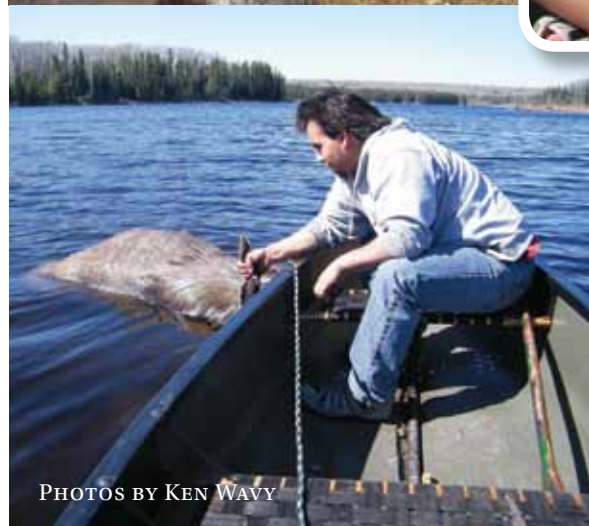




Community Update

Back to the Land in Spring



PHOTOS BY KEN WAVY

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Minimum Age for Trappers Going Down to 12

The Ministry of Natural Resources is proposing that the minimum age limit for a secondary trapping licence be reduced from age 16 to age 12 under the existing licence fee (\$16.95 including 13% HST for secondary helper trapping licence). This would allow youths aged 12 - 15 to participate in trapping, when under the immediate supervision of an

adult mentor who is a licensed trapper aged 18 years or older.

The amendment could provide youth the opportunity to participate in traditional family heritage activity, improve long term participation in furbearer harvesting and provide traditional outdoor recreational opportunities for youths.

The proposal would come into effect

in time for the 2012-2013 fall trapping season. The Ministry would like as many responses as possible to this idea. To respond, please call Chris Heydon, Fur Program Biologist at the Ministry at 705-755-1995 or respond online at www.ebr.gov.on.ca (type "trapper" into the search bar on this page and then click on the first result).

Around the Community

Local fire fighting services reimbursed

Mishkeegogamang has entered into a new agreement to provide local fire fighting services. A working crew based in Mish will be supplied with equipment and assisted by a fire command centre in Pickle Lake, which will provide air support and manpower support if a fire is large enough to require extra help. They will be able to respond to any bush fires or house fires. Mishkeegogamang will be reimbursed for costs at a minimum of \$400 an hour. The fire fighting crew will be made up of Mish residents, with Jeff Loon as team leader.

Rock crusher and screener purchased

Mishkeegogamang has purchased a rock crusher, screener, and flatbed trailer for road repairs and any related contracts. The total cost of the equipment, including extra parts, was approximately \$100,000. The band is seeking candidates for training on the equipment this summer. Any interested community members should contact the band office.

Agreement with new gold driller

Manicouagan Minerals is beginning to drill for gold about 25 kilometres southwest of the Dona Lake Mine. Drilling was scheduled to begin in late April depending on weather conditions. The first 1000-metre drilling program will focus on testing and expansion of a portion of a gold-bearing zone. The area was first developed in 1985 with 25 holes drilled by another company. Mishkeegogamang signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Manicouagan Minerals in 2010.

New Casino Rama agreement

Mishkeegogamang's agreement for a share of Casino Rama revenues expired at the end of April. The community had been receiving approximately \$380,000 in Casino Rama funding every year. A new agreement will see 1.7% of Ontario's gaming revenue being distributed equally (per capita) among all 134 first nations in the province.

Show ID when flying with Wasaya

Wasaya Airways will be implementing a new ID policy on May 1 for all passengers 18 years or older. Passengers who appear to be 18 or older will be asked to present identification before boarding Wasaya flights. Passengers will have to show one piece of government-issued photo ID with their name, birth date, and gender, or two pieces of government-issued ID without photos that include name, birthdate and gender. For complete details, check out www.wasaya.com

Spade given life sentence for murder

On March 21, Mishkeegogamang's Kecia Spade, 19, was given a life sentence for the November 2009 murder of her cousin, 18-year-old Mariah Wesley. Spade was originally charged with first-degree murder, but she pleaded guilty to the lesser charge of second-degree murder in Thunder Bay's Superior Court. Spade will not be eligible to apply for parole until 2019, which will be 10 years after the murder took place.



Children and Elders bonded over traditional practices at the Four-Day Cultural Learning event at Missabay School in March.



Roseanne Masakeyash and Levi Kwandibens go for a spin at Mishkeegogamang's Winter Carnival Square Dance. PHOTOS BY ERIN BOTTLE

Bedbugs are here

By the first week in April, four houses in Mishkeegogamang had bedbugs. The first case was discovered in mid-winter and a few more cases popped up toward the spring. If anyone else discovers bedbugs in their home, please contact Dan Sabko or Roberta Skunk at the Band Office.

Prizes for home improvements

\$5000 in cash and prizes will be up for grabs in the Pum-Itoo Taashikaywin (Let's Take Care of our Land) Beautification Contest. Application forms will be available at the band office on June 1, and judging to decide on the best home improvements and yard cleanup will take place at the end of August. See page 8 for more details.

Community participation needed

Mishkeegogamang's Land Use Planning project is heading into its final two or

three years. Key issues for Land Use Planning include hydro site development, mining, and forestry. The project is now at the stage of seeking grassroots participation from community members in Fort Hope and Mishkeegogamang. All community members, elders and youth, will be asked to give their input on how the land in the planning area is going to be used. There will be at least one public presentation this year and an Open House meeting this summer.

Trailer lots getting finished

Mishkeegogamang is hiring a project manager to oversee the long-awaited 27-lot housing development. The plan is to have the houses in place by August. "We're following the proper controls of hiring a project manager and following the proper steps to ensure completion of the housing project," said financial adviser Kevin Houghton.

Community Update

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Contribute to the newspaper.

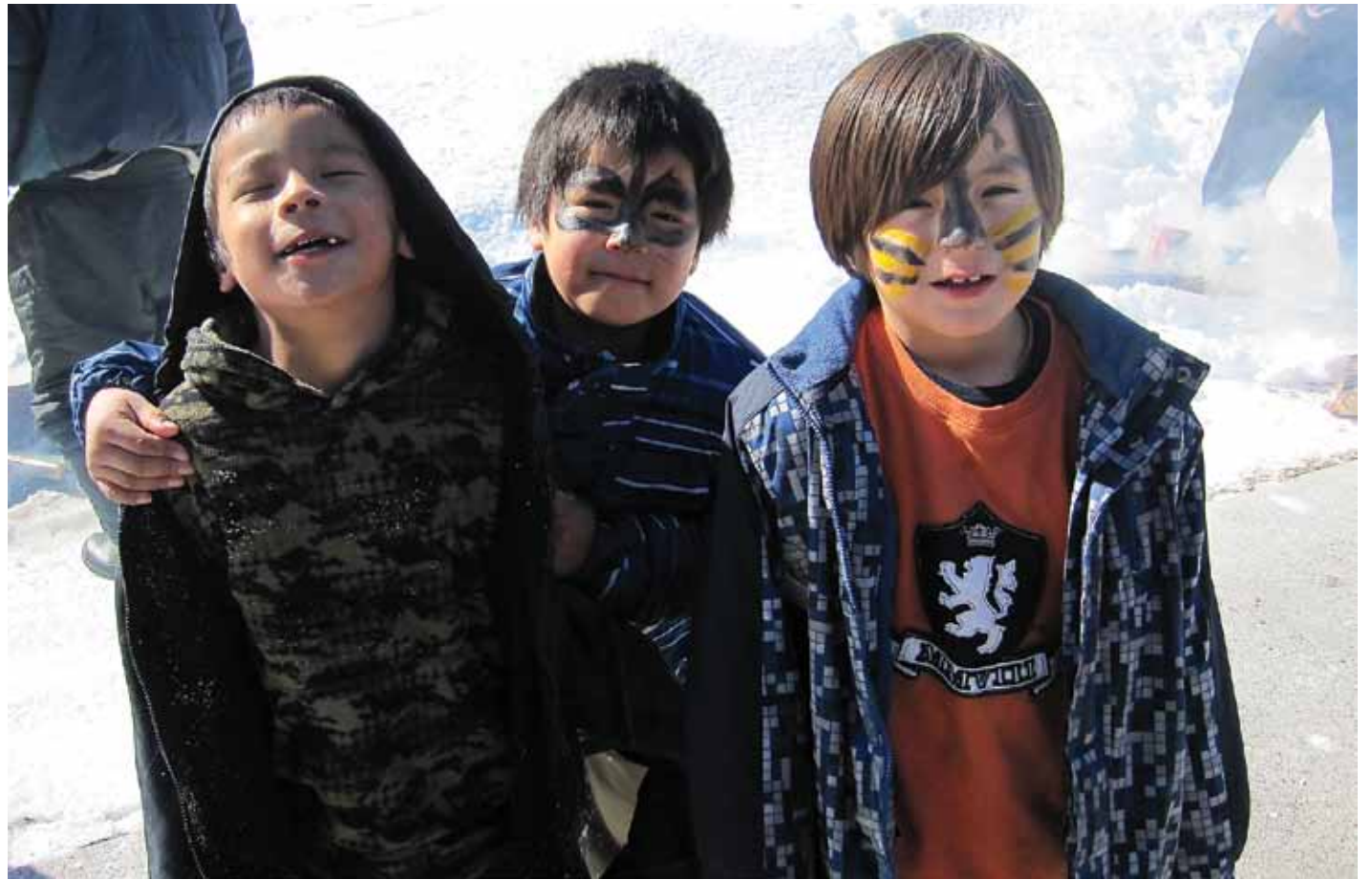
Everyone is welcome to submit an article, photo or write a letter to the Mishkeegogamang Community Update. Share your opinion or idea with other readers. Editors reserve the right to edit for clarity and length.

Lots of Smiling Faces at Winter Carnival

"The 2011 Winter Carnival was a great success, there was a great turnout and fun was had by all," said Amy Shapton, who organized the carnival along with Rachel Neekan and Ida Muckuck. More than twenty contests and activities were held over the three days between March 24 - 26, and all ages were able to get in on the action.

A dedicated committee of staff members from Missabay School (Stacey Cameron, Amanda Kraft, Tammy Mulrooney-Walsh, Daisy Munroe, Madeleine Oswald, Candace Panacheese and Harriet Visitor) all pitched in to help the event run smoothly. Carnival organizers would like to thank the Northern Store, the Welfare Department and Tom's Taxi for their generous donations, K & K Tackle for donating prizes and the OPP for the clothing donation.

"The carnival could not have been possible without the efforts of Missabay staff and all of the community volunteers - Meegwetch!" Amy said. "And many thanks to the Missabay students, Crolancia students and Mishkeegogamang community members for their participation, support and smiles that were brought to many faces over the three days of events. We had a blast and are looking forward to next year's carnival!"



Marcus Panacheese, Tyler Kwandibens & Austin Chickekoo. Below left, Tristan Lastheels-Loon, Jacob Masakeyash & Jerriann Lastheels-Loon. Below, an unidentified gentleman gets into big trouble in the men's snowshow race. PHOTOS BY AMY SHAPTON



Fantastic Opportunities in New Missabay Computer Lab

Missabay School opened up a brand new computer lab on April 6th. Two teachers at Missabay, Brent Labine and Amy Shapton, worked for six months to get the lab up and running. Each of the lab's 15 computers has a wide flat-screen monitor, and they are all connected to the internet via satellite. "Every student has their own computer account so they can log in individually," Brent said. "And all of the computers have Movie Maker software that allows students to edit their own movies."

Another feature of the new computer lab is the school's new Smart Boards, which are somewhat like digital blackboards. The Smart Boards combine a computer with a digital image projector, which can project any image onto an 87" touch screen display. A map of the universe, for example, can be projected onto the screen, and students can use their hands to move any of the stars or planets around the touch screen to learn about orbit paths. The new lab includes four Smart Boards, which cost \$8000 each.



Special Education Resource Teacher Brent Labine hard at work in Missabay's new computer lab.

Police and Community Rebuild Trust

About four years ago, Mishkeegogamang Chief and Council began meeting regularly with the OPP and NAPS. Chief Connie Gray-McKay says that the police meetings are not about teaming up with the police against the community, but rather collaboration to find ways to best serve the people.

“Some people think that we meet with the police to tell on people, but that’s not why we do it,” said Chief Gray-McKay. “The whole idea behind the police meetings is

to establish communication and a way of working together. We all have the same agenda, which is to protect and serve our communities.”

Many Mish residents have problems trusting the police, and the meetings are a way to rebuild relationships between cops and community members. “In the early 1980s there was a lot of police brutality and a really bad, fragmented relationship between the people and the police, so we wanted to be a bridge

for working with the police to address an obvious problem,” Chief Gray-McKay said. “A lot of times people don’t want to go directly to the police and make a complaint, and there are some bad cops out there. So the trust is not there, and these police meetings are one way we can re-establish that trust.”

Meetings were held monthly for the first few years, but changeover in OPP Sergeants has slowed down the number of meetings lately. The Chief would like to see

a return to more regular meetings because they offer an opportunity for both sides to get to know one another and keep the lines of communication open. “In order to work with the police, they need to know who you are and that you’re sincere about what you’re doing,” Chief Connie said. The meetings also give Chief and Council ideas for programming and allocating money, making policy and setting direction for policing in the community.

Coroner Office and Council Improving Communication

Changes are being made in the way coroner investigations are carried out when someone dies in Mishkeegogamang and other First Nations. Former Chief Ronald Roundhead, Councillor Tom Wassaykeesic, and Chief Connie Gray-McKay consulted in March and April with the Coroner’s Office, raising concerns and offering suggestions. They hope to hold an information session with community members in the coming months.

Chief Gray-McKay told the Office of the Chief Coroner that there has been a lot of concern from people in Mishkeegogamang about lost loved ones in the 1970s and 80s. They want to know how to re-open cases where the death was felt to have been handled improperly. Cases like this have resulted in mistrust and broken relationships.

Channels of communication need to be opened up between families, coroners, and the band leadership. “Somebody has to be a liaison person, somebody that has the Ojibway language, because

a lot of our members still only speak their original language,” said Chief Gray-McKay. “I think it’s important that deaths be communicated in a way people can understand. That’s how people can grieve, when they understand what’s happened in a coroner investigation or autopsy.”

Lack of communication from the coroner’s office recently caused added pain for one family in Mish. They had already buried their baby when they found out that the child’s brain had been retained without the permission of the parents. The situation highlighted a need for more culturally sensitive practices by the coroner. Traditionally, Ojibway people preserved bodies and buried them whole. “That’s what the elders always told us, wherever you can, don’t do any more harm than has already been done,” said Gray-McKay. “Death has already made its sting, and you want to lighten the sting of death. People need to have answers when someone dies – there has to be closure.”



Chief Connie Gray-McKay would like to see changes in the way coroners handle investigations when someone dies in Mish.



Heather Ross interviewed 70 people from Mishkeegogamang for the governance project survey.

The People Have Spoken: Results From Governance Project Survey

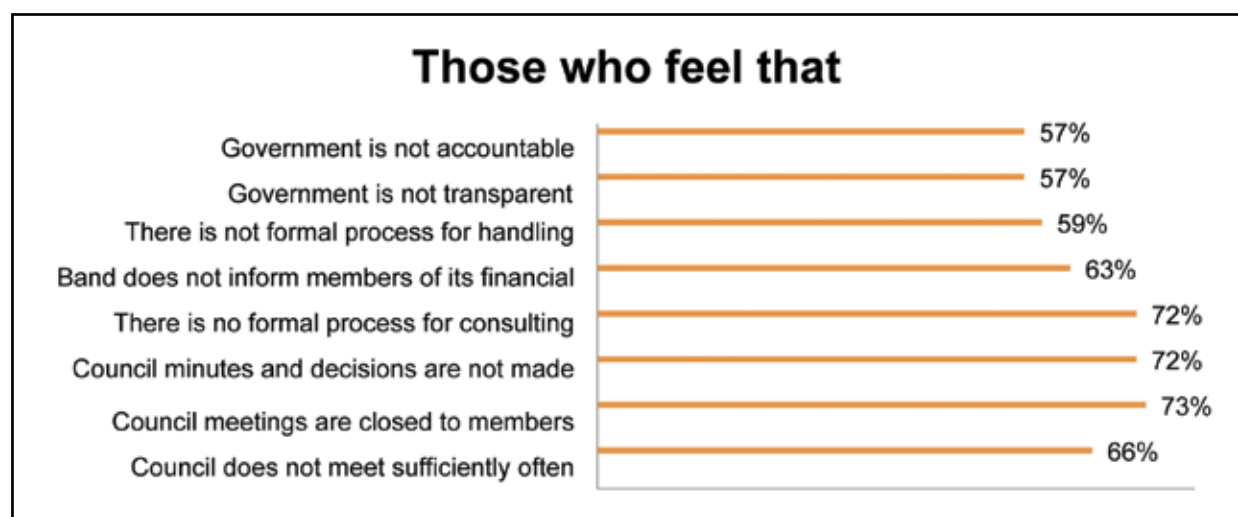
Remember Heather, sitting by the Post Office handing out questionnaires and toonies? Here are the results of that survey. It is based on 70 questionnaires, half from women and half from men. Almost half of the participants were under the age of 30.

The people surveyed felt that the job of the Band Council is first to bring in more funding and programs and to address community issues and the least important

is to run programs. Survey participants said the most important characteristics of leaders are knowledge of the community and the language and education. People would like to see, in addition to the elders’ council, a women’s council and a youth council and most would be willing to sit on such councils.

However the biggest concern people have about their government is the lack of information. People ask that the Council be more open and transparent; that the Council hold public meetings; that Councillors are on the radio often; that the newsletter continue and that people are able to read reports and audits and public documents. While people are critical of their Band government, they have not given up hope with almost half indicating that they do vote.

If the governance project does continue, the first issues people wish to see addressed are a financial code and an administration code, followed by an election code and a membership code. There is little interest in developing a constitution. However self government is not seen as very important. The important issue is meeting basic needs for housing, education, services, employment and a new community centre.



Canada Claim Update

The Canada Claim lawsuit is similar to the case against Ontario Hydro that was settled in 1998. Mishkeegogamang is suing the Canadian government for damages relating to the construction of a hydro station and dam at Rat Rapids in 1934 and 1935. Lake St. Joseph rose dramatically and destroyed homes, gravesites, traplines, hunting grounds, and wild rice fields.

Band members were not consulted beforehand, and fluctuating water levels forced the community to move three times. In 1994, Indian Affairs admitted that the Crown had broken its treaty obligations and should compensate Mishkeegogamang for flooded lands. A key difference from the Ontario Hydro case is that the Canada Claim is against the Canadian government instead of a hydro utility, which means that the settlement amount should be higher.

After many delays and stalling tactics by the government, the Canada Claim trial will begin on May 16, 2011, in Toronto. During the week before the trial, the judge will tour Slate Falls and Mishkeegogamang First Nations. Justice Gantz will fly around Lake St. Joseph and both communities to get a visual take and feel of the affected areas. The first stage of the trial will require elders' testimony, and Band Council will provide updates on the progress of the trial.

A Trust is being established for Canada Claim money. A questionnaire will be circulated this spring to determine how the community would like to see the money invested. At community meetings, which will likely be held in Mishkeegogamang, Thunder Bay, and Sioux Lookout, everybody will get a chance to say how they think the Trust should be set up. A draft Trust document is targeted for the end of August, and community meetings will be held again in November to discuss approval of the draft.

Band Election Deadline for Nominations Coming Up Soon

Have you considered running for the band council or nominating someone else to run? It's election time in Mishkeegogamang, and a meeting for nominations for the positions of chief and five councillors will be held on June 2. Elections will be held July 14.

Nominations can also be made before the meeting by filling out a form supplied by the electoral officer. Band members living off reserve can mail a nomination form to the electoral officer, who will open all nominations made at the meeting. Two band members (a mover and a seconder) are needed to make each nomination. Any candidates nominated on June 2 have until June 7 to withdraw their names.

All Mishkeegogamang band members living off-reserve should fax or phone in their current address and phone number to the band office (928-2414) as soon as possible. This will ensure that they get the notices, are able to make nominations, and receive ballots that will allow them to vote in the July 14 elections.



If you're thinking about putting an egg into the race for Chief and Council, you've got until June 2 to make a nomination. PHOTO BY AMY SHAPTON

Ongoing Questions About Hydro Settlement Funds

After Mishkeegogamang's \$17.25 million settlement with Ontario Hydro in 1998, band members received annual payouts until 2007. That's when Chief and Council decided to spend the remaining money on legal costs relating to the Canada Claim lawsuit and continue payouts to elders only. "We had two meetings in April of 2007 to get feedback from the community on what to do about the legal costs relating to the Canada Claim," Councillor Tom Wassaykeesic said. "No one there at those meetings said they were against the ongoing legal effort. But some of us disagreed with the way the decision was made to cut the hydro payments."

The effort to fund the Canada Claim litigation is in the best interests of Mishkeegogamang, says Councillor David Masakeyash. "We have committed the use of hydro funds, with the support of the community, to pursue this Canada

Claim litigation," Masakeyash said. "Council is aware of some objections to this direction, but we feel it's important enough to maintain that momentum and push through to make sure that these past grievances being addressed by the Canada Claim are respected and settled accordingly."

Councillor Wassaykeesic doesn't agree with his colleagues on council about how the hydro settlement funds are being spent. "I'd like to get this question settled once and for all," he said. "You have people who support the chief and council, and people like me who disagree. I think it causes a rift in the community and the whole thing could be avoided."

At a 2007 meeting, a band member suggested that payments should continue, but be disbursed in smaller amounts. "If that had been tried, if that was being done right now, there would be no controversy,

and no division," Wassaykeesic said. He is disappointed that payments were not resumed in 2009, which had been discussed at the 2007 meetings, and would like to see further community consultations on the issue that include all band members.

Councillor Masakeyash believes that making sure the Canada Claim is concluded will honour Mish's ancestors and provide the maximum benefits for the community's future. "The hydro payout sometimes did not serve the community at large - certainly the individual benefits were good for some, but for others it did not benefit to a great extent," Masakeyash said. "We feel that choosing this option to go and pursue this claim with full resources is the best choice. Not only today, but tomorrow, and to respect our forefathers and all they've gone through."

Mishkeegogamang Managers Train to Work More Effectively

Mishkeegogamang is training managers to work together more effectively and stretch their budgets into new areas. "We're trying to be creative within the budgets themselves, figuring out how to expand programs to fill the greatest needs in the community," said Kevin Houghton, a financial advisor hired by the band. "This year, we're focusing on trying to get the biggest bang for the buck for the community."

Two manager training meetings have taken place so far, and future meetings will focus on how department managers can get together and address problems such as housing. "Managers can find out how

to use program dollars to support elders in their homes more, for example, and that doesn't need to be part of housing but can be part of other programs," Kevin said. "That's the ultimate goal here, building synergies between different departments and having them work together. I'd really love to accomplish that this year, helping to get managers thinking outside the box in terms of their budgets and programs."

Another key goal of the manager training initiative is to show the managers how to better enforce the rules that the community has set. Department managers are also being encouraged to use the radio station and community

newspaper to promote their programs, letting people know what's happening and what services are being offered. Two new management positions are also being created, with a new Director of Operations and Executive Director expected to be hired later in the year.

In other administration news, Mishkeegogamang's standard yearly audit is scheduled for the last week in May, with the deadline for its completion being July 31st. "For the second year in a row we want to beat the year-end audit deadline so we'll hopefully have it in and completed by July 15th at the latest," said Kevin. Last year the budget deficit was

about \$600,000, and the community is aiming to have a balanced set of books with no deficit by March 31st, 2012.

The 2011-2012 budget is close to being finalized, and there are a few funding shortfalls that council is addressing. The largest funding shortfall compared to last year is for the Missabay School, which saw a drop of \$176,000 in funds because of a decrease in student enrollment. "We'll have to figure out a way to cover that shortfall and/or request new funds with a business plan in place to support it," Kevin said.

“Just Around the Corner..”

The Sachigo Lake Walkers said it so many times that the phrase “just around the corner” soon became the official motto of their 700 km fundraising walk. They encountered countless corners over the course of their nine-day journey and raised over \$205,000. That was more than enough to reach their fundraising goal and purchase a CT scanner for the Meno Ya Win Health Centre in Sioux Lookout.

The ‘Making Vision a Reality’ walk-a-thon got started by 20-year-old Riley Barkman of Sachigo Lake. He had been keeping an eye on the fundraising progress for the new CT scanner and saw that an additional \$150,000 was needed. The \$1.5 million Meno Ya Win CT Scanner Campaign had been underway since 2007, and Barkman decided to take matters into his own hands and put his feet to work. Sachigo Lake’s Andrew Kamainawash and Stanley Barkman teamed up with Riley, and they were joined later on by KI’s Lawrence Morris.

The Sachigo Lake Walker’s dedication was apparent right from the start, when they put in a grueling 15-hour first day and covered 75 km. The next morning, they were so sore and tired that they backed it

down to 28 km on day two and eventually settled into a “comfortable” pace of 50 km each day. “The first few days were rough, but it’s been getting better,” said Barkman. By the mid-point of their trek, the group passed through Mishkeegogamang and had already raised \$117,000.

The group stayed motivated during their trek by keeping their fundraising goal firmly in mind. They were also uplifted by all the encouragement and support received along the way. “We thought about what we were doing it for, and that helped,” Barkman said. “The people rooting for us kept us going too.”

An enthusiastic group of supporters from Mishkeegogamang joined the walkers as they passed through the community. They were warmly welcomed throughout their route, which took them through Muskrat Dam, North Caribou Lake, Pickle Lake, and Saugeen before reaching their final destination in Sioux Lookout. All of these communities will benefit from Sioux Lookout’s new CT scanner, which is a special type of X-ray machine that allows for early detection of cancer and other illnesses.



Top: The Sachigo Walkers and support crew take a break in Pickle Lake before heading to Mish. Left: Sachigo Walkers lead the way through Mishkeegogamang and pick up support along the way. Middle: Chief Connie and Riley Barkman walk and talk. Right: Flying the Mish flag.

Information Technology in Mishkeegogamang

Mishkeegogamang residents are active users of information and communications technologies (ICT). These include everything from radio broadcasts, videoconferencing, Facebook, and even the community newspaper you’re reading right now. The final report of a research team that visited the community over the past year contains some interesting facts about ICT use in Mishkeegogamang.

Seventeen community members were interviewed about the ways they use ICT. Not surprisingly, television is the most popular media source in Mish, with 88% of those interviewed saying they watch TV regularly. The internet gets a lot of use as well – 82% were using computers at home for emails and web surfing. People in Mishkeegogamang also seem to be hungry for local news, with 65% saying they listened to community radio broadcasts and read the community newspaper on a regular basis.

Social networking sites like Facebook are especially popular among youthful Mish residents, but all ages seem to be using them. 14 of the 17 people interviewed have a Facebook page, and 5 reported having their own site on MyKnet.org. Even though the area has no cell phone coverage, 53% still had a cell phone that they use when visiting larger centers like Sioux Lookout. In fact, 76% of the community members in the study said that if Mishkeegogamang

had cell phone service, they would use it.

Local people had many good suggestions for using ICT to maintain cultural traditions. “One thing that could be done is the keeping of elders’ testimony on video and using them to educate the community about culture,” one Mish resident said. “Those would be good because our elders are dying away so fast. As long as that’s not recorded, it’s going to be lost if we don’t record those teachings.” Other suggestions include making videos of pow-wows and bush skills like rabbit skinning and setting snares.

Several people also mentioned the importance of using the Ojibway language with these different technologies. “We need to retain language, because language is a basis of who you are,” said one resident. “It’s a basis of your pride, of where you’ve come from as a Nishnawbe person. To me, the only reason I’m living here today, feeling strong about who I am, is because I learned my language first.”

Three members of VideoCom’s research team travelled to Mish on April 1 to distribute the research paper, which is titled “Mishkeegogamang First Nation Community Members Engage with Information and Communication Technologies.” The paper is part of VideoCom’s research project about information technology in Canada’s remote First Nations.



The Mishkeegogamang Falcons had a good run in the Northern First Nations Hockey Tournament, which was held in Sioux Lookout over the week of March 14-20. The Falcons made it all the way to the C-side finals, but came up short in the final game and lost 8-3 to the Obesahdekong Ice Dogs. PHOTO BY ERIN BOTTLE

Chief Speaks at Child Welfare Conference

“Together for a Better Tomorrow: A Summit for Aboriginal Child Welfare” was held at Fort William First Nation near Thunder Bay on April 18-19. The conference was an opportunity for communities and professionals to come together to talk about child welfare and how to best support Aboriginal children, youth, and their families.

Mishkeegogamang Chief Connie Gray-McKay was one of three chiefs from three different regions who were nominated by the Chiefs of Ontario to speak at the summit. “The conference reviewed various Aboriginal child welfare agencies and discussed how they can better serve Aboriginal kids,” said Gray-McKay. “One of my favourite topics is child welfare because children are why we do everything that we do. That’s why we exist, to do something better for their generation.”

“Right now, the government-funded programs don’t base child welfare on

the reserve on cultural systems. The focus has been on intervention rather than prevention, whereas our methods and practices, our beliefs in our culture, are based on prevention,” Chief Connie said. “At least it was in my grandma’s generation and my parent’s generation: people got on our butts right away when we weren’t doing right. Child welfare should be funded to provide prevention programming, like taking kids on the land and that sort of thing.”

One of the main discussions of the conference was about “Innovative Practices in Prevention,” where participants highlighted new approaches to keeping families together and minimizing involvement with the child welfare system. Other topics included “Child Development and Parenting,” “Building Community Partnerships,” and “Innovative Practices in Supporting Children in Urban Centres.”



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**

New Bunk Beds for Children

Quite a few children in Mishkeegogamang have new bunk beds, thanks to an organization named Speroway (formerly known as Feed the Children Canada).

While operating a summer program in Mishkeegogamang, Karen Ward of Speroway had found kids in the community had to wait their turn to sleep because there weren't enough beds. She asked Chief Connie if it would be helpful if Speroway put bunk beds in rooms to provide more places to sleep. The chief was "thrilled with the idea," said Ward, "so we made it work."

Speroway teamed up with Tikinagan and got funding from Vale, a large mining company, to provide 300 bunk beds over three years to Mishkeegogamang and other First Nations. The North-South Partnership for Children also contributed financially, covering shipping costs.

"First priority is if a child under 13 is sleeping on the floor or on a piece of sponge, or if there are several kids crowded

on one mattress," Ward says of decision-making about which households in a community receive beds. "If we run out of homes that meet the first criteria, the second criteria are if they're older children in the same type of circumstances."

Tikinagan prevention worker Trina Ashmugeesha formed a selection committee, and Mishkeegogamang residents Destiny Skunk, who directed the Brighter Futures program, and Jeff Loon "were an incredible help when we got there," Ward says. "They offered their truck; they offered storage ... in the maintenance garage there," saving on trips back and forth to a storage facility in Pickle Lake.

The delivery team reported that "Overall the children were very, very happy, ... clapping and jumping up and down; they were so excited they were going to get a bed. They were already saying who was going to get the top bunk."

Speroway plans to deliver another 10 bunk beds - these ones built by



The first batch of bunk beds are ready for bedtime.

students and teacher-carpenters at two high schools in Mississauga, Ontario - to Mishkeegogamang, likely this summer. These beds will be used at the Pashkogogan Healing Lodge.

Almost Like Christmas All Over Again

Christian Horizons, a non-profit charitable organization, has been sending trucks full of food, clothes and supplies to Mishkeegogamang about two times a year for the last few years. The latest shipment arrived February 5th in a 26-foot truck filled with 8 skids of food and supplies as well as several boxes of new clothes, outerwear, shoes, and boots. The truck stopped at Missabay School, where staff and students helped unload and sort out the goods. "We had the Grades 6, 7 and 8 students put all the food in piles for each family," said Ida Muckuck, who is the Education Manager at Missabay School. "We took out whatever we needed for our students. It was like Christmas all over again!"

Everything was distributed in the school gym on Parent Teacher night, which had a big turnout of parents. "After awhile when everyone seemed to be done talking with the teachers, the gym doors were opened and everyone went in," Ida said. "They looked through the clothes and managed to get everything home. It wasn't too chaotic as everything was organized. The teachers were so amazed to see so many people, and everyone was smiling, mingling and happy."

Kerri-Jean Winteler of Christian Horizons says the organization is excited to be involved with the community. "We're thankful for all the great people in Mishkeegogamang who helped make this recent shipment such a great experience," said Kerri-Jean. "The students and teachers worked hard and did a great job organizing all the food into groupings for each family."

A special note of gratitude goes to Mark and Jamie, the two volunteers who took time off work to drive the truck up to Mish. They'd both been here before helping out with housing projects. "We are very thankful for our partners at Daily Bread Food Bank, Giant Tiger and Coats for Kids in Bradford who provided all the donations," said Kerri-Jean.



Delivery women help unload goods from Christian Horizons at Missabay School on Feb. 5.



Tom Hawke and Edna Skunk at the Prescription Drug Think Tank in Toronto.

PHOTO BY ERIN BOTTLE

Prescription Drug Abuse a Huge Problem

Five people from Mishkeegogamang traveled to Toronto for the Think Tank on Prescription Drug Abuse on March 11th and 12th. "The objective of the Think Tank was to come up with a work plan as to deal with this horribly huge problem," said Chief Connie Gray-McKay. "It was a really good dialogue about where we are as communities in terms of knowledge about drug abuse issues and the solutions we can find."

Edna Skunk, Charliisa Bottle, Tom Hawke, Erin Bottle, and Connie all made the trip. The conference was attended by numerous experts in the field of drug addiction, and the Chiefs from Marten Falls, Sandy Lake, Kashechewan, Ginoogamang, Muskrat Dam, and Mattagami First Nations were also there. Participants at the Think Tank discussed

the outbreak of opioid (such as codeine, Percocet, and Oxycontin) addiction in First Nations communities. They identified key elements to address the problem, including human & financial resources, policy changes, political agreements, and national & international supports.

"There are some people who want to do something about their drug use but don't know how to start. There are also a lot of people who feel that they don't have a problem," said Chief Gray-McKay. "I think part of the biggest problem I see here is that many of our parents and grandparents are in denial themselves and don't believe their kids are doing this stuff. They just know that their kids are asking for a lot of money at a lot of different times, and don't realize that the kids have a drug problem. We don't want to wait until they're dead."

What Is Truth?

A message from
Pastor Richard Sweat

What is Truth? The question is debated in classrooms, courtrooms, and even churches. Pontius Pilate asked the question during the trial of Jesus, then walked away as if there was no answer. Can we learn the truth through education? Can science, with its ever-changing ideas, teach us absolute truth? What about moral truth? Can we depend on our own decisions of what is right and wrong?

In order to find the answer to the Truth question we need an authority on the subject. You can be your own authority as Pilate was by searching your feelings and thoughts. This is, in fact, how most people arrive at their own version of the truth. But still we are dogged by bad decisions that seemed like truth at the time! All of recorded history tells the same story.

*We seem bent on badness!
1 John 5:19 tells us "...the whole world lieth in wickedness." We don't have to be taught how to be bad because it is in our nature. Five minutes in any history book or nursery in any century would prove the point. Obviously we can't leave the question of truth in human hands. So where can we turn for an answer?*

At his trial, Jesus said that He was a king. Of what was he the king? Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. John 18:37

The King of Truth! That is quite a claim. Did he have an answer to the world's badness?

John 1:29 tells us: The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. John says further in John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

**Life is short.
Death is sure.
Sin the curse.
Christ the cure!**

Pastor Richard Sweat holds Sunday Services at the Bible Baptist Church at 11:00 am every week

Sixties Scoop Survivors Encouraged to Join Lawsuit

A new lawsuit is seeking compensation for Sixties Scoop victims. Between 1960 and the mid-1980s, thousands of First Nations children were taken away from their parents by the government and either adopted or put into foster care. Even though it lasted well past the 1960s, this shameful chapter in Canadian history came to be known as the Sixties Scoop. In many cases, there was no legal justification for taking the children, and parents were not even consulted.

The class action lawsuit was started by Dokis First Nation's Robert Commanda and Beaverhouse First Nation's Marcia Brown-Martel. They are suing the government on behalf of at least 16,000 Aboriginal people in Ontario who "were systemically denied the opportunity to preserve their identity." The lawsuit is asking for compensation of

\$85,000 for each claimant. Depending on how many people join the lawsuit, total damages could reach \$1.36 billion.

The lawsuit is unique because it is the first case that targets loss of culture as a wrongful act. Lawyer Jeffrey Wilson said, "We expect Canada to appeal and do all it can to delay and wear us out but I am confident we can outlast them provided we continue to work together."

Anishinabek Nation Deputy Grand Council Chief Glen Hare is supportive of the lawsuit and also stressed the importance of working together. Scoop survivors are encouraged to register to be part of the suit. "Your stories can be powerful, say the lawyers in the case. People are urged to write letters to their MP's, chiefs, and other community leaders asking for their support in the litigation.

You can register as a claimant if:

- (A) You are Aboriginal/First Nations/ Metis/Native,
- (B) You were placed in foster care or for adoption,
- (C) You were placed in a non-Aboriginal home in foster care or for adoption,
- (D) The order placing you in foster care or for adoption was made in Ontario; and
- (E) You were in foster care or placed for adoption and/or living in foster care or the adoptive home any time between December 1, 1965 and December 31, 1984.

If this applies to you, you can register online to be part of the lawsuit at www.sixtiescoopclaim.ca. You can also register or get further information by calling Alex Hamilton at 416 956-5631.

Landscape Yard & Home Beautification Contest

Purpose: To initiate pride on the condition of our homes and yards, and to promote healthy competition in the community.

1st prize • \$2,000.00 cash

2nd prize • \$1,500.00 cash

3rd prize • \$1,000.00 cash

4th prize • \$500.00 cash

5th prize • BBQ & utensils (\$400.00)

6th prize • Yard package includes Lawn Mower and Weed Wacker (\$300.00)

7th prize • Wheel Barrel/Rakes/Shovel (\$200.00)

8th prize • Garden Package – Potting Plants /Top Soil /Flower Planters

Team Challenge Yard Cleanup: \$2,500.00

RULES

- Five houses per team
- Prizes will be awarded to the listed tenant paying rent only
- Teams must communicate and work with each other

Purpose: To promote team work and positive communication with your neighbour. To initiate creativity on how to landscape our areas.

A "Scooped" Child Talks about Home

Karen Kaminawaish was "scooped" as a two-year-old and adopted to the United States. She has since reunited with her birth family in Mishkeegogamang. Right now she is studying for a doctorate in Sociology at the University of Oklahoma. The Update asked her some questions and we will be printing her answers in the next few newspapers. Karen prefers not to capitalize references to herself when she writes. Our first question:

What does Mishkeegogamang mean to you now?

How do you think about it?

Today Mishkeegogamang means home. Home is where my roots are and where my family lives, even those family members that i do not know yet. It is an anchor for me, knowing that i truly belong and am part of a warm place way up the north road in the middle of the bush and it's home to me today. I often think of my late mom, Sarah Kaminawaish and how

she might have lived her life. Today if she is looking down, i want her to be proud of my actions and who i have become. One of my sisters once told me that my Mom was always doing for other people and i want to be just like that, while serving my God and having fun doing it.

I truly enjoy visiting with my sister, Josie and all my nieces and nephews. I love to get little treats for my "special buddy" James Masaykeyash while i am out.

I had the opportunity to meet the Muckuck sisters (whom i call "The Queens") last summer and got to spend time with them. I love them and especially enjoyed having Francis go places with me. It seemed that whenever my truck was going, she was ready to go too. One time i gave her a push-up popsicle and she did not know how to eat it and so i had to show her and we just laughed and laughed. Even though there was a language barrier, she and i would look at each other and

just laugh. Eva is always humorous, i just know it, but we cannot understand each other, while Amelia is always grinning in her quiet world. When i am living my life in Oklahoma i often think of "The Queens" and say a quick prayer for them.

My best last summer memory is when i had expressed that if the Queens wished to go to visit their home at Menako, i was willing to take them. Instead they wished to go to Sioux Lookout to visit their sister Mary who was hospitalized. So Erin and i took them down there and what a joy to see their tears of joy, laughter and happy smiles. It surely was a Kodak moment.

Having Chief Connie and the band councillors. David, Tom, Mary Ann, and Bobby guiding Mishkeegogamang into the future and managing the daily reserve life while assisting our people is calming. At times there may be misunderstandings, but all in all, we are one people, the people of Mishkeegogamang.

Kids Corner

How can you tell which end of a worm is which? Tickle it in the middle and see which end laughs!

Knock Knock. Who's there? Woo.

Woo hoo?!

No need to get carried away, it's just a joke!

Excellent New Accommodations in Sioux

First Nations people traveling to Sioux Lookout for healthcare have a new place to stay, thanks to the Jeremiah McKay Kabayshewekamik hostel that officially opened in March. The hostel is run by the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (SLFNHA) and will replace the old hostel that was built more than 60 years ago.

SLFNHA says that it will continue to support and advocate for First Nations clients who go to Sioux Lookout for healthcare at the Meno Ya Win Health Centre, as well as those on their way to specialist appointments in Winnipeg or Thunder Bay. The majority of patients and their families who travel to Sioux Lookout for healthcare are from the 31 northern communities in the Sioux Lookout area.

"Community members have to leave the comforts of home, family and community to access certain health services, often under trying circumstances," said John Cutfeet, who is the SLFNHA Board Chair. "The new hostel will alleviate some of the stressors of being transported to different appointments,



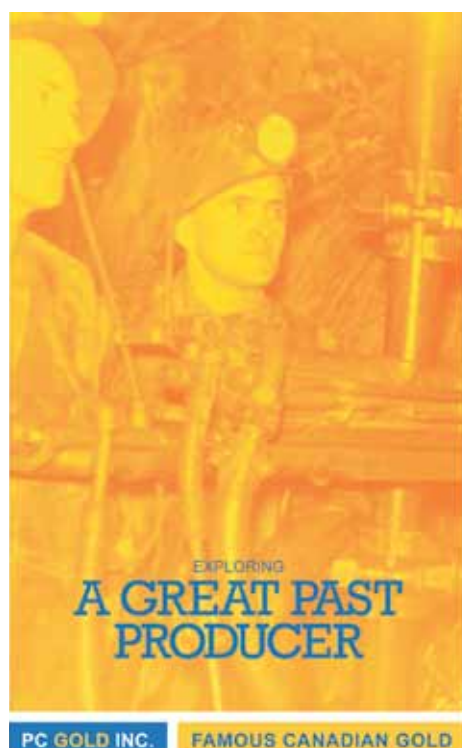
The Jeremiah McKay Kabayshewekamik hostel in Sioux Lookout's health centre is "state-of-the-art."

accommodations, and meal sites. It will also give community members the opportunity to begin their recovery earlier in a comfortable environment."

The \$14.3 million, 38,000 sq. ft. facility has 100 beds in 56 rooms, including two family suites, 42 double rooms and 16 single rooms. Each room has a private bathroom, cable TV, a telephone, and a card-key lock. The building features two elevators, wheelchair accessibility,

a family lounge, and a communications lounge for accessing the internet. An activity coordinator will host activities for kids in a children's play area on weekdays. SLFNHA expects the family-friendly accommodations to be especially welcoming for maternity patients and other long-term care patients.

The facility is a welcome replacement for the previous hostel, which was built in 1949 and condemned in 2006.



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