

eaglefeathernews

Newspapers will not transmit the Coronavirus

CPMA #40027204



By John Lagimodiere
of Eagle Feather News

What a year to graduate. Coming off a pandemic that led to disrupted classes, remote and virtual lessons, and tons of stress, 2021 graduates will have many stories to tell their little ones when it comes their time to walk the stage.

This year also comes during the traumatic revelations of unmarked graves at residential schools across Canada. The community is in shock, but there is always hope in the next generation. And the joy of receiving that diploma or degree is one joyous step in harnessing that hope for our next ones to

realize their proper place in society.

That's why we like to celebrate our grads with our annual photo contest. 2021 turned out to have our best response ever. Pictures from north, south, east and west came in. They range from someone who graduated as a doctor, down to a three-year-old who passed her Michif language class, the variety of subjects was spectacular. The locations, colours, outfits and happy faces made it very difficult for our judges, but after a long debate, we came up with our three favourite images.

Taking first place in our photo contest is.....

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Larissa Burnouf

Support of family

"My dad always told me, if you're not sick, dead or dying, you better be working or going to school. So that work ethic has always been there,"

- page 6

July 2021 is our
Graduation Issue

...a Cree Indian and was born on the Sandy Lake Reserve just north of Prince Albert, where his parents still live. He is a striking example of what education will do for the Indian, and his plea for similar education for the children of his race, as is compulsory for the children of our towns and cities, is strengthened by the force of the example in himself.



Edward Ahenakew - circa 1918 Fighting Draconia

After many years of resistance, Edward Ahenakew's motion at the League of Indians Nations 1921 convention was realized when the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) was formed in 1968.

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Reconciliation Ally: Jaime Le Roy With an Open Heart

I was greatly disturbed by the Canadian government's actions and the intergenerational trauma it set in motion. I wanted to offer support to residential school survivors and Indigenous communities.

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Therapy and childhood dream helped grad achieve goal

By Betty Ann Adam
of Eagle Feather News

Ryanne Torrence knew from the time she was five that she wanted to be a teacher.

"I would make little fake assignments and have my dad do them or put them in front of my teddy bears and pretend that was my class. Little scribbles on paper that was supposed to be writing," Torrence recalled recently.

She graduated from Senator Miles Venne High School at Lac La Ronge Cree Nation and was accepted into the Universities of Saskatchewan and Regina but chose to stay in the community she loves by enrolling through Northlands College, which delivers the USask Bachelor of Education degree program.

Despite high marks in high school, Torrence struggled with university because of crippling anxiety and depression.

"My anxiety was high. I was nauseated all the time. That went on for years... It was rough."

Torrence was treated for depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and suicidal thoughts and tendencies. She attempted suicide three times during the four-year program.

"I have lost people to suicide, and I know how it hurts and I know I am very loved so I didn't want to make my loved ones experience that if I had gone through with it. But I also had a hard time holding on. I needed something to live for. Like I said, from the time I was five it was, 'I want to be a teacher, I want to be a teacher.'

I needed that. I needed to do this," she said.

She left school in the first semester of fourth year after a suicide attempt. She had been doing the extended practicum and loved it.

"I was having so much fun, but when my mental health is bad, it's bad. My depression was so high my chest felt heavy all the time, I felt hopeless, like it

would never go away because I'd already been dealing with it for years and I didn't know what to do. I was so tired of trying to be okay and never making it."

She worked with her doctor, who tried to find the best medications to treat her mental state while trying to avoid negative side effects.

She also went into intensive, twice weekly therapy that required deep and exhausting daily reflection.

Therapy and medication have helped her regain equilibrium and she intends to continue with them because she wants to maintain her healthy state.

"You have to want (therapy) or else you're not going to put the effort in... It can't just be the therapist talking and you listen. You have to talk, you have to engage, you have to participate in exercises that are meant to help you," she said.

"I feel really good right now," she said.

She returned this spring to finish her practicum at the same elementary school that she attended as a child.

"I was with these little kids, and it was so awesome just watching them explore and discover new things and learning to interact with people. It was incredible. I had so much fun."

This spring, after her practicum ended and she'd completed her degree requirements, she was offered a four-week substitute position at the school and is set to teach Grade 3 in the fall.

"I try to tell myself whenever I make a mistake and I feel silly or I regret something, that every mistake and every regret that you have teaches you something," she said.

"It may be impossible, but I want to live a life without regret, so I try very hard not to let fear stop me from doing something. I was afraid to do this interview but if I didn't, I'd be breaking my own cardinal rule, so I'm doing it. I don't want to miss out on good things because I let fear win."



Ryanne Torrence B.Ed 2021 doesn't let fear stop her.
(Photo submitted)

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Fishing Lake member Ottmann appointed President of First Nations University

By NC Raine
for Eagle Feather News

Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann is keenly familiar with the profound impact that support and encouragement can have on a young person's success in education. She's felt it, first hand.

"I had parents who encouraged education, completion of school. I had grandparents that supported schooling completion," said Ottmann.

"My family really did celebrate, not only my high school completion, but the completion of each of my degrees."

That passion for education, home-grown in Fishing Lake First Nation, has led Ottmann from high school teacher to doctorate in education, and now, to the highest reaches of leadership in academia. On June 28, Ottmann was appointed the new President of First Nations University of Canada (FNUUniv).

"This is somewhat of a dream come true because, as an Indigenous person, to be part of a post-secondary Institution that is founded upon Indigenous knowledge is a privilege," she said.

"Education has been my passion, my calling, my career."

Ottmann will begin her role as the tenth President of FNUUniv on September 7, a position she has long been working towards. An Anishinaabe woman and speaker of Nakawe language, she has spent her life immersed in culture and education.

After receiving her Education Degree at the University of Calgary, she returned home to obtain her Masters and PhD at the University of Saskatchewan. Among her distinguished career, Ottmann has served as an Associate Professor and Director of Indigenous Education at the University of Calgary, President of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education, Professor and the first ever Vice-Provost of Indigenous Engagement at the University

of Saskatchewan.

"I think that having Indigenous perspectives and voices at the most senior levels of administration is very important, especially with the goal of Indigenization, reconciliation, and decolonization, you need to have Indigenous representation. Universities are complex organizations, so you have to have an understanding of the way things work and the social impacts that universities can have," she said.

Since the vision of the president and her job performance are considered synonymous with the university's performance, Ottmann will have a far-reaching influence in education in the province.

The FNUUniv, which is federated with the University of Regina with campuses in Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Alberta, brings Indigenous ceremony, knowledge keepers, language and traditions to post-secondary education.

It has about 1,200 students and graduated 195 students in 2020.

Loretta Pete Lambert, Chair of FNUUniv's Board of Governors, said Ottmann is a stand-out on paper but also impressed the executive council, students, and Elders who have met her.

"She has a collaborative (approach) and a quiet, driven energy to her. And of course, she has the experience in post-secondary that speaks to what her capabilities are," said Lambert.

"I think the University at this time needs an innovative thinker. We have a community of individuals who are very driven and professionally efficient in our university community, so I think she'll fit right into that."

Ottmann says that now is a particularly important time for Canadians to become better versed in the often tragic history of Indigenous people.

"These stories of what happened at Indian Residential Schools are known within our communities. There have been many people who have advocated for change

within our institutions, but also for various kinds of resources and support. With this new awareness, with new knowledge comes responsibility. I hope Canadians will come to understand what that responsibility is."

In leading FNUUniv for the next five years, Ottmann intends to uplift and support Indigenous students, through increased mental health supports, financial support and daycare for student-parents. Increased support for Indigenous students means more Indigenous knowledge and participation in mainstream society, she said.

"There's so much that contributes to the barriers Indigenous students face. (Barriers affect) our communities and are connected to our society and to how our educational institution are built and function. There's not one factor or barrier for Indigenous students, so I believe in providing integrated, wrap-around supports for our Indigenous students," she said.

"We need to ensure our students are properly supported through the education process, as well as through program completion and even beyond into the work force."



Dr. Jacqueline Ottman, a member of Fishing Lake First Nation, has been named President of the First Nations University of Canada. (Photo supplied)

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Celebrating for those that couldn't

This graduation issue is dedicated to all the students who went to residential schools that never had a chance to graduate. Some never finished. Some went to schools that never offered grade 12. And tragically, many never made it home. Killed through violence and neglect by an inhumane system staffed by some inhumane people.

The community has been traumatized once again by the revelations of the unmarked graves across our country. Graves of children. Relatives. We knew. The lost ones had been talked about and reported on but again neglected until hard proof came out. This will be a summer of grief. We must accept that.

The outstanding leadership of Cowessess First Nation Chief Cadmus Delorme has been revealed to the world. His wisdom and ability to explain and engage has captivated Canadians. And he puts this situation into such clarity with a simple quote. "Nobody today created residential schools. Nobody today created the Indian Act. Nobody today created the Sixties Scoop. But we all inherited this." Then he called on Canadians to read the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Calls to Justice from the MMIWG inquiry and asked them to incorporate them into their personal and professional lives.

A powerful statement at a historic time. These discoveries are making international news and shining the light on Canada's disgraceful past, and the shameful shortcomings of the Catholic Church in its response to its legal and moral obligations.

Perhaps these revelations will be that watershed moment where Canadians finally understand the long and deep impacts of these schools, hold the Catholic Church accountable, demand governments fulfill the Calls to Action and take personal actions toward reconciliation.

Till then we can embrace our current and future students. Support them in their education and sports. Give them every opportunity to succeed and one day earn that diploma or degree.

This year is special. These grads all went through a year and a half of challenging schooling. Pandemic. Lockdown. Virtual classrooms. Uncertainty. Historic trauma. But with the persistence and resilience of their ancestors coursing through them, they did it. Maybe they walked a quiet stage in a mask, but they did it and no one can take that away from them. And that is to be celebrated.

Summertime

Eagle Feather News will be slowing down in July. We all need a well-deserved holiday. We no longer publish an August issue so look for copies of our September

issue around the 10th. It will focus on back-to-school post-pandemic, what the families, teachers and students can expect. We will also look at education trends and look at Indigenous graduation rates across the province.

With many people getting their second vaccines, we can now have events, festivals, family gatherings and sports with fans! So, if you haven't gotten your shots yet, get on down to the clinic semuk so we can all meet in Davidson in mid-August, and have a provincial hug. Please have a safe, peaceful, and enjoyable summer.



Ellie Foster graduated from the Michif Early Language Program at Westmount Community School. Grads like Ellie give us hope.

Correction on recent article on MN-S election

We would like to apologize to the Gabriel Dumont Institute and MN-S Vice President Michelle LeClair for inaccuracies that appeared in the article "New MN-S VP LeClair, re-elected Pres McCallum differ on issues." The article appeared in our June issue and on our website.

The article inaccurately stated that, "It was also alleged that GDI played a political role in the election by only inviting certain candidates to a political debate." For the record, GDI did not host a political debate of any kind. GDI invited each candidate to submit information on their platforms for a special election issue of New Nation magazine but only 17 of 18 responded. The person who did not respond was sent several subsequent invitations, via several methods and refused to respond or submit information.

Eagle Feather News also wants to correct this statement: "Allegations of the MN-S overstepping its boundaries in GDI operations by having an appointed Minister take an active role in the governance of the organization." The actual governance of GDI is of a 12-person board of governors selected from the 12 MN-S regions plus a Chair. That Chairperson is the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Minister of Education.

There was also a mistake in this quote from Vice President Michelle LeClair: "GDI has positioned itself with its affiliates in ways that other governments would find inappropriate." The Institute does not have affiliates and is not a government. It should have read "MN-S has positioned itself..."

We sincerely apologize to Vice President Michelle LeClair, the Gabriel Dumont Institute board, management, staff and students for the confusion and harm done by these inaccuracies. We deeply regret the errors and will do better in the future.

John Lagimodiere
Publisher Eagle Feather News



Box 924 Saskatoon, SK S7K 3M4
306-978-8118, 1-866-323-NEWS (6397)

Eagle Feather News

is published monthly by ACS Aboriginal Consulting Services

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Publications Mail Agreement No: 40027204 | OSSN #1492-7497
Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to: EFN Circ., P.O. Box 924 Saskatoon SK S7K 3M4

Subscriptions:

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PUBLISHER / EDITOR: John Lagimodiere, john@eaglefeathernews.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Betty Ann Adam, bettyannadam@eaglefeathernews.com

SOCIAL / DIGITAL MEDIA : Errol Sutherland, errol@eaglefeathernews.com

GENERAL INQUIRIES: contact@eaglefeathernews.com

This issue was printed on:

July 8, 2021

Next issue to be printed on:

Sept 9, 2021

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CHECK OUT OUR LATEST TOP STORIES



Ottawa provides \$4.88 million to look into unmarked burials at residential
The FSIN has received \$4.88 million from the federal government to research unmarked graves at Saskatchewan Indian Residential Schools.



Change John A. Macdonald Road to Reconciliation Road, STC Chief advocates
Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC) Chief Mark Arcand walked the 27 kilometre length of Circle Drive in Saskatoon in an effort to bring major change to the city.



Indigenous history and trivia quiz
Welcome to our annual National Indigenous Peoples Day history and trivia quiz. We have scoured the archives in the arts, sports, politics and history and have 25 questions to test your knowledge of obscure Indigenous stuff!

Loss of sight didn't stop Education student

By Betty Ann Adam
of Eagle Feather News

Stella Wilm was only three when she was in a car crash and suffered a lung injury that would one day rob her of her vision.

Wilm, 30, of Pasqua First Nation, graduated this spring with a Bachelor of Education from the University of Saskatchewan.

After high school, she entered the Indigenous Teacher Education Program (ITEP) three years in a row, but withdrew each time.

After that, she enrolled in the one-year Early Childhood Education Program at Keeseekoose.



ITEP grad Stella Wilm with husband Kyle Wilm and son Christopher (photo submitted)

Things were going well until early 2014, when Wilm began to experience problems breathing and with her vision. Doctors discovered her right lung was smaller than the left one – a result of the childhood trauma – and had collapsed. The lack of oxygen caused brain swelling that damaged her optic nerves. She was put on constant oxygen.

She recalls studying when her vision was so restricted, “it was like looking through a straw.”

“At first I couldn’t see the ground or my feet. Things were just blurry and then it really picked up fast and the next thing you know, I couldn’t see.”

“I didn’t know what was happening, if I would ever see again.”

Wilm clung to her determination to complete the program. She finished the written exams before her vision was gone and made arrangements to

do her practicum.

“I think that was my way of dealing with things. I wanted to... finish school. It really showed me... that if I can get through this, I can deal with whatever happens,” she said.

“I had a lot of support. I was living with my parents (Leroy and Margaret Obey) and my family just all really pulled together and helped me through it.”

Over the next two years, Wilm did all she could to adjust and regain her independence. She did therapy with Raymond Jordan, who is blind. He and his wife, Jacqueline, are ministers at the Pasqua church and both became close friends.

“When I first went to university... My struggles, that was always me not knowing how to deal with my issues,” she said. Since her teens, Wilm had dealt with depression that had sent her into spirals of addiction.

“Even when I lost my sight, I spiraled, but that’s why I took the counseling. They really were there for me. They didn’t want me to fall into my old lifestyle with my grief,” she said.

In 2016 she moved to Saskatoon with her sister, Eunice Obey, who was also starting at ITEP. Wilm worked with CNIB to learn her way around campus and got to know the Education building, inside and out.

Continuing with counseling was an important part of staying healthy.

She learned to advocate for herself, introducing herself early to instructors and using the university’s excellent disability services and CNIB. She and Eunice took the same classes and shared an apartment.

The ITEP students and staff became family too; she seldom walked through a hall without chatting with someone.

“I wanted independence. That was always my plan, my goal was to be a teacher, to work and grow up like anybody wants to. I didn’t want my being visually impaired to hold me back.”

In 2019 she married Kyle Wilm, whom she’d met in 2017 and who brought son Christopher to their little family.

“When I graduated, my husband said ‘Congratulations,’ and I told him, ‘Kyle, this isn’t just my accomplishment. This is all of ours. It wasn’t just me. It was my family and my supports that helped me get this degree. I couldn’t have done it without any of them, especially my husband.’”



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Family support made a big difference for grads

By *Sophia Lagimodiere*
for *Eagle Feather News*

Perseverance and a strong support system are key to achieving education goals, say two recent graduates.

Larissa Burnouf, who has a BA in Sociology, recently graduated with a Law degree and a Certificate in Indigenous Governance and Politics. She achieved this milestone while raising her two children and working full-time as the Communications Director of FSIN.



Larissa Burnouf learned work ethic from her dad and was inspired by her children as she completed her law degree while working full time. (Photo supplied)

"I'm not going to lie, I cried (when I graduated). I totally bawled my face off," said Burnouf. "I've always known since I was a little girl that I wanted to be a lawyer."

Burnouf says she wouldn't have been able to get through law school on her own and is grateful for the everyday little things that kept her motivated, like classmates sharing notes when she had to go pick up her son, mentors reassuring her when she felt like she would never finish school,

and Papa showing up with a bag full of groceries when she needed to study.

"My dad always told me, if you're not sick, dead or dying, you better be working or going to school. So that work ethic has always been there," said Burnouf.

Being a mother also kept her determined throughout her studies.

"When you're a mom, it's different. I think that's what prepared me the most for law school because when you have a newborn baby, it doesn't matter how tired, or sick, or sore, or anything you are. You have to get it done, or that baby's not going to make it. It gives you that instinctual motivation to not give up because this person is depending on you," said Burnouf.

Burnouf recalls breastfeeding the day she wrote her law school admission test, having to rush out of class when her son got hurt at school and taking her kids with her to her night class.

"I've literally taken my kids to a night class. I have my son on his iPad with his headphones on and my baby girl colouring beside me as I tune into a night class, and that professor didn't say a word. It's that kind of community that helps you," said Burnouf.

She is articling at Sunchild Law and preparing for the Bar exam and plans to go to Harvard next May to take an Executive Education Program, which was postponed during the pandemic.

"The day after I graduated, I actually looked at (my friend), and I'm like, 'who the hell just gave me a law degree?' Right, so that that will never go away. It is always, you're in the back of your mind like 'I'm not good enough to do this'," said Burnouf. "But you know what, you're doing it, you've got in, you're still going."

"There are thousands of Métis and First Nations kids that are going to be like 'no we can't do it, we grew up on the rez,' or 'no we can't do it we grew up in poverty.' You're showing them that they can."

Kennedy Halcro, recent BA Education graduate and valedictorian, just finished a part-time contract teaching at École River Heights School. She feels fortunate to have attended the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP). Having classmates who shared the same family values and heritage helped her with her studies and becoming more in touch with her roots, she said.

... continued on page 7

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... continued from page 6

Halcro said she grew up with people doubting her abilities, telling her that she would never be successful in school. This narrative lit a fire within her to prove them wrong.

“(I said) I can do this no matter how hard it is. I will go to university. I will graduate. I will go on to do my dream career. Because as long as I’ve got the drive to do it, I can pursue it,” she said.

Halcro struggled with an undiagnosed learning disability throughout elementary and high school, never receiving any accommodations or help. It was



Kennedy Halcro, recent graduate and valedictorian, celebrates with family from home.

not until her last month of grade twelve that she was diagnosed with dyslexia.

“I was going to my SUNTEP interview (and) my mom called me, and she’s like ‘hey, you just got your results back,’” said Halcro. “I started crying.”

“It’s good to have the proof because, of course, I was struggling all by myself,” she said. “It’s definitely something I’ve always kept with me because I’m going to grow up to be a teacher who is going to have students just like me.”

Grade 12 was also when Halcro learned about her Métis roots after writing an essay on Louis Riel in her Native Studies class. She learned her maternal grandmother (Yiayia) had married a Greek man, learned the language, and joined the community. Growing up, Halcro always thought her Yiayia was Greek.

“It was kind of pushed out of them, really,” she said. “At the time... it was something that people were trying to hide all the time. Like with my grandma, she pulled off Greek really easily.”

She praises SUNTEP for helping her get in touch with her identity and roots, and opening her up to new ways of thinking and knowledge, which she can now bring with her into the classroom.

“A big challenge, I think a lot of people in SUNTEP face, is colourism. Because we’re Métis, but we pass off as white, we don’t always get the same appreciation. So if I tell someone, ‘hey, I’m Métis,’ they would fight me on it like, ‘no you’re not, you got blue eyes and pale skin,’” said Halcro. “I’m like, ‘no, I am, here is my story, I’m Métis.’ It is more my history than anything else.”

In Halcro’s second year of SUNTEP, her class went on a history trip to Winnipeg, where they looked at the Hudson’s Bay Company Archives. Everyone around her was finding old records to help pull their Métis history together. Already struggling with her identity, she couldn’t find anything.

On the last day of the trip, she looked at Louis Riel’s sash on display at the Saint-Boniface Museum and read a plaque underneath honouring her ancestor, Margaret Halcro. She was rewarded with Louis Riel’s sash for helping hide him in her cellar while he was on the run from the North-West Mounted Police.

“On my last day of learning about all my heritage, I found out this significant piece of information that I share with my students all the time now because I think it is pretty impressive,” Halcro said.

Halcro hopes that SUNTEP become more well-known among other Métis who don’t know their family histories, as she has been able to bond over her Métis identity and create life-long friendships.

“I’ve been with the same crew for the past four years, and that’s really helped me with my education. You [can] always ask for your friends to help because they’re really your family,” Halcro said.

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Grad photos tell story, celebrate success



... continued from cover

Kaszy Tootosis. The photo of Kaszy was the unanimous choice of our judges. Taken by her mother Tanya by the river in Saskatoon, the powerful image of the red dress blowing in the wind and painted hand on her face was Kaszy's way to honour missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls who did not get to graduate.

"I wanted to bring awareness to the issue so that is why I chose red for my dress. Also in high school, I wrote three papers on missing and murdered Indigenous women," said Kaszy, a member of Onion Lake Cree Nation and a graduate of Centennial Collegiate in Saskatoon. "It is important to me cause my aunty Jarita Naistus was murdered in 2006."

Kaszy made her own dress over the course of a week and her beaded cap took her three days. "I had never really done anything like that before. But I had a picture in my mind as to what I wanted and then found a Pendleton that matched."

In these trying times of residential school graves being discovered, Kaszy's perspective is insightful. "They let me know how fortunate I am to be able to graduate and go to university after everything that happened," she added.

Her mom is her biggest support and always motivates her. "She is always there for me. She lets me know I can do whatever I put my mind to." After some time off to relax, Kaszy is looking for a job then preparing for University of Saskatchewan in the fall where she is enrolled in Arts and Science and hopes to focus on child psychology.

Kaszy Naistus, Onion Lake Cree Nation, graduated from Centennial Collegiate in Saskatoon. - 1st Place, 2021 Eagle Feather News Grad photo contest winner.



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... continued from page 9



Kahley Iron - 2nd place, 2021 Eagle Feather News Grad photo contest winner.

Second place this year went to Kahley Iron. This fun shot of Kahley and her boyfriend Ruben Corrigan was inspired by a bunch of 1980's grad pics they had seen. "My sister convinced us to try it and took the photo at my mom's place," said Kahley. "We had a lot of fun."

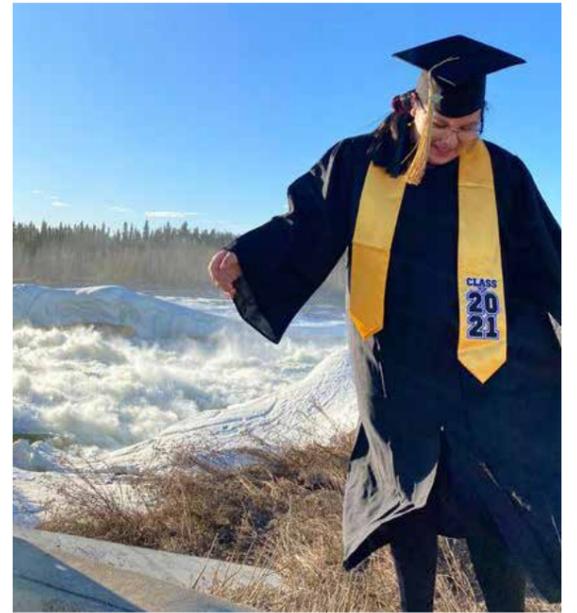
Kahley was the valedictorian at Canoe Lake Miksiw School. "I worked

hard all year on my school and to make valedictorian meant a lot. My message to the students was that we have to keep going. This graduation is just the beginning of our journey." Her biggest supports are mom Tara and dad Jamie. "They always instilled in me to go to school. And don't slack."

Kahley has a summer job lined up at North Haven Lodge in a summer camp and then is off to Meadow Lake in the fall to study at the U of S campus there. First an arts degree, then applying for law.

Coming third was Cass Bear. The power of nature and the beautiful sky really set off this image. Her photo was taken at Island Falls by her friend Harmony. "I took the photo at the falls because it has beautiful scenery and it has been there for many, many years, if that dam wasn't there, Sandy Bay wouldn't be a place," said Cass. She graduated from Hector Thiboutot Community School in Sandy Bay and is a member of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation.

Her plans for summer are just to enjoy it with family, travel around, visit and stay safe. "I am actually taking a year off school to get certificates for my career that are needed. I applied for medical radiologist at Saskatchewan Polytechnic, I'll be there for two years, then transfer to U of R for my last two years," said Cass. "My main support system is my family, they pushed me to do my best and here I am, graduated with high marks and I'm proud of myself. I can't wait to see what happens next, but I'm also afraid, but fear is a part of life."



Cass Bear - 3rd place, 2021 Eagle Feather News Grad photo contest winner.



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Cole Woytiuk earned his Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BScN) with Distinction and is the recipient of the President's medal for academic standing, leadership and extra-curricular activities at the Spring, 2021 convocation.

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A Love Letter for Trespassers

By Erica Lee
for Eagle Feather News

I grew up in a city named after *misâskwâtomina*, Saskatoon berries, or as some settlers call it, “the service berry” - their tongues unable to handle the slow sexiness of Cree syllables. The inner city is a predominantly urban Indigenous space, so we develop an understanding of borders early, since straying beyond them means an increased risk of facing violence. There is a border that separates the west side of Saskatoon (the “Alphabets”; the Native side) from the east. There are borders constructed between urban spaces and rural farms built for wealthier white people and poor urban spaces and reserves meant to contain the rest of us. The rest of us live with police cars parked outside our homes, and police planes circling over our neighborhoods all night long. In *Barrio Libre: Criminalizing States and Delinquent Refusals of the New Frontier*, the writer Gilberto Rosas characterizes this type of terrorism as “low-intensity warfare”, a constant psychological process of surveillance that dehumanizes us and restricts our freedoms. This type of terrorism is done by the state to people considered inherently criminal: those genetically and culturally predisposed to being “criminals.” In short, our very presence in this neighborhood is considered to pose a threat to the state. We are a threat to the type of “pure” nation state touted by John A. Macdonald and countless others. Surveillance, too, is an attempt at restricting our movements, and Canada’s legal system – police, prisons, and laws – are just as relevant now in the corralling of Indigenous bodies into spaces we are supposed to be as they were in the age of the North West Mounted Police.

Fences and Those Who Cross

It is here, in the inner-city neighborhood of Pleasant Hill, that early one spring, I saw a car run over a small grey cat on 22nd street. I’ll name her *okocihtâwiyiniw-minôsis*: little adventurer cat. When I found her, it was late enough in the evening that there wasn’t much traffic, so I walked into the road, weaving through the lanes to help her. I hadn’t thought about leaving her there, I guess because I would want someone to do the same thing for one of my cats if they were injured. When I approached

her, there was no blood that I could see; when I lifted her body, she didn’t fight or struggle, but her body was broken. I carried her to my house as gently as I could, she closed her eyes and her breathing halted in my arms.

Twenty-second Street is one of the main streets in Saskatoon: stretching from the east side to the west, it begins at the river, then moves through downtown, through the inner city, and to the suburbs and new retail developments in the west. While the street passes through the inner city, it is clear this road is not built for us. There are many people in this neighborhood reliant on mobility devices like canes and wheelchairs, and the lack of sidewalk maintenance impacts them most of all. Puddles form where the street dips into the



Erica Violet Lee speaks of the oppression of fences in the country and the inner-city.

curb and walking down the street or waiting to catch a bus means being splashed and soaked by cars that never bother to slow down while passing pedestrians, and instead, often speed up. In the winter, the sidewalks are rarely shoveled unless someone from the neighborhood takes care of it. In the summer, there are no trees, no benches, and no shade along the long stretch of sidewalk. This road is meant to be fast passage through the inner city, between two wealthier, whiter centers - fast and violent passage, at the expense of neighborhood residents like *okocihtâwiyiniw-minôsis*. Sometimes the speed comes at the expense of humans. In January 2014, a 59-year old man was killed crossing this street in the early evening, trying to get across in an area without a crosswalk. A minute may not seem like a long time, but some of us don’t have time to waste. When you’re carrying heavy bags of groceries with no car, a block makes a difference.

It took this man’s death, the years of accidents before it, countless complaints, and petitions for a crosswalk with a light to finally be installed on Avenue M and 22nd St W. When you push the button to cross, the light takes a whole minute to activate. Of course, a push button-activated light is no use for the little creatures crossing the road, and it hasn’t stopped accidents. The simple act of crossing a street in a community of people who make a home of a place deemed uninhabitable is an affirmation of our right to live when death is considered our natural state.

Keep Moving

In 2011, in response to the high number of accidents through an eight-block area of 22nd Street due to pedestrians crossing (or rather, cars failing to stop), the city proposed a fence in the middle of the street, 2.5 metres (8 feet) high and 2 kilometres long (1.24 miles).

Fences are often proposed as a solution to trespassing. But fences are not de-

signed to protect people: they are designed to protect property. Fences protect cars, farms, and settler colonial states. Fences rarely prevent passage, only make crossings more dangerous than they would have been otherwise. The fences on 22nd Street were proposed to protect the people driving. Our inner city lives become the inevitable collateral damage required to maintain the city. Construction here is constant, providing the illusion of unending growth, progress, and speed required to maintain a colonial space.

When I reached home, I laid *okocihtâwiyiniw-minôsis*’ still-warm, soft little body on some leaves. We called city animal control to collect her. While hours passed, I sat inside and wrote, acutely aware of the small body out resting on in my yard. Later, it began to rain, so I brought her body up to the porch and wrapped her in a blanket. I laid some sage for her spirit, lit some candles, and put on some Black Sabbath in her honour. In a space where we are never allowed to stop or rest, or walk slowly down our streets without fear, mourning is a form of care for each other as residents of this neighborhood, all. Our mourning is resistance, and in public, our unrepentant tears are an act of rebellion that shakes the facade telling us all this violence is normal and ought to be expected for humans and creatures like us. When I awoke late the next morning, *okocihtâwiyiniw-minôsis*’ body was gone. I wondered what would happen to her, now. The ground was still frozen from the long winter, so it would have been too difficult to bury her in the yard. I still wish I had tried. Despite the violence, this neighborhood is our home, and it is hers too.

Billy Jean Cote
Hometown: Kamsack, SK
Band: Cote First Nation
Program: Welding certificate

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▲ **Natasha Dreaver (Mistawasis First Nation) Process Engineer Colonsay** is one of the first of 24 grandchildren in her family to graduate from university, she's put an exclamation point on the achievement by earning two degrees—a BSc in Biological Sciences from the University of Alberta and a BSc in Chemical Engineering from the University of Saskatchewan.



▲ **Anthony Sparvier (grew up on Cowessess and Ochapowace First Nations) SR Electrical Engineer Automation Team Esterhazy K3** received his education at University of Regina with a Bachelors of Applied Science in Electronic Systems Engineering in 2007 before joining Mosaic in 2012.



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– Anthony Sparvier

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USask confers about 400 degrees upon Indigenous graduates

By NC Raine
for Eagle Feather News

Celebrations may be temporarily distant but were no less personal for students at this year's Indigenous Graduation Celebration at the University of Saskatchewan.

"It's such a positive thing, to build each other up and celebrate each other. To be able to say, 'look how many of us are supporting each other and standing together in this circle of hope,'" said Candace Longjohn-Constant.

Longjohn-Constant, who is graduating with a Certificate in Indigenous Languages, is one of the roughly 400 Indigenous students graduating from Usask this academic year. The Indigenous Graduation Celebration, which took place in May, was held virtually to replace the annual Graduation Powwow.

"It's an important thing to celebrate because until recently, we weren't able to celebrate anything about being Indigenous. We were shunned for practicing our culture. Now, we're being celebrated, we're being encouraged to teach and practice our culture, and dance our style," she said.

No stranger to celebrating and embracing her culture, the Sturgeon Lake First Nation member grew up in a family heavily involved with powwows. But as both her parents and grandparents attended Residential School, she was discouraged growing up from learning her language.

The Certificate in Indigenous Languages – a post-degree program from the College of Education – gave her an immersion in the Plains Cree language she had long been hungry to learn.

"I did this course to enhance my language acquisition skills, to be able to teach my kids and converse with my parents," she said.

"My grandparents (because of impacts from Residential School), forbade my parents from teaching us their language. To rebel against that has been a life-long dream. To fight against the system, in a sense."

The virtual celebration delivered messages of resilience, pride, and empowerment by individuals like Elder Marjorie Beaucage, Elder Roland Duquette, Usask President Peter Stoicheff, Provost and VP Academic Dr. Airini, Elder Maria Campbell, Vice-Provost of Indigenous Engagement Jacqueline Ottmann, and lawyer Helen Semaganis.

"We have never had a group of graduating students like the class of 2021. Completing your programs amidst the challenges of the pandemic required more dedication and

determination than ever before," said Stoicheff. "Indigenous students are essential to the success of the University of Saskatchewan, making important contributions in every college and every school on campus."

Ian Worme, member of Kawacatoose First Nation, graduating with a Masters in Public Administration, reflected on both the historical and personal significance of his accomplishment.

"It's wasn't until the last 40 or 50 years that you saw Indigenous people becoming educated with a post-secondary degree or post-graduate degree or PhD. So this day is representative of how far we've come," he said.

Worme is the second generation in his family to receive an education at Usask. His father received a Bachelor's Degree in Geology.

"It is not an easy challenge for Indigenous people to get this far. It shows the strength and perseverance of our people, of overcoming certain challenges," said Worme.

"So this for me is an extension of what my father was able to accomplish."



Ian Worme, a member of Kawacatoose First Nation, graduated with a Masters in Public Administration. (Photo supplied)



Candace Longjohn-Constant, graduating with a Certificate in Indigenous Languages, is using her education to take back her Plains Cree language (photo: Candace Longjohn-Constant)



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Reconciliation Ally My Journey of Allyship By Jaime Le Roy



Walking into my Grade 10 Socials class this past spring, I was expecting to pick up a textbook and start learning about the trials of World War I and how it helped shape our identity as hard-working Canadians. The first thing out of my teacher's mouth changed my expectations in a hurry.

"Canada uses its squeaky-clean reputation to hide its dark and difficult past, a past which scars and torments the first peoples of this land," was the first thing my teacher, Mike Gosselin, said.

At first, I was perplexed by his words. Maybe a little defensive. Isn't Canada a peaceful nation? Aren't we celebrated for saying 'eh' while drinking our Tim's coffee and playing pond hockey on our pet Moose?

While those things are arguably true, there is simply more to the story. A lot more.

With our teacher's help, my classmates and I were able to break away from these stereotypes and the illusion of a "perfect Canada." We had the opportunity to view our nation's history through Indigenous eyes.

We achieved this by throwing away the history textbook. Instead, we studied Indigenous media, stories, articles, music, artwork, and documentaries. We tore apart the Indian Act, learned about Treaties and followed the timeline of the systemically racist policies that helped found and shape this country.

One film, "It Had to Be Done" by Tessa Denomie, had a lasting impact on me. Told by two remarkable Indigenous women, who not only survived the horrors of residential school, but who, as adults, made the decision to return to the school and improve its living conditions for the next generation of Indigenous youth.

Upon concluding this film, a sense of helplessness washed over me. I was greatly disturbed by the Canadian government's actions and the intergenerational trauma it set in motion. I wanted to offer support to residential school survivors and Indigenous communities. I wanted to get involved but I didn't see how one non-Indigenous girl could make a difference.

This past May, the revelation of 215 children found buried at the Kamloops Resi-

dential School further pushed my need to do something. How could we let this happen? What am I personally going to do to help?

I didn't exactly have all the answers and Gosselin didn't either.

"If I told you what I thought the answers were, then you wouldn't learn anything," he said.

So, I conducted some research, talked to Indigenous members in my community, and discovered the term allyship. Allies are defined as individuals who advocate for targeted people or groups being oppressed in society. Their role involves dismantling stereotypes, prejudices, and acts of oppression.

In order to become an ally, I thought I had to make a big statement or do something that caught attention. My perspective changed when Gosselin introduced my class to the Medicine Wheel. The four quadrants of this sacred hoop reflect Indigenous culture and values, teaching the importance of appreciating the interrelatedness of our world. It shows us that we are all connected, we are all human, and we all have the power to change the world.

The Medicine Wheel became my guide. It allowed me self-reflection and the ability to realize I don't have to do anything big. It's the small things I can do in my day-to-day interactions as an ally to Indigenous communities.

I can further educate myself on Indigenous traditions, customs, and significant events, strive to form meaningful relationships with Indigenous people in my community, and do my best to understand by simply listening and observing.

"Allies are agents of change because they aren't afraid to step out of their comfort zone, take part in conversations, and ask questions. They understand that change takes time, that patience is key, and that being an ally isn't an identity but a life-long process of learning and striving to do better," Gosselin said.

So, with an open mind and heart, I will choose to support Indigenous communities. I will choose to inspire change through patience, listening and understanding. I choose to be an effective ally because that, in my mind, is what any non-Indigenous person living on Turtle Island should do.



Jaime Le Roy is a student of former EFN writer Mike Gosselin. This is her reaction to the discoveries of graves at residential schools.

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Local radio on the Internet helps communities stay connected

*By INCA Staff
for Eagle Feather News*

No matter where you live, community radio can take you home. That's what Pauline Clarke discovered when the station she set up in her northern community started streaming local programs on the Internet. Clarke studied journalism at the First Nations University of Canada. In 2000, she completed the Indigenous Communication Arts (INCA) Summer Institute and did an internship at MBC in La Ronge. She was shy to go on the radio at first, but when an announcer didn't show up for his shift, and she was the only Cree speaker available, she had no choice. That experience inspired her to set up CIRL 97.7 FM in Southend, Saskatchewan, 222 km north of La Ronge, accessible only by gravel road, on the southern tip of Reindeer Lake.

Clarke got help from veteran broadcaster and mentor Robert Merasty, who helped found Missinipi radio in 1983 and is now the Cree/Michif broadcaster in Ile a la Crosse.

Merasty helped Clarke set up a non-profit called Reindeer Lake Communications, apply to the CRTC for a radio license and find money to hire an engineering firm to install their tower and transmitter.

The CIRL signal travels about 20 kilometers out from the tower and reaches everyone in the community of 1,100 people. Many community members live and work outside the community, mostly in Prince Albert and Saskatoon.

Clarke goes on the air for four hours every weekday, plus evening BINGOs once a week. When she's not on the air, she switches it to MBC's programming from La Ronge.

About 10 years ago she realized that they had enough local programming to set up a live stream on the Internet. Their streaming service lets her see everyone who logs on.

Overnight their listening audience grew to include community members located all over Saskatchewan and as far away as Halifax, Las Vegas and Alaska.

Clarke says listening to the CIRL livestream gives people "a feeling of being at home."

Everyone's favourite show is the request hour, but she also does local news,

weather and sports in Cree and English (for nurses, teachers and RCMP).

With their station streamed live on the Internet, people living away can participate in pledge drives to help community members experiencing illness or loss. "In that way, they can show their support, even though they're far away," says Clarke.

During COVID, streaming radio helped people get news from home. "We had very important updates and they could tune in from wherever they were...because everything that happens here affects them as well," said Clarke.

Reindeer Communication Society has a Facebook page with over 2,200 followers and a link to their live stream.

(This article is part of a series supported by the In-Spirit Foundation, which gave INCA-FNUV a grant to do research with Indigenous radio broadcasters.)



Pauline Clarke connects the remote community of Southend, on Reindeer Lake, with the world on CIRL 97.7 FM, a community radio station that streams programming on the Internet. (photo submitted)



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Distance studies okay, distance graduation, not so much

By Judith Iron
for Eagle Feather News

First Nations and Métis women have always demonstrated the ability to successfully multi-task. Managing homes, families, kids, jobs, bills and schedules all while studying, reading, and writing papers for university requires serious multi-tasking skills.

The 2020/21 university term was confusing and challenging for many students when the Corona Virus arrived. Not to be thwarted in their educational pursuits, these resilient women continued their studies and received degrees despite the ongoing pandemic.

Joanne Durocher of Canoe Lake Cree First Nation graduated from the University of Victoria in June with a Bachelor of Social Work. She was a full-time student when the pandemic hit. Like every summer break before, Durocher returned to her home community to work at the General Store owned by her sister, Terry Ann. When she learned classes would continue to be delivered remotely, she decided to remain in Canoe Lake.

As a single mom of four kids, the convenience of being able to earn, study, and care for her children at the same time was idyllic. Unfortunately, being a sole provider, a committed employee, and a university student living in a community that had a security gate was not always easy.

“Being a front-line worker during the lockdowns didn’t help. I was working double and sometimes triple time,” says Durocher, “Some days I would do double shifts and race home to do mom stuff then read and write a 15-page essay.”

Trying to work with other students online was hard because she was having conversations and doing group projects with people she couldn’t see. It was often difficult to reach students to participate in the work. On the home front, childcare was an issue. Trying to make ends meet and care for her children was often struggle, but the many sacrifices were worth it because she now holds a Social Work degree.

The downside of finishing university during COVID was receiving notice of such a huge accomplishment in the mail without a ceremony at the University. Durocher was disappointed she couldn’t be with her fellow classmates for the event.

“I received an email from University of Victoria stating that they will be inviting me to walk the stage sometime over the next three years,” she said.

Elaine Malbeuf is a Métis woman from Ile-À-La-Crosse who wanted to quit university many times over the years, but she persevered. Working hard through the pandemic, Malbeuf was happy to participate in a virtual graduation in June for her second master’s degree.

In 2015, Malbeuf earned her first master’s degree in Educational Leadership through Trinity Western University. She had worked in various leadership capacities since 2001 and admits she questioned herself before taking that opportunity.

“But, you know what? I did it!” she said.

Upon completing that degree, Malbeuf immediately applied for a Master’s program in Northern Governance and Development with Johnson Shoyima School of Public Policy at the University of Saskatchewan. The pandemic was not an obstacle for her.

“I was used to learning remotely so it didn’t really make a difference. The downside of all of this,” says Malbeuf, “is that I saw videos of previous celebrations and thought, ‘Wow,’ they were so awesome, especially for First Nations and Métis people. I wanted that, but COVID prevented it from happening for me. I was a little saddened, but I’m happy I got my degree.”

“I still don’t know what I’m going to be when I grow up,” laughs Malbeuf, “but, I love learning so much I have actually already applied for a doctorate.”



Distance learning didn’t hold back Elaine Malbeuf as she recently graduated with her second masters degree. Now she has already applied for a doctorate. (Photo supplied)



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The maddening cold silence of residential school perpetrators

When former students of residential schools shared their heart breaking stories to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) none of the administrators, staff and teachers of the schools chose to share their experiences and convictions. The lone exception was a retired RCMP officer who tearfully expressed how ashamed he was for removing children from their parents.

Upon their investiture clergy vow to follow the direction of their bishop. The bishops and by extension their leadership gave no order requiring the clergy to appear before the TRC.

The maddening cold silence of the perpetrators was in sharp contrast to how arrogant, smug and controlling they once were. They believed they were doing the best for First Nations despite the protestations of First Nations. For some it was a job for others a diseased cause.

First Nations people were regarded as literal wards of the state. This did not change until First Nations were awarded the right to vote in the early 1960s. A bitter irony is foster children are now also designated wards of the state. There are now more children in foster care than there were at the height of the residential schools.

The residential schools did not attract quality staff. The pay was low. The worksite often isolated and they most couldn't find any other work. They were seldom screened and the vulnerability of the children attracted abusers. Then there were the remittance men, the black sheep of prominent families exiled to distant colonies. Some

surfaced and were employed by the residential schools.

There was a male nurse with St Pauls residential school on Blood reserve in southern Alberta back in the sixties. He came from a very well known prominent family famous to this day. He abused little girls, which may explain why he left England at his family's insistence. He was found out and reported to the principal. The parents



Breaking Trail

John Cuthand

wanted him fired but the principal wouldn't hear of it. He stated it was only certain children telling lies. He said the school was fortunate to have a nurse. Nothing came of the complaint. The parents were powerless. He wasn't stopped until he abused non-First Nations children off reserve. The residential school administrators across Canada knew full well what took place yet they did nothing.

It was during the early 1970s and, to an ex-

tent, the latter 1960s when First Nations began reclaiming their power. Victories were hard won. The old order doggedly refused to relinquish power but it was a different time. Canadian society was changing. The churches influence was waning and their congregations dwindling. Never again would they control the First Nations. First Nations were winning in courts forcing the hand of the Federal Government. The First provincial organizations were formed, united and grew in influence. Such leaders such as Walter Dieter, Harold Cardinal and George Manuel forged the National Indian Brotherhood. The schools closed one by one until they were gone.

"Indian control of Indian education" became a rallying cry and many former residential school survivors were at the forefront. Education, once the blunt instrument of assimilation became an engine of empowerment and success.

There is a lot more about the residential school era which needs to be known. The TRC recommendations have not been fulfilled in their entirety. The Roman Catholic Church stubbornly refuses to release critical church records and the pope has not apologized uttering instead a toothless statement of regret. The Anglican Church and the Presbyterians gave a full apology. The Anglicans became bankrupt as a result.

Despite generations of pain and despair a battle is being won. The perpetrators are in hiding. The public has come on side. Truth is told. More is to come.

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