



Cree Communicator

News of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band

June 2006



A taste of history

The treaty party – including dignitaries from the FSIN, PAGC and Indian Affairs – arrives by voyageur canoe at the shores of Lac la Ronge by Kitsaki reserve.

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Home ownership program opens new doors

The first leases have been signed and the initial phase of construction work has begun on band member-owned houses on Lac la Ronge Indian Band reserves.

After several years of development, the band's new home ownership program with the Bank of Montreal is now allowing members to either sign leases to take over legal ownership of on-reserve houses they have built or extensively renovated, and/or to borrow money from the bank for home renovations or new construction on the reserve.

Prior to the introduction of this program, restrictions under the *Indian Act* made the band the legal title-holder for all houses on its reserve land. Although individual band members could build or renovate houses with their own money, mortgages are normally established with the house as collateral, and according to the *Indian Act*, creditors can not come on-reserve and seize property if a loan is defaulted on by a band member. As a result, mortgages and housing renovation loans were not generally options, unless that band

member had other property to use as collateral for the loan.

"There was no mechanism to secure the rights of the home owner to the land," said Kevin McLeod, the band's home ownership program co-ordinator.

As well, with the housing shortage, band members who did invest money in their homes ran the risk that if they had to be absent for a lengthy period, they might lose their home. This was a concern for one of the first couples to sign up for the home ownership program, Rodney and Eleanor Hegland.

"We had this old house (on Little Rocks reserve), and we spent lots of money fixing it ourselves. We were spending thousands of dollars and it was still a band house.... If we would have left, say for three months, the band would take it back and give it to somebody else," Eleanor said.

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Eleanor and Rodney Hegland are amongst the first band members who, thanks to the new home ownership program, can legally call their on-reserve house their own.



High school in Hall Lake

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First Ph.D.

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Chief meets Governor-General

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Home ownership *continued from page 1*

"Say if I wanted to go to university.... The idea of losing your home because you're going to advance yourself is always there, but now we can leave even for a year, and our house will be here."

Through the new program, band members can acquire a lease to the reserve land on which their home sits, although – as per wishes expressed at public meetings on this issue – the land remains in trust for all band members.

As well, the leases are limited to single-family, owner-occupied dwellings only, to prevent a more well-to-do band member from snapping up several lots and then selling them, McLeod said. "They didn't want to get into a situation where one person could profit off others" for housing on-reserve.

In order to participate in the program, a prospective homeowner must apply for an available lot on one of the band's reserves, or express an interest in acquiring title to their current dwelling. The applicant's credit history is then analyzed (using the Bank of Montreal's criteria) by the community's housing committee or board, and once approval is given, the request goes to chief and council for a band council resolution.

If new construction is planned, the applicant's mortgage is based on the price of materials and construction, while for a transfer of title, the dwelling is analyzed and any renovation work still needed (which would normally be done by the band) and any work already done by the resident is deducted from the purchase price before the mortgage is established. In some cases, if extensive renovations have been done, the resident may just have to pay a nominal fee for processing the legal paperwork to transfer title, and, as in all cases, pay the first yearly lease fee.

From the band's perspective, the program offers one solution to the pressing demand for additional on-reserve housing. While there is

land available, "obviously there's not enough money (in the administration's coffers) to take care of the band's housing needs," McLeod said. "We're giving people a chance to do it themselves."

It's a move that makes good financial sense for the whole band, said Rodney Hegland. "I think the band has to go this way," he said. "They can't really afford to keep fixing houses over and over again. The money just isn't there any more."

While not everyone may be open to taking on the responsibility of owning a home, or even have the credit required, "in the long run, I think more people will want to borrow from the bank and have nice homes," said Eleanor Hegland. "The vision is there now. Somebody's made a path."

So far, approximately half-a-dozen builds are underway, and several families have already taken over their leases. The concept is generating enthusiasm both inside and outside the band, with banks, the federal government and other bands all watching closely to see how the program fares here, McLeod said.

Although the band is not the first First Nation in Canada to try this, "we've got a good reputation, and we've got a good history of management," he said. "They figure if it's going to work anywhere, it has a good chance with the Lac La Ronge Indian Band."

Interested band members, including Grandmother's Bay councillor Thompson Charles, certainly hope that's the case.

"I've always wanted to own my own house," Charles said. "(It's the idea that) you bought it with your own money – it's something to be proud of, something to leave for your children. I come from a very poor family, and we've never really had anything to call our own. This (plan to participate in the program) is my way of saying that I'm trying to get ahead in life."

Message from the Chief



It gives me great pleasure to report on behalf of the band council, management, staff and membership.

Treaty days were held in the five communities of Little Red River, La Ronge, Stanley Mission, Grandmother's Bay, and Hall Lake. It was so nice to see so many people come out and celebrate, come together and share stories. Sucker River will be hosting their annual treaty day on July 20, 2006.

Our first draft of the strategic plan is complete and ready for ratification at our upcoming special council meeting on June 28 and 29 in La Ronge. In our strategic plan, we have our vision, principles, goals, and objectives for the immediate and long term for our band. The strategic plan is our guide to keep us focused as we move into the future. Our strategic planning session brought our communities and departments together to decide on a future course of action that will provide our band with a road map for the future. Thank you to all the elders, councillors, management, staff and community members for your input into this important document.

We have been blessed with many graduations this spring, from Head Start to our band's first ever Ph.D. We congratulate all the students who have persevered in completing their educational goals at various levels. At our council meeting in Grandmother's Bay on June 6, we honored Dr. Rose Roberts, a band member originally from Stanley Mission, who completed her Ph.D. in nursing last December. We presented her with a plaque and gift, and Dr. Roberts shared the story of how she came to do her doctoral work on cancer among the Woodland Cree in northern Saskatchewan, and honoured us with details of her research findings. All in attendance were impressed by her research and knowledge. Thank you, Dr. Roberts, for your presentation and for coming in from Saskatoon to Grandmother's Bay.

Our recent grads have shown that education is the key to our future. We need to continue to support our family members and friends who attain a higher education. I congratulate the parents, families and friends of our graduates, and I recognize the importance of the support you show to students and the encouragement you give them to do the best they can in school.

I also want to applaud some very recent accomplishments of our band members. Congratulations to lawyer Clark McKay, who has been appointed as a Crown prosecutor, and the two winners of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations' Circle of Honour Awards: Danielle Dupre, 18, who was recognized as a youth role model, and eight-year-old Russell (R.J.) McKenzie. R.J. was honoured for rescuing his step-brother Gary when the younger boy slipped through the ice. Thank you for the honour you have brought to our band, and for being examples we would all be proud to follow.

Good luck to all the athletes who will be representing Team Saskatchewan at the North American Indigenous Games in Denver, Colorado next month. Have a great summer with your children, family and friends.

Chief Tammy Cook-Searson

The La Ronge Treaty Days Planning Committee of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band would like to thank all the people that participated in our Treaty Days Opening Ceremonies: Chief and council, Indian & Northern Affairs Canada, the RCMP, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the Prince Albert Grand Council.

As well, we would like to thank all the staff, volunteers, and the following sponsors for their generous donations (cash and prizes) to make our La Ronge Treaty Days successful:

***Keethanow Food Supermarket – Lac La Ronge Indian Band
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Dan Fenton – PA Photocopier
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Northern Regional Recreation Association
Ravi Prokash – Prakash Engineering***

Our sincere apologies if we missed anyone.

***From the LLRIB Treaty Days Planning Committee
LAC LA RONGE INDIAN BAND***

Hall Lake to offer high school at last

The kids are coming home to Hall Lake. Ever since Hall Lake's Sally Ross School first opened, the plan has been to eventually expand its program all the way to Grade 12. But at the moment, once the students reach the end of Grade 10, they have to leave the community to finish their education, going either 60 miles north to La Ronge or 100 miles south to Prince Albert.

That will change this fall, when the Thompson Halkett wing of Sally Ross School opens to at last accommodate senior high school students, and reverse the out-migration of teenagers from the community.

The grand opening of the wing was held May 11, and it was a proud day for Counc. Leonard (Georgie) Halkett. Not only has he, as the band councillor for Hall Lake, finally seen a long-time dream become reality, but the wing is named for his father, Thompson, who was the reserve's first councillor and in many ways its founder. The completion date for the project also means that Halkett's daughter Stephanie, currently a Grade 11 student in La Ronge, will be part of Sally Ross School's first graduating class.

Both as a leader and as a parent, Halkett knows how difficult it has been for his community to have had to send their children away in order for the kids to complete their education. "It's been tough," he said. "It's been pretty difficult trying to keep her (his daughter Stephanie) in school, because she doesn't really like being away from the community... and at the same time we're trying to stress that education is so important. It's hard on the parents, and it's hard on the students."

Now, thanks to the hard work of the project management team, some of the stress is finally being taken away. The team, which consisted of Counc. Halkett, principal Pat Cardinal, project manager Joe Campbell, Indian Affairs rep Wes Hicks (as the funder), and community members Kate Hamilton, William McKenzie, Kitchener Ross and Thompson Halkett himself, worked for more than a year to see the project through.

The new wing contains a multi-purpose/Cree culture/home ec room, a computer lab with 24 computers, a science lab, a tutorial room, a large storage room and three new classrooms. Like the wing, each of the rooms is or will be named after prominent community members; so far, elder Albert Ross, Jeremiah B. Ross, John G. Ross, and Tom Hamilton have been

thus honoured. During the grand opening, plaques showing the name of the room were unveiled by the person they were named after, or a relative.

"You could see the pride in their eyes (as they did the unveiling)," principal Cardinal said. "I almost wanted a plaque (to experience that feeling). The hairs on my arms were standing up. It was pretty intense there."

In Cardinal's eyes, the expansion is important because it offers the school a chance to see a student all the way through the system. "We can continue the same student from nursery right to Grade 12, so there's continuity in their education," he said. "There isn't (going to be) a break and then they have to go someplace else to finish off.... Everybody here is excited that, you know, our kids are going to stay here."

The need for the students to leave Hall Lake has created several problems, not the least of which is the fact that many of them end up either struggling academically or dropping out of school and coming home, Cardinal said.

"They were going to a whole new community; they were living with different people; they were going to a different school while friends were still back here," he said. "Even though we're still members of the same band... the success rate was not there."

For the fall, Cardinal is looking forward to greater participation in Sally Ross' sports program, and being able to take full teams to high school sports competitions. He's also eager to see students either come back to Hall Lake, or return to school after dropping out.

An added bonus for the students who will graduate next spring is a one-time scholarship, offered by project manager Joe Campbell both as a thank you to the band and an investment in a future career, perhaps even in his own

field. The \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to a 2007 Sally Ross graduate with high marks and a desire to pursue post-secondary education in a math- or science-related field.

"You don't see too many engineers or accountants or people in the medical field coming from Indian bands, and I think it's important that some focus be placed on that," Campbell said.

With the amount of construction work that the band does, it would be good news if they could hire their own band members to do the design and oversee the project, rather than hiring



Sally Ross School in Hall Lake is ready to welcome high schoolers for the first time this fall.

outside firms to do it, Campbell said. "It (the money) would be much better in Roderick Ross' great-grandkids' pockets than somebody the band doesn't know."

For Counc. Halkett, the scholarship was an important gift. "That's actually the first scholarship that's ever been established in this community," he said. "It gives them the incentive to continue their education."

And that incentive is important, because for his part, Halkett can't wait for next spring.

"I'm really looking forward to the first graduation ceremony," he said. "I'm pretty sure the whole community feels that way - it'll be just awesome to see our children graduate in their home community."



Crooning for the senator's bride

The king of rock 'n' roll (aka Elvis impersonator Frank Joseph) serenades elder Mary Venne, wife of Senator Myles Venne, on the Vennes' 63rd wedding anniversary. The couple were married on June 21 (now National Aboriginal Day), 1943. Chief Tammy Cook-Searson and her son Pesim Searson also enjoyed the show.

Roberts first band member to complete Ph.D.

For Dr. Rose Roberts, becoming the Lac La Ronge Indian Band's first-ever Ph.D. is an accomplishment that's not just important for herself and the band, but for the woman who helped shape her career: her mother.

Roberts, who completed her Ph.D. in December, is now an assistant professor (and the sole aboriginal faculty member) with the University of Saskatchewan's College of Nursing. She dedicated her doctoral dissertation to her mother, Elizabeth, who not only inspired Roberts' choice of research topic – Woodland Cree people's experience with cancer – with her reaction to recent bout with cervical cancer, but also had a deep impact on Roberts' passion for education.

"Because she was Metis, she never had the chance to go to school, and so she never had the opportunity to learn how to read or write, or even how to speak English. And for her it always seemed that it (formal education) was something lacking in her life," Roberts said.

"So when she started having children, she was bound and determined that they would not suffer the same way as she had. So even though by the time we were old enough it was not longer required to send your children to residential school, she signed us up."

That early grounding in the importance of education set Roberts on a path – albeit a long, twisting and often very complicated one – toward her Ph.D., including experiments with working as a chem lab technician at Key Lake, being a stay-at-home mom, and false starts in teacher training and pre-med studies. "One of the things about me is, once I've learned everything there is to learn about a job, I get bored, so I have to move on," Roberts laughed.

It was after her pre-med studies and the births of her two children, Jerilyn and John, that Roberts was encouraged to look into the nursing profession – an option she hadn't previously considered. She ended up choosing a four-year degree program at the U of S, but three years into her studies, she had a startling realization: "I don't like working with sick people!" Fortunately, however, nursing is a diverse enough career that Roberts was able to re-direct her thoughts toward working as a public health nurse instead.

Once finished, however – she graduated with her Bachelor of Nursing degree in 1996 – Roberts immediately went down another path, becoming the co-ordinator for the university's Native Access Program to Nursing (NAPN). "Within a couple of months (of graduation) I went from student to colleague with all my professors, which was quite a shift," she said. At the urging of fellow nursing professionals, she also got some clinical experience at an inner-city clinic in Saskatoon.

While doing these two jobs, Roberts had another realization – that the part of nursing she really enjoyed was the teaching. "I was coming back full-circle," she said, surprising even herself, considering how much lesson planning and the idea of actually going in front of a class (even of her peers) to speak had caused her to panic a few years earlier. Never one to shy away from a career change, Roberts signed up for master's degree studies in the College of Nursing's Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, which she had first encountered as the NAPN co-ordinator. She completed her master's degree in nursing in two-and-a-half years, doing her thesis work on

the connection between pesticide exposure and breast cancer. In the midst of this, she was also going through a divorce, and six months before she finished, her mother was diagnosed with cancer.

In the meantime, the number of aboriginal nursing students coming into the College of Nursing was increasing, and the dean felt that an aboriginal faculty member was needed. Roberts was offered the job, provided she begin studies toward a Ph.D. The college was willing to provide her with a three-year educational leave and funding, and the new Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre offered a substantial scholarship, so it was back to school time for Roberts – another year of courses, and then two more for research and completion of her doctoral research.

So it was that as Roberts was on the last phase of her journey toward the title of "doctor" that her mother Elizabeth, newly diagnosed with cancer, was refusing to have anything to do with anyone with that title – at least of the M.D. variety. "We as a family had a tough time getting her to the doctor, and we had a tough



Dr. Rose Roberts (centre, with starblanket) was honoured by chief and council at their June meeting in Grandmother's Bay, for her accomplishments in becoming the band's first member to achieve a Ph.D. Dr. Roberts, now an assistant professor in the University of Saskatchewan's College of Nursing, is originally from Stanley Mission.

time getting her to agree to any surgery," Roberts said. "Just the way she was behaving, I began to wonder if it was just my mother, or if it was more of a cultural thing.... I saw a certain personal or cultural pessimism in her reactions, and I wanted to find out where that came from."

To do her research, Roberts went home to the Lac La Ronge band, where she made contacts – through all the appropriate channels and following all ethical guidelines – with a group of elders, cancer survivors and victims' family members who became her research subjects. She probed into Woodland Cree definitions of health and illness, experiences of cancer diagnosis and treatment, and the place of cancer in the Cree worldview, coming away with some surprising findings and some heartbreaking personal stories.

For example, she discovered that her interviewees' definitions of health and illness were both intertwined between traditional Cree and western viewpoints, and also that age and education affected the definitions – the younger people had a more individualistic view of health while elders referred to health from a community standpoint, such as respect, helpfulness and being thankful for what you have. At the same time, people with training in the health care field were the ones using the holistic definition of health to include the mental, spiritual and emotional sides of health in addition to the physical, while "the elders were mostly (defining it as) 'when I don't hurt any more.... A more concrete definition,'" Roberts said.

She also found geographical differences in reactions to traditional medicine and healing practices, with people in Little Red being the most comfortable with it, and traditional pre-Christian spirituality was never brought up. As well, "when it came to cancer treatment, the first point of contact was always the western doctor... (and) everybody went for the western treatment, whether it was surgery, chemotherapy, radiation or all of the above." Still, some cancer patients combined both traditional medicine and western-style treatment, turning to the herbal remedies when their medication was no longer working or using them to keep the cancer from spreading or to regain energy pre- and post-op.

Once her research was completed, Roberts was reluctant to let it just sit on the shelf; she wanted to give her findings back to the people who inspired and contributed to the work. To do so, she took the data from her interviews and created three composite stories: one each from an elder, a cancer survivor and a family member. She then worked these stories into a drama presentation, for which she dons costumes and acts out each person's story. "It's really powerful," she said. "By the time I'm done (performing for an audience), they're sitting there bawling their eyes out, because it brings home the message of how life-changing it is."

Roberts has also arranged to have the three stories translated into Cree syllabics, so that the elders can read them, and she is working with the U of S's media and technology staff to create a DVD with the drama presentations and the text in both English and syllabics, which can then be distributed to schools and health clinics.

As an educator, a health professional and a First Nations person, Roberts is hopeful that her work will help to create culturally-appropriate disease screening, prevention and health promotional programs, and educate health professionals about listening to and respecting their First Nations cancer patients and families. And, while being one of the rare First Nations academics can be lonely, she is also proud of the contributions she is making toward her students' education – long after she originally gave up her teaching dream.

"It's the capacity to change somebody. It's that ability to let them see, 'oh yeeeah,' or see a different perspective," she said. This spring, after teaching a two-week course on working with communities as a nurse, Roberts received a gift that showed her just what she has accomplished. "I think the definition of success was that they gave me a standing ovation on the last day of lectures," she said. "And they presented me with a book, and it's called 'Sky Woman: Indigenous Women That Have Inspired Us'. So yeah, they made me cry."

"In order for us as a people to start taking control of every aspect of our lives," she said, "this is what we need to do, is to get the master's (degrees) and the Ph.D.'s, so we can have the credibility to walk in both worlds and build bridges."

And while her journey has been very different from her mother's, Roberts has in a sense followed in Elizabeth's footsteps: making a better life not only for her community, but for her children. "Everything that I've done in my life so far has been to provide them the best that I can."

Following in Kokum's footsteps

McLeod part of first P.A. nursing program

A partnership between two Saskatchewan universities has given a Lac La Ronge band member the skills she needs to follow in her grandmother's footsteps and become a health care provider for her family and community.

Since Valerie McLeod was a little girl growing up in Brabant Lake, she has heard stories of her kokum, her mother's mother Sarah McLeod, and her work as a midwife for women on the trapline. In fact, McLeod was born in her grandmother's house, and had the nurse not arrived just in time, baby Valerie would have slipped from her mother into her kokum's waiting hands.

Her earliest dreams were all of health care – first of being a vet, then of becoming a doctor – both jobs she'd read about. Nursing wasn't even on the radar; when she was a child in Brabant, "the nurses would come, they'd do a check-up on us, and then they'd take off in the plane and that's all you'd ever see of them," she said.

As she got older and learned more about the nursing profession, however, her interest grew, and a few years ago, a new co-operative effort between the University of Saskatchewan and the First Nations University of Canada (then the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College) gave her the opportunity to pursue the career without having to move far away from family and friends. The agreement, signed on March 7, 2003, officially created a northern campus in Prince Albert for the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan (NEPS), with FNUC providing the first two years of training, and the U of S taking care of the field placement supervision, the final two years of study, and the conferring of nursing degrees.

Students like McLeod, who had already completed an "access year" of university studies, were amongst the first to be placed in

the program, which has 40 spots set aside for northern students. Of that first group, seven – six women and one man – completed the four-year degree program this spring.

For McLeod, the program offered not only a university education close to home (her parents re-located to the Christopher Lake area when McLeod was entering her teens), but a chance to pursue her childhood dream, which had only grown stronger after the birth of her daughter and a growing awareness of health issues facing northern communities.

"I wanted to learn how to take care of my family. That was my main goal," she said. With a history of the disease on her in-laws' side of the family, "diabetes is a big concern, and all the diseases that are happening up north – I just wanted to be able to understand that more, and I thought nursing would help me with that."

While the NEPS program has been operating for a decade, with program testing in both Regina and Saskatoon, the Prince Albert program is distinctive because of the partnership with FNUC, said program dean June Anonson, who serves as both administrator and teacher for the senior students.

NEPS has always had an aboriginal component to the curriculum, "but they (FNUC faculty) have had a lot of input as to what's working and what isn't, as far as the aboriginal content – is it cohesive, does it make sense," Anonson said.

That aboriginal content is threaded throughout the classes the students take. For example, in a course on trends and issues in health care, aboriginal nurses come in and talk about what it's like to be a nurse in a primarily non-aboriginal health care system, and what they have done to maintain their identity as First Nations or Metis people within the profession. There are class discussions on dealing with prejudice, with students encouraged to share personal experiences. A course on community health addresses challenges that nurses face in isolated northern communities, and students learn about dealing with the unique needs of aboriginal patients, such as language, diet and views on traditional herbal remedies.

As well, the Prince Albert campus holds elders' forums to get counsel from aboriginal elders on what the nursing students should be taught, and elder Vickie Wilson is regularly on site to consult on aboriginal history and protocol, Anonson said.

For her part, McLeod appreciated the atmosphere on the FNUC campus, including hearing people speaking Cree and Dene, and the feeling that she could share with her classmates about her experiences and just be herself, as an aboriginal person. "I didn't feel like I had to hide who I was," she said. "I'd have people around who'd understand where I was coming from, and I could relate to people more."

As well, she said, "the culture was around more."

While McLeod's long-term goal is to work as a northern nurse, she has decided to get some experience in a hospital setting first, and thus is spending the next year working in a "float" position with acute care patients at Prince Albert's Victoria Hospital. This is partly to fulfill requirements for her status as a registered nurse, but also to give McLeod a chance to work in a setting where she isn't the sole caregiver and can seek guidance when she isn't sure what to do.

"As a new grad, you feel like a brand-new babe, because you don't know what's going on (in the work setting)," she said. "It's kind of scary (being on the job), but it's also a good feeling, because you realize that people are coming to



Valerie McLeod (fourth from left) and fellow graduates of the first northern nursing program display the honorary starblankets they received at their graduation ceremony.

you and asking you for help, and you know you can help them."

As a professor who has seen the first class go through their four years and emerge as skilled professionals, Anonson is eager to see where her grads end up. They have already shown impressive leadership skills, through a group effort to convince Prince Albert's city council to change a bylaw to make it mandatory for bar owners to post signs warning about the risks of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and Anonson expects to see even more of that kind of leadership in the coming years. "They're just a real phenomenal group," she said.

McLeod, for her part, feels honoured by the trust that has been placed on her shoulders, and the respect she has been shown – the gift of a starblanket at her graduation was a highlight – for the work she has done and will do as a nurse, serving her own community.

"We need to learn how to take care of each other (as First Nations people)," McLeod said. "We need to incorporate that (western medicine) and learn how we can help our own people, how to prevent the diseases, how to work towards making each other healthy again."

That's an attitude that McLeod's kokum would no doubt have appreciated. While her grandmother died while McLeod was still in nursing school, Mrs. McLeod told her granddaughter, "If I could do it, you can do it."

"I was struggling through school," McLeod said with a catch in her voice, "and when I felt like giving up, I'd just think of her."

The Cree Communicator is the official newspaper of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band. Its goal is to provide effective and positive communication between the band's chief and council, staff and general membership. This publication serves the 7,500 band members living off-reserve or in the six communities of La Ronge, Stanley Mission, Grandmother's Bay, Sucker River, Hall Lake and Little Red River. It is published once every two months.

LLRIB departments, staff and community members are encouraged to submit story ideas, photos and news about past and upcoming community events and band members' accomplishments.



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Renovated Little Red River home gets high marks for energy efficiency

In 2004, the Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC) was awarded a contract to deliver Natural Resources Canada's EnerGuide for Houses program (EGH). Since then, their Technical Services group has been working tirelessly to raise awareness and lower thermostats in First Nation homes.

As "Energy Advisors", PAGC representatives visit First Nation communities across Saskatchewan with a message about energy efficiency in the home. The EGH program is designed to help home owners reduce energy consumption, save money and help protect the environment. With energy costs on the rise, the message is timely.

Little Red River resident gets involved

When the PAGC began to deliver the EGH program, they paid a visit to Eunice Mirasty. Eunice lives in a single-storey home in Little Red River, a small community about 40 km north of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Her 30-year-old dwelling is owned by the Lac La Ronge Indian Band and is managed by Little Red River councillor, and housing manager, John Halkett. In need of repair and maintenance work, Eunice's home was a prime candidate for an EGH evaluation. Homes are selected for an energy assessment based on a number of factors. If the home is already scheduled for renovations, bands are encouraged to consider implementing energy efficiency upgrades at the same time. For example, if a home is scheduled for a furnace repair, a homeowner might evaluate the long-term benefits of replacing an older unit with a new high-efficiency model.

How the EGH program works Each EnerGuide for Houses visit begins with an "A" Evaluation. Energy Advisors conduct a range of tests to evaluate a home's current level of energy efficiency. Using a "blower door" with a series of air-pressure gauges, the home is tested for air leakage and heat loss. The results shed light on the home's energy use and point to key areas that contribute to energy consumption.

Based on information provided by the "A" Evaluation, the home is given an energy rating on a scale of one to one hundred. A "0" on the scale would indicate that the home is uncomfortable, has serious air leakage, no insulation and consumes an extremely high

amount of energy. A "100" rating would indicate that the home is extremely well insulated, airtight (yet well ventilated) and requires no purchased energy.

For Eunice Mirasty's home, the "A" Evaluation indicated an energy efficiency rating of "47". This rating was typical of an older home (1972) that had never been upgraded.

As part of the energy assessment, Energy Advisors provide the homeowner (band, landlord or building owner) with a list of "recommended" retrofits that, if implemented, would bring the energy rating up to the best possible level for this home, in this case a rating of "81" out of 100.

After reviewing their options, the band carried out many of the recommended upgrades and a few improvements of their own. The chart below lists the upgrades recommended by the Energy Advisors and (in brackets) the upgrades completed by the band.

The cost of retro-fitting

To help the housing manager decide whether it would be cost-effective to carry out some or all of the recommended retrofits, PAGC Energy Advisors used a special software called "HOT2-XP" to predict:

- 1) How much the band would need to invest;
- 2) How much they could expect to save in one year; and
- 3) How long it would take to recoup their investment.

*Note: Estimated payback period does not take into account grant dollars received from Natural Resources Canada and the Province of Saskatchewan's Energy Share Program.

Energy rating up significantly After the renovations to Eunice Mirasty's home were completed, PAGC Energy Advisors returned to conduct a post-retrofit evaluation ("B" evaluation), on the home. This test measured the improved energy efficiency of the home and provided the occupant with a new energy rating.

The "B" Assessment for Eunice Mirasty's home indicated that the energy rating had increased from "47" to "71". It also indicated that air changes for the home (and thus energy required

to heat the space) were reduced from 6.14 per hour to 2.35 per hour. This represents a 46.4% improvement in energy efficiency.

Natural Resources Canada rewarded the homeowner's energy efficiency achievement by providing a retrofit incentive of \$1,492. In support of the EGH initiative, the Province of Saskatchewan matched this grant and provided the homeowner with an additional \$1,492.

A winning proposition

For members of the Little Red River community, reducing home energy consumption is a win-win proposition. The homeowner or band saves money on energy costs and the community benefits from a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

This message resonates with many communities. Historically, Aboriginal peoples have lived in harmony with nature and have a tremendous respect for the earth and its natural resources. For communities like Little Red River, every kilojoule of energy they save helps to slow the effects of climate change and contributes to a healthier environment. One house at a time, they are setting an example for all First Nation residents to follow.

Article reprinted with permission from Natural Resources Canada.

Editor's note: Unfortunately, the federal government announced in May that the EGH program, including its financial incentives for energy retro-fitting, has been cancelled. Only houses that have had the "A" evaluation before March 13, 2006 are eligible for the grant, which is available until March 31, 2007.

Quick fixes for energy efficiency

In addition to more significant energy efficiency upgrades, Energy Advisors typically recommend a series of low-cost improvements that help to improve the energy efficiency of any home.

These suggestions include:

- Protect and cover all foam insulation.
- Service furnace or other space- or water-heating equipment annually and change filters monthly or as required.
- Set thermostat at 21 degrees F (70 degrees C)
- If you have a humidifier, set it for a relative humidity of between 30 and 55; clean and maintain as required.
- If you have a Heat Recovery Ventilation (HRV) system, follow the NRCAN on-line guide for maintenance.
- Install low-flow shower heads and faucet aerators to reduce consumption and costs; set hot-water thermostat at 55 degrees C (130 degrees F).
- When replacing lights, install energy-efficient bulbs (e.g. compact fluorescents).
- When purchasing appliances, home electronic products, or home office equipment look for the Energy Star® mark or use the EnerGuide label to select the most energy-efficient model.
- If you use a wood-burning system to heat your home, visit www.burnitsmart.org for advice on reducing potentially harmful wood smoke emissions.

Source: Natural Resources Canada

Recommended	What was done
Upgrade attic insulation from R-20 (average) to R-51	(Added insulation in the attic)
Replace windows (sliders) with triple low-E argon-filled window units	(Replaced windows (sliders) with double low-E argon-filled window units)
Install insulation (R-20 rigid) in crawlspace; install vapour barrier	(Installed insulation (R-20) and vapour barrier in crawlspace)
Replace hot water heater with high-efficiency condensing model	(Not done)
Caulk exterior window/door trim and where service lines penetrate exterior cladding	(Carried out air-sealing activities)
Install weather strip gaskets for interior electrical plugs, switches and fixtures	(Carried out air-sealing activities)
Install high efficiency furnace with accessories to provide fully functioning heating system (use existing ductwork)	(Not done)
Replace two existing entrance doors/frames; install non-hardening caulking to trim	(Replaced front exterior doors)
Install Heat Recovery Ventilator and necessary ducting; vent kitchen range to exterior	(Done as suggested)
Installed Heat Recovery Ventilator and necessary ducting	
The band also installed exterior siding and an air barrier.	

Chief and council explore wide range of issues

As part of an ongoing effort to hold their regular meetings in all of the band's six communities, chief and council met at the Stanley Mission Community Hall on March 21 and 22. Generous lunches and snacks were provided by the community both days.

Since the funeral for the late Senator Allan Bird was held March 20, the third day of meetings was re-scheduled to a special council held on April 4 in the La Ronge chambers. Look for a report on council's April meeting and the June meetings, held in Grandmother's Bay, in the September issue of *The Cree Communicator*.

March 21, Stanley Mission

Prince Albert Grand Council reports and joint projects
Grand Chief Ron Michel, Vice-chief Don Deranger and several members of the PAGC staff presented updates reports on the grand council's efforts on behalf of their member bands. These reports touched on the grand chief's pending visit to Ottawa, and work in the following areas:

- **Education** — the Credenda on-line school and Montreal Lake's training program for building ready-to-move homes
- **Engineering** — including the recently-completed Hall Lake fire hall
- **Justice** — a documentary film on drug issues produced by students from Black Lake, a "re-matriation" project to help women in returning to leadership roles; a Family Safety Act; and community justice planning
- **Fire suppression/forestry**
- **Economic development** — a certification training program for economic development officers, which starts in September, and the scheduled completion of the Northern Broadband Network installations
- **Agriculture** — gardening workshops; community gardens; and requests by Lac La Ronge band members for use of reserve land near Little Red for farming purposes (these members received a BCR to use the land and thus to submit loan applications to the Saskatchewan Indian Loan Company (SILCO) for their proposed projects).

The leadership of the PAGC also agreed to work with the band on several projects. These include obtaining financial resources and/or assisting with the establishment of an alternate school in Hall Lake for young parents to continue their education, and helping with negotiations for First Nations fire crews' wages to be paid at a rate closer to that received by provincial firefighters. It was noted that the First Nations crews will be guaranteed 20 weeks of work this year, even if the season ends sooner, so the crews will be able to access EI in the winter.

Grand Chief Ron Michel also agreed to assist the band on its negotiations regarding future use of the old La Ronge hospital land site, which the province plans to use for a new courthouse. The band is concerned because there are gravesites on that land from the early 1900s.

FSIN reports and joint projects

The vice-chiefs from the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations also gave reports, and agreed to participate in some joint efforts.

In the area of health, Delbert Wapass highlighted discussions with Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch on Saskatchewan's proposal to better prioritize needs, such as medical transportation; discussions with the province on locating a dialysis centre in La Ronge; and concerns regarding environmental pollutants in homes, licensing for First Nations-run care homes, and

a 24-hour youth hotline. Chief Tammy Cook-Searson will be writing another letter to provincial cabinet ministers regarding licensing of the Stanley Mission elders' facility, and Vice-chief Wapass will look at the facility to see what is required for licensing. Vice-chief Wapass also brought up a "Welcome Wagon" of sorts, intended to help First Nations people find services when they move to cities.

Vice-chief Lawrence Joseph and staffer Jamie Benson discussed the issues of gun legislation and hunting and fishing licenses, environmental pollution and its impact on wildlife, the legalities of spotlight hunting, and the status of the band's Little Red timber claim (which will be going for legal review). Council. Jimmy Roberts raised a concern about land ownership on Lac la Ronge, and the Stanley Mission councillors requested help from Vice-

have the equipment in place to record the amounts. Council also agreed (with five in favour) that if any money comes from the settlement of the Kathy's Korner issue, that this money will stay in the community of La Ronge.

North-central land use plan

After a presentation by Kitsaki Management CEO Russell Roberts, council agreed to formally support the present Saskatchewan Environment draft plan, along with the appropriate changes, of the North-Central Integrated Land Use Plan. This was done with the understanding that the band will continue to respect and abide by the wishes of band councillors within their traditional areas of concern. The band has actively participated in the negotiations and wants to enter into a Forest Management Agreement with the province. The band also wants to ensure the



The community of Stanley Mission played host for the LLRIB band council's regular meetings in March. Left to right: Chief Tammy Cook-Searson, Counc. Keith Merasty, Counc. Thompson Charles, Counc. Brian Hardlotte, Elder John McKenzie, Counc. Leonard Halkett, Counc. Bernice Roberts, Elder Elizabeth Charles, Counc. John Halkett, Elder Doris Halkett, Counc. Hillary Cook, Elder Catherine Charles, Counc. Kenny Ratt, Counc. Pam Mirasty, Counc. Jimmy Roberts, Counc. Doris Morin and Counc. Lester Roberts.

chief Joseph in opposing a shut-down of the Churchill River Dam (Witikoo Dam).

Vice-chief Morley Watson spoke about education issues, including the need to teach both First Nations and non-First Nations children about treaties, the status of the residential school settlement, First Nations participation in various sport competitions, and his role in the controversies surrounding financial irregularities and firings at the First Nations University of Canada.

Council also received an update from Vice-chief Guy Lonechild on the FSIN's economic development strategy, agricultural opportunities (such as agri-forestry and wild rice), tourism, and home ownership. Lonechild agreed to issue notices of Opportunity Funds Grants as soon as possible when these grants become available, so that the band has time to submit proper proposals, and to include Chief Cook-Searson in the Economic and Community Development Commission in order to assure proper LLRIB representation at these meetings.

Kathy's Korner fuel and tobacco tax issue

Council agreed (with five in favour and four opposed) to instruct the legal firm of McKercher, McKercher and Whitmore to proceed with negotiations with the provincial Department of Finance to settle a claim for the period June 5, 2000 to April 7, 2003, in the approximate amount of \$242,000, for tax collected by Kathy Bell (operating as Kathy's Korner) for on-reserve sales of fuel and tobacco to status Indians. During this period, on-reserve retailers were supposed to enter into the rebate program, but Kathy's Korner did not

establishment of a well-balanced plan for the area, including the band's traditional lands, for the long-term traditional, social, economic and environmental well-being of band members and other residents of the planning area.

Post-secondary education update

Council agreed to support the proposed distribution of Financial Transfer Agreement funds to post-secondary students from La Ronge and Stanley Mission, totalling just over \$3 million. They also agreed to write a letter of support for a proposed Bachelor of Arts in Northern Studies degree program, which Northlands College (including LLRIB education director Gladys Christiansen, who is on Northlands' board of governors) is working on with the University of the Arctic.

March 22, Stanley Mission

Health report

A short report was presented on behalf of health director Mary Carlson, who was unable to attend the meeting. Carlson noted ongoing efforts to get help from Health Canada for people needing to travel to addictions treatment sessions, and to get the ingredients for crystal meth off the shelves at on-reserve stores.

Election Act amendments

The councillors agreed to review the draft changes and submit suggestions to Tom McKenzie, who is co-ordinating this project. Russell Roberts will be working with Tom McKenzie on the amendments, and communications officer Carmen Pauls Orthner will advertise community meetings on these

Council meeting continued on page 8

Residential school survivors to receive compensation at last

What does the settlement involve?

On May 10, the federal government announced a \$1.9-billion deal to compensate former Indian residential school students. Participants in the process included the government, legal counsel for former students, legal counsel for the churches that ran the schools, the Assembly of First Nations, and other Aboriginal organizations.

The deal entitles any former student who resided at an eligible residential school to receive a lump sum of \$10,000 for the first year or part of a year attended, plus \$3,000 for each subsequent year spent in the schools. So, a student who attended Grades 1 through 12 at a residential school would be eligible to receive \$43,000. This is to compensate for loss of language and culture resulting from the schools, and is known as the "common experience payment".

Students do not need to submit copies of their school records to be eligible for the common experience payment; the government will verify students' attendance prior to approving payments.

Students who suffered sexual or physical abuse at the schools can file separate claims to seek additional compensation. These applications will be dealt with through an independent assessment process.

The settlement also includes the establishment of a national "truth-telling" commission to promote public awareness about residential school experiences, and to give former students, their families and their communities an opportunity to share their experiences in a safe and culturally-appropriate environment.

The provincial government has announced that none of the payments made under this deal will affect social assistance payments, training allowances or student loans. As well, settlement payments will not be subject to income taxes.

Assembly of First Nations national chief Phil Fontaine applauded the deal, saying that "we

will, at long last, see justice in our lives for the tragic experience of the residential schools." He said that the deal is "not only about compensation but also about healing and reconciliation between First Nations and Canada," and thanked the survivors for their patience and understanding as the parties move toward final resolution of this matter.

Who can apply?

Right now, former Indian residential school students aged 65 and older as of May 30, 2005 can apply for an advance payment of \$8,000. If a student has passed away, their families may not apply for the advance payment, but applications can be made on behalf of their estates when the full agreement is implemented.

The money being paid to the elders is not being paid out at the expense of other former students, nor has it delayed the completion of the deal. The \$8,000 will be deducted from future compensation payments, and all former students – regardless of age – will eventually be paid according to the fee calculator of \$10,000 plus \$3,000 per year of attendance at a residential school.

This early compensation package has been worked out because so many of the elderly former students are in frail health, and the neither the government nor our First Nations leadership want them to pass on before receiving at least partial compensation for the losses they suffered.

Application details for other former students have not yet been announced because the full deal hasn't been implemented yet. The agreement must be approved in the seven jurisdictions in which there are lawsuits pertaining to residential schools that are pending before the courts. After that, there will be a five-month "opt-out" period in which former students can choose not to participate in the settlement. The deal will not go ahead if more than 5,000 former students opt out. These two processes are expected to take quite a few months.

Stanley Mission councillors in the plan to get \$400,000 for 2006-07 housing in Stanley. Finally, Layton and Bird were asked to provide a full financial report on the housing program's deficit at the next regular chief and council meeting.

Persons prohibited from entering reserves

A motion was passed banning Riley J. Ballantyne and Elias D. Ballantyne from entering any LLRIB reserve. Counc. Hillary Cook recommended a bylaw be drafted with regards to this BCR, to simplify resolution of community concerns when persons are consistently behaving in ways that threaten a community's safety and well-being.

Financial Transfer Agreement

Representatives from the Department of Indian Affairs discussed the current federal Financial Transfer Agreement (FTA), and the agreement was approved through a band council resolution.

Home ownership program

Several BCRs were passed, approving band members' requests to purchase their homes or acquire or transfer a land lease through the new on-reserve home ownership program. Bank of Montreal representatives and the band's program co-ordinator, Kevin McLeod, also clarified some details about the program, such as that council is not liable for loan defaults.

Survivors learn about money management

With the pending pay-out of tens of thousands of dollars through the residential school settlement, several Lac La Ronge band councillors have been working on a plan to help former students cope with suddenly having a large amount of cash, often after years of living close to the poverty line.

"The majority of these people are on welfare, and none of them have ever seen a cheque as big as \$10,000," the basic amount that former residential school students will receive, said Counc. Hillary Cook, who has taken the lead on this issue.

So, in response, Cook and his fellow councillors have decided to arrange a money management workshop. Held on June 26, at the Keethanow Bingo Hall – a space chosen for its size, not its connection with big money gains or losses, Cook said – the workshop included a training session with experienced accountants on issues such as budgeting, investing and making wise decisions on spending.

Cook hopes to educate people on the risks that come with getting a lot of cash all at one time, such as the impulse to spend too quickly or freely, such as on big-ticket items or a party, and the danger that you could be taken advantage of, even by people you might otherwise trust. As lottery wins have shown, money changes people, including those who receive the money and those around them, and it is good to be informed.

How do elders apply for the early compensation package?

- Print or get a copy of the application form.
- Fill out the form with all the required information.
- Make photocopies of your "proof of age" documents – your birth certificate or any two of the following: Certificate of Indian Status, driver's license, health card or Canadian passport. These documents must be certified (that is, signed by an approved person such as a chief, councillor, lawyer, judge or other professional person whose occupation is listed in the application form).
- Mail in all the required documents.

The application form is only two pages long, but there are many instructions. If you need any assistance, your local band councillors can guide you through the process.

What is the deadline?

Advance payment applications will be accepted until December 31, 2006.

Where do I get an application form?

Forms are available at the band offices in La Ronge, Sucker River, Grandmother's Bay, Hall Lake, Stanley Mission and Little Red. You can also call the central office (425-2183 or toll-free 1-800-567-7736) to request that a form be mailed, faxed or e-mailed to you. Or, print out, fill out and mail in the form available on-line at www.afn.ca or www.irsr-rqpi.gc.ca.

Where can I find more information?

Call your local band councillor or call 1-800-816-7293 to ask questions about the application process. You can also visit the Indian Residential School Resolution Canada website (www.irsr-rqpi.gc.ca) to read the full text of the settlement agreement and find answers to frequently asked questions.

Council meeting *continued from page 7*

changes. The amendments will be voted on during the 2007 treaty day celebrations.

Council wage increases

With this issue having been brought up during the meeting, executive director Russ Mirasty asked for written justification from each councillor as to why they felt they needed a raise. Councillor Pam Mirasty suggested that council consider going back to their regular jobs and just collecting honorariums when attending meetings, because she feels that council salaries take money away from programs. The majority of council agreed with Counc. Mirasty's recommendation that the issue of council wage increases be taken to the community before any decision is made.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation report

Housing and public works director Lewis Layton presented a report on the band's CMHC housing program, and agreed to follow up on a number of issues raised by council. These include doing a comparative analysis on the CMHC program and finding whether if a mortgage was paid out, the band would lose its subsidy. Public works employee Clayton Bird was asked to send Counc. Thompson Charles an outstanding balance report with regards to CMHC housing in Grandmother's Bay, and both Layton and Bird were asked to involve the

Walkers take DARE for diabetes

Come this fall, when someone asks a group of volunteers from the Lac La Ronge Indian Band what they did with their summer vacation, they will have a simple answer: "We walked."

Those volunteers – numbering more than 50 at last count – are the participants in the upcoming "Just DARE Me" walk, scheduled for July 2-7. The group, accompanied by a team of approximately 20 helpers, will be walking from the RM of Buckland, near Prince Albert, to La Ronge, a distance of 230 km, in an effort to not only improve their own physical fitness, but to raise awareness of diabetes and raise money for exercise equipment at the new arena on Far Reserve.

While the walk is a new event for the band, it harkens back to the days before cars, buses and other forms of mechanical transportation were commonplace, and people like James Roberts – first chief of what is now the Lac La Ronge Indian Band – spent long nights under the stars in an effort to get to Prince Albert.

"There's stories of him having to walk that distance to attend meetings on behalf of his membership," said event organizer and current band councillor Jimmy Roberts, who shares his name with the late chief. "If he could have done it back in that day (in the late 1800s), why can't we do it today?"

Fortunately for the contemporary walkers, they will have a somewhat easier time of it than Chief Roberts. For instance, the organizers are supplying three meals a day, mosquito nets and spray, tents (and back-up indoor locations in case of rain), medical care, and even a pair of vans and a bus that will be travelling alongside the walkers and providing them with rides when they reach the point of exhaustion. Even so, the exercise will be demanding, with the team averaging 40-45 km a day.

In addition to preparing physically, the walkers are expected to raise pledges of \$2/km for up to 230 km. While the money is being raised for the purchase of equipment for the new arena, the organizers have created an incentive for band members under 18 or from communities other than La Ronge. These participants will receive half their pledges back to use for a piece of sports equipment of their choice, "whether it be

a pair of rollerskates, a bike, a skateboard – just something that'll keep up that exercise or being active," Roberts said.

Together with promotion in the band's La Ronge area schools, this incentive plan has helped to attract approximately 20 youth, "with the catch of getting something in return for the work they've done."

For Roberts, who will be working behind the scenes together with his wife Tina, the return on his investment is more straight-forward: it's a way of paying tribute, both to a man he loved, and a cause he cares about. The "DARE" in the walk's name is an acronym for "Diabetes – Amos Roberts – Education", honouring Roberts' late uncle, who like his nephew was a long-serving councillor and active in sports. He also suffered from diabetes, a disease that affects many Lac La Ronge band members and can be prevented or alleviated by physical exercise and diet.

Roberts is encouraging participants in the "Just DARE Me" walk to do so in memory or in honour of a family member or friend who has been affected by diabetes. As well, the organizers have consulted with a dietician to prepare the menu, and participants will be served a diabetic-friendly diet at mealtimes. Evening events will include games such as cards and horseshoes, and a wrap-up banquet and presentations will be held at Jonas Roberts Memorial Community Centre, the location of the new arena.

Participants in the "Just DARE Me" walk will also receive a practical gift as a souvenir, Roberts said. "We thought about a hat or a t-shirt, and then we thought, if it's going to rain, why not go with a jacket, so that it's a cover for the participants, who will hopefully continue walking whether it's raining or shining."

While the walkers and volunteers are ready to go, Roberts does encourage other band members to participate, either by making a donation toward the costs of gas, food and other expenses, or just offering support.

"If they're passing us on the highway," he said, "give us a holler or give us a beep, and encourage our participants."

We have 36 new Grade 12 graduates, and 41 band members who have completed post-secondary programs. Congratulations to all of you on your accomplishments, and best of luck to you as you begin your careers!

Grade 12:

Myles Bird, Seth Bird, Crystal Charles, Don Charles, Nikita Charles, Richard Charles, Rose Charles, Gilbert Cook, Danielle Dupre, Janice Ermine, Matthew Halkett, Roderick Halkett, John Hastings, Jamie Lafleur, Gerard Little, Cody Mahoney, Pam McKay, Donald Cory McKenzie, Absolom McLeod, Gladys McLeod, Samantha McLeod, Bernard Ratt, Bruce Ratt, Cheryl Ratt, Florence Ratt, Sylvia Ratt, Vivian Ratt, Debra Ray, Donna F. Roberts, Jean Roberts, Rachel Roberts, Sherrie Roberts, Stuart Roberts, Yvonne Ross, James Senga, Allister Stene

Post-Secondary:

Ph.D. in Community Health and Epidemiology: Rose Roberts

Bachelor of Science in Nursing: Valerie McLeod

Bachelor of Education: Jemima Charles, Colleen Durocher, Crystal Boschman

Bachelor of Arts and Science: Gerald Ratt

Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Studies: Erica Hennie

Bachelor of Social Work: Janet Auger

Bachelor of Engineering (Mining): James Little

Medical Office Assistant diploma: Joan Roberts

Management Studies diploma: Tom Bear, Crystal Charles, Curtis Charles, Jeannie Charles, Stuart Halkett, Daniel Isbister, Jason Ratt

Early Childhood Education Diploma: Tracey Halkett

Early Childhood program: Jeanine Iron

Social Work certificate: Donald Mirasty, Eugene Mirasty

Aboriginal Police Studies: Elizabeth Cook

Tribal Policing: Marla Charles, Antoine Merasty

Business Administration: Tanya Pruden

Community Health Representative: Rose McKenzie, Sophie McLeod, Caroline Ross

Community Services (Addictions): Sally McKenzie

Cosmetology: Pam Budd

Institutional Cooking: Lorraine Cook, Hazel McKenzie

Office Education: Cheri Cook, Sonya Charles, Tammy Eninew, Michelle Ratt, Julie Ross

Professional Cooking: Tom Cook

Welding: Peter Balantyne

If we missed anyone, we apologize.

Sports stories wanted

The next issue of *The Cree Communicator* will have a special sports and recreation focus, and we are putting a call out for anything related to sports and the Lac La Ronge Indian Band. Examples could include team reports, upcoming activities and events, photos or player profiles.

The deadline for submissions (either completed reports or story ideas) is August 11. Articles and photos (if digital, submit at full-size, 300 dpi or higher) can be sent to cpaulsorthner@llrib.ca or mailed to/dropped off at the band office in La Ronge. Please mark any materials for "SPORTS ISSUE – attention Carmen Pauls Orthner", and include a contact name and phone number. Ideas can be e-mailed to the above address, or phoned in to (306) 425-1334.

Article topics already in the works for this issue include profiles of the two band members who played with the La Ronge Ice Wolves this past season, and information on the band's involvement with the team; the Indigenous Games in Colorado; the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships; a recent high-performance athletics camp organized by Olympian Waneek Horn-Miller; a celebrated young golfer; and news about school and community sports teams, and fundraising projects, as well as lots of photos from recent sporting events.

If you've been involved in sports and recreation activities in any of our band communities, or are a proud relative or friend to any band athlete, please let *The Cree Communicator* know.



Congratulations to all our Lac La Ronge Indian Band graduates

from Aboriginal Head Start and preschool up to high school and post-secondary studies, including adult upgrading, journeyman certification, college and university programs. We are proud of your achievements, and we will continue to applaud and support you as you move into further education and careers. Thank you for all your hard work, and for showing us just how much you are capable of. Be proud of what you have achieved - you deserve it!

A special Grad 2005-06 photo gallery is being developed for our band website, www.llrib.ca. If you have a grad photo, consider submitting it to the gallery. Photos can be mailed to or dropped off at the band office in La Ronge, attention Carmen Pauls Orthner, communications officer, or e-mailed to cpaulsorthner@llrib.ca (please send no more than three pictures per e-mail message). Photos will be available for pick-up at the office or mailed back to your home community's band office for pick-up. Please do not send professional proofs; due to copyright restrictions, we can not use these pictures on the website.



Governor-General meets with First Nations women in leadership

On May 10, a group of women got together in Regina for a chat, and history was made. It wasn't the conversation that did it, but the fact of the gathering and the titles these women bore: head of state for Canada, head of state for Saskatchewan, and chief, times 14.

The meeting at Government House was initiated by the province's now-retired lieutenant-governor, Dr. Lynda Haverstock, as part of the first visit to Saskatchewan of Canada's new Governor-General Michaëlle Jean. After a banquet with influential people from across the province, Haverstock and Jean retired to a private meeting with their guests: Saskatchewan's 14 women chiefs and three elders, including a member of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations senate.

"It was just to hear what kinds of things we go through as women chiefs, personally and professionally," explained Lac La Ronge's Chief Tammy Cook-Searson, one of the governor-general's guests.

"It was a really empowering meeting, because it gave us a chance to talk candidly and openly about the different challenges we face as leaders, and also all the positive and exciting things that can happen."

Over the course of the two-hour meeting, the governor-general asked questions of the chiefs and elders, and both she and Dr. Haverstock shared about their own experiences. The

governor-general strongly encouraged the chiefs to continue meeting regularly, noting that in her travels across Canada, she has seen leaders feeling isolated even though the problems they face are not isolated.

"She encouraged us to get together and work collaboratively to address the issues that face our communities," Chief Cook-Searson said. "It makes it more powerful when you're working together for the good of all people."

The governor-general also proposed a conference about women in leadership, organized by the chiefs, and confirmed that she would attend if such an event were to take place.

There was a lot of frankness at the meeting, and a strong sense that such gatherings are important, Chief Cook-Searson said. "We're all women in leadership, but first of all, we're all women, getting together and talking," she said.

The participants also sensed the historical importance of the meeting, which was articulated by the elders, Theresa Stevenson, Margaret Keewatin and Alma Kytwayhat, Chief



Chief Tammy Cook-Searson meets Governor-General Michaëlle Jean at Government House, with Dr. Lynda Haverstock and her husband Harley Olsen also present.

Cook-Searson said. "(They said,) 'Our ancestors signed treaties with the Queen's representative, and now, we're meeting with the Queen's representatives.'"



Canada's governor-general, Michaëlle Jean, and Saskatchewan lieutenant-governor Lynda Haverstock held a private audience with Saskatchewan's female chiefs at Government House in Regina on May 10.

Back row: Chief Elaine Chicoose, Chief Olive McArthur, Chief Pat Sparvier, Chief Beverly Bellegarde, Chief Ellen LeCaine, Chief Marie-Anne Day Walker-Pelletier, Chief Constance Big Eagle, Chief Isabel O'Soup, Chief Sarah Gopher, Chief Colleen Sandfly, Chief Alice Pahtaykan, Chief Pauline Okemow

Front row: Tribal Chief Helen Ben, Senator Theresa Stevenson, Elder Gladys Wapass-Greyeyes, Her Honour Dr. Lynda Haverstock, Her Excellency Michaëlle Jean, Elder Alma Kytwayhat, Senator Margaret Keewatin, Chief Tammy Cook-Searson

Soldier's legacy a gift to Aboriginal education

The family of Nichola Goddard, a soldier killed in active duty in Afghanistan, has established a memorial scholarship available to people from the communities that nurtured her – including members of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band.

Capt. Goddard was part of the 1st Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, serving in the Afghanistan mission as a forward observation officer. She was killed May 17 during a gunfire exchange with insurgents, approximately 24 kilometres west of Kandahar. Goddard, who died age 26, is the first female Canadian soldier ever killed in combat.

She also has personal ties to the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, and specifically to La Ronge. Capt. Goddard's father, Tim Goddard, was the band's director of education for several years, while her mother Sally was a reporter at *The Northerner* newspaper and later a NORTEP student. The senior Goddards now live in Calgary, where Tim is an associate dean in the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary.

According to Dr. Goddard, Nichola closely identified with the First Nations people who were her classmates and friends. In his eulogy, delivered May 26 at her funeral in Calgary, he recalled something that happened after the Goddard family moved to Black Lake, when Nichola was four years old.

"Sally and I were teaching there, and one day Sally walked past Nichola's classroom. All the children were standing there, proudly beating their chests and proclaiming, 'I am a Chipewyan Indian!' Including Nich!," Goddard recalled. "She was so disappointed on Treaty Day, when she lined up in the band hall with her classmates, but when they all got to the front of the line the Mounties wouldn't give her the five dollar bill that was received by everyone else."

She may not have received a treaty payment, but in a way, Nichola Goddard's death will contribute toward the fulfillment of another treaty right for First Nations people: education. In his eulogy, Dr. Goddard announced the

establishment of an endowed scholarship in his daughter's name.

This scholarship will be available to three groups of people, he said: "They may be citizens of Papua New Guinea, the place of her birth; they may be from the First Nations, Inuit, or Métis peoples of Canada, in whose company she spent so many of her formative years; or they may be citizens of Afghanistan, the place of her death."

Anyone wishing to contribute may do so by mailing donations to:

Captain Nichola K.S. Goddard
Memorial Scholarship Fund,
The Faculty of Education,
University of Calgary,
2500 University Drive NW,
Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4.

For inquiries about the scholarship, contact Jennifer Diakiw at (403) 220-7083 or uofciving@ucalgary.ca.

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Treaty Days 2006



La Ronge



Grandmother's Bay



Stanley Mission



Hall Lake



Little Red River



Treaty days celebrated

Treaty day celebrations were held in all of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band's communities in May, with the exception of Sucker River, where a community-wide search for a missing six-year-old boy took priority over the planned festivities. The treaty party will return to Sucker River on July 20.

Chief Tammy Cook-Searson, sporting her traditional feathered headdress, attended each of the five treaty day events, where she, local councillors and executive director Russ Mirasty shook hands with band members and watched as the federal representatives – Indian Affairs officials and members of the RCMP – handed each person their five-dollar treaty payment.

The communities also organized activities for band members to enjoy during the treaty day festivities, including fish fries, immunization clinics and information booths. Stanley Mission held a mini poker rally, with participants going from building to building by foot to collect their playing cards, while kids in Hall Lake took part in a track and field day.

La Ronge's treaty day organizers decided to take a page out of the history books and arranged for the treaty party, including

Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Grand Chief Alphonse Bird, Prince Albert Grand Council Grand Chief Ron Michel and several of their vice-chiefs, to travel by canoe to the beach near Kitsaki Hall.

This brought back a lot of memories for elders watching from shore and from nearby homes – although as it turned out, the paddlers came in from the wrong direction, since they started from Sundance Marina whereas in the past the treaty party would have come from Stanley Mission. Still, the arrival at shore was a big hit, as was the photo opportunity with the chiefs and a group of kids, for which FSIN Vice-Chief Delbert Wapass urged all the kids to hold up a hand, spread their fingers and yell, "Five bucks!"

The La Ronge events also included family events such as a fish pond and a scavenger hunt, and a fish fry with fiddle music by elder Edmund Bell and FSIN Vice-Chief Lawrence Joseph. A planned canoe race and cabaret fundraiser for the North American Indigenous Games were cancelled, to show respect for the nearby community of Sucker River, which had just suffered the loss of two children in a drowning accident.