

WABUN

Volume Fifteen Issue Two

Sun



INSIDE:

- Founding Chiefs Speak
- 9th Annual Wabun Youth Gathering
- Dakotah Woods Talks Hockey
- Flying Post FN Land Claim

REFLECTIONS



**Shawn
Batise**
Executive
Director

Our 25th Anniversary Celebrations are behind us now with presentations, review and expressions of thanks to all those who have contributed to Wabun Tribal Council over a quarter century. We featured our 25th Anniversary in the last issue of Wabun Sun and as well it was a highlight at our most recent Annual General Meeting in September 2015. In this issue of Wabun Sun you will also see a story on the history of Wabun in the words of two of the founding Chiefs.

I have been with the council for most of the 25 years in my capacity as Executive Director and I have to tell you that the journey has been an amazing and gratifying one. I have been fortunate to work with our Wabun Chiefs over the years as we met many challenges and embarked on developing negotiating strategies that have resulted in much success. Our Chiefs have been visionary, steadfast and brave in moving ahead with consultation and negotiation strategies that have changed our Wabun communities for the better. Our Elders have played a big part in guiding us on this path.

When I drive through our Wabun First Nations today I see better housing, infrastructure, security, medical services and support and most importantly more of our people are going to work and living the Canadian dream. We have not gotten to the point where everything is perfect but we are all on our way in providing more safe, active, supportive and well run communities for our people. The winners of course will be the future

generations who will reap the benefit of all the hard work our Chiefs, Elders, staff and members have dedicated over the years.

In this new year we are full of hope with a new federal Liberal government in place. However, it remains to be seen if our new Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his team can live up to all of the promises made to First Nations. I think that for the most part most of the major promises will have some caveat. I believe that the Liberal government will deliver on funding for First Nations, education commitments and the inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women. Those are all positive steps and a welcome change in comparison to how the Conservative federal government has been dealing with First Nations for more than a decade.

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This change in government might help us to crystallize our position in resource development initiatives. We hope it would lead to First Nations having more of a say on whether or not development occurs on our traditional lands rather than having to work on the premise that no matter what, that development will occur and we are more or less forced to get on board. I would welcome success in First Nations gaining free prior and informed consent in terms of dealing with resource development but I have been involved in politics long enough to know that probably is

not going to happen any time soon.

In looking to the future I believe that with the continued vision and energy of our Wabun Chiefs and the guidance of our Elders we will really bring our First Nations into the 21st Century.

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I see our communities becoming more and more sophisticated at dealing with all kinds of issues and interacting and negotiating with government and private enterprise in resource development. Wabun Tribal Council has always performed on the basis of assisting our communities on all levels and accessing and passing along information, opportunities and the means to make things happen for a better life for our members.

One of our greatest challenges in the future deals with our success in being able to bring back our language and culture so that our people once again can experience the power and awareness of truly knowing who we are. I believe that the key to doing this involves fostering a better connection between our elders and youth. There is some development in education in this area and it is important that we maintain a focus on doing more when it comes to language and culture. Perhaps this will become a major role for the Tribal Council in the years to come. Wouldn't it be great if our children and grandchildren would some day be able to speak to each other in our language? Perhaps we will see that in the developments over the next 25 years.

HEALTH MATTERS

Welcome to 2016 as we here at Wabun Health look towards this year and the next quarter century with optimism and excitement. In 2015, we celebrated Wabun Tribal Council's 25th anniversary and counted our blessings along with all of our milestones and successes. Wabun Health is an important part of our tribal council and we are proud of our reputation as one of the most well run and successful health service providers for First Nation people in the country.

We will be looking to the government for support for our programs and services

With this new year, we also have a change in the federal government with the Liberals winning the recent autumn election. So far, I believe this is a welcome change in that the new Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has made many positive commitments to First Nations. Carolyn Ann Bennett, Canada's newly appointed Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, is well known to many First Nation leaders. She is a doctor and previously held key positions in government and in opposition with health portfolios. I believe she will be supportive of First Nations.

I am very happy that Prime Minister Trudeau appointed such a diverse group of people to his cabinet. Women, ethnic peoples and indeed First Nations individuals have been appointed to key positions by the prime minister including MP Jody Wilson-Raybould as Minister for Justice and Attorney General as

well as Hunter Tootoo as Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard. Canada's new Minister of Health, Dr. Jane Philpott has a lot of experience in advocating for minorities and has really dedicated her life to health care. All this makes me very hopeful for our future in terms of making things better for our First Nations members. We will be looking to the government for support for our programs and services as we plan.

We have laid all of the important groundwork in developing Wabun Health over the years and now we are planning on continuing and expanding our services so that our Wabun members have continued and even better access to first class health services. I am grateful to our Chiefs for their vision, support, and encouragement over the years and to all of our staff at head office and in all of our Wabun communities. With all of the right ingredients in place, we welcome the challenges of the future as we plan for increased services and programming and with a new and supportive federal government in place.

We want to add to our services where possible with additional staff and programming that is community based and easy to access. This is important in all areas of health care and in particular mental health and addictions. We need to do more in this area and we will be looking for the support of the new government as well as the provincial government to assist us in this area.

Wabun Health has also done much in recent years in terms of developing programs for our Elders and young people. We are seeking funding to expand and enhance our programming for our Elders and

**Jean
Lemieux**
Health
Director



youth. Our Elders are vital to our First Nations in terms of guidance as they hold the knowledge and wisdom of the past. They are our link to our language and culture so it is imperative that we help make their lives more comfortable and gratifying as they live out their golden years.

We are striving in exciting times and with the support of our Chiefs and councils, our Wabun Executive, staff and members the future looks very bright.

We also want to make sure that we manage to keep our Elders in touch with our youth so that our young people can benefit from their knowledge and learn about their language and culture. We plan to keep important programming going with our annual Elders Conference and our very successful and well-respected annual Wabun Youth Gathering.

We also have plans to continue with and expand our Men's and Women's Wellness and Anger Management programming, as this is so important to the development of strong and healthy families in our Wabun First Nations. So we have lots of work ahead of us but we are striving in exciting times and with the support of our Chiefs and councils, our Wabun Executive, staff and members the future looks very bright indeed.

Front Cover

Dakotah Woods, a member of Brunswick House First Nation is featured on the cover of Wabun Sun for this issue. Woods is shown in game action playing for the Quebec Remparts of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League (QMJHL). In addition to his hockey success, he is also pursuing his education.

photo courtesy of: Quebec Remparts / Les Remparts De Quebec

Founding Chiefs Recall Past

Wabun Tribal Council was formed in April 1990 through the vision and efforts of Chief Lawrence Naveau, Mattagami First Nation (FN); Chief Barney Batisse, Matachewan FN; Chief Clifford Diamond, Wahgoshig FN; Chief Baptiste Memegoes, Chapleau Ojibwe FN and Chief Joseph Saunders, Brunswick House FN. The council celebrated its 25th Anniversary this past year and highlighted this milestone at its' Annual General Meeting (AGM) in September 2015.

Sadly, only two of the founding Chiefs of Wabun are still with us and they are Past Chief/Elder Barney Batisse and Past Chief/Elder Lawrence Naveau. They were both featured guests at the September AGM and they were thanked for their work in establishing Wabun Tribal Council and for assisting the council over the years. Those Chiefs who have passed were also honoured.

Today Wabun Tribal Council includes the following leaders who act as the Board of Directors for the council: Chief Walter Naveau, Mattagami FN; Chief Alex (Sonny) Batisse, Matachewan FN; Chief Kevin Tangie, Brunswick House FN; Chief Murray Ray, Flying Post FN and Chief Marcia Brown-Martel, Beaverhouse FN.

"We were very happy to be able to feature two of the founding Chiefs of Wabun, Elders Lawrence Naveau and Barney Batisse at our most recent Annual General Meeting. Our founding Chiefs put in place Wabun Tribal Council to produce an organization that could better

represent their First Nations with the proven concept of strength in numbers and that has paid off for all our members," said Shawn Batisse, Executive Director for Wabun.



Founding Chief Baptiste Memegoes, Chapleau Ojibwe First Nation

Elder Barney Batisse, a founding member of Wabun Tribal Council described the formation of the council in the late 1980s as a trying time for First Nations in northeastern Ontario who were seeking representation from non-Native government and First Nation organizations. First Nations in the Timmins area in northeastern Ontario felt under represented by the relatively new Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN), which was formed in 1983 and the more broader Chiefs of Ontario (COO). At the time, the major Native organizations were dealing with Aboriginal issues in more northern reserves and First Nations in northwestern Ontario. During this period government organizations felt more inclined to meet with major Native organizations in northwestern Ontario or in major government centres in southern Ontario.

"We had a saying amongst ourselves back then that we saw the planes flying north and then coming back south over our heads full of Chiefs and government people but no one really paid attention to us down here. We were the southern part of the NAN territory and our communities were fewer and smaller so we were being overlooked by everyone. We had to do something so we got together as a group," said Elder Barney Batisse.

One of the major reasons the Chiefs of northeastern Ontario came together was to deal with the issue of child services. Area First Nations wanted better representation and control over child services and foster care. However, First Nation leaders quickly realized that representation in child services and the creation of a political body would have to become two separate initiatives. The work of child and family services then became an initiative that led to the formation of the Kunuwanimano Child and Family Services, while the political body developed as Wabun Tribal Council.

Elder Barney Batisse explained that the creation of a political body was not an easy task. At first, the Chiefs submitted formal applications for recognition which were refused on the grounds that this was too small an organization.

"When we were ignored, we simply went ahead with our organization and met as a council of Chiefs. One of our first meetings was to write a letter to the government stating who we were and that they could contact us at our new office which we set up without their immediate blessing. We had to knock down some doors to move ahead and we did just that," said Elder Barney Batisse.

The early formation also meant gaining support from Native organizations like NAN and COO.

"We needed recognition from larger organizations in order to gain funding for our own services and programs. I can remember walking into and interrupting NAN meetings in Toronto so that our tribal council could gain recognition. We had to be brave, bold and assertive," explained Elder Barney Batisse.

This early formation of the council was led by leaders such as Chief Lindy Louttit and Chief Clifford Diamond from Wahgoshig FN; Chief Baptiste Memegoes in Chapleau Ojibwe FN; Chief Joe Saunders in Brunswick House FN and Chief Lawrence Naveau in Mattagami FN. They were also originally supported by Aboriginal political leaders such as

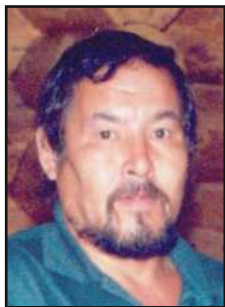


FOUNDING CHIEFS OF WABUN TRIBAL COUNCIL BARNEY BATISE (LEFT) MATACHEWAN FIRST NATION AND ELDER LAWRENCE NAVEAU, MATTAGAMI FIRST NATION WERE HONOURED AT THE RECENT WABUN AGM HELD IN SEPTEMBER 2015.

And Look To The Future

Bill Cachagee of Chapleau Cree FN.

"Baptiste Memegoes was a traditional hunter and trapper who led us with good advice and true wisdom. Joe Saunders was a grassroots leader who always knew what was happening in our communities. From Wahgoshig, Clifford Diamond was a great supporter and a tireless worker for our First Nations and legendary Lindy Louttit was instrumental in forming our early organization. Lawrence Naveau was also a great leader who guided our decisions at every turn. We owe so much to these individuals for what we were able to create for our people," said Elder Barney Batise.



Founding Chief Clifford Diamond, Wahgoshig First Nation

Elder Lawrence Naveau, who was born and raised in his home community of Mattagami FN, entered into First Nation politics at around the same time as a regional council was being considered in the mid 1980s. He described his two year term as Chief of his community in 1989 and 1990 as a difficult time when his First Nation faced debt, a limited administration, few services and little communication with the outside world.

"We needed Wabun to come together so that we could bring more services to our communities and our people. As a coalition of First Nations, it meant we could work together to bring more to our people," said Elder Naveau.

He also wanted to see his community and the other member First Nations have more control over services and programs that affected their memberships as well as gain more representation on issues and concerns that dealt with the land and the environment.

"For many years, we watched other agencies and government people tell us how to use the land or what we could or couldn't do. I wanted to see our people take over those roles because we had a tradition of how to use the land. We needed our communities to have more of say in how to care for Mother Earth," said Elder Naveau.

Both Elder Barney Batise and Elder Naveau agreed that one of the benefits to

come out of the formation of Wabun Tribal Council was a sense of connection, friendship and camaraderie between the First Nations, its leaders and its members. They pointed to services such as the Wabun Sun publication as a positive development that gave Wabun a voice that has spread and preserved the stories, ideas and perspectives of the leaders, Elders and members in Wabun communities.

"Thanks to our Wabun Executive and to Xavier Kataquapit for developing Wabun Sun and through communications linking our members and telling our stories far and wide," commented Elder Barney Batise.

The Council formerly came together in October 1989 and started operations in April 1990. The organization was instrumental in helping its member First Nations in developing more organized and independent administrations, establishing major infrastructure projects, expanding health programs, providing more political representation and in working as a group to represent their First Nations in major mining, forestry and hydro resource development projects within the Wabun territory.

Twenty-five years later, Elders Barney Batise and Lawrence Naveau are hopeful for the future and they want leadership to focus on maintaining their good work while doing their best to care for and support their youth, who will become the next generation of leaders for Wabun. They also agreed that this growth should be balanced with a mindfulness for the

land and Wabun's traditional past.

"We need to keep building a strong voice for our communities through Wabun. We need to help our people but we also need to protect our land. It is not always about what we can get for ourselves, or our individual community but in protecting the land and its animals, so that future generations can enjoy what we have now, just as our ancestors did," said Elder Naveau.



Founding Chief Joseph Saunders, Brunswick House First Nation

The two founders expressed that they were happy with the growth and prosperity of what has been accomplished over 25 years and they are hopeful for the future.

"Everyone at Wabun should be proud of everything they have given to our communities. We all owe a lot of gratitude to our Chiefs and councils, our Executive, Elders and staff at Wabun and in our First Nations. I hope Wabun continues to develop in terms of sustainability, self reliance and growth so that our First Nations and our people can continue to build on our past," said Elder Barney Batise.



CURRENT WABUN CHIEFS FROM L-R ARE CHIEFS MURRAY RAY, FLYING POST FIRST NATION; KEVIN TANGIE, BRUNSWICK HOUSE FN; ANITA STEPHENS, CHAPLEAU OJIBWE FN; MARCIA BROWN-MARTEL, BEAVERHOUSE FN, WALTER NAVEAU, MATTAGAMI FN AND ALEX (SONNY) BATISSE, MATACHEWAN FN.

9th Annual Wabun Youth

Wabun Tribal Council's Health Department held the 9th Annual Wabun Youth Gathering at the Eco Centre Lodge in Elk Lake from July 13 to 24, 2015. Event coordinator was Faye Naveau, Regional Crisis Coordinator and Crisis Intervention Worker for Wabun Health Services.

Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Harvey Yesno attended the gathering July 23 as guest speaker.

Wabun leaders, Chief Walter Naveau of Mattagami FN, Chief Kevin Tangie of Brunswick House FN and Chief Marcia Brown-Martel of Beaverhouse FN shared their own personal stories and life experiences with Wabun Youth.

"No one knows where their path will take them, as young people, I encourage you to listen to those Elders and teachers who are providing you with traditional and cultural awareness. Take those tools and skills that they are passing on to you and use them to make good decisions for your future," said Chief Naveau.

Chief Tangie spoke to the Wabun Youth about bringing back the spirit of community to all the Wabun First Nations.

"I remember as a boy that my grandmother was a big part of my life and the Elders in the community were very helpful to all of the children. We have drifted away from that sense of community and now with traditional teachings and culture, we are finding our way back. Things are getting better for our young people," explained Chief



WABUN YOUTH GATHERING JUNIOR WEEK PARTICIPANTS ENJOYED TRADITIONAL AND CULTURAL WORKSHOPS. THE JUNIOR WEEK RAN FROM JULY 13 TO 17, 2015.

Tangie.

Chief Brown-Martel was on hand for the duration of the gathering and worked closely with the youth as a chaperon.

The event was divided into two parts. The first week of events featured facilitators Craig Fox and his partner G'Wemin Migwans of Wikwemikong First Nation, traditional teachers and dancers who instructed the male and female youth on shield making, clay pottery and medicine pouches. They also led the junior youth in a mini Pow Wow. The Big Bear Claw Singers of Brunswick House First Nation performed at the junior week mini Pow Wow. Native storytellers Roger Jacklin and Lizz Brinootch of Magnetawan also entertained and educated the children.

The senior week featured a series of workshops by Running Thunder Native Traditional dancers and teachers from Edmonton, Alberta. The performers included group leader Adrian Lachance, dancers Marcus Pahtayken, Waniya Cardinal and Danielle Bird as well as their group Elder Russel Ouanger. Medicine Man and healer Ralph King of Rama First Nation led medicine walks for both the junior and senior groups.

The senior group Pow Wow was led by the White Stone Cree Singers of Timmins, which included singers Nathan Naveau and Mark Carpenter. They were also supported by Male Elder Dancer George Rose and the Four Eagle Whistle Women Singers of Timmins, which included Sarah Rodrique, Shaylan Sutherland, April



WABUN JUNIOR YOUTH TOOK PART IN SEVERAL WORKSHOPS AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES. PICTURED (L-R) ARE MATACHEWAN FN MEMBERS, QUINTON BATISE AND CALVIN COLLINS.



WABUN CHIEFS SPOKE TO YOUTH FROM THEIR RESPECTIVE COMMUNITIES. FROM L-R ARE: CHIEF KEVIN TANGIE, BRUNSWICK HOUSE FN; CATHY NAVEAU, EDUCATION DIRECTOR, MATTAGAMI FN; CHIEF WALTER NAVEAU, MATTAGAMI FN AND CHIEF MARCIA BROWN-MARTEL, BEAVERHOUSE FN.

Gathering Held July 2015

Atlookan, Holly Buffalo-Rodrique and Sharley Rodrique.

Jeremy Naveau, an 18-year-old member of Brunswick House FN, pointed out that one of the best things about the gathering was the opportunity to renew friendships with other youth from the Wabun territory.

"Every year I find I learn more about Native traditions and culture and that helps me with my life in the choices I make. I enjoyed the skits and role playing," commented Jeremy Naveau.

Quinton Batise, an 11-year-old Matachewan FN member participated in the junior week.

"This is my first time at the gathering and I had a lot of fun, learned things and met many new friends from other communities. I thank the Creator and everyone who gives us this gathering," commented Batise.

Elders Vina Hendrix, of Matachewan FN and Morris Naveau of Mattagami FN, assisted Wabun Youth and led opening and closing prayers.

Wabun Health Director Jean Lemieux congratulated Wabun Youth for making the ninth annual gathering a reality.

"I want to point out that this gathering is about helping our youth make good choices I look at all the young people here today and I want them to know that they are our leaders of tomorrow. We want them to take our



WABUN YOUTH GATHERING SENIOR WEEK FEATURED A POW WOW AND WORKSHOPS. SENIOR WEEK RAN FROM JULY 20 TO 24, 2015

jobs, fill our shoes, and keep the circle strong. I offer up my thanks to NAN Grand Chief Harvey Yesno, the Chiefs of Wabun, our Elders, our Executive Director Shawn Batise and to our event coordinator Faye Naveau for making

this year's event a success," said Lemieux.

The Wabun Youth Gathering came out of the vision and guidance of the late Elder Thomas Saunders, Brunswick House First Nation.

**For more information visit:
www.wabunyouthgathering.com**

Wabun Youth Gathering 2016 Announcement

Wabun Health Services is announcing some changes for the Tenth Annual Wabun Youth Gathering set for the summer of 2016. Under the direction of the Wabun Chiefs desire to bring more emphasis on land based traditional and cultural content to the gathering it was decided to move the event to a more rustic, natural setting at Horwood Lake Lodge off of highway 101 west of Timmins.

To support the Wabun Youth Gathering, Horwood Lake Lodge is developing a fishing tournament as a fundraiser to assist with ongoing funding. This tournament will be held the second weekend of August 2016. For more information on the tournament, go to www.horwood-lakelodge.com

"We are excited about the changes in our venue and we are im-

pressed with all of the good work and preparation Mike Brazeau and his family are doing in hosting the Wabun Youth Gathering. He has purchased some major items to make the event better serve us and will feature a very large wigwam that can be used as an activity in art with painting by our youth," explained event coordinator Faye Naveau, Regional Crisis Coordinator and Crisis Intervention Worker, Wabun Health.

There will be boats available for fishing and general use and as well, the resort has all terrain vehicles and pontoon boats for selected use. Wigwams will provide locations for activities and crafts and there are some good ideas for rock paintings. Brazeau also has other ideas for fundraising for the event, which includes clay pots or alternative heaters.



MARCUS PAHTAYKEN, DANCER OF THE RUNNING THUNDER NATIVE TRADITIONAL DANCERS FROM EDMONTON, ALBERTA.

Dakotah Woods Living The Dream

Dakotah Woods, a member of Brunswick House First Nation, has become a positive role model for the Aboriginal community by achieving the ranks of semi professional hockey with the Quebec Remparts.

Woods signed on with the Remparts in December 2015 and stepped into semi professional hockey as a player in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League (QMJHL). The QMJHL, together with the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) and the Western Hockey League (WHL) form the Canadian Hockey League (CHL) where almost half the players from all three leagues move on to the National Hockey League (NHL).



DAKOTAH WOODS, NUMBER 66, PLAYING DEFENCE FOR THE QUEBEC REMPARTS.

“Playing my first major game for a team like the Remparts was an amazing experience and something that every kid dreams of. As an Aboriginal person and someone from a small northern community this has been an exciting and unbelievable journey,” explained Woods, who plays defence.

Originally from Brunswick House First Nation, he grew up and played hockey as a child in the town of Chapleau next to his home community. He started ice sports at the age of three and over the next few years, he quickly excelled in each level he entered. His parents Gord and Isabelle Woods, noticed his potential for hockey and when Dakotah was nine, they moved their family to North Bay to give him access to more opportunities in the

sport.

Dakotah's mother Isabelle Woods, explained that it was also a chance for her to continue her training and education in the medical field.

“I feel that Dakotah and I went on a journey together with the family to North Bay to further our opportunities and to live our dreams. He was excelling in hockey and I was also doing my best to complete my training and education in nursing. He was always a dedicated individual and it was never hard to get him to those early morning games, through long days of training or enduring late night road trips. He has worked very hard for what he has achieved and knowing that makes us all very proud of his accomplishments,” said Isabelle Woods.

She and her husband Gord Woods have been keeping a record of Dakotah's accomplishments with a journal of articles, stories, papers and pictures. In North Bay, Dakotah quickly moved from Atom level to Pee wee AAA then onto Bantam and Minor Midget leagues for teams in Sudbury. He moved on again to Major Junior A hockey with the Elliott Lake Wildcats. At the same time, for two consecutive summers, he was selected to take part in the Aboriginal 'Hit The Ice' Program, a professional hockey training camp and reality television show that is aired on the Aboriginal People's Television Network (APTN). In 2015, he played several exhibition games in the OHL with the Oshawa Generals before moving on to Quebec City to sign a three year deal with the Remparts.

“We are so proud of what Dakotah has accomplished these past few years. There have been plenty of sacrifices on his part and for our family as well but we are grateful for the success he has achieved. I have so much pride in his hockey career but I am also happy to have watched him grow from a dedicated

boy in hockey to the mature independent man that he has become,” said Gord Woods.

Grandparents Carol and Jack Byce have also watched Dakotah's growth and are proud of his hockey career. Over the past few years, Gord Woods spent plenty of long hours and countless miles on the road with his son to attend games, training programs and events throughout Ontario, as far south to Sarnia and including Ottawa and Thunder Bay.



SUCCESS IN HOCKEY AND EDUCATION ARE GOALS OF 18 YEAR OLD DAKOTAH WOODS.

Gord Woods commented that for the past several years, Dakotah has also made plenty of sacrifices with his free time which was dedicated to hockey, physical training and travel. Dakotah now regularly spends the majority of his time in training to stay in top physical condition. He is also continuing his education through a correspondence program to make time for his daily routine of on ice training, strength building in the gym and plenty of rest.

“It takes a lot of work to get to a high level of hockey. I have to keep up my training throughout the year and it also includes maintaining a healthy lifestyle with proper diet, having plenty of rest and in managing time and stress. I had to learn to manage my time to the optimum

so that I could balance my playing, training, education and still have a good and positive quality of life,” explained Dakotah Woods.

His family went to visit him in Quebec City where he now resides, to celebrate his 18th birthday this January. He stays in constant touch with his family in Ontario including his older sister Cedar, who recently completed her secondary school education and his younger brother Hunter, who is following in his brothers footsteps and is involved in the Little Native Hockey League in northern Ontario.

In terms of his education, Dakotah Woods makes his studies a priority during his regular schedule and hopes to some day follow in his mother's path and develop a career in the medical field. He wants to give other young Aboriginal people the message he learned from his family that hard work and dedication to sports is important but that education should also be prominent.

“I make myself available to speak to other young people, especially in First Nation communities. I want to share the same teachings I learned from others along my path, that no matter where you are from or what walk of life, if you work hard, keep focused, make good choices and don't allow others to bring you down, anything is possible. It is also at times necessary to make sacrifices to achieve your goals and that means choosing your friends well and being aware of the danger or pitfalls of drugs and alcohol,” commented Dakotah Woods.



FAMILY SUPPORT HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT PART OF DAKOTAH WOODS' SUCCESS IN HOCKEY. PICTURED FROM L-R: HUNTER, DAKOTAH, HIS MOTHER ISABELLE, CEDAR SKY AND HIS FATHER GORDON. THEY ARE PICTURED HERE DURING ISABELLE'S GRADUATION OF A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE NURSING PROGRAM FROM NIPISSING UNIVERSITY.

He has a strong connection to his community and its history. His mother Isabelle Woods is the daughter of legendary Chief Joe Saunders and Chief Francis Saunders. Both of Dakotah's grandparents were instrumental in creating positive developments for their community and Chief Joe Saunders was also a founding member of the Wabun Tribal Council, a regional organization that represents six First Nations in northern Ontario.

Dakotah Woods explained that he has a long list of people to thank but those that come to mind included: Chief Kevin Tangie, Council and the community of Brunswick House FN; Wabun Tribal Council, Chief Dave Babin and the community of Wahgoshig FN; his player representative Adrian Gedy; his many trainers and coaches including John Chabot, Bruce Caza-

bonne and Matt Blanchard; Nancy and Gerald St. Onge, Mike and Marney Mooney and all the friends, relatives and supporters who have encouraged him over the years.

“My biggest thanks are to my parents for everything they've done for me and to my sister Cedar and my younger brother Hunter, for all their support. There have been so many people who have helped me on my path and I wish I could list them all but that would take a book,” said Dakotah.

During the off season of hockey, mainly from June to August, Dakotah Woods makes himself available to speak to First Nation youth at public events in workshops or motivational speaking.

He can be contacted directly on facebook at

dakotah.woods

Information Shared At Elders Gathering



WABUN HEALTH SERVICES ELDERS GATHERING TOOK PLACE ON OCTOBER 29, 2015. IT FEATURED WORKSHOPS AND INFORMATION SESSIONS ON VARIOUS HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND PROGRAMS. PICTURED IS CINDY GIGUERE, WABUN HEALTH NURSE IN MATACHEWAN FIRST NATION, SPEAKING TO ELDERS.

Flying Post FN Lobbying Federal Government For Land Claim

Flying Post First Nation leadership led by Chief Murray Ray and his Council is continuing to negotiate with governments to formally establish their First Nation lands.

Chief Ray explained that Flying Post is looking towards developing a part of their First Nation lands near the City of Timmins in the hopes of creating an industrial park that could provide business opportunities for his community, Wabun First Nations, the City of Timmins and other First Nations entities and organizations.

"We want to use a portion of our lands to create an industrial and business park next to the City of Timmins as an economic opportunity that could benefit everyone. This could provide an incentive to the mining sector to do business with our First Nation as well as other Wabun communities and area First Nations. It could also provide positive growth to the city as it would create more business opportunities," said Chief Ray.

The First Nation has been actively seeking their land claim since 2010 and have had some success in dealing with government. Chief Ray explained that the Ontario government has supported their claim but they have been blocked in the past by the federal government.

"Our community has never had a formal land base since our people signed onto the treaty over a hundred years ago. We are hopeful that the new Liberal government will be more supportive for our land claim," said Chief Ray.

The First Nation is also wanting to add to their established land base since the original band members were not fully accounted for during the original signing. The original land base was based on the size of the population of people at the time of signing. Flying Post First Nation leaders have stated that there were unaccounted members at the time of that signing so the true population was not represented and that there was a short fall in the size of First Nation lands granted.

Chief Ray explained that due to the small size of their office, they have staff with numerous other responsibilities who are working on this land claim including Ryan Ray, Lands and Resources Coordinator and Angie McLeod, Economic Development Officer (EDO). The First Nation is also supported in their efforts by the Chiefs of the Wabun Tribal



Chief Murray Ray,
Flying Post
First Nation

Council and by Executive Director Shawn Batise.

Flying Post First Nation, an original signatory of the Treaty Nine document which was established with the Canadian government in 1906, currently does not have an official land base for its membership. Although land was set aside for them in the original treaty a community was never established.

The Flying Post First Nation lands originally set aside are currently located in an undeveloped, inaccessible swampy area of the Groundhog River near Timmins. After signing Treaty 9 in 1906, the founding members of Flying Post FN discovered the treaty lands they were given were in a poor location and did not find it favourable to their livelihood. Due to the nomadic lifestyle of the people at the time, these members instead went to live in other parts of their traditional territories in northern Ontario so that they could provide for their families and survive.

In the 1960s, the original members of Flying Post First Nation organized themselves again into a First Nation

group and came together in Nipigon, Ontario where the majority of their membership had located. For many years they were part of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN) territory as an independent First Nation but in 2007, they joined with Wabun Tribal Council to work alongside their member First Nations in northeastern Ontario where their original land base is located.

"We have always had our right to a land base according to the treaty my ancestors signed however things were not done properly and our members were very much left with a situation that simply could not work for us. Through our work as part of the Wabun Tribal Council we are looking forward to righting a long standing wrong and establishing a land base that is not only good for our membership but also presents benefits to First Nation peoples on the whole and the City of Timmins as well as the private sector," explained Chief Ray.

Wabun Tribal Council Executive Director Shawn Batise noted that Flying Post First Nation is an historic example of how the treaty process was unfair and inaccurate to many First Nations

"We are at a juncture in time and history where our Federal Liberal Government can resolve a longstanding injustice that will not only benefit Flying Post First Nation but is also good for business and development for other area First Nations, the city of Timmins and private sector initiatives," commented Batise.

Health Care Workers Retreat



WABUN HEALTH SERVICES HOSTED A HEALTH CARE WORKERS RETREAT OVER THREE DAYS IN OCTOBER 2015 TO BRING TOGETHER WABUN HEALTH CARE STAFF FOR TEAM BUILDING, INFORMATION SHARING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

LaBelle New Mineral Development Advisor

Stephanie LaBelle, Mineral Development Advisor for Wabun Tribal Council is the featured Wabun staff member for this edition of Wabun Sun. She started her position with Wabun in July 2015.

As Mineral Development Advisor, LaBelle is primarily responsible for acting as a liaison between Wabun First Nations, government, and industry for mining exploration and development. The Mineral Development Advisor position was created to act as the first point of contact for government and mining exploration stakeholders who want to work in the Wabun territory.

"My primary goal is to ensure that everything is consistent and organized, and that engagement and communication protocols are being respected by government and industry. There are many mineral exploration projects in the Wabun territory that all our communities need to stay on top of. I try and do my best at making sure our approach is coordinated, that the Wabun communities are represented, and that we all remain engaged with the necessary government entities, like the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, as well as key industry people," said LaBelle.

She stays in regular contact with each of Wabun's First Nations through their respective Lands and Resources Departments in a co-



Stephanie LaBelle,
Mineral Development Advisor

ordinated effort to keep each community involved in potential and existing mineral exploration and development projects. LaBelle visits the Wabun communities on a regular basis to work directly with the Lands and Resources Coordinator, as well as coordinates site-visits with community representatives, Knowledge-Holders, and Elders to monitor projects in the Wabun territory.

LaBelle explained that her work involves primarily the activity that happens prior to a project becoming an operating mine.

"This is a very exciting job, every day is different and brings unique challenges and opportunities, and I am learning a lot from the staff at Wabun and in our communities," said LaBelle.

Before coming to Wabun, she worked for a short time as consultant for Dumas Mining, where she held an advisory and research role to assist with the development of

meaningful relationships with First Nation communities throughout Canada.

In May 2015, she graduated with a Masters in Arts and Native Studies from the University of Manitoba, where she did research on the role and contribution of First Nation women to negotiations with mining companies. She has also completed a four year Bachelor of Arts in History and Public Administration from the University of Ottawa.

She enjoys the challenges that her position offers and the ability to work with the Lands and Resources Coordinators, as well as with government and mining companies. In the past decade, Wabun communities have come a long way in dealing with resource development projects. At present time, there are over 40 exploration agreements for projects in the Wabun territory. LaBelle explained that she is looking forward to further assisting Wabun First Nations in developing capacity to respond to future growth and activity in the industry.

At 25 years of age, she has travelled to various locations for school and work but calls North Bay her home. She has a French Canadian background and in her spare time, she enjoys cooking and seasonal outdoor activities.

Anger Solutions Program Held In Beaverhouse FN



Faye Naveau,
Regional Crisis Coordinator /
Crisis Intervention Worker

Wabun runs an Anger Solutions Program every year. Faye Naveau, Wabun's Regional Crisis Coordinator and Crisis Intervention Worker is directing an Anger Solutions Program titled Emotion Commotion in Kirkland Lake at the Beaverhouse First Nation Band Office. She along with the assistance of Jaime Hennessey,

Crisis Worker for Beaverhouse FN are heading up eight sessions starting at the end of January and looking at completion by the middle of March.

The workshop series is for people who are struggling with anger issues and designed to help people in terms of raising their self-esteem and learning how to work through their anger issues.

"I will be using visual aids to give people a better set of tools to deal with negative emotions. The ideas from these workshops show people how to deal with strong emotions and show them how to communicate their feelings with others," explained Naveau.

She pointed out that the workshop will give people the skills and tools they need to deal with emotions and

be better able to sort through what they are feeling and find words to describe how they are feeling. Naveau believes that these workshops are important for assisting people as anger is one of those issues that limit people from being the best they can be and to go forward to live a better life.

Although this series of workshops was put in place for Beaverhouse FN members, Naveau explained that there is flexibility in participation.

"I am grateful to have received training for this workshop and I am very excited to be using the knowledge and skills I have learned to assist our members. Of course it is a learning situation for me as well, as that is part of the process," said Naveau.

Brooke Minarik Joins Wabun Health



Brooke Minarik,
Non-Wabun
Health Clerk

Brooke Minarik, non-Wabun Health Clerk, is the featured Wabun Health Staff person for this edition of Wabun Sun. She started her position in June 2015.

As part of the Wabun Health Care team, her main role is to assist non-Wabun First Nation individuals in accessing medical transportation. She mainly assists individuals in the north from First Nations mainly from the James Bay coast, although she provides help to people from

any First Nation that is not affiliated with Wabun.

She works with clients in submitting applications to Health Canada to access the medical transportation program, which allows them to travel away from their homes to hospital and medical facilities in other cities and towns.

"I enjoy working here at Wabun. It is a close knit family of people here and they have all been very helpful in my new position," said Minarik.

She explained that education is an important step for anyone especially for young people and that more opportunities for growth and development should be provided to youth from First Nation schools.

"We can really help our young people by preparing them more for the non-Native culture when they

come from our First Nation schools. It can be difficult to transition from our school system to one outside our home community and it would help our youth a lot if we gave them more of an opportunity to prepare for the outside world," said Minarik.

In her experience and professional development, she attended an Office Administration program at Northern College in Timmins.

Before joining Wabun, Minarik was the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Worker for Mattagami First Nation at the Mary Jane Naveau Memorial School. She assisted education staff and students in maintaining and operating much of the school's digital devices.

At 21 years of age, she is originally from and a member of Mattagami First Nation.

Mattagami FN Youth Workshop



WABUN HEALTH SERVICES PRESENTED A YOUTH WORKSHOP AT MATTAGAMI FIRST NATION, NOVEMBER 25, 2015. THE EVENT WAS RUN BY FAYE NAVEAU, REGIONAL CRISIS COORDINATOR / INTERVENTION WORKER AND DARLENE NAVEAU, COMMUNITY WELLNESS WORKER, MATTAGAMI FN. PICTURED ARE MATTAGAMI YOUTH PARTICIPANTS AND EVENT ORGANIZERS.



Wabun Sun

Publishing Editor: Shawn Batise
Editors: Xavier Kataquapit /
Mike McGrath /

Wabun Tribal Council

313 Railway Street
Timmins, Ontario P4N 2P4
Ph. 705-268-9066
Fx. 705-268-8554
www.wabun.on.ca
www.wabunsun.com