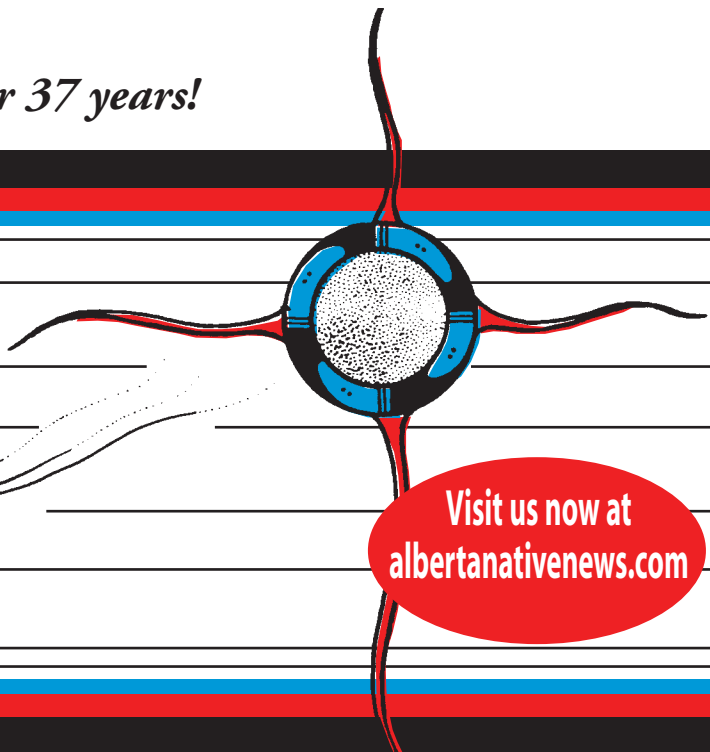


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Red Dress Day Rally honours missing and murdered Indigenous women

By Jake Cardinal, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

(ANNews) - May 5 was Red Dress Day - A day in Canada to raise awareness for the disproportionate number of murdered and missing Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ (MMIW) people in the country.

Red Dress Day was started 11 years ago by Jaime Black, a Metis artist, and it began as an installation art project based on an aesthetic response to this critical national issue. Black wanted to raise awareness for the nearly 1,200 missing and murdered Indigenous woman and girls in Canada (It's important to note that this number is believed to be much higher).

Now the day is observed on a national scale with marches and vigils held across the country.

A march and rally took place in Downtown Edmonton Wednesday May 5, with hundreds of people gathering to support Red Dress Day. Judith Gale, organizer of the event, said, "It's awesome to have the people here in unity and with one voice."

"That's to honour our missing and murdered, exploited Indigenous people of Canada."

It was an emotional time to say the least.

A stage was set up at the rally for people to speak about their friends and family members who were either missing or murdered. Many people cried, many hugs were given, and many people spoke.

"I love all the families that have been sharing already and the beautiful names they have been bringing forth. Those are the names that we need to speak today because we're here for them, to honour them, and to remember them," said Gale.

The rally also acted as a charity event as the organizers were giving away food hampers and clothing. Wati Rahmat, an MMIW ally and member of the Muslim Initiative called Sister's Dialogue, said, "We collected food items as well as toiletries and baby food."

The donations were coordinated by Edmonton Foodbank, the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights, Sister's Dialogue, the Bearclan and Water Warriors.

Food and clothing items were donated to the event from Edmontonians and were free for anyone to take. "It's open to anyone. We don't ask what their background is. Whoever wants to come and take a hamper can grab one," said Wati.

At the peak of the event, there were approximately 400 people in attendance.

Gale said of the amount of people, "I had ordered 300 masks and unfortunately they were all gone right away and there's still people who didn't get some."

While Alberta announced new COVID-19 restrictions the day before, the event practiced social distancing and followed all protocols.

"This is our third walk," said Gale. "Last year unfortunately, I let COVID get in the way and we didn't do the walk. And I really regretted it all year long. So this year I was very adamant that we do this because we need to come together as Indigenous people."

Gale continued, "We need to hug one another and say our loved ones' names to honour and remember them. I'm very happy that so many families are sharing."

"It's a wonderful day to be Indigenous," she added.

Finally, when asked about why she does this work, Gale pointed down to her bright, red ribbon skirt. On it was an art piece depicting two Native women.

"This is my sister who lay in the morgue for three months with a tag on her toe that read, 'Jane Doe.' 40 years ago nobody was looking for missing Indigenous women. That was 40 years ago. And still



May 5 was National Red Dress Day. By wearing red, we can call back the missing spirits of our brothers and sisters so we can honour them in a good way, explained Edmonton event organizer Judith Gale. This event included a walk down Jasper Avenue, concluding in Beaver Hills House Park. An open mic was available for all to share, and food hampers were distributed. Photos by Paula E. Kirman.

to this day it seems to be the same thing. There's been 40 years of this in my family alone."

"Enough is enough, Canada. You have to stop the ongoing genocide. You have to stop the missing and murdered exploitation of our Indigenous people."



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EPL appoints Elder Jo-Ann Saddleback

Elder Jo-Ann Saddleback from the Saddle Lake Cree First Nation is the Edmonton Public Library’s (EPL) 2021 Elder in Residence and she will be the first Elder in Residence to maintain residency in PÎYESÎW W SK HIKAN (Thunderbird House) at Stanley A. Milner Library.

EPL’s Elder in Residence program launched in 2017 as a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and acknowledgement of the City of Edmonton’s Urban Aboriginal Declaration. EPL values, recognizes and depends on the Elder in Residence to support its efforts to provide knowledge sharing and access for all Edmontonians around education, understanding and dialogue as it relates to reconciliation.

“We are honoured to have Elder Saddleback as EPL’s Elder in Residence,” said Pilar Martinez, Chief Executive Officer at EPL. “As a highly regarded Elder, cultural educator and artist, who has provided tremendous guidance to EPL over the years, Elder Saddleback brings Indigenous wisdom, invaluable knowledge and lived experience that will guide and support EPL’s efforts to provide meaningful services and programming to our customers.”

Elder Saddleback served as Elder Consultant during the extensive community engagement for the Indigenous Gathering Space at the Stanley A. Milner Library. Together, with Elder Jerry Saddleback, she blessed Milner Library and the gathering space as PÎYESÎW W SK HIKAN (Thunderbird House) with Grand Chief Willie Littlechild, Senator Patty LaBoucane, Mayor Don Iveson, Councillor Scott McKeen, MJ Belcourt and Chair of the EPL Board Dr. Fern Snart attending the pipe ceremony. She was also a member of the Stanley A. Milner Library Indigenous Art Selection Committee. As a cultural advisor, Elder Saddleback serves as Elder for the City of Edmonton Indigenous Framework development, and Elder for the City of Edmonton Indigenous Artist in Residence Program.

“I am here to bring our stories to the Library; let it not be supposed that we did not have written word because we do,” said Elder Saddleback. “We have a profound kinship to written text through Cree syllabics, which contain all of our language, all of our beliefs, and all of our stories. This is why some of them are on the windows of PÎYESÎW W SK HIKAN depicting the name of the space. It is through stories that we find these shared experiences on which we can build on and find kinship.”

Elder Saddleback will serve a one-year term supporting EPL throughout 2021. During her residency, she aims to facilitate inclusive connections between Edmonton’s Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Her initiatives include: inviting the Indigenous Elder and Knowledge Keeper community of Edmonton into PÎYESÎW W SK HIKAN to conduct ceremony and to share cultural stories; offering her wisdom through group and one-on-one meetings with customers; inspiring Indigenous people to use the Library; and advising EPL staff on their work as they continue to develop Indigenous services and classes and events.

Elder Saddleback will be working from PÎYESÎW W SK HIKAN three days a week to facilitate meetings with customers. However due to current health guidelines, one-on-one and group sessions will take place virtually. For more information, visit epl.ca/elder-in-residence.

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History will tell the tale

By Xavier Kataquapit

The Covid19 virus does not seem to be letting up in our cities and across Canada. There seems to be signs that we are moving toward a more manageable situation, at least for first world countries like ours. The situation is not the same elsewhere. In other parts of the world, the situation is bleak and critical in countries like India and many third world places.


It looks like it will be a very long road to herd immunity even as vaccines continue to be administered. Experts are now suggesting that this virus will be around for some time and it will be necessary to have regular booster shots to deal with variants of concern that develop. That is more like we are used to dealing with in seasonal flu vaccinations.

Even though it sometimes seems like we are fighting a losing battle, things are generally looking like they will move slowly back to some kind of normal eventually. However, that normalcy will take a year or more to appear. The process is constantly interrupted because some countries are so eager to start opening things up that it sets everything back to critical danger. Hopefully, we have learned that shutdowns, wearing masks, staying three metres apart and washing hands still stands out as the best way to deal with this virus and any other that might occur. We should not be too eager to take risks that would jeopardize the success we are having in managing this pandemic.


I am very thankful to the federal government, who were lobbied by our Indigenous political leadership across Canada, to make First Nations a priority with vaccinations. Indigenous people across the country and in particular in remote communities are impoverished, crammed into inadequate housing and people made to live in close quarters. It is a situation for a perfect storm of infection outbreaks when a new virus arrives. It is good to know that many lives have been saved with the advocacy of our Indigenous leaders and health workers. I hope that all those who first got vaccines months ago are being monitored so that we have meaningful data on the long-term view when it comes to the vaccines everyone received.

In many conversations I have had with senior citizens they feel that care for the elderly may have been mismanaged. In one way they were given attention for vaccinations but on the other hand many of them were left to the care of private

Continued on page 5



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Treaty 6 & 8 Nations Chiefs criticize flawed Bill C-15

By Jake Cardinal, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Federal Government’s proposed UNDRIP legislation is currently going through the committee process in parliament.

The Bill was created as a way for the Federal Government to bring Canada’s laws more in line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, also known as UNDRIP.

While the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) has been a major contributor to the creation of the legislation, many First Nations do not agree with implementing a federal bill that affects all First Nations in Canada — especially without the free, prior and informed consent of the Treaty Nations.

The Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations condemned the possible legislation, saying they were “extremely disappointed” that the government did not consult with them.

“As Treaty Peoples, we have never given our consent to Canada or the AFN to make decisions for our peoples. The Crown entered into Treaty with our ancestors - The Queen did not make unilateral decisions on who represented our Peoples,” said Treaty 6 Confederacy Grand Chief Vernon Watchmaker.

The confederacy is upset that the 2021 Budget proposes to provide \$31.5 million allocation over two years to create an action plan to implement the legislation.

“The decision to provide funds and work exclusively through the Assembly of First Nations violates every aspect of our Treaty relationship with the Crown,” said the Confederacy.

“AFN does not have a mandate to undertake this work. This organization is to work under direction of the Chiefs, however, increasingly we see them working under the direction of the Government of Canada.”

According to the Confederacy, the Standing Committee in the House of Commons preferred AFN

and other Indigenous partners to speak rather than representatives of their own Nations. “This is wrong. The Treaty Peoples started to organize to appear before the Committee to voice our concerns and at that time, the hearings were stopped.”

“This process has been flawed and continues to be flawed,” said the Confederacy.

Grand Chief Watchmaker said, “Bill-C15 will have a negative impact on our Treaty rights.”

The Confederacy believes that Canada is attempting to change the international nature of their relationship and place Indigenous people into a “domesticated realm.”

“During a time when discussions ought to be about reconciliation, respect, and sovereignty, we’ve reverted back to the government’s old assimilation and undermining tactics.”

“We appeal to the Senate and the members to correct this injustice and not accept Bill C-15,” concluded the Confederacy.

Treaty 8 Grand Chief Arthur Noskey echoes the sentiments of the Treaty 6 Confederacy, by saying that “AFN does not speak on behalf of Treaty 8 and I believe that they are not in tune or in touch with a lot of our grassroots people in understanding the sovereign relationships that we have,” he says. “Because if they did, if they knew that these treaties were sovereign to sovereign agree-ments... why are they there trying to speak on behalf of them?”

“This is 121 years in the making and the question we have is this: once again another suppressive legislation that is going to be interpreted by one side to be able to again restrict and suppress,” he says.

“That is the issue the First Nations have and are concerned about.”

Marlene Poitras, Regional Chief of the AFN in Alberta, also believes that AFN should not be creating legislation on behalf of all First Nations in Canada.

“The AFN is a lobby group. We are there to facilitate the direction as provided by the chiefs in assembly, and that’s our role,” she says.

“It’s not to negotiate and make decisions on behalf of First Nations. It’s the Nations that do that, not the Assembly of First Nations as an assembly.”

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Covid cases soar in Alberta oilsands region

By Jake Cardinal, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

As of May 10, Alberta has reached its highest total of active cases since the pandemic began with 24998 active cases; 705 people are in hospitals and 163 are in ICUs.

There were 21,138 cases at the height of the second COVID-19 wave in December.

The province also has the highest active case rate in Canada, with 570 cases per 100,000 people and the highest ICU rate in the country.

There are outbreaks across the entire province, but the Alberta oilsands and surrounding areas (including Fort McMurray) have been experiencing particular hardship. There are 3749 active cases in the North Zone (as of May 10).

Sixteen oil sand production sites have experienced outbreaks with over 3800 COVID-19 cases being linked to these facilities, according to Alberta Health data. As of May 10, CNRL Horizon has a reported 476 active cases, Syncrude Mildred Lake has 347 active cases and Suncor Base Plant has 133 active cases.

1.5 percent of the Fort McMurray population is infected with COVID, which is the highest rate in Alberta — which ultimately makes it the highest rate in Canada, government data shows.

Because of the growing number of COVID cases in the oilsands, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) in Northern Alberta declared a state of local emergency on Sunday, April 25.

“It’s out of control,” said the Chief of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, Allan Adam. “I am more worried about our health-care system. If that collapses, then all hell breaks loose.”

However, despite the clear correlations between active COVID cases in the Wood Buffalo Region and oilsands production sites, Alberta Premier Jason

Kenney implied that the rising cases in the area were because of Indigenous people.

“The population up there is *disproportionately* Indigenous,” said Kenney.

He then followed up by mentioning “vaccine hesitancy” in the Indigenous population and “extra outreach efforts” done by the government to try and address this.

“We’ve had a much lower age eligibility for vaccination for that First Nations population, and we have done a lot of extra outreach efforts working with the First Nations to address vaccine hesitancy and to make it as convenient as possible in a culturally sensitive way to deliver those vaccines,” said Kenney.

He said that the RMWB also has a large, un-used vaccine supply.

First Nations leaders were quick to challenge the premier. Just 4.5 percent of all COVID cases have been in rural and Indigenous communities; the only workplace outbreaks outside of Fort McMurray have been at oilsands camps and sites; and no schools in the greater Fort McMurray area have experienced outbreaks to date.

Assembly of First Nations Alberta Regional Chief Marlene Poitras said that Premier Kenney’s remarks were derogatory.

“The use of the word ‘disproportionate’ in this context is derogatory and shows the deep roots of white privilege and colonial practices,” stated Poitras.

“There are many areas where Indigenous populations are ‘disproportionately represented’ like prisons, and in having chronic and severe health conditions like diabetes, education, housing, infrastructure, and access to proper health care services,” she said in a statement.

“Where we are not ‘disproportionate’ is our existence as a people living in our traditional territories.”

“The Indigenous communities took measures into our own hands to protect our people,” stated Chief Adam, with rigorous safety measures, travel restrictions and curfews. “Kenney could have done the same, but even after a year, he chose not to. And who does that hurt? The residents of the RMWB.”

Gil McGowan, president of the Alberta Federation of Labour, called on Premier Kenney to shut down work sites with outbreaks across the province, including the oil sands, to get the virus under control.

“This is a recipe for needless infection and needless deaths,” McGowan told media.

Rather than shutting down the sites which have been deemed by the province as essential services, Kenney announced that additional vaccines would be sent to these hot spots. Starting May 2, Alberta’s oilsands companies began providing on-site vaccination clinics to help protect their workers.



History will tell *cont. from p 3*

care homes that prioritized profits over proper care. This should be a wakeup call that our Elders should be cared for in publicly funded homes that are not so concerned about profit. We owe it to our seniors to take the best possible care of them in their golden years.

Many of the elderly people I know also feel that priority for vaccinations should have been as important for those most at risk in public and industrial workspaces. If the argument was that Indigenous communities were a priority because of the potential for spread due to people being close together, why wasn’t the same logic applied to those workers mixing closely in the hundreds every day?

I want to say meegwetch, thanks to all those people

who have had to go to work during this pandemic without having vaccines and putting their lives and the lives of their families at risk. This includes all health workers, miners, foresters, plant workers, workers in grocery industry, those in services and distribution as well as transportation. Those who were obligated to work in public environments should have been prioritized from the start. They are in situations where they are close to many others and that has been the cause of outbreaks over the past many months.

Lock downs work, yet we know that it is impossible to completely lock down mines, plants, industry, distribution centres, grocery stores and transportation. This would never happen as it would devastate the economy. Things are bad enough currently with our

economy thanks to this worldwide pandemic.

Continued vaccinations gives us a chance to manage this Covid19 virus. I have heard that many people are hesitant to do that and in particular there are many health professionals who are resisting getting a vaccine. That makes me sad because from what I have learned through the reports of epidemiologists and virologists is that the best way forward to managing this pandemic is by getting vaccinated. Hopefully, some day future generations will be reading in history books how we all pulled together to deal with this pandemic.

For more columns by Xavier Kataquapit visit underthenorthernsky.com

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Canada adds five years to clean drinking water promise

By Jake Cardinal, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Canada will take several more years to end all long-term drinking-water advisories in First Nations territories.

In 2015, during the Trudeau Government’s election campaign, the Liberal Party made a promise to end all long-term advisories in First Nations Territories by 2021, with March being the original target month.

But Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) Minister Marc Miller said in December 2020 that this was not possible.

The new timeline was not announced, but revealed in government documents from ISC officials that were shown to the House of Commons Public Accounts committee.

This new timeline was made in response to an auditor general report that found ISC didn’t provide the necessary support to ensure First Nations had access to safe drinking-water.

“Although Indigenous Services Canada made progress in eliminating long-term drinking water advisories, the department was not on track to meet its 2015 commitment to eliminate all long-term drinking water advisories on public water systems on First Nations reserves by 31 March 2021,” the report read.

“Although the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic delayed progress on some projects, many were already facing delays prior to the pandemic.”

While the documents say that the department will continue work with First Nations to implement projects that address needs for all communities affected by long-term drinking-water advisories, estimates say that it could possibly take until 2026 to end all advisories.

It is estimated that eliminating all drinking-water advisories in First Nations Territories would take until 2023-2024 and it would take until 2025-26 to ensure long-term solutions for stable drinking water supply in some Nations.

There was no reason given as to why it would take another five years.

In the action plan, ISC said the 2023-2024 target completion date depends on “progress on projects and COVID-19 pandemic health and safety measures.”

As of April 9, there were 52 long-term drinking water advisories in effect in 33 First Nations Territories at the time of Canada’s last update.

Forty-three of these advisories were in Ontario, three in Manitoba and six in Saskatchewan.

Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde said, “The news that advisories may be in place until 2026 isn’t just disappointing, it’s unacceptable.”

“First Nations have the right to clean, safe drinking water.”

Adrienne Vaupshas, a spokesperson for Minister Miller, ensured the public that all long-term boil-water advisories are expected to be lifted “in the near future.”

She also emphasized that the new timeline is only in regards to the timeframe that the department expects all long-term solutions to be completed. At the moment, there is only one First Nation territory that is estimated to take until 2026.

“Estimated construction completion dates are subject to change,” she said. “The pandemic has



impacted many water and wastewater projects, resulting in delays. Necessary public health measures, contractor and human resources shortages, and supply chain interruptions continue to create delays in meeting targets.”

Finally, the day after the news broke, ISC Minister Marc Miller also emphasized that there isn’t a “single remaining long-term water advisory lift in a First Nations community that has been delayed until 2026.”

“Clean and safe access to water in First Nations goes beyond the lifting of all long-term water advisories,” Miller said on Twitter.

“This includes commitments to long-term water and wastewater investments, coupled with key investments in operations and maintenance of critical community infrastructure.”

Hummingbirds delay TMX Pipeline by months

A four-month federal stop work order has been issued on Trans Mountain’s pipeline construction, the result of local community members discovering hummingbird nests during tree cutting in the area. The delay, according to an earlier affidavit by a Trans Mountain executive, would push the pipeline’s construction date past 2022, adding millions to the taxpayer-funded project.

“When the government is the owner as well as the regulator, it means groups like ours are imperative. Our members have confirmed eight active nests on this site, but there are hundreds, likely thousands more bird nests along the 1,500 km of the pipeline route. And yet, construction continues without adequate government monitoring or protection,” said Sara Ross, of the Community Nest Finding Network (CNFN), a community group that alerted Federal Wildlife Officers in early April with concerns about non-compliance to the Migratory Birds

Convention Act.

An alert by CNFN led Federal Officers to witness the felling of a tree with a hummingbird’s nest in it on April 12th. In violation of the Migratory Birds Regulations, ECCC issued a stop order until August 21st. Trans Mountain said in an affidavit (pages 18 to 20) that tree clearing in the area had to be completed prior to August 1 to allow access to the streams. If that didn’t happen (which now it can’t) Trans Mountain will miss its 2021 window for watercourse crossing, its 2022 window for hydrotesting, and its 2022 in-service date. Pipeline work at this location must now wait until next year, 2022. The delay comes at a cost of at least \$100 million per month of delay past the in-service date, according to Trans Mountain.

“This is another costly example of Trans Mountain’s disregard for the rules that has happened far too often throughout construction. It was only because of the incredible work of local residents that

they were caught red handed,” said Eugene Kung, staff lawyer at West Coast Environmental Law. “With every delay, the total cost to taxpayers balloons and the project falls further outside the public interest. We have not seen a cost update in more than a year, but it’s easy to estimate the cost being closer to \$20 billion today.”



In addition to the new four-month delay, progress reports from Trans Mountain show construction delays in almost all segments of the pipeline. More delays mean a higher price. The PBO estimated (two years ago) that the cost of a year’s delay to TMX was \$638 million annually.

“It’s difficult to stomach that such a threat to birds, ecosystems and our climate is the result of a pipeline the federal government’s own data shows is not even needed,” said Donna Clark, of the CNFN and former Director Wild Bird Trust of BC.

Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, Executive Board member of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), said, “It is very symbolic that a tiny hummingbird has stopped local construction of this pipeline. At the same time, it is not entirely surprising, either. Many stories of ours honour the qualities of Hummingbird, and one that stands out, in particular, is Hummingbird’s tenacious loyalty to the forest. Even as the forest burned and all the other animals fled, Hummingbird carried drops of water – in their tiny beak – from the river to the forest fire. In response to the other animals, Hummingbird said: ‘I’m doing what I can.’”

Kukpi7 Judy closed by stating, “I’m grateful for the efforts of all the land defenders, especially the Community Nest Finding Network (CNFN). We all rely on healthy land and water, no one is exempt, and it is so important that we continue protecting Mother Earth in good ways.”

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Book Review

Peyakow:
Reclaiming Cree
Dignity

Review by Jake Cardinal,
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Author: Darrel J. McLeod
Publisher: Douglas & McIntyre
ISBN 9781771622318

“Displaced angels downtown took astonishing forms.”

Peyakow: Reclaiming Cree Dignity, A Memoir is a new memoir from the award-winning, Cree writer Darrel J. McLeod. He is from Treaty 8 territory in Northern Alberta. Before his retirement, McLeod was chief negotiator of land claims for the federal government and executive director of education and international affairs with the Assembly of First Nations.

Peyakow – the sequel to *Mamaskatch: a Cree Coming of Age* (which won the 2018 Governor General’s Award for non-fiction) – recounts the journey of steely perseverance and enduring love in the relentless pursuit of happiness and a meaningful life.

The book presents the Native experience in raw vignettes from the life of the author – the lowest lows and the highest highs. All the while, allowing the reader to experience the life of a Native person trying to come up in Canada.

Every single person in this book is written with incredible depth and the stories told paint a vivid picture of different parts of Canada from the educational institutions in BC, to the family-life of McLeod in Alberta.

Time and again McLeod is devastated by the defeat, self-destruction and even death of those closest to him

and constantly fears that he too will be dragged down. However, the story is ripe with perseverance and accomplishment as McLeod shows the world that he can overcome his traumatic past and do great things.

The memoir follows McLeod across Canada and the world as he recalls his time working as a school principal; his time as part of an Indigenous delegation to the UN in Geneva; an executive at the government of Canada; and author.

“It was not my intent to deal with themes as explicitly as I did, chapter by chapter,” said McLeod. “but I ended up addressing youth suicide; the long-term impact of residential schools on one Indigenous community in BC; poverty; the underfunding of Indigenous social programs; racial discrimination in the workplace; the tremendous challenges faced by Indigenous youth to acquire post-secondary education and then make their way ahead in the workplace (having to work twice as hard to be considered half as good as white colleagues); government corruption; the tremendous struggle to advance Indigenous rights on the international stage; and finally, the cultivation of an attitude of optimism and joy despite all of this.”

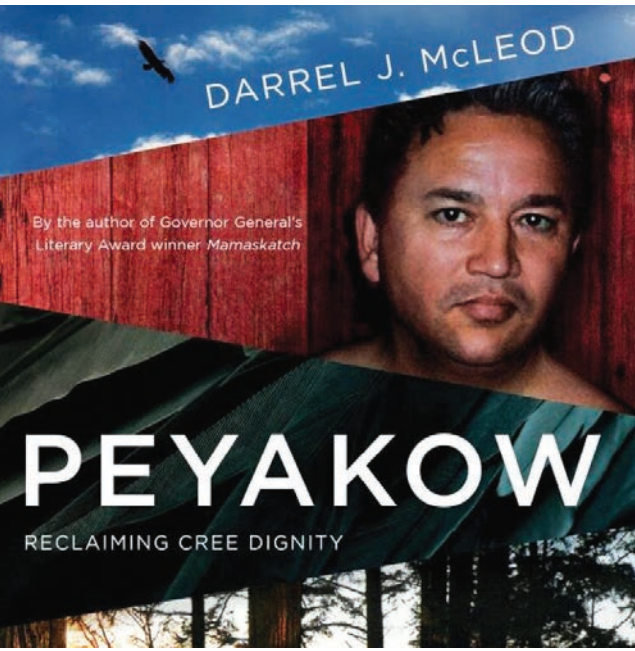
McLeod’s compelling story-telling builds on literary devices and innovations integral to *Mamaskatch*. He once again draws on inherited memory to set the stage for his book by writing about the Treaty 8 negotiations.

In the book, we are given a detailed – and even cinematic – description as to how Treaty 8 was created. “This is the true beginning of the story I sought to tell the world,” said McLeod.

“It’s an important piece of the puzzle, since this history has not been taught in schools.”

With a sprinkling of magical realism reminiscent of Garcia Marques, *Peyakow* – Cree for “he or she travels alone” – is a love song of gratitude to Mother Earth and an Ode to the Indigenous peoples of Canada.

A major issue throughout the book is McLeod’s yearning to reconnect with his Indigenous culture. “Because of the collapse of my nuclear and extended family, as well as personal and family dysfunctionality, I ended up moving through many



key passages of life alone,” said McLeod.

“I’ve always known that my ancestors were very dignified people as are my Nehiyaw relatives and contemporaries. However, in the course of my life, family disruption and intense abuse of various forms – which led to an addiction to sex, racial discrimination, poverty and disenfranchisement – took me to a place of desperation and low self-esteem in my teen years.”

“Once I began to reconnect with other Indigenous people who were strong, proud and healthy I began to feel a resurgence of my own pride,” said McLeod.

The book isn’t a feel-good read, but it will definitely provide insight into the very subtle and complex life an Indigenous person leads in contemporary times. In a blend of drama, tragedy, and comedy, *Peyakow* is an epic tale of one man’s journey to find his culture and to help his people.

For anyone interested in how a Native person navigates through current day Canada, this book is rich with personal experience and wisdom. McLeod carries the emotion found only at the end of life through each scene and sentence to create a cacophony of first-hand, Indigenous experience.

EPS launches
‘Know Your Rights’ campaign

By Jake Cardinal, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Edmonton Police Service (EPS) has launched a new campaign called ‘Know Your Rights,’ which is aimed at informing pedestrians on what their rights are during a police encounter.

The initiative will be comprised of wallet-sized cards, brochures, as well as online information. The rights and responsibilities of officers will also be included in the information.

The campaign was said to have been made in response to community engagement sessions that EPS had with Edmontonians.

Insp. Mitchell Flaman of the EPS equity, inclusion and human rights branch said, “Our goal with this educational campaign and content is to make this information more accessible and available to the community.”

“As police officers, we are tasked with maintaining public safety and preserving law and order, however,

we recognize that interactions with law enforcement can be stressful. In helping the public understand their rights and officer responsibilities, we hope to minimize any associated feelings of apprehension or concern some members of the community may feel when interacting with or speaking to EPS members.”

It is important to note that the information is not meant to be used as legal advice.

“At the end of the day this is really about helping establish respectful com-

munication between members of the public and police officers,” said Flaman. “I think by virtue of understanding what each person is responsible for doing or cannot do, that assists in having a respectful conversation.”

The information can be viewed online and the physical brochures can be picked up at any one of Edmonton’s six police stations.

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