

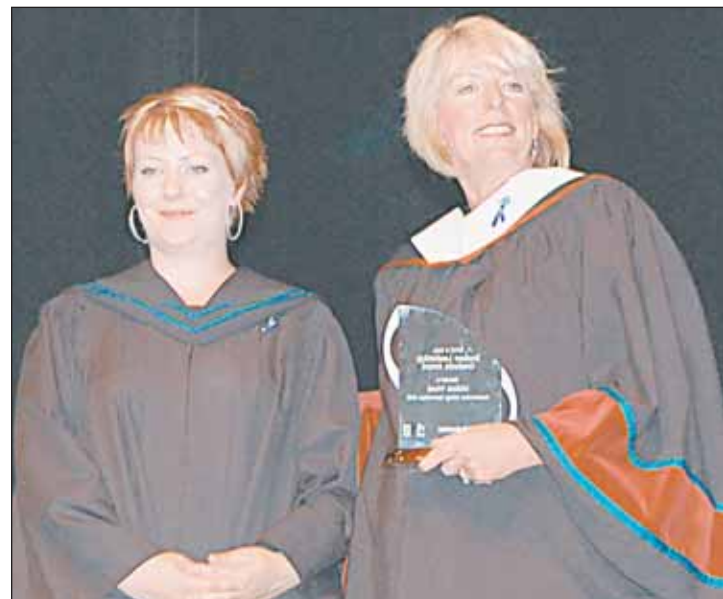
The Westend Weekly

Bringing Communities Together



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2009 Convocation at Con College



On the left, Graduate, Melissa Wood receiving SUCCI/OASA Student Award from Judi Maundrell, Vice-President of Academic & Student Services.

by Marlene Deschamps

Friends and family gathered at the Rainy River District Campus of Confederation College to watch as a record 48 students accepted their diplomas and certificates during the Convocation 2009 ceremony.

"It is an honour to recognize the accomplishments of our graduates. Today we acknowledge their next steps towards a bright and thriving future in their lives and in their careers," says Confederation College President, Patricia Lang.

The Student Union of Confederation College Inc. and Oshki-Anishnawbeg Student Association (SUCCI/OASA) awarded Melissa Wood the second Student Leadership Graduate Award. Vice-President of Academic & Student Services, Judi Maundrell, presented Melissa with the prestigious award. It is presented to a student who demonstrates exceptional leadership skills, is a positive role model and has effected change with integrity, compassion and understanding. Facing many obstacles Melissa Wood took them as a challenge and made the choice to change her direction in life and pursue a Confederation College education. In the fall of 2007, she completed the General Educational Development (GED) course to then enroll in the Business Accounting program. She immediately became involved in the Student Union, and was elected President of the Rainy River District Campus (SUCCI). She did well academically, juggling her role as a mother, a student and SUCCI president. In her first year as president, she made positive changes to the local student union making it a much more integral part of student lives. Melissa worked at the campus as a summer student and was instrumental in helping develop four executive paid positions at each of the Regional Campuses. She believed that if the executive was paid, there would be more accountability and more could get done. As a direct result of her leadership and entrepreneurial spirit many student activities were very popular and will be repeated in future years. Her ability to organize, her entrepreneurial spirit, and her enthusiasm helped make these events successful. "We are proud to have Melissa Wood, a student in our Rainy River Campus receive this award and be recognized for her tireless efforts," said Anne Renaud. "Our students work hard each and every day to be successful and this acknowl-

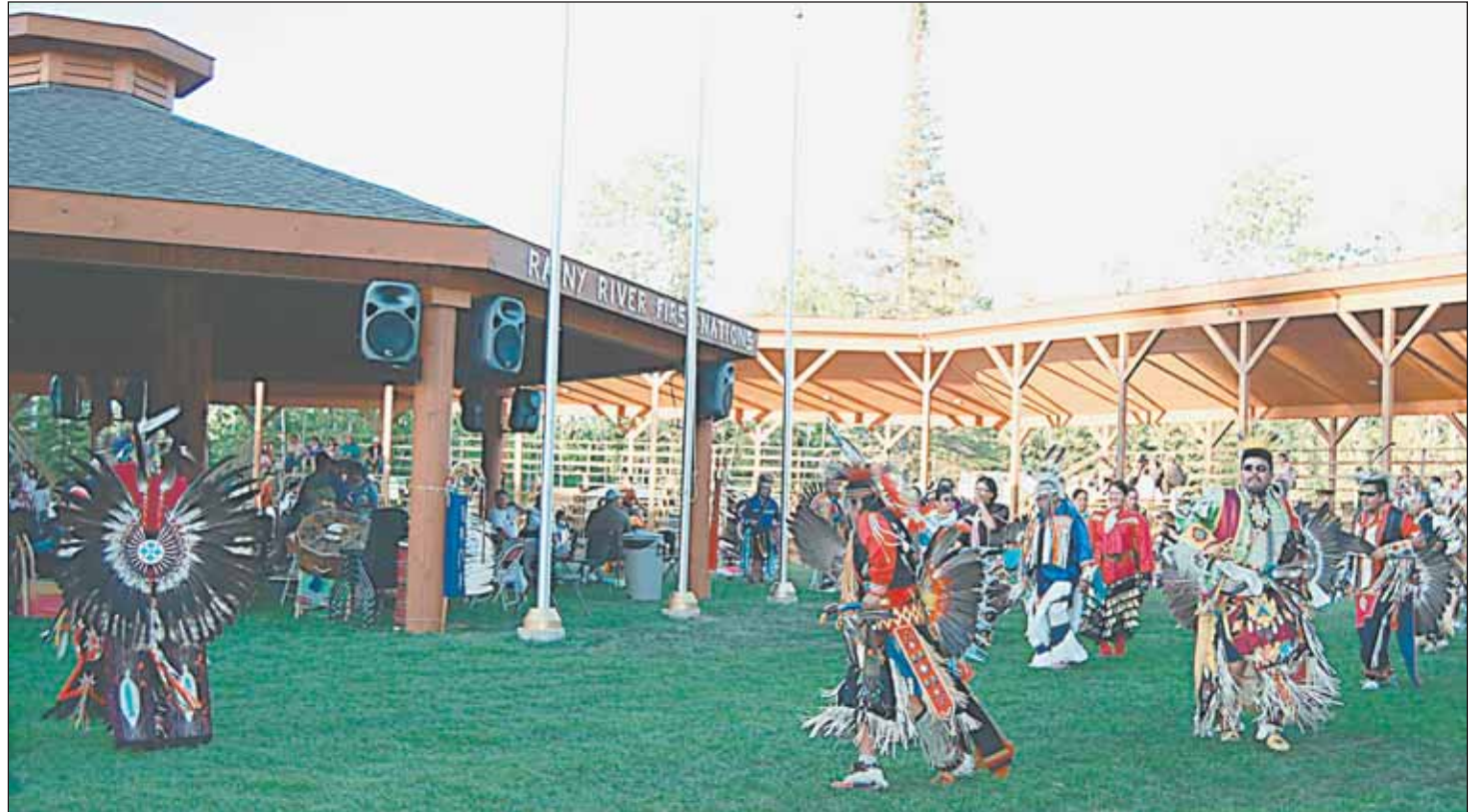
edges all of their strength and determination." Early in her second year, she approached Confederation to offer the 3rd year of the Business Administration-Accounting Program in the region. As a result of her research and collaboration with the college the region will be offering the third year, for the first time. Again, Melissa demonstrated her leadership, her persistence and her ability to influence positive change at the College. Melissa graduated from the two year Business Accounting program and this is the first time the Student Leadership Graduate Award has been given to a student attending Confederation College at one of the regional campuses associated with Confederation College.

Another accomplishment highlighted at the convocation was celebration of the first four year regional Bachelor of Science in Nursing graduating class. The pilot project graduated 20 regional students of which five are from the Rainy River Campus who were on hand to receive their degrees.

Jennifer Sheppard, a graduate of Early Childhood Education received the Campus Award of Excellence. This award is presented to one student at each regional campus with the highest grade point average. Jennifer graduated with a 4.0 GPA.

The Townshend Theatre was filled with proud parents, spouses and children as many of the graduates are mothers who worked very hard to combine two and sometimes three roles in order to make a better life for themselves and their families. Judging by the number of camera flashes one could see during the ceremony one would think this was an important movie premier. In many ways it is much more important than a movie premier and the diplomas and degrees the graduates received are more important than temporary acknowledgement one receives from the opening of a new movie- this night was the opening of a whole world of possibilities now available because of their hard work. Most of the students one talked to after the convocation all said this night was possible because of all the support they received from their families and their partners and even in many cases, their children. The students also acknowledged their professors and teachers and said they couldn't have made it without them. Refreshments and dainties were provided in the cafeteria after the ceremony.

Rainy River First Nations Powwow draws dancers from all over North America



Rainy River First Nations Senior Princess, Sheena DeBungee. Sheena made her own beautiful red jingle dress.

by Marlene Deschamps

The Rainy River First Nations held their annual Powwow at their beautiful new grounds. There was a ceremony held on Tuesday, June 16th to open the new grounds.

The Powwow was also held to honour the jingle dress. The Mille Lacs band from the Minnesota Reserve presented four jingle dresses to the Rainy River First Nations. On hand at the presentation were: Rainy River First Nations Chief, Jim Leonard; Elder Willie Wilson; Elder Annie Wilson and Rainy River Director of Family Services, Jim Cardy. Mille Lacs Band dignitaries who travelled to present the dresses were: Mille Lacs Band District 1 Representative Sandra Blake; Elder Panjl Gahbow; Elder Clara Jackson; Elder Amik and Band employee Sylvia

Villebrun. The jingle dresses were born out of a dream and are associated with healing. They come in four colors; yellow for the morning; red for noon; green for the afternoon and blue for the night. The four ladies chosen to wear the dresses were presented and honoured at the powwow after the grand entry, flag dance and veterans dance. They are beautiful and many chose to wear jingle dresses during the two days of festivities.

The new grounds are a dream that finally came true thanks to the hard work of many. During the powwow an honour dance took place for those involved in the planning and construction of the new facility. It is indeed a beautiful set up and as one visitor from another First Nations Community said "How is anyone going to top this. I have been all over both countries and have never seen a better powwow grounds than this." During Saturday evening's event, Chief Jim Leonard explained that the facility stands and centre portion all had seven sides and there were seven rows of seating in the bleachers. The number seven represented the 7 reserves amalgamated into the Rainy River First Nations in 1915. According to Elder, Willie Wilson, the Ojibwa Nation is the largest First Nations in our country. Willie is a wealth of information and also related how their Senior Princess made her own jingle dress, which as the picture shows, she did a beautiful job. Willie also shared that he and his wife Carol had a young woman visiting from Germany who was given a jingle dress as a gift. She not only wore it, but danced with the other women dancers throughout the day.

There were 250 dancers who participated in this year's Powwow and over 30 drum groups. They came from South Carolina, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Minnesota and from all over Ontario, including many from the local area.

Junior Royalty who were introduced to the crowds attending were: Mini Princess (1-6 yrs old) Andie Faye Hunter; Jr. Princess (7-12 years old) Destiny Sadwassa; Sr. Princess (13-18 years old) Sheena DeBungee; Mini Brave (1-6 yrs old) Ethan Cochrane and Jr. Brave (7-12 yrs old) Kristian Windego.

There was also a little compe-

dition with breakfast this year. Saturday morning belonged to the women of the community and Sunday belonged to the men. They were looking at who would be the next great chef. Although the winner's names haven't been revealed yet, it was passed on that the men must have won because, after all, they were working and cooking on Father's Day.

Rainy River First Nations has a Welcome to the Community sign posted along the highway. They really live up to that welcome when they host such events as the annual fish fry and their annual Powwow. All that's left to mention is "Thank you very much for the invite and the great time everyone had."



Ashton Bombay was one of the younger participants.

Legion Auxiliary VP gets big promotion

by Marlene Deschamps

Alfreda Easton, 1st Vice-President of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch #29 Ladies Auxiliary, was recently elected President of Ladies Auxiliary to the Royal Canadian Legion, Manitoba/Northwestern Ontario Council. The election took place during the 44th bi-annual convention held in Winnipeg on Tuesday, June 16th.

Alfreda has been in the

Legion Ladies Auxiliary for over 40 years. She was Deputy Commander for 2 years and District Commander for 7 years. Everyone in the Auxiliary are very pleased and proud that one of our own has been elected to this prestigious position. She will be attending functions throughout the district and in the rest of Northwestern Ontario and Manitoba during her tenure as president. Congratulations Alfreda.

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274-6688



Holly Penney
274-6688



Pam Buttner
274-6688



Martin Dufresne
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