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Driver Rick McCaul is eating from the breakfast menu at 7 p.m. He likes breakfasts at that time, especially when he is driving, because they are "lighter." "Get a heavy meal and in another 15 minutes I'd be sleeping," Eddies Corner. Moore, MT.

bought the café/bar in 1951, and the restaurant has been open 24 hours a day ever since, through weather events and remodels. "Even in a blizzard, you know if you can make it to Eddies Corner, we'll be open," promises Bauman.

Bauman may make few changes in the food, but he paved the parking lot, upgraded the gas pumps, and, most recently, remodeled the bathrooms. "You can't get complacent," he says.

"We're kind of a dinosaur. As an independently-owned family business, we're a rare breed," he says. But extinction will be the farthest thing from Bauman's mind when Eddies celebrates its 60th birthday with a free picnic and ice cream June 18.

Sometimes dinosaurs provide the best eating. **AM**



~Writers and photographers Craig & Liz Larcom cover travel and the outdoors for national, regional and state magazines. They live in Great Falls, MT.

Kay Bjork — BACK TO BUSINESS
• Photography by Phil Procopio

Khi Kuka Soldano BEATING Stereotypes

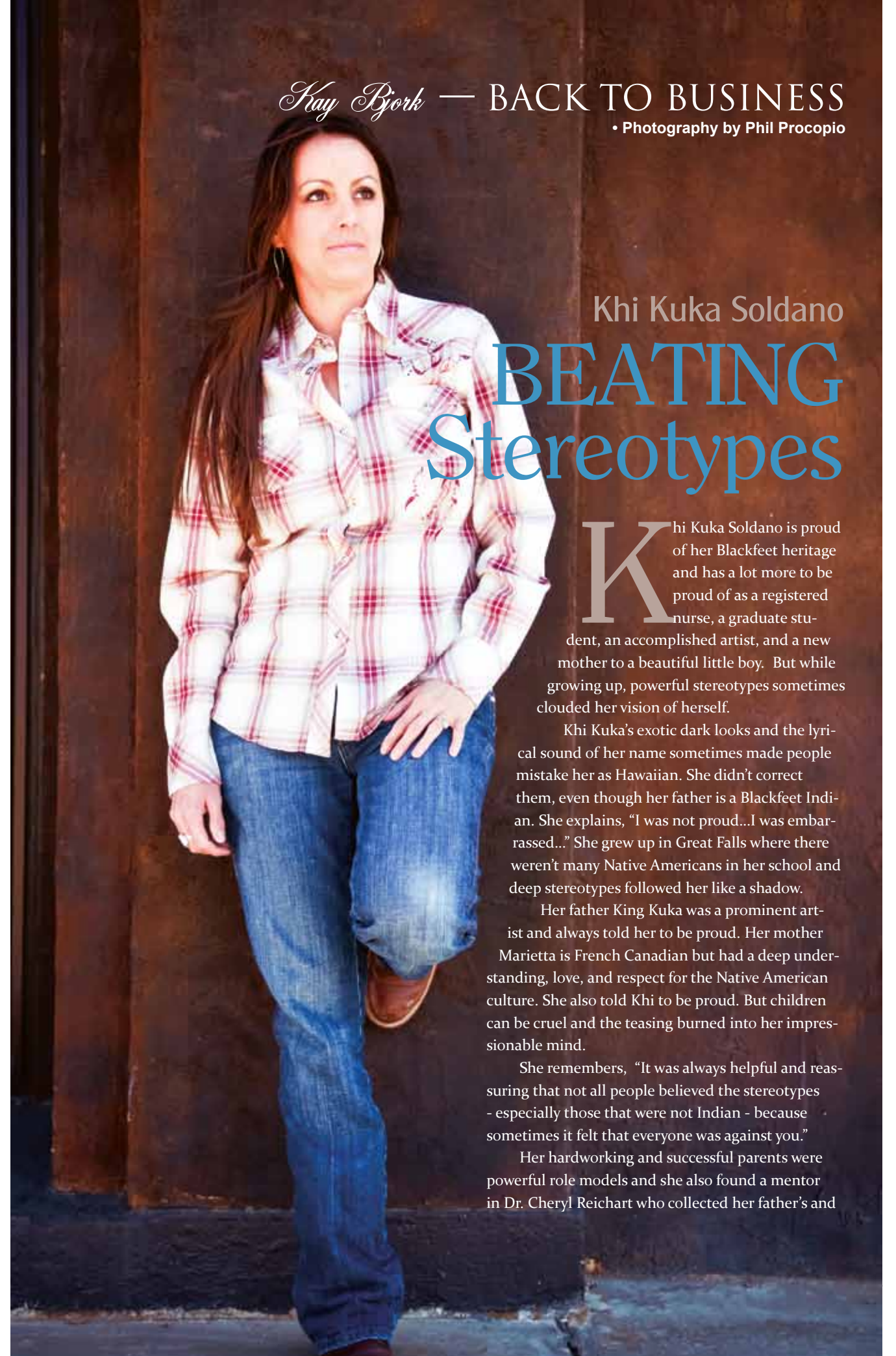
Khi Kuka Soldano is proud of her Blackfeet heritage and has a lot more to be proud of as a registered nurse, a graduate student, an accomplished artist, and a new mother to a beautiful little boy. But while growing up, powerful stereotypes sometimes clouded her vision of herself.

Khi Kuka's exotic dark looks and the lyrical sound of her name sometimes made people mistake her as Hawaiian. She didn't correct them, even though her father is a Blackfeet Indian. She explains, "I was not proud...I was embarrassed..." She grew up in Great Falls where there weren't many Native Americans in her school and deep stereotypes followed her like a shadow.

Her father King Kuka was a prominent artist and always told her to be proud. Her mother Marietta is French Canadian but had a deep understanding, love, and respect for the Native American culture. She also told Khi to be proud. But children can be cruel and the teasing burned into her impressionable mind.

She remembers, "It was always helpful and reassuring that not all people believed the stereotypes - especially those that were not Indian - because sometimes it felt that everyone was against you."

Her hardworking and successful parents were powerful role models and she also found a mentor in Dr. Cheryl Reichart who collected her father's and



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other Indian art. Dr. Reichart saw promise in Khi and gave her an internship, which gave Khi a wide range of medical experiences from lab work to observing surgery and planted the seed for her interest in medicine. Reichart's appreciation for Indian culture also helped Khi realize the beauty of the Blackfeet culture.

In high school Khi worked hard, earned top grades, graduated early and won a scholarship to the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe where she found herself amidst many gifted and vibrant Native American students. She was taught "true history," which included the fact that Native Americans were the first to settle in America. This knowledge helped Khi plant her feet on the ground and at the same time gave her wings. She says, "I found myself. I became proud."

She made the deans list and returned home with full expectations of becoming a full time artist. Her father told her, "You need to have another profession." Miffed at first, but relying on her father's wisdom, she enrolled at the University of Montana in Missoula.

Her beloved father died suddenly and Khi decided she needed the comfort of her two sisters in Pablo and a smaller school. She transferred to Salish Kootenai College where she enrolled in the two-year nursing program.



Khi and her father, King Kuka.

After graduation she returned to Great Falls to be with her mother and to work at Benefis Health. Her life continued to blossom when she married "my best friend and soul mate," Andy Soldano and with the birth of their baby boy, Justus in January.

Always reaching higher she earned her bachelor degree and shortly afterwards began working on her masters while working full time.

She still observes stereotypes as she treats both non-Indian and Indian patients, but she understands some of them are perpetuated because, "In critical care units you see people at their worst." She tries to offer knowledge and understanding to those who are not enlightened. She also shares cultural background to help facilitate care of Indian patients and their families. She gives as an example, "The burning of sweet grass is like their holy water."

Khi plans on teaching her children so they know their origin and are not entangled in stereotypes. Her words will be valuable, but they will only have to look to their mother's life to hear truth, see understanding – and to feel proud. **AM**



~A love for words and pictures led Kay Bjork to a career as a feature writer and photographer for numerous newspapers and magazines. Her home and family on Swan Lake have been the subject of many of her stories and photographs about their outdoor adventures including skating, skiing and hiking.

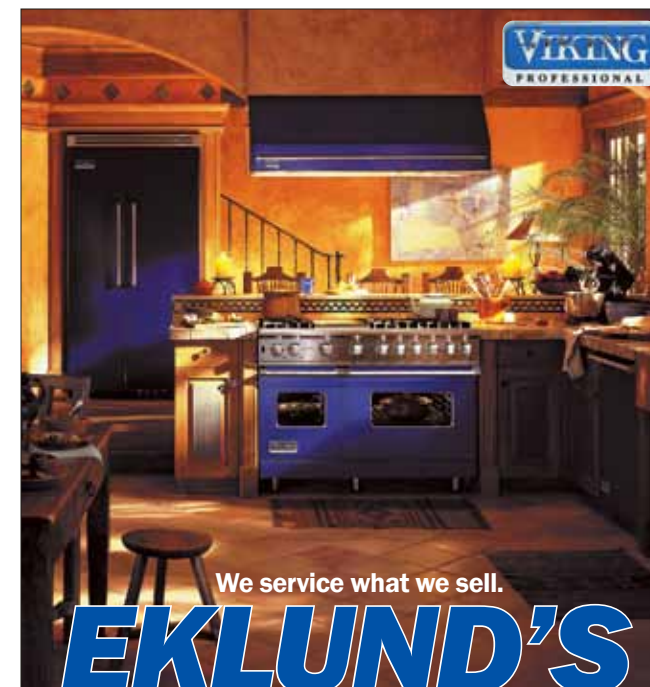
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