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Engage

SUMMER 2014 VOLUME 4, ISSUE 3



Sask **Culture**

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What's Inside:

Students bring life to the spoken word

The Saskatchewan Writers' Guild unveil their diversity plan

Cultural Arts Camp engages Turnor Lake Youth

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highlight

the work of cultural
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and the

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Recreation.



ON THE COVER: A student looks at art by another student, validating that art is for all ages, at School Art, an annual show of work at the Mendel Art Gallery by Kindergarten to Grade 12 students. Art Gallery.

Photo courtesy: The Mendel Art Gallery



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Past President's Message

Arts & Diversity

Words often fail us. Despite hundreds of generations of learning and evolving through language, there are still so many messages where we need something more to provoke new thoughts, and communicate beyond the barriers of definition and grammar. The issue is compacted when we introduce the myriad intersectionalities of background and experience: This diversity is such a powerful shaping force of our individual and collective beliefs and values. This is why the arts have such a lasting impact on our lives; the arts speak where words often fail.



The arts have the power to bring people together.

One of the most obvious (yet compelling) examples is the truism that music is the universal language. The structure, the emotion, the histories are all intuitively shared between a performer and the audience, whether or not they share a common language. When I was traveling in Yunnan, China last summer, what often told me (as an alien to the land, language and culture) the most about the people was the music, the dress, the crafts and art decorating everyday and sacred spaces, the performances at festivals and celebrations; the arts that infuse our lives with meaning, though we may often take them for granted as nothing special unless we see those assumed norms as false in other contexts, are new pathways of reflection and thought opened.

It is often artists who can open our eyes to question those unknown assumptions, even when we are sitting comfortably in our own well-known contexts of hearth and home. At the 2014 Heritage Saskatchewan Forum, Connie Kaldor spoke and sang about so many of her personal experiences of life in Saskatchewan, and made a point of how special they were despite how mundane we often consider them. Through exploring diversity through arts, we come to better know and value ourselves, which feeds back again to help us better love others.

Sincerely,

James Ingold



Buffalo Pound Round Dance helps to highlight Métis culture

BY FELECHIA BRODIE

Ashley Norton has a passion for Métis culture and dance, and how ideas about Métis culture can be encouraged and shared in Regina. Co-founder of the Wiichihwayshinawn Foundation (“We are Helpers” in Michif), she brought together a group of dancers from all over Saskatchewan to perform a contemporary jig dance at the Ice and Fire Festival, held in Regina, February 13 – 17, 2014. The dance group trained for months leading up to the event and performed in front of thousands of people throughout the festival. The public joined the dancers in jig-alongs after the performances.

Under the direction of Yvonne Chartrand, artistic director, Compaigni V’ni Dansi, in Vancouver, Robin Poitras, artistic director, New Dance Horizons, and Edward Poitras, senior artist, the dancers performed Buffalo Pound Round Dance. Edward Poitras describes this contemporary dance as:

Performers experience Métis culture by participating in a 'jig-along' as part of the Ice & Fire Festival in Regina.
 Photo courtesy: Wiichihwayshinawn Foundation

“A celebration of the memory of a time when the Buffalo roamed the prairies in such large numbers that you could feel the ground shake and their numbers looked like vast cloud shadows on the earth. It was truly a gift from the creator, and their loss marked an end to a way of life that we can only dream of as a possibility.

“An unlimited resource that supplied almost everything that one needed to survive, and then it was over with the bang of a gun and a few beads. In our evolution as human beings we are at times victims of our own desire for new and novel items that change our lives.

In this dance, we dance on snow but in our minds it is water, flour, and sugar, that fuels our next step in a direction that we hope will be the correct step for future generations.”

With the help of Edward Poitras and Robin Poitras, the dancers - Ashley Norton, Justin Toto, Krista Solheim, Marcus Merasty, Modeste Mackenzie, Ethel Struthers and Alison Kimbley – designed their warm costumes to dance outdoors, including mitts (“hooves”)



and moccasins outfitted with spikes for dancing on ice. Artist Margaret Harrison taught the dancers Métis style embroidery and textiles. The project received support of a \$9,000 grant from SaskCulture's Métis Cultural Development Fund.

Many of the attendees and other performers had not experienced Métis culture and embraced the opportunity to see the performance and then try jigging for themselves. The overwhelmingly positive response inspired the dancers to seriously consider dance as a profession, and to continue to find ways to strengthen and share Métis culture. Norton says she is currently writing grant applications with plans to reunite the group in Regina to train for performances this summer, as they have their hopes set on performing at the North American Indigenous Games and Back to Batoche Festival this summer.

PRESERVE HERITAGE.

In 2012, traditional skiff building was part of an Elders' Gathering in Pinehouse, SK, funded through the Métis Cultural Development Fund.



MAKE THINGS HAPPEN!

Funding available from the

Métis Cultural Development Fund

Supports activity that helps to preserve and pass on Métis culture and traditions.

Deadlines: Oct. 31 & April 30



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Living Histories –

Treaty education in Living Sky School Division

BY DANICA LORER

There is more than one way to tell a story and the Living Sky School Division is bringing Treaty education to life through cultural experiences.

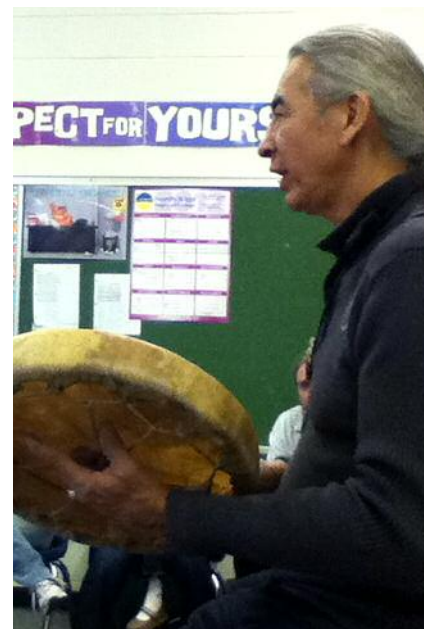
Sherron Burns, learning consultant, Arts Ed and Treaty Ed, Living Sky School Division, says “My thinking was that we would call it ‘Living Histories’ because it wasn’t just about understanding one form of history, but that history has many paths and many stories, and it depends on who is telling the story as to what you are going to understand.”

Early in the process and throughout it, the division consulted with Elder Fred Paskimin, other elders and community members. “That’s been a really important part of trying to ensure we’re doing things correctly, that we’re not moving too quickly, that we’re getting the advice we need, and the guidance

and the prayers we need, and the guidance to make this a good journey,” says Burns.

Before inviting schools to explore what they wanted to experience, Burns, along with storyteller Joseph Naytowhow and lawyer Deanne Kasokeo, did presentations for staff in each of the division’s 32 schools. They answered questions and opened up possibilities.

Burns wants the program to grow out of the needs of the schools by removing the barriers to communication and by building relationships. The program provides the links to resource people and the knowledge of correct protocols for communications and visits. As the project developed and the list of resource people



Elder Fred Paskimin works with students from Living Skies School Division to help them learn First Nations and Métis traditional culture through the arts.



grew, a Cultural Directory was created. The list currently has over 30 people, including: elders, knowledge and language keepers; and artists, people with specific talents, gifts, and knowledge they want to share with students.

"I wanted schools to feel comfortable bringing First Nations and Métis people in, but I also wanted First Nations and Métis people to feel comfortable coming into our schools," says Burns. "The program addressed how it could help make a school a good place for participants to go into, a safe place, where they felt they have something to offer, felt respected and valued."

The school division, located in northwest central Saskatchewan, is unique in its make-up. It includes two Christian schools, one Catholic school and three Hutterite Colony schools. All of the schools in the division have benefitted from the program through the initial visits and the majority have enjoyed unique programming. Cultural activities have included traditional and contemporary focuses. They have ranged from classroom presentations including a mini Pow Wow and cultural fair, to a Skype interview between students in Unity with a rapper/journalist studying in Regina.

Living Histories-Treaty Education in Living Sky School Division grew out of support from SaskCulture's Aboriginal and Cultural Leadership (AACL) Grant. The project has



proven so successful that funding from the division to Treaty and arts education has increased, and schools are increasing their own budgets to continue to grow the project.

"I feel the arts are a vehicle for bringing people together, working with artists can really excite the students. There is a lot of pain in the history. How do we begin to work with students and teachers in a way that is going to get us to acknowledge what we've gone through, but also how we think about a future that we share," says Burns. "I think the arts are a way to do that."

BUILD LEADERSHIP.

In 2012, youth in Cumberland House, SK, participated in a Media Arts & Traditional Storytelling Workshop, as part of a project supported by an Aboriginal Arts & Cultural Leadership Grant.



MAKE THINGS HAPPEN!

Funding available from the

Aboriginal Arts & Cultural Leadership Grant

Supports opportunities for First Nations and/or Métis youth to demonstrate leadership skills through cultural mentorships.

Deadlines: Oct. 15 & April 15




Visit www.saskculture.sk.ca for details.



Our Humboldt – Looking toward the future through a cultural lens

BY DANICA LORER

Humboldt is stepping into the future with a brand new culture-led growth plan. Concentrating on seven core values, the city is working to sustain a hub of cultural and economic life, to retain citizens, and attract people and investments from around the world. The community has worked together to identify that Humboldt is active, welcoming, prosperous, creative, green, connected and sustainable.

The preparation of the plan included work with the Canadian Urban Institute and an extensive community consultation process. Asking questions and listening to the answers created a sense of ownership of the plan, and people appreciated having a voice in the process.

Jennifer Brooks, director of communication and community development, City of Humboldt, says “The process was equally as important, if not more so, than the plan, at the end of the day because it provided a platform, not just to engage official and unofficial community leaders,

but to engage the wider community from all different community sectors. I think that is what made the plan as comprehensive as it is, and I think it will serve us well in the long run.”

Through the process, it became clear that there was a real hunger for encouraging a culturally dynamic community. By creating a community that embraces culture, it really helps with community sustainability in the long term by making it an attractive place to live. “We couldn’t have gotten the amount, or quality of information, if we hadn’t reached out to the community to ask them what they wanted. The city council can’t do it alone. It was really quite something to see folks from different backgrounds, ages and ethnicities sitting at the table and working together to discuss what they loved about the community, what they wanted to retain, and what they wanted to make better,” says Brooks.

Brooks along with Jennifer Hoesgen, director, Humboldt and District Museum

and Gallery, took the same process to the high school. “To listen to those young people speak about their city, their needs, and what they see for the future of their city was very exciting,” says Hoesgen.

With their innovative approach using a culture-led and value-based planning process, Humboldt is being looked at as an example, and the planners have already been invited to share their ideas with other municipalities in Saskatchewan. In June 2014, the Canadian Urban Institute will be presenting the plan to the Creative Cities Network of Canada in Hamilton.

In January 2014, Humboldt opened its first public gallery. They were able to use the ideas in the plan as they opened. “We want to ensure that the new public space is a place that encompasses those values, is a welcoming place where creativity and culture is really celebrated, and that we look at how we can ensure that new diverse cultural groups are welcome,” explains Hoesgen. The City of Humboldt was able to develop their plan with funding help from a SaskCulture Municipal Cultural Engagement and Planning Grant.

The goal of the plan is to improve the quality of life in the community as it grows. “The name of the plan, speaks to the inclusiveness of it. ‘Our Humboldt’ was a very deliberate choice of names. ‘Our Humboldt’ is about our community, and it’s about ensuring people have ways to make the community their own and make it meaningful to them,” says Brooks.

Humboldt residents get a chance to have their say on how to make their city a great place to live.
Photo courtesy: City of Humboldt

ARTforLIFE

creates lasting legacy for students and teachers alike

BY SARAH FERGUSON



Some believe imagination is more important than knowledge. However, a visual art-based education program at Saskatoon's Mendel Art Gallery combines both, and is building a creative legacy that will leave a mark on teachers and students for years to come.

Launched in 2001, ARTforLIFE is a program that partners the Mendel Art Gallery with community schools. "Its main goal is to encourage strong, long-term relationships and lifelong learning," says Laura Kinzel, public programs coordinator and head, ARTforLIFE program, Mendel Art Gallery. This past year, the gallery welcomed its 11th program partner, Caswell Community School. "The one thing that's really great about the program is that every single school partnership is different," adds Kinzel.

The Mendel works hard to find a good liaison match for a school. "When I talk to the school, I say 'what kind of person would you like to see?'" Kinzel says. The



school always prioritizes someone who has a thriving art practice, and the Mendel strives to strike a balance of participation between the Saskatoon Catholic System and the Saskatoon Public School, and also between elementary and high schools.

Noreen Neu, arts consultant, Media and Visual Arts, Saskatchewan Arts Board, worked in the Mendel's Public Programs Department during ARTforLIFE's infancy. "We wanted to develop a program that went beyond what we were currently offering schools," Neu says. She asserts that the program began by working with community schools that had issues like poverty, crime and drug abuse. "We thought we could make a positive contribution," she adds.

According to Neu, the program benefits students and teachers alike as it provides sustained arts programming to an entire school for three years. "Teachers [in all disciplines] have an opportunity to develop some skills around the arts curriculum," she explains. "Students also have the opportunity to benefit with a program that is not dependent on teachers in individual grades having arts education-related skills."

Kinzel also emphasizes that the program would also be impossible without the support of Affinity Credit Union. The liaison between Affinity Credit Union and the gallery has existed since the program began, and has been so successful that it won the Saskatoon Community Foundation's Strategic Alliance Award in 2006. The Mendel Art Gallery receives part of their operational funding from SaskCulture through the Culture Section of the Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund.

Since 2012, Robin Adair, a Mendel Liaison, has worked extensively with the staff and students of Bedford Road Collegiate. The program partnership, which is now in the second year at the school, has received great feedback. "During a Visual Storytelling project, the Grade 9 Arts Education teacher expressed a number of times that it was great to have someone challenging the students, and getting them to think about art from different angles," he says.

Kinzel remains optimistic about the ARTforLIFE program, even though the Mendel is currently undergoing a period of transition. "ARTforLIFE will continue as long as we have dedicated funders," she says, adding that the gallery hopes to bring another ARTforLIFE school partner aboard in 2015.

Saskatoon students actively engage with artwork at the Mendel Art Gallery. Photo courtesy: The Mendel Art Gallery



Cultural Arts Camp

receives rave reviews from elders and students in Turnor Lake

BY PAUL SPASOFF

The Cultural Arts Camp, hosted by the Birch Narrows Dene Community School, has started something they can't stop, and its positive impact will be long lasting for the community of Turnor Lake.

Getting Started

Culture Week is an annual event at the school in Turnor Lake, which is located approximately 500 km north of North Battleford. Planning for the 2014 edition of the event began immediately after the previous year's activities came to an end. Organizers wanted to build upon the week's activities to expose students to different mediums of art, including those of the Dene and Cree cultures, as well as other Aboriginal cultures in Saskatchewan.

Jocelyn Dreaver, one of the organizers of the Cultural Arts Camp, as well as the vice-principal and special education teacher, Birch Narrows Dene Community School, explains "We've held Culture Week for a number of years. Using some of the local elders, we've done beading and activities like that. We wanted to engage the students in different kinds of workshops that would possibly challenge some of them. We wanted to expose them to new art and different kinds of art forms."

Planning progressed through the summer of 2013, with Dreaver turning to a familiar face for assistance - her sister, Audrey Dreaver. Beyond providing trusted advice, Audrey also proved valuable with her own unique point of

view as an artist. "When (Jocelyn) first approached me and was asking me questions, I gave her suggestions on what to do," she says. "Then when they made the commitment to create it, I made the suggestion that instead of calling it an art camp, they call it an artistic culture camp because it's all about the artistic culture. Art is an important part of our lives - it's not outside our lives, it's part of everything we do."

Besides a title for the event, Audrey also steered organizers towards funding for the project. They applied for and received grants from SaskCulture (Aboriginal Arts and Culture Leadership Fund) and the Saskatchewan Arts Board (Indigenous Pathways Initiatives Grant), which ultimately allowed them to stage the camp.

"Nuhe chalani Hedarilden"

At the start of the current school year, the Culture Committee was formed to involve the school's teachers and continue planning for the camp. Then, monthly meetings were held with the local elders to receive their feedback and direction. By then the committee had a name for the project - *Learning Our Culture*, which translated into Dene is "Nuhe chalani Hedarilden."

From March 17-20, students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 at Birch Narrows Dene Community School were treated to artists from inside and outside their community, representing a variety of mediums, including: painting, carving, air-drying clay, birch bark canoes and baskets, storytelling, Métis jigging, traditional games, drumming, and drum-making. Elders were assigned to each of the activities in order to further the connection between the arts and Aboriginal culture. On the final day of the week they enjoyed a traditional community feast.

Engaging the Community

"They would start every afternoon with an elder telling stories. I was in the painting session and our elder talked about colour in nature, and how colour was drawn from the different plants and the significance of colour," explains Audrey Dreaver.

"(The students) were completely immersed in the stories they were listening to. When they went to do their own paintings, a lot of them ended up creating imagery that was based on some of the stories that they heard from the elder. He totally changed how they were approaching colour right from the start," she says. "That was a really important element of connecting art to culture. That's what made it an artistic culture camp."

By its very name, the intersection of arts and culture was the focus of the *Learning Our Culture* project. Although it would have made the name unwieldy, Jocelyn Dreaver explains that another key component was engagement - engagement of students, engagement of elders and engagement of the entire community. "Several years ago the elders played an active role in the



school," she says, "but over time they gradually drifted away." With attendance an issue among the older grades at Birch Narrows Dene Community School, some of the students in the community also have engagement issues. Although the students were slow to warm to the camp, by the end of the week the students and elders were fully immersed in the festivities. "It exceeded my

expectations," she says. "I knew we would have some small problems along the way, but overall the students enjoyed it, the artists enjoyed it and so did the elders.

"(The elders) said to us we started something that we can't stop, which is being with the kids and being in the school."

Elders and artists teach students from Turnor Lake about the connections between art and Aboriginal culture.
Photo courtesy: Cultural Arts Camp

Five things you might not know about the Ukrainian Museum of Canada

BY FELECHIA BRODIE



You may know the Ukrainian Museum of Canada tells the story of many people's immigration to Canada from Ukraine, but here are five other things you might not know about the first ethnic museum in Canada.

1. It's a "hands-on" kind of place.

Some museums are places that people go to see art. The Ukrainian Museum of Canada has lots to look at, but it also has lots to do. As Janet

Prebushewsky Danyliuk, director and chief executive officer, puts it, "We want to give people an experience. Watching a video of someone creating an Easter egg is not the same as peeling away the wax yourself and uncovering the design that you created. Listening to music online is not the same as being in the gallery with a live ensemble. We offer involvement and we encourage people to engage with the museum. Social media lets us share what's going on. We've been astonished at the responses we get! Then we invite people to come here... live and in-person!" Each year, between 10,000 and 12,000 people accept that invitation and visit the museum.

2. Perched on Spadina Crescent, overlooking the South Saskatchewan River, the museum is a lot bigger than it looks.

The permanent collection includes 30,000 items. Most people, even in the Ukrainian community, are unaware

of the full scope of the museum's collection, or of its rarity. In the Main Gallery visitors learn about immigration to Canada. The Special Collections Gallery features paintings by the artist and writer William Kurelek. Exhibits change in the Feature Gallery every three months.

3. The entire community gathers here.

The museum focuses on Canadian culture and history, as well as Ukrainian culture, and has a deep base of grassroots support and volunteers. Ninety per cent of the museum's operating budget is self-generated, thanks to donations and gift shop revenues. Additional funding comes from SaskCulture, City of Saskatoon, SUS Foundation of Canada and other community granting sources. With recent events in Ukraine, visitors find the museum a source of non-political, non-denominational background information and Ukrainian history.

4. The museum likes a party.

Throughout the year, the museum lets down its hair. The three-day Christmas market (yarmarok) is a major event for the museum, with music drawing people in the doors from up and down Spadina Crescent in Saskatoon. Each year at Easter, about 1,000 people learn the folk art of decorating pysanky (Easter eggs). Artists' receptions, concert performances, book launches, a pancake breakfast, and a Ukrainian medieval feast keep people engaged throughout the year. Children who visit on school tours often come back on the weekend with their parents or grandparents in tow.

5. Saskatoon is headquarters (HQ) to a national organization.

The Saskatoon museum acts as headquarters, but there are five other branches in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg and Toronto. Together, the Museum is one of Canada's foremost heritage organizations.

The Ukrainian Museum of Canada receives funding from the Museum Grant Program, supported by SaskCulture thanks to Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund for Sport, Culture and Recreation.



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There are plenty of activities one can participate in at the Ukrainian Museum of Canada in Saskatoon, such as decorating Pysanky. Photos courtesy: Ukrainian Museum of Canada

SWG leading the way on diversity in Saskatchewan

BY PAUL SPASOFF



Weaving Words Workshop in Saskatoon with Jennifer Wynne Webber (instructor), seated.

Saskatchewan was a different place in 1969.

At the time, the province was home to less than 950,000 people.

With approximately 50 per cent of that population living in rural areas, agriculture drove the provincial economy. The demographics of Saskatchewan largely reflected the descendants of the pioneers who migrated to the province from Western and Eastern Europe in search of a better way of life.

A conference of writers that same year led to the creation of the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild (SWG). A not-for-profit organization, it was established to help develop Saskatchewan writers and promote awareness of literature in the province. Its membership, along with its programs and services, largely reflected the demographics in the province at the time.

Much has changed over the past 45 years. As of the beginning of 2014, 1,117,503 people were living in the

province - approximately 30 per cent in rural Saskatchewan. Similar to the population base, the focus of the economy has also shifted to include the mining, oil and gas, and manufacturing sectors. People from abroad continue to seek opportunities in the province, with nearly 43,000 immigrants settling in Saskatchewan communities from 2007 to 2012. In recent years the newest residents have come from approximately 180 different countries.

As a result, the SWG has evolved to offer more programs and services, to serve a

larger and more diverse membership and province. Currently, the SWG has 685 members. "We have certainly noticed the changing demographics in the population in Saskatchewan. We've had a lot of people from various backgrounds wanting some help," says Judith Silverthorne, executive director, SWG. "There are new kinds of demographics that haven't really shown up much before. We want to be welcoming to people who are new to this province and this country."

To address the changing demographics and the requests for assistance, the SWG recently developed a policy for diversity, inclusion and equity. It is designed to ensure inclusion, as well as encourage further diversification within all areas of the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild. "We've kind of been on this path for quite a while - to be more inclusive and diverse," Silverthorne explains. "But we wanted to formalize it a little bit more and come up with a strategic direction and guidelines.

"Over the years there has been a narrow focus. We really wanted it to be something that could help serve writers - no matter what background, no matter what skill and no matter what age. We're here to help writers improve their abilities and help get them published," she says.

According to the policy, its stated intent is to ensure equity access to programs and services, as well all opportunities within the organization. It's a framework that provides a clearly defined, consistent and inclusive approach to encouraging participation, along with access to programs and services. The SWG developed the policy in consultation with some of its stakeholder groups to ensure it was meeting the needs of its members.

With the policy complete, the next step for Silverthorne and the SWG is to develop an accompanying diversity plan for the organization. "The strategy is really the next phase for us," she says. "Now that we've got a policy, we need to come up with some plans and strategies. But it's not something you can just do overnight. It's going to take us a while to connect with the communities and see where we might be able to help."

However, the SWG is already off to a good start. Over the years, Aboriginal programming has played an ever-



increasing role in the organization. It eventually led to the creation of a contract Aboriginal Program Coordinator position, which has since evolved into a permanent part-time position. While acknowledging there is more work to be done to develop the Aboriginal community, Silverthorne cites the

creation of the Aboriginal Advisory Circle and a partnership with the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Writers Circle Inc. as steps in the right direction. The SWG also partners with the Global Gathering Place in Saskatoon on a workshop to help visible minorities and immigrants to Saskatchewan tell their stories.



By developing a diversity policy, the SWG is taking a step forward as an organization. As one of the first non-profit groups in Saskatchewan to develop a full diversity policy, it is taking a leadership role in the province.

“We’re one of the leaders in our province in doing this and we’re one of the first ones to actually have a formal partnership with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission as well,” says Silverthorne. “We’ve heard from other (non-profit groups) that are interested in what we’re doing. We’ve made great strides, but it’s going to be evolving and changing and have to be adapted over time.”



TOP: Wes Fineday, Leah Dorion, and Errol Kinistino share stories at Wanuskewin Heritage Park in February during Aboriginal Storytelling month. ABOVE: Aboriginal Storytelling Month in Regina took place at the Royal Saskatchewan museum with Rodger Ross, Rhonda Donais, Dennis Omeasoo. Photos courtesy: SWG Staff

BUILD COMMUNITY.

In 2012, the Town of Maple Creek received a Municipal Cultural Engagement & Planning Grant to help plan a heritage district in their community.

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Funding available from the
Municipal Cultural Engagement & Planning Grant

Supports cultural planning projects that explore the creative and cultural potential of a community.
 Deadline: Feb 15

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Red Hot Riot leads a fun evening of fundraising for Creative Kids

BY SHAUNNA GRANDISH



Creative Kids teamed up four-time Canadian Comedy Award nominee Jayden Pfeifer, of the comedy variety show Red Hot Riot, for an evening of laughter, mayhem and music, with all of it contributing to a great cause.

On April 12th, various acts performed in front of a packed house of 140 people at Artesian Performance Venue in Regina. Red Hot Riot features an incredibly talented cast performing side-splitting, stand-up comedy, sketches, improvisation, and musical numbers featuring special guests – such as musical guest Orphan Mother, and Ed Minevich, Regina Symphony Orchestra Concertmaster.

According to Christie Nenson, fund development coordinator, Creative Kids, the show was completely sold-out. “There was a lot of good energy in the theatre that evening,” she says, adding that the event was a great success, bringing in \$7,467 to help create opportunities for Saskatchewan children and youth facing financial barriers to participation in cultural activities.

“The interview with Jayden [Pfeifer] and Ed Minevich was very funny,” says Nenson. “Jayden also got a pie in the face from a women with the highest bid on a live auction item. Who doesn’t love that old gag?”

Creative Kids is always looking to team up with organizations or individuals who are interested in organizing a Creative Kids fundraising event. “We have a great team of volunteers and staff who can help out where needed,” explains Nenson. Since all of Creative Kids administration costs are covered by SaskCulture, 100 per cent of all funds raised at events go right back to the community to support Creative Kids participants.

Last year, over \$36,000 was raised for Creative Kids from various fundraising events. According to Nenson, in most instances, funds raised can be directed to help out a specific community, or one of Creative Kids’ five key areas of participation, such as music, dance, theatre, art and other cultural activities. Contact Christie Nenson at 306-780-9461 to find out more on how you can help support Creative Kids.



Jayden Pfeifer of Red Hot Riot leads an ensemble cast through some hilarious skits staged in front of a full house, which featured the winner of the live auction pie Pfeifer (middle) and special guest Ed Minevich (bottom), all in support of Creative Kids.

Photos courtesy: Marc Messett Photography

Culture Days Team gearing up for 5th anniversary!

Culture Days will be celebrating its 5th Anniversary in 2014, and SaskCulture is delighted to announce that three “animateurs” have been hired to travel around Saskatchewan over the months leading up to Culture Days, September 26-28, 2014.

As Animateurs, they are charged with helping communities prepare for Culture Days through workshops, information sessions and sharing knowledge about cultural practices. As they travel the province this summer, they will be capturing the stories of people in Saskatchewan who have made a difference in their communities. They will also be exploring some of the “intangible cultural heritage” that Saskatchewan has to offer. These stories will be shared via social media outlets, emailed newsletters and through blog posts, so stay tuned for more from the Culture Days team.

For more information on Animateur availability, contact Marian Donnelly, Provincial Coordinator for Culture Days, at 306.780.9295 or mdonnelly@saskculture.sk.ca.

Karlie King

Tel: 306.845.2659 Email: kkingcd@gmail.com



Karlie was born and raised in Saskatchewan. She attended the University of Regina and obtained a B.A. with a double major in Religious Studies and Fine Arts. Her academic pursuits took her to Newfoundland in 2003, where she obtained a Master’s in Religious Studies. Karlie was part of the 2013 Culture Days team and is excited to be returning in 2014. Karlie is also currently working on a fibre arts project that will be installed in the lobby of the Farm Credit Canada building at the corner of 11th and Hamilton in Regina. Her 2013 Culture Days blog can be found at <http://karliekingcd2013.wordpress.com/>.

Kevin Power

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Kevin Power has received critical acclaim as a singer/actor from the *Times of London*, *Globe and Mail* and Opera Canada. His credits span blockbuster Broadway Tony Award-winning musicals; Canadian regional theatre; solo orchestral appearances; Canadian premiering roles; and self-produced jazz national tours. Kevin can be seen in movie and television principal roles with major studios including Lifetime Network, Lions Gate films, the SyFy network and CBC, and in the premier season of “Suits” with the US and Bravo Network. Throughout his career he has remained active in Saskatchewan’s artistic community with the Saskatchewan Playwrights Festival, Saskatoon Opera, Regina’s Globe Theatre, Moose Jaw Cultural Centre, and gala fundraising events, in support of not-for-profit foundations. Keep up-to-date on Kevin’s Culture Days adventures at www.kevinpower.net

Evie Ruddy

Tel: 306.209.8358 Email: iamruddy@gmail.com



Evie Ruddy is a freelance journalist, creative writer and university instructor. Her short documentaries have been broadcast nationally on CBC Radio. Her print work has appeared in *Reader’s Digest*, *The Toronto Star* and *Briarpatch Magazine*. In 2013, Evie was a runner up for the City of Regina Writing Award. She has participated in the Saskatchewan Writers’ Guild Mentorship Program, the Sage Hill Writing Experience and The Banff Centre’s Podcast Producer Work Study Program. Last year, she coordinated the Culture Days Stories of Integration Project for the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan, in which she and a videographer traveled throughout Saskatchewan collecting people’s stories on cross-cultural relations. One of Evie’s blogs was posted on the Culture 365 website at <http://culturedays.ca/blog/2013/09/13/stories-integration/> As an Animateur in 2014, Evie looks forward to leading workshops on digital storytelling.

Culture Days

Q & A with the Rivers West District



Sport, Culture and Recreation Districts focuses on fostering community development, and coordinating networks within their district, with the aim of enhancing access of sport, culture and recreation programs and services in Saskatchewan.

Shaunna Grandish had the opportunity to interview Bonnie Mills Midgley, community development coordinator, Rivers West District for Sport, Culture and Recreation, about Culture Days and its impact to her community.

How did your District connect with Culture Days last year?

For the past two years, SaskCulture held meetings in several different communities in the District and introduced the idea of Culture Days, what can be done, and that there is funding available. Last year, Culture Days Animateur Carol Daniels came to Turtleford School and was very well received. I think the Animateurs are a great idea. SaskCulture providing them to the province is such an enormous opportunity. It's great that these talented people come to the communities.

What are the benefits to organizations that host Culture Days in your District?

Culture Days definitely helps to promote culture around the District because it showcases what we have. When I first heard of Culture Days, I thought it had to be a big event. However, some small events – such as a scrapbooking event at the senior's centre – turned out to be



awesome activities because they appeal to a wide demographic of people: young, old and individuals of all abilities. A Culture Days event doesn't have to be enormous to be successful. Culture Days has grown over the past two years in the District. The District hopes to continue promoting Culture Days in the coming years. Last year, the turnout was fantastic for an event that took place in my community of St. Walburg. We have a lot of history and traditions in our communities that we can build on."

What are the benefits of culture in your community?

Culture helps tie people together in a community. Working together and showcasing what we have and what we can create. It also help bridge different communities throughout the District. Culture hasn't been as much in the limelight as recreation and sport, but it's becoming more so, and as we work with it, we begin to see the value. Events around Culture Days help people see the value in culture, and it brings people together who normally wouldn't have the opportunity to interact with one another.



Besides Culture Days, what other initiatives is the District promoting to help culture around the area?

We've had the Museums Association of Saskatchewan and Paul Gingras from SaskCulture presenting a workshop in North Battleford that had more than 20 people from the area museums who came to learn about the programs. The participants also had the chance to showcase their museums as it was a great networking event for people to exchange ideas and experiences.



Karlie King (pictured on page 18) gets the community of St. Walburg involved with Culture Days.
Photos courtesy: Karlie King

The Station Arts Centre brings a community together

BY SHAUNNA GRANDISH



As the demographics of small town Saskatchewan change in the new millennium, local cultural centres are seeking new ways to engage with their communities. The Station Arts Centre in Rosthern is one such centre that is setting a great example.



The Station Arts Centre brings together the community of Rosthern in celebration of art and culture.
Photos courtesy Rod Andrews, Valley News.

Over the past few years, the town of Rosthern, which has grown to a population of about 1,500 residents, has experienced many new people moving to the area. According to Nicole Thiessen, co-executive director, Station Arts Centre, many of the recent arrivals are choosing the community due to its cultural offerings. “It’s been really exciting to see new Canadians, and Canadians from all across the country, come to our community in small town Saskatchewan,” says Thiessen. “People have said they chose Rosthern because the Station Arts Centre really drew their attention. They were excited the town had a cultural centre ... and of this quality.”

Thiessen adds that the Centre has seen a lot of new Canadians take advantage of their diverse programming, such as taking part in Culture Days activities. “It is very exciting to witness people from all walks of life displaying and sharing their talents and ideas with the wider community,” she says.

The Station Arts Centre, like the entire community of Rosthern, has seen some

significant changes over the years: the theatre experienced a large renovation and is now a state-of-the-art facility that performers hold in high regard; and the expansion of the Tea Room has now allowed receptions and art exhibitions to be held on the premises.

Next year, the Centre, which has received a SaskCulture Capacity Building Grant, will be celebrating its 25th anniversary, and plans are currently in the works to mark this milestone. Thiessen's mother, Kathy, played an integral part in establishing the Centre a quarter of a century ago.

According to Thiessen, her mother strongly believed rural Saskatchewan residents should have the chance to experience arts and cultural activities similar in quality as one would find in a larger community. "Her vision was also to put Rosthern on the map as a cultural centre. She also wanted to make the town better for generations to come. The Centre is really important in developing attitudes and art appreciation in a small town."

As Rosthern continues to grow, Thiessen says she wants the Centre to continue serving its community, which includes a growing diversity of residents, well into the future by creating a new generation of art and culture appreciators. "Hopefully, as Rosthern and area grows, [the Centre] will continue being a hub that brings the community together," says Thiessen.

"My mother is a huge believer in bringing quality arts and cultural experiences to rural Saskatchewan," she adds. "That was always her goal – thinking big like that."



BUILD CAPACITY.

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Spoken word

brings Cree language to life for students

BY SARAH FERGUSON



Some may consider older styles of poetry to be dead, but a Saskatoon education coordinator is using the medium to bring the Cree language to life, and her students are reaping the rewards.

Desiree Macauley says she first came up with the idea for a project involving spoken word as a teaching tool last May. She conceived the concept of students at St. Frances School expressing themselves through spoken word and hip hop, both using the Cree language.

Macauley's spoken word project, based on the treaties, partnered 30 students from Grades 4-6, at St. Frances School, with 20 Oskayak High School students. "The reason I included Oskayak was for

mentorship," she says. "They were able to mentor students at St. Frances with the Cree translations, and the spoken word."

For additional support, Macauley coordinated a team of people that included herself and five staff members between both schools. Her project also included poets from the surrounding community, who she recruited as facilitators.

Macauley wanted to find as many Aboriginal facilitators as possible, so she spoke to Lindsay Knight, Kevin Wesaquate and Zoey Roy. "I included Jordan Schultz, and he was amazing ... the kids just gravitated to him," she says.

The key part of the project, which took place over a three and a half month period, culminated with two St. Frances students performing their poems onstage at the Oskayak High School Gala.

"When I read the pieces to the Cree speaking staff at the school, they told me that when the poetry is read in Cree, it's much more powerful," Macauley explains. "And even when I read the Cree parts to

the staff, I could feel the power and the strength of those words."

Macauley adds that she hopes the program's success will continue, and is hoping to do it again next year, refine it and take it further.

"The kids did a wonderful job. Next year, we have to do it again, with tons and tons of Cree," Macauley says. "That is where the magic is going to be, within the Cree. You can get kids to write an essay to convey their knowledge, or you can get kids to write a song to a beat. Spoken word captivates their attention and interests a little more than essays, and you still get the same point across."

The program was a success thanks to the help of a TreatySmarts grant, a unique initiative under the Artsmarts Saskatchewan banner, with funding from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, the Saskatchewan Arts Board and SaskCulture/Saskatchewan Lotteries. Risa Payant, program consultant for arts and learning, Saskatchewan Arts Board explains, "It supports arts curriculum instruction, but it speaks directly to the concept of treaties."

"Desiree is so excited about the work that she's doing with her students," Payant adds. "She's interested in weaving the Cree language through the engagement of her students. It's not something that I've seen happening in other schools around our province."

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Students use the power of the Cree language to give life to the spoken word.

Photos courtesy: Desiree Macauley

PHOTOS BY VERNISY.



Volunteers and staff have a huge role in the success of events such as the Métis Pavilion at Saskatoon's Folkfest.

Check out *Engage* at saskculture.ca to see this and other stories.



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SUM Theatre performs at Culture Days opening ceremonies in Saskatoon.
Photo courtesy: Matt Ramage