



# Community Update

## MOU signed with MetalCORP

Mishkeegogamang First Nation and MetalCORP Limited signed an Exploration Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in July. The MOU commits to an ongoing relationship between the two parties with respect to the company's exploration activities on its Pickle Lake properties which are located in Mishkeegogamang traditional territory.

MetalCORP is a Canadian junior resource company with offices in Toronto and Thunder Bay. The company is exploring on properties known as the Tarp Lake Property, the Metcalfe Property and the Connell Property which cover a combined total area of 12,000 acres in the historical Pickle Lake gold camp area.

The Exploration MOU sets out measures to include Mishkeegogamang in training, ongoing communication and opportunities for businesses within the community to participate in the exploration activities. In addition, Mishkeegogamang and MetalCORP have agreed to negotiate an Impact Benefit Agreement should the project proceed to the operational stage.

"This agreement ensures our cooperation, support and participation in the activities of MetalCORP," said Chief Gray-McKay. "This agreement envisions shared benefits from lands which our people have occupied for thousands of years."

President and CEO of MetalCORP, Donald Alexander Sheldon, said he is very pleased with the agreement. "MetalCORP is committed to working in cooperation with Mishkeegogamang in all phases of our project," he said.

David Masakeyash, head negotiator for Mishkeegogamang, said the negotiations were successful because the two parties listened to each other and tried to address the concerns and objectives each brought to the table. "With this Exploration MOU and the commitment to enter an Impact Benefit Agreement, the company's success is now important to us and we will support them to achieve that success."



Mary Moquano celebrated her 100th birthday in May.

## Another 100 years? Mary Moquano's not sure!

Mary Moquano celebrated her 100th birthday in May of 2009. She was born around Cat Lake where her father, Sandy Lawson was posted as Hudson Bay manager. Her mother's name was Sara and her grandfather was Ka pa neh. Mary doesn't remember playing with toys as a child, but said they lived near a beach where they would cut bark from a birch tree and make small canoes to float along the shore. She remembers working,

but not for a wage. Rather, work was for survival, "looking after each other for survival," she said. Mary lives with her daughter Marion Spade on the Main Reserve and receives home care a few times a day. When asked if she'd like to live for another 100 years, the shy, bright elder replied with a laugh that she wasn't sure about that.

## More questions than answers in OPP shooting

There are still more questions than answers in regards to a Peterborough man shot dead by the OPP on the lands between Mishkeegogamang communities.

According to media reports, 30-year-old Levi Schaeffer was killed on June 24 after being shot in the chest by an OPP officer with the Pickle Lake detachment. The incident took place near Osnaburgh Lake.

Chief Connie Gray-McKay said little is known about what happened that day. Schaeffer was seen in and around the community in the days before the shooting and there are stories about him stealing a boat from a tribal member during that time. Police told the Chief that there was an altercation on land and the OPP shot Schaeffer. He died at the scene.

Immediately after the incident, the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) was called to the scene. They arrived the following day. The SIU is a civilian law enforcement agency that investigates when there is a death, serious bodily harm or allegation of sexual assault involving police. They will release their findings once they conclude their report, whether or not an officer is charged in the case.

"Nothing has been disclosed to us at this point," said Chief Gray-McKay. "At the meeting we had with the OPP, they were very general. It's like they have a gag order."

The Chief is used to getting information from the OPP and NAPS on serious incidents, but in this case, with

the SIU involved, details are unavailable. "There's not much we can say when people are wondering," she said.

The Examiner, a Thunder Bay newspaper, reportedly spoke to the mother of the victim. She told a reporter that her son had traveled to the area from Thunder Bay by bicycle. She said Schaeffer was a loved member of his family and community and that the family has been told nothing about what happened and why it happened. The OPP in Pickle Lake were asked to comment for this story but said the case is in the hands of the SIU.

Anyone with information regarding this incident is encouraged to contact the Pickle Lake OPP at 807-928-2211.

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## Energy on the Albany

Gold, platinum, iron and nickel are not the only treasures on the traditional lands of Mishkeegogamang. There is also potential to increase the production of energy. Councillor David Masakeyash said energy production on the Albany River system is something that has to be looked at in greater detail. "We will have to be participants in that," said Masakeyash. Exactly how is unclear, but the band already has a strategy in place and has their "foot in the door" as an applicant to dam the river in two different places themselves. Due to the band's past experience with a hydro dam on the Albany, this is not something they will enter into lightly. "Hydro dams are bad, especially for this community. Somebody down the road will have to deal with that," said Masakeyash. But for now, the band has their application in and, for the time being, that will stop other developers from dam construction on the Albany.

## KI stops exploration

Chief Donny Morris has refused Platinex Corporation access to Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) First Nation traditional lands. Platinex claims it has the right to explore the area for platinum but has been denied access to the land by members of the KI community. In 2008 Chief Morris and six council members were sentenced to six months in jail for contempt of court. Although the Ontario Superior Court of Justice found the company took adequate steps to consult with KI and that preliminary drilling would do minimal harm to the land, Chief Morris continues to refuse Platinex access to the site. Chief Morris told the National Post in 2009, "I'm not sitting down with Platinex. I believe we paid our dues when we were jailed and that company does not exist here."

## Information Needed Regarding Tractor Trailer Damage

On July 29th, 2009 at midnight a northbound tractor trailer was damaged as a result of several objects being thrown at the windshield of the moving vehicle.

The incident occurred on Highway 599 in the Territory of Mishkeegogamang near the settlement of 10 Houses.

The Pickle Lake OPP encourages anyone with information to contact the Pickle Lake OPP or if they wish to remain anonymous contact Crime Stoppers with any information.

Crime Stoppers 1-800-222-TIPS



Top: Councillor David Masakeyash beside a large rock containing gold near the Pickle Crow mine site. Left: Pickle Crow mine has been re-opened near Pickle Lake and employs several members of the Mishkeegogamang First Nation. An exploration memorandum of understanding was signed between the band and the mining company in April. Right: This mining site was abandoned when there was a downturn in the global economic.

# Mining once again becoming lucrative

The price of gold is making the mining industry a paying proposition once more. Mining companies are once again exploring old mines as well as new opportunities in the traditional lands of the people of Mishkeegogamang.

Councillor David Masakeyash said that, as a result, Mishkeegogamang is putting the mining companies on notice. The old mining ways are over. There must be opportunities for First Nations in the future of mining in the area. The actions of Big Trout Lake Chief Donny Morris and his council, which resulted in jail time for council members, has been a catalyst for change – a change Masakeyash welcomes.

Mining has had, and will continue to have, a huge impact on the traditional territories, said Masakeyash. Currently Musslewhite, a gold mine north of Pickle Lake, has a transmission line going directly through Mishkeegogamang traditional lands and this is something that "has to be spoken to in some way." The life expectancy of the mine has been expanded 25 years. The mine produces nearly a quarter of a

million ounces of gold annually.

The matter of an agreement between the mine and Mishkeegogamang is complicated due to the mine's agreements with Round Lake and North Caribou. These First Nations have first privilege for employment and business and it is only when these communities cannot fulfill the employment needs of the mine that the company looks to communities such as Mishkeegogamang. Masakeyash said patience is wearing thin after years of waiting and negotiating with the mine.

"It does become somewhat frustrating," he said. Masakeyash takes some responsibility for the delays and lack of a reasonable deal.

"We left the door open for so long. We've been very patient and they take advantage because we have been so lenient," said Masakeyash. "It's also my fault because I grew up like that."

He said the band would like to continue negotiating in the traditional way, but he warns that the door will not be open indefinitely. "If they don't negotiate,

we will consult with the First Nations signatories in the agreement who are already involved. Their agreements also impact on our rights." Masakeyash said Mishkeegogamang wants an agreement that benefits the people as a group, as well as individually.

Mishkeegogamang has better agreements with junior companies coming into their territory to explore the mining potential. "They are coming to the table and (working with) the new systems put into place that respect First Nations rights as well as our traditional lands," said Masakeyash. "The dual process permits them to explore but is not a guarantee of free entry anymore."

If the junior companies make a discovery, they can sell the mine site or mine the area themselves. At that point negotiations would re-open with the affected First Nations. "The old mining ways are over," emphasized Masakeyash. "There have to be opportunities for First Nations."

# Respectful burial: important traditions

Tom Wassaykeesic saw the remains of the body that washed up near the Old Post. The man was wearing a shirt with buttons, so it was clearly a death after contact, but he was wrapped in birch bark in the traditional manner. "We believe it is better to have a separate place for the dead so they can rest in peace for eternity. That's what we believe in," said Wassaykeesic.

Council member Tom Wassaykeesic was born in Pickle Lake and that's where he plans to be buried, no matter what time of year he passes on.

Wassaykeesic and the rest of the Mishkeegogamang Chief and Council have been protesting the regulations of the Pickle Lake Pine Ridge cemetery committee that include not allowing burials in the winter time. When a tribal member passed away in early spring, before the ground was thawed, the committee requested the family put the body in storage until later in the season. "That wasn't right," said Wassaykeesic. "We've always buried our people as soon as possible after they pass away."

The reason given for waiting was so that existing graves and the grass at the cemetery would not be disturbed. "I didn't agree with that," said Wassaykeesic. "We have always been respectful when our people dig graves, usually by hand. We have always been respectful of the graves next to it."

The cemetery also took issue with band members digging the grave, saying it was the responsibility of their staff. But many Mishkeegogamang band members want to dig the graves of their loved ones themselves.

In two recent cases, the cemetery committee has made exceptions and allowed the burials if they are in the "new" area of the graveyard, but Wassaykeesic wants the issue resolved in a more permanent manner. "We haven't resolved anything yet and I know the issue will come up again. Whether the mayor and his council like it or not, they're going to

have to deal with it."

"My wish is to be buried at Pickle Lake because that's where I was born," said Wassaykeesic. Section 35 of the Indian Act says First Nations people can bury their dead at the place of their choosing.

Anishinabe also believe that when a grave is discovered, it is left alone, not relocated. "If someone is buried, you leave them there. You do everything to make sure the grave is not disturbed," he said. Respect for this custom can be seen at the Pickle Lake airport, which has a fence around an old grave, as well as in a new development to house MNR workers within the town limits.

He says the town does an excellent job of maintaining and caring for the cemetery. Originally there was a wooded lot between the Catholic and the Anglican/Protestant graveyards. However, in the 1980s the lot was sold and the owner cleared the lot of trees before turning it over to the town. The town has passed the responsibility of managing the cemetery to the committee, but it is still maintained with municipal equipment and the committee chair is a member of the town council. The committee maintains they are simply following Ontario provincial legislation in regards to cemeteries. Wassaykeesic fears that if the people of Mishkeegogamang purchase property within the town limits for their own graveyard, it too will have to follow the provincial rules. These are issues that need to be resolved as soon as possible for the benefit of both the town and the family members of Mishkeegogamang people that live, and when they die, wish to be buried there.

## Always think of the ones to come



# Changes at the Safe House

The Mishkeegogamang Safe House is in the process of an administrative restructuring. Safe House coordinator Edna Skunk has been in her position for a year and a half and said it has become evident during this time that there is a great need for change in the administration of the program.

The Safe House opened in 1998 and has had numerous administrators and considerable staff turn-over. Skunk believes this is due, partially, at least, to the lack of proper policies and procedures and personnel records.

A break-in at the centre was the catalyst for change in the way files are kept at the Safe House. Vandals broke into the facility earlier this year, scattering paper files and creating a general chaos in the building. Cleaning up and putting files back together made Skunk realize not only how vulnerable the files were to vandalism, but how inadequate the files were to begin with. She is currently researching the best method for electronic filing, both for client information and staff.

A computer-based filing system would include employee information as well as data on Safe House clients. Skunk said she will be able to put out statistics with the push of a button and be able to develop better programming for clients while keeping their information safe and secure. She said the software will also make reporting simpler and she will be able to keep the chief and council informed of the activities at the Safe House without divulging personal

information about clients.

"We will give a summary report to our chief and council so they know from us what is happening, rather than getting information from people in the community," she said. "That way they will know what's going on instead of being blindfolded."

Skunk said the monthly reports to the council will not give out personal details, but rather will discuss incidents and general statistics of the Safe House. Skunk said the staff will be abiding by the laws of the Canadian labour codes and will follow new, improved personnel policies including job descriptions, benefits and letters of hiring. A new work schedule is also starting, where four

full-time house counsellors will be on a two day on, two day off schedule, similar to the schedule followed by the security staff.

Skunk said she is working quickly to put the new plans into place and expects the system to benefit both clients and staff.

The Safe House houses not only women and children in need of shelter, but also takes in Elders visiting the community for short periods. A second facility with an extra four bedrooms is expected to be operational in the near future.

"We do everything to keep them safe," said Skunk of the Safe House clients. Sometimes women and children are taken out of the community via taxi to stay in shelters away from Mishkeegogamang. Skunk is in constant communication with shelter directors and also has access to a variety of services, including NADAP workers, healing lodge workers and specialized counsellors in the resource centre adjacent to the Safe House. "We have a lot of services right here," said Skunk. "The community people just need to look harder."

For herself, Skunk said she relies on family and time on their traditional lands to keep her balanced and able to do the work she does. "You feel connectedness," she said. "Our land is our spirituality as Anishinabe. It's so peaceful."

### Personnel files should contain:

- Job description
- Hiring documents (application, resume, etc.)
- Payroll-related documents
- Performance Evaluations (signed originals)
- Time cards for prior year(s)
- Awards, nominations, other commendation letters
- If applicable, corrective action or disciplinary letters



Osteopathic practitioner Tara Mueller with client Alice Bottle.

## It's about giving back

*"If we can help one person reconnect with the earth or with who they are, that's worth it to me. What's important is nobody is lost – there's always hope and tomorrow can always a better day."*

Tara Mueller is the leader of a team of four osteopathic practitioners who volunteer several days of their summer holidays to bring a free health service to the people of Mishkeegogamang.

Back in 2005, Dr. Marilyn Koval approached Mueller about the possibility of offering an osteopathy clinic in Mishkeegogamang. Mueller held a clinic on her own that year, and the following year came back with an associate. From 2007 to 2009, a team of four has come to hold the clinic. Mueller flies three team members out on points and one of the members covers her own airfare. They manage their own accommodations and charge no fees for their visits. Supporters from Sioux Lookout and Pickle Lake also help to make the clinic happen. "It's about giving back," said Mueller. "All of us have been blessed in our lives."

A team of two practitioners sees each patient for one hour. The doctors at the nursing station set up the appointments ahead of the team's visit. Mueller believes strongly in the health benefits of osteopathy. Seeing people only once a year isn't optimal, but, she said, practitioners deal with "a number of layers – emotional, physical, mental and spiritual – that people take on in their lives. If we can help one

person reconnect with the earth or with who they are, that's worth it to me. What's important is nobody is lost – there's always hope and tomorrow can always a better day."

Mueller expressed thankfulness for the "wonderful" administrative support of the nursing station during the practitioners' stay.

Mueller grew up in Sioux Lookout, received her Bachelor of Science in Physiotherapy from Queen's University in 1989, and worked as a Physiotherapist Officer in the Canadian Armed Forces until 1994. She earned a Doctorate of Osteopathy at the Canadian College of Osteopathy and is now in private practice in Sioux Lookout and King City, Ontario.

She sees her work also as a way to introduce the north to the south. "The more the south knows about the north," she said, "the better chance we'll all get along."

Osteopathy is a holistic approach to health care which teaches that treatment of the musculoskeletal system (bones, muscles and joints) assists the body's own power of recovery.

## Win-win approach to sharing the land

Taa Shi Kay Win. It's a complex Ojibway word which speaks to the native way, the inherent right of the Anishinabe people, where they live and where they exist.

A local Mishkeegogamang Taa Shi Kay Win committee, funded by the Far North Initiative, is working on a plan that will guide all future development and care of the Taa Shi Kay Win land base. Their meeting strategy is based on an interest based, or win-win approach to problem solving, rather than position based and confrontational or win-lose methods.

"We are vigorously trying to recognize our uniqueness as Anishinabe when it comes to the land," said committee member Ronald Roundhead. "It's a very

complicated issue based on our way, a spiritual way. How can you incorporate the spiritual into a government process?" Roundhead said his role is one of watchdog on the committee, to make sure the interpretation of Taa Shi Kay Win is followed.

The project is headed by Kenny Wavey and also includes Ronald Roundhead, Richard Loon, Edna Skunk, and Tommy Spade. Chief Connie Gray-McKay wants to also include five youth on the committee. Roundhead said he is happy to see youth included on the committee. They will be a "salt and pepper" mix, including a local youth who knows how to survive off the land as well as youth familiar

with computer technology. "We need to combine the knowledge," he said.

Taa Shi Kay Win is a joint effort between Fort Hope and Mishkeegogamang, communities that have a long history together on the traditional lands. Roundhead said these communities don't ever "quite fit the bill" of the provincial government, but he hopes there will be some flexibility at the government level in regards to how the Anishinabe people want to see the land used and taken care of. "It's up to the newly elected council to keep it moving forward," said Roundhead.

The provincial Far North Planning Initiative is intended to protect at least 225,000 square kilometres of the Far North

Boreal region and to develop a plan for sustainable development in the area. The initiative was announced in 2008 and requires consultation and accommodation with First Nations before mining development and forestry can go ahead.

Since the Far North Initiative has formalized the plan in legislation, Roundhead expects the Terms of Reference of Taa Shi Kay Win will formally and legally be included in the high level plan for the area.

The draft plan will be taken to the Chief and Councils in August and to the communities in September.



Construction cannot keep up with the need for housing on the First Nation, but continues as resources become available. Harvesting logs for construction provides jobs as well as building materials.



Drumming session at the Pettahbun Youth Gathering.

## Roots and identity

Youth were challenged to follow their dreams at the Pettahbun Youth Gathering that took place July 21 - 24 at Missabay Community School. One of the highlights of the Gathering was a presentation by Don Waboose, an elder from Wikiwemikong, the largest freshwater island in the world (also known as Manitoulin). He spoke on roots and identity, encouraging the youth not to forget where they're from when they leave home. "Follow your dreams," he said, but don't forget your family. It's an integral part of your identity."

Another highlight was a drumming session led by Broken Walls, a First Nations band based out of Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory in south-eastern Ontario. Broken Walls included motivational speaking and

ideas about youth empowerment in its presentations. Its motto is "Breaking Walls of Separation" and its mission is "To break walls of division through worship and to demonstrate a message that restores dignity and brings healing to the broken hearted."

A group from An Eagle's Cry Life Centre in Thunder Bay gave a message to youth about how some people get a different hand in life and it's up to you how you play the game.

The Gathering attracted about 30 youth per day. There were cultural teachings and teaching about a healthy lifestyle, alternative living and communication with the Creator.

## Damage to skating rink estimated at \$8,000

A late July fire at the skating rink in Ten Houses has sparked conversation once more about bringing the island of Kitchi-Miniss to reserve status.

Chief Connie Gray-McKay said the fire, started by "misguided youth" caused an estimated \$8,000.00 damage and will have an effect on the ice rink for the coming winter. Not long before, somebody used an accelerant to try and burn down the band office. Because of that fire, the band hired security that is credited for putting out the skating rink fire.

The band does have a new fire truck, but training has only begun for local firefighters. The band also wants to build a new fire hall to house the truck. The fire truck won't be much use to Ten Houses because there are no fire hydrants in that community. The Ten Houses water station doesn't have enough capacity to run hydrants. As well, by the time the truck would get from the main community to Ten Houses, a fire could be out of control.

But Councillor Tom Wassaykeesic said if the band would get Kitchi-Miniss Island back, they could begin to improve services by housing both a police station and fire station there. Kitchi-Miniss Island

is in control of the Province of Ontario and Wassaykeesic is not hopeful the band will be able to make use of it for emergency stations any time soon. "They won't give up the island. They'll keep it. They'll hang on for as long as they can," he said.

In the meantime, the people in Ten Houses will have to rely on quick wits, prevention strategies and band security to deal with local fires.

The band's position on Kitchi-Miniss is that Canada did not set aside the reserve lands selected by the Elders at Treaty in 1905. Instead, it surveyed and set aside only portions of the selected lands, splitting the land into two separate reserves, and excluding from the reserve the Kitchi-Miniss Island, other islands in Doghole Bay and Osnaburgh Lake, a substantial strip of land on the western side of IR 63B, 121.5 acres on the southern tip of IR63B and a significant section of land on the eastern side of IR 63A. It also took away any waterway capable of generating power.



Local artist Lawrence Muckuck painted a series of new signs which can be seen posted around the community.



Congratulations to Gordon Wassaykeesic who graduated from the Lakehead University with his language instruction diploma.



Radio bingo is a favourite activity for many Mishkeegogamang residents.



Josie Kaminawaish and three generations of her family, including great-grandson Sheldon.

## Traditional experiences significant for both children and elders

The first time she went to see Elder James Masakeyash, not a word passed between them. Josie Kaminawaish had put down the bottle two years before and a voice kept telling her to go see “this particular person.”

“I didn’t go for a long time, but one time I decided to go,” she said. The fact that the Elder didn’t speak didn’t discourage Kaminawaish. She went again, and again, and again. “I kept going and one day he started talking and he kept on talking.”

One of the things Masakeyash talked to Kaminawaish about was the seasonal teachings. She had a lot to learn. “It went on and on and on and I was thinking in my mind, ‘that’s a job he is giving me,’” said Kaminawaish. Her teacher has long passed on, but Kaminawaish continues to work with students at the school, using her knowledge “only when I feel that the kids need a particular area of something I’ve learned.”

“Sometimes when I’m teaching and I feel the kids are restless, I drop everything and tell a story. They just love stories. I think they’re story-hungry,” she said.

Kaminawaish said that a long time ago the elders used to say that when the moose stop multiplying, the deer move in their place. When there are a lot of moose, the deer will go. They also warned young people that if they “play around with whatever’s out there” you won’t have it any more. These are lessons she passes on to her children, often when they are having their lessons outside, something the children love to do.

Last winter Kaminawaish took them on a snowshoe field trip at the Rat Rapids area. After they were dropped off the children collected wood for a fire, made tea porridge and set up snares. All the while Kaminawaish and her counterpart Gordon Wassaykeesic taught the children about things they need to know while living in the bush. Kaminawaish said sometimes she speaks to the children in their language, explaining to them in a way that is not possible when using the English language.

When it was time to go back to the waiting bus, Kaminawaish realized it had been 43 years since she last used

snowshoes and it was a lot harder going up the hill than it had been going down the hill. She was utterly exhausted by the time she was helped back into the bus. The next morning the children were going to return to the location to check their snares. Kaminawaish knew she couldn’t repeat the trek of the day before. But the children would not take “no” for an answer. They found a sled and promised their teacher they would pull her down the hill and back up again to the bus later in the day.

Sitting on the sled and watching the children take turns pulling her and the supplies up the hill, Kaminawaish had a heart-warming moment. “My heart just went! I was watching them and it just hit me that they were experiencing something native people did a long time ago. They would drag their beaver or moose with snowshoes on the toboggan like the children were dragging me.” Back at the bus she told the children that now they knew what it had been like a long time ago. “That really made my day,” she said. “It’s those little things that really teach you a lot.

## Nursing station retreat

For the first time ever, the staff of the nursing station had a day-long retreat this summer. It was held at North of 50 Lodge 15 km north of Pickle Lake. A non-profit organization called New Vision Limited led the staff through a series of team building exercises and discussions about how programs could communicate better with each other and deliver better services. Asked if the retreated included some moments of fun, Pat Keesickquayash, who attended the event, said, “It was all fun. It was a day of fun!”

Pat, who had been the home care coordinator since June, 2007, was offered a new position as assistant health director last December. “It took me four months to agree to accept that position,” she said, citing added responsibility, challenges, and reporting requirements as reasons for her hesitation. But she did a lot of thinking and talked to her dad about it and he advised her to “go for it.” Since then, says Pat, she’s had her days, but she enjoys her new job and says she gets tremendous support from her co-workers.

Pat said the best thing about the retreat was that it was a “chance to get together and look at each other not as co-workers but to communication on a different level.” Of all the staff, only the medical drivers were unable to attend, but the nursing station is planning another retreat in the not-too-distant future which they hope can include the drivers as well. The second retreat may be held at Pashkokogan Healing Lodge, which wasn’t quite ready this time around.

## Lacrosse Camp a Big Success

A highly successful Lacrosse Camp was held at the Missabay School from August 3 - 7. About fifty young people from ages 6 - 29 attended the camp. The facilitators from the Six Nations-Iroquois Lacrosse Association brought equipment that they left as a donation, and they also expressed interest in helping Mishkeegogamang raise funds for more equipment.

The camp began at 10 each day and often did not end until around 7 p.m. Why were kids so enthusiastic about the camp? “It was something new,” said Erin Bottle, who brought the program to Mishkeegogamang through the Activators program. “There was motivational speaking and in the end local kids were taking leadership in the games. The message of the camp was that in lacrosse every member of the team is valuable.”

## Mish Adventure Camp

BY ERIN BOTTLE

The gift of children’s laughter uplifts the spirit within us all. This was certainly the case with the three-week-long Mish Adventures Camp that took place from July 13-31. As with any event in the community transportation was an obstacle but that did not deter the children who were diehards in making it to the camp. Their enthusiasm was awesome. The camp was sponsored and staffed by an organization called Feed the Children, an organization that comes to assist communities to deliver programs that will be suited to children.

Cool, rainy and windy weather was another obstacle, but children still enjoyed

activities like swimming lessons with certified trainers, soccer, field hockey, baseball, volleyball, crafts, music, drama, various ball games and parachute games. Camp Director Karen Ward said some of the staff experienced culture shock and the challenge of delivering programming with little or no resources. Nonetheless lasting friendships and relationships were formed with the children which was positive and uplifting to see. To the children who attended GITCHI MEEGWETCH! (Big Thank You) for making the event a success!

Thank you Desiree Gray and other youth for being such a positive influence

and help during the Mish Adventures Camp. Also Gitchi meegwetch to Chief Connie Gray-McKay for always having the vision and heart for the children and youth. Your support and constant encouragement is uplifting.

I would like to see Feed the Children back in our community again next summer. I am seeking the support of various department and frontline workers in making this happen again for our children and youth and also I am seeking volunteers for next year’s camp. Again Meegwetch to everyone who made the Mish Adventures a success and hope to see you again next year.



Chief Connie Gray-McKay knows that the land is life for her people.

## The land is the life

"The land is the life. It is the people. If you destroy that land, you destroy the people."

Chief Connie Gray-McKay is passionate about the land her people have been part of for centuries. She loves the forest just the way it is. At the same time she is keenly aware that her people need work and that work could come from the forestry sector.

Mishkeegogamang is once more in discussion with Abitibi Bowater, discussing where the company wants to go with forestry in the next year and a half. Gray-McKay expects a report from the forestry company by the end of August which will include details on the company's application to the Forest Stewardship Council for certification.

In order to get the certification, which tells the world the company is environmentally friendly and upgrades the quality of their lumber, Abitibi Bowater has to comply with strict environmental and social standards in order to be FSC certified. The 10 principals of responsible forest management include:

- Compliance with laws & FSC Principles
- Tenure and use rights & responsibilities
- Indigenous peoples' rights
- Community relations & worker's rights
- Benefits from the forest
- Environmental impact
- Management plan
- Monitoring & assessment
- Maintenance of high conservation value forests
- Plantations

The Chief suspects it is the third principal, that on indigenous peoples' rights, that might deter the company from getting the certification they are seeking. "I

think they will not get their stamp. We were not involved in a meaningful way," she said.

Mishkeegogamang was brought into the picture after the Ministry of Northern Resources made a plan following the caribou forestry initiatives. The First Nation's Memorandum of Understanding came after the fact. "We don't have people trained in a meaningful way. They haven't given us enough money to get ready. We haven't done a land use plan to mark out our values in a meaningful way in the south which is a huge traditional area for us," said Gray-McKay. She said there needs to be a complete forest inventory taken between Mishkeegogamang and Fort Hope before cutting can begin.

And consideration has to be given to more than just the caribou. "If they cut large patches, the moose move north and we see more deer. Deer will chase away moose," she said, adding that deer carry a brain worm that is fatal to moose.

Cutting also affects the weather and the aesthetic value of the land. "If you drive in from Sioux, it already looks yucky," she said.

The MOU between the band and Abitibi was signed in 2005 before their merger with Bowater. It is still unknown how the merger, as well as the financial difficulty of the forestry industry in Canada generally, will affect any agreements with Mishkeegogamang.

But one thing is clear. Chief Gray-McKay and the people of Mishkeegogamang will insist on a joint decision-making process for all activities related to harvesting in their traditional area, no matter which forestry company they are dealing with.



A group of youth enjoys an evening game of volleyball.

## Working towards the North American Indigenous Games in 2011

Activator Erin Bottle would like to see young people from Mishkeegogamang participating in the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) in Wisconsin in 2011. But there are some hurdles that need to be overcome first.

Erin is working with a number of other organizers, including Marc Laliberte, a Thunder Bay firefighter who helped organize Team Ontario for the last Indigenous Games. Mishkeegogamang took the bronze medal for soccer in those games, and Erin would like to build on that success. Thousands of athletes compete in the Games, which occur every three years.

Erin sees potential for Mishkeegogamang athletes in such sports as soccer, baseball and track and field.

The big need is for a new provincial body to organize funding and support. NAIG recognizes only the Ontario Aboriginal Sports Circle, which is no longer in existence. Laliberte is working hard along with community leaders like Bottle to organize support so Ontario's aboriginal athletes can compete at the Games. The teams must have a governing body and be registered and have entry fees to the Games paid by September, 2010.



Congratulations to Jeff Neekan and Lauren Wassaykeesic who have been elected to council for a two-year term.

## Back in the day

Tom Wassaykeesic remembers back in the day when there was a movie theatre in the mining community of Pickle Crow. He, along with other boys from Pickle Lake, used to try to sneak into the theatre without paying, since they rarely had cash on them. One "trick" they used was to tell the ticket seller that there was an emergency and they had to go in to get somebody. When it worked, she would say, "ok, but come right back out!" Once inside, they would stay to watch the evening's movie without paying.

Because of a 9:00 p.m. curfew in those days for children under 16 years of age, the teenagers would use a trail running parallel to the road to get between the communities. This made it easy to get

back to town without getting caught by the local cop who would chase them with his dog if he spied them out after 9:00. Sometimes, they would hitch a ride from one community to the other in the Volkswagen owned by their teacher, Mrs. Lucas. As many as possible would jump inside the vehicle and those that couldn't get inside stood on the rear bumper and hung on for dear life as she sped along the gravel road. Tom doesn't think she knew of the extra passengers, due to the flying dust and because she couldn't see out her back window due to all her passengers. "By the time we got to Pickle Crow we were covered in dust," he recalled. "Most of the time we walked back."

## Announcements

A Presbyterian church in Toronto held a fundraiser and gave six canoes to the Pashkokogan social program. There has been a tentative plan to take youth on a canoe trip down the Albany River in September, but at this time, the plan is on hold.

Next summer, 2010 is our biannual Mishkeegogamang Homecoming. Please give Chief and Council ideas about what you would like to have included in this celebration gathering. Who should we bring in for entertainment? What kind of activities should we plan? Your ideas are welcome! Call or drop in to the Government Office or drop by to see one of your council members.

We anticipate making this paper a regular communication for the people of Mishkeegogamang. If you have ideas for stories or letters you would like to include, please drop them off at the government office or contact the writers: Marj Heinrichs 204-746-8208 or 204-746-5959, Box 161 Rosenort, Mb. R0G 1W0 marjh@gninc.ca; or Dianne Hiebert 250-764-0472, 964 Arbor View Drive, Kelowna, B.C. V1W 5A1 diannahiebert@telus.net.

If you're interested in writing for the newspaper, call the above numbers as well. You'd need access to a phone, computer and internet connection, ability to work within a deadline, and basic computer skills, such as how to keyboard, email and make a Word document. Other training provided!



*Bears will eat whatever they can find. Cleaning up garbage around your house means bear visitors are less likely.*

## Don't give bears a reason to come around

The Ontario Provincial Police and the Ministry of Natural Resources are urging cottagers, campers and municipalities to be 'bear aware' and to work together to avoid attracting bears.

Bears are opportunistic eaters; when berries and other natural foods aren't available, bears will often eat whatever they can find, including pet food, birdseed, compost or even garbage. They will also return to food sources they remember from past seasons.

To reduce the chances of attracting bears, the ministry advises property owners to:

- Regularly dispose of garbage (in some cases this may mean stop composting).

- Keep garbage in bear-proof containers and don't put them out until morning of pick-up.
- Keep barbecues and picnic tables clean.
- Wait until the fall to fill birdfeeders.
- Remove a hummingbird feeder if it attracts bears.
- Keep pet food inside the house.
- Refrain from dumping fish parts in the bush; freeze them and put out with your garbage.

If people encounter a bear that they believe poses a public safety threat, they should call the Ontario Provincial Police at 1-888-310-1122

## Confidential Counselling Available

Wacheya,  
my name is Richard Visitor.

I am from Wemindji, Quebec and I am of Cree decent. I would like to say "Thank You" to Mishkeegogamang members for welcoming me to the community.

I was hired here in Mishkeegogamang in January 2009 by Nodin Counselling from Sioux Lookout. My position is Mental Health Counsellor and my office is at the Resource Centre in Ten Houses. I do a lot of home visits in both communities of Mishkeegogamang (63A & 63B) for individuals that cannot find a ride to the Resource Centre. I also provide my services with the Pashkokogan Healing Lodge Program. Working for the Pashkokogan staff is a wonderful experience and the Lodge is located in a beautiful setting.

For the past couple of months I have been interacting with the Mis-sabay Community School students. I've done individual counselling with the students that approach me and need someone to talk to.

In closing I would like to say that everything that is shared with me by individuals is kept CONFIDENTIAL. If anyone needs family or individual counselling, please do not hesitate to call me at the Resource Centre (807) 928-2414 ext 2244. Meegwetch!

### Mishkeegogamang Ojibway Nation Community Update

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## Pickle Lake OPP charge six after lengthy investigation

(Pickle Lake, ON.) – Pickle Lake OPP have charged five adults and one youth after a lengthy investigation into a rash of violent incidents which occurred between July 26th and July 31st in the Township of Pickle Lake.

The investigation revealed the accused

assaulted several people over a week period in different locations causing unnecessary fear in the community.

A total of 21 criminal charges have been laid including assault, assault cause bodily harm, breach of probation and a break and enter.

Four of the adults accused have been remanded into custody for a bail hearing on August 4th in Sioux Lookout, while police continue to search for the fifth adult. The youth has been released on a Promise to Appear and is scheduled to appear in Pickle Lake Court on September 4th 2009.

# Recognition for community service

Do you know of someone deserving recognition for their contribution to our community? We want to honour those people at a special gathering later this fall. Please call the Government Office with your nominations in the following categories: 10 year service; 20 year service; Clifford Wassaykeesic Volunteer Memorial Award; Employee of the year; Communications; Education; Courage, Hope, Spirit; Outstanding achievement by youth; Academic achievement.

We also welcome your ideas for awards not listed here. Let's celebrate the positive in our community and in our community members.

The following are the 2007 award recipients:

• **10-year service awards**, presented to persons who worked in the same area for 20 years or more. Education: Ida Muckuck, Charlotte Muckuck, Rachel Neekan, Waylona Neekan, Michael Bottle, Albert Wavy. Health: Daisy Spade, Arlene Skunk, Gloria Spade, Susanna Loon. Administration: Martha Loon, Dena Wavy. O&M Simon Skunk. Politics/Band Council: David Masakeyash.

• **20-year service awards**, presented to persons who worked in the same area for 20 years or more. Education: Josie Kaminawaish, Tommy Spade. Politics/Band Council: Ronald Roundhead. Health: Mary C. Fox. Welfare: Harriet Sabko.

• **Clifford Wassaykeesic Volunteer**

**Memorial Award**, presented in honour of the late Clifford Wassaykeesic who always volunteered his time escorting elders, recreational planning or wherever he could be of help. Presented to those persons who have spent time volunteering to help in time of need in the following areas: Mike Skunk, recreation; Wayne Kwandibens and Philimin Keesickquayash recreation/communications; Vivian Lastheels, Mary Wassaykeesic, feast preparations/funerals; Robert and Dianna Bottle, feast/preparations; Eva Skunk, Bella Panacheese, Edith Loon, Maggie Spade, Marita Roundhead, care giving and support/funeral; Gary Lastheels, Ricky Gray, burials, support worker.

• **Employee of the year award**. There was not a limit on number of persons for

this award; however, the recipients were outstanding in their commitment to their job and importantly to their people. Jeff Loon: O&M, Communications (internet), Housing; Ida Muckuck, Education - Manager.

• **Courage, hope and spirit award**, presented to people who have made a commitment to local church, demonstrating courage and hope to our people. Daniel Panacheese, Full Gospel Church; Mary Nayotchekeesic, St. John's Anglican Church; Lizabelle Kwandibens, for sharing her story of hope to young people.

• **Outstanding Achievement by youth**, presented to youth who have made extraordinary achievements. Hilary Fox,