

### Woodland Art In Red Lake - Tell Us Your Story

Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre is preparing for the very first Woodland Arts Festival, which is happening in Red Lake from July 4 - 6, 2008. This festival, a tribute to Norval Morrisseau and the Woodland Artists, will recognize the significant contribution that Anishinaabe artists from this region have made to Northwestern Ontario and beyond, nationally and internationally. Organized by the Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre in collaboration with local Aboriginal organizations and artists, the festival will take visitors on a special journey as they discover the untold story of Norval Morrisseau's life in this community.



Gunter Seitz and Reggie Bacon.  
Reggie has been interviewing Mr. Seitz, who was Norval Morrisseau's partner at the mill in Cochenour, for the Woodland Arts project.

Also honoured at the festival will be the members of the Triple K Cooperative, an Aboriginal print shop that operated in Red Lake between 1971 and 1980. Triple K artists included Goyce and Joshim Kakegamic, Saul Williams, and Barry and Paddy Peters. Carl Ray, a well-known artist from Sandy Lake who preceded the Triple K and who is considered a trail-blazer in the Woodland Arts movement, will also be recognized during the festival.

Part of the Heritage Centre's preparation for the Arts Festival is to gather stories and photographs about this time in our region's history from local people who were around during the 1960s and 1970s when Woodland School Arts movement blossomed in our corner of the world. Spearheading this research for the Heritage Centre is Christine Penner Polle, education coordinator for the museum. Assisting her as part of his co-op work placement at the Heritage Centre is Reggie Bacon, a grade 12 student at Red Lake District High School. Reggie, who travels to Red Lake from Wabauskang First Nation every day for school, says that he didn't know anything about Woodland Art before he started working at the museum. However, Reggie does remember reading "Legends of My People, The Great Ojibway", written and illustrated by Norval Morrisseau, while he was in junior high school in Ear Falls. At the same time, he read "Sacred Legends of the Sandy Lake Cree", co-authored and illustrated by Carl Ray.

"Instead of doing the work that my teacher gave me, I studied up on my people," Reggie says. But despite having read their books, Reggie didn't realize until now who Carl Ray and Norval Morrisseau were, or their important contributions to this area and to the art world. "I didn't know about any of this 'til I started doing this co-op. I just think it's a story that needs to be told. Most of the people don't realize that it was these guys that put Red Lake on the map, not just mining."

Heritage Centre Director/Curator Michèle Alderton agrees, "Back in the early 1960s Norval Morrisseau had a vision of making Red Lake a centre for Aboriginal art, and I hope that this festival is the beginning of a revival of his vision for our region, particularly for the aboriginal people whose rich heritage this is."

Do you have memories you would like to share? Did you know any of the artists personally? Do you have a story about a piece of Woodland art that you own? How have the artists, or their art, impacted you? Do you have any photos? The Heritage Centre would like to hear from you! Please contact Christine Penner Polle at the Red Lake Heritage Centre, at 727-3006 or by email at [cppolle@goredlake.com](mailto:cppolle@goredlake.com).