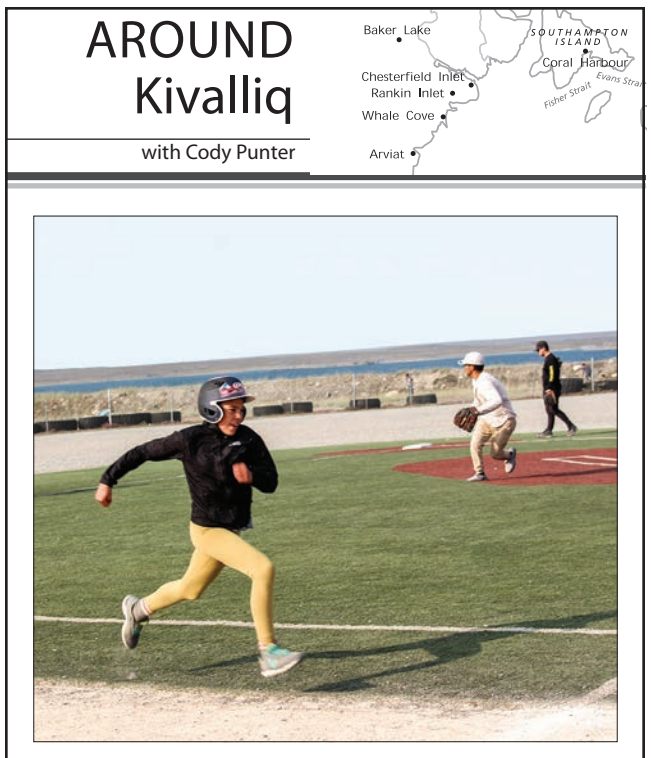
Did we get it wrong?

Kivalliq News is committed to getting facts and names right. With that goes a commitment to acknowledge mistakes and run corrections. If you spot an error in Kivalliq News, call (867) 645-3223 and ask to speak to the editor, or email kivalliqnews@nnsl.com. We'll get a correction or clarification in as soon as we can.

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Makayla Kaludjak of the Rankin Inlet Stealers team rounds the bases during the U-16 regional softball tournament in Rankin Inlet over August long weekend last year. Softball is a go again across the Kivalliq with tournaments in the works for youth and adults. photo courtesy of Veronica Connelly

RCMP seize large quantity of marijuana

Rankin Inlet

Rankin Inlet RCMP confiscated 25.7 lbs of marijuana, $15,600 and an all-terrain vehicle after executing a search warrant at a residence in the community on July 4.

Larissa Misheralak was arrested and charged with possession of cannabis for the purpose of selling, unlawfully importing cannabis into Nunavut, and possession of property obtained by crime over $5,000.

Also arrested was Dustin MacLean. He's been charged with possession of cannabis for the purpose of selling, unlawfully importing cannabis into Nunavut, possession of property obtained by crime over $5,000 and and failing to comply with an undertaking.

The charges have not been proven in court.

The RCMP encourages residents to continue to report suspicious activity by contacting their home RCMP detachment or by calling Crime Stoppers at toll-free 1-800-222- 8477 (TIPS), submitting a secure web tip at www.nwtnutips.com or text 'NWTNUTIPS' plus your message to 274637 (CRIMES).

Women's leadership forum

Rankin Inlet

The Department of Family Services will host a women's leadership forum in Rankin Inlet from Aug. 23 to 26. The Arnait Tulliningit forum aims to empower women and girls using traditional knowledge and skills while encouraging them to assume their role as natural leaders in their communities.

Representatives will work to build relationships that can help further economic and political opportunities for women, while setting the foundation for social change and gender equality in the territory.

One participant from every Nunavut community will be selected to take part in the forum. All costs associated with travel, including accommodations and all meals, will be covered.

To register, or for more information, contact the Department of Family Services and ask for Myna Kiguktak or Sarah Payne.

Youth softball tournament

Rankin Inlet

Rankin Inlet is planning to host a youth softball tournament from July 23 to 25.

The event is open to boys and girls who are born in 2005 or earlier. Teams are required to field at least three girls on the field at a time for a total of 10 players.

Rosters must be submitted to the recreation coordinator by July 14.

fact file

NUNAVUT COVID-19 SITUATION AS OF JULY 13

Active cases: **0**
Confirmed cases: **657** Recovered cases: **653**
Completed tests in Nunavut: **18,554**
Deaths: **4**
Vaccine uptake:
22,026 first doses
17,435 second doses

Confirmed cases by community
Iqaluit: **253 (all recovered)**
Kinngait: **7** (all recovered)
Rankin Inlet: **21** (all recovered)
Arviat: **339** (338 recovered)
Whale Cove: **23** (all recovered)
Sanikiluaq: **2** (all recovered)

Source: Government of Nunavut Department of Health

Arviat bids farewell to drama teacher Gord Billard



Arviat drama teacher Gord Billard, who helped start the community's first drama program in 2001, is retiring. He was interviewed about his role in the drama program as well as the Arviat Film Society on a special episode of the Tunnganarniq Show hosted Sylvia Aggark. Photo courtesy of Isuma TV

'It's been a very rewarding 20 years. My heart and mind are still there and probably will be for many more years.'

By Cody Punter
Northern News Services

Arviat has bid farewell to its longtime drama teacher Gord Billard.

The 60-year-old Newfoundland native retired to his hometown at the end of this school year after helping start the community's first drama program in 2001.

"It's been a very rewarding 20 years. My heart and mind are still there and probably will be for many more years," he told Kivalliq News

Billard first came North after a colleague was offered a job as the principal at the school. It took a couple of months of convincing, but Billard eventually agreed to come up and work for a couple years.

"He called me up to see if I'd be interested in going there to form a drama club. He had already hired a music teacher, Mary Piercey (Lewis), who just won a Juno. We were the first music and drama teachers the school had," he recalled.

At first, Billard committed to teaching in Arviat for two years. But he fell in love with the community and those two years turned into two decades. Billard explained that the school's theatre productions became such an important outlet for youth who were looking for ways to express themselves.

"Obviously producing plays with kids kept me going. It's what gave me rewards and the greatest satisfaction. Rehearsals were always on evenings and weekends. They came because they wanted to be there. I believe those memories will stay with the kids, some of whom are adults now," he said.

As a teacher with a background in languages, Billard understood the importance of trying to put on performances in Inuktitut.

He still remembers the first time the school hosted its annual Easter play in Inuktitut.

"I remember being back stage and seeing unilingual Elders in the crowd laughing or cracking up. I knew this was ringing bells for them. I find that people really, really appreciated that," he said.

Performing plays in Inuktitut went on to be a staple for all the productions the school put on. While Inuktitut doesn't have a tradition of written plays, Billard said they are becoming increasingly common and the school has adapted some of the productions over the years.

Every year that Billard was teaching, the school put on at least two productions, and occasionally three. Given that each play was performed four times – twice for other students and twice for the public – Billard estimates that students put on 180 shows during his 20 years.

"It was quite amazing to look at the list after I compiled it to realize just how much we've done and all the memories we created," he said.

In addition to his teaching and extra work at the school, Billard helped found the Arviat Film Society with John Main, Eric Anoee and Jamie Bell in 2010.

"We wanted to have it driven by youth in the community. It took off from there," he said.

While the film society hasn't been as busy as it used to be, Billard said its legacy has left a huge imprint on Arviat. As examples of the program's success, he pointed to members of the society like Evano Aggark and Jordan Konek, both of whom have gone on to do big things as visual storytellers.

"There's still a large number of young people in Arviat that have the skills and knowledge to do filming and video editing," he said. "I think we'll see more coming out of the town."

Although he has now moved back to Newfoundland to retire, Billard said he wouldn't rule out the possibility of returning to Arviat should the right opportunity present itself.

"If the stars are aligned I could see myself going for another stint," he said. "I'm definitely not done with the North."