



Prince Albert Grand Council Tribune



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Sod turned for a Wellness Centre project at Pelican Narrows



Ron Merasty Photo

Your scribe suggested that the sod-turning party stand in this uneven terrain in order to have Miron Lake as a backdrop, and a lovely view it is. From l-r: Mel Linklater; Chief Peter Beatty; Councillor Olivia Custer; Tallulah Bankhead; FSIN Vice Chief Fabian Head; PAGC Grand Chief Brian Hardlotte; Councillor Thomas Linklater; PBCN Vice-Chief Justin Halcrow; Councillor Leon Dorion; PBCN Pelican Narrows Administrator, Jonah Merasty; and Alphonse Dorion, Project Manager.

By Ron Merasty

It was a beautiful 17-degree fall afternoon, that began as cloudy but ended up sunny on September 9, 2025, as the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation (PBCN) Pelican Narrows Council, and Chief Peter Beatty, turned the sod - or maybe it was glacial till - for a future alcohol and drug wellness (and healing) centre.

The location of the project is at the east end of the expanded Pelican Narrows Indian Reserve 184B, and connected by a road that ends on a small bay on the shores of Miron Lake - a beautiful and secluded spot with a million-dollar lake view.

The sod-turning was briefly delayed as all waited for the arrival of silver-coated shovels, but in the meantime everyone was musically entertained by Darrell "Boots" McCallum and his son "Jabu." As I arrived I heard my favourite fiddle tune, "Maple Sugar." If it wasn't traditional fiddle music being heard, it was classic country music that this crowd appreciated.

The opening prayer, in Cree, was delivered by Mel Linklater.

Paul Glaser of RBM Architecture, Saskatoon, and his colleague, Richard Gryschuk, were given the opportunity to speak first. We learned that the building, to be of log construction, will

cost approximately \$5.5 million and be 4000 square feet in area, and require about 14-16 months to complete. It will need to be connected with water and sewer.

As the building is to be constructed on the predominantly rocky Precambrian (granite) terrain, it will require some blasting and excavation, and be built into the side of the stone. Both of the RBM representatives, and all speakers, were presented with a framed, larger-than-original replica silver (pewter) Treaty No. 6 medallion as a memento.

PBCN Chief Peter Beatty, as others did, acknowledged that the project was a vision of past leadership. He thanked the project management team and the organizers who had arranged to provide a large, pop-up canopy tent for the ceremony, and had meals of moose-meat (pre-sod turning) and fried pickerel (post-sod turning) prepared. He congratulated the current Pelican Narrows council and thanked RBM for the many, excellent PBCN projects they have previously been involved.

"All our communities are suffering from alcohol and substance abuse, and it is up to us to help our people," PBCN Vice-Chief Justin Halcrow, who is from Pelican Narrows, said.

He said that community members have previously been sent to the south for treatment, and questioned whether sending someone into a different cultural setting is the best solution. Once the project is operational local residents will not have to leave their community and will have the comfort of familiar surroundings and loved ones nearby.

"I have faith in our people," to devise an appropriate and effective treatment program, he added, and acknowledged, specifically, the efforts of past local council members, Elizabeth Michel and Myrtle Ballantyne.

The local council had determined that they could not wait for Indigenous Services Canada to review their wellness centre proposal - it could take years for final approval - and so they green-lit it with own-source funding to be accessed from their Agricultural Benefits settlement with Canada.

Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations Vice Chief, Fabian Head, congratulated PBCN, saying, "You are reclaiming your health; you are reclaiming your wellness."

"The challenges that we have is all over Saskatchewan region," Prince Albert Grand Council Grand Chief Brian Hardlotte said about alcohol and substance addiction. "You make us proud at PAGC for where you're at with the wellness centre."

Councillor Thomas Jr. Linklater said that the project was given momentum because "people always look to their leaders to 'do something.'" He thanked Mel Linklater, "whose program funded the construction of the road, otherwise we'd have to come by boat!"

The sod-turning ended with a meal of fried pickerel, bannock, macaroni salad, potatoes and beans. The closing prayer was delivered by Elder Pat Linklater.

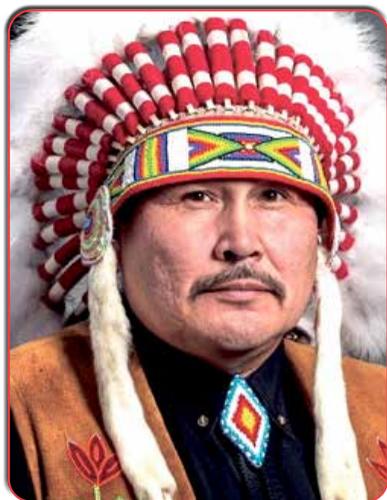


Ron Merasty Photo

Cooks Lorna Sewap, Mary Custer and Emma Sewap prepared a wonderful pickerel meal.

MESSAGE FROM GRAND CHIEF BRIAN HARDLOTTE

James Smith Cree Nation was an excellent host of the Western Treaty Nations 2025 NRTA Summit in Prince Albert



Since 2011 the Prince Albert Grand Council, in an alliance known as the Western Treaty Nations – signatories to the Numbered Treaties 1-11, in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta - have been holding talks that we call “summits” to find a way to rescind the terms of the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement(s).

The NRTA Acts were passed in 1930 in the legislatures of the three Prairie Provinces and the Parliament of Canada wherein the administration and control of the natural resources were transferred from Canada to the Provinces.

First Nations’ objections to the NRTAs are because it goes against the terms of the Treaty made between First Nations and the British Crown, wherein we, the First Nations, according to our understanding of the Spirit and Intent of Treaty, agreed to share the land with the newcomers. We did not agree to ‘cede, release and surrender’ our lands as set down in the written text of the Treaty. Neither did we give up ownership of their resources.

The NRTAs are part of the constitution of Canada. As Western Treaty Nations lawyer, Paul L.A.H. Chartrand wrote in 2016, “If the legitimacy of a Constitution depends upon the support and confidence of the people that the Constitution governs, then it is important that the consent of First Nations attach to the NRTAs. Even more directly, if the Treaties are sacred covenants between Canada and First Nations then it is obvious that the representatives of First Nations be involved in any constitutional or legal changes that affect the Treaties.”

Chartrand goes on to write: “The movement to amend the NRTAs is about

justice and respect for the Treaties which are the foundation for the relationship between Canada and Treaty Nations.”

The NRTA fight is about sharing the natural resources which Canada and the Prairie Provinces have *assumed* ownership and control of.

Since 2011, which is now 14 years ago, seven more summits have been held at several locations in the various Treaty territories with the latest having been held at Prince Albert exhibition centre August 24-27 and hosted by James Smith Cree Nation. It was an excellent Gathering with representation from:

- Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations;
- Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs;
- Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak;
- Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations;
- Treaty 7 First Nations Chiefs’ Association; and
- Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta.

It also featured many excellent speakers, including:

- Regena Crowchild, a leader from Tsuu T’ina Nation from Treaty 7 in Alberta since the 1970s. A strong proponent of Inherent and Treaty Rights, her inspiring message of First Nations sovereignty is a feature article in this month’s Tribune.
- Ovide Mercredi, who needs no introduction, has been a strong advocate on a national level for First Nations since the 1980s.
- Sharon Venne, an accomplished First Nations lawyer, originally from Muskeg Lake First Nation, is an inspiring speaker on Inherent and

Treaty rights.

- Matthew Coon-Come, a national and international leader of Cree descent from the Cree James Bay region of Quebec, has long been an advocate for Aboriginal, Treaty and human rights for Indigenous peoples.

There were other excellent speakers. The Mercredi, Venne and Coon-Come presentations will be feature articles in future issues of the Tribune, starting in the next issue.

Toward the end of the of the summit, on August 27, I was very satisfied with the agenda and the lineup of speakers that we had heard, and I thought our message was getting through to our people. I said: “I think we educated people this week,” and that progress was being made, about the need “to rescind the NRTA.”

Some leaders may be impatient for progress, but First Nations Elders, such as Abel Charles from my First Nation, Lac La Ronge Indian Band, has urged leadership to continue our struggle, saying, “kâwitha pakicîk” (“do not give up”).

As I said near the end of the summit, “it took 25 years to get Cows and Ploughs and the right government,” and this issue will not be rushed. We will know when we are ready.

Chief Kirby Constant and his James Smith Cree Nation council and membership proved to be an excellent host of the 2025 NRTA summit and I thank them for that, and include the organizing committee. They all hit home runs. I also thank all leadership that attended and supported our summit. The next summit will be hosted by Kehewin First Nation in Treaty 6 territory.



Ron Merasty Photo

NRTA Summit – In the photo from l-r: Chief Ronnie Auger, Fond du Lac Denesuline Nation; PAGC Grand Chief Brian Hardlotte; Matthew Coon-Come; Chief Kirby Constant, James Smith Cree Nation; and one of the summit organizers, Robin McLeod, Lac La Ronge Indian Band.



RON'S RAMBLINGS

BY RON MERASTY

* The opinions expressed by the contributors are solely their own and not necessarily that of the PAGC Tribune

To contact the PAGC Tribune: Ron Merasty, Publisher/Editor/Ad Sales
Phone: 306-763-6628 Email: rmerasty@pagc.net

SOME FACTS ABOUT RISE AIR'S FLEET

Rise Air operates 24 aircraft, including ATR 42, Saab 340 and Beech 190D regional airliners; a Pilatus PC-12 corporate aircraft, and Twin Otters; and the fast, pressurized King Air. How fast? As a KC Chiefs fan I have fantasized about boarding a King Air and arriving in Kansas City within 3 hours of takeoff! It is that fast. (That was, of course, before travelling to the U.S. has become

problematic with President Trump turning into an ugly and unfriendly neighbour.)

Flying from Saskatoon to KC on Air Canada takes about 20 hours with three stopovers, no matter which route is taken. Who wants that? So, I've driven to KC to watch the Chiefs' games. I have no plans to go to a home game anytime, but maybe, with luck, after 2028?



Ron Merasty Photo

This photo was taken at the Shoal Lake Grade 12 Graduation in June, and many in the photo are community leaders. Left to right: Raimey Whitecap; Shoal Lake Councillor Kevin Bear; PAGC Grand Chief Brian Hardlotte; Wacihk School Principal, Stan Merasty; PAGC Vice-Chief Chris Jobb; FSIN Vice Chief Fabian Head (from Red Earth Cree Nation); and Shoal Lake Chief Marcel Head.

FACTS ABOUT POPES

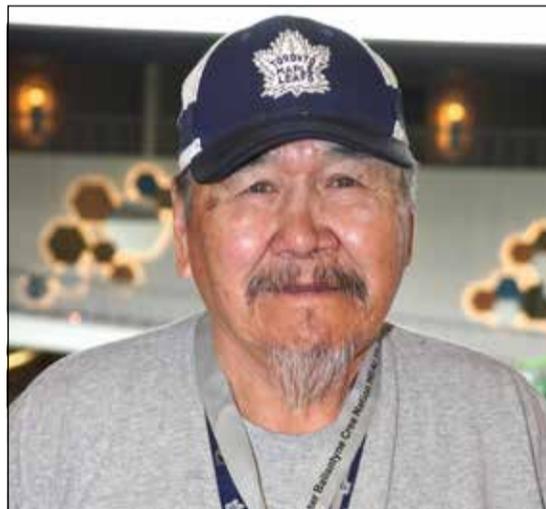
The current Pope, Leo XIV (fourteenth), is the first pope in my lifetime that is younger than me! I was raised Roman Catholic and so I, naturally, always took a natural interest on who was the head of the church. I keep an interest because, well it's the papacy. After all, the pope is a head of state and he is looked at to provide some moral direction in a world gone mad.

When I was born Pius XII was the pope, and he expired in 1958, and succeeded by John XXIII, who died on June 3, 1963 when I was in Guy Hill residential school. He was succeeded by Paul VI, who passed on August 6, 1978, and was succeeded by John Paul I, who was in office from August 26 to September 28, 1978, a very short tenure. Then came the Polish-born Pope John Paul II who, despite being nearly assassinated in 1981, reigned until April 2, 2005. He was succeeded by Pope Benedict XVI, a German, who resigned on February 28, 2013, to be succeeded by the Argentinian (with Italian parents) Pope Francis on March 13, 2013 and passing on April 21, 2025. Pope Leo, an American by birth, is the 267th pope

since Peter. The year 1978 was the year of three popes. Yes, it feels a little weird to be older than the pope.

Pius IX (1846-1878 - 32 years) was the longest-reigned pope; John Paul II was second at 26 years. There has been an English pope, Adrian IV, from 1154-1159. Pope Benedict IX, elected in 1032 was only 11 or 12 at the time, according to the testimony of a monk called Rodulfus Glaber. The three oldest popes elected, ironically, all in my lifetime, were: Benedict XVI, Francis, and John XXIII. The latter only served five years but presided over Vatican II which resulted in the Catholic mass changing the language from Latin to the prevailing official language in the diocese. In the year 896, Pope Boniface VI was *chosen* (not elected) to be the leader, but his reign lasted only 15 days. He was 90 at the time.

The pope at the start of the second millennium was Sylvester II, from 999 to 1003. Pope Clement IV (1265-1268) was about the portliest pope, given the nickname of "Guy the Fat," while Pius XII was considered very thin, as was Paul VI.



Ron Merasty Photo

George D. Michel, a PBCN member, is from Pelican Narrows. Born in 1948, in 1968 he briefly worked for Co-op Fisheries in Prince Albert. He wasn't much older than some of us high schoolers and we used to play touch football down by the river near to St. Mary High. I think he returned home sometime in the later fall. This photo was taken in very early May when PBCN had an Elders' conference in Saskatoon. In the April/May 2025 issue of the Tribune Elder George, somehow, had his photo not placed in the Elders' photos page, so this is the fix.

NHL SEASON STARTS SOON

My goodness, it just seems like the Stanley Cup final was just over and now we are looking at the start of the 2025-26 season. The biggest change seems to be that Mitch Marner, who wore blue with Toronto, will now be donning a Vegas Golden Knights jersey. Will he be booed when he returns to Toronto? Oh, likely about \$96 million worth of them.

I note that Marner has moved to a "no state income tax" state, so he saves some money. Those states with no state income tax are: Florida, Texas, Nevada, Tennessee, and Washington. Those states have an easier time attracting free agents as a result, and have an advantage. (Nobody wants to be traded to Winnipeg, Calgary or Edmonton, or Vancouver, which is rated to be the most beautiful city on earth. Toronto and Montreal are world-class cities but they are located in tax-heavy Canada.) Which teams have won Stanley Cups lately? 2025 - Florida Panthers; 2024, Florida Panthers; 2023 - Vegas Golden Knights; 2022 - Colorado Avalanche; 2021 - Tampa Bay Lightning; 2020 - Tampa

Bay Lightning. The Dallas Stars have been very competitive and it's merely a matter of time before Seattle Kraken attracts the free agents, one would think. Right now they are still at the Sad Sack stage.

But the tax haven jurisdictions, let's call them, are all in the United States, and generally, all U.S. states probably have a kinder state/federal tax burden than any city in Canada that has an NHL team. That is part of the reason that no Canadian NHL team has not won the Stanley Cup since 1993 (32 years). Not since Montreal Canadiens did it in 1993.

I remember the 1993 Canadiens. By 1996 most of its stars had become free agents or had been traded to other teams, probably because they requested it, likely for the reason of a lesser tax burden. All the good ones left: Guy Carbonneau, John LeClair, Kirk Muller, Denis Savard, and of course, Pat Roy, one of the best goaltenders of all time - a GOAT - was chased away by tough-guy coach Mario Tremblay.

more ramblings on page 4



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MORE RAMBLINGS*continued from page 3***A GUY HILL VISIT AND PICNIC**

As I had indicated in the last Tribune, while I was at Wollaston in early July I was invited, or asked, to attend the annual Guy Indian Residential School (Clearwater Lake) gathering, always held on the August long weekend. I attended that institution for six years as a child.

I live in Prince Albert and on August 2, a Saturday, I left somewhat late in the afternoon. I took the long way, through Melfort, Tisdale, Mistatim, and Hudson Bay, then further east toward Barrows, MB, and Dawson Bay, an extension of Lake Winnipegosis (which means "Little Lake Winnipeg - Little Dirty Water Lake"). Then it was up my favourite highway in the world, Highway 10, to The Pas. No 10, from about Baker's Narrows to Mafeking is a great drive, and usually does not have much traffic.

The plan was to overnight at a hotel. Camping is passé for me; it is not 1996 anymore. Arriving exhausted, I fell asleep for two hours. When I awoke I did not really want to get up, still feeling tired. Now already past 7 pm, I set out to drive to Guy Hill, which is 22 miles away, but feels more like 10.

At the first turn after leaving The Pas/Opaskwayak Cree Nation (The Pas is on the south side of the river and OCN on the other side) there is a locale known as Big Eddy - part of the reserve. I remember my mother used to pronounce it in her Cree way (she couldn't help it) as "Peak E.T." What I remember from my Guy Hill days is that on that corner there used to be an advertising sign displaying the vintage 1950 Pepsi-Cola logo. The sign, with the old logo, was still there in 1966.

Things have changed. One more long turn later, where Highway 287 branches off to Clearwater Lake, there is a locality called Prospector. In the 1960s it had that name even though there was no population there, and only a metal tower from which conservation officers, or their minions, could scan the horizon for smoke from a distant fire (which is a

title of a mediocre 1970s pop song). So, the tower isn't even there anymore.

I noted that Highway 287 is falling into disrepair; it was much better in 1973 or 1996. A few miles down the road is Sunset Beach, at the west end of Clearwater Lake. We, Guy Hillers, used to occasionally go swimming at Sunset Beach, and because of distance we had to travel there in the school bus with the eternally black-clad Brother Menard (whose only stain was being a Montreal Canadiens fan) providing the chauffeuring duties (the slowest driver in the world).

I have mentioned, previously on these pages, that Clearwater Lake has approximately the same area as the freshwater Lake Tiberias in Israel, also known as the Sea of Galilee, even if the former is more "square" in shape. It is hardly a sea. At Guy Hill we received a lot of religious instruction with recurring mentions of the Sea of Galilee. At that time I had no idea the "sea" was about the size of our lake.

By the time I was nearing Guy Hill the sun was sinking lower on the horizon. On the last stretch of road, which is approximately 3.5 km of gravel, I met a couple of vehicles. Finally, I turned the last corner at the location of my old residential school. I remember that I used to feel severely downcast every year upon making that last turn when we saw our brick-constructed prison. It meant the summer respite was over and doing hard time was about to resume.

After parking I immediately saw Mr. and Mrs. Simon Samuel, from Lac Brochet, and my niece, Fran. Simon was in Guy Hill for a year in 1960-61. Fran attended at Prince Albert before the turn of the century (the 20th). They were the only people I recognized.

I was offered a bowl of soup. It wasn't the best bowl of soup ever, but it was superior to the mysterious slop we got every time when we were inmates. We chatted for a while. It seems that both the Samuels and Fran had been on the

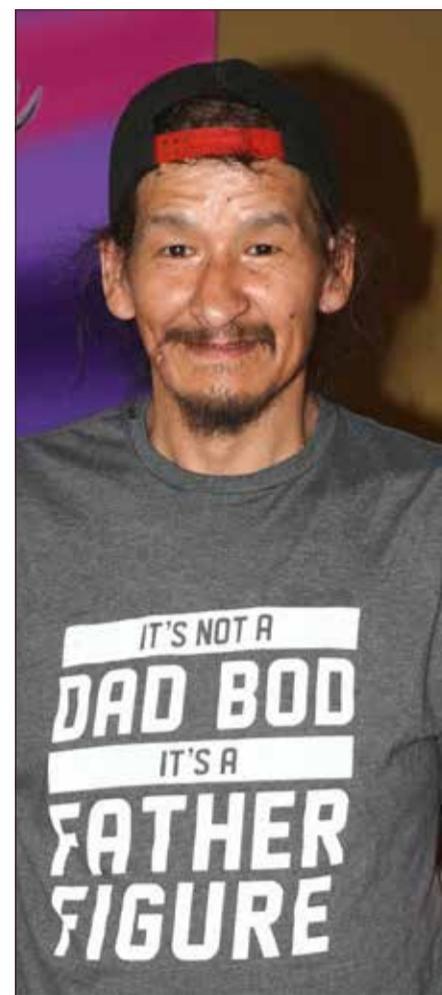
verge of leaving Guy for The Pas where they probably had accommodations. Since they were leaving, I also returned to The Pas.

I was feeling under the weather by now and told the desk clerk at the hotel that I was checking out and driving home. The two hours of rest would hold me in good stead. A personable sort, he said, something like, "Okay, you check in for two hours and then you go home!"

Driving along the main drag, I turned left at the courthouse. I turned there because it is Highway 283 going west to the Manitoba/Saskatchewan boundary. From the boundary the road turns to gravel, which is why I took the long way to The Pas, adding over 100 kilometres to the journey, eventually arriving at the Shoal Lake Cree Nation junction, where the road turns to pavement. It was 70 miles of gravel before I hit even better pavement once I arrived at Saskatchewan's northeastern-most agricultural land about 10 kilometres past the Red Earth Cree Nation junction. I arrived home around 1:00 am.

Okay, back to the present. I noted that the stop sign at the end of the gravel road, which had been there in July 2021, the last time I went to Guy Hill, is now gone. I wondered what had happened to it and it felt as if a monument had been removed. Maybe one of the former inmates dug it out, even though I felt it unlikely, to take home as an artifact from that unhappy place.

In the 1960s that stop sign was for traffic, yes, but it also told us that we were not allowed to go beyond that point. After all, we were inmates in that institution that was 3.5 kilometres down the road.

*Ron Merasty Photo*

This photo was meant to be included in the last Tribune. The fellow in the photo is George Ratt, a Lac La Ronge Indian Band member from La Ronge that, in June, was evacuated to James Smith Cree Nation's "Lodge" which had excellent accommodations. George, at the time, was separated from his companion, Carla, during the rush to leave Bell's Point Reserve. About five years ago, George said, he weighed 365 lbs, but in June weighed only about 140. George said he found the t-shirt at the Lodge amongst donations of clothing provided by kind folks in the Melfort area during the evacuations.

*Ron Merasty Photo*

Your scribe took this photo in the early hours, just before sunrise, on July 4, 2021. This is the infamous stop sign - the Brandenburg Gate for Guy Indian Residential School students at Guy Hill, Manitoba. The sign, in 2021, appeared as if it had been in place at that spot since 1958, appearing more orange than red. It had an orange cloth tied to it, probably placed there by a former student, signifying that "Every Child Matters." That is Highway 287 beyond the sign.

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Elder Regena Crowchild says we still have our Sovereignty as Treaty Peoples to decide our futures

By Ron Merasty

Regena Crowchild, 81, a Blackfoot Elder of the Tsuu T'ina Nation, Alberta, from Treaty 7 perspective, imparted her accumulated wisdom about what she understands about Treaty at the Western Treaty Nations' 2025 *Natural Resources Transfer Agreement* Summit held in Prince Albert August 25-27. It was appreciative audience that took in her approximately 30-minute address in which she told her "truths" about "exactly what happened to our Peoples."

She always used the word "peoples" in the plural, to denote all the different Treaty nations. She sometimes used "Treaty" in the singular in referring to all the Numbered Treaties, and in telling us "that our Treaty is in danger."

Crowchild said that "at the time of Treaty-making our Peoples were sovereign Peoples. They still are. Remember that. Never forget that."

She added, the Treaties were about "sharing our territories, and the Elders would say this: 'This deep.' Some of us say, 'To the depth of the plough,' some say, 'six inches.'"

Those Numbered Treaties, she said, were "Peace Treaties, Peace and Friendship Treaties. They were not surrenders."

The view of non-Indigenous historians, writers, citizens and, of course, Canadian courts, believe the



Ron Merasty Photo

2025 NRTA Summit, Prince Albert. In the photo l-r: James Smith Cree Nation Councillor Tanya Moostoos, Treaty 6; Tsuu T'ina Nation Elder Regena Crowchild, Treaty 7; JSCN Chief Kirby Constant; Senator James Burns (from JSCN)

Numbered Treaties were of the "ceding, release and surrender" of First Nations territories - the written text, to them is akin to Scripture. The history of Canada seems to believe this narrative, but Elder Regena Crowchild does not buy it. She has her interpretation as passed down by Elders who know the true

Spirit and Intent of Treaty.

She mentioned the 16th Century Doctrine of Discovery, where arriving Europeans on Turtle Island claimed the land as their own, in their view "because we weren't Christians, we weren't Peoples."

In Treaty-making, Crowchild said there were First Nations sovereign-to-sovereign negotiations with the British Crown. Her view of sovereignty is that Turtle Island Peoples who had it, had "their territories, their languages, their right of self-determination, their right to law-making authority, right to government, and the right to justice, and everything else that they possessed," given by the Creator.

The newcomers had their world view, we had ours. The Creator had given the nations the territory of Turtle Island "to hunt, fish, trap, gather their medicines for their livelihood."

In her view King George III, on October 7, 1763, proclaimed, 'No one can settle on Indian lands, Indian territories, unless they come to me to make Treaty,' that the King recognized First Nations' right to 'free, prior and informed consent,' and that we've "always had it."

First Nations had entered into Treaties before the 1870s, amongst each other, and that 'free, prior and informed consent' was always acknowledged and followed. We've never lost it."

So, when the Canadian state was created, Crowchild said, Canada "assumed title to our territories, our natural resources - everything on this land that they thought they conquered, which they never did...."

Crowchild reiterated that the peoples of Treaties 1-11, as sovereign people, "own their territory, and they've never given their consent to relinquish their authority, and their lands, and their Peoples, and their right to self-determination."

The Treaties, she said, provided "certain portions of our territory for the exclusive use of our people, and

we were to live side-by-side without interference," but "Canada has *always* interfered in our lives."

In 1876, Canada enacted the federal *Indian Act*. It came into force on April 12, 1876, after the conclusion of Treaties 1-5, and before the start of negotiations of Treaties 6-11.

"In that *Act* they stripped our peoples of their authority, their sovereignty, their right to self-determination, their right to 'free, prior and informed consent.' They took that away. They started getting rid of us, and they want to get rid of us so that they can legitimize their title to our territories," she said.

In her view, the federal government is not our friend and is serious about getting rid of the official designation of "Indian" and of Indian lands.

Elder Crowchild said that the 1867 *British North America Act*, now called the *Constitution Act, 1867*, has section 91, the legislative authority of the federal government, and section 92 for the provinces. Overall, she views the *BNA Act* as delegated authority from the British Crown to a colony that was, and is, Canada, and that the provinces did not have any responsibility for Treaty.

She said "Canada *assumed*... title to our territories, including the mineral rights to our natural resources above and below the surface of our lands."

And that "They were asked, at the U.N., 'How did you access territories - the territories that you make Treaties with?' They couldn't answer it. They have yet to answer that question."

In 1930, Canada and the provinces enacted the *Natural Resources Transfer Agreements*, transferring that assumed jurisdiction of the lands and resources to the provinces, doing so "without our peoples' consent."

The same NRTA, Crowchild says, recognizes "that our Peoples would continue to hunt, fish, and trap, gather their medicines in our traditional territories, and yet our people get charged today."

continued on page 13



Ron Merasty Photo

2025 NRTA Summit, Prince Albert. FSIN Vice Chiefs Craig McCallum, Waterhen First Nation, Treaty 10, left, and Ed "Dutch" Lerat, Cowessess First Nation, Treaty 4



Ron Merasty Photo

2025 NRTA Summit, Prince Albert. Grand Chief Garrison Settee of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, from Pimicikamak First Nation (Cross Lake), Manitoba, Treaty 5, with Chief Joyce McLeod, Montreal Lake Cree Nation, Treaty 6

Shoal Lake Cree Nation Family Camp has a long History

By Ron Merasty

On Wednesday, August 6 your scribe visited the annual Shoal Lake Cree Nation Family Camp (August 3-8, 2025), located on an old logging road going in the direction of the Wildcat Hills in eastern Saskatchewan.

The road at McVey River off Highway 55, is only about 10 kilometres from Shoal Lake, which has a total population of over 1200, of which approximately 900 reside on-reserve.

Family camp started about 30 years ago, maybe experienced some ‘growing pains,’ but now everything seems to be operated with precision and a certainty familiarity.

On Sunday the security staff set up the big top tent at the far end of the road, and fire wood had been readied and delivered by the wood crew to the various camp sites.

Food, or groceries, and drinking water are provided for each camp, and there is garbage pickup every morning and evening. All are urged to keep their sites sanitary, to ensure, as much as possible, that bears are not attracted to the area by garbage.

“Our elders have always taught us to keep our campsites real clean,” and one of reasons is “to have respect for the land,” Chief Head said.

When camp week is over “we make sure that it’s all clean and before we (leave), we’ll have a walkthrough, we pick it all up and so like that’s the way we found it.”

Chief Head, who has been leader for a good many of his 64 years said



Ron Merasty Photo

Shoal Lake Family Camp. Some of the individuals in Chief’s Camp and Young’s Camp are in this photo. In the first row (of five individuals) from l-r: Cade Head, Kyra Head, Jayna Sand, Hunter Flett, and Rayna Mckay. In the back row, l-r, are 9 people: Breeze Head, Rilson Flett, Kiersha Head, Ian Flett, Darlene Flett (Chief’s wife), Chief Marcel Head, Kobe Flett, Betsy Flett, and Hayden Flett (from Red Earth CN).

that the family camp idea came from Elders who wanted their members “to utilize their traditional territory” called Sipanohk.”

Each year, before camp week, crews fan out to go moose hunting but – alas! – 2025 turned out to be unsuccessful. Hunters did spot a cow and calf but “we usually leave those alone to maintain that moose population within our traditional territory,” Chief Head said.

However, there are still plenty of fish on Shoal Lake and one of the camp days had a huge fish fry for everyone.

In the first family camp so many

years ago, many could not afford some of the equipment, even tents. Chief Head said that the administration bought 80 tents then, “both four-man way up to eight-man tents.”

But 25 years onward, some are bringing their own generators, tent canopies, “and some built their own cabinets, their own cupboards, practically anything to store our food in some form of a cabinet, and then there’s tables,” Chief said. There seems to be competition happening.

Camp week 2025 had a big rain and wind on the Tuesday, so much so that their big top, where they have their main events - such as a Gospel jamboree, talent night, musical entertainment, and square dancing and jigging (yes, that’s the case all over the north) - was blown down.

But they righted the ship because by the next day it was up again. They had purchased the tent in Alberta four years ago after their first tent started to sag, as it were, and who wants that?

Last year, says Chief Head, they invited the “Number one Oiler fan,

Superfan Magoo” to entertain and to speak about changing lifestyles away from alcohol and drugs.

There seems to be more usage of drugs now by youth – “meth and other hardcore drugs” - whereas alcohol used to be the number one problem, Chief said.

“We’re trying to provide some programming for the youth - we don’t really literally want to force them to quit - it’s entirely their decision. If they want to come out of it, then we’ll be there to provide the programs and services ... and we’ve had some youth that have come out of it, and now they’re pretty much role models in our community, and so they’re the ones, too, that are reaching out to the ones that are being challenged.”

After our chat I was offered a bowl of, I believe, delicious moose tongue and heart soup by the Head family – maybe the Chief had his own supply from somewhere else – and although I’m ‘assimilated,’ as a certain Grand Chief has labelled me, I totally appreciate traditional food. Bring it on!



Ron Merasty Photo

Shoal Lake Family Camp. At Harold Flett’s Camp, from l-r: Shem Mckay, Trenelle Head, Velma Mckay, Manny Bear, and Delores Lathlin.



Ron Merasty Photo

Shoal Lake Family Camp. Your scribe stopped this group of youth walking on the road. Note that one of them is holding a copy of the PAGC Tribune. Sorry, too many to name.



Ron Merasty Photo

Shoal Lake Family Camp. These bikers are l-r: Lucius “Loots” Whitecap (12), Ethan Mckay (9), Latryll Lathlin (12), and Lennon Bear (9).



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- Chakastaypasin Cree Nation.....Traditional Powwow
- Birch Narrows Dene Nation.....Community Skate Park & Playground
- LLRIB – Sucker River.....Winter Festival
- LLRIB – Stanley Mission.....Woodland Cree Gathering
- LLRIB – Hall Lake.....Winter Festival
- Hatchet Lake Denesuline Nation.....Harvest Hunting Trip
- Hatchet Lake Denesuline Nation.....Sandy Island Pilgrimage
- Sturgeon Lake First Nation.....National Elders’ Gathering – Edmonton
- PBCN – Sandy Bay.....Treaty Days
- PBCN – Urban.....Easter Egg Hunt
- PBCN - Pelican Narrows.....Meat Packs
- PBCN – Deschambault Lake.....Community Wellness
- Buffalo River Dene Nation.....Youth Centre Furnishings
- James Smith Cree Nation.....Playground Equipment
- Beardy’s & Okemasis First Nation....Golf Tournament
- Meadow Lake Tribal Council.....Accounting System Improvements
- Prince Albert Grand Council.....Men’s Recreational Hockey Tournament
- Shoal Lake Cree Nation.....Annual Golf Tournament
- Wahpeton Dakota Nation.....Powwow Grounds Rebuild



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Mark's Mix

By Mark Merasty

The world right now is far too busy a place for any one subject. Beginning in this October issue, the *PAGC Tribune* will give reader's "Ron's Ramblings" and "Mark's Mix" in further effort towards providing readers with more reading entertainment, more First Nations knowledge, and information.

Mark's Mix will be focused more "off-reserve" and more global-oriented. The stories, however, touch on some effect on the lives of Canada's First Nations people. Here's the first story.

Climate Change Affects us; and is our country to become the 51st State?

Commentary by Mark Merasty

Hello again to all PAGC Tribune readers, I am returning once again to the monthly columns of this longtime Saskatchewan publication. I took a lengthy and necessary break from writing due to chronic neck, shoulder and back pain. I am much pleased to once again be able to deliver my informed First Nations perspective on national and global events that affect the lives of First Nations people and all Canadians alike. These columns I write have always been intended to be interesting, fun and thought-provoking. PAGC Tribune readers are as smart, as informed and as well-read as any readership in Canada, and it is why I like to write articles like the following.

THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in the 1980's had a most wonderful hour of television every weekday night beginning at 10:00 PM, starting with "The National," CBC's daily news program, followed by "The Journal," a 35-minute newsmagazine featuring documentaries about current issues or personalities. It mainly featured CBC journalists along with a broad assortment of independent filmmakers. Canadian journalists, at this time, were generally considered "elite" (for their level of outreach and accessibility) and were highly-respected among their

peers.

One standout documentary on "The Journal" from January 1984 titled "The Greenhouse Effect" was a feature documentary that I remember to this day, because I understood then that the information was important for everyone's future - the world really was heading towards climate change - and that little or nothing was being done by current world leaders to curb the pollution that was causing global warming.

"The Greenhouse Effect" was a classic in Canadian documentaries: it was produced by David Studer, a longtime producer of CBC's newsmagazine "The Fifth Estate," and had former CBC News anchor Peter Kent as its narrator. It was such a powerful and distilling documentary that its very title became a coin-phrase for describing global warming effects. The doc's visual presentations were brilliant.

It has been 41 years since the "The Greenhouse Effect" aired on CBC, and long enough for me to witness the effects of climate change since 1984. The years 2015 to 2024 were the warmest 10 years on record. Year 2020 tied for the warmest year on record, a record that was broken in 2024 during a year that was 1.5 degrees warmer than the average temperature between 1850 and 1900.

A warm climate is unsuitable for an evergreen forest filled with jack pines and spruce. There is not enough rain and moisture any more to grow those millions of pine and spruce trees. There's not enough coolness and humidity to protect the evergreens from wildfires. The weather is becoming too hot and dry in many parts of northern Canada to grow healthy, mature evergreens. Northern forests need about thirty years to regenerate after a major wildfire.

Some recent Saskatchewan wildfires, like those in Narrow Hills Provincial Park during May 2025, are flaring up in areas that were re-planted in the late 1990s after a devastating wildfire swept through the Narrow Hills region in the summer of 1991. It seems that there is not enough time anymore to grow mature evergreens in ever-growing parts of Saskatchewan.

Climate does not lie or deceive. The great number of wildfires across northern Canada in 2025 is sending a clear message that Canada's beautiful forests and all its wildlife are slowly disappearing. Canada's evergreen forests are being erased by forest fires, and are being pushed further north towards a cooler climate. It has become too hot and dry for the continued well-being of pine and spruce trees in many areas of central Saskatchewan.

Some of those burnt-out forests from

the great fire season of 2025 may, out of necessity, have to be transformed into regions covered by elms, maples, oaks, poplars and birch. Deciduous trees with leaves burn far less easily. A warming climate with later autumns and earlier springs will support more southerly species of plants, like oaks and elms. Wildfires and global warming certainly will decide whether evergreen trees will ever again survive in certain areas of Canada, like say, Narrow Hills Provincial Park.

My heart, and the hearts of all PAGC Tribune readers, goes out to all the families from Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation and Lac La Ronge Indian Band who lost their homes, their livelihoods, and many cherished possessions during May and June of 2025 due to wildfires. The fires in Denare Beach and Hall Lake were most catastrophic, and our strongest best wishes go out to everyone affected in those two communities.

Congratulations to the resilience of all fire evacuees who endured and coped through a long evacuation stay elsewhere. Many citizens from Flin Flon, Creighton, Denare Beach, Snow Lake and Lynn Lake endured their longest evacuation (if not their first) ever, with many seeking refuge in Winnipeg and Brandon or some point in between. Evacuees from Flin Flon were ordered out their homes for an entire month.



Ron Merasty Photo

Mark Merasty on the western side of a narrow strip of land at Point Pelee, Ontario, with the southern-most point of land in Canada about 150 yards behind him on Lake Erie

Our fondest PAGC Tribune gratitude goes out to the many hundreds of firefighters, local and out-of-province, who came from as far away as Quebec, California and British Columbia. Their great firefighting efforts certainly saved the communities of Flin Flon, Creighton and Pelican Narrows. To the brave firefighters on the ground, to the aircraft crews who flew on stressful missions, and all ground volunteers, our heartfelt thanks on your good fight and for a job well done!

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE “51st STATE”

Let us celebrate our wonderful country Canada, and her 40 million citizens, three ocean coasts and millions of lovely lakes and streams. Canada turned 158 years old on July 1, 2025. Do Canadians fully appreciate the full depth of Canada’s history? It is a tough thing to even begin to wrap one’s thoughts around the “great history” of Canada. We as Canadians, however, should be (and can be) as gung-ho about Canada as any citizen from, say, Japan, Italy, or Egypt (countries with awesome histories).

Recently though, and for unknown reasons, some powerfully-stationed Americans (Tribune readers know who they are) have come to “believe” that Canada has little right to self-determination, that Canada ought to be in hands of bold American imperialists, and that the only “solution”, as if any problem actually exists, is for Canada to become the 51st state and join into the “great history of the United States of America.” Okay.

Do any of those astoundingly bold words and thought processes even take into account the fact that Canada



Ron Merasty Photo

This is the old Mile 10 (now Km 16) of Highway 135, some 35 km south and east of Pelican Narrows, where fire has devastated someone’s trapline. Your scribe used to drop off the trapping family here many moons ago.

has a longer, richer and more united history than the United States? Jacques Cartier, for example, began Europe’s ties with “Canada” way back in the early 16th century while on an expedition commissioned by King Francis I of France. The territorial name “Canada” was used by Jacques Cartier for his cartography records during that year of

“discovery,” 1534 A.D.

This incredible story from 491 years ago is totally aside from the fact the “great history” of the Americas, including the United States, had always begun and always will begin with its Indigenous peoples: the First Nations of Canada, the American Indians, and the Meso-American Indians. The three main groups of Indigenous Americans comprised many hundreds of unique Indigenous languages and cultures stretching from Central America to Alaska and the far Arctic.

To be clear, there is no “absolute” evidence to verify that every First Nations and Native American person is a descendant of ancient nomads who “migrated” or “emigrated” from Siberian Russia. Waves of ancient nomads would have made that journey in the past for sure, and their ancestors are definitely here in the Americas today. I accept the land migration theory as fact, but not to the farthest extent that *every single* Indigenous person is descended from “latter-day” Asian and Siberian nomadic ancestors.

The true story of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas most likely is far more dynamic and breathtaking than those mid-20th century migration theories. If “all” Indigenous people had indeed been ancestors of people who “migrated” eastward from Asia, Siberia, and Europe (why not Europeans as well?), then it would be all too simple to categorize all Indigenous people as immigrants, or worse yet, undocumented migrants.

There is no definitive proof that Indigenous people existed in the Americas since the creation of human species. By the same reasoning, there’s no proof that every Indigenous person is descended from Eastern Asian nomads. The scientific and archaeological discoveries to come will help solve this mystery of how long Indigenous people have lived in the Americas. Some known archaeological sites in Oregon and California date from 9000 B.C. to 12,000 B.C. That, I believe, is just the top of the tipi. I will definitely be

writing more on this subject as I believe that Indigenous Peoples were here a lot longer than some archaeologists claim.

American genealogy sometimes begins with a Pilgrim’s voyage aboard good ship “Mayflower” which sailed from England to Massachusetts in 1620, and the settlers established one of the first English colonies in the Americas some 405 years ago. They transformed the history of the Americas. The Mayflower voyage, however, came 86 years after Jacques Cartier’s first crossing of the Atlantic and to a land he named “Canada.”

There were no “states” in the Americas before 1776, but there already was “Canada.” Prior to “The Declaration of Independence” in 1776 (the document that led to the formation of the United States of America), the Kingdom of Britain had possessed 13 American Colonies comprised of British citizens. The term “United States of America” came into existence 242 years after French explorer Jacques Cartier placed “Canada” on world maps. Now that’s a “great history,” isn’t it?

And besides, Canada has never had a civil war in its 158 years. That’s what’s called UNITED! In fact, UNITY is a Canadian credo.

Canada has won every war it had entered into, even though it is not a warrior nation.

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Canada may have higher taxes than the United States, but no gun problems.

That’s why Canada is different, and why the Canadian way is simply better - up, down and sideways. That’s why Canada will never, ever become an American state.

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Pictured: Graham Bussiere, EHSS Manager for SSR Mining, and Trish Cheveldayoff, By Your Side Campaign Director



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Molanosa Cultural Days is an annual Gathering for Montreal Lake Cree Nation members in their Traditional Territory

By Ron Merasty

On Monday, August 11, Montreal Lake Cree Nation (MLCN) held opening ceremonies for their 44th annual Molanosa Cultural Days. Molanosa is located on traditional and historic land at the northeast end of the approximately 50-kilometre long body of water called Montreal Lake, so it is about 50 kms away from their main community at the south end of the lake. It is historic because it is where the February 11, 1889 Adhesion to Treaty 6 was signed by MLCN and Lac La Ronge Indian Band.

At around noon on a pleasant late summer day, it seemed like about 1000 of their 5000 members, including Chief Joyce McLeod and Council were at Molanosa and they had invited special guests that included: Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC) Grand Chief Brian Hardlotte; the Honourable Eric Schmalz, Minister of Government Relations and Minister responsible for First Nations, Metis, and Northern Affairs, and MLA from Saskatchewan Rivers; and MLA for Cumberland, Jordan McPhail.

They were pleased to have Minister Schmalz, to publicly thank him as the province has agreed to transfer the Molanosa land to Indian reserve status set aside to MLCN through the federal Additions to Reserve policy.

After the opening ceremonies MLCN honoured some of their citizens, some posthumously, who had served their nation. Chief Joyce McLeod provided some details.

The late Gilbert "Gilligan" Halkett had been a spiritual leader that conducted pipe ceremonies and sweats, and had been a director of Montreal Lake's detox centre. The late Susan Sanderson was appreciated and remembered for her services as a cook during past Molanosa Days.

Lionel Bird was honoured upon his retirement, and had worn many hats and assumed many key roles during his career. In the 1980s he served as a councillor and then, later, as a very young MLCN Chief. In the 1990s he presided over the nation's first health transfer agreement. Later he was a



Ron Merasty Photo

Molanosa Cultural Days. The opening ceremonies included some special guests. From left to right they are: LLRIB's Shane Bird, wearing his awesome regalia; MLA Jordan McPhail; PAGC Grand Chief Brian Hardlotte; Minister Eric Schmalz; MLCN Chief Joyce McLeod; and PAGC Vice-Chief Christopher Jobb.

member of the Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority's negotiating team; the director of PAGC's Health & Social Development department; the head of MLCN's construction company building many homes; and a board member of the MLCN Child & Family Service Agency (CFSA). He was the founder, and is still chairman, of Montreal Lake's annual \$100,000 walleye derby. His wife, Janet was honoured along with him. They were presented with Starblankets.

In an interview, Chief McLeod spoke of a disruptive fire season and that "over 180" of her members - elders and mothers with young children, "P1's and P2's" - from Montreal Lake had been evacuated for a time to Regina. That happened in early June 2025.

The Ditch fire had threatened their Weyakwin community, where many members reside, but Montreal Lake's fire department rushed over with their equipment and saved homes, she said.

None were lost, but the community's residents, as well as those from Timber Bay and Molanosa, were evacuated to Montreal Lake where they were temporarily housed at the school, and other locations,

including Little Red River Reserve, until the danger passed. Some evacuees were taken as far away as Wahpeton Dakota Nation and Sturgeon Lake First Nation, Chief McLeod said. *continued on page 20*



Ron Merasty Photo

Molanosa Cultural Days. Elaine Misponas (10, Jingle Dress dancer), Azaria Misponas (7, Fancy Shawl dancer), and Alec Misponas (5, Grass dancer), looked wonderful in their colourful regalia

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On September 30, Athabasca Basin Development will be honouring National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Treaty 10 Gathering, Wollaston, July 2-4, 2025

Photos by Ron Merasty



Youth paddlers from Hatchet Lake, Brochet and Lac Brochet, have arrived in Wollaston.



Joe Dantouze, left, and Elder Joe Hyslop, both of Northlands Dene Nation, at the flag-raising ceremony.



Dene Drummers inside Wollaston community hall.



Grand Chief Kyra Wilson, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs is a young and dynamic leader.



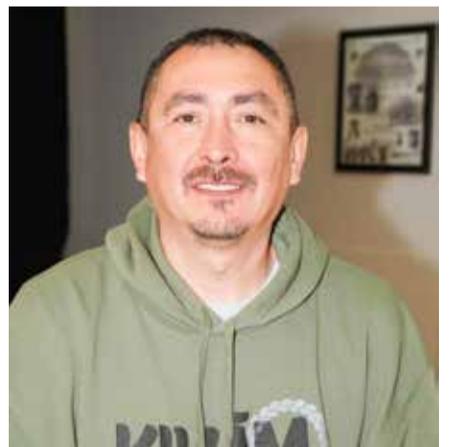
PAGC Grand Chief Brian Hardlotte addressing the Gathering.



Waterhen Juniors perform at the flag-raising to open the Gathering.



Vice-Chief Norma Catarat of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council.



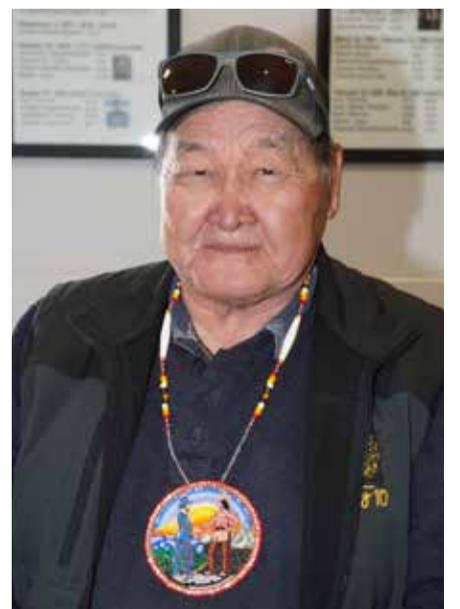
PAGC Vice-Chief Joseph Tsannie.



Rosalie Tsannie-Burseth being honoured with a presentation of a plaque by her Hatchet Lake Chief and Council for "professional distinguished achievement." Standing beside her is her brother, Chief Bart Tsannie.



Grand Chief Walter Wastesicoot of the Keewatin Tribal Council, Manitoba, is a member of York Factory First Nation.



PAGC Senator Hector Khailterh, Hatchet Lake Denesuline Nation.

The Office of the Treaty Commissioner's Mandate is to be "an advocate of Treaty"

By Ron Merasty

On September 30, 2024, symbolically, on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Dr. Kathy Walker, a member of the Okanese First Nation from Treaty 4 territory, was appointed as the sixth Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan and the second woman. She succeeded Mary Musqua-Culbertson, and has a five-year appointment.

A Cree woman with an admixture of Saulteaux, Nakoda and European lineages, Dr. Walker holds a Master of Political Science, a Master of Business Administration, and a PhD in Political Science. She was previously an assistant professor in political studies at the University of Saskatchewan.

She was appointed by the federal government and the FSIN, and is a member of the Okanese First Nation from Treaty 4 territory.

Toward the end of June Dr. Walker and others were part of a PAGC-arranged visit to the Athabasca communities of Fond du Lac and Black Lake to meet with their chiefs and councils. The following week she was invited to make a presentation at Treaty 10 celebrations being hosted by Hatchet Lake Denesuline Nation at Wollaston. She provided slightly different presentations about the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) at each location.

The OTC was established in Saskatoon in 1989, a partnership between the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) and the Government of Canada "to try to come together and reach a common understanding on Treaty," she said. The first modern-day Treaty Commissioner was Cliff Wright.

Historically, the role of the Treaty Commissioner was to negotiate Treaty, but it wasn't the only role. "The role was also to uphold and renew the Treaty relationship," Walker said at Wollaston.

Most years First Nations did not see a Treaty Commissioner, no review of Treaties, and no gatherings "to discuss the issues concerning our rights - the rights and responsibilities of Treaties."

In 1989, the FSIN needed help to address outstanding claims in Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) by many First Nations.

On September 22, 1992, at Wanuskewin Park, one of OTC's victories was in addressing the outstanding claims under TLE by bringing the federal and provincial governments and First Nations together in a tripartite Framework Agreement, "and today we have a lot of nations now that have settled their TLE, that have bought lands under the TLE Framework and that have urban reserves all over the place that are doing a lot of great things, economically, for their people," Walker said.

However, in 1989, with the OTC just freshly established, the Spirit and Intent of Treaty was not supported by the federal and provincial governments who dismissed such an idea out of hand. Their view was that Treaty had long been settled, that they were "only willing to recognize the written text of the Treaties, so, from their perspective, because of what was in the written text, was the 'cede, release and surrender' language. They did not recognize ongoing First Nations' Treaty Rights to territories and lands and resources, and our continuing way of life," Walker said.

But the Treaties are much more than the written text, Walker says, adding that "the text is wrong" and that the Treaties were never about surrender.

Walker says that the familiar Treaty medallion is a good representation of the Spirit and Intent because it depicts the Treaty parties shaking hands in friendship, peace and respect. The intent of the Treaty relationship "was to create peace and harmony amongst our peoples within co-existence."

To First Nations, co-existence meant sharing the land to the depth of a plough, and the agreement was to continue in perpetuity for as long as the sun shines, the grass grows and the rivers flow.

Walker says that OTC's mandate is to be "an advocate of the Treaty

relationship" - to build strong relations between the Crown and First Nations, and to create a common understanding on Treaty.

One of the ways is through Treaty education and creating Treaty awareness. The Treaty Right to Education, Walker said, meant that First Nations were supposed to maintain their way of life, of their languages and cultures, but they were also to learn 'the cunning of the white man' as put by Commissioner Alexander Morris at Treaty negotiations at Fort Carlton in 1876 - meaning an education that would enable them to acquire the skills to succeed and thrive in the modern world.

The OTC has a provincial mandate to teach Treaty education in the province's K-12 schools, although they don't have that mandate for First Nations schools, but that informally, "we probably do," Walker says.

She also considers it important to provide that education to leadership and the general public. The OTC provides a two-day intensive workshop entitled "The Treaty Learning Journey" that covers the periods from before Treaty, during Treaty, and breaches of Treaty, and what the future of Treaty holds. Any First Nation community can contact the OTC to request such a workshop about Treaty education and awareness. And, they also host "Treaty Learning Journey" conferences twice a year.

Their website has more up-to-date



Ron Merasty Photo

Dr. Kathy Walker, Saskatchewan Treaty Commissioner, at Wollaston, July 3, 2025.

information in a newsletter, and they even have a speakers' bureau where schools can request 'Treaty experts' to come and talk to their students.

Another way they create awareness is through commemoration events, like Treaty gatherings such as the one held at Wollaston July 2-4 for Treaty 10 First Nations. There, she described the gathering as one to honour their Treaty, "and to discuss the issues concerning our rights - the rights and responsibilities of Treaties."

continued on page 18



Ron Merasty Photo

In July 2025, lawyers from J. de Whytell Law in Association with Delia Opekokew, a practice located in Toronto, was in Wollaston for the Treaty 10 Gathering. In the photo from the lower right, going clockwise: The legendary Delia Opekokew, LL.D., IPC, from Canoe Lake First Nation, the first female First Nations lawyer to practice in Saskatchewan and Ontario; then Josephine de Whytell; Rebecca Bryan; Tara Chadran; and Jade Opekokew.



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Elder Regena Crowchild says we still have our Sovereignty as Treaty Peoples to decide our futures

continued from page 5

Canada gives First Nations “a little bit of money - keeps us quiet, but yet, our children, our families - many of our peoples are living in poverty, suffering - and yet, all this wealth that the Creator gave us on Turtle Island, is the land of abundance, that we’re supposed to be living off so that our people are not poor, not struggling. Those are the mechanisms that Canada put on us.”

Now, she says, the provincial governments don’t listen, “because they’re assuming title,” and that Alberta Premier Danielle Smith from Alberta wants to separate.

“But she can never take our territories. If we stand strong, we have the authority and the power to retake what our Creator gave us for our peoples, today, tomorrow, and in the future. *You* have the authority - *use* it!” she said.

Crowchild spoke about the newly-enacted Bill C-5. Because of major projects, national projects, she said that they, federal government and industry, are going to consult with us on future projects.

She reminded her audience that they are “the rights-holders of our territories,” and not to “forget your ‘free, prior and informed consent.’”

“What does ‘revenue-sharing’ look like, moving forward?” Elder Crowchild asked

It involves the question of natural resources. In her view First Nations leadership need to consult their members - all Treaty Indians because we all have Treaty rights, and the right to benefits under that Treaty, and she added, “Those natural resources are protected by Treaty according to Spirit and Intent.”

The Spirit and Intent is our understanding of the Treaties as passed down by Elders through oral history.

“I try and encourage the Peoples to support their leadership, and guide them, and get Elders to guide them, so we can work collectively, because collectively, we are *strong*. Individually, we are weak, and that is what Canada is doing - divide and conquer tactics - that is what they are doing to us, and we fall into their traps.”

Saying she is a mother, a grandmother, a great-grandmother, and a great-great-grandmother, and that she wants them to have future without poverty, “We, have a responsibility for our children, those yet unborn, and the current, who are citizens today.... When will our people start receiving profits from those natural resources? When will our people stop living in poverty? When will leadership stop managing poverty?”

Crowchild returned to the theme of Canada trying to get rid of Indians.

“Canada is getting out of the Indian



Ron Merasty Photo

2025 NRTA Summit, Prince Albert. These two individuals are the scribe's close relatives from Manitoba. On the left is my first cousin, Randy Bear, from Matthias Colomb Cree Nation, Pukatawagan, a Treaty 6 First Nation; and on the right is Willie Moore, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs' AFN Regional Chief for Manitoba, and he hails from Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, formerly Nelson House, which is in Treaty 5 territory.

business,” she said, and that the federal government’s introduction of the Tax Commission, which would allow “us to have taxing powers,” with the intent that when “they quit giving us money we can start taxing our people, not just non-Indian interests in our lands.”

The *First Nations Land Management Act* from 1999, allows First Nations to alienate their lands, but if you do, “you say that your lands are fee simple and you can utilize them as collateral for loans, or to sell them.”

Because our Peoples have always had the right to government, she says that we cannot fall into the trap Canada is laying for us “to negotiate our right to self-government.”

She said Canada has no business to break Treaty, and that Canada exists only because of our Treaties. Canada is not our partner, she reiterated - “We do not have a Treaty relationship with Canada because it’s not with Canada. We have a government-to-government relationship with Canada, and that’s all.... Our Treaty partner is with the

Imperial Crown.”

“At Treaty-making our Peoples had full jurisdiction over citizenship,” she said. Our headmen decided who their members were, as they were coming through. The Indian Agent was taking the names of those people. We had complete jurisdiction on our citizenship.”

Saying that our Peoples do not know what the Treaty is all about, “That Treaty protects our Inherent Rights. That Treaty protects the territories our Creator gave us - all the natural resources. Don’t let Canada sweet-talk you.”

“I don’t know how much longer our Creator is going to give me, grant me to stand here, because I’m 81-years-old and I’m doing my best to deliver the message and to remind you, you have the authority, not the state of Canada. So, let’s get together and do our thing. Be strong. Never forget your power and your authority. Treaty trumps Canadian law, and that’s what we have to make sure stays.”



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TRIBUTES



KINGSLEE RATT
2010 – 2025

Kingslee James William Ratt "King Man" was born on April 30, 2010, in Flin Flon, MB, and passed away on June 9, 2025, in Prince Albert, SK, at the age of 15 years. Kingslee is survived by his loving family, his mother, Colleen H. McLeod (Lucas); his father, Havery J. (Charity W.) Ratt; his siblings, Gracie, Addison, Harley, Casper, Kylan, Jake, Rozella, Zarrance; his grandfathers, William McLeod, James (Georgina B.) Ballantyne,

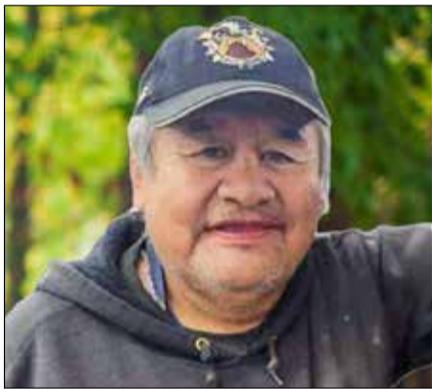
George T. Eninew; his grandmother, Claudia (Gilbert) Ballantyne; and numerous uncles, aunts, cousins, godparents, kokoms/mosoms, and friends. He was predeceased by: his grandmother, Louisa McLeod; his brothers, Havery Jr. B., Baby Muffin, Baby Lathlin Ratt; his kokoms/mosoms, Nora, Lydia, Albert, Rosie, Shirley, Elizabeth, Christopher C., Archie R., Vivian R.; his chapans, Katie & Douglas B., Harriet & Stanley B., John & Delia M., Suzette & Phillip R., Elizabeth & George Eninew. The Prayer Service for King Man was held at 11:00 a.m., on Saturday, June 14, 2025, at River Park Funeral Home, in Prince Albert, SK, with Margaret Ferchuk officiating. The Wake Services were held on Saturday, June 14, 2025, and Sunday, June 15, 2025, at the St. Peter Anglican Church, in Deschambault Lake, SK. The Funeral Service was held at 2:00 p.m., on Monday, June 16, 2025, at the St. Peter Anglican Church, in Deschambault Lake, SK, with Rev. Richard Custer and Minnie Sewap officiating. Interment followed at Robertson Island Cemetery, in Deschambault Lake, SK. **Funeral arrangements are entrusted to the care of River Park Funeral Home.**



HARVEY MORIN
1955 – 2025

Harvey Ronald Morin was born on March 31, 1955, in Southend, SK, and passed away on June 24, 2025, in Saskatoon, SK at the age of 70 years. Harvey is survived by his loving family: his wife, Gloria Morin; his children, Aaron (Chrystal Pearson) McCallum, Dale Morin, Jenna (Mervin McCallum) Morin, Dustin Morin; his 24 grandchildren; his 9 chapans; his siblings, Angie (Ray) Wanhella, Agnes Pranteau, Jane

Bishop-Morin, Henry (Linda) Morin, Shirley Morin, Celina Morin, Raymond Morin, Trevor Morin; and numerous in-laws, friends, nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by: his son, Brent Morin; his parents, Joseph & Marguerite Morin; his grandparents, Susan Ballantyne, Hermengilde & Isabel (née Bird) Morin; his brothers, Solomon, Inias, Pat, Phillip; his sisters, Lena Fletcher, Vicki Morin, Gertie Clarke, Maxine Morin; and numerous aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and in-laws. The Prayer Service for Harvey was held at 11:00 a.m., on Saturday, June 28, 2025, at River Park Funeral Home, in Prince Albert, SK, with Father DJ Vu officiating. The Wake Services were held on Saturday, June 28, 2025, at the residence of Harvey & Gloria Morin, in Southend, SK; continued on Sunday, June 29, 2025, at the residence of Harvey & Gloria Morin, in Southend, SK. The Funeral Service was held at 3:00 p.m., on Monday, June 30, 2025, at Our Lady of Mount Caramel Roman Catholic Church, in Southend, SK, with Father Petronilo Ligtas officiating. Interment followed at Southend Cemetery, in Southend, SK. Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the care of River Park Funeral Home.



CORNELIUS DAVID THOMAS
1959 – 2025

Cornelius David "Cheepits" Thomas was born on May 28, 1959, in Reindeer Lake, SK, and passed away on June 21, 2025, in Brabant Lake, SK, at the age of 66 years. David is survived by his loving family: his partner, Martha McKenzie; his son, Alfred Allan McKenzie; his grandson, Lennox

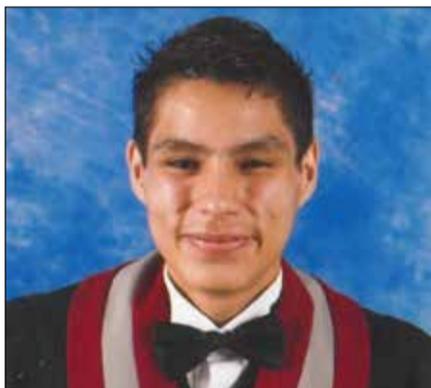
McKenzie; his brother and sisters, Frank, Adolph (Maureen), Nancy, Mary (Richard); his special friend, Peter McKenzie; numerous nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by: his daughter, Cordelia McKenzie; his brother, Alfred Thomas; his parents, Charles & Rose Thomas; his nephew, Charlie Richard. The Prayer Service for David was held at 11:00 a.m., on Wednesday, June 25, 2025, at River Park Funeral Home, in Prince Albert, SK, with Margaret Ferchuk officiating. The Wake Services were held on Wednesday, June 25, 2025, at the residence of Martha McKenzie, in Brabant Lake, SK; continuing on Thursday, June 26, 2025, at the Southend Band Hall. The Funeral Service was held at 1:00 p.m., on Friday, June 27, 2025, at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Church, in Southend, SK, with Father Petronilo Ligtas officiating. Interment followed at Sedley Cook Cemetery, in Southend, SK. **Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the care of River Park Funeral Home, (306) 764-2727, Sarah Naytowhow, Funeral Director.**



MARGARET MCKENZIE
1939 - 2025

Margaret McKenzie was born on November 12, 1939, in Southend, SK, and passed away on June 22, 2025, in Prince Albert, SK, at the age of 85 years. Margaret is survived by her loving family: her daughter, Patty (David) McKenzie; her sons, Clarence McKenzie, Randy Lala McKenzie, Ronald McKenzie, Morris McKenzie (Mary Ross), Nelson (Kristin) McKenzie; her siblings, Virginia (Jonas) Bird, Bella Michel, Georgina Bird, Alvina (John) Halkett, Napoleon Thomas, Anslern (Mary)

Thomas, Delbert Thomas, Brian Thomas; her 23 grandchildren; her 9 chapans; her goddaughter, Pauline Clarke (Jr.); her adopted sons, Rod Clarke (Jr.) Stephen Clarke, Ernest Cook (Jr.); numerous nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by: her husband, Richard McKenzie; her sons, Ricky McKenzie, Darryl McKenzie, James McKenzie; her siblings, Baby Brian Thomas; her parents, Phillip & Catherine (née Bighetty) Thomas; her in-laws, Edward & Sarah (née Roberts) McKenzie; her best friend, Catherine Jobb; and numerous relatives. The Prayer Service for Margaret was held at 11:00 a.m., on Thursday, June 26, 2025, at River Park Funeral Home, in Prince Albert, SK, with Margaret Ferchuk officiating. The Wake Services were held on Thursday, June 26, 2025, at the residence of Margaret McKenzie, in Southend, SK; continued on Friday, June 27, 2025, at the Southend Band Hall. The Funeral Service was held at 2:00 p.m., on Saturday, June 28, 2025, at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Church, in Southend, SK, with Father Petronilo Ligtas officiating. Interment followed at Sedley Cook Cemetery, in Southend, SK. **Funeral arrangements are entrusted to the care of River Park Funeral Home.**



RUEBEN BALLANTYNE
1995 - 2025

Rueben Dexter Ray Ballantyne was born on June 27, 1995, in Flin Flon, MB, and passed away on June 24, 2025 in Deschambault Lake, SK, at the age of 29 years. Rueben is survived by his loving family: his companion, Olivia Michel; his children, Ezra Ballantyne, Emerson Michel; his siblings, Jerry Ballantyne, Spencer Ballantyne, Kaydence Ballantyne, Mallory Ballantyne, Nigel Ballantyne, Adrian Ballantyne, Darcy Ballantyne; his adopted mom, Maggie J. Ballantyne; his stepdad, William McLeod; his adopted siblings, Jackie Starblanket, Chelsea Starblanket, Skyler Starblanket, Darren Starblanket; his friends, Henry Naytowhow, Tyrell Sewap; his aunts &

uncles, Rebecca McCallum, Eileen Susanne Highway, Sally J. Ballantyne, Johnny Ballantyne, Stanley O. Ballantyne, Albert M. (Ida) Ballantyne, David J. (Sharon) Ballantyne; his grandparents, Melvin (Annie Ratt) Sewap, Mary Sewap, Mildred Ratt; numerous cousins, nephews, nieces, aunts and uncles; and best friends, Angie Naytowhow, Evangeline Ballantyne. He was predeceased by: his mom, Edna Julie Ballantyne; his grandparents, David & Ida Ballantyne, Charlie Ballantyne, Angeliqque Ballantyne; his aunts & uncles, MaryAnn McCallum, Nancy Ballantyne, Theresa Ballantyne, Rachel Ballantyne, Wendy Ballantyne, John Ballantyne, James Ballantyne, Horace Highway, Fred Starblanket; and his Ballantyne cousins, Craig, Dewey, Mikwan, Trisha Lynn, Caitlin, Sikwan, and Keith. The Prayer Service for Rueben was held at 2:00 p.m., on Sunday, June 29, 2025, at River Park Funeral Home, with Margaret Ferchuk officiating. The Wake Services were held on Sunday, June 29, 2025 and continuing on Monday, June 30, 2025 at St. Peter Anglican Church in Deschambault Lake. The Funeral Service was held at 2:00 p.m., on Tuesday, July 1, 2025 at St. Peter Anglican Church in Deschambault Lake, with Reverend Elaine Bear officiating. Interment followed at Deschambault Lake Cemetery. **Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the care of River Park Funeral Home, (306) 764-2727, Sarah Naytowhow, Funeral Director.**

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TRIBUTES



CORINA MORIN
1971 - 2025

Corina Pelagie Morin was born on March 29, 1971, in Flin Flon, MB, and passed away on July 2, 2025, in Prince Albert, SK at the age of 54 years. Corina is survived by her loving family: her partner, Darrell Morin "Bob-O"; her children, Summer (Franklin), Vera (Adam), Blake (Joslena), Farrell (Cheyanne), Jarel (Adele), Speare - Princess; her grandchildren, Franklin Jr., Silas, Xenon, Xaliah,

Adalyn, Vayda, Blakey, Demetra, Allison, Laina; her uncles & aunts, Ken (Clara), Ernie, Kathy (Doug), Lorraine; her siblings, Virginia, Rebecca, Michelle (Edmund), Betty (Leroy), Darcy, Michelle & Marty Ballantyne; and numerous nieces & nephews. She was predeceased by: her parents, Rosalie E. Morin, Cornelius Ballantyne; her great-grandparents, Suzanne & Gabriel Morin; her aunts, Barbara, Judy, Iris; her siblings, Randy, Betty Ann, Keisha (Infant); her special friends, Clara & Adele Morin; her nephews & Niece, Gage, Christopher Jr., Neveah; her godchild, Garth Antoine Lee Morin. The Prayer Service for Corina was held at 1:00 p.m., on Friday, July 4, 2025, at River Park Funeral Home, in Prince Albert, SK, with Margaret Ferchuk officiating. The Wake Service was held on Friday, July 4, 2025, at the Gary Memorial Hall, in Sandy Bay, SK. The Funeral Service was held at 1:00 p.m., on Saturday, July 5, 2025, at Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Roman Catholic Church, in Sandy Bay, SK, with Fr. Josi Chinthamalla, MSFS officiating. **Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the care of River Park Funeral Home, (306) 764-2727, Carla Jesso, Funeral Director.**



SHERI BIRD
1972 - 2025

Sheri Rozina Bird was born on February 5, 1972, in Prince Albert, SK, and passed away on July 3, 2025, in Saskatoon, SK, at the age of 53 years. Sheri is survived by her loving family: her partner,

Keenan Bear; her children, Felicia, Shannon (Roddie), Justin (Brittani); her 9 grandchildren; her brothers, Wilson Jr. (Myrna), Tony (Emma); her special sisters, Ruby, Norma, Vicky; and numerous nieces and nephews, aunts and uncles, and cousins. She was predeceased by: her parents, Wilson Sr. and Victoria Bird; her granny, Bibiane; her cousins, Darnell, Allen; her uncle, Tom Bird. The Prayer Service for Sheri was held at 2:00 p.m., on Monday, July 7, 2025, at River Park Funeral Home, in Prince Albert, SK, with Margaret Ferchuk officiating. The Wake Service was held on Monday, July 7, 2025, at the Multipurpose Building, Sandy Bay, SK. The Funeral Service was held at 2:00 p.m., on Tuesday, July 8, 2025, at Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Roman Catholic Church, in Sandy Bay, SK, with Elder Evelyn McDonald and Maggie Hunter officiating. Interment followed at Sandy Bay Cemetery. Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the care of River Park Funeral Home.



CAILIN BEAR-NATEWAYES
2005 - 2025

Cailin Shawna Marie Bear-Natewayes was born on March 13, 2005, in Sandy Bay, SK, and passed away on July 5, 2025, in Sandy Bay, SK at the age of 20 years. Cailin is survived by her loving family: her parents, Harvey & Marilyn Natewayes; her daughter, Brayleen Bear; her siblings, Ryan (Julia) & kids, Vanessa & kids, Justin (Keanna), Tayven (Helena), Jazlyn; her grandmother, Ann

Marie Bear; her grandfather, Mike Natewayes (South Indian Lake); and numerous uncles and aunts. She was predeceased by: numerous grandparents; her uncles, John E. Bear, Roland Natewayes; her auntie, Marilyn Sheena Natewayes; her nieces, Katie Colomb, Shawn Lee Colomb; her cousins, Byron Lee Bear, Marilyn Natewayes-Moose, Myrna Natewayes, Calvin Natewayes, Rose Aimoo. The Prayer Service for Cailin was held at 3:00 p.m., on Thursday, July 10, 2025, at River Park Funeral Home, in Prince Albert, SK, with Margaret Ferchuk officiating. The Wake Services were held on Thursday, July 10, 2025, at the residence of Harvey & Marilyn Natewayes, in Sandy Bay, SK; continued on Friday, July 11, 2025, at Garry Morin Memorial Building, in Sandy Bay, SK. The Funeral Service was held at 3:00 p.m., on Saturday, July 12, 2025, at Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Roman Catholic Church, in Sandy Bay, SK, with Father Josi Chinthamalla, MSFS officiating. Interment followed at Sandy Bay Cemetery, in Sandy Bay, SK. **Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the care of River Park Funeral Home.**



OLIVER STANLEY BALLANTYNE
1957 - 2025

Oliver Stanley Ballantyne was born on October 9, 1957, in Pelican Narrows, SK, and passed away on July 5, 2025, in Deschambault Lake, SK, at the age of 67 years. Stanley is survived by: his loving family, his children, Ramsey (Naomi), Linda (Sam's), Albert; his siblings, Rebecca McCallum, Eileen Highway, Maggie Ballantyne, Sally Ballantyne, Johnny Ballantyne, Albert (Ida) Ballantyne, David J. (Sharon) Ballantyne; his 10 grandchildren; his 4 great-grandchildren; and

numerous in-laws, uncles, aunts, nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by: his loving wife, Rachel Ballantyne; his sons, Dewey Norton Ballantyne #1, Dewey Norton Ballantyne #2; his granddaughter, Tavia Lynn; his parents, David & Ida Ballantyne; his grandparents, Albert & Jean Ballantyne, John Custer, Eliza Sewap; his sisters, Nancy Ballantyne, Theresa Ballantyne, Maryann McCallum, Julie E. Ballantyne-McLeod; his granddaughter, Katana Custer; and numerous in-laws, aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews. The Prayer Service for Stanley was held at 2:00 p.m., on Tuesday, July 8, 2025, at River Park Funeral Home, in Prince Albert, SK, with Margaret Ferchuk officiating. The Wake Services were held on Tuesday, July 8, 2025, and Wednesday, July 9, 2025, at the St. Peter Anglican Church, in Deschambault Lake, SK. The Funeral Service was held at 11:00 a.m., on Thursday, July 10, 2025, at the St. Peter Anglican Church, in Deschambault Lake, SK, with Rev. Richard Custer, Maryann Ballantyne, and Minnie Sewap officiating. Interment followed at Bear Point Cemetery, in Ballantyne Bay, SK. **Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the care of River Park Funeral Home.**

IT'S HARD TO
Forget someone
WHO GAVE US
SO MUCH TO
remember



MARY MINNIE SEWAP
1949 - 2025

Mary "Minnie" Sewap was born on April 4, 1949, and passed away on July 9, 2025, in Prince Albert, SK, at the age of 76 years. Minnie is survived by her loving family: her children, Clifford (Lorna) Sewap, Darryl Sewap, Tommy Sewap, Gerri (Rob) Sewap, Malcolm A. Sewap, Richard J. Sewap, Angus E. Sewap, Richard (Bella) Custer, Allan Sewap; numerous grandchildren,

great-grandchildren; her sisters, Mary (David) Custer, Donna Sewap, Lydia Custer, Ida Sewap; her brothers, Richard (Noreen) Custer, Robert (Rosie) Custer, Adam Custer, Hilliard (Carmen) Sewap; and numerous in-laws and relatives. She was predeceased by: her husband, Angus Sewap; her brother, Malcolm Kenneth Sewap; her parents, Robert & Sarah Sewap; her niece and nephew, Sheenaln Sewap, Hilliard Jr. Sewap; her granddaughters, Cloris Sewap, Savannah Sewap; 2 chapans; her aunts & uncles. The Prayer Service for Minnie was held at 2:00 p.m., on Saturday, July 11, 2025, at River Park Funeral Home, in Prince Albert, SK. The Wake Services were held on Saturday, July 12, 2025, at the residence of Minnie Sewap, in Pelican Narrows, SK, continuing on Sunday, July 13, 2025, at the Pelican Narrows Band Hall. The Funeral Service were held at 9:00 a.m., on Monday, July 14, 2025, at St. Bartholomew Anglican Church, in Pelican Narrows, SK, with Rev. Richard Custer officiating. Interment followed at Amisk Lake Cemetery, in Denare Beach, SK. **Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the care of River Park Funeral Home.**



DWAYNE DORION
1975 - 2025

Dwayne Ralph Dorion "Mr. Clean" was born on May 23, 1975, in Pelican Narrows, SK, and passed away on July 14, 2025, in Smeaton, SK, at the age of 50 years. Dwayne leaves to celebrate his life: the mother of his daughters, Janice Dorion; his baby girls, Jazlynn, Jayla, Jayna Dorion; his stepson, Tyrell Stewart; his mom, Joyce Linklater; his dad, Ralph Dorion (Fran); his in-laws, Ron & JL McDonald; his girlfriend, Terrilyn McKay; his brothers & sisters, Darren (Sheryl), Drew (Glor),

Dwight (Baz), P-Nut (Caitlyn), Laurel (Ben), Leigh (Lambert), Tanner (Celina), Tristan, Osemis (Shanice), Brad (Katherine), David, Greg (Dolly), Gus, Karen, Shavonne, Miranda, Roddy (Bonita), Jason Michel, Clayton (Ann), Aiden & Avery, Big J. (Lavanna); his grandchildren, Kryslenn & Kohen; his goddaughter, Iskiwisis Daniels; and numerous nephews and nieces, aunts, uncles, and cousins. He goes to meet his grandparents; his sister, Lorraine; his brother, Fernand; and numerous nieces, cousins, aunts, uncles and other relatives. The Prayer Service for Dwayne was held at 2:00 p.m., on Saturday, July 19, 2025, at River Park Funeral Home, in Prince Albert, SK, with Suzette Merasty officiating. The Wake Services were held on Saturday, July 19, 2025, and Sunday, July 20, 2025, at the residence of Joyce Dorion, in Pelican Narrows, SK. The Funeral Service was held at 11:00 a.m., on Monday, July 21, 2025, at St. Gertrude Roman Catholic Church, in Pelican Narrows, SK, with Suzette Merasty & Valerie Morin officiating. Interment followed at Graveyard Island Cemetery, in Pelican Narrows, SK. **Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the care of River Park Funeral Home.**



“There are no goodbyes for us. Wherever you are, you will always be in my heart.”

Mahatma Gandhi



TRIBUTES



HELEN MICHELL
1963 – 2025

Helen Doris Michell was born on October 15, 1963, in Flin Flon, MB, and passed away on July 15, 2025, in Prince Albert, SK at the age of 61 years. Helen is survived by her loving family: her daughters, Angelique (Pelly) Linklater, Jessica (Wilson) Michell, Arianna Michell; her sons,

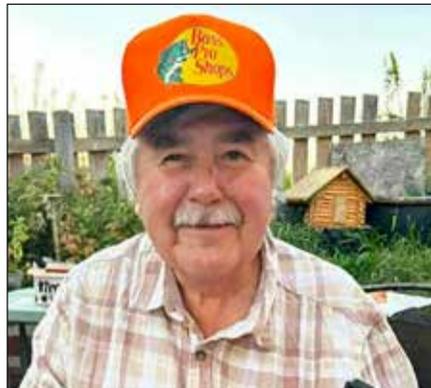
William Michell, Gage; her 7 grandchildren; her husband, Louie Michell; her sister, Lorna (Robert) McCallum; her brother, John (Uncle Art) Ballantyne; and numerous uncles and in-laws. She was predeceased by: her parents, Peter & Angelique (nee Morin) Ballantyne; her brothers, Hubert, Joseph, Armand; her sister, Darlene Sewap; her best friend, Martha (Owl) Linklater; and numerous in-laws, aunts, cousins, nephews and nieces. The Prayer Service for Helen was held at 11:00 a.m., on Saturday, July 19, 2025, at River Park Funeral Home, in Prince Albert, SK, with Margaret Ferchuk officiating. The Wake Services were held on Saturday, July 19, 2025, and Sunday, July 20, 2025, at the Band Hall, in Pelican Narrows, SK. The Funeral Service was held at 2:00 p.m., on Monday, July 21, 2025, at St. Gertrude Catholic Church, in Pelican Narrows, SK, with Francis Merasty officiating. Interment followed at Moise Bear Memorial Gardens, in Pelican Narrows, SK. Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the care of River Park Funeral Home.



STEPHANIE BALLANTYNE
1982 – 2025

Stephanie Cecilia Ballantyne was born on September 12, 1982, in Flin Flon, MB, and passed away on July 23, 2025, in Saskatoon, SK, at the age of 42 years. Stephanie is survived by her loving family: her sons, Kamden, Keewatin; her daughter, Kona; her sisters, Kristen (Nelson), Kirsten, Christina (Gary), Harriette, Tamara, Tania, Arlene, Marie; her brothers, Nathan (Verna),

Marlon, Henry (Cheyenne), Sean (Daralee), Brett; her mother, Nancy (Arnold) Dorion; her father, Ronald Michel; her adopted brother, Stephen Ballantyne; and numerous aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and friends. She was predeceased by: her grandparents; her auntie, Myra; her uncles, Doug, Arthur, Solomon, Etienne Jr.; her nieces & nephews, Ashton, Dalton, Solomon, Josiah, Wilfred, Hilton; her godparent, Fred Ballantyne; her best friends, Kimberly Custer, April Gladstone. The Prayer Service for Stephanie was held at 11:00 a.m., on Monday, July 28, 2025, at River Park Funeral Home, in Prince Albert, SK, with Margaret Ferchuk officiating. The Wake Services were held on Monday, July 28, 2025, and Tuesday, July 29, 2025, at Pelican Narrows Band Hall. The Funeral Service was held at 2:00 p.m., on Wednesday, July 30, 2025, at the St. Gertrude Roman Catholic Church, in Pelican Narrows, SK, with Fr. Josi Chinthamalla, MSFS, officiating. Interment followed at Moise Bear Memorial Gardens, in Pelican Narrows, SK. **Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the care of River Park Funeral Home.**



ERNEST COOK
1955 – 2025

Ernest Cook was born on January 16, 1955, in Reindeer Lake, SK, and passed away on July 27, 2025, in La Ronge, SK at the age of 70 years. Ernest is survived by his loving family: his children, Laurie (Frankin) Cook, Kevin (Teejay) Merasty, Arlene (Wayne) Clarke, Leroy Cook, Charlene Cook, Carmen (Errol) Halkett, Colleen Cook; his 30 grandchildren & 19 chapans; his brothers & sisters, Maryann Dorion, Della (George) Cook,

Peter (Shauna) Cook, Joyce (George) Cook, Helen (Jonathan) Bird, Harland (June) Cook, Gladys (Ernest) Clarke, Darleen Cook (Emile) Merasty; and numerous in-laws, aunts & uncles. He was predeceased by: his loving wife, Gertie Cook; his son, Morgan Cook; his grandson, Riley Cook-Morin; his parents, Rose & Sedley Cook; his brother, Larry Sinclair; his sisters, Della Clara Cook, Marlene Cook, Linda Cook, Julie Bird; his grandparents, Caroline Jobb, Thomas Jobb, George Cook, William & Mary Clarke; and numerous friends, nephews, nieces, and in-laws. The Prayer Service for Ernest was held at 10:30 a.m., on Thursday, July 31, 2025, at River Park Funeral Home, in Prince Albert, SK, with Margaret Ferchuk officiating. The Wake Services were held on Thursday, July 31, 2025, and on Friday, August 1, 2025, at the Southend Band Hall, in Southend, SK. The Funeral Service was held at 2:00 p.m., on Saturday, August 2, 2025, at the Southend Band Hall, in Southend, SK, with Father Petronilo Ligtas officiating. Interment followed at Southend Cemetery, in Southend, SK. **Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the care of River Park Funeral Home.**



KARALYNN MCCALLUM
1996 ~ 2025

Karalynn Avery McCallum was born on December 9, 1996, in Saskatoon, SK, and passed away on July 28, 2025, in Flin Flon, MB at the age of 28 years. Karalynn is survived by her loving family: the father of her children, Bernie Linklater; her loving sons, Rowan Aries & Waylon Daniel; her parents, Blair and Myrna McCallum; her siblings, Karalee (Lloyd), Blair Jr., Blaine (Justina); her special niece & nephew, Kaylee Amara & Winston Jaxon; her chapan, Clara Linklater; her grandmothers, Maryann McCallum, Lucy Bloomfield; her grandfathers, Roderick Morin (Cindy Lou), Jerry Bloomfield, Ernest Custer; her godparents, Bobby & Lorna McCallum; her special friends, Keraanne, Claudette, Dereck James, Angela, Jonathan T, Austin, Bretson, Cohen, Devin, Jeremiah, Jerrika Skye, Tori Anne, Amber, Evan Sewap, Krista

Louise, Greyson, Jody, Princess Sanderson, David Custer, Bobbi-Jo Stenzil, Colleen, Andrew, Bret N., Colton; Karalynn is also remembered by numerous kokums and kimosoms. She was predeceased by her chapans, Gilbert Linklater, Alex & Theresa Morin, Joseph & Veronique McCallum, Alphonse & Annie Sewap; her grandfather, Marcel McCallum, Kenny Linklater (Tina), Marcel Merasty, Henry Sewap; her grandmother, Sheri Jones; her aunties, Lynette, Carissa, Katrina, Geena; her uncles, Steven, Steve-O, Stuart, Gilford Jr. Brendon, John (Harriet), Marty, Travis, James S, Gary S; her cousins, J'Kolbey, Kalina, Jordyn, Saul, Andrew, Blaise Pierre; her niece & nephew, Chase Pearl & Arrow Sylvain; her special friends, Cecil Dorion, Shaelyn Custer, Jessica Michelle, Dennis James, Michelle Sewap. The Prayer Service for Karalynn will be held at 2:00 p.m., on Thursday, July 31, 2025, at River Park Funeral Home, in Prince Albert, SK, with Margaret Ferchuk officiating. The Wake Services will be held on Thursday, July 30, 2025, and Friday, August 1, 2025, at the Band Hall, in Pelican Narrows, SK. The Funeral Service will be held at 11:00 a.m., on Saturday, August 2, 2025, at St. Gertrude Roman Catholic Church, in Pelican Narrows, SK, with Father Josi Chinthamalla, MSFS officiating. Interment to follow at Moise Bear Memorial Gardens, in Pelican Narrows, SK. Funeral arrangements are entrusted to the care of River Park Funeral Home, (306) 764-2727, Sarah Naytowhow, Funeral Director.

Goodbyes
ARE NOT FOREVER
Goodbyes

ARE NOT THE END
THEY SIMPLY MEAN
I'LL MISS YOU

UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN



JESSICA MICHELL
1996 – 2025

Jessica Emily Marie Michell was born on August 23, 1996, in Flin Flon, MB, and passed away on July 25, 2025, in Prince Albert, SK at the age of 28 years. Jessica is survived by her loving family: her son, Brodin Dorion; her sisters, Arianna

Michell, Angelique Linklater; her brothers, William Michell, Gage Michell; her father, Jeremiah Louis Michell; her grandpa, George Ballantyne; and numerous aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins. She was predeceased by: her mother, Helen Michell; her auntie, Darlene T. Sewap; her uncles, Hubert, Joseph, Armand; her numerous grandparents, friends, nieces, aunts, uncles, and cousins. The Prayer Service for Jessica was held at 2:30 p.m., on Monday, July 28, 2025, at River Park Funeral Home, in Prince Albert, SK, with Father DJ Vu officiating. The Wake Services were held on Monday, July 28, 2025, and Tuesday, July 29, 2025, at the residence of Jolene Ballantyne, in Pelican Narrows, SK. The Funeral Service was held at 11:00 a.m., on Wednesday, July 30, 2025, at St. Gertrude Catholic Church, in Pelican Narrows, SK, with Father Josi Chinthamalla officiating. Interment followed at Moise Bear Memorial Gardens, in Pelican Narrows, SK. Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the care of River Park Funeral Home.



KRISTINE BALLANTYNE-OKEMAU
2005 – 2025

Kristine Faith Mary Martha Ballantyne-Okemau was born on November 8, 2005, in Prince Albert, SK, and passed away on July 30, 2025, in Saskatoon, SK at the age of 19 years. Kristine is survived by her loving family: her foster parents, Darlene Cook & Emile Merasty; her mother, Candace (Randy) Burns; her father, Gordon Ballantyne; her adopted parents, Tiffany

& Dave Burns; her grandparents, Maryann & Gordon Ballantyne; her siblings & foster siblings, Kevin (Leanne) Ballantyne, Kierra (Darcy) Ballantyne, Kaylene Ballantyne, Patricia (Neil) Merasty, Jaydon Ballantyne, Jordon Ballantyne, Ryder Ballantyne, Raydon Ballantyne, Spiritdon Ballantyne, Eliza Ballantyne; and numerous nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends. She was predeceased by: her grandpa, Napoleon Okemau; her grandma, Nancy Okemau; numerous great-grandparents, and aunts and uncles. The Prayer Service for Kristine was held at 11:00 a.m., on Saturday, August 2, 2025, at River Park Funeral Home, in Prince Albert, SK, with Margaret Ferchuk officiating. The Wake Services were held on Saturday, August 2, 2025, and Sunday, August 3, 2025, at the Band Hall, in Southend, SK. The Funeral Service was held at 2:00 p.m., on Monday, August 4, 2025, at Our Lady of Mount Caramel Roman Catholic Church, in Southend, SK, with Father Petronilo Ligtas officiating. Interment followed at Southend Cemetery, in Southend, SK. **Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the care of River Park Funeral Home.**

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The Office of the Treaty Commissioner's Mandate is to be "an advocate of Treaty"

continued from page 12

If invited OTC representatives will attend your Treaty Days. The OTC assisted with Treaty 4 150 Celebrations in 2024 and will be doing the same for Treaty 6 150 Celebrations to be held in 2026.

Beginning in 1989 the OTC hosted the Treaty Table, which were discussions between the Crown and First Nations, expected to be on a nation-to-nation basis, to discuss Treaty issues.

It has been a struggle, because of the Crown's unwillingness to recognize "the sovereignty and the jurisdiction and the authority of Treaty Nations over all areas, from education to health to land to resources, and almost all of its policy fails to recognize the nation-to-nation relationship," Walker said.

Bringing the parties together to talk about Treaties, to uphold the nation-to-nation relationship. What they would like to see would be having the federal Minister meeting annually with Chiefs "talking about the issues surrounding the Treaty."

In Saskatchewan there remain many outstanding claims under TLE, Walker says, as well as over 100 specific claims filed by different First Nations, regarding obligations under Treaty that have not been addressed.

Walker says that the OTC is there to help facilitate those claims through research, analysis and has a Treaty Library and Archives that is intended to "uphold the true Treaty history - the Spirit and Intent of Treaty."

By that she means they have an



Ron Merasty Photo

These Wollaston ladies definitely wanted to be on the pages of PAGC Tribune. Seated, l-r is Freda Tsannie, Rayla Besskaystare, and Shirley Sha'Oulle. Standing, l-r: Doris Besskaystare, Margeurite Clarke, Annie Joseyounen, Cecilia Kkaikka, Therese Tsannie, Corinne Tsannie, Dora Benoanie, and Stephanie Tsannie.

extensive collection of oral history which is based on interviews with our Elders - testimonies from the 1990s when FSIN and the OTC went across Saskatchewan talking "to all the different knowledge keepers and oral historians, specifically, on Treaty."

OTC created an Elders' Council with representatives from every Treaty territory throughout Saskatchewan. Walker considers the Elders "the keepers of the Spirit and Intent and the oral history... the basis of a lot of the affirmation of our Treaty rights."

When we talk about annuities and TLE, Walker says, and the reason they exist is because the Elders always kept that oral history intact, always maintain

the same oral history, "despite all of the violations of Treaty."

Twenty-five years ago, in 2000, the OTC sponsored the publication of a book, entitled, *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan: Our Dream Is That Our Peoples One Day Will Be Clearly Recognized As Nations*.

It contains a lot of what Walker calls "the core, foundational Treaty doctrines that underlie the Treaty relationship and the Spirit and Intent, and how we must understand it."

Every Treaty and every First Nation has their own distinct Treaty history with leaders that negotiated Treaties, emphasizing different things. With

Treaties 8 and 10 in the north with the Dene, "it was always about the land and maintaining your way of life... and there were repeated assurances from the Treaty Commissioner... that the Dene would still be able to exercise their... hunting, fishing, harvesting, trapping - and that there would be no interference."

Walker says that all First Nations organizations, which she calls Treaty-based, including the OTC, realize that Treaty Implementation is an ongoing process, that there remains a lot of "unfinished Treaty business," and that is "because while First Nations have been upholding the bargain, the Crown has not."



**National Day
for Truth and
Reconciliation**
September 30th



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Truth and reconciliation is all year around. SIGA Casinos are committed to the 94 calls to action.

September 30th is Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. SIGA encourages you to wear your orange shirt to honour the thousands of survivors of residential schools and the children who never returned home, as well as their families and communities. #OrangeShirtDay

The SAGA of John Rowand's Bones

By Bill Waiser

It was his farewell journey.

In May 1854, Hudson's Bay Company chief factor John Rowand left Fort Edmonton with the annual spring Saskatchewan brigade. It would be his last trip down the North Saskatchewan and out of the western interior.

Rowand planned to attend the annual council meeting at Norway House (in present-day Manitoba) in June, say his goodbyes to old friends in the trade, and then push on to Montreal and retirement.

But during a stopover at Fort Pitt, Rowand died from an apparent heart attack. So began one of the most bizarre sagas—at least, for his bones—in fur trade history.

John Rowand entered the trade in 1803 as a sixteen-year-old apprentice clerk for the North West Company and was assigned to Fort Augustus (the rival post to the HBC Fort Edmonton). For the next half century, he would make the northern plains his home.

In 1810, while hunting bison, Rowand fell from his horse and broke his leg badly. A Métis woman, Louise "Lisette" Umfreville (sometimes Umphreville), the daughter of another trader, came to his rescue. The pair would become partners in a "country marriage" that produced seven children (four girls and three boys). It is said that Rowand never really recovered from Louise's death in 1849.

By 1820, Rowand's business acumen earned him a partnership in the North West Company. The following year, when the NWC and HBC merged, he was asked to head the new Saskatchewan district.

Rowand quickly became a legend for his toughness and no-nonsense demeanour. He was literally larger than life. Although short and rotund, he had amazing strength and never backed down from a confrontation. The Indigenous people called him "Iron Shirt" and "Big Mountain."

Those who worked for him were not so admiring. Rowand could be a tyrant and often resorted to verbal abuse, backed up by the occasional cuff.

By the late 1840s, Rowand was ready to retire. He seemed to sense that the days of the fur trade were coming to an end on the northern plains. But it was not until the spring of 1854 that it became official that the sixty-seven-year-old trader would be leaving the interior and returning to Montreal, the place of his birth.

Rowand had made the trip down the North Saskatchewan River with the outgoing brigade dozens of times. He would have known the river and its moods intimately, all the bends and straight stretches, and the familiar landmarks along the way.

He reached Fort Pitt (just east of the present-day Saskatchewan-Alberta interprovincial border) on May 29, 1854. Rowand had selected the site, halfway between forts Edmonton and Carlton, twenty-five years earlier. His son, John Jr., was now in charge of the post.



John Rowand

That night, the pair likely talked about the senior Rowand's retirement to Montreal—and how the fur trade had changed and the challenges it faced.

The next morning, the Fort Pitt boats were being readied to join the flotilla that had left Edmonton days earlier. Two men began to fight. Rowand tried to separate them, madly yelling as he stepped forward, only to keel over dead at their feet.

Rowand was buried outside the Fort Pitt palisades. But there was a problem. The night before his death, Rowand had told his son that he wanted to be buried in the same Montreal cemetery as his father.

George Simpson, the overseas governor of the HBC, decided to honour his dead friend's wish. Sometime over winter of 1855-56, Rowand's body was disinterred at Pitt, and the remains boiled down in a large kettle. The person who handled the macabre task apparently got drunk first.

The bones were taken to Norway House, where they were picked up by Simpson and transported to Red River. Simpson was worried, though, about sending the Rowand's bones directly onto Montreal. The contents of the package were the subject of whispers and grumbling, and superstitious voyageurs might be driven to throw the bones overboard during the trip east.

The bones were consequently repackaged and secretly sent to York Factory on Hudson Bay for shipment to England by the annual supply ship. Simpson then arranged to have them returned to North America.

Rowand's journey finally ended on November 10, 1858—more than four years after his death—when his bones were placed in an imposing, \$500 tomb in Montreal's Mount Royal Cemetery.

Bill Waiser is a historian and has contributed to the Tribune since 2021.

Book Review of Ralph Paul's "UN NEH Aboriginal Rights – Dene Law – NRTA 1930"

"UN NEH is a Dene word that denotes living away from settlements. That is camping out in some river location, lakes or forests. It means living off the resources from the waters, lands or sky. Hunting is a prime example of the word UN NEH."—Ralph Paul

Book Review by Herman Michell PhD

Land and resources take a central focus in Ralph Paul's book at a time when 'reconciliation' is being interpreted to align with treaty rights and treaty relationships supported by the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. The 'sharing of land and resources' equally are expressed in the languages, concepts, words, and stories of First Nations peoples who are the carriers of our history.

The author is 87-year-old Ralph Paul, a Denesuline writer who grew up in northwestern Saskatchewan at Patuanak. He is a residential school survivor. This book is on Dene Law and English Law. Ralph, now retired, had been a teacher for over 30 years and has written 5 books with strong links to his Denesuline heritage. At one time he was an elected leader of his English River First Nation, located at Patuanak on the upper Churchill River in Treaty 8 territory.

The book is significant, informative, and easy to read, and is written from the Dene perspective. Ralph takes readers back to his territory of forest and inland-lakes used by Dene and Cree people for sustenance. Dene Laws are rooted in this territory. People had their own ways of governing themselves for thousands of years prior to contact.

At the signing of the treaties, the idea was to live 'side-by-side' without interference in each other's lifeways. From the worldview of Dene people, the treaties were interpreted to mean the 'sharing of land and resources' along with other promises so that we could continue to live on our lands unmolested by external societies as long as the sun shines, the grass grows and the rivers flow.

In 1930, Canada introduced the *Natural Resources Transfer Agreement* (NRTA) that unilaterally transferred land and resources from the federal government to the western provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. First Nations see this as a violation of treaties. We did not sign treaties with Canada nor did we sign treaties with the provinces. He writes that if we had 50 percent of the billions of dollars that leave our lands from the royalties of our resources, we would be able live a good quality of life free from poverty.

The intended audience for the book is high school students. It is important that youth know the true history from the lens and memory of their own people as so many non-Indigenous writers have painted a picture of First Nations people with erroneous depictions that fuel stereotypes and racism (attitudes of superiority). These depictions then filter into the Canadian court system decisions which in most cases do not always side with First Nations peoples when it comes to land issues. There is a long history of misinterpretations based on the use of the English language.

The author has two university degrees combined with knowledge grounded in his 'lived experiences' as a Dene person. He majored in British history with a minor in native studies. He said he was always interested in becoming a lawyer but ended up being a teacher. He highlights key appellate court and Supreme Court rulings that have led to the way First Nations are treated, yet contributed so much to the wealth of the country. He reminds us to be wary of certain English words and concepts used in constitutional and legal documents as they may not mean the same thing from the perspectives of First Nations people.

Ralph argues it is important to look at how 'history' and the 'truth' are shared from a Dene lens and the relationship people have with the land. NOO NEN NEH is the Dene word for 'Our Land.' The land is sacred to the people, and that is why it could not be given away in treaties. There are many issues surrounding 'treaty signing.' Interpretations of the treaties are based on different worldviews. The treaty interpreters had to move back and forth between Dene, Cree, English, and even Latin. Words mean different things based on language. There are also stories of unscrupulous dealings and

malicious intent on the side of non-Indigenous treaty commissioners.

He says for example the word 'game' is a word linked to wealthy British hunters who did this for 'recreation purposes.' Dene did not look at animals and wildlife as 'game' for trophies, nor was hunting ever done for fun. Dene people had strict protocols regarding the treatment of animals and the overstepping of spiritual and natural laws. Ironically the word 'game' is used in provincial conservation laws that strangle and restrict treaty rights. The author inserts questions in the book for the reader to think about further and more deeply.

The interpretation of the treaties is a serious and on-going issue. For Ralph Paul, treaties and treaty relationships were about living 'side-by-side' with European settlers without interference in each other's lifeways. As sovereign nations, we had our own constitutions, our own laws, and governance systems. We strived to live in a peaceful way guided by our own values and laws. We looked at the land and resources as 'sacred living entities' that dictated our cultural lifeways and survival.

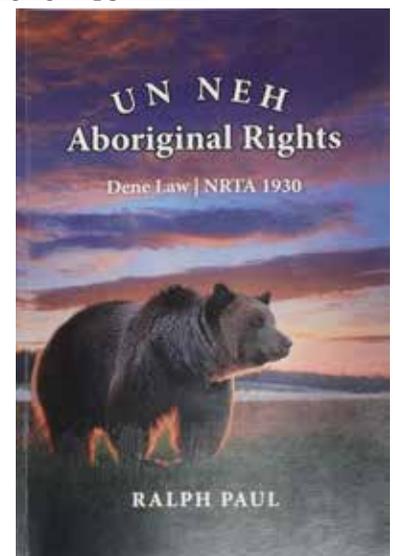
He says another word that comes up in government documents is the word 'practice' when there are discussions around 'culture.' Ralph argues we did not 'practice' our culture as it is outlined in legal decisions, we 'live our culture' which is an inherent right. DENE TCHA NEE YEH is the word used to mean 'Dene culture in action.' We are not a vanishing species.

The book highlights key Supreme Court of Canada legal cases that recognize and attempt to interpret inherent and treaty rights, such as the *Horseman, Badger, Calder and Sparrow* cases and other, lower court rulings. The author does a short summary of these cases in easy to understand language.

The court cases build on each other. He argues Canadian courts mirror British law, which is deeply rooted in European cultural lifeways, of a court system that is alien to First Nations people. Ralph Paul reminds us the risk that is involved in addressing First Nations treaty rights in Canadian courts where laws are interpreted from a British lens.

I was captivated by author's wealth of legal knowledge explained and laid out in the book even though he is not a lawyer. He takes readers back in time to the Doctrine of Discovery in the 1500s where the pope of the Catholic Church issued a series of papal bulls that was his justification of the take-over of Indigenous land and resources and to murder people that did not subscribe to the Christian faith. This doctrine, as it pertains to the takeover of Indigenous lands, still influences Canadian courts, and influenced *Indian Act* policies, displacement, forced confinement in reserves, and forced attendance at residential schools that separated peoples from their cultural lifeways on the land.

It is an interesting book and I couldn't put it down and kept going back to reread some of his 11 chapters. Published by PrintPro, Winnipeg, 2025, it contains 114 pages. The price is \$20. To purchase, contact Ralph Paul by email at ralphvpaul@gmail.com



Molanosa Cultural Days is an annual Gathering for Montreal Lake Cree Nation members in their Traditional Territory

continued from page 10

Another necessary action, in coordination with the province, was for the creation of a fireguard around the future reserve land that is Molanosa because the combined Ditch-Shoe fire had been approaching. The fireguard protected not only the land but cabins that are used for land-based learning.

Because of the experience gained from the major fires in 2015 leadership was more prepared and organized contingency meetings about a month before the fires actually broke out. Chief McLeod wishes their fire trucks had been in better condition.

On a final note about fires she said that as of that day they had contended with 48 fires in their area since May, many of them “man-made,” many created by people including some that are homeless. They had been cooking food in the open, and of leaving them unattended “on a windy day,” despite a fire ban being in place.

She wanted them to know that fires “affect everybody” - to refrain from making fires because of the resultant disruption, the enormous costs of suppressing fires and evacuating people to cities when it is an avoidable problem.

Chief McLeod was pleased that many of their members, especially children, from their sizeable MLCN urban population had come to Molanosa Days. She said their total membership is approximately 5000 to 6000, that about two-thirds live in urban areas, and that some of them are able to attend and enjoy their varied, planned activities for that week because of bus transportation paid for by the nation.

She says that children experience identity loss in city life, but that “when you bring them to a culture like this they feel good about themselves.”

The organizing committee is the same one that organizes the annual walleye derby and they are experienced. Events for the week included: prize draws, a Gospel jamboree on Sunday night, nightly musical entertainment, Summer Reading Program for youth, men’s and ladies’ doubles horseshoe tournament with cash prizes, elders’ sharing of knowledge, canoe races, archery shoot, daily community and Elders’ bingos, co-ed relay races with cash prizes, jigging contests with \$3500 in cash prizes, poker tournament with a top-up prize of \$2000, movie night, scavenger hunt,



Ron Merasty Photo

Molanosa Cultural Days. This group includes, from left to right: Gail Halkett, Elder Howard Halkett, Lionel Bird, Councillor Eldon Henderson, Janet Bird, MLCN Vice-Chief Dean Henderson, Councillor Troy Naytowhow, and Councillor Conrad Naytowhow.

waltz contest, talent shows with cash prizes, and a fish derby.

Each day everyone was provided with a free breakfast, lunch and supper. The bonus this year was that there was plenty of moose meat - the hunters were lucky,

so wonderful traditional food.

Earlier in the summer Chief McLeod had attended Stanley Mission Cultural Days and said that she played copy-cat and “stole” the idea of their doggy-paddle canoe race where you put the

paddles aside and just use your hands. Her arms were sore the following day after finishing second, but she had a lot of fun competing in that one. The inaugural doggy-paddle canoe race was scheduled for later that week.



Molanosa Cultural Days 2025
Aaron Whitefish
is a Big River member

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 <small>Avery LaBerge, Buffalo Narrows Radiation and Environmental Monitoring Technician Program</small>	 <small>Parker LeDoux, Oxbow Bachelor of Engineering</small>	 <small>Marcus Mecredi, Tisdale Power Engineering Technology</small>	 <small>Marsha Morin, Beaulieu Northern Saskatchewan Indigenous Teacher Education Program</small>	 <small>Victoria Pedwell, Denare Beach Biological Sciences</small>	 <small>Owen Slogoski, Oxbow Environmental Geoscience</small>	 <small>Harrin Tinkey, Peace Hills Heavy Duty Equipment Tech - Level 4</small>

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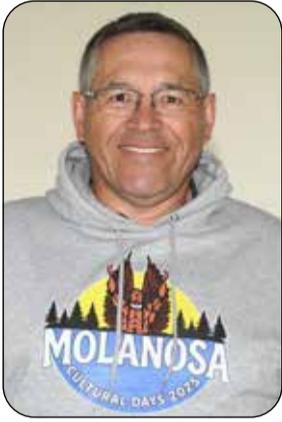


Cameco's Northern Saskatchewan Scholarship program has awarded **\$400,000** since it began.

MOLANOSA CULTURAL DAYS 2025

Montreal Lake Cree Nation

Photos by Ron Merasty



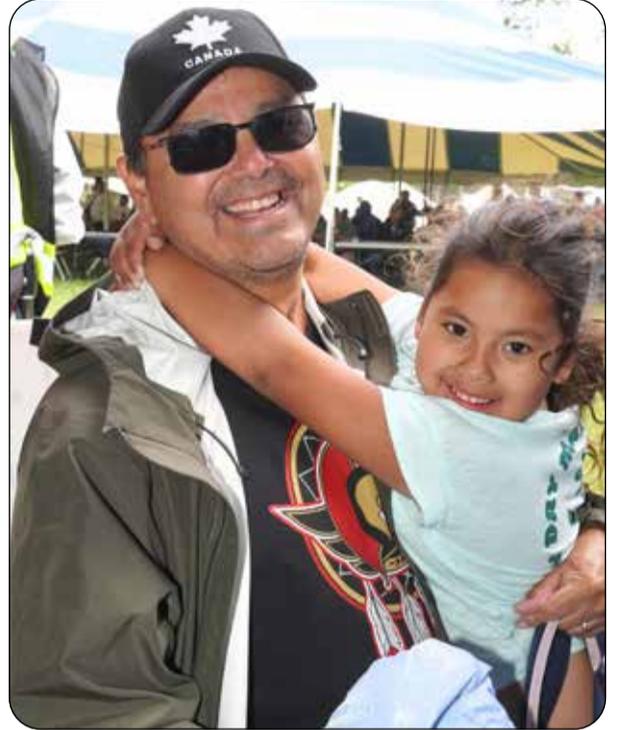
Don McKay,
MLCN Band Administrator



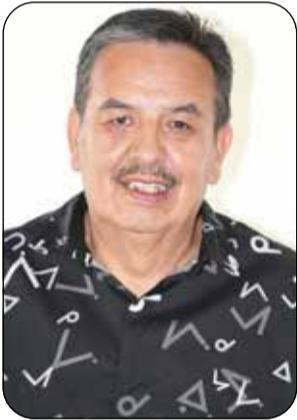
Ron Umpherville,
Oiler fan



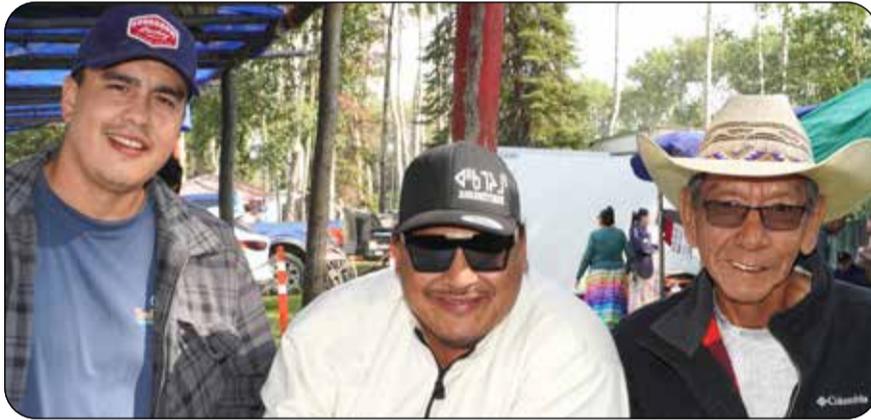
Brothers Steven Beatty, left,
and John Ross



Ed Mirasty, PAGC Urban Services Director,
and daughter Lilly B. Mirasty



Roger "Ungo" Bird
wearing his Cree syllabics shirt



The trio of Bruce Naytowhow, left, Shane Bird
and the still-roguish Jake Felix ("5 bucks")



Sasha Naytowhow (9),
and her grandma Julie Naytowhow



Roy Charles,
MLCN member



Philip Bear,
PBCN Southend



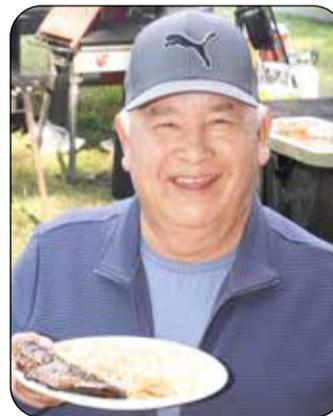
Warren Thomas, Big River Cree drum
group, bellied up to the food line



Aaliyah Smith
(5)



Nadia Halkett, left, Annie Halkett,
and Caroline Halkett



MLCN Senator Noland Henderson,
being traditional, ate "stique" for supper



Robert "Cookie" Bird,
security guard of 21 years at Molanosa



Kinsley McKenzie, 10, "Timbit" Naytowhow, 10,
and Constance Bird, 10



Clockwise from top left: Dana Lariviere, Kennedy Budhanlall, Pearl Peters, Jai Budhanlall,
all work for Montreal Lake Child & Family Services Agency.

Buckley Belanger speaks to the challenges of being a Liberal MP from northern Saskatchewan

By Ron Merasty

Buckley Belanger, a Metis who hails from Ile-a-la-Crosse in northwest Saskatchewan, was elected as MP for Desnethé-Missinippi-Churchill River on April 28, 2025. It was a period of transition for him from provincial politics to the federal scene. Your scribe spoke to MP Belanger in Prince Albert in the middle of August, about 90 days after his election.

When Prime Minister selected his cabinet, Belanger (which he pronounces as Belanjer) was not in it as a full-fledged member despite being the only Liberal MP from Saskatchewan. However, he was handed the responsibility of Minister of State for Rural Development, which in itself is a significant portfolio as you will read below.

The rules of cabinet are that Belanger will only be invited to address it when the topic of discussion involves his portfolio, otherwise he is not around the table.

Federally, he said that he now faces “a bigger agenda in a more complex governance structure,” and a lot of work, but it was something he expected. He had to become familiar with his Liberal caucus members and “getting engaged with different departments” as part of the learning process.

One necessary task was hiring staff at four separate office locations, to establish effective communication with residents of one of the largest constituencies in Canada, so at La Ronge, La Loche, perhaps at Cumberland House, and “more than likely a part-time office in the Far North.”

His “quarterback” is Devin Bernatchez, the former Lac La Ronge Indian Band councillor at Sucker River, who will work out of the La Ronge constituency office.

Right from the get-go Belanger expected that he might hear, “We don’t see our MP enough,” and “when are we going to start seeing things happening in the north?”

Fair enough, but Canada is the second-largest country on the planet and it is a long way from Saskatchewan to Ottawa.

Belanger says that he plans to “work hard, stay humble, and stay focused on the people that elected him as MP.” He also says he’s got three jobs to tend to.

Job one is to be an MP and represent his northern peoples’ interests, knowing that “the roads are bad, we need more housing, a lot of issues around illegal drugs,” and many other issues that impact northern communities.”

The second job, he says, arises from being

the only Liberal MP from Saskatchewan, and that a lot of Saskatchewan people will approach him to express their concerns about what is happening provincially, “because (I’m) sometimes the only person at the table from Saskatchewan.”

There are 12 Conservative MPs from Saskatchewan, but they’re not in government. He is, so he says that industry and agricultural leaders and ordinary citizens have been talking to him, and that will continue.

“It’s important that I’m receiving them and respecting them and understanding their issues, because when you go to Ottawa, and they will ask, ‘Well, what do Saskatchewan producers think of this?’ Then you have to have the answers, sitting at that table.”

His third job was tasked to him by the Prime Minister in “redeveloping our approach towards rural development” in Canada.

If he’s not in Ottawa or travelling in northern Saskatchewan, “I could be in Nova Scotia and then I’ll be in BC next, and I’ll be in Saskatchewan, and I’m in Manitoba, and I’ll be in the Northwest Territories,” but he wants the Tribune readership to know “that the North is my home riding, and we’re going to do all we can to assist and continue improving lives in northern Saskatchewan.”

He gave some examples of how the federal government benefits the citizenry, such as this past summer when the Canadian military working with the province to suppress fires, of Indigenous Services Canada helping with the evacuations and the associated costs.

Another example he pointed to was that recently the federal government “made a \$105 million announcement around internet connectivity,” and that as the “minister responsible” for the development of a national high-speed internet network, a \$3.2 billion national project that by 2030, “the ambition is to have all of Canada connected to high-speed internet.”

It is part of his rural development portfolio. To that end, he says that the federal government has been partnering with various telephone companies, which in Saskatchewan is SaskTel, to finance high-speed internet, an approximately \$200 million investment in Saskatchewan.

The conversation turned to the *Building One Canadian Economy* – Bill C-5, which Belanger says was necessitated by two countries imposing punishing tariffs on Canadian exports – being the United

States and China.

The tariffs impact “lumber, steel, aluminum, vehicles, and now most recently canola,” he said, the last which Saskatchewan relies on sales to China.

Bill C-5, Belanger says, triggered the “harmonization” of interprovincial “rules and regulations,” to “make sure that our interprovincial rules on trade don’t impact the ability to trade - to reduce those barriers.”

“There is a \$200 billion opportunity if we streamline those regulations and start building our economy together,” he explained.

One example of harmonization of interprovincial rules and regulations he provided, is for the ability of workers to work in other provinces, of nurses and truck drivers being able to work in, say, Quebec, or of Quebec truck drivers and nurses being able to work in this province.

He said the legislative intent of Bill C-5 is for all provinces joining together with other provinces to create a “streamlined, efficient process, building our Canadian economy, becoming our own best customers,” through internal trade, diversifying the economy and moving away from relying so much on one trading partner, the United States.

Okay, but how are Indigenous Peoples supposed to have a leg up say on participating in that economy?

Belanger said that the Prime Minister spoke to Indigenous representatives in Ottawa, including by Prince Albert Grand Council, about developing projects “that are of national interest – nation-building projects” which will create economic opportunities.

He said the Prime Minister stressed “there’s two principles that he wanted to bring along with that nation-building project mentality.”

One is that you’ve got to have First Nations and Métis communities’ involvement, “because many of the resources are in their backyards, and (the Prime Minister) is very insistent upon that. And how that process develops is wide open today. There’s been no preconceived notion on excluding any First Nations or Métis engagement in building that one Canadian economy and looking at these nation-building projects.”

“The second thing he said that we needed to do was that he wanted to make sure that we have environmental integrity right across the board, that we



Ron Merasty Photo

Buckley Belanger 2025

don’t compromise our environment,” to that “Indigenous engagement and environmental stewardship.”

He called them “the key pieces ... and it’s something that we passed as a government and ... (my) role as an MP is to make sure we position as many northern Saskatchewan people and rural Canada people to be part of that movement.”

Another topic of discussion with Belanger is what commitment the Carney government has on continuing to invest in Indigenous communities who have been playing catch-up in the last decade, that spending by the federal government on Indigenous Peoples had increased with the Liberals – particularly with the Trudeau government - but that the quality-of-life gap is still not closing vis-a-vis non-Indigenous Canadians, and that the fear is that spending on Indigenous Peoples will go down in the future, but not certain when that could happen.

On June 9, the Prime Minister announced his government will now be spending 2% of GDP on defence, up from approximately 1.45% in 2024, and that commitment may go even higher in the future, to 5%.

On July 8, the federal government announced sweeping budget cuts across all departments – 15% over three years, and it seems Indigenous Services Canada was not spared, which funds essential services for First Nations people.

In speaking about the Trudeau-era spending, Belanger said: “So, I think there (was) a deliberate investment into Indigenous services. And that money was, I think, was almost doubled if not tripled. And that whole catch-up effort to make sure the quality of life was afforded to our Indigenous community, which is First Nations and Metis, that how long that envelope is there for, I don’t know.”

Book Review of *Lost At Windy River: A True Story of Survival*

By Elizabeth Zdunich

“It takes courage and bravery to survive in the barrens.”

In 1944, 13-year-old Ilse Schweder got lost in a snowstorm while checking her family’s trapline at Windy River in northern Canada, and got separated from her dog team. Windy River is in Nunavut, north of the Manitoba boundary near Neultin Lake.

Lost At Windy River: A True Story of Survival is written by Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation (PBCN) member Trina Rathgeber, Ilse’s granddaughter. This is a gripping story full of traditional knowledge and resilience. The artwork, by Alina Pete, is captivating and is coloured by Jillian Dolan. I can’t recommend this book enough.

This is the harrowing story of how a young Indigenous girl defies the odds and endures nine days alone in the unforgiving barrens.

Ilse faces many challenges, including freezing temperatures, wild animals, snow blindness and frostbite. With no food or supplies, she relies on traditional Indigenous knowledge passed down from her family. Ilse uses her connection to the land and animals, wilderness skills and resilience to find her way home.

If you were lost, alone in winter in the north, would you be able to survive? Would your 13-year-old be able to survive? This brave, young girl did, but it was no accident.

My message to teachers, parents, grandparents is that if you are looking for something that will help our

young people feel proud of our traditional knowledge this book is a great resource. (I did a little peek online and it looks like there’s a study guide available on Teachers

Pay Teachers too.) My thoughts are this book is great for Grades 2-9, and I think it should be in all PBCN schools as part of the curriculum. My 8-year-old, 10-year-old and 12-year-old each read it and thought it was “really cool.”

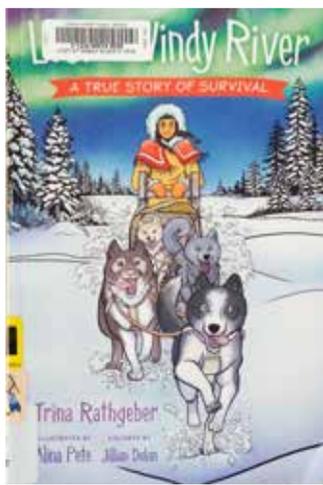
This graphic novel is a page turner. Learning how 13-year-old Ilse deals with snow blindness, cold, hunger while wandering lost in the barren lands is

fascinating. I get the sense that some of the old people would really appreciate this book too at it takes place in 1944, so long removed from our modern world. It’s heartwarming to see how people lived off the land.

I hope you borrow a copy from your public library or buy it for yourself or a young one in your life. It is well written, beautifully illustrated. This story does not disappoint.

Lost is published by Orca Book Publishers and was released in November 2024. It contains 96 pages, is in paperback format, and available on Amazon for \$19.95. You may also want to check out McNally Robinson Booksellers located on 8th Street in Saskatoon.

Elizabeth Zdunich, a PBCN member, is an educator.



Cameco and Orano sign 15-year agreement with Indigenous-owned Rise Air

By Ron Merasty

On August 29, it was announced that Cameco Corporation and Orano Canada Inc. have signed a 15-year agreement worth approximately \$500 million with Rise Air, a 100 percent Indigenous-owned Saskatchewan airline, to provide workforce transportation to their northern operations worksites. It would seem that the two uranium giants are the wind beneath Rise Air's wings, to quote an old song.

The announcement was made at Hangar 3 at Saskatoon airport and it began by emcee **Mr. Derek Nice, CEO of Rise Air**, handing off Senator Caroline Isadore a pouch of tobacco before she delivered the opening prayer in Dene.

Black Lake Denesuline Nation **Chief Coreen Sayazie** spoke on behalf of the two other Athabasca Denesuline Nations, Fond du Lac and Hatchet Lake, calling the agreement "historic." It is that because previous agreements by Cameco and Orano, or their predecessors, since the 1990s, have typically spanned three years or less.

Chief Sayazie acknowledged that the previous agreements had supported their communities with jobs and training opportunities, but that from the airline's viewpoint, in which they have an ownership stake, "that made it challenging to plan, invest and to imagine what the future could hold."

"With this 15-year agreement we are stepping into a new era of stability and of opportunity - a long-term partnership like this gives everyone the confidence



Ron Merasty Photo

From left to right: Mayor Daniel Powder, Northern Village of Stony Rapids; Dean Classen, Uranium City; Jim Corman, President & CEO, Orano Canada Ltd.; Geoff Gay, CEO, Athabasca Basin Development; Eileen MacDonald, Band Manager, Black Lake Denesuline First Nation; Derek Nice, CEO, Rise Air; Rachelle Girard, Senior Vice-President and Chief Corporate Officer, Cameco Corp.; Rosalie Tsannie-Burseth, Board Member, Rise Air; Christian Sandypoint, student pilot, Dziret'ai Flight School, Black Lake Denesuline First Nation; Richie Robillard, AME aircraft maintenance engineer, BLDFN; Senator Caroline Isadore, BLDFN; Chief Coreen Sayazie, BLDFN. In front: Terri Daniels, Mayor, Northern Village of Wollaston Lak

to invest in better equipment, upgrade facilities and for the people in the north it means more training, more hiring, most importantly, real careers that our young people can count on like more pilot training and other training programs... This helps prepare our people for careers where they can stay close to home and have a better life in their communities."

She added that Black Lake and "eleven other First Nations and four municipalities are proud to have ownership in Saskatchewan's largest regional airline.... I am happy to see this type of long-term commitment

formalized in this way."

Lastly, Chief Sayazie thanked Cameco, Orano and Rise Air for demonstrating vision. "You are showing what true partnerships look like - one built on trust, respect and shared responsibility to the north."

"The importance of agreements and collaborations like this cannot be overstated... and that they will create jobs not only in the cities, but also in the north," **Eric Schmalz**, minister responsible for First Nations, Metis and Northern Affairs, said.

"More than half of our workforce at our Saskatchewan operations is from the north. Regularly-scheduled air transportation is critical to these operations. Without the ability to fly workers to our northern sites we cannot operate," **Rachelle Girard, Cameco Senior Vice-President and Chief Corporate Officer**, said, adding that Rise Air is "a trusted service provider."

The agreement, "allows us to provide safe, reliable and comfortable transportation for over 1150 Cameco workers flying with Rise Air every week - this is a significant event."

Jim Corman, President and CEO of Orano Canada Ltd., called the agreement "a great collaboration" as well as a great success story, but that it required negotiators working diligently for two years to create the agreement. He called Orano's employees the company's "most precious resource."

"We trust Rise Air to handling our most precious resource every day as we load our people onto your planes," he said.

Corman, a geologist who said he had worked for many years at the mine sites reminisced about waiting in Hangar 3 in the 1980s for flights north, first in Hawker-Siddeleys, and that the planes progressed to Saabs and ATRs. He praised the ATRs that are on order, manufactured in France - he liked that fact because Orano is owned by French interests - and was pleased that Rise Air was going to acquire a "bigger and better one(s) of these," that will be "faster, more fuel-efficient and comfortable."

Rosalie Tsannie-Burseth, a member of Hatchet Lake and having been on Rise Air's board of directors since 2022, said that the agreement "shows a strong

and lasting commitment by the mining industry for Indigenous businesses and communities."

Saying that the agreement "is more than a contract," it will be "a commitment that will support our regional airline and boost our northern economy into the future."

Tsannie-Burseth foresees that the agreement will be "transformative" for Rise Air which will include more hiring and training that will "enable Rise Air to focus on building long-term careers for residents of northern Saskatchewan."

She added that all three companies to the contract have supported innovative initiatives that will benefit northern Saskatchewan, one of them being the Dziret'ai Indigenous pilot training program which is in progress and that will ultimately have Dene pilots flying into northern communities.

Rise Air has had "remarkable progress and is striving to be the best and to do the best," to enhance their service for their customers, she concluded.

Mr. Nice said that Rise Air will be the first airline in Canada to operate the new aeroplanes they have on order. They will be "factory-new" ATR 72-600s made in France by a subsidiary of Airbus, and feature new technology engines manufactured in Montreal by Pratt & Whitney Canada. They will have a 68-passenger capacity, and will be the largest aircraft to be operated in Saskatchewan by a Saskatchewan airline.

"They are capable of flying on the aircraft for about 20 years before they need overhaul," Mr. Nice said of the new turbo-prop engines. "They are much more fuel-efficient and so carbon emissions are lower as well... and that's going to have a big impact on us for the reliability of our services."

He said that the new contract will allow them to recruit the pilots and maintenance engineers that Rise Air needs, "and offer them careers over the life of the contract."

The three aircraft on order will be an investment of \$98 million and Mr. Nice expects the first ATR 72-600 to arrive in Saskatoon in December 2025 and to go into service in January 2026.



WOMAN'S HEALING CIRCLE

851-23rd St West
Prince Albert, SK

Woman's Healing Circle is a sacred space where women come together to heal, connect, and empower one another. Rooted in ancient wisdom and guided by modern holistic practices, our circle offers a nurturing environment for emotional, spiritual, and personal growth.

We believe in the power of community, shared stories, and intentional healing. Whether you're seeking peace, support, transformation, or sisterhood, the Woman's Healing Circle is here to hold space for your journey. Our gatherings include guided meditations, sharing circles, energy work, creative expression, and rituals aligned with the moon, seasons, and feminine cycles.

This is a space for all who identify as women of all ages, backgrounds, and experiences to be seen, heard, and celebrated. Together, we remember our strength, restore our balance, and rise in unity.
Come as you are. Leave more connected.

*Each time woman gather
in circles with each other
the world heals a little
more.*

Location: PAGC Health and Social Development
(Boardroom)
Time: 6:00pm - 8:00pm
Date: Every Wednesday
Contact Info: Chelsea Moran 306 953 7917
Rachyn Bui Sanderson 306 953 7929
Selvia Tsannie 306 953 7909
Kelsea Sinclair 306 953 7901

Snacks and Beverages will be provided.



National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, **SEPTEMBER 30**



*Guy Indian Residential School at
Sturgeon Landing, ca. 1927-1945,
Ecole Ste Therese Sturgeon Landing*

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30 – also known as Orange Shirt Day – recognizes the tragic legacy of residential schools, the missing children, the families left behind and the Survivors of these institutions.

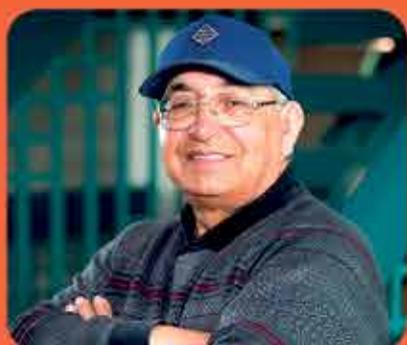
Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation still has Survivors – many aging – that have not forgotten their experiences at various institutions.

The first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation was held in 2021. September 30, 2025 marks the fourth anniversary date to commemorate this sad chapter in our nation's history. **Every Child Matters.**



The day coincides with Orange Shirt Day, which was first honoured in 2013 by the founding non-profit organization, the [Orange Shirt Society](#).

We urge Canada to implement the 94 Calls to Action by the 2015 Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.



**Chief Peter Beatty
on behalf of the Council
and membership of
Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation.**

