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Gouvernement régional
d'Eeyou Istchee Baie-James
Eeyou Istchee James Bay
Regional Government

MRS. NANCY GUYON

IS NAMED DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE
EYYOU ISTCHEE JAMES BAY
REGIONAL GOVERNMENT



The Council of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government (EIJBRG) is very pleased to announce the nomination of Mrs. Nancy Guyon to the position of Director General.

A proficient manager with over 20 years of experience in the public and private sectors, Mrs. Guyon will play a strategic role in the accomplishment of the objectives of the EIJBRG and the advancement of the priority issues.

As Director General, she will also lead the team at the Regional Government in the provision of quality services for the benefit of the residents of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay territory.

Holder of Master of Business Administration degree from the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, she was the Director of Economic Development for the Government of Nunavut from 2015 to 2021. More recently, she held a position on the Secretariat of Economic Development of the City of Gatineau since 2021.

Mrs. Guyon is known as a cooperative and unifying leader. These qualities will be particularly useful in her new position.

She will officially begin her duties on May 17, 2023 at the head office of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government in Matagami.

The Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government congratulates Mrs. Guyon for this nomination and wishes her lots of success in her new position.

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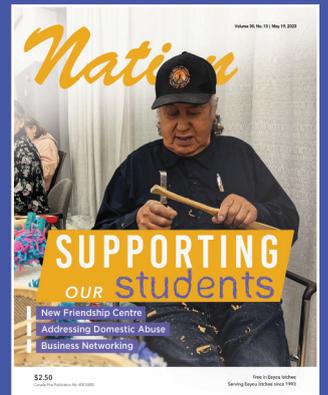


Photo by Raven Icebound Lord

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A 'Geo-Symbol' for Val-d'Or

Cree patients to get new accommodations at rebuilt Native Friendship Centre

by Patrick Quinn
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A major renovation of the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre will improve accommodations for Cree patients staying in the city for healthcare services. A new five-storey pavilion will be constructed adjacent to the centre's current building, on its existing parking space.

Federal Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Marc Miller and provincial Indigenous Affairs Minister Ian Lafrenière announced the \$60 million project in Val-d'Or May 1. Ottawa will contribute \$40 million, with \$10 million each from the Quebec government and the Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon.

"This project traces a path towards reconciliation and is part of a process of cultural safety and bridge-building between peoples," stated Friendship Centre president Oscar Kistabish. "The contribution of Indigenous knowledge-carriers, artists and artisans gives the project an invaluable sense of purpose and identity."

As the new pavilion will be carbon-neutral, energy efficient and resilient to climate change, Infrastructure Canada is budgeting \$25 million of the federal funds for the new Friendship Centre, which will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2024.

"We're looking forward to the next 50 years with our healthy environment values," said executive director Édith Cloutier. "A committee of knowledge carriers, artists and Elders accompanied the architects and engineers, anchoring this project in our identity. It's going to be a 'geo-symbol' – a strong statement about who we are as First Peoples."

The top three floors of the new building will house Cree patients and their caregivers, with 90 beds available in 48 rooms equipped with private washrooms. This facility will include communal areas specifically for Cree patients to socialize and prepare meals.



While the current service corridor between the Cree Health Board and the CISSS de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue facilitates care for nearly 9,000 Cree patients and their caregivers each year, CHB executive director Daniel St-Amour said that a lack of accommodation forces more than 80% to stay in area hotels for four nights on average.

"For our clientele who need to move away from their community to receive healthcare, it is fundamental to ensure the best conditions during their stay," said CHB chairperson Bertie Wapachee. "We acknowledge the efforts of the Native Friendship Centre to offer dedicated lodging and a safety to our clients, as well as a revitalized and welcoming environment that respects Indigenous culture and traditions."

The new pavilion will also provide space for the growing needs of the Minowé health clinic – recognized as a province-wide model for urban Indigenous healthcare – where medical staff deliver culturally safe health and social services.

With new reception, cafeteria, offices and community gathering spaces for the

overcrowded 25-year-old building, this development will allow the Friendship Centre to repatriate services currently dispersed among rented locations.

"The centre would like to add space for different community activities, specific spaces dedicated for Elders and youth, for our family and early childhood programs, and to renovate our daycare centre," Cloutier told the Nation.

The centre's diversified frontline services are keeping pace with a growing urban Indigenous population. Its grassroots initiatives provide a cultural connection.

"We work with other partners on homelessness programs to support our people who are most vulnerable, but at the other end we also have training programs for young adults who want to access the labour markets," Cloutier explained. "It's just part of being connected with our community – we always take that challenge."

Along with a day respite centre for the homeless, the centre's social-housing project provides 24 apartments for Indigenous families with specialized services to promote a positive living envi-

ronment. Cloutier said that demand is so high for this housing that they could build another tomorrow morning and it would still be full.

Construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2024 and be completed in 2026. It will increase capacity for a wide range of services, including psychosocial intervention, justice access, skills development, cultural activities and an artisan marketplace.

"This Friendship Centre is becoming an urban Indigenous governance model that is promoting self-determination through community development," asserted Cloutier. "It's taking recommendations off the shelves of national inquiries to truly put them into action. We feel we're contributing concretely at a local-level to make reconciliation happen."

Nation

**PREPARE YOUR
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The Nation issue in celebration of National Indigenous Peoples Day is coming out on June 16th.

It would be wonderful to have your message and wishes included in the Nation, to celebrate and honor the pride and culture of First Nations on this very special day.

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Language Frictions **Heat Up**

Indigenous leaders are demanding the Quebec government drop plans for a provincial law that would supposedly protect ancestral languages, asserting that only Indigenous communities should determine their language policies.

"Quebec has no jurisdiction on language laws, and we want for them to leave it alone and let us handle it," said Kahnawake Grand Chief Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer. "We want them to know that we are firmly opposed to provincial interference in our communities. We're telling you, 'No!' and they are not paying attention."

Indigenous Affairs Minister Ian Lafrenière plans consultations on the proposed legislation in Val-d'Or, Uashat, Montreal and Kuujuaq during May and June.

The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador also opposes the initiative, arguing that Quebec should not legislate without the agreement of First Nations governments and that the process contravenes inherent rights to self-determination and self-government.

"The government of Quebec must listen to reason and halt these insidious assimilation methods that date back to another era," declared AFNQL Chief Ghislain Picard.

On April 20, the AFNQL and the First Nations Education Council filed a legal challenge in Quebec Superior Court over the Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec, known as Bill 96 before it was adopted by the National Assembly and became law last June 1. They contend the law aggravates existing obstacles to the aca-

dem and professional success of Aboriginal learners.

"We've tried and we've tried to work out a solution but there's just a refusal to make any modifications," explained Chief John Martin of the Gesgapegiag Mi'kmaq community in the Gaspé. "There is no nation on the planet that is going to impose legislation on another nation and their language."

The Cree Nation Government announced it will not participate in the consultation process, instead requesting discussions on a nation-to-nation basis. The CNG argues that the JBNQA and other agreements impose tailored consultations that respect Quebec's treaty obligations to the Cree.

Grand Chief meets **Trudeau**

Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty joined other First Nation, Métis and Inuit leaders from across the country in a meeting of Modern Treaty and Self-Government Partners with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau May 8.

The exchanges were focused on nation-to-nation relationships, recognizing the potential of treaties and self-government agreements, and implementing strategies to foster well-being and healthy communities. Leaders shared their visions of their nation's futures and expressed that a whole-of-government approach framed by mutual respect and openness are necessary to affect systemic changes within the federal government.

"These principles should never be taken for granted," said Gull-Masty. "They are the foundation of our relationship and partnership with Canada,

and their implementation will contribute to advancing reconciliation between Canada and Indigenous Nations. Full compliance with these principles will be critically important in order to make meaningful progress in remaining areas, such as language, culture,

Quebec should not legislate without the agreement of First Nations governments and that the process contravenes inherent rights to self-determination and self-government

health, education, and social and economic development."

The federal government announced an updated treaty implementation policy February 28 at annual conference of the Land Claims Agreement Coalition. The policy supports the negotiation of modern treaties that provide a way for Indigenous nations to leave the Indian Act.

Since the first modern treaty, the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement, was signed with the Cree Nation in 1977, 25 other nations have negotiated modern treaties. They are usually tripartite, including the province or territory. More than 70 Indigenous groups are currently negotiating modern treaties.

Buckskin Babes set up hide camp

A group known as the Buckskin Babes Urban Moosehide Collective organized their third camp since 2021 in a shared community space in Montreal's Pointe-Saint-Charles neighbourhood.

For a week in early May, the former industrial area

that once housed CN's railway workshops became a reclaimed space for a network of knowledge keepers, Elders, students and families. The collective helps Indigenous people living in Montreal to reconnect to land-based prac-

tices and Elders' traditional knowledge.

"We're taking it back," said co-founder Autumn Godwin, a graduate student at Concordia University who is from Montreal Lake Cree Nation, north of Saskatoon. "We need to be in these circles. We're all finding moments of healing, but we're also finding moments of solidarity."

Gracie Ratt, a cultural educator from the Algonquins of Barriere Lake, brought pelts of beaver, otter, deer and moose to the city. Around a picnic table, teepee and fire, Ratt and other Elders shared their experience using handmade tools to de-flesh and scrape moose and deer hides.

"My motivation is keeping the culture, language, just to preserve it, especially for our youth," Ratt told CBC Indigenous. "Also, to preserve the animal, the animal fur, the meat. These are the things that the youth need to know – to preserve the knowledge."

STEPPINGSTONES TO SUCCESS

Cree School Board's first Post-Secondary Student Services conference provides **a sense of solidarity**

by Patrick Quinn

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Photos by Raven Icebound Lord

The Cree School Board hosted its first Post-Secondary Students Services (PSSS) conference in Ottawa, featuring honest and at times heart-rending admissions of struggles and how they were overcome.

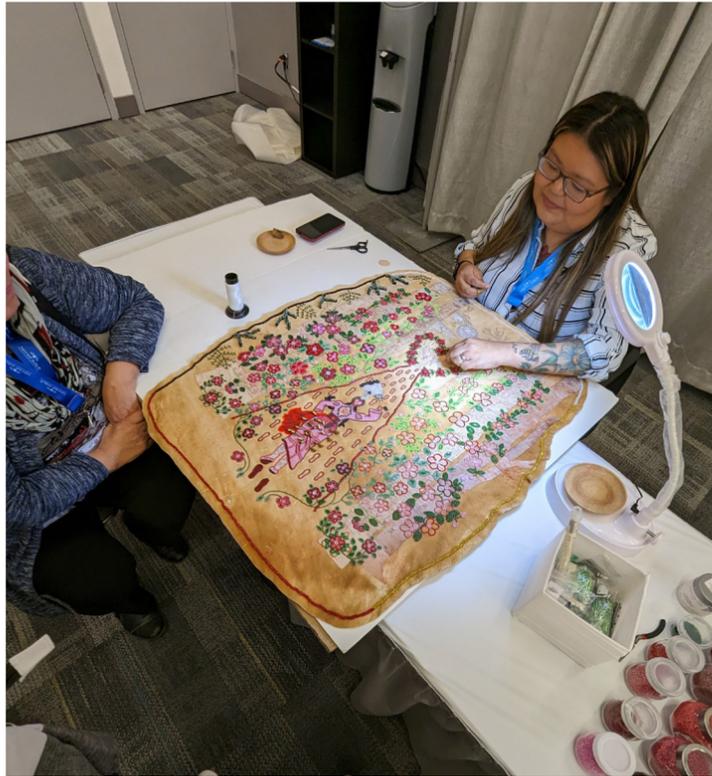
Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty led a delegation of leaders from all major Cree entities, respected Elders and accomplished graduates to the April 21-23 conference. Students were invited to develop a network of peers and meet potential employers, perhaps the conference's most significant benefit was the sense of solidarity it brought to students far from home.

"They saw I'm not alone on this education path," said Darryl Diamond, CSB's post-secondary student affairs technician. "A strong message shared was the importance of knowing the people you come from but also being dedicated to your learning and having that work ethic to serve your Cree."

Among the approximately 450 Cree students in post-secondary studies, about 300 reside in the Ottawa/Gatineau region. A wide variety of workshops and employer networking booths at the conference connected students with potential career paths ranging from specialized healthcare positions to traditional arts and crafts.

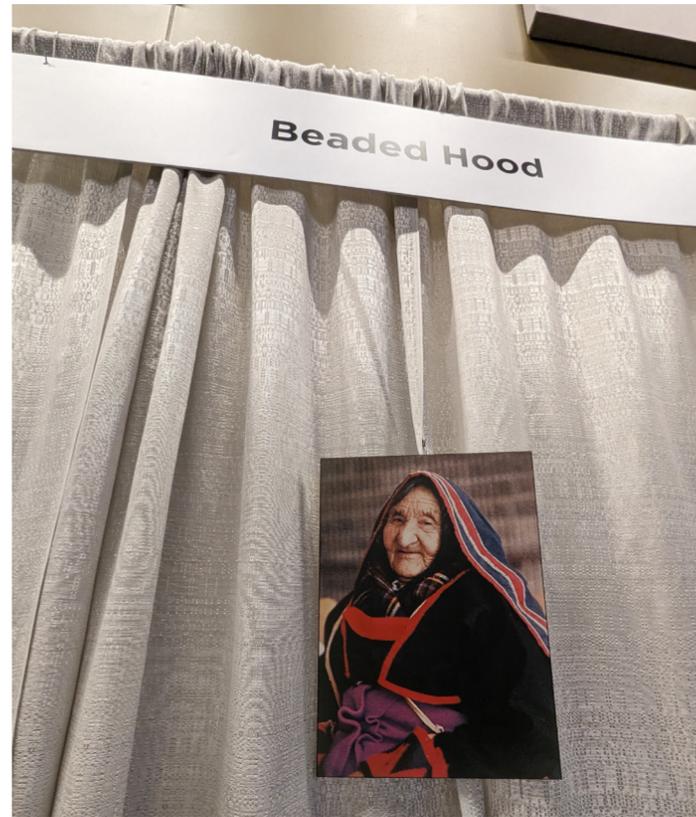
Workshop topics included media communications, midwifery, budgeting and resume building, entrepreneurship and nurturing mental health. Several Cree artists and artisans exhibited skills like moosehide sewing and slipper beading in the cultural teachings room while Elders Roderick and Janie

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Myupitahaaasutaau chinimutaanawaau



*“Our Cree people have had generations before them work hard to give what we have today. The opportunities available for our young are strong **steppingstones**.”*

- Darryl Diamond, CSB's post-secondary student affairs technician



Pachano and David and Anna Bosum hosted valued breakfast discussions.

“Just their presence and discussions with the youth brought so much joy and reassurance that we are validated and loved by our Elders,” said event emcee Joshua Iserhoff. “It assured us how important it is to safeguard our traditional language and culture, something every student sacrifices when they come to an institution in the south.”

Iserhoff admired the promotional material, banquet entertainment and detailed snowshoe-themed floor directions. He was also encouraged by PSSS coordinator Andrea Kitchen’s announcement that some of the CSB’s “outdated policies” were being reviewed.

Heading into the conference, the CSB faced controversy following a CBC article alleging that 18-year-old Khayden Carter Dick’s funding was cut after he failed two courses and missed a deadline to file paperwork. The award-winning Whapmagoostui student with dreams of becoming a doctor reached a crisis point this winter and was admitted to hospital with serious, self-inflicted wounds.

While the CSB refuted some of the article’s claims, the incident raised important issues about the adequacy of support offered, particularly to younger students inexperienced with budgeting and urban realities. Law student Raven Icebound Lord recalled her own stress when she failed a course in her first semester and wasn’t able to reach a counsellor in the PSSS office.

“If you’re fresh out of school, it’s very difficult to navigate,” explained Icebound Lord. “It’s a lot to juggle in such a short span. They could talk one-on-one with students, similar to the Gladue report’s individualized healing path in the criminal justice system.”

While Indigenous bridging programs and specialized advisors increasingly offered by universities can help transfer the unique survival skills required for southern life, multiple students suggested these resources could be better communicated and coordinated by the CSB.

Although social media has simplified networking among Cree students, Icebound Lord finds it challenging to overcome busy schedules and geographic barriers. Still, she is attempting to launch an Indigenous law student network in Montreal and was pleased to meet another student at the conference interested in creating a study group.

While Icebound Lord has secured daycare at her university, being a single parent without family nearby has its own challenges. Joshua Loon advocated for a parents committee with unique services, which is planned to launch next year.

Previously known as “the radio guy” in Cree Health Board communications, Loon left Mistissini with his wife and four children to study journalism at Montreal’s Concordia University.

“The Cree Nation needs more Cree writers,” Loon asserted. “If you write it down, people will read it in 50 years. How many Cree medicines were lost because we didn’t write it down? Did you ever play the game broken telephone?”

Suggesting CSB allowances are insufficient for rising rents and daily expenses, Loon recommended that younger students be paired with a mentor. If he were one, Loon said he’d advise the youth to understand their finances from the beginning – and finish school before having children.

Keynote speakers CSB chairperson Sarah Pashagumskum, Eeyou Istchee Lifestyle founder Raymond Jolly and Cree physician Dr. Kevin Brousseau delivered transformational messages.

“I was thinking of calling it quits,” shared Loon. “Kevin Brousseau quit his first time, but he decided to go back and really focus on his education. I told him I decided to return to school because of his story – it was so inspiring.”

Acknowledging the huge learning curve students must face to pursue higher education, Darryl Diamond said the CSB is itself learning from comments shared at the conference. He suggested today’s investments fulfill the vision of yesterday’s

leaders of a people gaining worldly skills while staying true to their roots.

“I kept hearing the words opportunity, responsibility and privilege,” Diamond said. “Our Cree people have had generations before them work hard to give what we have today. The opportunities available for our young are strong steppingstones.”

*“A **strong message** shared was the importance of knowing the people you come from but also being dedicated to your learning and having that work ethic to serve your Cree.”*

- Darryl Diamond, CSB's post-secondary student affairs technician



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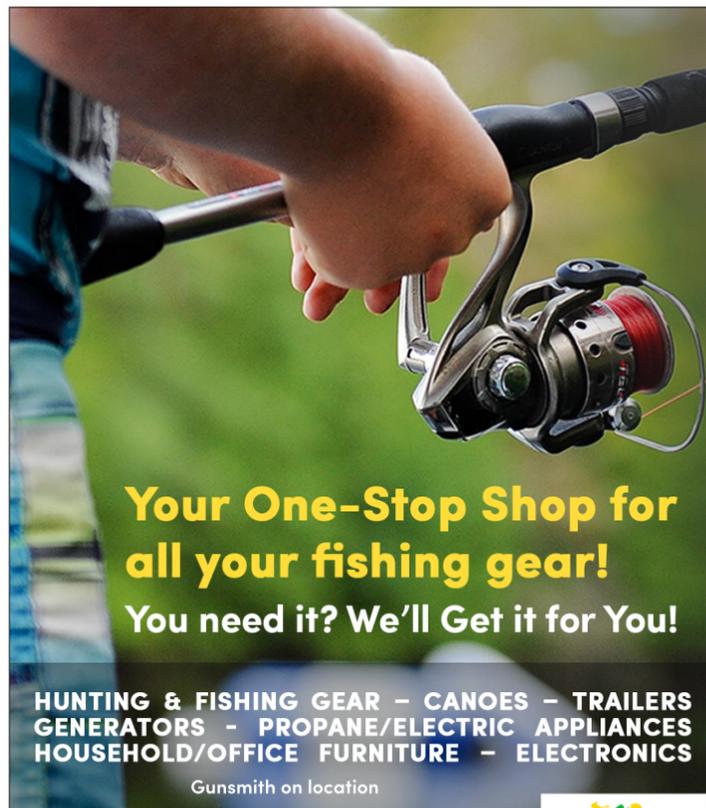
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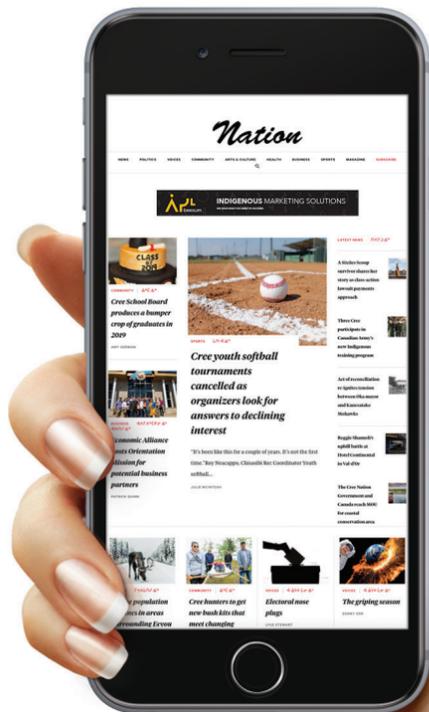
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Let's Build

Manchadauu program addresses domestic family violence

by Patrick Quinn
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association (CWEIA) has initiated a new regional program called Manchadauu, which means "let's build", to help families affected by domestic violence through strength provided from traditional teachings.

Project coordinator Adrian Rabbitskin-Bullfrog assumed his position in January, working with CWEIA wellness coordinator Susan Mark. Together with local women's and men's associations, he will visit communities following Goose Break to help connect impacted individuals with Elders.

"We're approaching domestic violence through the teachings of the Elders," Rabbitskin-Bullfrog told the Nation. "It's to be comfortable in knowing they can go to the Elder whenever they feel like sharing their thoughts and feelings, and to better understand the meaning of traditional shelters and dwellings."

Rabbitskin-Bullfrog explained that coastal and inland communities have different cultural dwellings that are built according to the season. As each pole of a teepee or other structure has a specific Cree name and purpose, understanding which pole represents the individual can support traditional healing pathways.

Manchadauu's purpose is to give women affected by domestic family violence a sense of belonging; that life has a plan and a purpose. It is to let them know they have a meaning to their family, to their community and to the Nation. In the program's logo designed by Tim Whiskeychan, the bear represents strength, the goose symbolizes hope and the mookadagan (crooked knife) is for building.

Community consultations will seek guidance from local Elders, who will determine which types of dwellings to be constructed and share teachings about interconnected responsibilities. Local associations will work with tallymen to identify land for the dwellings outside each community.

"We're going to take justice department and social services clients to help with the building of the dwellings using their community hours," explained Rabbitskin-Bullfrog. "When someone comes back from jail, they can use their hours to reintegrate with the community, so they won't feel lost, alone or afraid."

Although the Manchadauu program currently has a two-year mandate, Rabbitskin-Bullfrog said funding could be extended according to ongoing needs. He intends to attend the debut and completion of each dwelling construction.

"After it's done, there's going to be a community feast and the local women's and men's associations can use it whenever they want for walking out ceremonies and meetings," said Rabbitskin-Bullfrog. "Maybe it could look like a little village after so they can have different workshops and activities."

In development of the Manchadauu program, the CWEIA has worked with the Cree Health Board, which is integrating traditional healing practices that have sometimes been lost due to colonial and religious influences. To address the growing problem of domestic violence, the new program will support the efforts of existing Robin's Nest women's shelters in Waswanipi and Waskaganish.

Inspired by Ayaashaau's tale of transformation, healing and reconciliation, Virginia Wabano spearheaded the Piipiichaa Uchishtuun (Robin's Nest) initiative in partnership with Cree entities. The shelters offer crisis management, culturally appropriate healing methods, and local programs so women aren't forced to seek refuge in distant centres.

The tragic death of a mother of four in Wemindji March 23 – confirmed to be a result of domestic abuse – is a reminder of how important these resources are. Emphasizing that mental health, addictions and shelter services are available, the Cree Nation Government noted that such events are harder to accept in small communities where everyone knows each other.

*Manchadauu's purpose is to give women affected by domestic family violence a sense of **belonging***

"Domestic violence is a reality in our communities and can happen to anyone," read a CNG statement. "We must be able to stand strong alongside the families affected and allow them to lean on us. Our communities are hurting, but it is only when we stand united that we get through the most difficult of challenges."

Indigenous women are nearly six times more likely than non-Indigenous women to be killed, according to Justice Canada's 2014 data, often disproportionately impacted by overcrowded housing and intergenerational trauma.

In response to one of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and

Girls (MMIWG) inquiry's calls for justice, the federal government announced \$103 million in funding for Indigenous women's shelters and transitional houses on May 8. It will support new facilities in over 20 communities across the country, including two in Puvirnituk, Nunavik.

Since 2010, May 5 has been observed as the National Day of Awareness for MMIWG and Two-Spirit people, also known as Red Dress Day. At a vigil at Montreal's Cabot Square this year, the Iskweu Project and Quebec Native Women organizations announced a new initiative to create an interactive map that puts names, faces and stories to the long list of victims.

Organizers said the map would be developed in consultation with victims' families to help identify the support services that may be needed in certain regions. As data is gathered over the next three years, they hope to highlight challenges in accessing data and dealing with law enforcement.

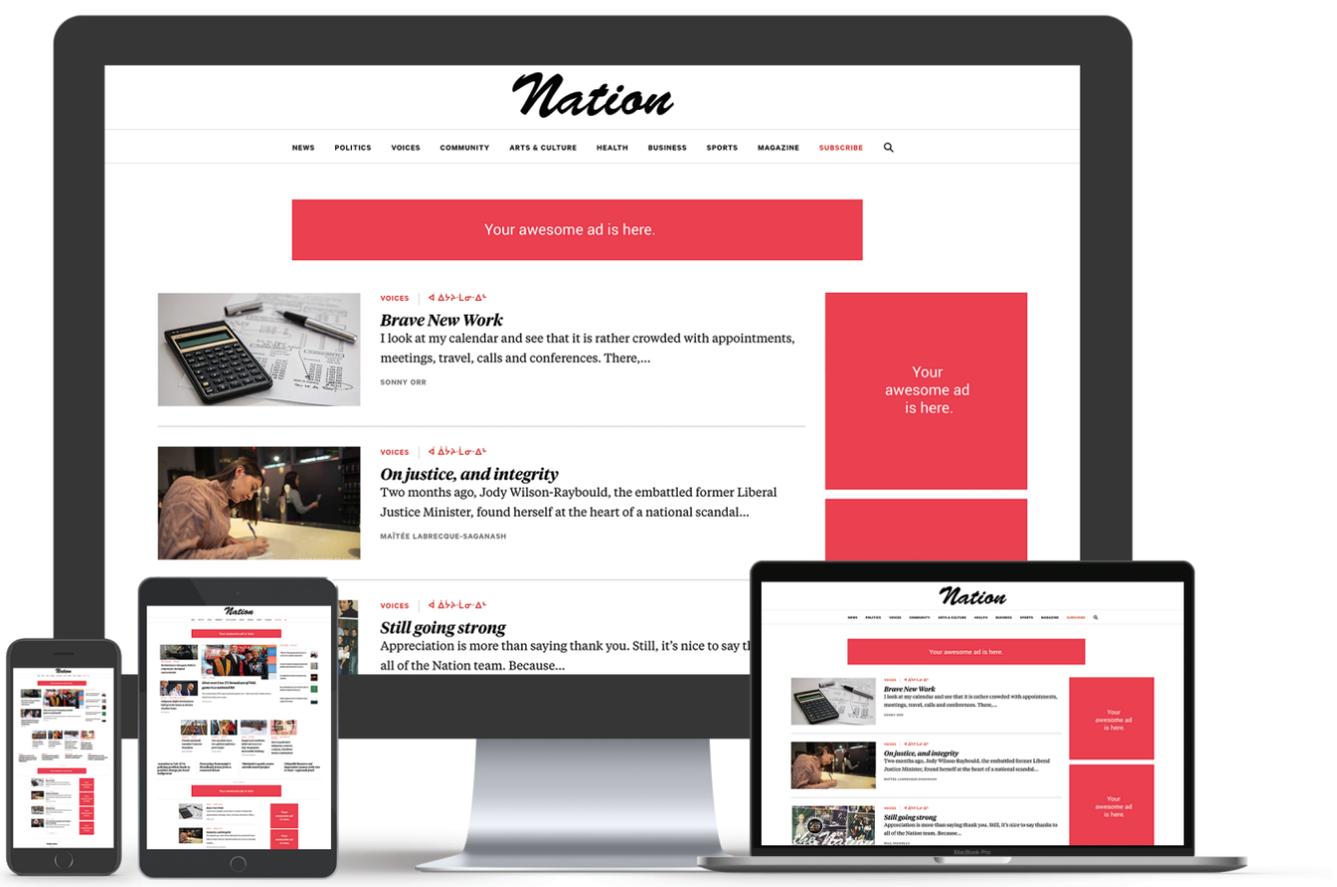
"I feel like Indigenous people had their stories taken from them for such a long time, focusing on being like a sex worker or having addiction issues and that's not important," said Janis Qavavaug-Bibeau, the Iskweu Project's coordinator. "It takes away humanity. I want to give back to the families – I want them to reclaim their stories."



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Connecting for Success

Aboriginal business networking event focuses on Indigenous economic development

by Sakib Hossain

The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) is hosting its first in-person Tools and Financing for Aboriginal Business networking event on May 25, at the Google office in Montreal.

With a focus on Indigenous economic development, the event aims to bring together entrepreneurs, businesses and supporters to discuss the challenges, opportunities and tools needed to support the growth of Indigenous-owned businesses.

The event will feature a fireside chat with Robert Auclair, Business Development Officer for CRECO, the recipient of the CCAB's 2022 Aboriginal

Economic Development Corporation award.

Auclair will share insights on how CRECO's companies contribute to employment, training and revenue for the Cree Nation. CRECO's latest project is a \$100 million, 26-story tower on Robert Bourassa Boulevard in Montreal.

Stéphane Côté, President of Major Projects Division, COGIR, CRECO's partner on the project, will also participate in a discussion that will focus on the importance of Indigenous economic development, the challenges faced by Indigenous-owned businesses, and the opportunities for growth.

The event is part of CCAB's efforts to promote economic reconciliation and create opportunities for Indigenous-owned businesses and entrepreneurs. It comes at a critical time, as Indigenous-owned businesses in Canada were hit hard by the Covid pandemic.

According to CCAB research, over half of Indigenous businesses reported lower revenues and many had to temporarily close or lay off staff. The event will provide an opportunity for Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses to net-

work and access resources and support to help them recover and grow.

The event is supported by Google Canada, which announced a \$1.5 million commitment to CCAB to help Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs across the country. Most of the support will go towards cash grants and CCAB memberships for Indigenous businesses. The partnership between Google Canada and CCAB aims to close the digital divide and create opportunities for Indigenous businesses to capture the full potential of digital.

"Guided by CCAB's research, our support will be used by CCAB to address some of the most pressing needs of Indigenous businesses in Canada, with the goal of building a more resilient and inclusive economy," said Sabrina Geremia, country director of Google Canada.

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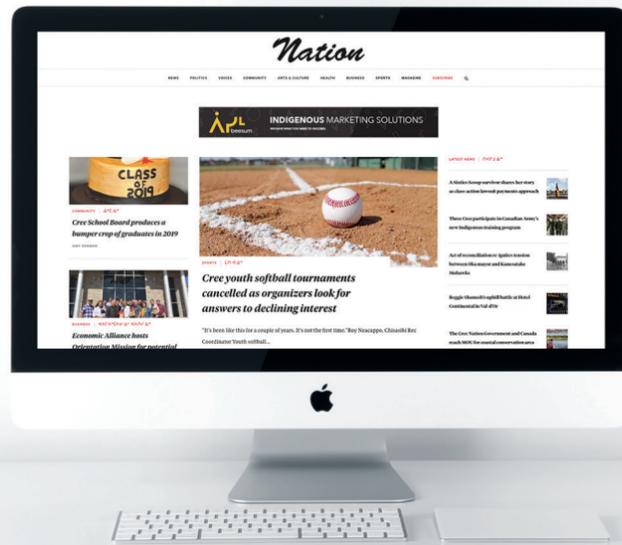
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Here's another edition of the Nation's puzzle page. Try your hand at Sudoku or Str8ts or our Crossword, or better yet, solve all three and send us a photo!* As always, the answers from last issue are here for you to check your work. Happy hunting.

PREVIOUS SOLUTION:

E	M	M	A	S	U	D	A	N	R	A	S	H	
L	O	A	D	O	N	I	C	E	E	L	M	O	
D	O	R	M	L	I	M	I	T	A	T	I	O	N
E	S	T	I	M	A	T	E	D	L	I	E	G	E
R	E	S	T	O	R	E	C	O	R	N			
			T	A	P	S	T	O	N	E	A	G	E
W	I	R	E	T	A	P	P	I	N	G	B	O	Y
I	C	E	D	N	A	I	L	S	S	L	O	E	
L	O	T	F	E	L	T	T	I	P	P	E	N	S
E	N	R	O	L	L	E	E	D	O	E			
			I	R	I	S	C	E	L	E	S	T	A
S	I	E	G	E	C	O	R	R	E	C	T	E	D
N	O	V	A	S	C	O	T	I	A	H	A	N	D
O	W	E	N	O	C	T	E	T	E	L	S	E	
B	A	R	S	G	O	O	S	E	S	E	E	R	

Crossword by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- Harbor sights
- Give a hand?
- Large-scale
- ___ noir (wine)
- Tiny bit
- Prefix with physics
- Sister to Fred Astaire
- Legal tender, slangily
- Ancient drug for grief
- Abhor
- Implied
- Reputation stain
- Magical drink
- Given to bragging
- Stage background
- Biblical outcast
- Wed stealthily
- Minestrone, e.g.
- Less damp
- "Monday Night Football"
- Actress MacDowell
- Hypnotized
- Olympic score
- Soft to the touch
- Stalky veggie
- Trait carrier
- Stun gun
- Burglar deterrents
- Locker room speeches
- Mythical sea serpent
- Think out loud

DOWN

- Spic-and-___
- Trapper's ware
- Lack of knack
- Medieval weapon
- Sign-making aid
- Tour highlight
- Folk wisdom
- Ingested
- Spanish rice dish
- Prepare for combat
- Kind of moss
- Allergy symptom
- Birthday fare
- Hangman's loop
- Out of gas
- Yawning, perhaps
- Blue-book filler
- "Madam Secretary" actress
- Life form
- One taken in, once
- Shoe part
- Squiggy's pal
- Cut back
- Religious travelers
- Summary
- Fluid accumulation
- Make like new
- Part of the foot
- Cleared a hurdle
- Barbershop quartet singer
- In addition
- Lascivious
- Enthusiastic
- Normal beginning?
- Kind of socks
- Wields a needle
- Old TV knob

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Under the Northern Sky Maachestan Worries

by Xavier Kataquapit

There is a great deal of anxiety around Maachestan, the Cree word for "spring break-up". There are so many variables and chance events that can turn an average break-up event into a disaster.

In my community of Attawapiskat, we grew up with stories about spring flood events. I remember listening to my aunt Rose Kataquapit in her small house about one May spring break-up in the 1950s when ice had clogged the river in an unusual way. Instead of water coming from the riverside, forests around the community were flooded and water came at them in all directions. Aunt Rose explained how fearful they were as they hurriedly filled their canoes and fled into the forest away from the moving river ice.

In May 1986, the worst spring flooding event occurred in the old village of Winisk on the Hudson Bay coast north of Attawapiskat. Two people died and an entire community was destroyed – later rebuilt as the modern settlement of Peawanuck.

I remember several spring break-up events when I was a young boy in the 1980s. They depended on the weather and how fast the ice and snow melted. If the

weather was consistently warm, then it was fairly predictable. But if the weather frequently fluctuated between warm and cold over weeks, there was no way to know what would happen.

I remember monitoring the breaking ice on the riverbank as Elders and traditional people did their best to read the conditions. Big freighter canoes were positioned upright next to our front doors, ready with paddles and emergency supplies.

There were nights that our parents warned us to prepare to move if anything happened. We went to bed listening to the booming sounds of massive blocks of ice colliding in the dark. It was good to hear the crackling of brittle ice crystals, the loud static sound of sharp ice rubbing against themselves and the crash of heavy blocks because it meant the ice was moving.

If the sound stopped, it meant the ice had dammed and then we waited for the water to rise. Silence in the dark meant that we were in danger.

The dangers of the annual spring break-up are the same today. Thanks to those with a good understanding of the river and ice movement we can better

anticipate flooding threats. Elders and traditional people fly along the river to monitor how well the ice is being evacuated, and whether the community should prepare for a flood.

I was happy to see traditional people like Joe Louttit taking a prominent role in monitoring the ice. His father Reg Louttit, who was a memorable Chief in our community in the 1980s, had done the same with so many Elders in the past. Meegwetch for everyone involved in keeping family and friends safe.

There are evacuations that take place with the threat of potential flooding. Often, the most vulnerable are the first to be flown south. Many prefer to escape to their traditional territories where they know how to be safe from flooding. However, others are not able to travel on the land and it is safer for them to go south.

I wish everyone a safe and careful evacuation during the spring break-up. I hope and pray that severe flooding does not take place. Yes, I worry a lot and there is good reason. I will be content when everyone returns homes and the danger of flooding passes.

STR8TS

No. 653 Medium

7	5								
	6			7	1				
	9				4				3
									4
					4				
	1	8	2						
			9		7				
2	1								
						7			2

Previous solution - Tough

7	8	3	2	5				
3	2	6	9	4	5	1	8	7
2	1			3	4	7	9	8
3	4	2	1	5	7	6		
3	1	5	2	4	6			
7	6	5	2	1	3	4		
8	7	9	5	6		2	1	
6	5	1	4	7	8	9	3	2
4	2	3	9	8				

How to beat Str8ts – Like Sudoku, no single number can repeat in any row or column. But... rows and columns are divided by black squares into compartments. These need to be filled in with numbers that complete a 'straight'. A straight is a set of numbers with no gaps but can be in any order, eg [4,2,3,5]. Clues in black cells remove that number as an option in that row and column, and are not part of any straight. Glance at the solution to see how 'straights' are formed.

SUDOKU

No. 653 Medium

				1	5			8	
2	6		7		9			4	
1		4		9				5	8
3	9			7		1			2
	4		5		8			7	9
8		1	4						

Previous solution - Easy

7	3	2	4	6	9	1	8	5
4	1	9	8	5	7	6	3	2
8	6	5	1	2	3	7	9	4
2	4	6	9	7	5	3	1	8
5	9	8	2	3	1	4	6	7
1	7	3	6	4	8	5	2	9
6	8	7	3	9	4	2	5	1
9	2	4	5	1	6	8	7	3
3	5	1	7	8	2	9	4	6

To complete Sudoku, fill the board by entering numbers 1 to 9 such that each row, column and 3x3 box contains every number uniquely. For many strategies, hints and tips, visit www.sudokuwiki.org. If you like Str8ts check out our books, iPhone/iPad Apps and much more on our store.

The solutions will be published here in the next issue.

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Thoughts from the blind

by Maitée Labrecque-Saganash

According to scientists, climate change is warming the North much faster than the South. I think we can see it with all the irregularities we have encountered these past years during Goose Break.

Even my Inuit friends reached out to me this year to see if geese were flying, because only a few flocks were making their way North.

I was in Winnipeg at the end of April when my friends told me it was 25 C in Montreal, so I headed back home in a rush to get ready for Goose Break, but the geese were late.

It's frustrating for people who don't have much flexibility with their schedule and days off because when the geese start to fly, you have to go back to work.

The fact that climate change is closely linked to capitalism and colonialism makes it hard for me to engage in my work, especially now that those factors impact the quality time I get to spend out on the land.

I was in the Broadback Valley where my grandparents used to spend their winters and I couldn't stop thinking about how different my life is from theirs and how much things have changed in just two generations.

*Even though I struggle in this late-stage capitalism, I'm grateful the universe made me Cree and gave me access to land where I can escape this **dystopia***

Not to romanticize the traditional way of life my grandparents had, because according to aniyâ nûhkum it was very hard to live off the land. But what makes me nostalgic for a life I never knew is the fact that this choice has been taken away from us.

People my age will never be able to experience life the way our grandparents did, even if we wanted to.

Here I was enjoying every minute I had on the land only to be reminded that I'd have to go back to work to pay my bills while the planet is on fire, on top of the

frustration of not being able to harvest as much as I wanted because geese weren't flying.

Even if I was juggling my very modern problems and dreaming of simpler times, seeing pictures of my people enjoying their time on the land and passing down traditional knowledge always makes me happy.

Even though I struggle in this late-stage capitalism, I'm grateful the universe made me Cree and gave me access to land where I can escape this dystopia, even if it's only for brief moments.



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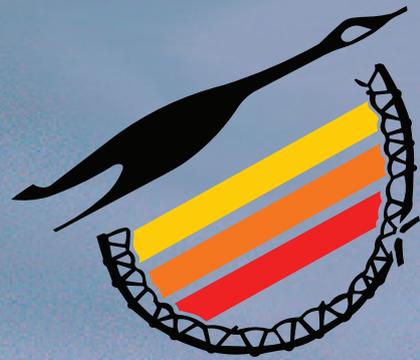
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