt strongly that if an independent review could give the family some comfort and help them move forward, he would help make it happen."

The aunty of Machiskinic said she is grateful that there will be a review but does not feel assured of the process.

"I'm not very confident in it," said Delores Stevenson. "Just because the relationship that I've had with the author-



The late Nadine Machiskinic and her aunty Delores Stevenson were only three years apart and considered each other as sisters. Stevenson describes her niece as a good mother who loved her children.

(Photo by Delores Stevenson)

ities in these last two years and the experiences that I've been through with them. Like the trust is not there."

Stevenson hopes the review will look into everything that happened and

went wrong in Machiskinic's case and how the investigation was handled. An inquest into the death of Machiskinic was held at the end of March in Regina in which the jury found Machiskinic's

cause of death as 'undetermined'.

"Even though there was so much information that was disclosed, I just felt like it was being ignored in a sense," said Stevenson. "Like that's it, the inquest happened. That's the message I'm getting still from the Regina Police Service."

She hopes this review will provide more answers rather than be left with questions.

"I'm hoping for the best," she said. "I hope that the RCMP will show some kind of integrity building a relationship with families and so that I can have confidence in their service and know that they're doing their jobs."

The RCMP has reached out to Stevenson already to arrange a meeting within the next couple of weeks to discuss the review process.

Although her niece's death is two years past, Stevenson is determined to find answers to help bring closure for herself and her family. Machiskinic was more than a niece to Stevenson, she took her as her sister.

"My mother raised her since she was a baby so we grew up together," she said. "We were like sisters ... she was a good person. She was a good mother and she loved her children."

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— by DARNELL GHOSTSKIN

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# Former gang member discovers opportunities and hope

By Julie Ann Wriston  
Of Eagle Feather News

Looking across the table at a quiet young man, hands resting in his lap, contemplating the subject being debated by others in a small, hot room, I am struck by his silent knowing.

While three of us passionately tackle the topic: what can be done to prevent the fate that has befallen Austin Eaglechief, a young man struggling to get out of the gang life who died tragically in a crash after a high-speed police chase and shooting.

I can see he won't jump in, so I ask him a far too simple question, "What do you think?"

He pulls a pile of handwritten notes out of a well-worn folder and reads aloud: "By the time I was born, my hands were already bound in a no-win situation. Born to a family totally lost in poverty, drug and alcohol addiction. Our house may as well have been adrift in the sea, hope and dreams cast away. Lost."

The pull towards the gang life is one of few opportunities for young men like Austin and Devon Napope. Currently, there are at least 13 known gangs in Saskatchewan including the Hells Angels, Native Syndicate, Indian Posse, Redd Alert, Saskatchewan Warriors, Crazy Cree, Mixed Blood, Tribal Brotherz, and West Side Soldiers.

Youth gangs identified are the Crips, Junior Mixed Blood, Indian Mafia Crips, and North Central Rough Riderz. The largest gang activity is in Regina and Saskatoon. And once you are in, it is very hard to get out.

This is reality. For Devon Napope, 30 years of trying to make it in a no-win situation has provided an "education" about survival, addiction and a society that isn't equipped to offer the options and opportunities to change.

Spending eight years of his young life in and out of incarceration, he has become an unwilling expert. His words shed light – the following is an excerpt from his writings.

"Violence, misery, drugs, alcohol and gangs are a given on the streets. I do not accept what happened to me as a youth as normal. But it prepared me for a cold



**Devon Napope was born into the reality of street life and gangs. Now a member of Str8up, Devon hopes that telling his story can help heal his wounds and maybe help someone else out along the way.**

(Photo by Julie Ann Wriston)

world, savage world. The world of street gangs and prisons. I had no education, or goals that were worthwhile. No history of my people. No identity to be proud of. The gang provided acceptance, love, friendship and a sense of belonging. That was the illusion I was sucked into.

"As an adolescent, the ruthlessness in life was to be accepted. Reputation, violence, drugs and alcohol, gangs, were to be accepted. It was insanity. Hands bound together since the day I was born. Unable to break free. Knowing no other alternative. Not ever see-

ing a better way."

Devon speaks of the mask that you need to wear on the streets.

"It's a persona of who you have to be. You feel judged, looked down upon. Not knowing who you are or where you come from, or having good role models. People don't see how we got here ... the history, the struggle. No one tries to understand the footsteps that got us here in the first place."

Pretty succinct words and the studies back him up.

In 2010, the University of Saskatchewan released the Process and Outcome Evaluation of the Saskatoon Gang Strategy. In the report, the FSIN suggests that "Aboriginal gangs represent a spontaneous youth movement of sorts born out of necessity and daily survival (2003). Gang membership fulfills a sense of belonging and comradeship, and is an expression of collective social ills; that is, gangs are a symptom of deeper community problems. The gang problem will only increase so long as the social, political, legal, and economic problems faced by Aboriginal people are not resolved."

Devon is now a member of Str8up and he speaks to the need for a focus on open communication that sees beyond the gangs. One that focuses on wellness, healing and treatment.

"We need to stop the cycle of hate and blame, and dividing people into good and bad. We need to take the time to build people back up."

Devon has been working through his healing with the support of Cree Haven Treatment Centre. Having the support of people he is learning to trust is a big part of his healing journey.

He writes, "Stan and Father Andre at Str8up believed in me. They didn't see or look at me like the failure that I felt I was. They looked past my broken promises, stuck it out with me. With me ... held me up when I couldn't stand myself. There when I needed."

The report did show there is hope.

"Targeted outreach programs have been proven to be an effective strategy for helping gang members safely leave their gang. The key is providing gang members who are considering leaving their gang with opportunities and a sense of optimism about the future."

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# Inmates escape through creative writing program at Correctional Centre

By Jeanelle Mandes  
Of Eagle Feather News

Creative Escape, a book of intensely personal poems and prose is the result of a creative writing program for inmates at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre (SCC).

Diann Block, who is the SCC Cultural Coordinator, said that the booklet was used as a resource in English classes at the University of Saskatchewan. The literature featured pieces of fiction, non-fiction writing and artwork from inmates who took the writing program in jail.

Shane Gamble from Beardsy's and Okemasis First Nation contributed two pieces to Creative Escape. He said writing was his way of a temporary escape.

"It's like you're built up with all these emotions and you don't know what to do with them," he said. "(Your thoughts) just sit there lingering. Suddenly, you just start writing and a massive weight comes off your shoulders because you're holding onto all these things all these years. It's pretty amazing what a pen and paper can do."

Gamble, who served over a nine-month sentence at the SCC, said being in jail is like reliving the same day over and over again.

"It's like trying to build up a routine that you know that you're going to do again tomorrow, next week and next month," he said. "It really sucks but at the same time, that's where your true self comes out. Like I started to learn who I really was."

Gamble added being locked up was a bad feeling but yet one of the best feelings he's ever felt as it was an eye-opener to his own problems. He was introduced to the creative writing program in the

SCC and was asked to come up with some literature pieces. Gamble grew up with a dislike of writing but his perspective changed when he took the writing program.

"The more I would write, it was like I was right there reliving the moment," said Gamble. "It's like my mind took me out of there, I was no longer in jail anymore. My mind was free to run ... it was a real powerful feeling."

After Gamble served his sentence, nothing has been the same for him. But in a good way. He moved from the reserve to the city, got his licence and took a six-week scaffolding program which resulted in landing him a job to lead a team as a foreman in a matter of months. He said he got all these things that he never thought he'd have.

"I got my family back and we all have jobs. I never had structure before and I never had anything to look forward to," Gamble said. "I don't want to call myself a success or anything but I'm happier."

He said writing not only helped him lose track of time being locked up but it gave him hope that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. He continues to write in his spare time hoping to publish his own life story one of these years, he said.

"Never give up on yourself. You just got to have goals and have a positive mind frame," added Gamble.

"It doesn't matter what you did or how you got (into jail), what matters is what you do next. Don't be scared to write. We're all writers in our own stories."

"The justice system can take your freedom but they can't take your freedom to write."



Creative Escape is one of two booklets that was created by a creative writing program in the Saskatoon Correctional Centre. Shane Gamble served over nine-months at SCC and he took the writing program which allowed him to escape with his mind and imagination. (Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)



**THANK YOU!**

The Friends of Batoche and Batoche National Historic Site would like to THANK... all of our partners, visitors, participants and friends for making the 2017 Louis Riel Relay & Kidfest a success!

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# Trying to make sense of WMD's

Oh Lordy, When Will It End?

It was inevitable. As First Nation people begin to reclaim for themselves their rightful place on Mother Earth, a new source of resistance has emerged.

This resistance is quietly hostile, resentful and, if given even a little authority, it can be self-righteously reckless – just ask, Canadian Tire shopper Kamao Cappo. It can even have deadly tragic consequences – as Colton Boushie found out at a farm near North Battleford.

It often cries, “When will it end?”, “When will you Indians have enough?” or “Why can’t you just get over the past?”

It is in genuine pain. And it seethes with fantasies of being an avenging hero.

I speak of the White Male in Distress. For short we’ll call them WMD’s.

Note to the Reader: There was a part of me that wanted to crack a joke and say, “Not that dress, but Distress.” Get it? But for the life of me, I couldn’t get it to work “smoothly” in the column, so we are all out of luck. But I digest ...

Since we all prefer simple an-

swers to complex problems, we have a tendency to dismiss the WMD as irrational, simple minded nitwits and cowards. And we fear them.

They often have hair-trigger tempers. They mock people of other cultures, and when confronted they unleash a terrific barrage of hostility because, “they were only having fun”, “doing their job” or “protecting their property.”

They rely on over-simplified answers that dehumanize the targets of their pent-up hostility. And when you can dehumanize someone its easier to do things to the targets that no normal human would do to other humans.

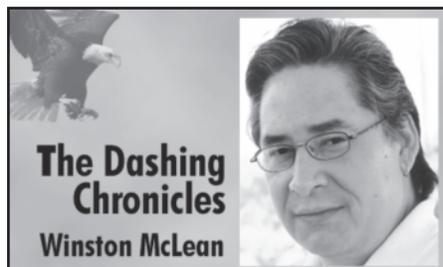
And we worry, and rightly so. “When will the WMD turn their hostility on us?”

It may seem ironic at first, but they do not discriminate. Anyone, at any time, can fall within their crosshairs if you cross them.

So why is the WMD frightened and confused? Why does it fantasize about being the heroic avenger? Why

does it resist examining the past to understand the present?

There is a myth in the western world.



The Dashing Chronicles  
Winston McLean

The myth is that if you work hard, pay your taxes and mind your own business, you will have the good life. The myth holds that every-

one is fundamentally equal. And central to that myth is the belief that we are all individuals, with no ties nor obligations to the past.

The myth holds, you are a rugged individual, isolated yet powerful if you pay your dues and persevere. In fact, this world is yours to conquer and dominate. If you are a white male you are the king of your domain.

For countless generations, this myth powered many to explore and colonize. Power, prestige and women were the fruits of these labours – yes, sex is a powerful motivator.

But the myth is flawed.

For example, the idea that

everyone is equal is a seductive one, and it is deceptive. In fact, the starting line in life for many is not the same, so we make accommodations because we give a damn. The WMD cannot comprehend this, for it appears that others are given an unfair chance.

And then there is the obscured past. To the WMD history is irrelevant, which can be frustrating as hell when everyone seems to be throwing it in their face. “I didn’t make this mess, why do I have to pay for it?”

The WMD is angry. And no wonder – they were lied to. And now they lead frustrated, misguided lives.

Are all White Males guilty? Hell no. The overwhelming majority I’ve encountered in my mad-cap journey on this crazy, wonderful planet exhibit the best virtues the western world has to offer – courage, compassion, wisdom, and so on.

These are the ones we must feed.

And when they mix with the best of what the Asian, African, Middle Eastern, and the Indigenous worlds have to offer, we got something great to work with.



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The Second Annual Louis Riel relay was hosted at the Batoche National Historic site. The historic hills and river were the setting for arduous canoeing and hill running. Comradery was at an all time high as young and old competed in multiple divisions. The Stanley Mission Warriors won the top spot in the competitive relay, the second year in a row a team from Stanley Mission took first. (Photos by Parks Canada)



# Riel Relay keeps the spirit alive

By NC Raine  
For Eagle Feather News

Every summer, in the spirit of multiculturalism and well-being, Parks Canada Agency holds the Louis Riel Relay, named after the famed Métis leader and founder of Manitoba.

The relay includes canoeing, horseback riding, pack-running, biking, and, of course, conventional running. The 2017 race was held at the Batoche National Historic site for the second year.

There were four races held: the competitive team race, competitive individual race, youth race, and recreational race. The competitive race, being the main event, involved a six-person team relay featuring running, canoeing, back-packing, horseback riding, and archery.

The winner of this year's competi-

tive relay were the Stanley Mission Warriors; the individual relay was won by Phillip Harder; the recreational relay won by the Métis Militia, and the Youth relay won by the "Eh" Team Jr.

For those opting to participate in a less physically demanding way, there was plenty of entertainment and festivities. The Louis Riel Relay featured bouncy castles, a petting zoo, traditional Métis games, a saskatoon berry pie-eating contest, archery and canoe lessons, as well as live music and bannock tasting.

This year's relay was particularly significant in that it celebrated the 150th anniversary of Confederation. Canada's national parks used the anniversary to enable Canadians to experience their history and heritage in a special way to celebrate Canada at 150 years.



**Provincial Métis Housing Corporation**

Tel: (306)343-8240 Fax: (306)343-1700 E-mail: metishousing@sasktel.net

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Provincial Metis Housing Corporation is the Community Entity that provides the administration for the Saskatchewan Non-Designated Aboriginal Funding Stream for the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS). HPS funding under the Saskatchewan Non-Designated Funding Stream provides funding for projects throughout the Province however projects must be off-reserve and we will not fund projects based in Regina or Saskatoon. This Request for Proposals will solicit applications specific to HPS to meet the needs of homeless and people at imminent risk of homelessness in the province of Saskatchewan.

Priority will be given to Aboriginal service providers.

The total amount of funding available for 2017-2018 fiscal years is approximately \$460,000 under the HPS Non-Designated Aboriginal Homelessness funding stream to fund projects between September 30, 2017 and March 31, 2018.

The closing date for receiving applications is September 8th, 2017 by 4:00 PM at the following address:

Provincial Métis Housing Corp. #15-901 1st Ave N, Saskatoon SK, S7K 1Y4  
E-mail: metishousing@sasktel.net Fax: 1-306-343-1700

For an application package or more information, contact:

Tenille Thomson or Marcia Wolinski  
Email: metishousing@sasktel.net Phone: (306) 343-8240 or toll free 1-844-396-7933

## APPEL DE PROPOSITIONS

La Société d'habitation du Provincial Métis est l'entité communautaire qui fournit l'administration pour le Flux de Financement Autochtone non désigné de Saskatchewan à travers la Stratégie de Partenariat de l'itinérance (SPLI). Les financements de SPLI conformément au volet de Flux de financement Autochtone non désigné de Saskatchewan fournit du financement pour des projets dans toute la Province. Toutefois, les projets doivent être hors réserve et nous ne financerons pas de projets basés à Regina ou à Saskatoon. Cet appel de propositions sollicite des demandes spécifiques pour SPLI pour répondre aux besoins des sans-abris et les personnes à risque imminent d'itinérance dans la province de Saskatchewan.

Priorité sera donnée aux fournisseurs de services autochtones.

Le montant total des fonds disponibles pour les exercices de 2017-2018 est environ de 460 000 \$ sous le volet de Financement des Autochtones non désignés sans-abris à travers SPLI pour financer des projets entre le 30 septembre 2017 et le 31 mars 2018.

La date limite de réception des candidatures est le 8 septembre 2017 de 16:00 à l'adresse suivante:

Provincial Métis Housing Corp. #15-901 1st Ave N, Saskatoon, SK S7K 1Y4  
Courriel: metishousing@sasktel.net

Pour un dossier de candidature ou plus d'informations, veuillez contacter:

Tenille Thomson ou Marcia Wolinski  
Courriel: metishousing@sasktel.net Téléphone: (306) 343-8240 ou toll free 1-844-396-7933



Team Sask entered its first-ever female team in the box lacrosse competition. The team did well, winning two of its five games in the exciting sport.

## Team Sask finishes a strong second at NAIG in Toronto

By K.D. Sawatzky  
For Eagle Feather News

Five hundred athletes, coaches and managers made their way to Toronto at the end of July to represent Saskatchewan at the 2017 North American Indigenous Games.

And they did the province proud. By the end of the week, Team Sask collected 166 medals (65 gold, 54 silver, 47 bronze) coming in second in the overall medal standings. British Columbia placed first with 179 medals and Ontario was third with 136.

Highlights from the week included exceptional performances by the green team in cross country, track and field and riflery, plus a historic appearance by its first-ever female box lacrosse team.

The athletics team earned Team Sask the most medals (76) at the games.

Sixteen-year-old Dylan Bauman from Saskatoon brought home a whop-

ping six gold medals in the boys' 16U (16 and under) 3000-metre, 2000-metre and 1200-metre races but also shone on the track in the 4x400 metre relay, 4x100 metre relay and the 800-metre.

The riflery team earned 15 medals, with three siblings from George Gordon First Nation, bringing in almost half of them. Inez, Montrell and Nidahnia Blind, who have hunted with their father since they were young, won medals in each of the three different positions. Montrell won bronze in 16U male prone and Inez won silver in 16U female 3P and bronze in prone and overall. Nadahnia won gold in 19U female prone and bronze in overall and 3P.

Team Sask also won gold in archery, badminton, canoe/kayak, both female and male softball, swimming, volleyball and wrestling.

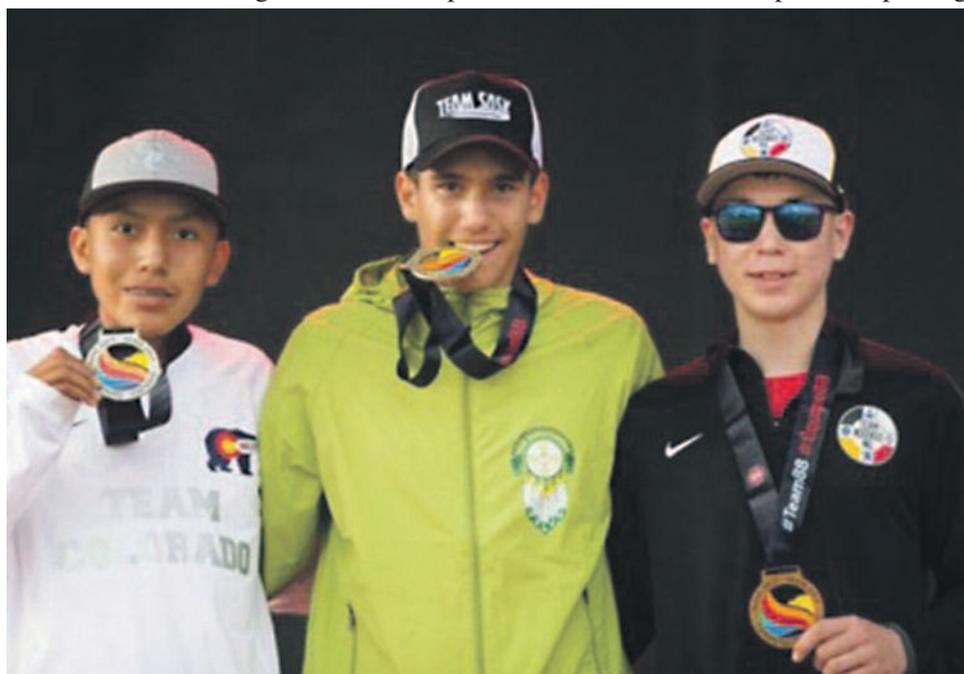
The 19U female box lacrosse team almost made it to the podium, placing

fourth in their final game against British Columbia. This year was the first year NAIG opened up the box lacrosse category to females. The sport, recognized as "the medicine" game or a game for warriors, is traditionally only played by men.

Despite only have one practice as a

full team the day before their first game at NAIG, coaches Darcy Ratt and Tyson Fletch from Prince Albert said the women improved each game they played and that many, hopefully long-lasting, friendships were made.

Go Team Sask!



Bauman (centre) with his gold medal for the U16 3-kilometre cross country event. He always makes a point of shaking his competitors' hands after each race, something that makes his mom proud. (Photo courtesy of Dylan Bauman)

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## ROBERT MATHIEUS

*Operating Engineer*

"THE WORK INVOLVED a lot of digging, which is why I enjoyed it. I also enjoyed the challenge of digging in different locations."

### *Robert Mathieus: Digging the day job*

Before retiring two years ago, Robert Mathieus enjoyed over 30 years as an operating engineer. For him, it all began with a cable hoe.

Mathieus, who grew up just south of Meadow Lake, began working on a farm in Coleville after finishing Grade 8. Eventually, he found work with a sewer and water construction company.

"I watched the more experienced employees operating the cable hoes and I was pretty fascinated with that," Mathieus said. "At dinnertime, I'd ask the operators if I could just practice with the equipment. Most of them would say it was no problem. I became pretty good at it. One day, one of the bosses from Saskatoon came up to me and said, 'Bob, how would you like to operate one of these.' And I said, 'You bet.' They let me start operating the hoe and the rest was history."

With no formal training program back then, Mathieus picked up the tricks of the trade on the job site. Operating engineers use one or several types of power construction equipment, such as motor graders, bulldozers, scrapers, compressors, pumps, derricks, shovels, tractors, or front-end loaders to excavate, move and grade earth, erect structures, or pour concrete or other hard surface pavement.

"The work involved a lot of digging, which is why I enjoyed it," Mathieus said. "I also enjoyed the challenge of digging in different locations. In Ontario you're dealing with a lot of rocky surfaces and in Northern Alberta you have to dig through a lot of permafrost."

During his career, Mathieus helped dig pipelines all across Canada. These job opportunities, however, only became available to him once he made the decision to join the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 870.

"The union boss at the time heard I was a pretty good operator and he kept trying to convince me to join the union. I kept putting it off, but decided to give it a try," Mathieus said. "It was a great decision. By being a member of the union, I've had access to so many benefits that weren't available to me on the private side, such as pension, overtime, health and welfare. All of the union operators get the same rates, so there's no animosity."

"I have a son in the union and he's got four boys and they're all in the union too. When they get older and are ready to retire, they're going to have a heck of a nice pension."

Mathieus lives in Perdue, and now that he's retired he has plenty of time to hit the links. He said golfing is one of his greatest passions and while he might not be the best golfer, he's certainly not the worst either. While he's happy to have more spare time, Mathieus looks back at his career fondly.

"There are definitely times when I miss the work," he said. "You work with some great people and meet a lot of friends working all over Canada."

"I wouldn't say I'm great at it, but it keeps me in shape," he said. "It's a healthy outlet and something I enjoy."



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