



Artist honours venerable education building with traditional **star blanket** mural

RECLAIMING SPACES

NIIGAN SINCLAIR



IN Indigenous traditions, being gifted with a star blanket is a high honour. Sewn or stitched in the middle with a morning star, the brightest light in the dawn sky, the blanket is given to leaders and wrapped around their shoulders in ceremony. It's intended to protect, honour and — most importantly — recognize the work an individual does to forge a path to the future. Most of this involves taking the brave step of bringing light in the darkest of times. Just like the morning star. This week, a building in Winnipeg is being recognized as doing this work. Métis mural artist Kenneth Lavallee is leading a project to cover the entirety of the Helen Betty Osborne Building, located at 511 Elllice Ave., with a star blanket. "I want to wrap this place," Lavallee said, covered in primer on the first day of work, "and recognize the hope that's here." Located at the University of Win-

nipeg, the building houses education programs and the Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre, where Indigenous education and cultural programming take place. Painting four sides of a two-storey building is a huge project, but one Lavallee has experience in. It's the fourth installation of his Star Blanket Project series, with sister sites located at Edge Gallery, the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre and the Red Road Lodge. Still, this is the biggest project Lavallee has undertaken. Partnering with Synonym Art Consultation, he is being assisted by seven artists working around the clock to be finished this week. The mural will be unveiled Saturday at noon with a barbecue and DJ music to follow. "I not only wanted to give jobs to artists, but to activate this space, recognizing the jobs people do and can do to grow a community," Lavallee said. The mural embodies Lavallee's belief that people must reclaim spaces where they live, particularly in cities where Indigenous Peoples have endured violence and marginalization. The mural therefore is dedicated to murdered and missing Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit peoples, an issue deeply felt in the neighbourhood where the mural is located. This is also why the Helen Betty Osborne Building was chosen for the



Above: Artist Kenneth Lavallee is painting a star blanket mural on the University of Winnipeg's Helen Betty Osborne Building. Above left: An artist's conception of what the building will look like once complete.

project. Osborne, a Cree woman from Norway House, was abducted and murdered near The Pas in 1971. Four years ago, Lavallee was speaking to his mother about Osborne's story and realized he had to do something to honour her. Approached by the University of Winnipeg last year, he received his chance. Constructing the mural is as complicated as stitching a star blanket itself. Creators have to perform a delicate balance between mathematics and art, focusing on precision and creativity while ensuring nothing is out of sync. A typical star blanket has 288 small diamonds woven into sets of 25, 36, and 200 larger diamonds — combining eventually into an geometrically even eight-pointed star. One mistake can destabilize the entire project, so an incredible amount of attention is necessary at all times. "I've got a lot of math this week," Lavallee laughed, "but there are lines already in the cement and that helps." Star blankets are not given just to honour work, but to encourage it to continue. This is the message the University of Winnipeg wanted to share when contacting Lavallee and Synonym Art to do the mural. "We wanted something that exemplifies our message that Indigenous education is inclusive and accessible

here," said Jarita Greyeyes, director of community learning and engagement, "and demonstrates our commitment to making Indigenous space here." It's hard to imagine physical Indigenous spaces at the University of Winnipeg, a place full of modern, block-style architecture and high rises. While new buildings and spaces have been built or renovated recently, few embody Indigenous principles. "We hope this will be a bold statement and an anchor to our Indigenous programming on campus," Greyeyes said. "We are experiencing a transformation on campus with our Indigenous course requirement, but now people can see it in the physical spaces we work in." The University of Winnipeg requires that all students enrolled in programs on campus take a course with primarily Indigenous content in order to understand the knowledge, history and relationships that embody Winnipeg, Manitoba and Canada. It's one of only two universities to take this step. And now the campus has a centrepiece for this learning. I spent the morning at the Helen Betty Osborne Centre. I remarked to Lavallee and Greyeyes how much the place has changed since I attended as an undergraduate in the 1990s. While there, I never read a book written by an Indigenous person. There were no courses taught by Indig-

enous Peoples, never mind an Indigenous studies department. There was one Indigenous faculty member, the late Dr. Mary Young, but her office and the Indigenous student lounge were housed physically underneath the theology department. When I hung out with my friends, we were literally located underneath people studying Christianity. Nothing triggering there. Now, the Helen Betty Osborne Building is bustling, full to the brim with Indigenous students and families working with Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff to make paths for themselves. I also noticed many non-Indigenous students studying and a large contingent of new Canadians working on computers. Most of all, people were visiting, talking, laughing. The last time I was in the building was a few years ago, taking free Indigenous language classes with my daughter. We even learned how to sing *Frère Jacques* in Ojibway. Now, as I return to the university where I began, I see a star blanket wrapping itself around a campus and community trying to make a place where a future can thrive. Where light can shine. Wrapped in warmth. niigan.sinclair@freepress.mb.ca Twitter: @Niiganwewidam

Meth busts include man with machetes taped to arms

CAROL SANDERS

A MEGA-METH weekend in Winnipeg included three separate incidents involving the drug that police say has become a scourge in Winnipeg. It began Friday just after 7 a.m. when a man coming down from methamphetamine with machetes taped to his arms in a residential area was outside yelling at police to shoot him. Then, on a sweltering Saturday afternoon, police seized more than \$6,400 of the brain-poisoning drug from a vehicle with all its doors left open. Just after midnight, after a driver who was allegedly impaired hit a chain link fence in Crestview, police discovered nearly \$2,000 worth of meth in the vehicle. The three incidents happened in different parts of the city and involved different people, but they all had one thing in common that police say is becoming more of a problem: methamphetamine. "At some point, you hope it goes down," Winnipeg Police spokesman Const. Jay Murray said at a Monday morning press conference that kicked off with a description of the bizarre, frightening incident involving the man with large machetes taped to his hands. "He'd made specific plans to attack officers and force them to shoot him," Murray said. Murray said the 34-year-old man who is known to police called 911 himself just after 7 a.m. to report a male armed with a machete in the Robertson neighbourhood.

The situation was stressful for police and the man's family members watching it unfold and the possibility that a passerby or gawker could trigger the unpredictable man at the centre of it, Murray said. "He indicated he was willing to injure people to get police to shoot him," Murray said. Officers took him into custody. He's been charged with possession of a weapon and failing to comply with probation order. The use of meth in the city has led to a "drastic increase" in the number of "use of force" encounters, Murray said. "There's tremendous difficulties in communicating with individuals high on meth," he said. "Some people will hear you, some won't. "Not every individual high on meth is going to act in the same way," Murray said. "The last thing we ever want to do is use force on someone... The ultimate goal is to safely take individuals into custody." Friday's potentially deadly incident involving the meth user was followed Saturday by two incidents involving alleged meth traffickers. Just after 1 p.m. Saturday, officers with Winnipeg's street crime unit were patrolling near Sargent Avenue and Furby Street when they observed a vehicle parked with its doors open and a man and woman standing beside it. When police officers went to speak with the man and woman, they saw a canister of bear spray and the knife inside the vehicle, Murray said. The

pair were taken into custody. Police said they searched the vehicle and seized several items, including 43 grams of methamphetamine that police say has a street value of \$6,450, cocaine, marijuana, a "cocktail" of several prescription drugs, three mobile phones, packaging materials and \$1,160 in cash. Harley James McLeod, 29, and Kaitlynn Rae Burke, 26 — both of Kenora, Ont. — face several weapon and drug charges, including possession for the purposes of trafficking. At midnight on Saturday, emergency workers found a vehicle parked up against a chain link fence in Crestview. The lone occupant of the vehicle parked near Buchanan Boulevard and Hamilton Avenue was taken into custody and police searched the vehicle, Murray said. Police seized a number of items, including an Airsoft-style gun, a knife, a collapsible baton, tools believed to be used for break and enter, \$280 in cash and 13 grams of methamphetamine with an estimated street value of \$1,950, he said. Christian Charles Dennis Caron, 35, of Headingley faces numerous charges, including impaired driving, possession of methamphetamine for the purposes of trafficking, possession of proceeds of property obtained by crime, failure to comply with conditions of a recognizance by a judge, possession of a weapon and possession of break-in instruments. He was detained in custody. carol.sanders@freepress.mb.ca



What meth does to brains

METHAMPHETAMINE is neurotoxic and damages brain cells. Its long-term use can cause intense feelings of rage, psychotic episodes of not knowing what is real and what isn't, feelings of anxiousness, an inability to sleep and paranoia — feeling scared and suspicious for no reason. People can put themselves and others in risky

situations when using. Its use can also lead to bad decision-making and embarrassing actions that the person might regret. It is made in illegal labs using cheap and toxic ingredients. It can be smoked, taken in pill form or injected and is addictive. — source: Addictions Foundation Manitoba

Legals

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: BEVERLEY IRENE FRITSCHY, late of the City of Winnipeg, in Manitoba, Deceased. All claims against the above estate, duly verified by Statutory Declaration, must be filed with the undersigned at their offices, 1700-360 Main Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 3Z3, on or before the 30th day after this publication date. DATED at Winnipeg, Manitoba, this 13th day of August, 2018. FILLMORE RILEY LLP Attention: A. L. Southall Solicitors for the Administrator

Massage therapist convicted of four counts of sexual assault

KATIE MAY

A BLUMENORT man who claimed he was offering a new type of therapeutic massage to female clients has been convicted of sexual assault. Kenneth Wall was offering massages out of his home as a private-practice massage therapist when seven women came forward to police to report Wall had touched them inappropriately during massage appointments between 2010 and 2014. He claimed he was performing pain-relieving breast and vaginal massages with his patients' consent, but a provincial court judge disagreed.

On Monday, more than a year after his provincial court trial ended, Wall was convicted on four counts of sexual assault from 2014 and for violating a court order in November 2014 that prohibited him from contacting one of the complainants. He'd phoned the woman's brother to ask if they could meet to discuss the allegations she'd reported to RCMP. He was acquitted of four other charges after provincial court Judge Carena Roller decided the Crown had not proven them beyond a reasonable doubt. Roller found Wall guilty of sexual assault, but not guilty of sexual interference after he gave a breast massage to

a 15-year-old girl without her consent. The charge of sexual interference requires proof of a "sexual purpose" and the judge ruled there was no evidence Wall got "sexual gratification" from performing the massage. One of the women told court she agreed to a breast massage to help with her neck pain and asked Wall to stop when she was uncomfortable, which he did. He was acquitted of that sexual-assault allegation. He was also acquitted of sexual assault for an incident the judge decided could have been an accidental, his brief touch of a woman's vagina. As well, Roller found Wall not guilty of anally penetrating

another female patient. When he testified in his own defence, the 45-year-old married father of four denied sexually assaulting his patients and said he believed he had their consent to perform what he called "inguinal massage" — a term, Roller wrote in her decision, that he may have coined himself. Wall remains on bail awaiting sentencing. A sentencing date has not been set. The decision was delayed for more than a year, and Roller returned from a medical leave to deliver it Monday. katie.may@freepress.mb.ca Twitter: @thatkatiemay