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Sage Beauty wins Leduc Chamber of Commerce Start Up Award

By Chevi Rabbit, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Danielle Baptiste, originally from Maskwacis Alberta, was awarded the START UP Business of the Year at the Leduc, Nisku, and Wetaskiwin Regional Chamber of Commerce annual business awards gala on March 11, 2023.

She was also recently nominated for the prestigious Alberta Chambers of Commerce Award for Indigenous Business Award of Distinction.

Baptiste is the CEO and operator of Sage Beauty. Due to its success, Baptiste has relocated from Wetaskiwin Mall, to a larger location, 5008 – 48 Street, which offers various services, including permanent makeup, lash extensions, clinical skincare, endless jewelry, and nails.

Baptiste received her master's degree in management with an emphasis on human resources before becoming a successful business owner. She worked as an Indigenous relations liaison for oil and gas companies Imperial Oil and Energy businesses over several years.

"I was not enjoying what I was doing," said Baptiste. She was tired of the 9-to-5 job and wanted to fulfill her business dream – to own her own business.

When Baptiste hit a crossroad in her life, she wanted to explore new career options. "So, I enrolled in the skin specialist programming, and I wanted to see, first of all, if I enjoyed it and secondly if I was good at it," she said. "I enrolled in a skin specialist programming because it has a variety of certifications, such as micro-needling, chemical peel, facial, and you name it, there were

a lot of certifications."

She enjoyed the learning process so much that she enrolled in eyelash extensions, permanent makeup, tattooed eyebrows, and eyeliner. Successfully progressing and learning about permanent makeup led to tiny and then larger tattoos. She then got further training as a trainer in her field. In total, Baptiste is nineteen times certified.

"I am now trained as a trainer to train others too," said Baptiste.

She started in her home with her new certifications while still working her salary job. As her clientele list was getting larger, she asked herself, "Am I going to do this completely and fully? Am I going to continue working and living with my comfortable salary, knowing what I am going to make every two weeks? Or am I going to own my business and have zero clue what I am going to make, and if I am going to be successful?"

"I had to make a decision," said Baptiste. "I chose the hard one and went full force." She rationalized the decision by telling herself, "If I fail. At least I have my education to fall back on."

"So that's what I did. I became an entrepreneur," said Baptiste. "I moved from my house, and I got an actual space. I was living in Leduc at the time, and I felt that I could offer my services closer to home, where clients often have to go to the larger cities for the same services that I offer."

She felt that services like her's were available in Leduc so she set her sights on Wetaskiwin. "I found a place in Wetaskiwin Mall. However, I only signed for one year because I was still on the fence about opening my own business. I started

small, but as soon as I opened up, I was getting booked. I went from 5, 6, 7, and more clients a day."

She realized she was getting swamped and needed to hire more people. She brought in a nail technician, who booked up right away and became very busy.

Baptiste says so many of the surrounding communities have supported her growth in her business, which left her "with a good problem."

"I needed to get a bigger space and hire more people," she explained, and then proceeded to create several job opportunities for other women in the area.

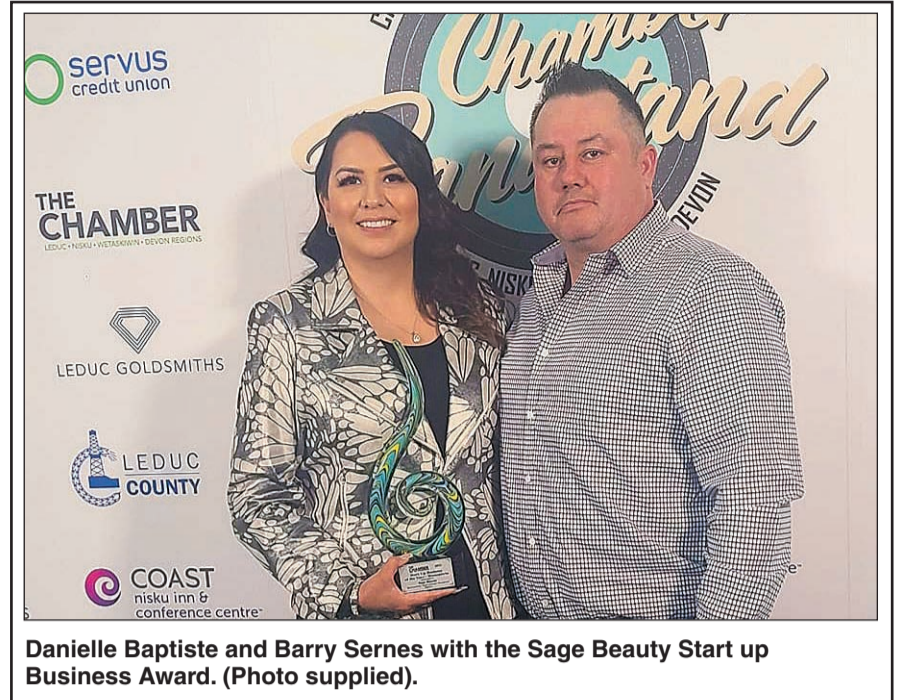
Baptiste's mission with Sage Beauty extends beyond just running a successful business – she also wants to break down barriers and stereotypes about Indigenous people in the business world. She wants to show that Indigenous people can own and run successful businesses and provide high-quality services to non-Indigenous people.

In addition to her business success, Baptiste also offers training to those interested in entering the beauty industry. This training is certifiable and can lead to employment in other salons or spas or even starting their own businesses.

Baptiste is grateful for the support she has received and credits her success to the people who believed in her from the start. She also recognizes the hard work and contributions of her staff members, Kerrin Baptiste, Vanessa Tomkow, Shireen Soosay, and Caitlynn Baptiste. Winning the Start-Up Business of the Year Award is a testament to Baptiste's dedication, hard work, and inspiration to others who may be looking to follow in her footsteps.

Baptiste is already booking up for speaking engagements. She ends the interview by advising other women who are seeking entrepreneurial career paths. She says, "Do your research before entering the market, and go for it."

"Don't contemplate doing it, don't sit back and watch others do it. Just jump in and try. You will never know until you try."



Danielle Baptiste and Barry Sernes with the Sage Beauty Start up Business Award. (Photo supplied).

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How did it ever come to this?

By Xavier Kataquapit

It is that time of the year when the Niska – the Canada Goose, are flying north and the traditional hunt of we Cree happens out on the land. This is something my people on the James Bay coast have been doing forever. We consider this time of the year as a way to walk in the trail of our ancestors and to spend some time out on our traditional lands.

None of this is easy but most of my family and friends these days are well prepared with modern luxury snowmobiles, all kinds of supplies and great camps on the land on the shore of the salt water James Bay. This time of the year the ice and snow is slowly melting and although we can still venture out to hunt we have to be careful as there are many dangers on our way.

The hunt these days is really an adventure for everyone however there are so many dangers and it takes skilled and experienced hunters to make sure that everyone out on the land for this activity are safe. It is important to know

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Vatican rejects Doctrine of Discovery – but questions remain

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A Vatican statement rejecting the Doctrine of Discovery, which was used to justify the conquest of Indigenous territories has been met with approval from Indigenous groups as a positive step towards reconciliation, although questions remain about what it means in practice.

The 15th-century doctrine was the culmination of a series of papal bulls, or declarations, based on the assumption that Indigenous lands were empty, which a March 30 statement from the Vatican now acknowledges “did not adequately reflect the equal dignity and rights of Indigenous peoples.”

However, the Vatican’s statement also deflects responsibility for the doctrine’s use, claiming the papal bulls “were manipulated for political purposes by competing colonial powers in order to justify immoral acts against Indigenous peoples.”

This comes a year after First Nations, Inuit and Metis leaders travelled to the Vatican, where Pope Francis apologized for the role of the Catholic Church in forcing Indigenous children into the forced assimilation institutions known as “residential schools.” This was followed by a Papal visit to Canada a few months later, where the Pope stopped in Alberta, Quebec and Nunavut.

During the Pope’s stop at the National Shrine of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré in Quebec, two Indigenous women unfurled a banner reading, “Rescind the Doctrine.”

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #49 calls on all religious leaders to disavow all edicts used to justify European conquest of Indigenous lands, specifically naming the Doctrine of Discovery.

The Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations said in a statement to the *Edmonton Journal* that it’s unclear what the Vatican’s statement means in practice for Indigenous Peoples, who have “always known these lands have belonged to us since time immemorial.”

“As the moral conscience of Europe, the Vatican enabled Christian empires to commit genocide, starve, relocate and dispossess Indigenous peoples from these lands in the name of the Doctrine of Discovery,” the statement said. “It was used to justify the creation of what is now called Canada and its national, settler-colonial laws imposed on Indigenous peoples. Without this document, Canada has no historical mandate in their control of Indigenous peoples and territories.”

Lynne Proulx, the Quebec-based CEO of the Native Women’s Association of Canada, told the *Journal* that the Vatican’s statement raises questions about its legal implications.

“How are treaties impacted by this, and

ownership of land now that we know that this doctrine — the whole basis of the land grab in Canada — was not justifiable?” she said, predicting “there’ll be a lot of analysis around it by legal experts, and even international experts.”

Assembly of First Nations National Chief Roseanne Archibald told *The Canadian Press* that the doctrine sent the message “that we were unworthy and that our lands were empty,” and that the Vatican should take another step and positively affirm the value of Indigenous peoples’ lives.

“We need the world to know that we are worthy, that we are valuable,” Archibald said.

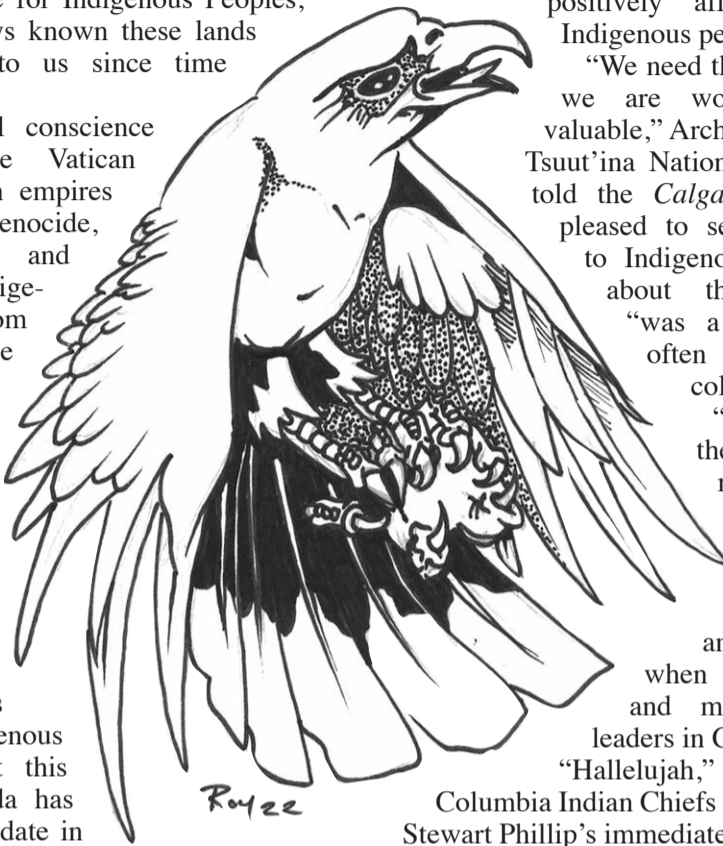
Tsuut’ina Nation Chief Roy Whitney told the *Calgary Herald* that he’s pleased to see the Pope listened to Indigenous leaders’ concerns about the doctrine, which “was a major influence in often brutal and inhumane colonization.”

“We cannot rewrite the past, but the rejection of this doctrine demonstrates good faith, is a step toward reconciliation and demonstrates that when Pope Francis visited and met with Indigenous leaders in Canada, he listened.”

“Hallelujah,” was Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) Grand Chief Stewart Phillip’s immediate response to the news.

Phillip told *CityNews* the Vatican’s repudiation of the doctrine was a long overdue but “amazing step” towards reconciliation.

“The discrimination against people of colour, Indigenous people, it’s time to throw that in a



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First Nations leaders hail revised child welfare settlement

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and First Nations Child and Family Caring Society have agreed on a final settlement agreement worth \$23 billion for children who were systematically discriminated against in the Canadian child welfare system.

The deal was subsequently endorsed by delegates to the AFN's special chiefs assembly on April 3, bringing a 16-year legal battle to a conclusion.

In 2007, the AFN and Caring Society first brought forward their complaint to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT), which was accompanied by a class action suit from the who suffered under the child welfare system's discrimination against Indigenous people.

A 2016 CHRT decision found that the Canadian government's perpetual underfunding of on-reserve First Nations child welfare and family services, and its refusal to pay for health care through Jordan's Principle, amounted to racial discrimination.

Jordan's Principle states that in disputes between federal and provincial governments regarding funding for First Nations services, the priority is for the service to be provided, with financial disputes between governments resolved after the fact.

A tentative \$20-billion compensation deal reached last year between the Crown and AFN was struck down by the tribunal, upon the urging of the Caring Society, because it excluded children who weren't in federally funded child welfare placements.

The additional \$3 billion ensures that everyone who is entitled to \$40,000 in compensation receives it, according to a joint news release from the AFN and Caring Society.

"We've held our children, youth, and families in our hearts and in our prayers throughout negotiations towards the revised FSA," AFN Manitoba Regional Chief Cindy Woodhouse said in the release.

Woodhouse credited the "collective efforts of the AFN and Caring Society at the negotiating table" with achieving the "best possible agreement to compensate our children and families harmed by Canada's discrimination."

Caring Society executive director Cindy Blackstock said "this compensation recognizes

the serious harms First Nations, children, youth, and families suffered including unnecessary family separations and the denial of life saving and life wellness services."

Blackstock said it's of the utmost importance to "ensure this is the last generation of First Nations children who are hurt by the Government of Canada. That work continues and they are our inspiration to get it right."

Woodhouse added that the AFN special chiefs assembly's approval allows the AFN to bring the new agreement to the rights tribunal with one voice.

The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, in a statement, applauded the agreement for including all those who were previously excluded from the initial deal.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip hailed the "unparalleled and unprecedented recognition of and compensation for the egregious harms experienced by First Nations children, their families, and communities, as a result of Canada's discrimination."

"We must reflect on, celebrate, and honour our children who became victims and survivors, some of whom are with us and some whom have passed on, whose stories have led to the revised Final Settlement Agreement on Compensation for First Nations Children and Families, being achieved, to end the cycle of child removal and abuse," Phillip added.

Cheryl Casimer, First Nation Summit political executive, said the new deal "is a long-fought and long-awaited step towards meaningful reconciliation."

"No settlement will ever undo or reconcile the harms experienced, which continue to have revolving impacts on our families and communities. It is our responsibility to continuously work to end the imposition of colonization on our peoples, as manifested through ongoing child welfare systems, policies, and practices," Casimer said.

B.C. AFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee said the fight to have all victims compensated, rather than most of them as the previous deal would have done, "reflects our continual and collective pursuit of justice for our children, youth, and families, nothing less of which will suffice."

While the April 3 agreement is "cause for tremendous celebration and will be remembered in our hearts and history books, as a pivotal



moment in our shared history," it's now time to ensure broader reform to the system, Regional Chief Teegee added.

The system must be reformed to guarantee the "prioritization of long-term, sustainable, predictable, and needs-based funding to ensure our people are adequately equipped to exercise their inherent rights to jurisdiction over child and family services."

Chair of the Indigenous Child & Family Services Directors Our Children Our Way Society, Mary Teegee (Maaxw Gibuu) of Takla Nation, identified three goals of the litigation: "to end discrimination against children and families, to ensure discrimination never happens again, and to compensate the children and families who suffered."

The revised agreement will provide a "measure of justice to our children," who "are our most precious resource, and they deserve nothing less," Mary Teegee added. But work on long-term reform to the system must continue to guarantee "that no child suffers discrimination ever again."

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Up to 179 remains could be in Saddle Lake mass grave

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

There could be as many as 179 children's remains in a mass grave found on Saddle Lake Cree Nation at the former site of the Blue Quills Indian Residential School, according to data sets from a ground-penetrating radar (GPR) survey.

An updated report from the Acimowin Opaspiw Society (AOS) non-profit, which conducted the GPR search, includes the data sets from its October 2022 search.

"We don't know until we excavate," Leah Redcrow, executive director of the AOS, said of the number of children buried in the mass grave.

Redcrow has a long history with the Blue Quills forced assimilation institution, with three generations of her family imprisoned at each location.

The Blue Quills institution was located in Lac La Biche from 1890 to 1898, on Saddle Lake Cree Nation which included the Sacred Heart Cemetery, from 1898 to 1932, and then St. Paul County until its closure in 1970. Even after the school moved to St. Paul, the bodies of children who died were transferred to Sacred Heart for burial.

The mass grave was accidentally discovered in 2004, but it wasn't until last year that its existence was confirmed with the use of GPR. Its existence is not accounted for in the records of the school's home parish, the Archdiocese of St. Paul, which collaborated with AOS on the investigation. These records account for when children were baptized and when they were buried.

In order to account for a mass grave, the records would have to include a "number of back-to-back deaths within a 1-4 week period, buried on the same day or within a short time period," the report notes.

"There's nothing like that in the records,"

Redcrow explained.

The records provided to AOS indicate 335 children died from tuberculosis, likely from drinking unpasteurized milk from cows that weren't tested for TB.

The updated AOS report notes that Blue Quills' principal asked for the cows to be tested in 1944, indicating a suspicion they were infected, but the Department of Indian Affairs said its resources were spread too thin.

The search of the mass grave found irregularities between eight centimeters and 20 centimeters from the grave's surface. Redcrow said the grave's shallowness is a major concern.

According to the lead archeologist AOS is working with, the grave's lack of depth places the remains at risk of erosion or being dug up by animals. Redcrow said dogs are already "hanging out a lot in the cemetery."

There are suspected to be two more mass graves on site, which have yet to be located, in addition to individual unmarked graves throughout the cemetery. Adding to the complexity is the fact that Sacred Heart is still used as a cemetery to this day.

"The children's graves are absolutely everywhere," the AOS report notes, "unmarked and shallow, and being accidentally disturbed, each time a new grave gets dug in Sacred Heart. The community must immediately stop new burials at this site."

Another challenge is the excavation itself, which must be conducted by the provincial chief medical examiner. But the examiner's office hasn't responded to AOS's inquiries, nor has the RCMP.

Alberta Native News reached out to the office of the chief medical examiner for comment, but it



Art by Mohan: 'Too many faces'

hasn't provided any by press time.

In late-February, Indigenous-Crown Relations Minister Marc Miller visited Saddle Lake Cree Nation to hear the concerns of residential school survivors and visit the site of the mass grave.

"He was very sympathetic," said Redcrow. "We're actually really thankful that he came and got to hear from the survivors. That was the first time a federal minister ever came to our community."

Survivors would like to see the Blue Quills building ultimately torn down, Redcrow added.

"There's absolutely no reason to keep it standing there. It traumatizes them to this day. I don't think that these buildings should be celebrated."

This article contains content that may cause trauma invoked by memories of past abuse. A National Indian Residential School Support line 1-866-925-4419 is available for emotional and crisis referral support services to minimize the risk associated with triggering.

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MMIW advocate says human trafficking concerns us all

By Chevi Rabbit, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Jamie Gladue, a former pipefitter and former sex worker, a survivor, and now outspoken advocate for the missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW) in Edmonton, opens up about her battle with substance abuse and Edmonton's human trafficking ring(s).

She says, "Wake up, Edmonton, there is a huge sex trafficking ring [here]. Multiple rings are operating in Edmonton, and Edmonton is not what it seems; there are many people involved and people you wouldn't even think of."

In February, Gladue, along with other Indigenous women and allies, held information rallies in Edmonton on 118 Ave and 97 Street. They were supported by prominent advocate April Eve Wiberg, a founding member of the Stolen Sisters and Brothers Awareness Movement.

Gladue says, "I was a pipefitter before I got into the sex industry; I lost my job in 2018, I abandoned my child, and I got a DUI."

Gladue's life spiraled out of control, and she became addicted to crystal meth.

"I would black out when I was drunk," she said. "I went to jail a lot for hitting cops."

She explained, "That summer, I met a guy at Show Girls in Fort McMurray, and he paid me \$1000 for one hour, and that's how I got into the business."

According to Gladue, she was soon working as an independent sex worker in hotels; she got into crystal meth and became "a major alcoholic."

"It was during this time I met six girls who went missing," she said. "The last girl told me her story and that she thought I could do something about what was happening."

"I have had situations where boyfriends tried to traffic me," continued Gladue. "I have been in bad places and bad times, but I was never taken..."

I felt and believed the ancestors or god was watching over me."

"In 2020, I got into needles of meth. I was losing hope and faith; I was losing hope in myself," said Gladue. "But I was saved, I went to detox, and I got blessed with a construction job. Now, I no longer live that life, but I have a lot of trauma that I have not dealt with."

"I keep running into the same ladies," she added. "I can't turn a blind eye to what is happening."

She alleges that Edmonton has a massive sex trafficking ring, and she believes there are many human trafficking rings operating in the city and throughout Alberta.

"Sex trafficking rings are extensive, and they are right in front of our eyes, and people don't see it, but I do," she said. "I want to raise awareness because of the girls that went missing. I can't help them, but I can educate other people from being taken."

Gladue offers this advice: "Families need to check their messages, their social media pages, and be aware of their online activity because these people groom people – these people are sick, they target vulnerable women, and vulnerable families."

"First thing sex traffickers say to women is that you are beautiful, and they shower them with



In February, Jamie Gladue and others held rallies to raise awareness about MMIW and the victims of human trafficking. Photo supplied.

gifts, they lure girls in, and the girls that are insecure and have no love for themselves, are being naïve that they are being targeted."

She alleges, "There are sex cults in Edmonton and Thunder Bay. I have had cars following me and parking outside my apartment."

Her advice to the public is, "Take pictures of the cars and license plates, and ALWAYS HAVE

YOUR PHONE ON YOU."

Gladue wants people to "acknowledge the hard truth of what's going on not in just our beautiful city but our world. I want people to become knowledgeable and educate themselves on the signs and red flags of sex and human trafficking. You could be involved and not even know it, just like you could be a victim and not even know it. I want people to educate themselves on whom they target."

"Simple words such as "you're beautiful" start a conversation; they test your insecurities by starting a conversation like that to see how you react...I want people to wake up about what's going on with not just our women but our people, and all look out for one another, love each other, help each other, most importantly, accept one another," said Gladue.

"I can raise awareness and protest; I also understand I am tampering with a trillion-dollar business, so obviously, I put risk on myself for gangs talking, etc.," she said. "But I have dealt with a lot worse, and I'm sober now, so I am even safer, thank you, creator, for keeping me safe. Also, by spreading awareness, people continue to tell me stories, and I continue to connect the dots."

Gladue's allegation of multiple sex trafficking rings in Edmonton is a serious concern that needs to be addressed by authorities. Her experience highlights the vulnerability of individuals struggling with addiction and needing financial support. She strongly feels that society must provide more resources for people in such situations to help them get back on their feet, so they don't desperately resort back to illegal activities.

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"PROUDLY SERVING ALBERTA'S FIRST NATION COMMUNITIES FOR OVER A DECADE"

Hilda Lambert: Creating a new life through education

Looking back over her professional and educational journey, there are so many defining moments for NLC Alumni Hilda Lambert. However, obtaining her Certificate of Completion in Academic Upgrading stands above the rest. “When I achieved the courses that I needed to get into my post-secondary program, that was an amazing feeling. I thought I would never get there. I did things ‘backwards’; I had my children first then I got my education. I never thought I would be able to do it,” explains Hilda.

Hilda is currently the Vice President of Region 5 of the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA). She has held the position for four years. Her primary role is to assist the President of Region 5. Communication is a large part of the job and Hilda is a born communicator, so the role comes naturally to her.

An active member of the MNA, Hilda has been involved in several capacities, from a youth representative in 1999 to becoming VP in 2018. Prior to this, she worked with Rupertsland Institute, connecting individuals to learning opportunities. Throughout her career, Hilda has worked mainly for Indigenous and non-profit organizations and primarily in roles to help build community and individual capacity. “I love to help people see outside of their situation and the steps to get to where they want to be. I believe you can create a new life through education,” she explains.

After completing Academic Upgrading at the Northern Lakes College Smoky River Campus in her hometown of McLennan, Hilda enrolled in University Studies at the Slave Lake Campus. Over the course of the next three years, she took a variety of courses, trying to find her ‘niche’. “I knew I wanted to help people. Ultimately, I went into social work because I am a community

helper at heart. Today, my role with the MNA allows me to serve our citizens with the programs and services we can offer,” Hilda says.

It was during her years in the University Studies program that Hilda began to look into her Métis history. She took on part-time jobs at the Slave Lake Campus as a security guard and worked in the library, and it was while working in the library that she really dug into her genealogy and family history. Explains Hilda, “I was raised Métis and always identified with the culture, the music, the jigging. It all spoke to me. But I really began to research and embrace my cultural history when I moved to Slave Lake.”

After completing three years of general studies with Northern Lakes College, Hilda transferred into year three of the Bachelor of Social Work program at the University of Calgary. “When I successfully transferred to the U of C, I thought to myself, ‘I am actually going to do it!’ It took about five years all together to get my degree, but it was so worth it,” she recalls.

Reminiscing on her time with Northern Lakes College, she comments, “It was very friendly, like a family, because the classes were small. I was raising three children at the time, and worked most of the way through my studies, and the College was a very supportive environment for someone juggling a lot of responsibilities,” she says. “I am so grateful of the support of the instructors. They understood when things happened with family and children. The flexibility afforded by NLC was really appreciated.”

About her choice to pursue further education, Hilda explains, “Essentially, I did this for my children - so that I could be a role model and achieve a better life for them; to provide for them independently and not have to rely on anyone else



NLC Alumni Hilda Lambert

to support my family. Advancing my education provided me with greater opportunities to do that. Through this experience, my children learned that education is key to having an enriched life, be it a trade or a degree.”

Looking back, Hilda acknowledges the supporter that has always been there for her. “My mom has always been my biggest fan and greatest supporter. She knew education was the best way for me to get a better life. She instilled in me that I needed to equip myself to be able to compete in this world.”

It is clear that the role modeling and example Hilda provided her children has taken. She explains, “I am now a new, blessed, proud grandmother and I am also beyond proud of my eldest child, my daughter, Lynette, for following in my footsteps by choosing NLC for her studies. She is excelling in University Studies and completing the two-year, Social Work Diploma program. She plans to move to Slave Lake, and I am elated to spend more time, helping with my precious granddaughter, Elowen, while Lynette pursues her degree in Social Work, as well.”

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'Bear Grease' star emphasizes Fine Arts programs for youth

By Chevi Rabbit, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Despite growing up in a small northern community with little focus on the arts, Tammy Lamouche has become an accomplished singer-songwriter and actress. As a teacher, she is committed to providing her students with opportunities that she didn't have.

When Lamouche is not traveling across North America performing for *Bear Grease*, an indigenized version of the 1950s musical *Grease*, she is passionate about incorporating language revitalization into her teaching and music.

"I'm from a small northern community in the territory known as Whitefish Lake First Nation, and my mother is from Gift Lake Metis Settlement in Treaty 8 Territory," said Lamouche. "As a youth, I didn't have any option of fine arts. So [now] I get to teach students how to be confident in who they are, to help create platforms to showcase their creativity."

Lamouche started singing at age five, but she said there is little for arts in reserve schools. "I went to school in a small community where it only went up to Grade 9, and there was nothing for the arts," she said. "I taught myself to sing."

Lamouche's inspiration was listening to Alicia Keys, Motown, and Mariah Carey.

"I moved to Edmonton and attended University. I got my first degree in Native Studies and a second degree - a Bachelor of Education," she said.

As soon as she became a teacher, "I was able to teach fine arts in the school. I came full circle."

Lamouche believes that Fine Arts programming should be a priority in the Indigenous education system and that creative minds should be supported to showcase their creativity.

"In the budgets, Fine Arts are not a priority; they are often the last to be considered," she said. Educators can combine language revitalization

and the arts, she added.

"I love music, and I translate popular songs into Cree," said Lamouche. "I grew up around my language and culture. I grew up around fluent Cree speakers."

"It's something that I want to continue working on in education and through my craft, through music."

Her use of the arts as a way for students to learn the language is a creative and effective method that highlights the importance of cultural expression and preservation.

Being a cast member on the hit musical *Bear Grease* has helped build Tammy's confidence. However, in terms of her personality, there is a noticeable difference between her real-life persona and the character she portrays on stage in *Bear Grease*.

While Lamouche is connected to her culture, passionate about language revitalization, and using the arts to facilitate learning, her character Rizzo is portrayed as mean, fierce, and hard-shelled. Lamouche had to work hard to bring this character to life.

"Playing Rizzo on *Bear Grease* is so different from who I am. I had to build up to this character. I had to work hard towards being that mean girl."

"I'm just this shy girl from the Rez," said Lamouche.

Her story is a perfect example of the positive impact of the arts; they can take you to far-off places and broaden your horizons.

Bear Grease is an international success, and the musical has taken the cast across North America. Tammy explained, "*Bear Grease* is picking up, and people have been inviting us to other communities and big cities, like Denver, Colorado, Las Vegas, Florida, and cities in southern California."



Singer/songwriter and teacher Tammy Lamouche. (Photo supplied).

"It's taking me to places I thought I would never visit," said Lamouche. "We are attending communities where your spirit is being filled, and we are getting to share our beautiful culture."

"*Bear Grease* is a dream come true. I'm doing things I never thought I would."

Lamouche ends the interview by saying she wants to use her platform to inspire Indigenous youth. "I want to encourage and inspire Indigenous youth. I want them to feel empowered and worthy," she said. "I feel that's what my purpose is," and that's what she is doing with *Bear Grease*, which continues to be an incredible experience for her both professionally and personally.

Lamouche's role in *Bear Grease* has led to speaking engagements including a recent engagement at Grant MacEwan University. Her availability for workshops and motivational speaking further underscores her commitment to inspiring others and using her experiences to help others achieve their potential.

For info email lamouchetammy@gmail.com.

Vatican rejects *cont. from p 3*

political dumpster of history," he said.

The disavowal will serve to bolster Indigenous land and title claims in court, Phillip predicted, calling the Vatican's move a "win for everybody."

Matthew Wildcat, a University of Alberta political scientist from the Ermineskin Cree Nation, told CTV News that the Vatican's statement represents a "humongous symbolic victory," but questioned "what the actual effect will be."

Lloyd Yellowbird of the Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society in Edmonton also suggested the statement's impact is up in the air.

"Maybe it's a step, but we don't know how that step is going to be looked at. Is it a big step? Is it a small step? Again, it's about the action, not just the words," Yellowbird told CTV.

Chief Tony Alexis of the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation, who accompanied Pope Francis on his visit to Lac St. Anne last year, said the "pernicious and deeply harmful doctrine has cast a long, dark shadow over our people, perpetuating colonization, subjugation, and exploitation of Indigenous lands, lives, and cultures."

"The cruel legacy of this doctrine persists. Governments and monarchies continue to wield it as a weapon, infringing upon our sovereignty, exploiting our resources, and denying us our rightful place as equal partners in shaping the future," he said in a statement.

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Indigenous students attend youth leadership summit

Mistassiniy School, O'Chiese First Nation School, Paddle Prairie School, Piikani Nation Secondary School & Sunchild School recently took part in Inside Education's 12th in-person Youth Environmental Leadership Summit, Generate and Navigate 2023.

A total of 20 high schools from across Alberta and northeast BC were selected by the award-winning environmental and natural resource charity to come together in Canmore, Alberta, to better understand the science, issues, technology, and careers related to energy, climate, and water.

During the three-day Summit, six students and two teachers from each of the 20 schools were given a unique opportunity to meet and engage with over 70 expert guests from academic institutions, industry, government, Alberta's Indigenous community, and environmental groups. Experts included Jasveen Brar, ED of the Youth Climate Lab (and Generate 2013 student-participant), Jacob Irving, CEO Energy Council of Canada, and Autumn EagleSpeaker from Keepers of the Water.

"This [Summit] gave our students the opportunity to expand their knowledge of energy and water in Alberta," O'Chiese First Nation School teacher Karyn Booy said in a recent letter to Inside Education. "I saw our students get out of their comfort zones, try new things, and be courageous. We highly valued our time here and would love to come again."

160 students and teachers participated in a series of hands-on energy and water-focused workshops, such as wind turbine model-building and DNA extractions from local water with University of Alberta professor Dr. Patrick Hanington, along with various off-site

experiences, including guided tours of hydroelectric dams and snow sampling.

Upon completion of the Summit, each school is challenged to develop and implement an education and action project to engage their peers and their community about the energy, climate, and water topics they learned about throughout the Summit. These projects will occur from Spring Break to the end of the school year and beyond.

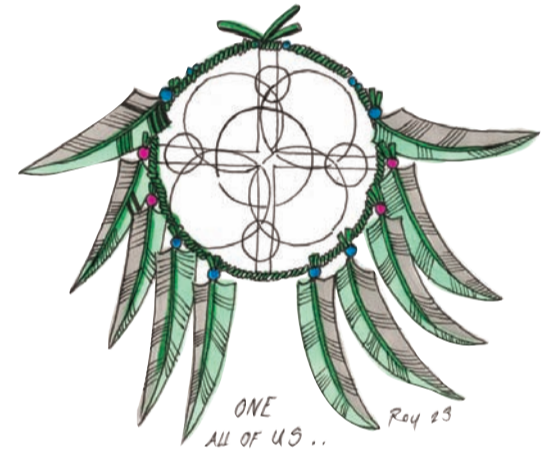
"We expect to see a multitude of positive outcomes as a result of each school's participation in the Summit. What has already become apparent is that students left Generate/Navigate informed, inspired, and empowered to work toward a sustainable future for our environment, economy, and society," according to Kathryn Wagner, Inside Education Program Director.

Inside Education is Alberta's largest environmental and natural resource education charity. In addition to province-wide Youth Leadership Summits like Generate/Navigate, Inside Education is committed to inspiring students and providing support for K-12 school teachers through various avenues, including in-class learning resources, interactive presentations, experiential field trips, securing grant money where needed, and much more.



Teachers and students from five Indigenous schools were among the 160 delegates who gathered in Canmore for the Generate/Navigate Youth Environmental Leadership Summit. Photo by Jordon Hon

"This will forever be one of my favourite memories. I've learnt a lot and got so much help from people I just met. I'm so grateful I met everyone here and now get to call them my friends. All the things I learned will forever stick with me," noted Ashley, a student at Mistassiniy School in Wabasca.



Be a change maker

Anthropology student Sofia Eaglehead Baptiste enrolled at Mount Royal University in pursuit of a post-secondary education. Along the way, through powwow dancing and learning Indigenous ways of knowing, she also embarked on a journey of self-discovery and connecting with her Indigenous ancestry.

Read Sofia's story





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How did it ever *cont. from p 2*

where to go when out on the vast ice surface of James Bay or travelling the tundra. Storms can come up quickly and trap people in blinding blizzards. There is a lot of melting so water becomes a problem for safe operation of a snowmobile and often hunters get wet which is a serious danger in freezing temperatures. There are also Polar Bears out and about on their own hunt.

These days there is also transportation by helicopter for hunters so that they are delivered to their camps at various remote and inaccessible spots along the coast. People also stay in touch with cell and satellite phones. Hunters are also given some support for their hunt so that they can continue this important traditional and cultural pursuit and introduce new generations to this activity.

In the old days the hunt was all about survival and the coming of the geese meant our people would have food. These days it is more of an annual cultural tradition as we rely less on hunts and gathering for our survival. Of course this is a good thing as most of us don't really want to return to such hard lives and cycles of feast and famine that was the reality of our ancestors. People actually starved to death back in those days from time to time. There was much more appreciation for the land, the animals and all life as we were directly connected to our world for survival. We knew that and we honoured that reality.

The spring arrival of the geese and a good hunt back then meant life and death for my people. Sometimes geese arrived early, or late, or changed their travelling routes or landing locations. Sometimes late winter storms prevented people from travelling or early thaws made heading out impossible.

This time on the land for the hunt also means a break for many from the confines of communities, all the rules, regulations and stresses we feel. We deal with a lot of addiction problems and this time on the land is a good break from situations that are depressing, painful and



sad. When we are out on the land there is a feeling of freedom. We feel the spirit of the hunt. We spend hours and days sitting in hidden blinds waiting for the geese to arrive. Everyone appreciates the silence of the land, the natural orchestra of the sounds of melting ice and snow while the geese sing their honking voices to herald their arrival. This experience out on the land is the very best thing we can do for our mental health. We find ourselves again on the land and in the wake of many hundreds of years of hunters that went before us.

I recall how enlightening it was for me as a boy and then a young man to be out on the land for the goose hunt. It was easy for me to grasp just how beautiful our planet is. Out there in a blind under a never ending northern sky, vast land and water stretching forever and the company of so many creatures. These days here in the south I am reminded every day how fragile and precious Mother Earth is. Constantly I witness through news media how the leaders of so many countries, heads of huge corporations and all the billionaires in charge are out of their minds and continually finding ways to wage war, cause pollution that is wounding our planet and threatening us all with the loss of our wonderful world, just to make money and have power. How did it ever come to this?

For more columns by Xavier Kataquapit visit underthenorthernsky.com

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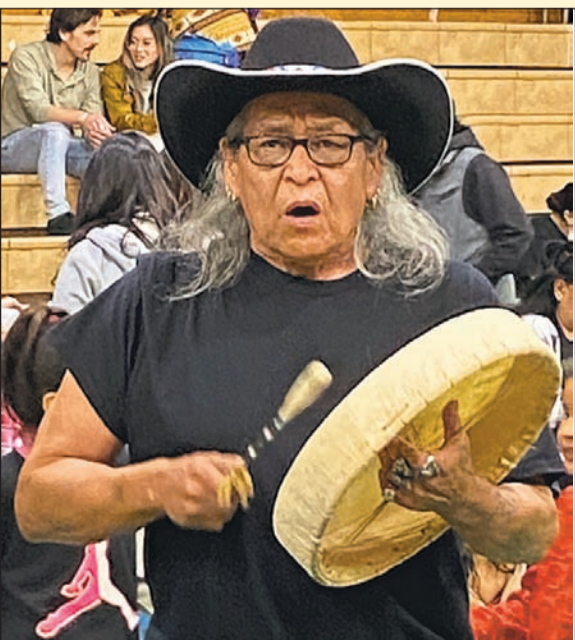
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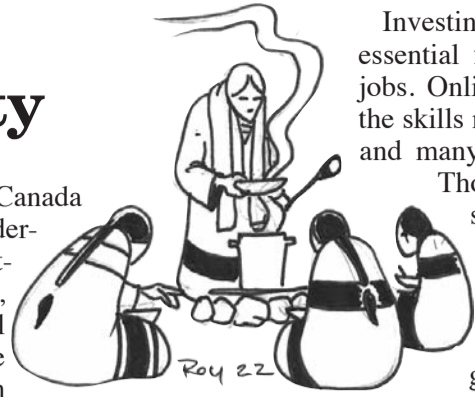
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Happy Birthday Cicelia

Cecilia Moonias from Maskwacis First Nations celebrated her 90th birthday at the Peter Bull Health and Wellness Centre on Louis Bull Reserve on March 25, 2023. Many relatives and friends turned up to share her special day with her. There was cake, a feast and a round dance too to which she took part in. Note: she didn't so much as have a walking cane - she's so healthy! Photos by Terry Lusty

Remote education can help drive prosperity



Since the start of the pandemic in 2020, there has been a revolution in both the technologies and education that make work-from-home and remote work options possible.

In 2016, StatCan estimated that less than 5% of the Canadian workforce was working from home in some form or another. Now, as we come out of the pandemic, that number has seen a drastic increase with close to 25% overall, and as high as 40-50% for information and professional service industries.

This increase is creating the greatest opportunities for people living in smaller and isolated communities, making it possible for them to pursue high-paying jobs without the need to leave the places they love.

Technologies like Zoom, Teams, and various project management software suites make it simple for employees and management alike to communicate not only across broad distances, but also across time zones.

Meanwhile, education institutions have been championing online and virtual learning systems for residents of small and isolated communities who may not have the resources to travel to larger centres to pursue their education.

This is a crucial advancement as many small

communities across Canada have long been underserved by post-secondary education, limiting the potential to stay close to home and pursue long-term career goals, which in turn perpetuates a cycle of economic stagnation and increased unemployment.

While these technologies have had global implications, they are especially significant for those living in remote communities. Students and workers have more options available when presented with the choice of going to school and working, or staying at home to be close to family and the communities they grew up in.

Few industries are experiencing remote work opportunities like those in the tech sector. Increasingly jobs like UI/UX designer, mobile and web applications developers, and even network administration roles can be done with little more than a computer and connection to the internet. When combined with the increasing cost of living in dense urban centres, the attraction of staying at home and still pursuing a high-paying career is clear.

Investing in education and skills training is essential for those seeking high-paying remote jobs. Online courses and programs can provide the skills needed to work in tech and other fields, and many are available at an affordable price.

Those who invest in their education and skills are more likely to land good jobs and enjoy the benefits of remote work.

None of this is to say that working in remote areas doesn't come without challenges, and while the Canadian government has been working to connect more communities to high-speed internet, many communities still face infrastructure shortcomings. This is particularly true in communities in the Canadian north, where long distances, and cold winters make accessibility problematic.

However, with continued investment from the government, and innovation in the delivery of satellite connectivity, these obstacles are likely to ease over the coming years, and may even begin to shape the potential for innovation within these communities, and help further drive economic opportunity.

With the right skills and education, people in these areas can pursue high-paying careers in tech and other fields while staying in the places they love.

For more information on how you can pursue an online education, head to online.cdicollege.ca.

Controversy mounts over Papaschase leadership

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Papaschase First Nation (PFN) has successfully applied for an injunction against several people and entities it claims have been falsely representing themselves as the nation's leadership.

The interim injunction was granted on March

23 by Justice W. Renke against George Frank Quinn, Darlene Misik, Bonnie Gravel, Mark Nixdorf, Clifford Gladue, Len Steinhauer, Holly Teed, Papaschase First Nation #136 Association, Papaschase First Nation Group of Companies Inc., Papaschase First Nation #136 Inc., Beaver

Hills House 136 Inc., Robert Stanley Ghostkeeper, Dellmar Lapratt, Deborah (Debbie) Lynn Metz and Papastew First Nations Corporation.

It prohibits them from representing themselves

Continued on page 15

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Security training provides career opportunities for Siksika residents

Eleven Siksika residents are benefiting from specialized career training thanks to their participation in the Security Guard and Workplace Essential Skills Training program. A unique partnership between Siksika Employment and Training Services (SETS) and Lethbridge College's LC Extension, the six-week program provided interested individuals an opportunity to become a certified security guard in Alberta, while developing additional employability skills.

All training took place earlier this year in Siksika Nation and not only prepared participants for the Security Services Investigators Act (SSIA) Provincial Examination and the opportunity to become a certified security guard in Alberta, but also provided training in areas such as CPR/AED, Mental Health First Aid, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information Systems, and the history of policing in the Siksika Nation.

"This program is meaningful to us because it's an example of a community coming forward with a specific need," says Jason Donkersgoed, Director, LC Extension. "We were then able to work collaboratively with Siksika Employment and Training Services to build something really interesting that meets that need and provides a benefit to the Siksika Nation.

We were able to supplement the mandated security training with additional skills that will benefit participants in their lives and careers."

After completing the program, all 11 participants wrote and passed the SSIA Provincial Examination, earning a class average of 90 per cent. Now certified, they can work as security guards in Alberta and have a credential that is transferable to other provinces. Security guard training can also serve as a pathway to other careers in the justice field, and participants were provided with information about the college's School of Justice Studies.

"Each student came to the security course with unique skills and interests and were eager to acquire a deeper understanding of the security program," says Jen Magnus, an instructor in the Custom Security Guard Training Program. "I enjoyed working with each student to further their career development through the program. The goal-setting portion of the program proved



Graduates who successfully completed the Security Guard and Workplace Essential Skills Training program. Photo supplied.

effective as each student worked on setting personal and professional goals to ensure success in the security industry."

SETS provides career building opportunities to Siksika Nation members, including career planning, employment and training, as well as job placement. The service seeks to secure job opportunities for Siksika citizens through employment arrangements and partnerships with industry employers.

"SETS' vision is for a skilled workforce with a mission to provide the necessary resources and skills to become ready, willing and able to successfully enter the workforce," says Barry Duck Chief, SETS program coordinator.

FNFA calls on Ottawa to fund Indigenous infrastructure

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The First Nations Finance Authority (FNFA) is calling on the federal government to fund First Nations infrastructure projects the same way it funds municipal and provincial projects to fulfill its promise to bridge the infrastructure gap between First Nations and the rest of Canada by 2030.

A news release from FNFA says this relationship would be rooted in "partnership rather than paternalism."

The FNFA is a non-profit created by the federal government to provide low-interest loans for First Nations infrastructure projects and economic development. It's provided \$1.8 billion in loans since its 2005 inception.

According to a BTY Group report commissioned by the Assembly of First Nations, however, there's a \$349.2-billion infrastructure gap in First Nations communities, consisting of capital and operating costs.

"The federal model for funding infrastructure has failed to deliver the housing, clean water and other critical infrastructure that will improve the living conditions in First Nations communities," said Ernie Daniels, FNFA president and CEO. "We believe there is a better way, a way that works with First Nations as partners rather than the colonial approach that's rooted in the almost 150-year-old Indian Act."

The process would begin with the feds setting aside \$200 million in its budget for First Nations infrastructure, with the amount of funding

increasing annually as the program grows in scope. FNFA would issue a debenture — a bond that is unsecured by collateral — to build priority infrastructure while the federal funds service the debenture payments.

This would allow First Nations to engage in monetization, allowing them to build immediately at today's cost and pay back those funds over a preferred loan term.

Presently, First Nations infrastructure is funded through an "annual cash" model that doesn't account for increasing costs over time.

Monetization funding could serve to pay for housing, clean water, replacing diesel generators with clean energy, schools, health centres, administration centres, among other community priorities.

A \$200-million annual monetization payment could fund \$3.6 billion in housing over 20 years, amounting to 12,000 units being built at today's prices, according to the FNFA.

Due to inflation, annual cash payments would fund far fewer houses over the same time span.

"Monetization would be a new tool that could put shovels in the ground now to address the critical shortage of decent infrastructure in our communities," said Chief Warren Tabobondung of Wasauksing First Nation in Ontario, who is also the FNFA chair.

Chief Derek Epp of Tzeachten First Nation in B.C., who's also the FNFA vice-chair, said monetization isn't a "silver bullet" for closing the

infrastructure gap, but it could help kickstart the process of "economic reconciliation."

The federal budget unveiled on March 29 didn't adopt monetization for First Nations infrastructure projects, but did commit \$4 billion for co-developed Indigenous housing strategy for Indigenous peoples living outside their home communities.

According to the Assembly of First Nations' (AFN) pre-budget submission, \$63.3 billion is needed to bring on-reserve housing levels to those of the rest of Canada by 2040. Over the next five years, First Nations also require \$20.5 billion for general infrastructure, \$4.5 billion for drinking water and wastewater, \$10.2 billion for green infrastructure, and \$6.9 billion for education facilities, all over five years.

AFN Chief Roseanne Archibald told CBC News that if the government is serious about reaching its 2030 target, it needs to develop an "economic new deal" for First Nations.

"This prime minister is a performative reconciliationist," Archibald said. "First Nations are not looking for a handout. We're looking for the opportunities that are the birthright of our people."

She expressed frustration that the AFN's "reasonable" funding requests are repeatedly denied.

"What we see the federal government do is chronically, intentionally underfund us, and so they're creating this cycle of poverty," she said.

An April 2022 report from the Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs recommended the federal government implement a monetization pilot project for replacing diesel generation with clean energy in remote communities.

FNFA CEO Daniels pitched this pilot as a way for the federal government to close the infrastructure gap while taking concrete steps to reducing carbon emissions in a January 2022 *Policy Options* article.

"It's good for the environment, but it also makes sound economic sense to start building the infrastructure now at today's costs, at today's lower interest rates, rather than waiting another decade or so to wean communities off diesel when inflation would only drive the capital costs higher," Daniels wrote.



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Lana Whiskeyjack on exhibit at AGA

The stunning art on the cover of this month's *Alberta Native News* is *Kaskatinowipisim – Frost Moon* by multidisciplinary treaty iskwew scholar artist Lana Whiskeyjack. It is part of an exhibit that is currently on display at Art Gallery of Alberta until August 13.

kisikayastew ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ...when the night shines like the day features works by Whiskeyjack and is an exploration of the *nêhiyaw* teachings of the Thirteen Sacred Moons. Within the *nêhiyaw* (Cree) annual calendar, the year is divided into thirteen moons, each with their own teachings and spiritual significance. Passed on in ceremony and from community knowledge keepers, the teachings remind *iskwêwak* (women) and diverse genders of their sacred role to nurture and safeguard the culture and lifestyle of the community.

The exhibit is organized by the Art Gallery of Alberta and curated by the AGA's Adjunct Indigenous Curator MJ Belcourt Moses. It is presented by the Poole Centre of Design and the Capital Power Indigenous Art Fund.

Lana Whiskeyjack is from Saddle Lake Cree Nation, Treaty Six Territory, Alberta. Guided by her grandmother's advice, "Go to school, travel, and see as much as you can. Then return home to share what you learned, but do not forget where you came from." After graduating high school, the young mom moved to Red Deer to attain her Art & Design diploma, then moved to Ottawa

with her growing family, attaining B.A. (Honours) and M.A (Canadian Studies) degrees. The story continues with returning to work near her home community and attain her doctorate degree at university nuhelot'ine thaiyots'j nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills (UnBQ) in iyiniw pimâtisiwin kiskeyihtamowin, the first Indigenous owned and operated educational institution in Canada. Prior to 1970, UnBQ operated as Blue Quills Indian Residential School, where two generations of her maternal family attended.

Lana's research, writing, and art explores the paradoxes of what it means to be *nêhiyaw* (Cree) and *iskwew* (woman) in a Western culture and society; and, how she and other Indigenous peoples are reclaiming, re-gathering, and remembering their ancestral medicine (sacredness and power). Her art is passionate and expressive, born from the deep roots of her culture, history, and intergenerational relations. Through the examination of sometimes difficult subjects, her art reflects the intrinsic beauty of her interconnections with the earth, *nêhiyawêwin* (Cree language) and *wahkohtowin*.

Lana brings her leadership and knowledge in *nêhiyaw* (Cree) arts-based practices, community-engaged research, and scholarship into her role as an assistant professor in the Women's and Gender Studies Department, Faculty of Arts, University



Lana Whiskeyjack, *Niskipisim – Goose Moon, 2021*, oil on board. Currently on exhibit at the Art Gallery of Alberta until August 13.

of Alberta. Her decolonizing learning and being at UnBQ grounded within *nêhiyaw* (Cree) ceremony, *nêhiyawêwin* (Cree language) and *nêhiyaw* worldview is foundational to her creativity, research, teaching and community service practices. Her current research projects explore issues re-matriation, (re)connecting to the spirit of *nêhiyawêwin*; and *nêhiyaw* diverse gender worldviews and rites of passage.

kisikayastew ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ...when the night shines like the day is on exhibit at the Art Gallery of Alberta until August 13. For information visit youraga.ca or drop by the AGA at #2 Sir Winston Churchill Square in Edmonton.

Health Education: Failure is a gift

By Laura Mushumanski, Local Indigenous Initiative Reporter

As you read my words, some of you can think of me as your auntie, cousin, or sister that is goofy and usually, somehow makes a lot of sense. For ones that know what a rotary phone is I can be your witty, sarcastic niece, daughter or granddaughter. And others – straighten out.

Before I begin, I want to share with you one of my favourite words – those that know, know, 'mama-sheesh' and well 'keesh-kwan' because I use to hear this word quite often from my aunts. If you do not know either of these words, please ask an older relative, I am sure they could always use a good laugh!

An Indigenous worldview within health education is crucial. The philosophy on how to live a good life is embedded in our ceremonies, languages, relationships with the land – where everything about health is an Indigenous way of understanding the world we live in. This is where we are about to turn those frowns upside down . . . because health education within Canada is subjected to a vast misinterpretation towards the understanding of a person's health and well-being.

Have you ever noticed that when your body is calm and relaxed, you do not question your self-worth? Instead, you are almost confident enough to fight off a bear that just stole your fish. But yet when something does not go as planned, more or less as Creator planned, why are you down and out, and resort to hindering your spirit by thinking you are a failure because of an event or a situation?

More than a few times during my adult life I had to go ground myself, in my room, like I use to have to when I was a kid – who knew that grounding was more about having time for reflection about what I just did where somebody was a witness to one of the most embarrassing moments of my life. I am also pretty sure that I am not the only one that can be petty and throw f-bombs out of my mouth as if I am participating in a speed round on Family Feud with Steve Harvey.

And as I take a moment to engage in a sinister chuckle, thinking what I did was hilarious and I was in the 'right', only to discover – after I took a time out, that "oooffff, that wasn't nice Laura,

wanting to rip a person a new a-hole because you were blaming others for your hurt is not something to write home about."

Indigenous worldviews are action orientated, implying everything is in constant motion and that we are continuously growing and learning as a process and part of our own journey. To suppress the understanding of life as a process aligns with how colonial views seem to be more fitted in seeing challenges and barriers as problematic yet Indigenous worldviews see this as an essential part of healing, an honour and an opportunity. This leads to 'health-related issues' within health education from a Eurocentric worldview that oppress the ability to perceive health challenges as 4-part person connection to the world we engage in. These 'issues' alternatively, can be viewed as a learning process to live a good life.

The challenges that each person faces, from an Indigenous worldview are seen as an opportunity to connect with oneself as a practice of reciprocity, as these understandings are different ways, our bush people ways. All our relations are bush people – even my part Ukrainian bloodline – of how we interpret the world.

Decolonizing health perspectives within Canadian health education implies having a different interpretation of health itself. This is where my understanding of health is based on the practice of reciprocity as a process of give and take. Understanding give and take as a process within an Indigenous worldview is viewed as our emotional, mental, physical and spiritual health all need to be in sync and in balance with each other.

The teachings of balance and understanding within health education, from an Indigenous worldview of course – speaks to reciprocity as finding balance within our natural environment. So, before you think silly thoughts, and we all do because learning is a process, just like understanding our health is a process, please remind yourself that the actions of reciprocity with the land is to take care of the land like it is our own lives.

Acknowledging the world outside of our own

heads, that is a magical challenge waiting to be greeted with a grin and sarcasm, to only discover how precious this challenge is that walked in unannounced and into our lives. By the way, have you taken time to notice that everything in life needs to be sustainable in order to thrive, not just survive?

Now let's venture into our Ojibway brother's and sister's teachings of the medicine wheel, and where the *Nehiyawewak*, the Plains Cree people, my relatives that reside on Treaty 6 Territory incorporate teachings of the medicine wheel into their teachings, where I have come to know that our emotional, mental, physical and spiritual health should align with each of the 4 seasons.

The changing of seasons and how each season resembles a specific time of day, and where it seems that our worldviews contribute to understanding the body as a continuation and representation of our natural environment. I also found that seeing challenges are like dark clouds is part of the process to understanding and holding knowledge on how to live a good life. And where we cannot appreciate sunny skies and blossoming flowers without having dark clouds form, that are made up of dust particles and water molecules, and windy days to disburse water from the clouds to create rain and turn everything green, majority of things green – on Mother Earth.

Everything is interconnected, reciprocity is an ongoing process of give and take that is one of many foundational understandings of how to live a good life. The process of life, failure in some perspectives, is not a bad thing; it is a beautiful gift and honour.

Please, before you think of yourself as a 'failure', know that 'failure' is a word, that perhaps you can shift those thought patterns to understanding that you are being challenged and it is a gift waiting to be unwrapped. After all, you ain't Creator, you also are not perfect – attempting to be perfect is exhausting and personally knowing how much responsibility it is taking care of little ol' me, on some days it is equivalent to having 4-full-time jobs. These challenges are building resiliency within your body, you are growing and learning as part of a process, along your own journey and where everyone else is experiencing similar challenges; we are on our own healing journeys, separately-together.

Less than half of First Nations have high-speed internet: AG

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Less than half of First Nations reserves have access to high-speed internet and cellular connectivity, according to a March 27 report tabled by Canadian auditor general Karen Hogan.

“These findings emphasize the persistent digital divide for people living on First Nations reserves and in rural and remote communities, compared to people who live in urban areas,” Hogan said in a news release.

“The government needs to take action so that there is affordable, high-speed connectivity coverage for Canadians in all areas of the country.”

According to the report, there’s a growing divide between urban, rural and First Nations communities, despite the federal government’s 2019 connectivity strategy.

The government defines high-speed internet as 50 megabits per second for downloads and 10 megabits per second for uploads. Its long-term goal is to have 90 per cent of households connected by 2021, 98 per cent by 2026 and 100 per cent by 2030.

The report notes that the government hasn’t accounted for whether this speed will be a sufficient minimum by the time its goal of full high-speed connectivity is reached.

Overall, access to high-speed internet has improved across the country, reaching 90.9 per cent nation-wide by 2021, a 4.7 percentage point increase from the previous year, yet connectivity

remains at 42.9 per cent on reserves and 59.5 per cent in rural and remote communities. Urban connectivity, by contrast, is 99.3 per cent nationally.

In Alberta, 98.65 per cent of urban households have high-speed connectivity, compared to 40.74 per cent of rural and 26.91 per cent of First Nations.

P.E.I. and New Brunswick are the only provinces where First Nations connectivity exceeds rural and remote. In Yukon, no First Nations reserves have high-speed internet access.

While the government has dedicated \$8 billion to expanding internet and cellular access across the country, it’s unclear how much more funds will be required to reach its 2030 goal, the report notes.

Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, the ministry responsible for the connectivity plan, tracks limited measures of connection quality and affordability across the country. For instance, it doesn’t track how many people with access to the internet have actually purchased internet services, nor does the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.

While a community might technically have high-speed internet, it’s of little assistance if the connection is of poor quality or prohibitively expensive, the audit notes.

This is particularly concerning as increasing



numbers of people work remotely, participate in the digital economy, and access education, medical care, and government services online.

Cellular connection, defined by access to the 4G network, is more equitable, with 99.2 per cent of Canada covered, 100 per cent of urban areas, 96.3 per cent of rural and remote areas, and 87.6 per cent of reserves.

In Alberta, those figures are 98.69 per cent for rural and remote areas and 91.51 per cent of reserves.

While no First Nations communities in Yukon have high-speed internet connectivity, they have 100 per cent cellular coverage.

The report found, however, that the government has no strategy for reaching full cellular connectivity.

About the RCMP K Division – East Alberta District

By Chief Superintendent Gary Graham

Eastern Alberta District (EAD) is one of four Alberta RCMP Districts within the province commonly referred to as “K” Division. EAD covers the northeast corner of Alberta and borders the Northwest Territories to the north, Consort/Coronation to the south, Barrhead to the west, and Saskatchewan to the east. EAD is comprised of 27 detachments and employs 550 regular members of the RCMP supported by 108 detachment services employees. It is led by a District Officer and supported by an Assistant District Officer, an Operations Officer, and five District Advisory Non-Commissioned Officers. Within EAD, the RCMP provides policing service to 15 First Nation Communities and 10 Metis Settlements.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, formerly the North West Mounted Police, has a long history working with Canada’s Indigenous people with 2023 marking the 150th year of service. This is truly a milestone for the Force; a milestone that requires reflection on the on-going role of our organization. The driving reason for our formation was to protect the Indigenous peoples from the whiskey traders and wolf hunters from the United States and to maintain peaceful relations. As time progressed so did the role of the RCMP, and we, like everyone, have continued to adapt to a changing world.

The RCMP provides officers who are assigned specific duties under the Community Tri-Partite Agreements on the First Nation as well as Metis Enhanced positions in the Settlements. Members

occupying these positions are under contract and dedicate the majority of their time in the communities focusing on priorities established by the communities.

Regular members of the RCMP in EAD work day and night to provide safe communities for our residents. This vocation requires RCMP officers to respond to calls for a wide variety of complicate, and sometimes dangerous, issues. The members of the RCMP are committed to helping address the root cause of crime in their communities like mental health issues, poverty, and addiction. The members work tirelessly to ensure they stay true to the RCMP motto, “Maintain the Right.”

EAD has partnered with Indigenous communities to educate our officers on the historical events that continue to impact people today such as intergenerational trauma as a result of the Residential School system. These partnerships are also a critical component in educating our members on the local cultural and traditions of the specific communities they provide service to.

A strong relationship is key with all communities but specifically our Indigenous communities as result of the historic connection

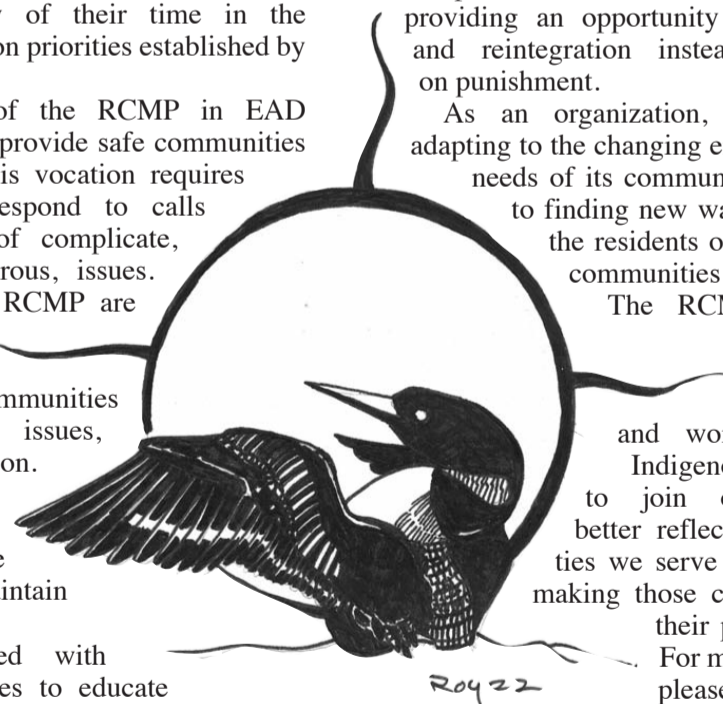
we share. With the help of the partnerships in the Indigenous communities the RCMP is able to uphold public safety, and police these communities, from a place of understanding. We work to utilize restorative justice practices to change the way our justice system works; these practices are focused on respect, compassion and inclusivity, as well as providing an opportunity for reparations and reintegration instead of focusing on punishment.

As an organization, the RCMP is adapting to the changing environments and needs of its communities, committed to finding new ways to best serve the residents of the Indigenous communities.

The RCMP is actively making efforts to recruit young men and women from our Indigenous communities to join our ranks, to better reflect the communities we serve and to assist in making those communities and their people feel safe.

For more information, please visit our website at rcmp-grc.gc.ca or contact a recruiting specialist at RCMP.KRecruiting-KRecrutement.grc@rcmp-grc.ca

Chief Superintendent Gary Graham is District Officer - Eastern Alberta District “K” Division.



ATTENTION READERS:

This edition of Alberta Native News deals with topics that may cause trauma invoked by memories of past abuse. A National Indian Residential School Crisis Line has been set up to provide support for former Residential School students to minimize the risk associated with triggering.

You can access emotional and crisis referral services. You can also get information on how to get other health supports.

Please call the Crisis Line at 1-866-925-4419 if you or someone you know is triggered while reading the content of this newspaper.

Christina King on the importance of using fur in fashion

By Chevi Rabbit, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Christina King is a well-known Inuvialuk artist and couture fashion designer who owns Taalrumiq Art and Design. She is also a cultural educator and digital content creator from Tuktoyaktuk, Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

In recent years, she has become a celebrity in the Inuvialuit community and has been invited to speak on CBC Radio One's *Unreserved* to discuss issues facing Indigenous designers and people.

In addition, she attended and graduated from The Indigenous Haute Couture High Fashion program at the Banff Center for Arts and Creativity, which has allowed her to expand her business and showcase her work across Canada.

Despite being removed from popular e-commerce platform Etsy, King has secured several high-profile contracts for her Sealskin Solidarity Heart pins.

Last year, King participated in Pow Wow Pitch, a premier pitch competition and non-profit organization supporting emerging Indigenous entrepreneurs. She won two prizes – the people's choice award, and the alumni award. She was also one of six emerging Indigenous fashion entrepreneurs to be awarded an Aritzia Indigenous Fashion Grant, which helped to further showcase her work.

"That was exciting, and it challenged me beyond what I thought I could do, and just getting those awards shows me that other people believe in me and what I am doing," remarked King.

She has been able to feature her art and design work in Winnipeg, Vancouver, and Ottawa, and has had many opportunities to participate in events and fashion shows. Her social media presence has also been steadily growing.

"The product for my pitch was a heart-shaped orange seal skin solitary pin that came about during the 2022 Strong People, Strong Communities, Indigenous Mural Art Project,"

said King. "I was a part of that project on the strong elder's team, and they approached me about doing a workshop for the public."

It was during that time they were starting to report on all the children's graves nationally found at the sites of former Indian residential schools, in Kamloops, and across Canada, explained King.

"I felt that creating the orange heart pin was a meaningful way to address what was happening and just a symbol of love and support for all our residential survivors," she added. "I am a child of residential school survivors. Both my parents went to residential schools, and my brother and I attended through high school. So, it has so many layers of meaning, and it was a way to heal through traditional arts, using our traditional materials, and gathering together in a safe space to talk, and have these discussions."

Art and Design Business, Taalrumiq just grew from there, she said, and she has been busy, recently completing an order to provide 100 pins for conference attendees. She laughed when expressing how difficult it is to add beadwork onto seal skin.

King is also at the forefront of advocating for the Inuit fur trade industry. "I came on Rosanna Deerchild's show called *Unreserved* on CBC Radio One to talk about how I use fur in my fashion and to educate about the dwindling fur trade in Canada and the world," said King.

"A big part of my platform is education and sharing the importance of fur to Inuit and why I use it in my fashion...I tried to sell my mittens and moccasins on the Etsy website, Facebook, and other online platforms, and was viciously attacked online for my use of fur."

"It was discouraging," she added.

But she now has a platform, is being heard and her work is being appreciated.



Sealskin Solidarity Pins by Taalrumiq

"It's a total 180," said King. "It's nice that so many other Inuit designers are being fairly compensated now, unlike our grandmothers who gave away their hard work."

King opens about her grandmothers, "I feel that my grandmothers were exploited for work. My maternal Inuvialuk grandmother is Alice Cockney Gruben of Tuktoyaktuk, NWT, and my paternal Gwich'in grandmother is Eliza Albert Louie of Aklavik, NWT."

"They were paid so little. My grandmother was a well-known seamstress, she made a pair of handmade seal skins for a Japanese explorer, who was the first explorer to walk to the north pole, and he stayed at my grandparents for a couple of weeks. So, my grandmother took care of him and made him proper clothing for his journey to the north pole... that was huge. And she just gave this stuff away."

"It's been a struggle to get our work valued and convince consumers why we have the prices set that we do."

Follow Taalrumiq | Christina King's work through Linktree or on Instagram @taalrumiq, TikTok @taalrumiq, Facebook @taalrumiq, Twitter @taalrumiq, and YouTube @Taalrumiq Inuvialuk Artist & Designer.

Papaschase *cont. from p 11*

as the "duly elected or hereditary Chief and Council of the PFN, or any derivatives thereof, and/or the Papaschase descendents."

"A small group of individuals have taken it upon themselves to hold themselves out as leadership of the Papaschase peoples," said Chief Calvin Bruneau in a news release announcing the injunction. "We took this group to court, and the court has issued an injunction against them. They do not represent the Papaschase First Nation and they have no authority to do so."

The news release says the chief cannot provide further comment.

Papaschase isn't officially recognized by the federal government but has elected a chief and band council since 1999.

The band signed Treaty 6 in Fort Edmonton in 1877, which awarded it 49.9 square miles of reserve land in south Edmonton, although it only received 39.9 square miles. In 1888, Papaschase's membership was absorbed into surrounding nations, including Enoch Cree Nation, based on a vote from three of its 249 members.

The website for Papaschase First Nation #136 Association says the site is suspended due to the

injunction.

A March 23 update on the site from Darlene Misk, however, says the group is "responding to this injunction in order to clarify all our responsibilities, roles, along with our processes, governance and proper verification for Papaschase ancestry through legal genealogy documentation or DNA testing."

A hearing at the Court of King's Bench in Edmonton is scheduled for April 20.

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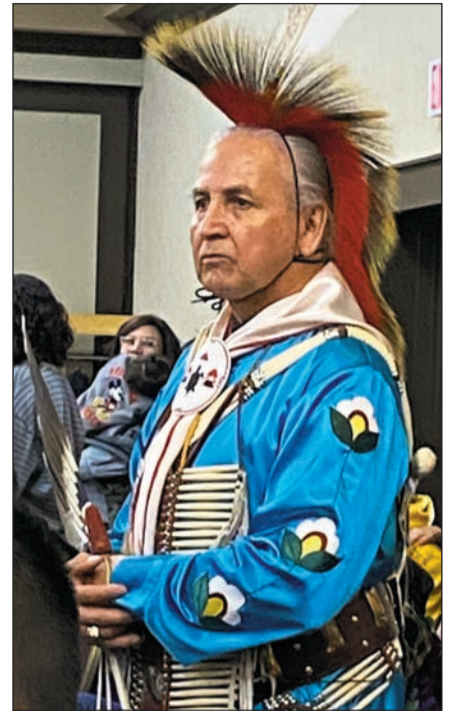
- You can work in a world class entertainment facility
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- You can help contribute to an exceptional guest experience

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HOW CAN YOU FIND OUT ABOUT CURRENT JOB OPPORTUNITIES AT RIVER CREE RESORT AND CASINO?

You can view job openings and submit your resume on line at www.rivercreejobs.com. Follow us on Facebook at River Cree Resort & Casino Job Board or come to our office in person and visit our Recruitment Specialist.

Saddle Lake kicks off the Spring Powwow Season - Photos by Terry Lusty

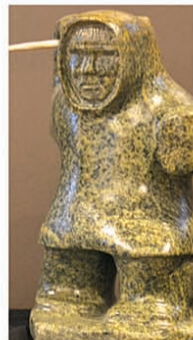


Hundreds of people turned up at the Edmonton Inn on March 25, 2023 to attend one of Alberta's first powwows of the year - Saddle Lake First Nation Spring Powwow. At least 400 dancers were on hand to delight the audience and provide a tune-up for the powwow season around the corner.

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