

Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

Bold Eagle program builds character

Helayna Albert spent half of her summer as a Bold Eagle cadet where she learned self-discipline, endurance, obedience, respect and fitness training.

(Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)



By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

Gaining the experience and the skills of the Bold Eagle program was the intention of a young girl who joined the yearly program which attracts many young Indigenous youth.

Helayna Albert from the Sweetgrass First Nation was excited to embark on a journey that built her endurance and strength. She wanted to join to follow the footsteps of a family member who was

also a Bold Eagle cadet.

"My sister (Jenay) went in 2016 and told me it was a good program to join. She said to look into it, so I did," she said.

"I was selected and passed (my) tests and made it into Bold Eagle."

It was a rewarding yet tough journey for Albert, 17, as she discovered strengths that she did not know she had.

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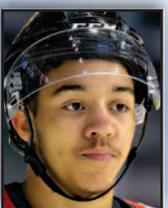
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Role Model Edition

Coming In November - Veterans & Youth Issue

CPMA #40027204

Wanuskewin chef savours the opportunity to share her passion for food and culture

By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

Wanuskewin Heritage Park wants you to have ‘a transformative experience’ during your visit to their cultural centre, and the rich history of Indigenous culinary arts is not something they’re overlooking.

“We want everything, even the food, to be an opportunity to enlarge people’s understanding of Indigenous ways and culture,” said Jenni Lessard.

Lessard, the new executive chef at Wanuskewin, is the first female executive chef in the park’s history. And it’s a role that she seems to have been working towards her entire life.

Born in Prince Albert, Lessard had her first experience in a professional kitchen at a camp near Besnard Lake when she was only four years old. That experience set things in motion.

“I would see how you could make people happy with good food. At a young age, that was my thought: I want to cook, I want to feed people, and I want to make people happy.”

She began learning on the land, picking berries, and learning what and when to harvest. In high school, she opened her first food service – a burger trailer at the La Ronge airport. From high school, she regularly moved around the

province, working in kitchens and coffee shops, until she rented a coffee space in Birch Hills and made food that reflected her Métis heritage.

She later operated a food, music, and art space in Birch Hills for seven years before selling it and moving to Saskatoon to open her own catering company. She worked alongside Wanuskewin several times to put on their Han Wi Moon dinners.

Then, this August, was invited to fill the open position as executive chef. And it’s a role that she doesn’t take lightly.

“It’s not just serving food,” she said. “It’s being part of one of the foremost cultural spots in Saskatchewan, if not Canada, if not the world. It’s an honour. I want to learn every day.”

The new chef isn’t the only culinary change at Wanuskewin. The park is renaming their restaurant to incorporate a fire theme, as well as planning on having the restaurant open for evening service, and, expanding their catering space to accommodate up to 350 people.

In the kitchen, Lessard is working on a ‘field to shield’ theme, featuring Indigenous cuisine from the prairies to the Canadian shield. They are also working on their own Wanuskewin line of coffee which will support “our Indigenous



Jenni Lessard, the new executive chef at Wanuskewin, is the first female executive chef in the park’s history. She is Métis from Prince Albert and has been cooking since she was four. (Photo supplied)

brothers and sisters in other parts of the world.”

“We want everything in the kitchen to have a connection to the land, to the culture,” she said.

With such lifelong passion for food and culture, Lessard hopes to unite the two for Wanuskewin guests in a way that

leaves a lasting impression.

“You can’t separate food from culture and heritage. It’s such a huge part of the culture,” said Lessard. “Once people have eaten food that is representative of a culture, it’s really hard for them to forget.

“That memory is always there.”

Helayna Albert found program’s challenges were improbable, not impossible to handle

• Continued from Page One

“It’s really hard. It’s mentally challenging and everything is challenging but you get used to it. It gets hard then it gets easy and it gets hard again,” she said.

Albert said their day-to-day routine consists of waking up at 5 a.m. every day to do physical training followed by breakfast at six. Then classes start at 8 a.m. followed by inspections, drills, more physical training and cleaning up before bedtime at 11 p.m.

This prepares them for a challenging summer that delivers hands-on skills development, encourages teamwork, provides physical fitness training and promotes self-discipline, self-confidence, time management, respect and fitness.

During her time in the Bold Eagle program, Albert found herself looking up to Master Corporal Mahekan Ahenakew.

“He’s in touch with his culture and does his job very well,” she said. “He’s a great role model to the kids in the Bold Eagle program.”

Although Albert is unsure if she wants to pursue a career in the army after she completes high school, she said she will

be taking the skills she gained and applying them in her daily life, adding that she will cherish the everlasting memories that were created.

“I like all the friendships (I’ve made) and you become one family. You get close to so many people you never knew,” she said. “The self-discipline is really sticking with me. The experience is really good.”

Albert’s advice to other youth who want to consider joining the Bold Eagle program is to not be afraid to try something new and challenging.

“If you’re thinking about it and think it’s too hard, it’s not. We were told it’s not impossible, it’s improbable. Just get through it. It will get really tough and you will get lonely for home but everything is all worth it in the end,” she said.

“You come out with a good experience and a different attitude and mindset on things. I encourage the youth to try it and do your best.”

The Bold Eagle Program takes place in Wainwright, Alberta where a graduation ceremony was held for the cadets in mid-August.



Helayna Albert will be taking home an unforgettable experience and many newly formed friendships from the Bold Eagle Program.

(Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)

Flute player discovers good health is true wealth

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

A well-known flute player from northern Saskatchewan is beating the odds during his recovery from a stroke and is learning of many strengths he did not know he had.

Jason Chamakese from the Pelican Lake First Nation is a successful Native American flute player and recording artist – a passion that grew over 21 years.

He released his first album in 2007 and since has been nominated for numerous awards and won the Canadian Aboriginal Music Award for the best traditional flute in 2011 for his album called ‘Native American Flute Songs Vol.2.’

“I think Native American Flute Music is the most beautiful and relaxing music out there,” said Chamakese.

“If I can bring those good feelings to people by my music, then that gives me more drive to get better.”

The flutist has self-taught himself to play since 1998 by listening to older flute albums where he learned to play along.

“All the flutes that I own have been given to me as gifts. My main flutes are made by a maker named Bryan Towers and a few of the flutes I have are one of a kind,” he said. “Though I do have a few other flutes from other makers. My latest album uses Bryan Towers’ flutes exclusively.”

Chamakese enjoys participating in his

cultural ceremonies and is also a fluent Cree speaker who takes pride in speaking his language. In fact, he was amongst Earl Wood, Clarence Iron and John Chabot, all fluent Cree speakers who made history earlier this year when they broadcast an NHL game in the Cree language – a first in NHL history.

“I knew that it was a historic event that we were a part of. I thought that it would be interesting to mostly Cree speakers but what I found later is that many Indigenous households throughout Canada tuned in to watch the game,” said Chamakese.

“It made my family and many of my friends proud and it certainly made me proud. All of the languages Creator gave us are beautiful to listen to and to speak. I think that the most important emotion that hockey broadcast evoked was one of pride and I hope that it got people into thinking about reinvigorating their languages and passing it on by teaching it or learning it.”

Prior to making history, Chamakese faced a health scare where he had a stroke in 2015 that caused him to be put on life support. He later suffered from short-term memory loss, reduced mobility and even had to be spoon fed. He said it’s been a long process but realizes that he has come a long way.

“I had to learn patience and it does get frustrating when I still struggle with short-term memory problems,” he said.

“I have come a long way though. No

Jason Chamakese has released a new flute album entitled “Nisto”.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)



more life support, no more induced coma, I can walk again, I’ve regained mobility.”

Through his recovery, Chamakese has learned that it’s the simple things in life that matter the most. He wakes up every day and is thankful to still be alive.

“Making coffee is living life to the fullest. I could be on a plane flying out to a performance or waking up and cooking breakfast for my parents, Maggie and Isaac, it’s all something to be thankful for,” he said.

“Being healthy is true wealth. We can have a full wallet, a nice house and car but

these things we take for granted, like walking and running or taking out the garbage are what makes us wealthy. I learned that I have a strength that was put to the test and it’s stronger now than it’s ever been.”

Over five years in the making, Chamakese released a solo flute album which is the third volume of his traditional flute music called “Nisto.”

“I wish everyone well,” he added. “Pray and be thankful that you have been given your second shot at life because many people aren’t afforded that gift of life again.”

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Well done, Chief McKnight

The community lost a true champion and role model when the Hon. Bill McKnight passed away in the first week of October.

McKnight was a political veteran, having served in Ottawa as a Member of Parliament in the Mulroney years. All told, he was a Member of Parliament for Kindersley-Rosetown for 14 years.

His roles included as Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Minister of National Defence during the first Gulf War, Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and Minister of Labour.

In his work in Ottawa, Bill McKnight was a pivotal player in the development of the Treaty Land Entitlement Settlement of 1992 (TLE). The result of TLE has been an explosion of growth of First Nation reserve lands in Saskatchewan and the development of urban reserves.

McKnight was so respected that the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation made him an Honourary Chief. No small honour. Muskeg Lake Cree Nation's urban reserve in Saskatoon, a role model arrangement and business success in its own right, was named the McKnight Commercial Centre in recognition of his role in creating federal policy for the Land Claims Settlements.

TLE has been a political and financial success for Canada, Saskatchewan and the First Nation governments involved and has helped First Nations enter into the bustling urban economy they had historically been shut out of.

He retired from federal politics in 1993 and became a world travelling businessman. He knew how to open doors politically and internationally. Beginning in the summer of 2007, Bill McKnight became the Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan where he served until 2012. As he had done

when he was in government, McKnight worked to advance the First Nations treaty right to livelihood – prosperity, economic self-sufficiency, and independence.

I had the pleasure to sit on the Saskatoon United Way Leadership Committee to End Homelessness with Bill. Just like when he was a politician or Commissioner, Bill cared about the people we were building the project for.



Treaty Commissioner and Honourary Muskeg Lake Cree Nation Chief Bill McKnight and George E. Lafond of Muskeg Lake Cree Nation who became Treaty Commissioner in 2012 following McKnight, shared a moment at the 2012 Wanuskewin powwow.
(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

It was magical to watch him mull and think, then lay down a strategy to move an agenda item along. All the while in his calm, even voice. He also had the power to phone into Regina and secure meetings with ministers and deputy ministers in one call. He was retired. He had done enough. But he still went out and did more.

His pragmatic, diplomatic and gentle ways helped him stickhandle many political hot topics in Ottawa and as Treaty Commissioner and he always did it with class. His legacy will be well-preserved as the McKnight Centre on Saskatoon's east side continues to bustle with economy and people working.

And out there right now, someone has a roof over their head and safe, affordable housing for them and their

children. Well done Chief McKnight. Well done.

Speaking of politics, remember to get out and vote. Set a precedent for your children. The more engaged they see you in the process, the more they will pay attention and learn to use the power of the ballot to bring about change in our country.



Looking at the leaders now, though, Trudeau and Scheer both have lost the Indigenous vote and lots of credibility.

One with the blackface and one with a fluffed-up resume who, before politics, was nothing more than a glorified office boy in an insurance agency.

Weak. Sorry, Scheer never had the Indigenous vote. But I digress. Minority government coming Oct. 21.

Does this mean a minority government with the NDP and the Greens helping someone form power? Every vote counts. Fun!

Speaking of political role models, October 2019 marks the 175th Anniversary of the birth of Louis Riel.

To commemorate this, the Minister Responsible for First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs, Lori Carr announced that October will be proclaimed as the Month of the Métis in Saskatchewan.

A number of events have been planned throughout the province, including several at Government House in Regina.

Oct. 1, 2019 to Nov. 10, 2019 Government House will feature an art exhibition by Métis artist Leah Marie Dorion: Being One with the Earth and will also display a rare Hudson's Bay Company 1870 Promissory Note, issued at Fort Garry during the Red River Resistance (on loan from the Regina Coin Club).

Also on display will be a sample of Métis Scrip which was offered to Métis families to compensate them for loss of their title.

While you are at Government House, you may also meet another political, Indigenous role model, Lt.-Gov. Russ Mirasty and speak Cree with him. Nice. Go vote.

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Election goes beyond some Halloween costume

This month there will be a federal election in which we will choose a party to represent us. That party will have a leader and that guy or woman will become our new prime minister.

It's not as sexy as saying, "I'm voting this guy for prime minister!" but it's more accurate.

But I tend to focus on the leaders like anyone else. The cliché is that we vote for the person that we would most like to go for a beer with – not me – mostly because I don't drink beer and also why would I want to go for a drink with a complete, albeit telegenic, stranger? Socializing is already a chore, why add making awkward conversation with a politician to it?

When choosing who to vote for, I gravitate towards the person who seems stable enough to handle stress, smart enough to listen to the smart people around him and kind enough to not want to kill Indigenous people.

Actually, that's kind of a baseline for me: does this candidate want to kill First Nations people? Because let's face it we have had prime ministers who wanted to kill us. We had John A. MacDonald who was both the architect of Residential Schools and the Indian Act.

If there are any statues of that guy still standing, I vote that part of next year's Indigenous Day celebrations is blowing them up. Or melting them down. Or, how about we freeze them and then shatter them with sledgehammers? As you can see, I've put some thought into this.

You almost need a map to navigate through the racism of this election season.

First, we had photos of our prime minister wearing the world's worst costume. Here's a question blackface wearers: why do you do the hands? Do you think it will be less convincing if the hands aren't done?

Then we have NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, who every time he ventures out into the world he has to



face potato-faced people who say things to him like, "Muslims are bad" and accuse him of attempting to implement Sharia law.

Singh is Sikh but that doesn't make a difference to the ignorant who pride themselves on not being able to tell anyone apart.

Also, no one has tried to implement Sharia law, people. That is racist nonsense. Here's a tip: if a news blog or article switches to CAPS IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ARTICLE or if you see even one! – It's propaganda and you are rotting your brain. And to stop the rot, you should google "cats farting" immediately.

But the racism goes on and on. The day I am writing this, a man approached Singh and told him to cut his turban off. Which sort of presumes that the turban is sewn to his head. The man then said

that Singh should try to look more Canadian and that "when in Rome do as the Romans do."

Mr. Singh replied with his customary good nature that this is Canada and we can and do wear what we want.

Although that isn't true, as people who wear religious head coverings in Quebec cannot work in the public service. They cannot do what they want – the Pope could not get a job in Quebec is what I am saying. It is hard to believe that such a law exists in Canada, unless of course you had ever read a history book that featured what Canada has done to First Nations people.

Then we have Conservative leader Andrew Scheer who has just called for a judicial review of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision to compensate First Nations children harmed by the on-reserve child welfare system.

It was easy to see who the bad guys are – until the Trudeau government announced that it was seeking to set aside the Tribunal Decision on Oct. 4.

This isn't just a bad Halloween costume, this is a choice to fight against children who have already been traumatized. This statement is some John A. Macdonald type racism right here.

Thanks to Trump's America, also known as Armageddon, racism is freely coursing through the public spheres.

No longer tamped down by any pretense of civility, it's loud and it's proud.

Racism is terrible and dehumanizing but at least we have power in the voting booth.

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Youngster's first steps an internet sensation

By Kerry Benjoe
For Eagle Feather News

It may have only been 49 seconds, but a Facebook video of Dannalee McCallum taking her first steps has gone viral with more than 250,000 views to date.

The response has been unbelievable said Danna Henderson, whose voice could be heard in the video cracking with emotion, as she witnessed her daughter walk for the first time.

McCallum, 8, was diagnosed with Spina Bifida before she was born and medical experts have doubted her progress every step of the way. But each time she has proven them wrong.

On Sept. 2, with steely determination and a belief in herself, she decided to walk.

"I didn't want her to feel pressure to walk," said Henderson, who never tried to force her daughter to walk.

"Society already places so much pressure on us to be a certain way, so I didn't want to add to that."

However, Henderson's father, up until the day he passed, believed his granddaughter would one day walk. And she did.

"I am spiritual and I always think of things you can't see. That day, I actually went out and got a memorial tattoo," she said.

Henderson took an excerpt from a letter her dad had written and had it permanently etched on her left forearm.

It says, "I know it is difficult, however I want you to know I will always be with you in spirit, I miss you and love you much, Blue Eagle."

When she got home, McCallum said, "I can do it, Mom."

At her daughter's request, she pulled out her phone to record it, but didn't anticipate how well she would walk.

"I was completely blown away," she said.

But what was even more amazing were McCallum's words when she asked her, "What did you have to do?"

In the video a smiling little girl proudly said, "believe in myself."

It is a simple yet powerful message that has resonated with thousands of viewers.

Henderson has been bombarded with messages from strangers telling her how inspired they were by the video. Initially, she was not sure how to react.

McCallum, on the other hand, is enjoying the sudden attention and has posted a couple of followup videos of her walking progress.

"I am the big sister and now I can walk," she said.

Her younger brother, Antoine, is especially proud of his big sister's accomplishment. He knows with McCallum walking it means she can do more things, like play more with him and their little brother Daynyn.

One of the new challenges is keeping up with McCallum because she wants to walk everywhere.

"I'm still not sure how to feel about that," Henderson said jokingly.

But all kidding aside, she couldn't be prouder of her daughter.

"With everything she has gone through, she inspires me to be a better person," she said.

She believes the light that emanates from her daughter was captured in that Facebook video and it's inspiring others.

"Believe in yourself," is what McCallum wants people to do. "I believed in myself and now I'm walking."



Dannalee McCallum with proud mom Danna Henderson after a video of Dannalee, who has spina bifida and was told she would never walk, was recorded walking for the first time at age 8. She did it because she "believed in herself."

(Photo supplied)



Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation Inc.

Annual General Meeting

Friday, November 22, 2019

Meeting Time: 9:00 a.m.

Saskatoon Inn Hotel & Conference Centre
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

In conjunction with

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Trudy Stewart was an award winning filmmaker and storyteller.



Arts world mourning loss of Trudy Stewart

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

People in the arts community are mourning the loss of a well-known, award-winning filmmaker.

Trudy Stewart from the Flying Dust First Nation passed away suddenly on Sept. 28 at the age of 46.

Details of her passing are not known but people close to her are more focused on the kind of person Stewart was.

Her best friend, Janine Windolph, was like a sister to her and they did everything together. They created award-winning documentaries that were featured at festivals and screenings around the world.

“The things that keep playing in my mind are hanging out, being friends because we worked so long together and our world was so much about our work and community,” said Windolph.

“I don’t even know if she understood the impact she had on everybody because she was such a gentle soul.”

Some of those she impacted were saddened to learn of the loss of a fellow mentor in the film industry. Filmmaker Chris Tyrone Ross said the arts and film community lost one of the kindest souls that they will ever know.

“There was a beautiful vibe about her that always put you in a place of calmness,” he said.

“It was that calmness that made her into a great storyteller, because everything she did, she did with an open heart. But her story doesn’t end here, it will continue on through her children, her films and those she impacted. I will truly miss my friend.”

Candy Fox is another accomplished filmmaker and first got to know Stewart through the Mison Film Festival. She remembers her friend as being so generous in her words of encouragement to-

wards her and her work.

“She always made an effort to connect me with other filmmakers she knew,” said Fox. “And now that I look at it, she was building community for Indigenous filmmakers like myself and that created a sense of belonging.”

Gordon Pepper, the executive director of Saskatchewan Film Pool Co-operative, commented on the loss of their fellow colleague.

“Trudy was an incredible person and so supportive to fellow filmmakers and to the Film Pool,” he stated. “We will miss her dearly.”

With a long list of accomplishments, Stewart and Windolph worked together at the Indigenous Filmmaking festival, Mison. Later on, they became involved in gathering statements for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Through the stories they heard about the Regina Indian Industrial School (RIIS) which was located outside of Regina on Pinkie Road, the duo created the RIIS Media Project to raise awareness about the history of the school and cemetery where they co-directed and co-produced a documentary called RIIS from Amnesia: Recovering the Lost Legacies.

The RIIS Commemorative Association was born and they sought heritage status for the site and finally received that designation from the City of Regina and one year later the Province in 2017.

Before she passed, Stewart was working as a film programmer for imagineNATIVE.

Stewart is survived by her children, Joshua and Cali Stewart, their father Robin Stewart and his mother, Karin Stewart; Trudy’s parents, Cliff and Bev Clampitt; her sister Jaime Hayes and her family.

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Sask. voters grapple with several key issues

By Penny Smoke
For Eagle Feather News

As the date for the 2019 Federal election nears closer we asked people from across the province what issues the same three questions:

1. Did you get out to vote last federal election? Why?
2. What issues are important to you personally?
3. What issues do you think are important to Indigenous people?

Here are a few of their answers.



Errol Kayseas, 38, Student U of S Saskatoon

Q1

“Yes, I did. Bill-C27 was the reason I got out last time when Stephen Harper was putting forward the transparency act, something I felt made Indigenous people look like

criminals. But it was a compound of factors so I did vote in the last election”

Q.2

“I think we need to get the younger people informed like Grade 11 and Grade 12 students. One of the most important things for me is the education, as a university student myself. The last election made the next generation being informed.”

Q.3

“I would like to see more First Nation representation at the table at both provincial and federal levels. I think it’s one of the most important things because that is the only way we are going to change things right? We could probably change a lot of legislation.”

Lydia Thunderchild, 35, Education Consultant Thunderchild First Nation



(Submitted by Lydia Sunchild FB photo, Photographer Shelley Mike)

Q.1

“I did vote in the last election, I want to vote because I am a citizen and know that these are the people who will be making decisions for me.”

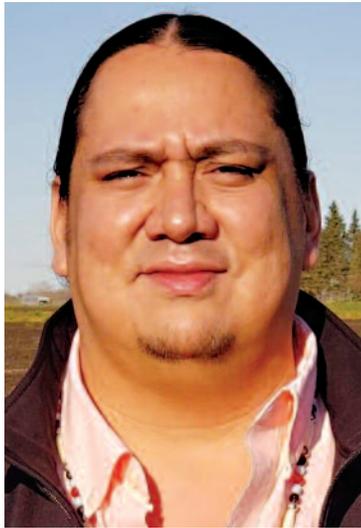
Q.2

As a parent, educator and Indigenous person it’s our Treaty rights that’s important to me for future generations.

Q.3

“Treaty rights! Holistically the Treaty encompasses an agreement that needs to be honoured. So for me it’s not a specific issue because I don’t find education or health more important than the other they need each other to function. They are all important like hunting, Treaty Land Entitlement I think these are important to all First Nations people.”

Peter Sutherland, 39, Justice Portfolio One Arrow First Nation



Q.1

“Yes, I voted at my home community of One Arrow at the school; I really liked that. It gives those people who otherwise wouldn’t have a chance to get out to vote a chance to do so. Having it right there makes it.”

Q.2

“This federal election first and foremost would have to be Indigenous rights, although there are other issues close to me I think this would have to be the main one. If someone is going to make promises in regards to that then I am definitely more favorable to them. Holding on to those Treaty rights I would hope we can elect someone who will help in that way.”

Q.3

“In Saskatchewan the Indigenous population is going to be 1 in 5. So if we get out in numbers to vote then we could actually have the power to elect the people who will help us that why we need to get out there. So come on people get up and get educated around these issues...the way the Canadian political system works that we do have more power that we think to make a change.”

Kendra McKay, 33, Saskatoon.



Q.1

“I have voted ever since I was 18, it I think it’s important to us as First Nations people. Last Federal election is was because of Harper I wanted to make sure the Conservatives didn’t get in again. They brought a lot of bills that were harmful to the earth and us First Nations.

Q.2

“I would say voting. People getting out and actually voting, and the environment is number one. I think my vote leans towards to whoever has more policy for climate change. We only have one earth.”

Q.3

“I would say the same thing everything that has to do with the earth. We only have one and like taxes and all that are always going to go up and down, but the earth needs to recover from all this climate change going on.”

Wendy Whitebear, 50 Regina



Q.1

“I did so! I made a huge point out of going out to vote because I wanted to get the Conservatives out of power. I figure that as many First Nations people that can get out and vote, should! I know that my vote counts so I went out and voted”

Q.2

“For me the climate change is really important as well as well as lowering taxes for middle wage earners, and increasing taxes for high income earners. Even though I am considered middle-class I feel like I am officially the working poor because the cost of living has risen dramatically but our wages don’t.”

Q.3

Biggest issue that I want to make sure that the government honours the Treaties. We have massive land claims, water advisory issues, poverty, gang related violence, meth all the intergenerational trauma are concerns. I want to make sure that they are taking their responsibilities as well as the duty to consult seriously. I want to truly and seriously consult with any communities or people that are involved in issues of pipelines or land.

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The importance of healthy leadership

I have spoken to breaking down barriers and misrepresentations. I would like to now speak to ways people are achieving this.

Change is happening, but it is happening relatively slow. The question that comes to mind is, how do you overcome an ongoing genocide of your people and land when generation after generation has internalized lies/biases/stereotypes/misrepresentations of the true history of this country and who we are as Indigenous peoples?

This is no easy task, but it is one we need to talk about to produce solutions. As you may have seen, Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth around the world are speaking up in regard to climate change.

The youth are concerned about the serious crisis the state of our world is in. The impacts of greed and capitalism is reflected in the degradation of the land, soil, animals, environment and the overall health of our world and the people.

Therefore, our youth are taking lead as young role models to show us the way when it comes to their future.

Being a good role model is directly related to good leadership, you naturally take charge of situations thinking about what is best for the people and not just what is best for yourself.

Currently there are a lot of political issues arising especially in light of the federal

elections. Politics can easily divide people and at times bring out the worst in people who want to impose their perspectives on others.

The issue here is that many people take **p e o p l e s** words/promises at face value. People are eager to hear only what they want, and many are not willing to go out and do the research necessary.

It is difficult to come by true leadership that is transparent, accountable and follows through with their promises. This is like a relationship and when the trust is broken it's not easy to get back. I think in many ways society will mirror those in power and that has become a reality in our Indigenous communities where colonial systems of governance have been imposed.

This has created division amongst Indigenous Nations and the people within those Nations. There needs to be a common ground and goal for everyone to want to work toward.

I do not have enough room to speak to all the role models I am blessed to have in my life, but I will speak to a few.

My dad is about to celebrate 25 years

as Chief and one of the main reasons he has been Chief this long is because of his leadership abilities. There have been years of hard work and sacrifice to make my Nation

what it is today. Nothing happens overnight.

With being in leadership for that many years comes trials, triumphs but also stability. With constant overturn of leader-

ship comes instability. A lot of work can be undone in one term of defective leadership.

I also see how a lot of my dad's leadership skills have come from his mother, my Kungsi Rose. My dad was raised by his grandparents due to impacts the Residential School System had on our peoples' parenting skills and lifestyle choices.

Despite all she endured she overcame that and what I see now since my grandmother's passing is that she was the glue in our family and Nation. She was the backbone and matriarch and things have not been the same since she passed.

I have noticed a divide since many of our elders have passed in the past few years, but we must continue to figure it out together for them.

My papa OC also passed away. These were leaders in our communities. The work does not go unnoticed. He worked hard navigating the colonial world facing discrimination to trailblaze a path breaking down barriers and stereotypes so more people can come through.

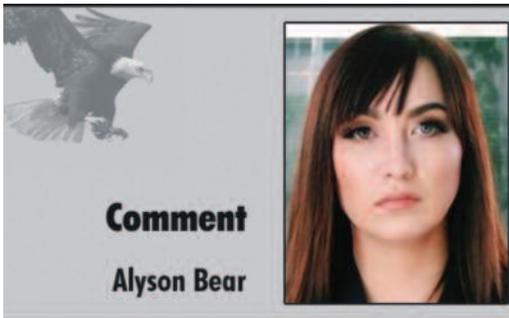
That is true leadership and that is what I see my dad doing, building a future for generations to come so that when that day comes where he grows old, we are not left with nothing.

I have been fortunate to witness many great people including my grandma Ruth and my mom work within both the Catholic and Public school divisions, working tireless hours helping as many families and students as possible.

I watch my mother's dedication to our family and our community. She's there every day for the youth as the principal for Charles Red Hawk Elementary.

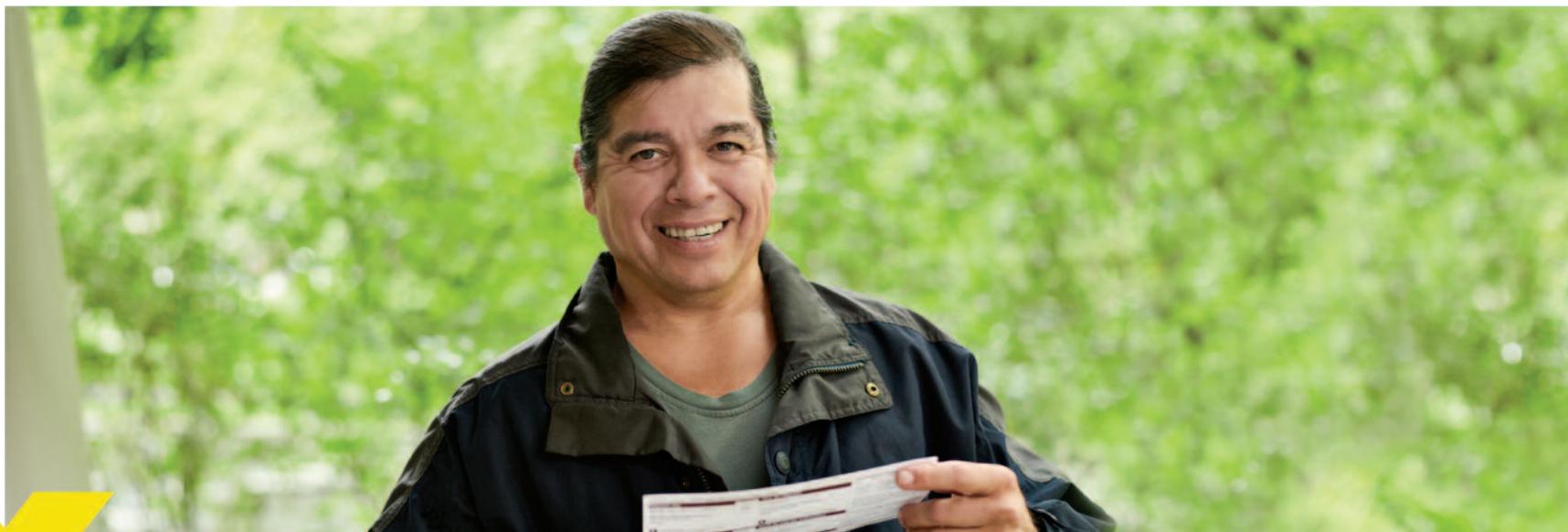
From all of this my main takeaway is that the answer is not in being divided by difference in perspectives but coming together on common grounds for how the best outcome can be achieved to benefit everyone as a whole.

This is what true leadership looks like to me. This comes from our inherent Indigenous values and laws of, honesty, wisdom, courage, respect, truth, humility and love.



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Métis student honoured for outstanding research

By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

Adam McInnes, a biomedical engineering student at the University of Saskatchewan is being recognized for research that could one day impact millions of lives.

McInnes, a Métis student, was recently awarded the prestigious Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship, \$150,000 over three years, for demonstrating excellence in research at a Canadian university. His research is looking at promoting tissue growth for 3D printing of artificial organs that may be used for transplants.

"I don't know if it's really sunk in yet, to be honest," McInnes said about receiving the Vanier. "It was quite a shock, a good shock."

More specifically, McInnes is looking at two different proteins that the body finds favourable to work with, and putting them together. He hopes, by putting them together, they will complement each other's strengths and reduce the drawbacks – creating a protein that will degrade slower and have improved biocompatibility. His PhD research will focus on printing this protein into a scaffold that he can then attempt to grow tissues with.

"It sounds complicated, but to me it's rather straightforward," he laughs.

The kernel to work in tissue engineering was planted at a young age, he said, about 13 or 14, when he saw a program about the Vacanti mouse (aka ear mouse), a laboratory mouse that appeared to have a human ear on its back. It was an early proof of concept that



Dr. Adam McInnes was honoured with a blanket this summer at Back to Batoche by MN-S President Glen McCallum and Richard Quintal, the CEO of the MN-S Secretariat. He was awarded a Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship earlier this year for his research into promoting tissue growth for use in 3D printing of artificial organs. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

showed McInnes what the possibilities were in science.

Now McInnes is working towards making a significant contribution to regenerative medicine, which has the potential to be a multi-billion-dollar industry.

"This larger field (of regenerative medicine) is going to revolutionize how we practice medicine. It looks at how we rejuvenate, repair, or even replace damaged tissues in the body," he said.

"It can get into organ transplantation, hypothetically being able to grow a liver or kidney. That's the eventual hope."

McInnes also said several other applications are possible, including in pharmaceutical research for developing and testing new drugs.

"If this works, we can get a better understanding during the early phases of these tests, and hopefully help the drug development process."

When he's not working to revolutionize contemporary medicine, McInnes is involved with the Métis Nation-

Saskatchewan (MN-S) as the President of the Métis Local 126. Some of their current efforts include applying for different academic grants, a housing grant for Métis people in Saskatoon, and starting a 4-H club to teach Métis culture to kids.

"I didn't grow up around that cul-

ture or community, so I'm trying to learn more about my culture, who I am, and where I belong within the Métis community," he said.

"Not just as a scientist, but as a human being, I think I have an obligation to be a role model and help the next generation."



Provincial Métis Housing Corporation

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CALL FOR MEMBERS OF THE MN-S HOUSING STRATEGY INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATION PANEL

The Provincial Métis Housing Corporation (PMHC) is in the process of developing an MN-S Independent Adjudication Panel (MN-S IAP) for the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan Housing Strategy.

PMHC is looking for five (5) qualified Métis citizens to be members of the MN-S Independent Adjudication Panel (MN-S IAP). Members of the MN-S IAP must be of good character, bondable and of the highest integrity, and at least eighteen (18) years of age with an ability to travel.

The MN-S IAP will review and recommend housing applications and proposals submitted through the MN-S Housing Strategy process. We would like the MN-S IAP to be composed of Métis citizens with a strong interest in housing, and/or social issues, and Métis citizens with a financial or administrative background.

PMHC is looking for Métis representation from the North, South and Central Saskatchewan, as well as two representatives from Urban centers. We will be taking applications to December 31, 2019.

To apply please feel free to mail your resume to:

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Alyshea Watson speaks about her experiences as a nursing student in Prince Albert at the ground-breaking for the University of Saskatchewan Prince Albert Campus. (Photo by NC Raine)

Nursing career always the goal

By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

How one arrives in their chosen career can often be the result of a long, winding path of self discoveries and occupational experiments.

For Alyshea Watson, her life's calling was engrained in her from a very early age.

Watson is a fourth-year nursing student at the University of Saskatchewan's nursing program in Prince Albert. She grew up in Witchehan Lake, near Spiritwood. As a young girl, Watson was in and out of hospitals frequently, suffering from stomach-related issues. But the experience imprinted something positive into her.

"When I was in the hospital, when I was younger, I remember the nurses who were looking after me in Spiritwood. I remember two of those nurses being so sweet. When my mom would have to go to work, they would calm me down and carry me around.

"That compassion they showed me made me want to be a nurse," said Watson. "That desire to comfort others was instilled in me from a young age."

Despite being so impacted by the care of others in the hospital, her own journey to become a nurse wasn't direct. She initially took training to be a medical office assistant in Saskatoon, where she worked for seven years.

But while on the waiting list for the nursing program at Saskatchewan Polytechnic, she heard a radio advertisement for the nursing program in Prince Albert. The move north made sense for her.

"I really wanted to go to school and practice in this area," said Watson. "Going to school in Saskatoon was so intimidating – it's so big and doesn't feel like home. So, I was so happy that this program was offered in Prince Albert," she said.

Watson, now married and proud mother of a young girl, is only a few small steps away from making her career goals a reality. She is passionate about educating and promoting both health and culture.

"I want there to be Cree classes as an elective in our nursing program. Here in the North, there are so many reserves around here with Cree and Dene speaking people," said Watson.

"I think it would be so beneficial for nursing students to learn the basics on how to talk with First Nations patients."

With the University of Saskatchewan expanding their campus in Prince Albert next year, Watson hopes that it brings about more positive impacts in healthcare for northern communities. Since 2007, the number of nurses working in Saskatchewan has increased by almost 30 per cent, with more incentives for nurses to be placed in rural and remote parts of the province. Watson hopes she can contribute to that growth.

"I really want to help First Nations communities," she said. "I want to go in and work with young populations, do immunizations, and promote healthy lifestyles with them. I'm so excited about the promotion and education side of nursing."

When it comes to role models, Watson cites her mom and sisters as the hard working, selfless people that she looks up to. She even credits the two nurses who had such influence over her life when she was a child. Watson doesn't think of herself as a role model yet, but is likely on the way to having a similar impact on many other young people's lives.

"I am finally working in a community setting that I'm excited about, where I get to educate other people. I'm definitely where I want to be now."

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Mercredi leading fight against HIV, AIDS in Sask.

By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

The HIV and AIDS epidemic in Saskatchewan remains one of the province's most critical issues.

Saskatchewan has the highest HIV diagnosis rate in the country, and it's estimated that 30 per cent of people with HIV in the province are unaware they've contracted the virus.

Invaluable are those in the province, therefore, who have dedicated their lives to help educate and support those with HIV and AIDS.

Jason Mercredi, executive director of AIDS Saskatoon, is one of those people working to make a difference.

Mercredi, who is from La Ronge, worked in youth outreach before being recruited by AIDS Saskatoon seven years ago. His desire to work in this particular field came from a personal encounter while growing up.

"I had someone who I grew up with living with HIV, and I thought it was pretty messed up that (it) had happened to someone our age. In a First World country, that really shouldn't be happening," said Mercredi.

"We see so much injustice, and the discrimination is quite heavy with folks who have HIV and addictions. That's really what propelled me," he said.

Mercredi has served as executive director for the past two years, during which time he said he's starting to see some positive shifts in the attitudes towards AIDS and addictions.

"Harm education is becoming much more accepted. I don't know if it's being implemented



Jason Mercredi at the Pride Parade in Saskatoon, representing safe practices. (Photo courtesy Jason Mercredi)

correctly in every place, but we're seeing places like the Health Authority really try to embrace harm reduction, which is great," he said.

One of the most important upcoming developments in Saskatoon, of which Mercredi has been a leader, is the soon-to-be opened safe consumption site in the west side of Saskatoon, approved by Health Canada in July 2019. AIDS Saskatoon will offer its current services when they move into the facility this November, and will open the safe consumption site in the new year, which will be the first of its kind in the province.

"We think we're going to have one of the best sites and models in Canada. We're really going to make sure we're doing our best to get people connected with care," he said.

"This is a public health issue; we have people dying. The time to act like (safe consumption sites) are a matter of opinion is over. They are a scientific fact, they work."

While Mercredi objects to personally taking credit for these decidedly significant developments in Saskatoon, he recognizes that progress occurs when putting Indigenous people in positions to succeed.

"I think our success as an agency shows the need to make sure we have Indigenous people in positions of leadership," he said.

"Indigenous leadership is going to be key in moving the need forward in any societal issues. When you have Indigenous leaders, things seem to happen in a good way."

'Indian Oprah' offers comfort for cancer patients

By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

"I just know I was kept alive to help other people. God put me here. I'll do whatever I can to be there for people and give them hope."

It's hard to imagine anyone being more positive in the face of adversity and suffering than Terri Hansen-Gardiner.

The retired, but-not-so-retired, healthcare worker has essentially created a one-of-a-kind position for herself in the province, travelling from community to community, speaking with Indigenous people who have been diagnosed with cancer. Or sometimes just being a shoulder for someone who is struggling.

"I told the Cancer Agency, 'I will be your Walmart greeter'," Hansen-Gardiner laughed.

"Indigenous people, they need someone. They need an Indigenous face, someone standing there for them."

Hansen-Gardiner is able to provide such understanding support because she herself is a cancer survivor.

Two years after starting a job at the Saskatoon Health Region, she found a lump in her breast. After being diagnosed and going through chemotherapy, feeling "horribly sick", she noticed something that deeply impacted her: Indigenous people, particularly elders who may not speak English, were sometimes lacking understanding and support.

"I saw the need when I was going through the Cancer Centre. I saw elders crying, and not understanding. The system is just so cold when you first walk in," she said. "Being diagnosed is so scary. But you feel better when you have someone there to talk to."

Hansen-Gardiner is now cancer free and the province is better for it. In 2014, she told the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency (SCA) that Indigenous people need a cancer navigator, someone who speaks Cree, who is able to help them

through their cancer journey.

With her expenses covered by the SCA, Hansen-Gardiner spends the summer travelling to communities in the 'cancer bus.' She said last summer she visited 30 communities in the North and spoke with around 3,500 people in either English or Cree.

"There's not one community that we were not well received," she said. "This service is so needed in the North. It's the only service like this that people get, so we're going to keep going, whether I get paid or not."

"They see me and I tell them how sick I was, and it helps them."

There seems to be no slowing down for the woman affectionately dubbed as 'Indian Oprah' (she says due to her love of talking to people and clothes, but this writer believes it probably has more to do with her natural gift for connecting with people). Even after breaking her leg this last summer, she didn't stop travelling the province and "hobbling around on crutches".

Hansen-Gardiner said that while Indigenous people often have good emotional support systems in their communities, it's the financial support she sees as still lacking.

"What the province needs most up north is financial help for those with cancer. No one should ever have to miss chemotherapy treatment because they have no money. That is not acceptable."

Healthy or sick, on one leg or two, Hansen-Gardiner is determined to continue improving the lives of as many people as she can and continue to be one of the province's most unsung heroes.

"I'll continue no matter what. It makes my day when I know I made a person sleep better at night because I talked to them. I'll probably still be doing this when I'm 80."



Terri Hansen-Gardiner travels the province offering comfort for Indigenous people dealing with cancer.

Single mother of seven determined to live healthy lifestyle

**By Penny Smoke
For Eagle Feather News**

Living a positive lifestyle is not just a saying for Carmen Fourstar.

The 37-year-old, single mother of seven from the Wahpeton Dakota Nation near Prince Albert, says it is a way of life.

Starting from a point where she had never given health a second thought throughout her entire life, she is now making sure she is able to fit in a daily workout no matter the time.

“It took me losing myself to find myself again,” said Fourstar. “Throughout all my first six pregnancies I never took care of myself, pre or post-natal, then in 2014 my marriage ended and I lost my dad. I wasn’t taking care of myself.”

Hitting her pregnancy weight last year opened her eyes to the unhealthy lifestyle she was living and showing her own children.

Fourstar decided it was time to take care of herself, with her children now being her biggest motivation.

She began to hit the gym. Fourstar said she never relies on a weight scale for the definition of her progress, but rather using and documenting her progress with

photos on her social media.

“I don’t define my weight loss by a scale, because your body can fluctuate, I use my photos to keep me motivated, and I am losing a lot of inches and it is progress,” said Fourstar. “Last week I finally fit into a size small! I was like wow!”

Fourstar admits that over the years she has tried diets and exercise programs to help her lose weight but it wasn’t until recently she began to really take her new exercise program seriously after seeing the results.

Her main goal is to see her belly button, something she says she hopes to happen in the near future.

Fourstar’s children are also helping her by supporting and motivating her to get in her workouts and eating healthy, motivation that is also catching on to other family members.

“Carmen is always helping me with different workouts for pain in my back,” said Amber Waditaka, Fourstars younger sister.

“She never forces her new lifestyle on anyone but she is encouraging me to get healthier.”

For Fourstar, she shares her positive message with others.



After seven kids, Carmen Fourstar admits she didn’t take care of herself pre or post-natal. That has all changed now with regular exercise. She doesn’t watch her weight though, she uses photographs to keep her on track. (Photo supplied)

“It all about mindset. Anyone can do it, you have to keep your mind in the game. If I can do it so can you.”



Carmen Fourstar decided to take control of her life and self after the passing of her father. Her seven kids motivate her every day on her healthy journey. (Photo supplied)

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Ocean Man Chief inspired by mother's leadership



Ocean Man First Nation Chief Connie Big Eagle learned her leadership skills from her mom Laura, who was Ocean Man's first Chief. (Photo supplied)

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

A First Nation Chief credits her role to her late mother, a woman who paved a way for her community.

Ocean Man Chief Connie Big Eagle has been serving her community for 10 years.

She was first elected as Chief in 2003, then ran for council after her term was over. Altogether, she served 16 years as a community leader. She learned the qualities of what it's like to be a leader from her family's matriarch, her late mother Laura who was their community's first chief.

"I was always with her whether it be work or school," said Big Eagle. "She would always work. She was a workaholic.

"When she wasn't working, she would use her (employment insurance) to upgrade herself in some form, like take training or educate herself in some way."

She remembers when she was five-years-old, her mom took a teaching assistant job during the winter months in Whitebear First Nation, which is the neighbouring community to Ocean Man. In the summer-time, her mother would take classes which led to a teaching certificate.

All the while, she was on local committees and eventually ran for council where she served for several years.

"I would always be with her. I saw her at the table speaking and advocating for the people of Whitebear," she said. "She ended up becoming the head negotiator to re-establish Ocean Man."

After a successful negotiation, Ocean Man First Nation was re-established in 1990 which resulted in Big Eagle's late mother becoming the first elected chief, a job she held until the day she passed away in 2001.

"I had come home from working in Winnipeg for the Christmas holidays as (my mother's) health wasn't well," Big Eagle said.

"I phoned my boss and (asked for) a leave of absence which he granted me (and which) turned into a two-year leave."

Big Eagle stayed to look after her mother who still served as Chief and she drove her mom to her meetings and took notes for her mother.

"We would have wonderful conversations on our way home," she said "I remember one time I said to my mom 'why don't you guys do this' thinking I could solve the world's problems. And she said, 'if you think it's so easy, why don't you become the chief', never thinking that I would ever. Now that I am, I see how right my mom was because there's so many factors to consider."

Big Eagle's late mother was her role model throughout her life and she is fortunate to have been by her mother's side through it all.

"There's always comparisons. Some people would say 'oh, you remind me of your mother' which I take as a compliment. And other times, if I make a decision that displeases someone, they would be like 'oh, your mother would have let us or she wouldn't have decided that'," she said.

"My mom was awesome. Me and my mom were two different people and we definitely have different approaches to leadership. But I can see similarities as well. My mom led with her heart."

Big Eagle is a role model within her community as an Indigenous woman leader and she encourages other women to not be afraid to be a leader.

"You can't please everyone so just do the right thing," she said.

Big Eagle has two biological siblings and many foster siblings as her late mother had adopted so many.

Ocean Man's band list consists of over 555 people and their on-reserve population is over 200. Ocean Man First Nation is located in southeastern, Saskatchewan.

Young Chief welcomes advice from Elders

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

Making history by being the youngest chief to serve his community, the Chief of Cowessess First Nation is paving the way to success in his role as a leader.

Cadmus Delorme was first elected chief in 2016 and was re-elected this year to serve his community.

"It's the biggest honour I have to date," he said. "You lead your people with your heart and you make decisions with your mind with experience and consensus."

Delorme said some of his community's elders complement his leadership as a breath of fresh air and just what his community needed to lead them into the direction they are going into.

"When I hear that, it really lifts me up knowing that and I'm really honoured in what I do," he said.

Delorme follows the words from the elders in Cowessess and others who have made an impact in his life. He credits their wisdom that has helped him to be the person he is today by respecting their words.

"One of the things that I know that is consistent on the advice I receive is 'make sure the next generation does not have to endure what we did,'" he said.

Delorme recalls back when he was in Grade 12, the chief back then took him and another student to a chief's assembly where he sat next to his chief. That moment made such a big impact on him at the time that he knew whatever he did with his life, he wanted to come home to help his people.

As part of his journey after high school, Delorme excelled in the sport of golf. He competed in the province and nationally. His network increased incredibly and he became acquainted with a lot of people.

Delorme constantly worked and eventually made it into university. Throughout his studies, he would think of how he would apply the education he learned to his community. He completed his post-secondary education in business administration from the First Nations University of Canada in Regina and had also obtained a Certificate in Hospitality, Tourism, Gaming and Entertainment.

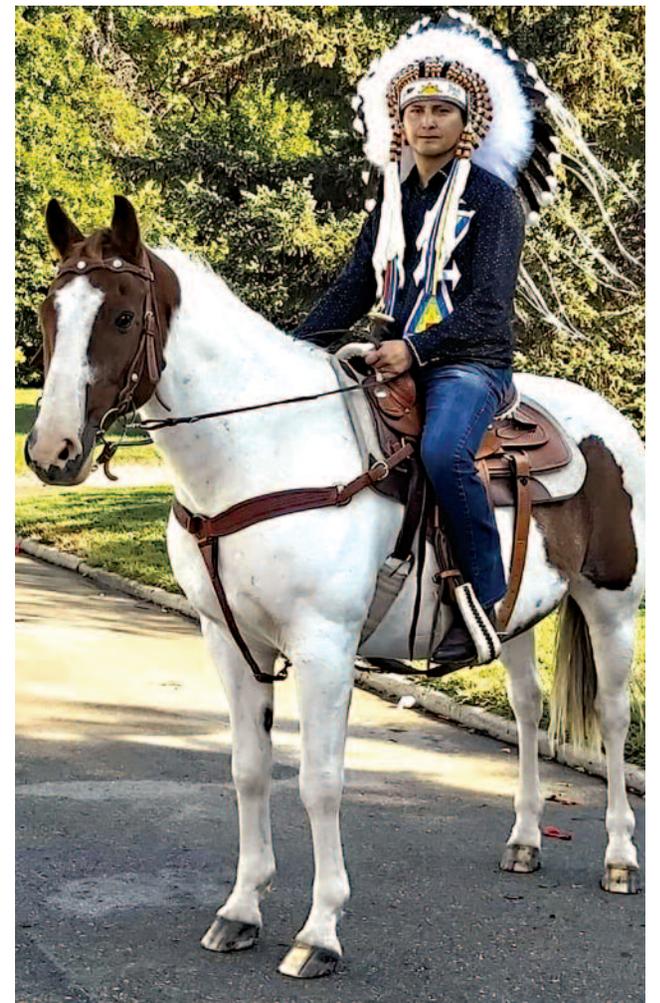
He continued on to receive his master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Regina's Johnson Shoyama School of Public Policy. He decided then that he wanted to be the chief of his reserve one day.

"To be a good leader, you've got to have empathy. You've got to be open to understanding the hurt and the experience that some of the people experienced," he said.

"You have to be a motivator and the energy in the room. You need to have the courage ... and have the tools to make sure you make good choices. The last (advice) is to leap in to be a leader."

Since his time as chief began, Delorme, along with his council members, have begun construction on a new transition home for young girls in long-term care with social services.

October, Delorme announced the launch of a so-



Cowessess First Nation Chief Cadmus Delorme says his mom Charlotte and his late dad Bruce were integral role models in his life. (Photo supplied)

lar energy project which will generate 400 kilowatts of solar energy.

• Continued on Page 17

NexGen aids northern students

By Penny Smoke
For Eagle Feather News

The cost of being a post-secondary student can be daunting, so NexGen Energy Ltd. has been helping northern Saskatchewan students with their education endeavors.

Third year commerce student Jonathan DesRoches, 25, is one of those students. He attends the Edwards School of Business at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon.

"I would 100 per cent not be able to attend school this year if it wasn't for NexGen and their financial help," said DesRoches who is originally from the Clearwater Dene First Nation.

"Coming from a low-income family, being able to attend university is ... yeah, a dream. I want to make sure it becomes a reality."

DesRoches grew up in the northern community of La Loche, located approximately 600 km northwest of Saskatoon.

"I want to show the kids from my community that we can do these jobs, that we can get them."

He is a fluent Dene speaker and is no stranger to the bush, he said. Having the connection to the youth helped him in

his employment as a summer student and eventually the opportunity to go to attend university in the city.

"The course load is somewhat heavy considering the program. I'm taking economics and statistics classes, but I think that's what you would expect in a business course," said DesRoches.

"But I see this challenge as an opportunity to make my dreams come true. You know it's a stepping stone to eventually where I will be where I want to be."

DesRoches tuition, books and living allowance for his program are all covered by the bursary.

NexGen Energy Ltd was founded in 2011 and is based out of Vancouver with a headquarters in Saskatoon. They have been working within the Athabasca Basin at the Arrow I mine since 2014.

This bursary is available for all northern students who are attending a post-secondary institution. Some of the current areas of study range from geology, business and even culinary school. Each being based on financial need and case by case basis giving \$120,000 in bursaries for post-secondary students this year.



Alexis St Pierre, a third year Geology student and bursary recipient, receives a presentation from NexGen President and CEO Leigh Curyer. (Photo supplied)

Over the years NexGen Energy has been engaging with local communities, sponsoring initiatives like daily breakfast programs, summer student employment as well as sponsoring local sports teams.

"It's all about our community focus on health, wellness, economics and education," said Leigh Curyer, President and CEO of NexGen.

"What we are doing is not charity. It's really just helping put down avenues that they have to go down themselves, they still have to get themselves there we want to help create those avenues," said Curyer.

It is those community engagements that is attracting local talent like third year student and new mother, Alexis St Pierre, a third year Geology student, who is also a recipient.

"The criteria was just perfect for

me," said St Pierre.

"I am from the North I wanted to help benefit my community and it takes so much of the financial weight off on me."

Being a new mother, St Pierre wanted to stay close to home and be able to raise her child while getting her education.

"It makes it so much easier to focus and be motivated to do what I need to do," said St Pierre.

"You can tell NexGen is really engaged in making a positive impact in the community. I have learned a lot working with them from geology to administration.

"They have given me the chance to find out what interests me. Being a new mom it's nice to be close to home, because that is really important to me."

Parents were Delorme's role models

• Continued from Page 16

Cowessess First Nation partnered with Sask. Polytech to create a new digital mapping project to help first emergency responders to locate reserves faster.

Earlier this spring, Delorme announced a partnership with Regina's Autism Resource Centre to create a three-year project called the Building Block Program. This project will be based on ground-breaking research on exploring autism in Indigenous communities – a first of its kind in Canada.

Last winter, Chief Delorme announced his community, among others, will look into regenerating Indigenous agriculture under a 10-year expansion plan.

Additionally, Delorme's leadership announced earlier this summer that his community has partnered with the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina to revitalize a gravesite on the First Nations community, a \$70,000 investment.

There are more accomplishments under Delorme's belt as a leader and he hopes to continue to pave more opportunities for his community with the guidance of his council members.

"One of the best things about being chief is having a supportive council. When you have a supportive council, you tend to drive more," he said.

Delorme credits his mom Charlotte and his late dad Bruce as being integral role models in his life.



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Mike Linklater hangs up sneakers, sets sights on new life challenges

By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

Over the past decade, Michael Linklater's name has become virtually synonymous with athletic excellence in Saskatchewan.

Linklater's Saskatoon 3x3 basketball team was ranked among the top in the world for several years, he won a CEBL championship in the inaugural season with the Saskatchewan Rattlers, and he has hosted countless camps and speaking appointments to help motivate young people in athletics, culture, and life.

As of this August, Linklater has retired from basketball. But his role as a community torchbearer isn't going anywhere.

"It was time for a change. My body feels great, and I love playing the game, but the time that it requires in order to stay competitive is not something I want to sacrifice right now," Linklater told Eagle Feather News.

"There are a lot of other things I want to give my time to, one being my family. As well as some initiatives that require very passionate people."

Linklater is wasting no time transitioning from the court to the community.

He was recently elected as a councillor at his home Thunderchild First Nation, which he will serve for a four-year term.

"I am really liking the leadership role and being able to sit at these decision-making tables that are making a greater impact on a larger scale," he said.

Linklater was also recently approached by the Saskatoon Public Schools Foundation to sit as co-chair for a fundraising initiative that will be raising dollars for a literacy program for inner city youth.

In late September Linklater was also elected for a three-year term to the AthletesCAN national board, which is an athletes-run organization that provides a voice for Canadian national team athletes, and who develop leaders to influence sport policy and culture.

"As Indigenous people, our ancestors had their identity stripped from them and to this day we are still clawing and fighting to get our way of life back," he said.

"So, it's extremely important for us to make sure we are connected with our communities and culture. It's our inherent right to be proud of our spiritual identity and culture."

But Linklater still has some basket-



Michael Linklater has retired after an amazingly successful basketball career. Now this role model is onto community service as a Thunderchild First Nation Councillor and he is participating in several campaigns, including bringing a world class outdoor basketball court to inner-city Saskatoon. (Photo Supplied)

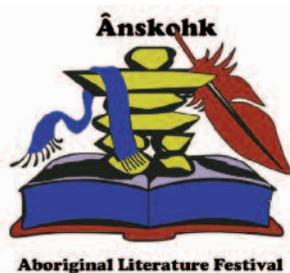
ball left in him. His athletic career has taken him all over the world but had humble beginnings on a simple outdoor court in Saskatoon. As such, Linklater is one of three leaders behind the "Hoist the Hoops" initiative, which hopes to bring a marquee outdoor basketball court to the Riversdale/Pleasant Hill area of Saskatoon.

This relentless pursuit to better his

community comes from a responsibility he feels to constructively use the stature he gained from sport.

"I think I'm someone that a lot of people over the years have looked towards," said Linklater. "I take that very seriously knowing that there's younger generations looking up to me."

"I want to make sure I'm leading by example."



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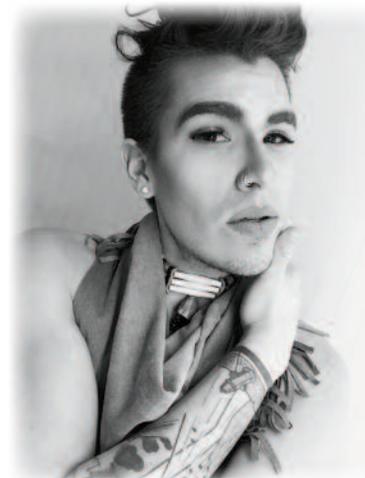
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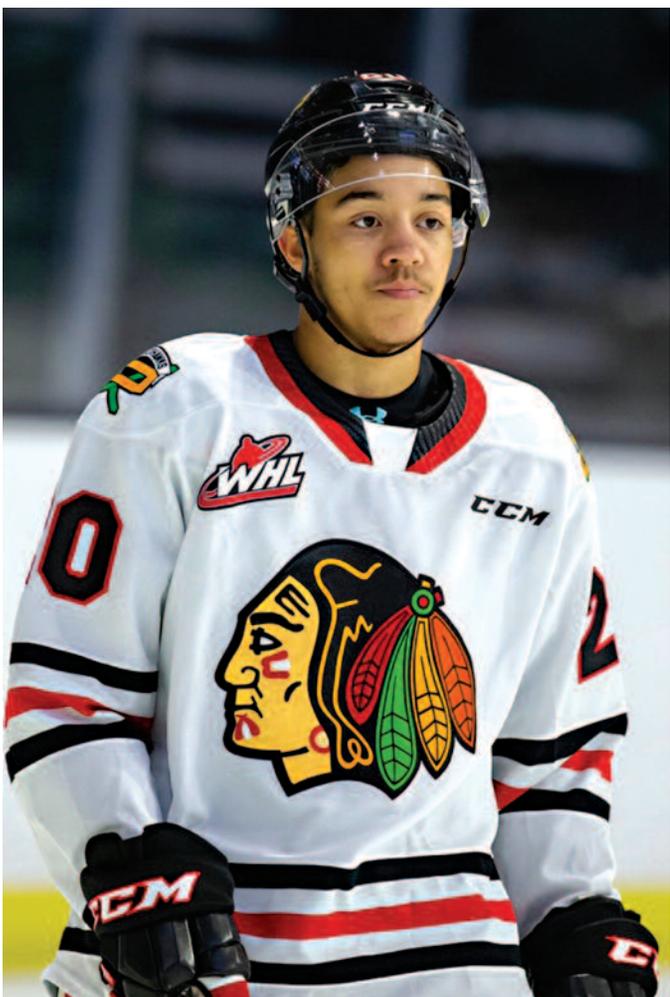
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Kishaun Gervais plays left wing for the Portland Winterhawks and hopes to be drafted by an NHL team.

(Photo credit: Chris Mast)

Kishaun Gervais has NHL dreams

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

A young man from Keeseekoose First Nation is hoping to make it to the NHL or play professional hockey.

Kishaun Gervais, 17, lives and breathes everything about hockey.

The moment he first held a hockey stick in his hands at the age of three, his passion for the sport was ignited and he has played ever since.

"I train every day. I work out and practice hockey," he said. "As soon as I was done high school, I knew exactly what I wanted to do. I wanted to take college courses and get my business degree, but my main goal was to become a professional hockey player.

"Knowing that I'm a few steps away from the NHL or European pro hockey, it's an amazing feeling."

Gervais graduated from high school in Yorkton last year and is now playing in the Western Hockey League in Portland, Oregon for the Portland Winterhawks.

"In bantam hockey, I ended up getting drafted by Portland. I worked hard as I could to make the team and I ended up making it this year," he said.

"I knew I didn't have a solidified spot, so I had

to work really hard every single day. It was a big weight off my shoulders because I've been trying to make the team for the past three years. I'm pushing every day to be a regular in the lineup."

His experience in Portland is going great so far but it was an adjustment that he had to get used to.

"It's definitely different. It's a different culture and a big city," he said. "I'm about 20 hours away from home but it's nice here because we have a lot of guys from Saskatchewan on the team so that's good and it makes it feel like home."

Gervais will be playing in Oregon until next spring and hopes that his performance in the upcoming months can lead to him being drafted into the NHL or another professional league.

"I'm hoping to get an NHL or pro contract. This year is my draft year but if not, I'm still eligible next year," Gervais said.

Gervais hopes his drive for hockey inspires others to follow their passion for the sport.

"Work hard even if people say you can't do it. Just believe and find yourself. Surround yourself with positive people," he said.

"There's a lot of people who may try bring you down. For me, if you work hard every day, you will be able to pursue your dreams."

9-ball champ aims to own the table at worlds

By Kerry Benjoe
For Eagle Feather News

Haydar-Ali Cappo is aiming to be the next Junior World 9-Ball champion.

In August, he secured his shot at the title when he became the Canadian Junior champion.

It's the 16-year-old's second time competing internationally, which is an accomplishment in itself considering he only began playing the game last year.

Cappo lives on the Muscowpetung Saulteaux First Nation and is a Grade 11 student at the Chief Paskwa Education Centre.

To compete at an elite level requires him to practice every day, which is challenging.

Cappo and his dad travel to Regina as often as possible so he can practice, but because of his age he can only play until 9 p.m. in most establishments.

In comparison, his competition practices between five and 10 hours daily to prepare for the world championship. Knowing this disadvantage motivates him to focus even harder on his game.

"I want to be the world champion, so I can show other Indigenous people that it can be done," said Haydar.

"Maybe someone will say, 'Hey if he can do it so can I.' It can be anything it doesn't have to be pool."

Initially, he played 8-ball, but decided to learn 9-ball strictly for the competition aspect, and has grown to love it.

"It's like playing chess, you have to always plan out your next three shots," he said.

Last year, determination and natural

talent earned him a second-place spot at the Canadian Junior 9-ball Championship, as well as an invite to the World Pool-Billiard Associations Annual Junior Championship in Moscow, Russia.

Although he didn't do as well as he would have liked in Moscow, he did catch the eye of an elite pool coach from New York. The two communicate via video, which has helped improve Cappo's game.

The only thing standing between him and the title are the funds to get to the competition in Cyprus, Europe next month.

Sponsorship is next to impossible, so his family is doing what they did last year and that is raising the money themselves. They have created the Haydar's World Championship Bid GoFundMe page.

Despite the out-of-pocket costs, Cappo's father Kamao believes it's worth it.

"I told him I would do whatever I can to support him as long as he stayed away from negative influences," said his father, Kamao.

The first thing he did was to purchase a pool cue from a pawn shop, which Cappo took to Moscow.

This year, things are different because not only is Cappo experienced and professionally coached, but he is focused.

He said meditation has helped him stay balanced because in addition to pool he also boxes, plays ball, runs cross-country and helps his dad operate a youth horse program.



Haydar-Ali Cappo is the reigning Canadian Junior 9-Ball Champion and is aiming to raise funds to compete for a world title in Cyprus next month.



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