

Circles of Light

March 2001 – Number 10

Cree-Ative Custom Woodworking Inc.

Dave Tuccaro Teams with Master Cabinet Maker

by Diane Koven

When **Dave Tuccaro** decided last year to use a Web site to advertise his newest business venture, it was just the latest idea for a man who eats, sleeps and breathes business ideas.

Tuccaro, a Cree from Fort Chipewyan, Alberta, is always looking around to see what market opportunities exist; then he jumps in with a new business to meet the need. From the days when he drove a taxi following his high school graduation and decided to be entrepreneurial and buy two cabs, to the automotive repair shop he opened by hiring licensed mechanics and taking a one-year course himself, Tuccaro is now the sole owner of *eight* successful businesses. In 1999, he received the National Aboriginal Achievement Award for his contribution in the area of business and commerce, one of many awards he has received over the years.

Cree-Ative Custom Woodworking Inc., a company that Tuccaro created, is only a couple of years old, and has already attracted customers and potential customers across the country, in the United States and around the

Throughout the country, Aboriginal businesses are taking advantage of high technology and the Internet to market their goods and services to the world. Web sites are also helping make the international community aware of Aboriginal cultures and tourism venues in Canada.

world, thanks to its Web site. The company's head office is in Redwood Meadows, Alberta and its manufacturing plant is located in Calgary.

However, the Web site enables potential customers to view the products, learn about the business, ask questions and place orders on-line.

Western Canada's only Aboriginal owned furniture manufacturer, Cree-Ative designs and builds functional and decorative



furniture for offices, hotels, restaurants and other commercial uses. Master cabinet maker **Mike Elliott** has been building high-quality custom furniture for 25 years and has worked with people from all around the world. One thing that makes the company's products unique is the inclusion of Aboriginal designs and motifs in traditional and modern materials. They purchase their wood only from suppliers who practise sustainable harvesting methods.

"The foundation of every company is the people working for it," says Tuccaro. "If you can recruit the best possible people, you can be assured of success." Cree-Ative Custom

"Cree-Ative Custom..."
continued on page 2



Indian and Northern
Affairs Canada

Affaires indiennes
et du Nord Canada

Canada

"Cree-Ative Custom..."
continued from page 1

Woodworking works with architects and designers, and is branching out into a wide variety of markets. "We are getting into supplying hotel furniture," says Tuccaro, "and we are about to enter into a contract to supply the furniture for a university dormitory in Atlantic Canada." Hotels in Las Vegas have expressed interest in Cree-Ative's products and Tuccaro is planning to exhibit at U.S. trade shows, thus entering a billion-dollar market.

In addition to running his eight (and growing!) businesses, Tuccaro somehow finds time to sit on numerous boards, both local and national. He is the president of both the Northeast Alberta Aboriginal Business Association and the National Aboriginal Business Association, chairperson of the Business Development Committee of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network and co-chair of the Arctic Winter Games Committee for 2004.

To find out more about Cree-Ative Custom Woodworking Inc. and its founder, visit the Web site at www.creative.com *

Dave Tuccaro's Eight Companies

- Neegan Development Corporation Ltd.
-
- Tuc's Contracting
-
- Aboriginal Technical Services
-
- Cree-Ative Custom Woodworking Inc.
-
- Tuc's Rentals
-
- Global Indigenous Gaming Company
-
- Tsimcrehawk Development Group
-
- Tuccaro Inc.

Bella Bella Call Centre

1-800 Technology Creates Employment for Heiltsuk Band

by Diane Gauthier

Despite its isolation, the Heiltsuk Band of Bella Bella — an island community off the coast of British Columbia — has become an important communications centre. This means local employment opportunities for its members.

The community already had a successful operation providing administrative services to businesses, like handling billing for a local fuel company. The band saw this operation had further possibilities, and approached Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) with the idea of creating a call centre. The great advantage of a call centre business is that it can exist anywhere, as long as the local telephone system is able to service 1-800 technology. This makes it an ideal enterprise for a remote First Nation — people can have jobs without having to leave their community.

At the same time the community approached INAC with the idea, the department was launching a national advertising campaign. The campaign's aim is to familiarize First Nations members throughout Canada with the *Corbiere* decision, and its impact on First Nations election and referendum regulations. This seemed an ideal opportunity for using the Bella Bella Call Centre.

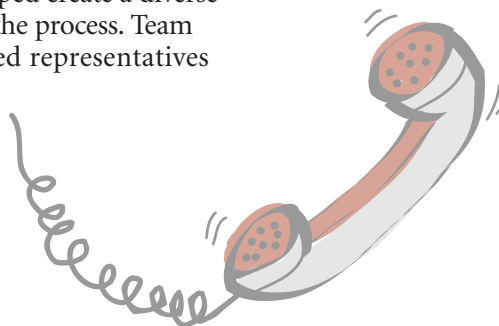
INAC's B.C. Regional Office recognized that the proposed call centre and the national *Corbiere* enquiry line would make a good match. It then helped create a diverse team to facilitate the process. Team members included representatives



Staff at the call centre.

from Corporate Data Warehouse, Connecting Aboriginal Canadians, Corporate Services in INAC's B.C. Region, private sector engineers, Bell Canada, and Telus, which assisted with the technical aspects of the proposal. An advisory group from the Heiltsuk Band, consisting of community members, band staff and members of council, was also part of the team.

The Bella Bella Call Centre officially opened on November 29, 2000, with jobs for eight full-time, and several part-time employees. *



Opening On-Line Opportunities in the Kitikmeot Region

by Raymond Lawrence

When PolarNet started out, the challenge of organizing the office was a bit like a jigsaw puzzle. But since then, the company — owned by the business arm of the Kitikmeot Inuit Association — has opened up the world and on-line opportunities for people of the Kitikmeot region of Nunavut.

“We had absolutely nothing when we started...just a blank desk and a chair,” says **Darrell Ohokannoak**, manager at PolarNet, which is based in Cambridge Bay. Then bits and pieces of their high-tech office-to-be started coming in, leaving them to figure out how it all worked together. Four months later, people were logging on to the Internet on a regular basis to test PolarNet and see that the server was working as it should. By the end of January 1997, the company started bringing in paying customers.

A Yellowknife-based company, SSI Micro, helped the new business get started. “(They) equipped us with what we needed in terms of equipment, technical experience, and training,” says Ohokannoak, adding that ties between the two businesses remain close. “Our server that provides our mail service, authentication, and our Web pages, is located in Yellowknife. The reason for that is — through all the satellites that we have in our communities, it’s just a single hop to Yellowknife to access the network, rather than a triple hop up to Cambridge Bay.”

“We have five communities in our region, so what we’ve done is install satellite-earth stations in each community and through our little satellite network we offer local Internet service to all the communities in our region,” Ohokannoak explains.



PolarNet is more than just a server. The company also provides technical assistance and solutions for individual businesses, and maintains a computer repair service for clients. “We provide network support, technical support, and PC repair work,” Ohokannoak confirms. “Quite a bit of our work is support for companies with existing networks, and if something goes wrong and they don’t have the staff or skills to solve their problems, they’ll come to us.”

Local PolarNet representatives are trained to configure computers for Internet connections and deal with computer problems that arise. But some of the problems they have encountered are more complicated. “We’ve had some problems with things like the satellite going off track. Or if our satellite link in Yellowknife goes down, then all our communities in the region go down,” says Ohokannoak. “We’ve had ravens who accidentally killed the power for our satellite dish

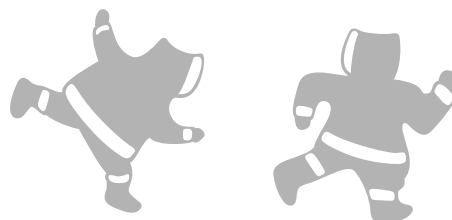


in Yellowknife when they got on the lines....Sometimes we’ve had other companies accidentally transmitting on our satellite frequency.”

Despite the challenges they face from time to time, PolarNet plans to expand its service base, while staying on top of changes to the fast-paced high-tech world.

Visit the company’s Web site at www.polarnet.ca *

Raymond Lawrence is a freelance writer of Ojibway and European ancestry.



Aboriginal Connections Web Site Takes on Life of Its Own

by Diane Koven

Sometimes it pays to volunteer — just ask **Rob Wesley**, a member of the Constance Lake First Nation, northeast of Thunder Bay. While studying chemical engineering at Lakehead University through the Native Access Program, Wesley volunteered to help develop a Web site for the program. Without formal training, but with a keen interest in computers and unbridled enthusiasm, he created not just a Web site, but a “monster,” a site so successful it has taken on a life of its own.

Wesley’s site, *Aboriginal Connections*, is a search engine for information for and about Aboriginal people. Once he had expanded it to include external, commercial Web links, he was no longer able to run it out of the university. He describes the site as “an on-line navigational guide to information and Web sites concerning the Native people of North America and the Indigenous people of the world.” *Aboriginal Connections* already reaches a worldwide audience.

The directory currently lists 1,980 sites. And more than 500 external Web sites provide links to *Aboriginal Connections*. Wesley is now writing a business plan to present to *Aboriginal Business Canada* and the *Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund*. He expects to make *Aboriginal Connections* a profitable enterprise in the not-too-distant future.

Once he starts to sell advertising space for Web banners, Wesley will have much-needed funds for additional software and hardware. “With the business loan,” he says, “I plan to add more services, to make the site more interactive. I would also like to acquire an Internet chat site and I hope to get my own Web server machine.” Services will include a business directory; e-mail directory, forums and job advertising



Rob Wesley's
Web site attracts
up to 6,000 visitors
a month from
around the world.

for employers; a calendar of events and a biography-portfolio site. “Eventually,” Wesley says, “I would like to get into the selling of Native arts and crafts. E-commerce is what I hope to get into.”

Aboriginal Connections already has between 3,000 and 6,000 visitors from around the world each month. Since its founding in January 1999, the site has had almost 100,000 hits, proving that the interest is out there. As the services expand, Wesley believes the number of visitors will increase as well.

In the meantime, while working almost full-time on his business plan and expanding the services on his Web site, Wesley has also switched gears educationally. No longer in the engineering faculty, he is nearing completion of a course at a private school that will give him an internationally recognized certification as a Microsoft systems engineer.

“After graduation,” he says, “I hope to land a job as a computer network administrator. I hope to stay in the Thunder Bay area and to have my business space on the reserve.”

Visit *Aboriginal Connections* at
www.aboriginalconnections.com *

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Eagle Feather Data Exchange High-Tech System Speeds Vote Tabulation

by Raymond Lawrence

The vote is in. It appears that the frontrunner — a Saskatchewan woman with a family-owned and-operated business — has come out ahead.

Loretta J. Hall, together with her husband and seven sons, hopes that more people will elect to use their company's services. Eagle Feather Data Exchange employs a high-tech system that scans ballots and tabulates election results. The system produces highly accurate results only minutes after polls close.

Eagle Feather Data Exchange is light-years away from the old method of counting ballots by hand. According to Hall, counting by hand is not only labour-intensive and slow, but also prone to human error.

A high school mathematics teacher at 20 years of age, Hall was later an administrator, a principal and a school board trustee. She also has a solid background in business. For the past 25 years, she and her husband have operated a summer program called "Young Athletes of Saskatchewan."

They founded Eagle Feather Data Exchange three years ago. "Four years ago I was at an election where I stayed all night," Hall recalls. "We were so tired by the time it was all finished that I decided there had to be better systems to get ballots counted quickly. We searched for a system that would work and found a company that had the technology. Fortunately, the AFN (Assembly of First Nations) used our system last year. The chiefs now all know how it would run in their communities, but still some people are shy of it because it is a computer, and they don't see someone physically looking at a ballot. Hopefully, it will catch on in Canada, especially with the bigger bands with 300 voters or more, because you get the results a minute later."

"The new electronic technology and innovations make it possible for all First Nations to vote for the National Chief," Hall adds.

During an election, the company has a technician on hand, but the bulk of their work — setting up and testing the system — is done about a week in advance. If a recount were requested, it would take little more than 10 minutes to run through 1,000 votes.

"We started Eagle Feather Data Exchange because I saw a need for efficient systems for administrative organizations...one of the things being database management and making data work for you," Hall explains. In addition to database creation and management services, the company also provides Web site designs and secure servers for Internet users. They have about 50 clients who want to bolster their business sales via the Internet.

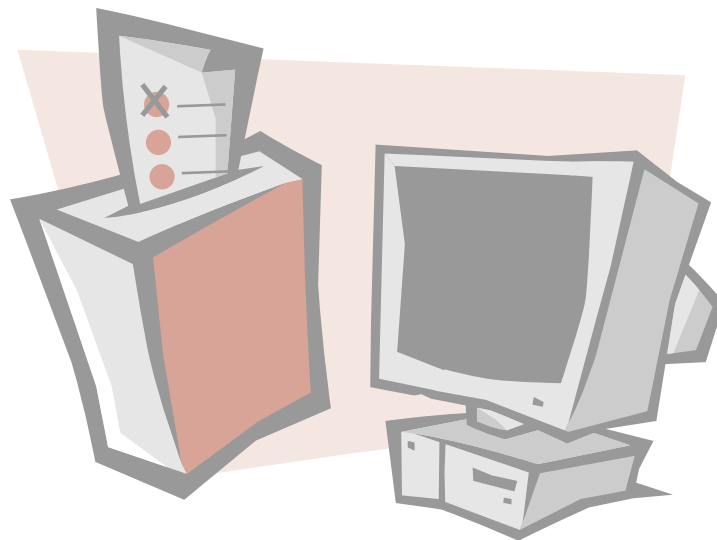
"As a First Nations person, I make sure I hire First Nations people," Hall says. "I don't expand more than I have to, and I watch my cash flow very carefully because I never want to put myself into a negative position. You have to be careful and try to be shrewd."



Loretta J. Hall's Eagle Feather Data Exchange uses a high-tech system that scans ballots and produces accurate election results within minutes.

Hall says one of the challenges facing women in business in Saskatchewan is that most of the political leaders and board members are men. "But you see a lot of women in the business world, and so in terms of numbers it's getting better," she adds.

For more information about Eagle Feather Data Exchange, visit the company's Web site at www.eaglefeatherdata.com *



La piste amérindienne

A Direct Link to the Aboriginal World

by Annabelle Dionne

After just four years, *La piste amérindienne* (The Native Trail) has established itself as the foremost French-language Web site on Aboriginal issues. The Internet site is an initiative of Groupe Cleary, an 11-year-old Aboriginal communications firm based in Wendake, Quebec. The company's aim was to create a site to help integrate new technologies into Aboriginal communities in Quebec.

All of Groupe Cleary's consultants have expertise on Aboriginal issues. The company's specialities include training, development and program evaluation. Groupe Cleary also offers a range of communications and multi-media services. *La piste amérindienne* is a crucial part of these services.

"Today, four of the firm's twelve employees work full-time to ensure that *La piste amérindienne* becomes a national reference on the Web," says **Dominic Cleary**, the firm's development and marketing manager, and son of founder, **Bernard Cleary**.

The site, which gives visitors information on the Aboriginal economy, tourism and culture, receives nearly 20,000 hits per month. The site enables visitors to keep up-to-date with Aboriginal news. It has more than 400 hyperlinks to different Aboriginal sites in Quebec, including 20 created by Groupe Cleary itself. "Over the years we have acquired a certain expertise in the new media sector, and we are able to create Internet sites for companies and communities, as well as CD-ROMs and other new technology products," Cleary explains.

La piste amérindienne also offers e-commerce opportunities, and visitors can purchase craft products made in various Aboriginal communities in Quebec. "Requests for Aboriginal products come from as far away as Europe," Cleary notes. The



site allows Aboriginal craftspeople to advertise their products, which range from pottery to moccasins. It also gives international visibility to Groupe Cleary.

In the future, they plan to offer CD-ROMs, books, Aboriginal recipes and even fur products through the site.

The site also generates requests for all kinds of information. "People ask us to suggest Aboriginal names for their children... We also get questions about the meaning of certain Aboriginal names or objects," he says.

"When we receive certain specific requests, we refer them to our partners," Cleary adds. "This means that there are benefits to doing business with us." Thanks to the Internet, Groupe Cleary has been able to achieve its goal of promoting and developing the First Nations economy.

Future plans include the creation of a similar Internet site for Aboriginal communities in every other province and territory. "Our aim is to become the reference in Aboriginal issues for the whole of Canada, and perhaps even internationally," Cleary emphasizes. *The Native Trail*, the English-language section of *La piste amérindienne* introduced two years ago, already offers hyperlinks to more than 800 Canadian Aboriginal sites. The entire site is also available in English, to reach as many Internet users as possible.

Thanks to the site, Groupe Cleary is now better known, helping to enhance the firm's reputation. "Bigger firms are now more willing to trust us," Cleary says.

Visit the site at www.autochtones.com *



Red Road Technical Services Wedding High-Tech and Traditional Values

by Wendy MacIntyre

The first time **Perry McLeod Shabogestic** turned on a computer was when he worked as an Intergovernmental Affairs Assistant with the Union of Ontario Indians. “As an artist,” he says, “I was fascinated by what the computer could do.”

That fascination ultimately led to Red Road Technical Services (RRTS), the business he and his wife **Laurie** have established on the Nipissing First Nation just outside of Sturgeon Falls, Ontario. Between them, the couple have a wide range of talents and experience. In addition to his skills as an illustrator and cartoonist (his *Baloney and Bannock* strip is featured in several Aboriginal publications), McLeod Shabogestic has worked with Aboriginal political and health organizations. Laurie McLeod has a background in journalism and traditional crafts, and is a former editor of the *Anishinabek News*.

The services RRTS offers reflect the couple’s diversified experience: information technology consulting; Web site design and development; graphic design and desktop publishing services; communications consulting; and business and project development and consulting. Their clients include various First Nations, the Chiefs of Ontario, the Assembly of First Nations and the Union of Ontario Indians.

“You have to be really diversified to succeed,” says McLeod Shabogestic, adding that RRTS deals “almost exclusively with the Native community.”

That dedication to community is an extension of the McLeod Shabogestic’s traditional values: “Laurie and I consider ourselves as following a more traditional path as a family,” he explains, noting that they both serve as helpers in their community.

RED ROAD TECHNICAL SERVICES



He is a traditional healing co-ordinator and counsellor, who also harvests traditional medicines and wild foods in summer, for the Elders’ use in winter. One of his wife’s current projects involves developing Aboriginal language tools on a desktop at the Ojibway Cultural Foundation in M’Chigeeng. She recently completed a contract in Malawi in Africa, where she did field research for an international AIDS project. Through RRTS, she is also working on this project as a curriculum writer.

The couple see their business as service rather than profit-oriented. “We don’t have set prices,” McLeod Shabogestic explains. “It depends on the client and what they can give.”

If a family or community organization can’t afford to pay for a service, for example, RRTS is more than willing to work out some kind of trade of goods or services.

“A lot of things we do for free or very little...,” McLeod Shabogestic emphasizes. “But we do have bills to

pay, and that’s why we have contracts (with larger organizations). As long as we can make enough dollars to keep doing what we’re doing...to us, breaking even is a success.”

Another unique service RRTS provides is the design of Aboriginal funeral caskets and liners. The desire to meet this need in the Aboriginal community arose from a personal experience: “I was asked to talk and drum at a friend’s funeral,” McLeod Shabogestic says. “I looked at the casket and it just didn’t look right.”

It was then that he and his wife decided to open a new branch of their company — “Sacred Winds.” Laurie McLeod’s skills as a seamstress, and the woodworking talents of another partner, ensure that culturally appropriate caskets and liners are available for Aboriginal funerals.

For more information about the company’s many services, visit the Web site at www.rrts.net ✨

Providing Aboriginal Goods and Services to the World

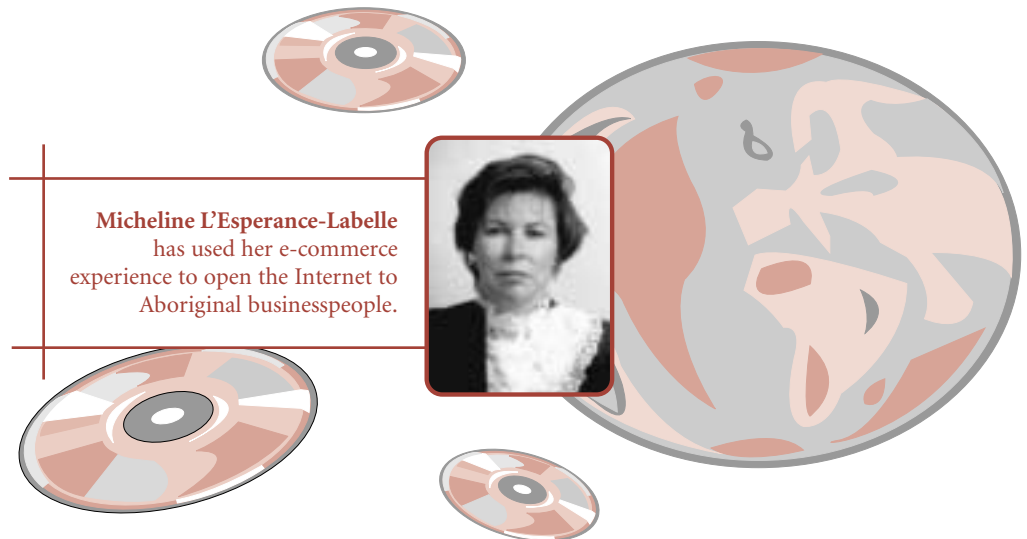
by Diane Koven

Micheline L'Esperance-Labelle, a member of the Montagnais Nation, is the embodiment of the word "entrepreneur." She thrives on challenge and opportunity and when she sees a need for a product or service, she simply goes out and starts a new business.

Her experience with software goes back to 1984, when L'Esperance-Labelle was a school principal. She wanted to introduce computers into the schools — at that time, a unique concept. "What existed in English was not appropriate for young children," she says, "and not much was available in French." So she set out to fill the gap. Within a couple of years, L'Esperance-Labelle had become a publisher of software and a distribution channel as well. She authored, edited and published educational CD-ROMs, which she distributed in over 20 countries.

Since that initial foray into business, L'Esperance-Labelle has founded several companies and organizations, served on the boards of directors of many technology firms and successfully formed major partnerships with IBM, Merisel Canada, TLC Edusoft and Quebecor Multimedia. In 1997, as President and Director General of Quebecor DIL Multimedia, she formed a partnership with Bell Sympatico to deliver a new e-commerce concept.

"Going back to my origins as a Native person," she says, "and my experience with software, I decided to use my expertise in e-commerce to open the Internet to Aboriginal people to sell their products." The result, unveiled in February at a grand international launch in Cannes (France), is Webtamtam.com, a joint partnership with InternationalBoutiquesWeb Inc. (IBWeb), Le Group Cleary — both Aboriginal companies — and Solutions MDI.



Webtamtam.com is a vehicle for promoting Aboriginal goods and services internationally, using secure servers and state-of-the-art practice systems and equipment. It will also serve as an Aboriginal information centre for the sharing of information on local, national and international issues.

"Last year," says L'Esperance-Labelle, "only 35 percent of Aboriginal companies were computer-literate, compared to almost 85 percent for the rest of Canada." Because of that, she aims to help Aboriginal businesses take advantage of the Internet. "We will solve problems, we'll develop

their sites, take pictures of their products, manage everything for them over the Net, and we will handle the payments." She also plans to develop an e-catalogue to help distribute products.

Even in its initial stages, with little or no publicity, Webtamtam.com has attracted such Aboriginal businesses and organizations as First Peoples' Business Association, selling memberships and subscriptions; the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee, selling subscriptions to the 9th Scientific Caribou Conference; and several craftspeople selling their designs and wares.

Building on all of her past education and experience, L'Esperance-Labelle is also committed to creating training facilities to give Aboriginal people an opportunity to expand their knowledge of the Internet and e-commerce.

Visit the Web site at www.webtamtam.com *





Portrait

Northern Lights and Satellites

Kenina Kakekayash
Oji-Cree
Director of Radio
Wawatay Radio Network

by Fred Favel

If there ever is an Aboriginal radio station, where Native people can speak on the air in our own language, I want to be the first Native woman broadcaster.

“Flying Forever” is the literal translation of Kakekayash, an apt description for an Aboriginal radio broadcaster who deals with satellite windows and radio transmissions and whose voice flies through the air to over 40 Aboriginal communities. Kenina Kakekayash was born on the Weagamow Lake Reserve, better known to the English-speaking world as Round Lake. It is one of the many First Nations communities that make up the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, where contact with the wider world is through radio, satellite and the Internet. For Kakekayash growing up, radio was a magical experience.

Her age must remain somewhat a mystery, for when asked, she innocently replies, “I don’t know,” before breaking into peals of laughter. She concedes, however, that she is in her forties. Kakekayash comes from a long line of trappers and hunters, and grew up close to the land. Her father’s trapline, about 40 kilometres from their reserve, was where the family would spend the three months from fall to just before Christmas. Kakekayash could walk in snowshoes at age three and could carry a canoe by the time she was 12. She recalls tanning hides with her mother which were sold to The Bay trading post back home.

Kakekayash spent most of her younger years with her aunt who lived next door, which was not uncommon in an Aboriginal extended family system. She learned most of the practical elements of everyday life then, including how “to be patient with things and to learn more.” She also learned to speak her language fluently, and went to a government elementary day school in her community. For high school, she was flown to Dryden, Ontario where she lived in a boarding home. “The first year was really hard for me because that was my first time to be away from my family. I was homesick.” But she stayed motivated by thinking about what she really wanted to do in her life.

Her dream was to become a teacher — a dream that began as early as Grade 2. “We were colouring with crayons,” she recalls. “I was drawing the classroom and there were little chairs and students. There was a lady standing at the front, and that was supposed to be me.” Although she did not graduate from high school, she entered university as a mature student, “because my dream was still that I wanted to be an elementary school teacher and I did!” Her first position was as a teaching assistant, working with Kindergarten through Grade 2. She then enrolled in the Native Teachers Education Program at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, but returned home before the program ended. “It was my mom who wanted me to be at home. She thought I was away too long.”

Kakekayash had another dream, and that was one day to become the first Aboriginal woman broadcaster. In Sioux Lookout, she came across a job working for Wawatay (Northern Lights) Communications Society, which then consisted primarily of an Aboriginal newspaper fast gaining national attention. Her first job was to help telephone operators deal with Aboriginal callers by providing the appropriate translation, through a translation program sponsored by Bell Canada. During her first

five years with Wawatay, the newspaper began to look at the possibility of expanding into radio programming to service the Aboriginal people of Northern Ontario.

Wawatay approached TV Ontario, which was then establishing its own programming to Northern Ontario through satellite transmission. The communications society asked for leftover space on the sub-carriers that transmitted the sound portion of TV Ontario’s television programming. The answer was “yes!” That same year, the federal government announced a four-year, \$4.3-million Northern Native Broadcast Access Program, designed to help all Aboriginal groups in Northern Canada to develop language programming in television or radio. The communities pitched in by providing the power, equipment sites and support groups for the radio service, and on September 6, 1984, eight communities tuned into the new Wawatay Radio Network (WRN). By that time, Kakekayash had taken on the position of a mobile community radio liaison. Travelling wherever she was asked, she would take the community from infrastructure and equipment funding to programming.

She also organized yearly meetings where station managers could discuss their ideas, programs, and other business involved in running a successful radio network. Each community would have its own say. “When you look on the map, there’s about three-fourths in the north where it’s bush and it’s very isolated; there are no roads, and the communications they have is Wawatay.”

Today, WRN operates out of Sioux Lookout with a substation in Moose Factory and its daily service integrates community-based programming. The 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. slot is protected for local community radio stations, and regular programming may be pre-empted for live coverage of events.

WRN transmits to 43 community radio stations throughout Northern Ontario. In the 22 years that Kakekayash has been with WRN, she has held positions in all aspects of the organization, from receptionist, translator, liaison and station manager to broadcaster. She was executive director from 1996 to 1998, and is currently director of radio.

Now transmitting through Bell Canada’s Express Vu satellite, WRN has come a long way from the days of Kakekayash’s youth, when she would sit beside a little transistor radio with an antenna fashioned out of rabbit snare wire, and listen to a Winnipeg radio station, wondering if there would ever be an Aboriginal radio station.

Kakekayash credits the respected members of her community for giving her the values, culture, teachings, language and roots that have helped her in all her endeavours. And her lifelong attention to learning has constantly reinforced her commitment to her dream.

Last year, she spoke to the graduating class of the Sandy Lake First Nation about the power of motivation, using one of her favourite quotes, “If you want your dreams to come true — wake up!” The close of her inspirational address would just as aptly describe her own life journey: “Remember, stand your ground — keep on going — hold on to your special dreams — and your life will be successful.”

Fred Favel is an Aboriginal writer and communications consultant.



Photo credit: Fred Favel



Photo credit: Fred Favel

