

The Westend Weekly

Bringing Communities Together



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Ontario Aboriginal Minister Bentley meets with Native Youth



Minister Bentley surrounded by Ontario Aboriginal Youth.

By Marlene Deschamps

During the 36th All Ontario Chiefs Conference, Ontario Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Minister Bentley, met with Ontario Aboriginal Youth for a separate session. Several youth representing different areas of the province had the chance to voice their concerns and ask

questions of the Minister without the presence of media or Chiefs. Following the session one of the youths said the session went okay but they really didn't receive any answers. The focus for them was education and one lad said Mr. Bentley didn't have any firm answers,

but at least he did listen to their questions.

The youth were very present at the three day conference and appeared to be very interested in the topics being discussed by their leaders. Many seemed to be pleased to be included and pleased to be listened to.

Record 61 Confederation College graduates



Award winners, from left, Barbara Kwansnicia, Patsy Roy, Kyleigh Ossachuk, Patricia Smith, Dawn Pastuck, Marcia Broughton, Amanda Jourdain.

By Marlene Deschamps

On June 22nd, Confederation College held their Convocation Ceremony. This 2010 ceremony saw 61 graduates which is a record number.

The audience rose as the procession entered the auditorium at Townshend Theatre. The pianist was Christina Sletmoen who also lead the singing of O Canada. The Master of Ceremonies was Anne Renaud, Director Rainy River District Campus. She introduced the platform party. Mayor Roy Avis gave greetings from the Town of Fort Frances. Patricia Lang, President, opened the convocation. There was a musical selection by Christina Sletmoen prior to the awarding of diplomas and certificates. The presentation was done by President Lang with the assistance of Judi Maundrell, Vice President Academic, Don Bernosky, Executive Director, Innovation and Skills Development and Marjorie Kinnunen, Registrar.

Following the conferring of diplomas and certificates was the presentation of awards. The following are the winners of those awards: Amanda

Jourdain-Award of Excellence Native Child and Family Services; Marcia Broughton-Award of Excellence Paramedic-Highest Academic Standing at Fort Frances Campus; Dawn Pastuck-Award of Excellence in Social Service Work; Patricia Smith-Highest Achievement College Access Award; Kyleigh Ossachuk-Academic Award of Excellence, Pre-Health Science; Patsy Roy-Award of Excellence Personal Support Worker and Barbara Kwansnicia-President's Award, Governor General Medal, Derek and Joan Burney Award, Academic Social Service Program Distant Education Award.

Barbara Kwansnicia who was loaded down with awards at the end of the evening is a model of what distant education means to people who want to further their education and don't have access to a nearby campus or are unable to attend on a full time basis. Barbara works at Atikokan General Hospital Supportive Housing, Community Living, Rainy River District and House of Hope. Despite the number of

jobs and volunteer work she does she managed to get all the diplomas she needed to be assessed for an undergraduate Paramedic-Highest Academic Standing at Fort Frances Campus. Barbara is a student that manages jobs, a family, is a mature student and still managed to not only get further along in her education but excel at it. She said she is proof that is you work hard enough and want something bad enough you can find a way to do it. She credits distant education for allowing her to pursue her dream and thinks nobody should put an age or time limit on what they can do.

The number of graduates in the various programs offered by Confederation College proves you can finish all or most of your post graduate education right here in your own district. Hats off to the graduates and hats off to the College and their staff who have made all this possible. The College will be offering courses and programs for children over the summer. You can contact their offices to see what they have to offer.

Please note that The Westend Weekly will be closed for 2 weeks holiday July 1 thru July 14. Our next paper will be July 21.

Fort Frances Relay for Life raises over \$54,000



By Marlene Deschamps

Twelve year old cancer survivor, Madisyn DeGagne, addressed all those gathered to kick off the annual Relay for Life which was held at the Fort High grounds this year. She gave an overview of her battle against cancer and how with the skill of doctors and all the support from her family, she is now making the survivors lap and then leading a team "Pink Attitude: Second Generation" for the night long relay. At age 8, Madisyn DeGagne was diagnosed and had life saving surgery. During that time, family members managed to bring to Fort Frances one of Madisyn's hockey heroes, Cheryl Pounder, a gold medal winner with Canada's women's hockey team spoke at various schools throughout the area, including Madisyn's school, St. Michael's. She had a chance to hear the presentation and have her picture taken with her heroine. Today she is a bright articulate young lady who is helping others fight cancer. Her friends and family took part over these past years and named themselves "Pink Attitude". This year the teams offspring took over

and not only did they do the name proud, they also won the top decorated campsite and Madisyn was the top fundraiser at around \$2,500. She led off the survivors lap by first releasing a couple of dozen of blue

and yellow balloons that floated up into the air as the group started their lap. The walkers were cheered on with applause during their lap.

There were many teams on hand that were really into the theme of 'around the world'. One such team was the Countries of the World that had walkers dressed in Spanish, Greek, First Nations and other traditional costumes of various countries. Some of the teams even had food from different countries as their meal during the night.

The Team lap was led out by the Royal Canadian Legion Branch #29 honor guard and the Highlanders. Carole and Lorne Nelson provided entertainment throughout the night. The weather remained pleasant throughout the night and the predicted stormy weather stayed away. It was another big success and those dollars added to the monies raised in other communities throughout the district will bring the total from the Rainy River District to well over the \$100,000 mark proving once again this is a great place to live and we take care of each other.



Madisyn DeGagne

Former Muskie Joe Basaraba picked in NHL draft

By Marlene Deschamps

The only hockey player from Northwestern Ontario picked in the NHL Draft held over the past weekend, was Joe Basaraba. 18 year old Joe played at Shattuck-St. Mary's Sabres prep school in Fairbault, Minnesota for two seasons and is set to play this fall for the University of Minnesota-Duluth. During his stint with St. Mary's Sabres, he scored 24 goals and added 22 assists in 52 games and sat seventh in team scoring. He was listed 54th overall among North American skaters in the final NHL Central Scouting rankings released this past spring. He

was drafted in the third round by the Florida Panthers.

Joe played in the Fort Frances minor system and for the Fort Frances High School Muskies.

Joe was quite excited to be drafted as his whole family was in Los Angeles for the event. He said it was great to share the moment with his family. He said although he will be playing for the University of Minnesota-Duluth, he now has the opportunity to play for the Panther in the future. Joe mentioned it had always been a dream to play in the NHL during this past year it finally sunk in that it could become a reality.

He added that the minor hockey program in Fort Frances with it's great coaches and support speaks well to keeping you prepared to keep playing the game you love. Over the summer, Joe plans on doing some training to jump into the college level of playing hockey and joking added he would also enjoy being with family and friends and playing golf and, of course, going fishing. Congrats to Joe and congrats to the hockey system at all levels that help local hockey players go from dreaming to realization of playing in the big leagues.



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