



# Community Update

## Tikinagan Launches 25-Year Review

The Chiefs that govern Tikinagan Child and Family Services have commissioned Aamaskawachikatak Mamow Obikiahwah-soowin (Strengthening the Circle of Care for our Children). It is a 25-Year Review of the agency. Chief Connie Gray-McKay is one of five chiefs on the steering group to oversee the Review.

“When I look at where Tikinagan has come to in the last 25 years, it is a good start. But we have a long way to go to reach our goal,” she said.

The Review will focus on getting feedback from Chiefs and Councillors, Elders, community leaders and community members. “It is the people who will say what Tikinagan should do, and not the other way around,” said Gray-McKay.

The intention of the Review is to assess the progress that Tikinagan has made in achieving the original vision set out by the Chiefs and Elders when the agency was created in 1984. At that time, they had a vision for their own child welfare agency that would enable the First Nations to regain full control over their own children. Too many children had been lost to non-Native Children’s Aid Societies.

Gray-McKay said the Review will look at many aspects of Tikinagan including services, organization, policies and standards. “Tikinagan is 25 years old. This Review will help us to move toward the point where the agency can actually do what our ancestors and grandparents tried to do, when we were raised in the bush according to the traditional teachings and child-rearing practices. The biggest hurdle will be how do we get back jurisdiction over our own children, how do we get control over our own child welfare system.”

In 25 years Tikinagan has grown into a large agency with Native staff, Native foster homes, and local offices based in the

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Fire destroyed the old finance building which had been converted to a thrift store and was to become a youth centre at Ten Houses.

## Firefighting Cost Over \$75,000

The fire that started near and across from the Band Office in Ten Houses May 19 cost \$75,260 to fight, according to MNR. It was considered officially “out” on May 22 and it took four initial Attack Ranger Crews, one MNR fire engine, two helicopters, one Bird Dog and one Water Bomber (Tanker) to put out the blaze. MNR spokesperson Debbie Morison said even if a fire appears

to be out, they keep a close eye on it. “A fire that appears to be out might not actually be out,” she said.

Arson is believed to be the cause of the fire which destroyed 5.2 hectares of forest as well as the old finance building, which was supposed to be turned into a youth centre this summer. It is believed that children started the fires.

The main concern of the department, said Morison, is the direct threat to people and property. “When people are considering playing with fire we want them to think about the danger it could pose to their friends, their family and even the home they live in,” said Morison. As well, she said, “Every response to a fire that can be prevented draws from resources that might be needed if there was another fire in the district.” When resources are being used to fight a fire that was deliberately set, this could be taking them away from other important work. “If a fire can be prevented, there is the potential to prevent a threat to the community and the entire district.”

People found responsible for setting fires that get out of control and require the resources of MNR could be held responsible. This could mean fines up to \$1,000 and even jail time. Those who set the fire could also be charged the cost of putting the fire out.

MNR works with the local fire department as well as the Chief and Council to respond as quickly as possible to fires as well as to prevent fires in and around the community. The Pickle Lake Fire Attack Base employs five people from Mishkeegogamang on a seasonal basis. Two Peak Work Load Firefighters have been hired on a six-week contract and 12 more came in for a three-day training course. These 12 would be pulled in during periods of fire escalation.

## Mishkeegogamang Asked to Participate in Talks

Agreements are being made between forestry companies and environmental groups but Mishkeegogamang remains out of the loop until a joint consultation process can be developed.

On May 18, 21 member companies of the Forest Products Association of Canada (FPAC) and nine leading environmental organizations unveiled the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement. It applies to 72 million hectares of forests licensed to FPAC members. The Agreement identifies explicit commitments for both sides and sets out a plan, which includes:

- The development and implementation of world-leading forest management and harvesting practices;

- The completion of joint proposals for networks of protected areas and the recovery of species at risk including woodland caribou;
- A full life cycle approach to forest carbon management; and
- Support for the economic future of forest communities and for the recognition of conservation achievements in the global marketplace.

Signatory environmental organizations, FPAC, and the Association’s companies have begun meetings with provincial governments, First Nations and local communities across the country to seek their leadership and full participation in

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# Taashikaywin Terms of Reference Signed

Chief and Council visited Eabametoong First Nation April 13 to meet jointly with Minister Linda Jeffries, Ministry of Natural Resources. Both councils signed a Terms of Reference for the Taashikaywin Land Use Planning exercise.

This project began with a Memorandum of Understanding signed by both Eabametoong and Mishkeegogamang in 2002. The communities agreed to work together to build a land use plan to help direct land and resource use within their respective traditional use areas. This was initiated under the Northern Boreal Initiative (NBI).

The original timeline predicted a five-year period to complete the inventory and begin the planning process. That timeline has been kept fairly well. At this time, the inventory is almost completed (the last few map sheets are being audited by the MNR) and the Terms of Reference has been signed to begin the planning process.

While the inventory and development of the Terms of Reference was taking place, a number of other important things occurred:

- Eabametoong and Mishkeegogamang rekindled and developed a relationship that is eons old but had suffered somewhat in recent history due to the many changes brought about by interference with their culture over the past two hundred years. The joint planning process has reconnected the communities to some degree and in a positive way.
- The Ministry of Natural Resources (first NBI and now Far North) people have built an excellent relationship with the two communities. The government representatives have been respectful of the communities, their culture, and the process. This means that the planning team can sit together in an atmosphere of trust, respect and comfort. As a result, they can get down to business as a team and start planning without extended preliminaries.
- This relationship, along with the movement of the Ontario Government toward enabling legislation for the land use planning (Far North Act as well



MNR Minister Linda Jeffery, Chief Connie Gray-McKay and Eabanetoong Deputy Chief Harry Papawsee sign the Terms of Reference.

as the Mining Amendment Act), has created the ideal scenario for a rational and planned approach to development of natural resources and support for the First Nation communities moving into the future.

With the above in mind, it is of the utmost importance that all levels of the Ontario Government, including crown corporations, are fully aware of, and compliant with the direction of the Far North Act and the Mining Amendment Act. Both of these acts directly reference and support the development of community

based land use plans as a means of managing development in the Far North. Ron Hammerstedt from NRplan Inc, the company managing the land use planning, said, "What is really important is that the two communities are connecting in a positive way and are taking charge of a planning area within their respective territories. This will result in better decision making and future planning for the two communities."

A copy of the Terms of reference is available in the Band Office should any member wish to read it.



Dr. Marilyn Koval (second from left) expressed her appreciation, as well as that of her partner, Dr. Larry Willms, to the Mishkeegogamang nurses during Nurses Week in May.



John Spade Jr. (security) and Caroline Spade with the Clarissa Amanda Bottle Memorial championship trophy for the April broomball tournament.

## 25-Year Review

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remote communities it serves. There are over 500 children in Tikinagan care.

The Review will study the potential for greater decentralization of services and management at the community level. It will also look at the development of First Nation laws, standards and policies to decrease the agency's dependence on external provincial standards. It is expected that the Review will result in a new vision framework and action plans to lead Tikinagan into the next 25 years.

Elder Emily Gregg said, "I am glad to see the Review model and to see that the Review will set a spiritual foundation. The traditional teachings and the teachings of the Bible say that parents are to look after their children well and to respect them. We need to help couples to learn the traditional ways of looking after children again."

Besides interviewing Tikinagan founders, Chiefs and Councillors, Elders, and community leaders, the Review Team will visit a number of communities, make presentations on community radio and seek feedback from community members. The Review Team will also examine the feedback received from the communities in previous reviews done on Tikinagan over the past ten years.

In a press release, the Review Team stressed that everyone's feedback is important to ensure the Review results "accurately reflect the feelings of the full circle of people concerned for the well-being of children in our communities."

## Mish to Join Human Rights Complaint

Police funding in Canada is racist, said Chief Connie Gray-McKay, and Mishkeegogamang is going to join the human rights complaint against the provincial and federal government for discrimination.

The Chief said when comparisons are made between the OPP and NAPS, it is obvious that First Nations get lower quality services. "We will participate in a comparison between the OPP and NAPS," said Gray-McKay. "First Nations should get the same quality of policing as everybody else."

In 2007 the Mushkegowuk Council, including Attawapiskat, Kashechewan, Fort Albany Moose Cree, Taykwa Tagamou, Chappleau Cree and Missanabie Cree, filed a complaint with the federal and provincial human rights commissions. They said NAPS, which is funded 52 per cent by Canada and 48 per cent by Ontario, is "significantly" underfunded. In their complaint, the Mushkegowuk Council alleges there is discrimination "due to the complainants' ancestry, ethnic origin and race."

Mishkeegogamang is currently two officers short of a full contingent that is supposed to include the sergeant and four officers.

### Mishkeegogamang Ojibway Nation Community Update

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#### Contribute to the Newspaper

Everyone is welcome to submit an article, photo or write a letter to the Mishkeegogamang Community Update. Share your opinion or idea with other readers. Editors reserve the right to edit for clarity and length.



# Working Together Works

David Beaulieu of Lynx to Change Consulting had a two-day workshop on Case Management at the Resource Centre in May. Beaulieu stressed the need for all community resources to work together.

"If we all work collectively we get a lot more done than when we work in little cliques here and there," he said. "The cliques have different ideas and sometimes they don't want to share with the rest of the people and that's why it doesn't work."

Beaulieu said he was asked to come to Mishkeegogamang to help identify the groupings of the community, the social issues and "who does what and who doesn't." He said it is important to identify community events and to find out what each group is doing throughout the year. Part of the discussion was around community development with a major portion on mental health strategies and planning sessions.

Beaulieu's sessions also delve into the clan system; the existing culture, history and language of Mishkeegogamang. It is important for the Christian and Traditional aspects of the community to work together. Eventually, the resource personnel would like to promote an Anishinabe Fair in the community. "The traditional and historical knowledge is not (generally) known," he said. An Anishinabe Fair would be similar to a health or job fair, but would feature things like hunting/ trapping skill development on site and a place for the elders to share their knowledge with the community.

"They have the traditional knowledge; they are very aware of their culture," he



David Beaulieu speaks to program leaders at a two-day conference on working together for case management.

said. But unless the community works together, sharing the knowledge becomes very difficult.

Beaulieu said adults have to take responsibility for what they teach their children. The stages of child development for each child shapes the reality of the community. The positive lifestyles that they see and hear from the time they are in their mother's womb and throughout the life cycle will determine their own personal outcome. Hopefully it will also shape the community to a better life based on culture and traditional values and beliefs. It won't be easy, he said, but there has to be consistency in the teachings because so

many suffer from the mental health trauma brought on by residential school. There are residual effects and generational impacts that remain from the ordeal of many people who attended Indian residential schools and the descendants are carrying that ordeal.

Beaulieu said an example of this is the need for people on a First Nation to begin to understand the difference between need and want. People fill the void in their life with "want" because they don't understand the "need." "Hence, there are misunderstandings between cliques in any community that have been affected by the Indian residential school legacy."

## Asked to Participate

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advancing the goals of the Agreement. Participants recognize that governments, including First Nation governments, are decision makers within their jurisdictions. The Agreement recognizes that aboriginal peoples have constitutionally protected aboriginal and treaty rights that must be respected and engaged in order for the Agreement to fulfill its objectives.

Tawny Lem, negotiating with Mishkeegogamang on behalf of AbitibiBowater, said representatives from the First Nations told her there was generally a good relationship between the First Nation and the company, but their involvement with AbitibiBowater was put on hold while the community discussed their future forestry interests.

"A Mishkeegogamang representative has participated in the Forest Stewardship Plan process for a time, but withdrew based on a concern with the consultation process," said Lem. She said the Mishkeegogamang council is clear on "how" forestry development should proceed, but the community had not yet decided "if" they were supportive of forestry development taking place.

Lem said AbitibiBowater has maintained an agreement to not develop key areas of interest as defined by the First Nation. "This deferral of activity is viewed as reducing risk to the First Nation's interest, until such time that the First Nation indicates an interest to engage with the company."

The agreement signed in May will conserve significant areas of Canada's boreal forest, protect threatened woodland caribou and provide a competitive market edge for participating companies. FPAC members managed two-thirds of all certified forest land in Canada and commit to the highest environmental standards of forest management in the area. They will suspend new logging on nearly 29 million hectares of boreal forest while conservation plans for endangered caribou are developed.

Last year AbitibiBowater agreed to delay the harvest of approved wood directly next to the highway and on the portion of John Derouin's trap line immediately west of Wertheim Lake. They proposed a committee of representatives from Mishkeegogamang, the Ministry of Natural Resources, and the company to work together to modify the harvesting pattern in the Dole Valley area that would attempt to combine traditional knowledge, science, and operations experience.

To date this committee has not been formed but the community of Mishkeegogamang still has time to become involved and make their concerns and conditions known.

## Lump Sum Investment Advice

It's easy to dream about all the possibilities one would have if they suddenly won a large sum of money or received an inheritance or insurance settlement. Spending on travel, vehicles, homes and furnishings comes to mind. For some residential school survivors, financial settlements are becoming a reality. These settlements range greatly in amounts from thousands to tens of thousands and into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. It would probably be wise to get the advice of a good, qualified financial advisor in regards to any sudden windfall of cash.

James Reimer is a Senior Financial Planning Advisor with Assante Financial Management in Winnipeg. He says the first question he asks potential clients is "What are you using the money for?" If your intention is to spend the money on one item, like a new vehicle, or a number of items like electronics, furniture and vacations, he said the best place for your money while you decide what and where you want to buy stuff, is a savings account in the bank.

"In order to make proper investment decisions, decide what you want to spend the money on. If you plan to spend the money in less than two years, don't invest in the stock market," he said. "Be careful of the temptation to invest in investments offering big returns in the short-term, as this is never guaranteed."

Reimer said there are all kinds of investments for people wanting to put

the money away for their retirement, including mutual funds, stocks and bonds and various combinations. However, for people over 60 who want to supplement their existing income, he would suggest they consider buying into an annuity.

An annuity is guaranteed income for life. Payments stop when you die. For example, if a 70-year-old invests \$100,000 in an annuity, they would receive \$747 per month for the rest of their life. That's about \$9,000 a year compared to interest at the bank of about \$2,000 for a \$100,000 investment.

A 60-year-old would get \$559 for a \$100,000 annuity and an 80-year-old just over \$1,100. This 80-year-old would be paid about \$13,000 per year. If they put the \$100,000 in the bank and took out \$13,000 per year, the money would last about 7 years.

An annuity is based on current interest rates, the amount of money and the age and health of the buyer. People in poor health can get more than the average rate. There is also an option to buy 5 and 10 year guarantees which lower the monthly rates, but could benefit your beneficiaries if you should die before that time.

The amount of the monthly payout, once determined, is 100 per cent guaranteed for life. That is the upside of an annuity. The downside, said Reimer, is that you can't ever pull your money out. Once you write the cheque to the insurance company, that money belongs to the insurance company and you can't make changes or get your money out if you change your mind.

Annuities, said Reimer are like a mortgage payment in reverse, combining both the interest and the principal of the

## Legacy of IRS Event in Winnipeg

The first national event on the Legacy of the Indian Residential School System will be held at The Forks in Winnipeg June 16 - 19. A number of elders from Mishkeegogamang are planning to attend.

The event will include honouring IRS survivors and their experiences and give an opportunity for private statement-taking recounting both positive and negative experiences. There will be daily educational, cultural and artistic activities

and full-day children's programming.

Residential school survivors, former staff and those experiencing the intergenerational impacts are invited to attend. As well, the event is open to the general public, parishioners of all faiths, students, community leaders, educators and social workers. Contact Donna Roundhead if you are interested in attending.

### Lot Thunder Meetings

Lot Thunder will hold revival meetings at Mishkeegogamang on June 19th and 20th. The theme for the meetings is "Family" and all are welcome to attend.



# Council Declares State of Emergency



Trees that take decades to grow take only seconds to burn at Ten Houses.

## ASKS FOR HELP

The Council of Mishkeegogamang continues to be motivated to address what they concede to be complex and enormous social and economic dislocation and breakdown within the community.

Council asserts that the support systems within the community are underfunded and under-resourced, creating what has become a state of emergency."

Chief Connie Gray-McKay and Council have identified the need to come to grips with the chronic abuse of alcohol and prescription drugs, serious assaults, arson and vandalism as becoming increasingly "out of control tragedies" that need to be tackled head on. Otherwise, they predict that there will continue to be a breakdown of the social, family and community support systems, which may become "too little, too late," thus becoming irreparable.

"Our people are dying right in front of us." Council has the will and support of the people. "We need immediate financial and human resources to begin to confront the realities we face in order to provide realistic solutions."

For more information and to provide offers of support please contact: The Office of Chief and Council. Tel: 807-928-2414

## Local Police Service Understaffed and Overwhelmed

Overwhelming. That's about the only word Acting NAPS Sergeant Merle Loon can find to describe how he feels about his job as a police officer these days.

Loon grew up on the Mishkeegogamang First Nation. He recalled a time when young people feared the police. As a teenager, Loon and his friends assumed police were not to be trusted. They heard stories of people being arrested and "resisting" and coming back from the south beat up. "Police were the enemy. We'd run away from them because of what we heard," said Loon. As well, he said, he'd make bets with his friends about who would be the next person to be beat up or medi-vacced out or who would be the next person to die in the community. "That's not normal," he said. What he sees people normalizing on the Reserve these days is definitely not normal but even more disturbing than the atmosphere he grew up in.

Mishkeegogamang in the 80s, (known as Osnaburgh in those days) was notorious for crime and social chaos. Loon said it was worse than what's going on these days, but he fears for the future. "It seems like morals are lost. People are walking around with no soul, there's nothing in the eyes. They drink and drink and drink and drink. We are dealing with people that don't care for anything, even themselves."

In May a fire was lit in the middle of the highway through the main reserve. When police responded, gas bombs were thrown at the police vehicles. Loon suspects it was an "ambush fire," lit by community youth.

"These kids have no respect whatsoever. They think this is fun and games. I don't know what's going through their heads, but it seems that a lot of people just don't care, including parents."

These are strong words and Loon admits to being exhausted and frustrated after working 44 hours in two days over the weekend. He said when he was young, parents would be out looking for their children if they didn't come home at night and do what they could to raise their families. These days, many expect the police and Tikinagen to look after their kids. "It's pretty stressful. It's a vicious cycle where everything is lost and I don't know how to get it back," he said. Some parents are making an honest attempt to protect and raise their children, but Loon said for the most part people are not participating in the programs available in the community. "Nobody's interested, nobody goes. (They see it as ) a waste of time."

As a police officer working in his home community, Loon would like NAPS to be more proactive but he said there's never enough time. "We're constantly dealing with the negative. It's hard to catch up with the work that needs to be done."

The department is short two officers, positions Loon hopes will be filled at the end of June. Mishkeegogamang is supposed to have four officers and a sergeant, but Loon said six officers would be a more realistic number, given the issues they have to deal with.

However, once they are at a full



TOP: A water bomber scoops up lake water in an effort to put out a fire on the reserve. BELOW: The forest east of the government offices at Ten Houses burned quickly after a fire was set in mid-May.

complement of police, NAPS expects to be more visible in the community with patrols and follow-up work. "Right now, because we're so overwhelmed with everything that's happening, we don't have time to do some of that," said Loon. He is discouraged, but understanding, when community members go right to the OPP with their concerns. "People figure we're not doing our job. If we were here 24 hours a day, seven days a week and were robots,

maybe we could do everything that needs to be done."

Loon knows the solutions to the social problems of Mishkeegogamang are not going to be simple or easy to find. But he says it would be a good start, at least, for people to "see the good stuff" about themselves, their culture and their community and build on that. "When we are so overwhelmed with what's happening it's easy to just see the negatives."





An MNR water bomber at work.

# A Chat with the Chief

*Sometimes the Chief needs to be reminded that what she, as a community leader, and every individual on the First Nation deal with on a daily basis is not normal.*

Chief Connie Gray-McKay closes her eyes and sighs deeply before squaring her shoulders and collecting her thoughts on how to deal with the latest tragedy in her community. Chief Gray-McKay will set events in motion to take care of the immediate needs, including travel for the family to be together and funeral and burial arrangements.

"It's amazing how functional you manage to be," she said. That is an understatement. Sometimes the Chief needs to be reminded that what she, as a community leader, and every individual on the First Nation deal with on a daily basis is not normal.

Long before she experienced her own first trauma, Chief Gray-McKay was affected by the trauma her elders carried

with them. These traumas came from the effects of residential school as well as family and community violence in many forms. Many of her elders did not have access to any type of professional therapies and learned to live, to cope, and to survive to the best of their ability.

"We become traumatized by their experiences and then we experience our own. How do you shovel yourself out of that mess?" asked the Chief. She describes it as "PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) compounded," a "complicated grief." Many, she said, never really grow up. Many still have no access to proper or consistent counselling services and so they carry around their own trauma as well as "vicarious trauma."

As the chief, Gray-McKay has to deal with

her own and her family's trauma as well as the issues within her council, in the community and on the larger political scene.

Mishkeegogamang is not the only community to be dealing with extreme social issues. "It's everywhere, on all reserves," said Chief Gray-McKay. "The situation is unsettling for everybody."

The Chief is dismayed to see how First Nations people have dealt with colonization. "There is inward violence. We have turned violence inward to our own selves, our own people," she said.

The solution will be as complicated as the grief and violence that makes healing necessary. But of one thing the Chief is sure. "We have to regain our culture and our identity in order to get back to being a strong nation."

# MNR Training Results in Employment

Fifteen band members from Mishkeegogamang took a five-day MNR training course on firefighting in Pickle Lake in May. Of those, four were hired, one full time and three on call.

Wayne Kwandibens was hired for on call work. He said he wanted to try something new and needed a job to provide for his family so he welcomed and enjoyed the MNR training. He said he learned a lot from the hands-on work with water hoses and how to hook on to a helicopter. For Fabian Sakakeesic, also hired for on call work, the helicopter training was the most fun of all the activities.

The S-100 training course is a 40-hour entry level course to prepare candidates to be forest fire crewmembers. The basic training includes:

- Personal and fire line safety
- Chainsaw safety
- Fire behaviour
- Fire suppression techniques and methods
- Operating pumps and hoses
- Helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft safety
- Fire line communications

After they are hired, firefighters must complete yearly maintenance training packages and may also qualify, after some years of experience, for training for specialized positions such as Crew Boss and Initial Attack Fire Boss.

In addition, MNR has implemented a physical fitness standard (See Pre-Fit) for its firefighters, which results in higher productivity and fewer accidents.



Fabian Sakakeesic (left) and Wayne Kwandibens were hired as on-call firefighters.

**Build a safe campfire not a wildfire**

**BE FireSmart.**

**Safe Campfires are built:**

1. on bare soil or exposed rock
2. sheltered from the wind
3. at least three metres from the forest, overhanging branches or other flammable material.

**Safe Campfires have:**

4. a pail of water and a shovel at hand to control the fire
5. someone tending them all the time.

**Safe Campfires are:**

6. small...a small fire is best for cooking, and is easier to control and put out. The forest is no place for a bonfire.
7. put out as soon as possible. How?
  - Douse with water then stir the ashes with a stick or shovel to uncover hot coals, and douse, again.

For more information contact your local Ministry of Natural Resources Fire Office Or visit us at: [ontario.ca/fireprevention](http://ontario.ca/fireprevention)

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**BE FireSmart.**

**If you love it – don't burn it.**

**Don't start a wildfire while burning grass or brush near your cottage or home!**

- Don't burn grass or brush piles when it's windy.
- Don't light your fire until two hours before sunset or later.
- Burn a safe distance from anything that could catch fire.
- Keep a fire small, and have a shovel and water close at hand.
- Stay with the fire until it's out.

For more information contact your local Ministry of Natural Resources Fire Office Or visit us at: [ontario.ca/fireprevention](http://ontario.ca/fireprevention)

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# Students win School Awards



Charlissa Bottle and her brother Davery were award winners at the Dennis Franklin Cromarty School.

Mishkeegogamang students and siblings Charlissa and Davery Bottle were award winners at the Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School both attend as boarding students. Davery, 16 and a Grade 9 student, was on the honour roll and also won athletic prizes and a leadership award.

Davery's sister Charlissa can gut a fish, but lately she's been too busy making the honour roll and hitting volleyballs to practise her traditional skills. Still, the lessons she learned at home in Ace Lake are what she credits for her success at school.

Charlissa won the Executive Director's

award for the highest academic performance in the Dennis Franklin Cromarty high school in Thunder Bay. "My mom and dad encouraged me," said Charlissa. "It's the way I was raised, to work hard, do what is right and not do drugs and drink. I get to class. I do my work." Charlissa and Davery's parents are Charlie Bottle and Edna Skunk.

Charlissa has just completed Grade 11 and her second year in the Thunder Bay boarding school. She said she boards with a great family in Thunder Bay and doesn't have time to miss home. "It's fun to be away at school. I don't miss home because I have a lot to do. I get involved with a lot of stuff."

That might be an understatement. Charlissa is a middle hitter on the school volleyball team and also plays scrimmage hockey and soccer. She not only won an academic award, but an athletic award as well. Being on the honour roll qualified her and eight other students to spend a week in Toronto where they attended a Jay's game and explored the CN tower, the Science Museum and the Eaton tower. Charlissa also attended a Youth Decision Makers (YDM) conference in Toronto. YDM is a body of youth, young adults and adult allies from across the country working together to ensure that the youth voice is heard in formal and informal decision-making bodies (governments, systems and organizations).

Charlissa has no intention of quitting school after her high school graduation next year. She's thinking of being a chef because she likes to spend time in the kitchen, especially baking cakes.



Missabay students wait their turn at tanning a moose hide.

## Missabay School News

The Grade 8 class week-long graduation trip to Thunder Bay was packed with fun activities. Students earned the trip with positive participation in class, regular attendance and successful fundraising. Principal Wayne Thorne said, "They gave their time whole-heartedly and worked as a cohesive group to achieve this trip. Activities included swimming, movies, shopping and sightseeing at the suspension bridge, look-out point and museums.

For the second time this school year, Art Can volunteers came to Missabay School to offer students creative activities in art and music. Four volunteers get the whole school involved in various activities. After a week of activities, students display

their creative work and present unique songs created especially for each grade.

Missabay will be getting two new buses for the next school year. The school has been having difficulties due to unreliable buses for the past two years. This year the old buses were traded for two new buses. These buses were built for the north and each bus has a built-in video system so students can watch movies on their trip to and from school. They also have security cameras to ensure that all children are safe while riding on the buses. Delivery date was expected by June 15th.

A feast for the last day of school is scheduled for June 27th.

## No Quick Fix for Housing

Housing is in bad shape and the Director of Housing knows it. But there's not much Dan Sabko can do about it at this point. He is optimistic that the lots and sewers will be ready for the trailers that are waiting in Thunder Bay, but it remains unclear if that can still happen before the winter.

In the meantime, Sabko said the band will concentrate on plumbing, heating and sealing up the existing houses so they will hold the heat in the winter. For now, any major repairs are on hold. "We will make sure the sinks and bathtubs work," said Sabko, stressing those are health and safety concerns, but as for new flooring and patching up holes in the walls, that work

will have to wait. Many people damage their own properties, he said. "Social issues, anger and frustration drive people to do what they do," he said. "I understand it. I know why, but fixing a home and making it look new doesn't change the condition it's in. It only makes them feel better for awhile."

Even so, Sabko would fix up and build new houses if the funding was available. "Even if I had all those houses in great shape and I could get these trailers up, we'd still be overcrowded," he said. "Indian Affairs is supposed to supply housing for First Nations. I believe they failed."

## Planning for Pashkokogan

Family Camps will be held at the Pashkokogan Healing Lodge again this summer. The 14-day family treatment program is designed to support families in overcoming addictions and trauma and to help them connect once more to the land. Health Director Donna Roundhead said the Resource Centre expects to run three two-week family camps, starting in late June and continuing in July and August.

"It's a two-week program for families to look at their issues and to begin the healing process," she said. "We want to help them with their personal, family and home lives."

The Pashkokogan Healing Lodge is located on traditional territory and is only

accessible by boat in the summer time. Roundhead said they can accommodate about five families per camp, depending on the number of children in a family.

Families interested in the program can contact the Resource Centre at 807-928-2407 and will go through an intake process. "We want them to look at their issues and identify what it is they would like to begin to deal with," said Roundhead.

The program includes a lot of group activity during the day. Besides working on their personal and family issues, participants take part in the cleaning and cooking and might set fish nets or even join in a moose hunt. "We teach people to work in groups and to share," said Roundhead.



Electoral Officer Mary Wassaykeesic and Deputy Electoral Officer Jamie Skunk set up the nomination table at the radio station.

## By-Election Tuesday, June 22

Eligible Mishkeegogamang band members are asked to vote in the June 22 by-election to replace Wayne J. Neekan who resigned his position as a member of council. You can place your vote between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. at the radio station. Votes will be counted immediately after the polls close and the results will be declared

immediately. The following candidates will be on the ballot:

John Derouin, Mary Skunk, Brenda L Fox, Donna Roundhead, Robert Brisket, Thomas Spade, Durrell Gray, Martha Loon, Jeff Loon, John Paul Spade, Lishia Brown, Gordon Wassaykeesic, Isiah Roundhead, Angus W. Panacheese.



# Mishkeegogamang Participates in Cutting Edge Research



Participants at the video workshop for Mishkeegogamang youth.

SUBMITTED BY KERRI GIBSON

Mishkeegogamang First Nation has come on board during the last year to participate in a cutting-edge research and outreach project. Community-based participatory research is exciting and empowering. It involves communities, researchers, and organizations working together to explore issues within the community. VideoCom ([videocom.firstnation.ca](http://videocom.firstnation.ca)) is a partnership project that engages in research and outreach work.

A main objective of VideoCom is to explore how remote and rural First Nations are (and can be) using broadband technologies like video and

videoconferencing to support community development. The partnership project is between three First Nations organizations – Keewatinook Okimakanak (Northwestern Ontario), the First Nations Education Council (Quebec), and the Atlantic Canada's First Nation Help Desk (Nova Scotia), as well as the University of New Brunswick and the National Research Council (located in New Brunswick). The project began in 2006 and will continue until at least 2012.

In the spring of 2010 a group of VideoCom members were welcomed into Mishkeegogamang. With the support of Chief Connie Gray-McKay and Erin Bottle (who was the community researcher

with VideoCom at the time), valuable community connections were formed. We (the VideoCom group) had the fortunate opportunity to conduct interviews with 17 community members. We were able to host a community video festival showcasing videos created by individuals from First Nations in the Sioux-Lookout Zone as well as a video training workshop.

With Mishkeegogamang's support and involvement, we are exploring how community members are currently using various technologies and how these technologies can be used to support community development. This includes traditional and land-based activities as well as health and wellness.

VideoCom is analyzing the rich data that was collected and will be working with the Chief and community members to share the knowledge that has been documented. Together we will identify ways to put the great ideas of community members into practice. The Community Youth Video project is also underway and Mishkeegogamang, Fort Severn, and KiHS (Keewatinook Internet High School) are partnering to support and celebrate the incredible talent and creativity that exist in the community youth. The plan for this initiative is to work together to support, train, and mobilize community members in using video as a way to share their stories and have their voices heard.

I would like to say "Thank-you" to Mishkeegogamang community members for your involvement in this project. This is only possible because of you.



NAPS Senior Constable Mel Coles will teach the D.A.R.E. program at the school.

## D.A.R.E Coming to Missabay School

Senior Constable Mel Coles is looking forward to teaching a prevention program to students at the Missabay School in the fall. Coles is new to the Mishkeegogamang NAPS, but has worked as a police officer on various northern First Nations for over 23 years. "This is my first community with pavement," he said. His experience has taught him that a lot of young people's behaviour is a direct result of what is taught and what is not taught at home.

The D.A.R.E. (Drug and Alcohol Resistance Education) program gives kids the skills they need to avoid involvement in drugs, gangs and violence. "We will talk about smoking, drugs, alcohol and violence," said Coles. "When the kids finish their 10 lessons we're going to have a little gathering where they will receive certificates and we'll make a 'do' of it." He will work with students as young as Grade 2 level and up to Grade 8.

The D.A.R.E. program was founded in Los Angeles in 1983 and was proven so successful that it is now in about 50 countries around the world. It is designed to give kids alternatives to drugs, gangs and violence. "There is so much peer pressure out there and this deals with that," said Coles. "We let kids know they are not alone, that there are positive decisions to be made."

The program promotes teamwork and shows them how to take negative peer pressure and turn it into positive peer pressure.

# Sacrifices Made by Our People

*To our youth and members in our Community*

SUBMITTED BY ERIN BOTTLE

It takes a strong-minded individual to succeed in the choices they make in life. Oftentimes one has to do daunting and scary tasks. Take education for an example. It is often repeated that education is important and that it is the most valuable contribution that one can make to their community. It takes dedication and time to start a task and complete it. Along the way there are deterrents, pressures and challenges that come across our path. To be one of the selected and chosen few that gets to go to high school, college or university is quite the honor and this must be carried well.

The way I understand it, our community leaders make an investment to the people in supporting our youth and members to continue on with their education. That investment and support to education is something that not everybody receives due to shortfalls in funding. We have many reserve members that have undertaken the task of receiving their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (High School Diploma), but many have not been successful due to the challenges they face. There are many who have graduated with their high school diploma and have gone on to college and university. Filling out forms for college or university can be a challenge and sometimes people are overwhelmed when they get their acceptance response.

Once accepted, the student still has to send a request for Band Support. Our leadership then makes a request to the Northern Nishnawbe Education Council (NNEC) who is the sponsoring body which supports college/university post secondary students during their chosen fields of study.

Mishkeegogamang has many members who have left to attain their post secondary studies, and many have graduated in fields such as Counseling, Education, Political Science, Gerontology, Water Management, General Arts and Sciences and Aboriginal Law and Advocacy. The list goes on and on. But it should be noted that when a student receives their funding they receive limited dollars from NNEC to support them during their studies. These costs include monthly bus passes, food, accommodation and fees to purchase your items of study. It is evident that a lot of investment goes into our students by our leadership to make their education aspirations a reality.

In return for this investment and support, students should be willing to make sacrifices to ourselves and our community. The tuition cost alone of attending high school has gone up to \$10,000. This does not include fees for transportation, books and other academic fees.

The cost of attending a college program

varies depending on where one studies. It is generally in the range of \$17,000, not including required text books. This also does not include the cost of the monthly allowance that covers the cost of transportation, food, and bills such as hydro, water, rent, and heat for an apartment.

For university the cost of tuition has been raised to \$18,000 - \$19,000 and again the costs for books, accommodation, travel, rent, heat, hydro is magnified.

The point I am making is that our leadership makes a very considerable contribution for our people striving for their secondary and post secondary education. The sacrifice is up to you, the individual, in making a contribution to your own education and a contribution to our community in exchange for gaining your accreditation at a recognized institute.

To our youth and young people, it is time to realize the investment that is given to your education. It is time to recognize our leadership's contribution to your education in supporting our youth in gaining their education. As many leaders in all government levels say, "Our youth are our future leaders." Let's take the time to honor the leaders within ourselves and within our community and let's start making our sacrifices a reality for the betterment of our community and overall Nation. Meegwetch!

## Councillor Suspended

Councillor Lauren Wassaykeesic has been suspended without pay while an investigation into an alleged incident involving band funds continues.



# Child of the 60s Scoop Comes Home

Greetings! My name is karen kaminawaish, while some of the elders knew me once as Lillian Kaminawaish, daughter of the late Sarah Kaminawaish and Solomon Williams of North Caribou Lake First Nation. Unfortunately, i was one of the 60s Scoop kids that got adopted out, but fortunately i found my way back home to Mishkeegogamang. i was raised in Elkhart, Indiana, by a great, loving and caring Mennonite Caucasian family that taught me biblical teachings and good work ethics. All my life i felt a huge part of me was missing...my identity...who i was and where i came from.

In 1999 my daughter Octavia inquired about her maternal grandparents and so i told her that i would make a few phone calls. Although Children's Aid Society is closed, i was directed to contact Tikinagan in Sioux Lookout and the lady asked if i had wanted to find my family. i was elated that someone wanted to help me. i had always known my name was Lillian Kaminawaish, and this helped the lady to contact my late brother Roy. Two weeks later she called and said she had contacted my family and they wanted to meet me. i waited for Roy to contact me and of course, he did.

Two weeks later, i was on the Greyhound to come north and meet my family. Josie, Rachael and Waylonia met me at the border and drove me into the interior, better known as the bush.

That trip i spent time with Roy and Hazel and their family, Frank and Lena and their children and on to Round Lake to spend time with still yet more family on my Dad's side. Since then i have spent time in Round Lake and came last year when Frank crossed over.

Currently i live with my son, Checotah Kaminawaish Powless, who is ten years old, in Stillwater, Oklahoma. i attend Oklahoma State University, where i am a third year Sociology doctoral student. We are staying in Mishkeegogamang FN for two months while i am working at the band office. Presently, i am working on proposals and beginning a sociological assessment.

My passions are Natives in recovery living an alcohol-free lifestyle and Natives in higher education. Currently i am active in my own recovery at the local, state and national levels. Checotah and i love to attend powwows and participate. Checotah loves to skateboard and talk with politicians, and hang with his buddies.

My plans for the future are to graduate with a PhD and move back to Mishkeegogamang to utilize my knowledge to assist my band and its members. i have an enormous amount to learn about my heritage and traditions, but know i can only be open-minded and listen intently to my elders. Please if you see me about Mishkeegogamang, stop me and introduce yourself and shake hands. That hole inside of me is becoming filled with getting to know my people and band.

Thank you Erin for asking me to do this article. It is an honour.

Respectfully, karen kaminawaish

## Let me look...Let me find

*Let me look into your face to see if i can  
See a little of me there*

*Let me look into your face to see  
a shared*

*Gesture or smirk, laugh or smile  
Let me look into your face to see if we*

*Are kin...some distant relative*

*Let me look into your fact to see if  
There is acceptance for me there*

*Let me look...let me find*

*For what i am looking for*

- kjk

## Another Lost Bird is Home

*i went to Wounded Knee  
and i see Lost Bird's grave*

*i kissed her tombstone  
for she knew herself...my*

*journey*

*i know she lived as*

*i do now*

*with many questions...*

*some now answered, some*

*still unanswered*

*But i am okay with it*

*because i am another*

*Lost bird that found*

*her home.*

*Another Lost Bird is Home*

- kjk



Ken Wavy watches his daughter Skye burning the feathers off the one and only goose they caught this year due to the early summer. Burning like this gives the bird the wild taste natives love, said Wavy.

# Spring Hunt a Non-Event

Even the best and most experienced hunters came up empty-handed this spring. "The spring hunt wasn't very good," said Ken Wavy. "It got too warm too fast and the geese just flew over us while we were sleeping."

Wavy said the geese usually stop in the Mishkeegogamang area and wait for the weather to warm up before they head farther north. Once the snow melts they move on to their breeding grounds up north.

The warm weather seems to have confused the few geese that are still hanging around the area. "I think they're a little bit lost," said Wavy. "They seem to be breeding anywhere."

Now that the ducks and geese are making nests, the hunters are leaving them alone in order not to wipe out the future food supply. Once the wild birds are

breeding they lose weight and get toned, "just like the moose," said Wavy.

Wavy said people generally hunt mallards and geese and a few hunt for swans. A few people eat blue herons, but not many. This year there seems to be a large number of bears in the area, many coming into the highway area. Wavy said bear meat tastes like moose meat if you smoke it on a rack. He said he saw what might have been a large grizzly bear on the Sioux Lookout road, much farther south than usual. "The snow level was low this year, so he could have made his way down here," he said. "That's the biggest bear I've ever seen." Wavy said with low water levels, the bear could be fat from overeating, since fish would be easy to catch in the rivers these days.

The low water levels also bode well for harvesting wild rice in the fall.

## Mishkeegogamang Ojibway Nation Chief and Council Emergency Contact Numbers

### Chief

Connie Gray-McKay  
Work: 807-928-2414  
Fax: 807-928-2077  
Cell: 807-472-2083  
Home: 807-928-2083  
Email: conniegraymckay@msn.com

### Head Councillor

Tom Wassaykeesic  
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Home: 807-928-2014

### Senior Councillor

David Masaykeyash  
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Home: 807-928-2927  
Email: davidmasaykeyash@msn.com

### Councillor

Maryanne Panacheese-Skunk  
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Cell: 807-629-8624  
Home: 807-928-2151  
Email: maryannepanacheese@hotmail.com

## Mishkeegogamang: The Land, the People and the Purpose

Read all about the history of Mishkeegogamang; learn the wisdom of the elders.

Copies of our history book are now available at the band office.

**\$40.00**

### Volunteers Needed for the Homecoming Committee

Homecoming is August 2-6, 2010. Please contact the band office at 928-2414

## The Native Nation

Where is our grace

We were more than half of the earth's population

There are less than 10 percent of us on earth's population

What has happened to the native nation?

We fell so hard that we're still broken inside

We have no respect for ourselves anymore

And no one with whom we can confide

We keep suffering till we are no more

Our love is gone

We don't really care for each other

The light of our love and mercy just once shone

And is gone now and probably forever

Our spirits and souls are bound by the darkness

We keep going till we are unredeemable

Our troubles are great but we never confess

We easily fall because we're not withstandable

Happy moments of the past are drowned out

Poison fogs our mind then nothing else matters

One second we're happy, the next we scream at each other and shout

We hurt someone else but our heart shatters

What has happened to our native nation?

*The writer is a Mishkeegogamang youth*