MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO HEALING & WELLNESS:

MNO releases findings of major Chronic Disease study

Métis Nation of Ontario calls for immediate attention to higher rates of chronic disease in Métis population

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O
n February 17th, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Georgian Bay Métis Council (GBMC) partici-pated in the Penetangoshowen Wint-erama parade. The theme of the parade was the “Year of the Dragon”, so the council came together and assembled a dragon using an old canoe, cardboard, and garbage bags. The amount of citi-zen participation was astounding. The float was filled quickly with eager people willing to give up their time to show their pride in the Métis Nation. The parade was enjoyed by all and the GBMC hopes to be part of Winterama for many years to come.


The moose are taking over T-Bay

World’s biggest garden gnome spotted in Thunder Bay

“In my whole life in Thunder Bay, I have never seen a new-born baby moose. This one was not even a half mile from my house. The mother picked a quiet neighbourhood in Thunder Bay and had her baby in the front yard, at 5:30 A.M.,” said MNO citizen Cam Burgess. "Debbie and I were out bike rid-ing when we came upon the pair. The lady across the street from this house told us she saw it being born. We saw them at 5:30 PM, so the lit-tle one was 12 hours old. What an awesome place we live in, to see such a sight!"

In response to The Toronto Star article “I will never give up” by Linda Diebel written on behalf of First Nations, Inuit and Métis. By Government documents I am Red River Métis. I was removed from my home in Caramat in 1964 and brought to Thunder Bay where I was made a Crown Ward of Ontario and grew up in the provin-cial private instruction Children’s Aid Society.

It does not surprise me that Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his Conservative Government is fighting this 60’s scoop class action suit. Historically each generation the Conservative Government was in parliament we see the unkind-ness shown towards aboriginal peo-ple. In 1885, Métis lost our way of life and our right to be included as aboriginal people in Canada’s Con-stitution. In 1885 the Conservative Government under the leadership of Sir John A. McDonald was in par-lament. It appears the patterns and belief systems of this government have not changed when it comes to aboriginal people otherwise Stephen Harper would be for this class actions suit instead of against it. In 1985 our Red River Métis fami-lies signed documents called Half-breed Scrip which extinguished our aboriginal title. In 1985 Métis finally regained our standing and now are included in the Canadian Constitution as aboriginal people where we belong.

It is difficult for an aboriginal person of the system to talk about “loss of identity” without mention-ing our own history which we have studied. In 1985 my ancestors were involved in the Rebellion at Duck Lake where Louis Riel and eight Indians were hung. These Indians belonged to Chief Big Bear’s and Chief Poundmaker’s group. This is important history because it shows the close relationships between First Nations and Métis and the ways we supported one another throughout history. Over this Rebellion we wit-ness the identity loss for both Métis and First Nations. Many of the bloodlines of the aboriginal people in this time period were the same. The identity loss I experienced as a child removed me psychologi-cally from many feelings that most people experience. I have no idea what the feelings would be to have an aunt, uncle, grandpar-ents or many more relationships. I am 55 years old and have never attended a family funeral. I do not know what the feeling would be. This is not because no family members passed away. This is because once I was removed from my family and separated from sub-

Letters to the Editor

Opinions expressed in the following commentary are solely those of the writer and do not reflect the policies of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) or the viewpoints of MNO officials or staff.

Victims of Sixties Scoop seek justice in the courts

In the last issue of the Métis Voyageur we carried a letter to the editor, “Victims of Sixties Scoop Seek Redress in Courts”, which we mistakenly did not credit to Ruth Robbins (see pages 2 and 23). Please accept our apology for this omission. In that article Ruth makes reference to an unpublished letter which she sent to the Toronto Star. This is that letter:

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lies signed documents called Half-breed Scrip which extinguished our aboriginal title. In 1985 Métis finally regained our standing and finally regained our standing and now are included in the Canadian Constitution as aboriginal people where we belong.

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MNO releases findings of major Chronic Disease study

Métis Nation of Ontario calls for immediate attention to higher rates of chronic disease in Métis population

Anyone who is part of a Métis community can attest to the terrible toll of chronic diseases, like diabetes, cancer, respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses, on our people. Most Métis also recognize that the frequency of these health problems in our communities is greater than it is outside of our communities and that there are barriers to treatment and preventative services faced by Métis that are not faced by others.

To help address this reality, on March 20, the MNO released the findings of a landmark research initiative studying chronic diseases within the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO). The findings demonstrate significantly higher incidences of chronic diseases in the MNO Métis population than in the general population. It was also found that some Métis have less access to treatment than individuals in the general population. This is the first Métis-specific study of its kind in Ontario and was carried out by the MNO in partnership with the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Science (ICES). The study represented over five years of intensive research utilizing the MNO Citizenship Registry and provincial health administrative databases that are managed by ICES. The findings represent irrefutable scientific evidence that there is a need for Métis-specific wellness and health strategies.

On March 20, MNO President Gary Lipinski, Karen Robert, Public Health Agency of Canada; Saba Kahn, Institute for Clinical Evaluative Science; Dr. Baiju Shah, University of Toronto; MNO Chair France Picotte; Dr. Martin Cooke, University of Waterloo; Dr. Eric Crighton, University of Ottawa; and Dr. David Urbach, University of Toronto, released the findings of their research. The findings demonstrated significantly higher chronic disease rates in the Métis population than in the general Ontario population. This is the first Métis-specific study of its kind in Ontario.

The prevalence of diabetes among Métis citizens in Ontario was 26% higher than in the general Ontario population; Métis with diabetes were 86% more likely to be hospitalized due to a heart attack or pre-heart attack than people with diabetes in the general population; Métis were 18% less likely to receive care from a diabetes specialist; less than half of Métis with diabetes are receiving the recommended eye care.

Metis people have a Métis-specific set of data requirements that are unique, compared to other Canadians and Ontarians, but also to other Aboriginal peoples...
Over the past number of years, the DFO, through the Aboriginal Inland Habitat Program (AIHP), has provided resources to enhance the ability of the Métis Nation of Ontario to participate in management of fish and fish habitat and further develop relations between the Métis Nation of Ontario and DFO.

Inland habitat management involves the implementation of techniques and tools on both large and small scale. For our part, the MNO will concentrate on building on the strides it has made, through its current AIHP, in governance and empowering communities by moving toward enhanced Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge collection from Métis knowledge holders and integration of the ATK into an aquatic habitat management framework.

The MNO’s work under the AIHP has continued to build on MNO’s efforts to increase its capacity to engage in aquatic habitat initiatives and manage aquatic habitat. The MNO conducted ATK collection initiatives, including the collection of ATK relevant to aquatic habitats and training for MNO citizens in the collection of ATK. The work also included Community Council aquatic habitat projects by both initiating new project work plans and initiating projects proposed and planned by MNO Community Councils during 2010-11.

During the past year initiatives included:
- Community Council fish habitat initiatives (Thunder Bay Métis Council and Kenora Métis Council)
- Traditional knowledge collection
- Captain of the Hunt – Youth knowledge transfer and traditional knowledge collection training

These initiatives, as well as other initiatives undertaken through AIHP in previous years, have allowed the MNO to increase its capacity in fish habitat management. This has positive implications in the areas of consultation, habitat management, and the Métis way of life. Over time, working through programs like the AIHP, the MNO and its communities will continue to grow stronger because of this important foundational work.

The MÉTIS Way of Life

Rights-bearing Métis communities throughout Ontario have deep connections – social, cultural, spiritual, and economic – to their traditional territories. These connections lie at the core of Métis identity and culture. The health and well-being of the land directly correlates with that of the Métis people, whose history and future are tied to it. These territories include areas where there was historical settlement, presence and occupation by Métis, as well as historical use, including cultural, social, spiritual and economic activities (including harvesting).

Although harvesting is only one aspect of the Métis way of life, it is one that is tremendously important to many Métis. Like their ancestors, Métis people in our communities rely on the living world around them for food, medicine, and spiritual fulfillment. Fish are harvested by line or net for food. Large game like moose and deer are hunted for meat and hides. Plants are collected for food, medicine or use in ceremony. Upland and migratory birds, as well as small game such as rabbits, are harvested for food. Trapping and commercial fishing are also important activities. These are only a few examples of how harvesting is important to the Métis way of life; there are many more.
A Bitter Legacy

Métis Nation files intervention to the United Nations on Métis survivors of the Residential School System

Seeking recognition for Métis survivors who endured emotional, physical and spiritual abuse in Métis residential, day and boarding schools continues for the Métis National Council. “This is one issue that I will not put down until it has been settled,” says Métis National Council (MNC) President, Clément Chartier. “There is a real misconception in Canada about the Métis’ place in this horrific piece of Canada’s history. I can assure you that Métis experienced the same brutalities and the stripping of self-identity, as those recognized under the Indian Residential Settlements Agreement.

Another step was taken on January 30, 2012, by filing an official intervention to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in Geneva, Switzerland. This intervention provides the position of the Métis Nation on Canada’s nineteenth and twentieth reports of Canada to the CERD and highlights the continued discriminatory effects on Métis citizens of the residential school system imposed by the federal government of Canada.

It also explains the exclusionary policies and legislative measures imposed on addressing the full scope of the legacy of the residential school system by the Crown and describes the reality that Métis children suffered inexcusably for decades in these ‘schools’.

The document outlines how the Métis have been excluded in all accounts during the process of recognition and compensation criteria set out by Canada and provides the following recommendations to the CERD:

- It is recommended that the CERD urge Canada to accept its jurisdictional responsibility to the Métis and to address the discriminatory impacts of the residential school system on Métis survivors and their descendants. These negotiations must lead to fair compensation for Métis survivors and their descendants at least equal to compensation currently available to other Indigenous peoples in Canada. Specifically, it is recommended that the CERD urge Canada to initiate amendments to the Settlement Agreement to provide for at least equal access to its compensatory schemes for Métis survivors and their descendants.

- It is further recommended that the CERD urge Canada to initiate amendments to the mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada to specifically include the Métis on an equal basis to First Nations and Inuit peoples.

- This battle is far from over, but the MNC is determined to ensure Métis survivors and their stories are heard and that every individual has the closure they deserve. Only then will the Métis Nation, as a whole, have an opportunity to heal from a legacy that began by imposing a childhood that no child should ever endure.

MNC President | Honoured by the Crown

Métis National Council President receives Diamond Jubilee award

The Métis National Council (MNC) President, Clément Chartier, is among 60 winners of the inaugural Diamond Jubilee Awards, celebrating the 60th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II’s accession to the throne.

Governor-General David Johnston, accompanied by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, awarded 60 inaugural medals, several of them to Aboriginal people or those working on indigenous issues. Chartier won “for his leadership as President of the Métis National Council, and for advocating for Métis and indigenous rights,” according to the Governor General’s website.

“It is an honour to have been selected to receive the Diamond Jubilee Medal,” Chartier said in a statement. “This medal recognizes the achievements and dedication to building a better Canada—to be recognized for pushing the Métis rights agenda forward is very special, but there is much work yet to do on this issue.”

The medals were given out in a private ceremony at Rideau Hall.

MÉTIS NATIONAL COUNCIL | MÉTIS SURVIVORS OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

A Long Way from Reconciliation

Efforts continue for recognition and compensation for Métis residential and day-school survivors

The Métis Nation continues to seek recognition and compensation for the thousands of Métis residential and day-school survivors not included in the Indian Residential School Settlements Agreement. The challenge facing the Métis Nation is the continued exclusion of the Métis residential/boarding schools from the Settlement Agreement, the Government of Canada’s apology, and the mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) whose interim report was released on February 24, 2012.

“Reconciliation requires more than just one party at the table,” said Métis National Council (MNC) President, Clément Chartier. “We made it clear that we would not be participating in the work of the TRC in the absence of some party taking responsibility for what happened to our children in the residential or boarding schools set up for Métis children.”

President Chartier also expressed concern that the interim report’s reference to a meeting of TRC commissioners with the MNC leadership may imply that Métis residential schools were included in the commission’s mandate and the Settlement Agreement itself. “We met with the TRC to tell them we would not be participating in its work until such time that responsibility was assumed by the government and/or the church organizations involved and a settlement concluded with respect to residential schools.”

The MNC President said he fully supported initiatives to compensate and reconcile with the victims of Indian residential schools but wanted the TRC to be clearer in its reporting so that Canada and the international community will understand that there are many Métis people and boarding schools excluded from Canada’s acknowledgement of past harms.

“I am at a total loss as to why Canada would turn its back on the Métis children who suffered the same or similar abuses in those institutions as suffered by First Nations children in Indian residential schools,” concluded Chartier.
Michif

A language for today and tomorrow

By Francis Picotte, MNO Chair and Dr. Chris Paul, Manager MNO Education & Training

Michif continues to be one of the languages spoken in Ontario today. Thanks to funding from the Aboriginal Languages Initiative, Canadian Heritage, and the Ministry of Education, Michif speakers from across Ontario gathered for a day of sharing and discussion. The state of the Michif language spoken in Ontario is largely unknown outside of the Michif Committee. The committee has been around a number of years, functioning as a key group of dedicated volunteers with passion for the language. The day long gathering was an opportunity to share and celebrate Michif as a language for today and tomorrow.

Historically, many of the Michif speakers were reluctant to speak in public. “We are pretty sure that we have more than two dialects but how many is still unknown. This gathering of speakers is but a minute example of what I suspect to be its existence in Ontario,” said Francis Picotte, Chair of the Métis Nation of Ontario. The Michif language is a language of survival and necessity. In the early days, before the formation of Canada, Michif facilitated communication between diverse peoples, added Métis mobility (across different cultural and linguistic landscapes) and contributed to the survival of our ancestors.

There are many questions about the state of Aboriginal languages: What do we need to do to ensure these languages are not lost with the current generation of speakers? What were those things that contributed to the development of the languages? As the Métis Nation continues to grow in Ontario what do we need to do to ensure the viability of Michif? Métis peoples’ ability to communicate with diverse peoples continues to be instrumental in the development of Ontario and Canada; the same values that were important in the past are of importance today and in the future. The Métis Nation of Ontario is committed to supporting Michif—gathering, preserving and propagating all the languages spoken by Métis.

A Michif Committee meeting, February 27, 2012.

MNO citizen receives National Aboriginal Achievement Award

Dr. Janet Smylie

The 2012 National Aboriginal Achievement Award (NAAA) recipient list includes two other outstanding Métis Nation citizens. Senator Gerry St. Germain from Manitoba was recognized for his lifetime achievements. As the first self-identified Métis person to serve in Canada’s federal cabinet Senator St. Germain has dedicated much of his life’s work to advancing issues of importance to Indigenous peoples across Canada. He was appointed to the Senate in 1993 and is currently the Chair of the Senate’s Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, where he has introduced legislation on self-government. Senator St. Germain was instrumental in achieving a formal residential school apology from the Government of Canada.

Candace Sutherland from Manitoba was given the Youth Award. Candace is an exceptional role model for young people across Canada. Donating to charities and running across Canada in support of the Salvation Army, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Canadian Diabetes Association and the Canadian Cancer Society.

The National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation presented its yearly awards on February 24th in Vancouver. The Awards Gala was co-hosted by Theo Fleury and Carmen Moore and will be televised by both Global and APTN later in the year. Special appearances included rock icon Robbie Robertson from Six Nations of the Grand River, internationally acclaimed Métis singer songwriter and pianist, Chantal Kreviazuk, award-winning singer Derek Miller, and Métis actors and chanteuse, Andrea Menard.

For a complete list of winners and more information about the Awards visit: www.naaf.ca/NAAA

Dr. Janet Smylie (left) with National Aboriginal Health Organization CEO, Dr. Paulette C. Tremblay, presented findings of the Indigenous Children’s Health Report: Health Assessment in Action to the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) in 2009. (PHOTO: National Aboriginal Health Organization)
Kenora Métis Council brings Métis culture & language to the next generation during Festival du Voyageur

By Nina Henley

Kenora Métis Council
Secretary

The Métis Nation of Ontario, Kenora Métis Council was asked to join in the festivities at Ste. Marguerite Bourgeoys' French Immersion School in celebration of Festival Du Voyageur for the second year in a row on February 17th.

We set up two classrooms. In one classroom we focused on the sharing of our traditions, showcasing our resource books, posters, and Métis artefacts such as our flag, sash, clothing, traps, etc. Councilor, Karen Cederwall was happy to discuss any of our resources with the teachers and students, and to answer their questions.

We held a mini-Michif class, with Women’s Representative, Colette Surovy giving a short lesson. Colette also gave a brief explanation of the canoe expedition that came through Kenora and showed the paddle that had been presented to our council, a map of the route they had followed, and pictures of the young voyageurs. She also talked to the students about how important the canoe was to the voyageurs, and how they made canoes out of birch bark.

Katelyne Stenlund welcomed the students in Michif and gave a brief presentation about our Métis flag and sash, explaining the meanings of the different colours. PCMNO Region One Councillor, Theresa Stenlund, and citizen, Roxy Derouard, helped Katelyne answer questions from the students.

Our treasurer, Sandra Triskle, her father, Floyd Triskle and Jaymie Triskle display fiddle music played, while citizens Adelle Gordon, Nina Henley, and Hailey Porter showed the students how to play the spoons and how to jig. They were all excited to give it a try. Then, citizens, Jolena Henley and Ashley Cederwall handed out bannock and jam to the deserving students.

Both the teachers and students seemed to enjoy our participation in this event, and have asked us to participate again next year.

The Métis Way of Life

By Theresa Stenlund

Region One PCMNO Councillor

When it comes to passing on the teachings of our Métis way of life, it is so important that our children, and our children’s children, are given the teachings that our ancestors have given us.

In saying this, it is also very important to me as a parent, for my children to know who they are and where they have come from. I have taken the time to teach my children and watch them grow up as Métis children.

At Ste. Marguerite Bourgeoys’ French Immersion School in celebration of Festival Du Voyageur.

This workshop incorporated a definition of who the Métis are and some teachings about our Métis way of life. It was very heartwarming to see my daughter wear her ribbons shirt and sash and give teachings on the Métis flag, sash, capote, etc. to the teachers and to children of all ages who rotated through her group station. It confirmed for me that my daughter at this young age, is proud of who she is, her culture, and her identity.

I also had my six year old son, Hayden, participate in the group stations and he had the opportunity to watch his sister Katelyne present on our Métis culture. I hope through his eyes he sees his sister as a strong Métis role model and he too will one day be in her shoes teaching others about our Métis way of life for the next generation to come.

Colette Surovy giving a short lesson to students at Ste. Marguerite Bourgeoys’ French Immersion School in celebration of Festival Du Voyageur.

Floyd Triskle and Jaymie Triskle display trapping paraphernalia and medicinal plants.

Ashley Cedarwall prepares to serve the bannock.

Tadpole and plants.
Durham College has welcomed an array of new facilities and programs over the past few months, including the recently opened Aboriginal Student Centre, located within the Simcoe Building.

The centre celebrated its first Métis Awareness Day on January 26th, when everyone was invited to find out more about the Métis culture. Cecile Wagar, the Senator of the Métis Nation of Ontario Oshawa and Durham Métis Council, was in attendance and happy to share food, jigging and fiddling fun with curious visitors. She also mentioned the artefacts and furs that were on display, as well as the beaded moccasins and unique clothing items.

Alicia Blore, who played the fiddle throughout the day, entertained guests with her songs.

Based on an article by Brea Bartholet

On January 26, a number of Brock University students took part in a traditional Métis beading workshop, held on campus in St Catharines, Ontario. The workshop was sponsored by the Métis Nation of Ontario’s (MNO) Infinite Reach program and co-hosted by Brock’s Aboriginal Student Services.

Beading is a traditional art form of Métis culture, a gift taught to Métis girls by Christian nuns in mission schools. Métis women went on to produce beaded items for their voyageur husbands to trade with First Nation partners in the fur trade. Historically, the Métis were referred to as “The Flower Beadwork People” because of the popularity of their exquisite beading, and flowers are one of the most common designs. Today, beading is worn proudly by many Métis, including our leaders across the province and country as a symbol of our history.

Barbaranne Wright, the Women’s Representative for the MNO Niagara Regional Métis Council, volunteered her time to come to campus to teach students this craft. A total of nine students took part in the event, including two Métis students and two First Nations students. All participants started a flower design project, and received a full kit with all the necessary supplies to finish two designs. Students could sew the finished product onto clothing or another accessory, or use it to be used as a wall decoration.

During the workshop, Barbaranne shared with participants the historical and cultural importance of beadwork for the Métis people. Beading has always been an important component of traditional Métis culture, first taught to Métis girls by Christian nuns in mission schools. Métis women went on to produce beaded items for their voyageur husbands to trade with First Nation partners in the fur trade. Historically, the Métis were referred to as “The Flower Beadwork People” because of the popularity of their exquisite beading, and flowers are one of the most common designs. Today, beading is worn proudly by many Métis, including our leaders across the province and country as a symbol of our history.

Barbaranne also talked about the history of the Métis sash and the Métis flag, two traditional symbols of the Métis people. She even told the history behind the lives of her own Métis ancestors from all parts of North America.

For almost all of the students, this was their first exposure to any type of beading craft, but everyone did an amazing job and took home some beautiful projects. All of the participants enjoyed the workshop and the full day of stories, laughter, sharing, and fun!

The event was sponsored by the MNO as part of its Infinite Reach program. The Infinite Reach Student Solidarity Network is a new initiative of the Métis Nation of Ontario to help to create a community of Métis learners in Ontario’s post-secondary institutions.

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There is so much we learn from our history. The Métis of Ontario can most likely better identify with the voyageurs than with the buffalo hunters of the central part of our Homeland. History has taught us that just before the Nor’Wester voyageurs came to a fort or back to their point of origin they would beak their canoes and change into somewhat more presentable clothing. They would polish themselves up to make a proper and dignified impression. They would put on their best face and do themselves proud. What can we learn from our forefathers? Certainly we can relate to this practice of making a good impression. When we ourselves gather we observe a multitude of sashes and Métis regalia. Without doubt it is a fine tradition to continue. However, on a more basic level it also teaches us a valuable lesson that I believe is worth exploring.

There is no question in my mind that the long canoe trips caused some conflicts amongst the voyageurs as they travelled day in and day out in close, cramped quarters. What of course is interesting is how they put that all aside and put their best foot forward when they came to a fort or back to Montreal. While on their journey, many differences must have come to the forefront; it would only be natural that these “issues” come to a head. There would be disputes, complaints, bickering, and confrontations of all sorts. But just prior to coming into public view they would stop, shake off the dust, dress up in their best attire then head into the fort or settlement in fine form—a well-oiled machine.

All too often as we travel on our Métis journey, we have our own disputes or complaints, and our own confrontations. We most definitely have our fair share of bickering. All of this is a healthy way of advancing the Nation. However, some of us seem to have lost the ability to shake off the dust and put forth a united appearance when we come into public view. The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) has always striven for consensus; it is the cornerstone of our political system. What is unfortunate is how some continue disputes, complaints and confrontations after consensus has been reached.

The Métis Nation of Ontario and its citizens are in a constant battle to secure our inherent rights and place within Canadian society. In order to achieve this, the MNO has set out certain rules and principles. One of the most disputed of these principles is that of “citizenship.” The MNO is working hard to prove and promote the idea of an “all province” concept, citizenship from the Quebec border to the Manitoba border (east to west) and from the southernmost point to the far north. They take into account court rulings and citizenship concerns; it is a work in progress. Unfortunately, bickering over this and other issues often occurs outside the confines of our own Nation—to the detriment of our Nation and its citizens. It is like being in a war where we give the opposing side our own ammunition to use against us.

The lesson to be learned from our history is to seek consensus within our ranks and present a unified front in public. Let us shake off the dust in private and put our best foot forward.

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For a northern girl who never really ice fishes, I was impressed with this experience and very grateful to have been given the time to teach my children and myself this great winter sport.

For a northern girl who never really ice fishes, I was truly impressed with this experience and very grateful to have been given the time to teach my children and myself this great winter sport. We were very blessed to have had a wonderful day, the wind was calm, the ice inviting and the sun kept us warm and many for shuttling us out to the ice fishing huts they had set up for us to use for the day.

Following the ice fishing and enjoying what nature has to offer, we had a great dinner with some thrilling cultural music, which fed my soul.

A Métis Rendezvous planned in Port Dover

A Métis Rendezvous is planned for Port Dover this coming fall, on September 22nd. The event will be held at Silver Lake Park where about 1000 people are expected to attend. Workshops are planned on drum making, tomahawk throwing, mocassin making and bead- ing. There will be fiddlers, jiggers and story-tellers as well as displays of herbal medicines and trappers’ skills, such as hide stretching. There will also be special events for youth. The Port Dover Lions Club is helping to promote this first-time event. Port Dover is approxi- mately a one hour drive from Hamilton.
Demystifying Mental Illness

MNO Healing and Wellness workshop makes learning fun regardless of topic

By Jessie Dolan and Michelle Seguin Timmins

On February 15th, 2012, we at the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Timmins branch held our workshop for “Stress Management and Mental Health”. Despite the weighty topics we had a great turn out and wonderful feedback from participants, which we credit mostly to our unique approach.

The decision to partner these two topics in a one day workshop came easily given that the mention of “mental health” or “mental illness” is that people are so quick to label others that they associate with mental illness. So we decided to tackle why it is no wonder that people often run from mental health issues, trauma, and stress and we targeted just that! It is no surprise, we heard things like, “you hear voices” and “you have delusions” for schizophrenia, and “you’re disruptive to others,” “you can’t focus on anything” for ADHD. This simple game brought to light all of the myths and stigmas surrounding mental disorders in a fun and interactive way allowing us to address the truth and open up a discussion addressing our participants’ questions and comments.

A huge “thank you” goes out to all of our participants for being open to questions and comments. We had our participants put on a headband with the name of a mental disorder or illness, such as “schizophrenia”, “depression”, “attention deficit hyper-activity disorder” (ADHD), etc., without their seeing what is written on it. All the other participants are able to see the label and are charged with providing the “label” person with hints to guess the disorder stuck to their headband. Not surprisingly, we heard things like, “you hear voices” and “you have delusions” for schizophrenia, and “you’re disruptive to others,” “you can’t focus on anything” for ADHD. This simple game brought to light all of the myths and stigmas surrounding mental disorders in a fun and interactive way allowing us to address the truth and open up a discussion addressing our participants’ questions and comments.

We would like to acknowledge the entire Métis Nation of Ontario Healing & Wellness Team in Timmins.

A Promising Practice

Métis Centre programs highlighted for potential to reduce existing health disparities between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

In August, the Health Council of Canada released, “Understanding and Improving Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health in Canada”. The report is the result of a multi-year initiative in 2010 to highlight programs and initiatives with a potential of reducing existing health disparities between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

Last winter, the council held a series of seven regional meetings across Canada to learn what is making a difference in the health of Aboriginal mothers and young children. The goal of the meetings was to capture on the ground information about what is working from people in the field.

The council identified two Métis Centre projects as promising practices: Healthy Beginnings, Supportive Communities A Strong Future, a DVD about Métis maternal child health, and ISPAYIN-Métis Youth Express Yourself! a DVD and discussion guide exploring Métis identity and culture from a youth perspective.

A promising practice was defined as including the following characteristics: is based on Aboriginal experiences; resonates with users, results in positive changes in people’s lives; is inclusive; and, is adaptive, i.e. recognizes the importance of community context for successful implementation.

Findings from the report conclude that:

Healthy Beginnings, Supportive Communities A Strong Future:

- Fills a gap where information was lacking or non-existent.
- Ensures Métis voices are heard in maternal and child health discussions.
- Recognizes and respects oral stories and teaching.
- Is easily accessible to all Métis across Canada.
- Has a comprehensive package with written material, images and video.

ISPAYIN-Métis Youth Express Yourself!

- Promotes positive Métis identity.
- Builds Métis cultural competence.
- Is youth-driven and developed.

A huge “thank you” goes out to all of our participants for being open to questions and comments.

We, at the MNO Timmins Healing & Wellness Branch, had a lot of fun presenting this workshop and want everyone to take a few lessons from what we learned: get the word out; always present topics honestly and provide follow up; encourage participants to discuss the topics amongst their friends and family; NEVER be afraid to make it fun. Some topics are very difficult and bring up a lot of emotions, but using interactive games is a great way to relieve tension in a group. Games are also a good ice breaker or a simple tool to open discussion.

Try the head bands game yourself, and mix up the topics or use a “stress masher” to release feelings and make something positive. A stress masher is fun.

We used ripping card-stock paper of many colours and gluing it onto a board to create unique artwork, but you can use any medium you choose to create something wonderful from something negative!

We would like to acknowledge the entire Métis Nation of Ontario Healing & Wellness Team in Timmins.

For more information or to read the reports, visit the Health Council of Canada: www.healthcouncilcanada.ca
Big-hearted community keeps the Métis Hall going

Based on an article by Heather Latter, staff writer Fort Frances Times On-Line

In addition to musicians, there were storytellers, actors, comedians and dancers, all of whom donated their time and talent to help raise money to sustain the Métis Hall, as did the artists and artisans from the Rainy River Arts Collective. “They are all a true testament to how much heart our community has,” he remarked.

Calder thanked local merchants and community members who contributed to the penny table and the community programs that run out of it, “they stressed. “We really appreciate the help of all of the entertainers who pulled together a remarkable lineup, and the Rainy River Arts Collective for adding another dimension and joining in with a fabulous display of local artistic talent,” he added.

We need events like ‘Heart of the Arts’ not only to show off some of the amazing talent we have in the area, but also to help fundraise to keep the Métis Hall going,” said Clint Calder, President of the MNO Sunset Country Métis. “We don’t have many community halls left in Fort Frances, and we would like to preserve this one to house our community gatherings but also the community programs that run out of it,” he stressed. “We really appreciate the help of all of the entertainers who pulled together a remarkable lineup, and the Rainy River Arts Collective for adding another dimension and joining in with a fabulous display of local artistic talent,” he added.

In addition to musicians, there were storytellers, actors, comedians and dancers, all of whom donated their time and talent to help raise money to sustain the Métis Hall, as did the artists and artisans from the Rainy River Arts Collective. “They are all a true testament to how much heart our community has,” he remarked.

Calder thanked local merchants and community members who contributed to the penny table and the auction, and local bakers for contributing to the bake sale. He noted that the Métis Hall is a gathering place for many community groups and events, and some great programs that benefit surrounding communities, like the Healthy Living Food Box and the Kids Bring Kids playgroup.

“There is a misconception that the Métis Hall is government-funded, but it is not and it never has been,” stressed Clint Calder, President of the MNO Sunset Country Métis. “It is run by volunteers.” He added that because many of the programs there, are philanthropic and cultural in nature, they do not necessarily generate revenue.

We need events like ‘Heart of the Arts’ not only to show off some of the amazing talent we have in the area, but also to help fundraise to keep the Métis Hall going.

Let Us Walk a Good Path

Live of our heritage guided us throughout our journey. Energized by Mother Earth, we sought to live in harmony. Thanks to our sole Creator, we discovered our Métis identity.

Unrestrained joy flowed in our hearts as God kept us company. SILENCE sounds inspired our souls. We felt one with Mother Nature.

We kept quiet to fully savour the warm embrace of our divine Creator. As we heard the sacred heartbeat of the drum, we blossomed to no end. Life nurtured our quest for wisdom. It was as if we were already in heaven. Knowing that the Golden Eagle kept an eye on us, we longed to join his flight.

Accepting us as his children demonstrated the intensity of his spiritual might. Goodness filled our souls and beckoned us to help the poor of our society. Open-minded, we greeted them with dignity. We knew they were needy. Our hearts bled for them and our souls overflowed with compassion.

As we heard his hypnotizing hoots, we stayed awake no less. The regal Thunderbird reminded us of our ancestral ways. Hope, love and optimism became our Helios Pathways.

Métis Lament

Take kindly to the council of years and experience of our Elders, gracefully surrendering our youth and many things of the past. We would not be here without them. We will continue to build our strength and spirit to protect and continue to build our strength and spirit to protect and

A clear, strong and nurtured mind will overcome and conquer many of our fears, which are often the origin of our unhappiness, fatigue and loneliness. We will discipline ourselves to be outstanding and proud people who will leave our mark of excellence in today’s society, to carve a path to guide our siblings and the next generation of Métis.

We must stand together as a nation and be proud of our heritage and be kind and gentle to our brothers and sisters. We are a family of Métis in this great universe, who stand equal to all others on this earth.

We give thanks to our great creator for all the great gifts and wisdom he has given us. We will continue to follow our guiding light and carry forth our sign of infinity into the future because we have a God-given right to stand tall as proud Métis.

--- Raymond D. Tremblay

MÉTIS IN THE MEDIA

Riel Goes Digital

Chester Brown’s award-winning graphic novel biography of Louis Riel to be published as e-book

Originally published in 2000, Louis Riel: A Comic Strip Biography, won a Harvey Award for graphic fiction, and was dubbed by Publisher’s Weekly as “a strong contender for the best graphic novel ever” because of its artistic telling of the life story of Riel. Now, Drawn & Quarterly (D & Q), the Canadian graphic novel publisher, will digitize cartoonist Chester Brown’s well-known account of the Métis hero’s life.

“While the book concerns imperialism, empire, nationalism and the chaos that results, Brown maintains a still, almost silent atmosphere. He brilliantly renders a lengthy courtroom sequence by setting figures against a black background, heightening the tension of the events by employing minimal effects. Even the battle scenes are subdued," Publisher’s Weekly said in its review at the time of release.

Last fall, Brown voiced his desire for e-books; CBC Canada Reads shortlisted Louis Riel in its top-ten for its annual contest; and, Canadian company Kobo, expressed an interest.

Louis Riel: A Comic Strip Biography, by Chester Brown—an artist considered to be one of the greatest cartoonists living today—coming soon to a computer near you.

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--- Senator Emer Ross

Benoit Carrier, ON
I’m finally being myself

By Tamarra Shepherd
Regional Employment & Training
Intake Officer - TORONTO

Nina Farrauto is not one to settle. The self-identified Métis woman and successful 26-year-old makeup artist, originally from St. Catharines, has never been satisfied staying still. But it took a little searching to determine where she wanted to be and how she would get there.

After a brief and somewhat discouraging stint at university, Nina knew that the typical post-secondary experience wasn’t for her. A self-described “artist”, Nina recalls being aware her talents lie elsewhere at an early age. “I was making extensions at two years old,” she says.

For a period of time, Nina admits she pursued what others around her were doing instead of following her truest passion and it wasn’t until an insightful talk with a university advisor that she knew she was in the wrong place. She says her biggest challenge in that moment was “figuring out what my dream job was and finding out where I belong.” For Nina, this meant leaving the university experience behind and taking a chance on the unknown.

She didn’t hesitate. Nina knew in order to pursue her dreams she needed to talk to and shadow experience from people who are already living them. She talked to fashion designers, successful stylists, and even met with eTalk’s Leah Miller’s makeup artist over coffee to talk about what unforeseen challenges she might face in this field. Nina found the experience invaluable. “One of the biggest steps for me was figuring out who to shadow,” she credits this as being the key to success at any job. “I don’t think there’s enough emphasis on ‘job shadowing’. When you finish high school take one year and go to the company you want to work for and ask to shadow ‘the accountant’, ‘the receptionist’, or whoever, for free for two weeks.”

A practitioner of her own advice, Nina discovered after a few hour-long job shadows, exactly what her future would entail. Relying on her talent as a stylist, it wasn’t long before she found a job at a salon. Temporary as it was, Nina’s eye for hair design inspired in her a desire to learn more about the aesthetic arts. But how she would be able to afford the education she needed for such a competitive field was yet to be decided. “After going to university and hair school, I just couldn’t afford it.” That problem brought to mind a conversation with a cousin years ago who had mentioned accessing support through the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) for college tuition.

Métis herself, Nina visited the MNO Toronto branch to see if the MNO could help in any way. When she met with Kelly Honsberger, Coordinator of Education and Training at the MNO Toronto office, she was confident she had made the right choice. Her desire to do art instead of just aesthetics led Nina to choose Complections makeup artistry program. This institution, well-known for its instructors and its focus on special effects make-up, is considered among the best aesthetic arts schools in the country.

With the MNO’s help, not even a few weeks into the eight month course, Nina realized she’d found precisely where she belonged; she excelled at her course work and uncovered a hidden talent for sculpture, design and prosthetics.

Upon graduation, she secured her first contract—working as a makeup artist on season three of So You Think You Can Dance Canada. Since then, she’s worked season three and four of the Canadian version of the dance show, as well as on the set of Battle of the Blades, and had her work published in magazines like Lush and Vive. Nina is now working on her first film, an independent production filmed in Toronto titled “Concrete”, slated for release next year.

Nina recognizes the possibilities her future holds. “I knew my whole life I wanted to do this.” When asked what the most rewarding part of her job is, there is a long pause. At last she says, “That it feels like home; that it feels like I’m finally being myself.”
The Métis were fighting for Canada, before there was a Canada

The Métis & the War of 1812

Historians often portray the War of 1812 as one theatre in the much larger conflict created by the ambitions of Napoleon Bonaparte, who, in the early part of the 1800s led France in a series of wars against several European nations. In an effort to contain Napoleon, Britain blockaded continental Europe, interfering with American commerce and providing the United States with the justifications for the War of 1812. In the event, the Métis were fighting for Canada, before there was a Canada. The Métis contributions during the War of 1812 placed us in the crucible that formed Canada and further affirmed our role as one of the founding peoples of this great nation. The following feature in the Métis Voyageur highlights some of the many contributions of the Métis during the War of 1812. While by no means does it represent every Métis who did in the War (that would require, at least, an entire book) it does highlight some of the more well-known aspects of our involvement. In truth, much more research is required to explore Métis history in Ontario in general and in the War of 1812 in particular, before the full story of the Métis in Ontario can be appreciated. I am pleased that in some of the upcoming commemorations, Métis contributions will be recognized. Most notably, the Métis Nation of Ontario will be invited to help plan a Government of Canada ceremony taking place this summer in Ottawa that will recognize the vital contributions and sacrifices of Aboriginal people during the War of 1812. At this ceremony, commemorative War of 1812 medals will be distributed Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizens, including Region 4 Provisional Council of the MNO (PCMNO) Councillor, Art Bennett, have been involved in the plans of Algoma 1812, which will include the re-enactment of the events surrounding the surrender of Fort Mackinac at the start of the war—events in which the Métis played a pivotal role. The MNO is also putting the finishing touches on its own plans to commemorate Métis involvement in the War of 1812. The War of 1812 lasted until 1814, so the MNO is not limiting itself to 2012 in its activities. Look forward to more War of 1812 themed activities from the MNO in the near future and during the next two years.

The War of 1812 is an important part of Ontario Métis history and I would encourage all MNO citizens to take part in commemorations and celebrations this summer. Take pride in your Métis heritages and don’t be shy about reminding people of the Métis role in this conflict, especially if you notice that it has been overlooked. Our heroic contributions to the defence of Canada must not be forgotten! These Hardy Voyageurs...

"Much more research is required to explore Métis history in Ontario in general and in the War of 1812 in particular, before the full story of the Métis in Ontario can be appreciated."

"These hardy voyageurs... or half-breeds... came up with the North-West Company, and... married Indian women, their progeny also becoming British soldiers or attachés of the fur company in various capacities... Some were proud recipients of medals still treasured by their descendants and gained for bravery at Plattsburgh and other historic battlefields, and some carried wounds received while gallantly upholding British supremacy. They were in the front of battle during the stirring scenes of Mackinaw, St. Joseph, Sault Ste. Marie and other sanguinary points during the war of 1812-15. This is a testimony more eloquent than words to the loyalty and worth of the ancestors of the settlers around Penetanguishene."—William Rossouw (son of Sergeant Sandie Rossouw, a British soldier in the War of 1812), quoted in, The Migration of Voyageurs from Drummond Island to Penetanguishene in 1828 by A. C. Osborne in Ontario Historical Society: Papers and Notes. v. 2 (1901), p. 123-144.

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Fort Mackinac

Fort Mackinac was an American outpost on Mackinac Island, located strategically in the strait between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, and a crucial waterway for the fur trade. When the United States declared war in June, 1812, the British commander, Isaac Brock, dispatched a voyageur canoe expedition (likely including several Métis) to the British garrison at Fort St. Joseph near Fort Mackinac to instruct Charles Roberts, the British commander there to lead an assault on Fort Mackinac and seize control of the island. Responding quickly to the orders, on July 17, seventy war canoes and ten other boats manned by Métis, First Nations and British allies left Fort St. Joseph and landed without being detected on the north end of Mackinac Island. There they were able to remove the civilian population and seize two canons on the fort. The American garrison, not even aware that the United States had declared war, was taken entirely by surprise when Captain Roberts demanded their surrender. The Americans, seeing that they were outnumbered, at a strategic disadvantage, and because they were afraid of the Americans, saw no other choice but to surrender. The Americans succeeded in destroying Fort St. Joseph, they failed to re-capture Mackinac Island, which was ably defended by British soldiers with their Métis and First Nations allies. The Treaty of Ghent (1814), which ended the War of 1812, gave Mackinac Island back to the Americans, so, with Fort St. Joseph destroyed, the British moved from Mackinac Island and re-located their garrison to Drummond Island with the majority of the Métis population choosing to go with them. Surveys, not completed until 1822, determined that Drummond Island was also part of the United States. Again, the Métis followed the British garrison when it moved, this time to Penetanguishene on the Georgian Bay. Our Métis Ancestors During the War of 1812

Like much of Métis history in Ontario, Métis involvement in the War of 1812 has not been well documented. We would like to thank those few Métis Nation of Ontario citizens who were able to submit information about their ancestors to be included in this special feature on the War of 1812. Some simply reported that their family ancestors (or sometimes both) participated in the War of 1812. Some reported their ancestors served during the war and afterwards became a “Superintendent of Indian Affairs” in Upper Canada. Grace Louis Langlade and Barnet Lyons.” Bruce Poitras of Brantford is a descendent of Colonel Robert Dickson, who worked directly under the command of Isaac Brock. Poitras reports that Dickson was also a fur trader who married a First Nations woman and her family eventually found its way west to the Red River Settlement and the Qu’Appelle Valley. Louis Langlade of Guelph, and Cora Bunn, President of the MNO Grand River Métis Council, are related to the family of Charles and Louis Langlade, both of whom served in the War. Louis Langlade’s role is documented on a Government of Canada monument located near Niagara-on-the-Lake. The monument describes the Battle of Butler’s Farm and states in part: “On the 9th of July, 1813, an eruption of the invading force, encamped near Fort George, was defeated by a band of Six Nations and Western Indians led by Chiefs John Norton and Blackbird and interpreters Michel Brisebois, Louis Langlade and Barnet Lyons.” Bruce Poitras of Brantford is a descendent of Colonel Robert Dickson, who worked directly under the command of Isaac Brock. Poitras reports that Dickson was also a fur trader who married a First Nations woman and her family eventually found its way west to the Red River Settlement and the Qu’Appelle Valley. Louis Langlade of Guelph, and Cora Bunn, President of the MNO Grand River Métis Council, are related to the family of Charles and Louis Langlade, both of whom served in the War. Louis Langlade’s role is documented on a Government of Canada monument located near Niagara-on-the-Lake. The monument describes the Battle of Butler’s Farm and states in part: “On the 9th of July, 1813, an eruption of the invading force, encamped near Fort George, was defeated by a band of Six Nations and Western Indians led by Chiefs John Norton and Blackbird and interpreters Michel Brisebois, Louis Langlade and Barnet Lyons.” From July 17-21, 2012, there will be commemorations of the War of 1812 taking place in Algoma that will include re-enactments of the canoe flotilla that travelled from Fort St. Joseph to Fort Mackinac in 1812. www.algoma1812.ca
I make them amenable to military procedures; to standard military law. They generally came on parade with a pipe in their mouths and their rations of pork and bread stuck on their bayonets. On seeing an officer, whether general, colonel, or subaltern, they took off their hats and made a low bow, with the common salutation of ‘Bonjour, Monsieur le General’ or ‘le Colonel’ as the case might be, and, if they happened to know that the officer was married they never failed to inquire about the health of ‘Madame et les enfants.’ On parade they talked incessantly, called each other ‘pork eaters,’ quartered about their rations, wished they were back in the Indian country again, &c., and when called to order by their officers and told to hold their tongues, one or more would reply, ‘Ah, dear captain, let us off as quick as you can; some of us have not yet breakfasted, and it’s upwards of an hour since I had a smoke.’ In vain the subaltern winked, in vain the captain threatened, in vain the colonel frowned, neither winks, threats, or frowns, could restrain the vivacious laugh, silence the noisy tongue, or compose the ever changing features into anything like military seriousness.” (The Voyageur, by Grace Lee Nute, New York: 1931 p. 164-165)

Shortly after its formation, a group of 31 Corps members were camped near St. Regis in Lower Canada where they were attacked by 400 American soldiers from Plattsburgh, New York. Twenty-three of the voyageurs were captured and the remainder killed. Despite this loss, and the superiority of American forces in the Great Lakes, it was primarily due to the Corps that Fort Mackinac stayed out of American control, which, due to its strategic importance, was critical to keeping supply routes open. The Corps also assisted in some conventional battles such as the attack on Frenchtown (Rarray Raisin), Michigan in 1813.

Despite the Corps’ lack of respect for conventional military discipline, the British commanders came to have great respect for the Corps and its effectiveness. In 1813, the Northwest Company replaced the Corps of Canadian Voyageurs with “Provincial Commissariat Voyageurs”. The new body would perform the same role as the Corps of Canadian Voyageurs but it was hoped there would be some improvement in the new force’s military decorum. These hopes were mostly in vain.

Métis Weapons of the War of 1812

Métis, fur traders to form the Corps of Canadian Voyageurs

During the War of 1812 the Northwest Company recruited a force of largely Métis, fur traders to form the Corps of Canadian Voyageurs.
Students publish books about Métis culture

By Dr. Chris Paci, MNO Manager of Education

Schools sure have changed a lot since the days when being Métis was something to hide from public view. Nowadays, schools are showing a great deal of initiative. Not only do they invite Métis community members and guest speakers to share their knowledge about being Métis in Ontario, but some, like St. Hilary, St. Martin, St. Brigid, Holy Saviour and Holy Angels Schools in the North Superior Catholic District School Board, have taken a further step. These students and their teachers have produced a collection of books that share their experiences from a recent school presentation on Métis culture by Scott Carpenter, MNO Manager of Projects and Partnerships. The schools have produced an attractive self-published collection of books, each featuring illustrations, pictures and stories provided by students. The books were unveiled at the third Circle of Light Conference in Toronto in November, 2011.

For more information contact the MNO Education & Training Branch: education@metisnation.org

MÉTIS EDUCATION OUTREACH

MNO provides input on new courses for Ontario schools

In January the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) met with the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) in Toronto. The OCT is in the process of creating some new “Additional Qualification” courses that will become available in the fall of 2012. This session was an opportunity for the MNO and the larger Métis community to provide input on the content and “teachers’ guidelines” for three of the proposed courses. Attending from the Education and Training Branch at head office were Jennifer St. Germain, Chris Paci, Chris McLeod, and Benny Michaud. Many community councils were also represented, including the Niagara Regional Métis Council and the Thunder Bay Métis Council.

The courses being contemplated are titled, “Teaching Métis Children”, “Native Studies”, and “Métis Peoples: Understanding Traditional Teachings, Histories, Current Issues and Cultures”. Snr. Patrick Kennedy and Roland St. Germain were there, as were youth representatives Janine Landry and Mitch Case.

Moccasin Camp in Kitchener helps promote Métis culture

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) held its fourth very successful “moccasin camp” in Kitchener on January 14, 2012. Moccasin camps build a community of learners within the Métis Nation. MNO presents are in high demand by schools, governments and from among the general public who are interested in learning more about Métis in Ontario. The camps assist the Métis community by building presentation skills, increasing awareness and instilling pride in Métis identity. At each camp community members share what they know about Métis history and culture.

In response to the growing demand for Métis presentations, moccasin camps, provide Métis educators and community leaders—including senators, elders, youth, community councillors, and other active community members—with effective ways of making presentations to different audiences using various presentation tools, such as the “Métis Education Kit”. MNO Chair, France Picotte; MNO Vice-Chair, Sharon McBride; and Provisional Council of the MNO Councillor, Pauline Saulnier were among the approximately 30 participants. MNO Education and Training staff—including Chris Paci, Chris McLeod, Benny Michaud, and Gaylaine Morin-Cleroux—led sessions on such topics as public speaking skills, presenting Métis material culture, and how to promote Métis education. The participants were provided with tools they can adapt for their own presentations.

The highlight for many of the participants was a presentation by renowned Métis canoe maker Marcel Labelle. Marcel was assisted by his apprentice, Christian Polon, and together they demonstrated how they use the canoe as the basis for teaching traditional Métis knowledge. Marcel brought a full-size canoe with him to help with his teaching. He also generously presented the MNO with a miniature replica of a traditional canoe, which is now proudly displayed in the MNO head office in Ottawa.
Connecting with Métis roots
MNO training and skills development empowers a Metis youth

By Justine Chatykov

I would like to thank you for the support offered to me by the MNO.
My first contact with the Métis [MNO] was during 2009 at which time I applied for financial support. The Métis [MNO] agreed to fund me for school. The funding provided to me was for tuition, books, and supplies. In the “Adven-
ture, Recreation and Parks Technician” program supplies were quite expensive and I was grateful to ac-
quire this support.

The first summer of college, the Métis [MNO] let me know that jobs would be posted. I applied for and received the position of “summer program assistant” for the Métis Nation of Ontario. This summer position offered a place to put my studies into practice. I was able to be part of the Métis community and connect with my roots as an Aborig-
inal person and a Métis. It was an exciting summer for me, and my education grew.

[During] my second year at college, I was funded for another position, this time at Sault College. I was able to use some of the skills acquired from my education, this time with horticulture and landscaping. I designed a flowerbed, a symbol of Métis presence on campus—an infinity symbol.

I was able again to use some of the skills acquired from my education, this time with horticulture and landscaping. I designed a flowerbed to reflect [the] Métis presence on campus—an infinity symbol.

This, I know, is the beginning of my educational experience. I do plan to pursue further post-secondary education. I know I could not have come this far without your support. This letter is small compared to the support this young person received from the Métis Nation of Ontario. Again, many thanks.

We All Count
Aboriginal Peoples’ Survey will sample 50,000 Aboriginal people living off-reserve in Canada

In this day and age it is impossible to get along without statis-
tics. Companies spend millions surveying consumer spending habits; political parties spend millions surveying public opinion; and governments spend millions to gather data on social and economic conditions of their constituents. No one would be doing this if the results weren’t important.

Aboriginal people are one of the fastest growing populations within Canada. We know this because of the population statistics that Statistics Canada gathers through the census. The Canadian Census, which rolls out every five years, is one of the prime sources of statisti-
cal information on Canada’s Aboriginal population. In fact, about the only source of hard data on Canada’s Métis population.

The other Aboriginal group—First Nations and Inuit—have other data sources, such as the “Indian Register” or modern “land claim benefits,” in the case of the Inuit. These are known as “administrative databases.” There are no established administrative databases yet for Métis people. So, we must rely on the census to count how many Métis people there are in this country.

There was a time when the census asked the same questions of every household in Canada. For example, the 1901 Census, much used in Métis genealogical research, was conducted by census takers who visited every house-
hold, recording, among other things, whether there were “half-
breds” or “Métis” living there. But since the 1970s, the Government of Canada has found this method to be less cost-effective—and a lot cheaper—to use the census to count everyone in Canada at the time the census is taken, and then to ask detailed questions of a sample of the total population. Up to the most recent census in 2011, these questions were found in what is known as the “Long Form Census Ques-
tionnaire,” which was asked to one in every five households.

People were required by law to answer this ques-
tionnaire and the 20% sample was statistically sufficient to provide reliable data on the entire population for most purposes.

Among the questions in the Long Form questionnaire is the “Aboriginal Identity” question, which asks whether you are First Nation/North American Indian, Métis or Inuit. This self-identification is the way Aboriginal popula-
tion counts are generated in Canada today. For the 2011 cen-
sus, the Conservative government decided to transform the Long Form questionnaire into a volun-
tary survey, called the “National Household Survey,” which was distributed to one in three households. Approximately 78% of the surveys have been returned, which results in a number compa-
rable to the former Long Form questionnaire.

The census and now the

Building Systems Technical Advisor Internship Program

Second round of BSTAIP Interns learns about Building Science

During the week of January 16-20, 2012, the second group of trainees in the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), Hooping Branch, Building Systems Technical Advisor Internship Program (BSTAIP) was introduced to the concept of the “House as a System.”

The instructor, Gail Lawlor, from Energy Matters, conducted a week of building-science training which included an overview of pressure systems within a home, materials used to create a better, safer, house, and the physics behind airflow within the home.

The APS seeks to add to the information obtained on Aboriginal people by the census and National Household Survey by exploring issues that are specific to Aboriginal peoples, such as the use of Aboriginal languages, and school or labour market experience. The APS usually follows the Canadian Census. It is a sample survey and it draws its sample from all those who identified as Aboriginal in the most recent cen-
sus. That means that the sample for the 2012 APS was drawn from households who received and responded to the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS). If you didn’t receive the NHS, you won’t be included in the APS, but if you did fill out the NHS, then the chances are good that you will be included in the APS sample. The APS will sample 50,000 Aboriginal people living off-reserve in Canada. Statistics Canada will be conducting telephone interviews and some face-to-face interviews starting February 4 and continuing to the end of June 2012. APS results should be available beginning sometime in 2013.

The results will be important. The 2012 APS concentrates on education and employment. These are two central concerns of govern-
ment at all levels and will define the future of First Nations, Métis and Inuit in Canada. If the APS can lead to better policy and enhance resources being devoted to the education of our young people and jobs that can lift our people out of poverty, it will be worth the hour or so that it takes to complete the questionnaire.

APS surveys were conducted in 1991, 2001 and 2006, but have not gone on-reserve for over a decade. That is supposed to be remedied this time. Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Canada promises to conduct a similar survey on-
reserve in 2013. The majority of people surveyed in the APS will be Métis, but we must remain vigilant about how the data will be used. The survey is being conducted under the Statistics Act, which guarantees the privacy of personal information; and, only aggregate data will be published. Neverthe-
less, it is important to ensure that we can all access the data and not just federal bureaucrats or organi-
sations with deep pockets who can afford to pay for it.
Nuclear Clean-Up

MNO continues learning about Canada’s plan for Safe Long-Term Management of Used Nuclear Fuel

Canada is well on its way to establishing itself as an international leader in planning for the safe, long-term stewardship of used nuclear fuels, through the work of the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (www.nwmo.ca). The NWMO's process is designed to identify an informed and willing community to host a deep geological repository and Centre of Expertise for safely managing used nuclear fuel over the long term. As a requirement of federal legislation, the NWMO was established by Ontario Power Generation, Hydro Quebec and New Brunswick Power in 2002 to operate on a not-for-profit basis.

As the siting process moves forward, the NWMO's work will increasingly take place with interested communities and those that surround them. Building trust and doing so in a manner that is both transparent and respectful of communities' values and needs is vital to the process.

Canada’s approach, commonly referred to as “Adaptive Phased Management” (APM), was approved by the federal government in 2007. The plan calls for the construction of a single deep geological repository to become the facility for the long term storage of highly radioactive used nuclear fuel. Current estimates hold the earliest a repository facility may be in operation is 2035. The site selection process itself is expected to take seven to ten years. However, there are no prescribed timelines for identifying a suitable site.

The NWMO and the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) have worked together over a number of years to learn together and develop a strong relationship.

In Saskatchewan—along with Ear Falls, Ignace, Schreiber, Hornepayne and Wawa, in Ontario have moved forward to step three, the “Preliminary Assessment - Feasibility Study.”

The project has an estimated cost of $10 to $24 billion to be paid for by the used fuel producers. It will involve scientists, engineers, and community well-being professionals, trades people and many others. The project will have a significant impact on any community and region in which it is located.

An undertaking of this size and nature has the potential to transform a host community. Social and economic pressures will need to be carefully managed to ensure the long term health and sustainability of the host community. Overall, the project will generate thousands of jobs in a host region, and hundreds in a host community for many decades.

The NWMO and the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) have worked together over a number of years to learn together and develop a strong relationship. Following the dialogues which the MNO participated in during the study years of 2002-2003, the NWMO invited the MNO to collaboratively design, develop and coordinate a series of regional information and dialogue sessions on the proposed siting process in 2009. These sessions brought together MNO leadership, Elders, and youth to provide perspectives on the process. Each year since that time, the MNO has invited the NWMO to bring members up to date through a work shop during the Annual General Assembly in August. This year through the MNO Regional Consultation Committees, the two organizations will develop plans to involve Métis people in the areas where potential host communities are located.

The NWMO’s Learn More program offers a wide range of resources to communities expressing an interest in learning more about the APM, the activities of the NWMO, and the process it will use to select an informed and willing community to host the project. Providing communities and organizations with information, building their capacity to understand the work and its potential impact on them, placing independent experts at their disposal—all are part of building sustainable relationships and making the siting process one of partnership and collaboration.

Canada has been generating electricity from nuclear power for almost 50 years. In that time, just under 2.3 million used fuel bundles have been produced.

After a fuel bundle is removed from a reactor, it is safely managed in facilities licensed for temporary storage at each reactor site. First, it is placed in a water-filled pool for seven to 10 years while its heat and radioactivity decrease. Afterwards, used fuel bundles are placed in dry storage containers, silos or vaults.

About 85,000 used fuel bundles are generated in Canada each year. Source: NWMO.
On Truth and Reconciliation

By Rev. Riscylla Shaw

A s far back as I can remember in my family is the story of our connection to this land which we call home. My great-ancestor grandfather went back. Peter Fulder, an English surveyor and map maker who worked for the Hudson’s Bay Company in Canada’s early European settlement period, married a Cree woman named Mary. We carry the genes in our blood, and feel the heartbeat of the land. Our family is mixed-blood, Métis. As a result, my grandfather and his sister were sent to residential school during World War One.

My great-grandfather, a Cree woman named Mary. We were the intended outcome of some colonial experiment to eradicate the sojourners on this land. An intergenerational survivor and as a representative of the mother of two families, and as a representative of the TRC to listen. I witnessed there a momentous gathering of our nations, a momentous gathering of our nations, human family—people who followed their hearts and came to heal, came to be heard, came to witness, came to speak of anger, pain, and betrayal—many for the first time in a public fashion. Alongside the flowing of the mighty Red River and the great Assiniboine River which meet at this place, there was a constant wind blowing through our gathering. I perceived it to be a beautiful invocation and blessing of the Holy Spirit, a tangible presence of love that changed the land itself. We came in good faith, to work together. It is hard work, this unveiling of the past, finding ways of dealing appropriately with injustices, and this healing process into which we lean. This process of involvement is deeply challenging, for me personally because I come both as a member of my family, and as a representative of the church—a flawed institution that helped contribute to the cultural destruction the residential schools created—an institution that is helping to unravel that mess and work for justice, for right relationships among the first peoples of this land and their descendents, and all who now call this home.” As Métis people, we have a place and a responsibility in this reconciliation process for there were many Métis children, including my grandfather, who were taken from their homes and concentrated at a young and vulnerable age with brutal de-culturation and assimilation techniques. The mess that is the legacy of the residential school system is not limited to abuse, as it includes many stories of positive relationships experiences and educational opportunities that were the intended outcome of some change human consciousness.

As a result, I am Métis, the mother of two young children, and a parish priest with the Anglican Church in Bolton, Ontario. It is in my calling to listen, to look at, to reach into the darkness of the human heart and the human condition, and to shine the light of love as much as possible into that same darkness. Working with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools (TRC) is a personal journey for me, and a responsibility I undertake as an intergenerational survivor and as a sojourner on this land.

I went to Winnipeg in June 2010, to the first national hearing of the TRC to listen. I witnessed there a momentous gathering of our nations, human family—people who followed their hearts and came to heal, came to be heard, came to witness, came to speak of anger, pain, and betrayal—many for the first time in a public fashion. Alongside the flowing of the mighty Red River and the great Assiniboine River which meet at this place, there was a constant wind blowing through our gathering. I perceived it to be a beautiful invocation and blessing of the Holy Spirit, a tangible presence of love that changed the land itself. We came in good faith, to work together. It is hard work, this unveiling of the past, finding ways of dealing appropriately with injustices, and this healing process into which we lean.

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What was stolen in the spirit of colonization was land, rights and responsibilities, a voice—language, culture, faith—that makes us who we are. It is a few words, the vastness of what is being reconciled includes the re-integration of people with their own hearts and well-being, and with their cultures and languages of origin, the hope that families are being reunited and affirmed, acknowledgments of wrongs perpetrated and committed, which bring opportunities for the spoken word of apology, restitution, forgiveness, healing, justice, and creativity. Artists continue to speak out in the voices of the oppressed and the stigmatized, helping us to see with new eyes and hear with new ears.

In this reconciliation process, we have the capacity to heal our hearts, to deepen our souls, to change human consciousness.
Métis voices to be heard
Minister Hoskins commits to hearing Métis perspective on Children and Family Services

Prior to the 2011 Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Annual General Assembly (AGA) in August, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) released its “Children First: Report on the Status of Aboriginal Child Welfare in Ontario.” As the Métis were neither consulted nor included in the report, the AGA passed a resolution that the MNO prepare a parallel report on Métis children to complement the MCYS report and set up a meeting with the Minister of Children and Youth Services to discuss the lack of Métis perspective in the Children First Report.

That meeting took place on March 21st between President Gary Lipinski and Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Children and Youth Services. Although he was not Minister when the report was released, Dr. Hoskins is very well versed in MNO concerns and indicated that he was pleased that the MNO initiated its own report. The Minister committed to reading the MNO report, which had just been released before Easter, and to considering its contents along with the original MCYS report.

“In the spirit of the Framework Agreement both the Minister and President Lipinski agreed that their respective staffs should continue working together starting with at least two of the Minister of Children and Youth Services’ new strategies: ‘Children and Youth Mental Health and Addictions’ as well as the ‘Youth Framework Strategy’.”

MNO Education & Training branch welcomes new staff

The MNO is pleased to introduce several new staff members to the Education and Training Branch. These individuals bring a wealth of experience and look forward to working on behalf of our communities and clients across Ontario. Please welcome the following talented people to the MNO.

RAE-ANNA GARDNER
Project Developer
Navigating Employment Pathways

Rae-Anna comes to the branch with a Bachelor of Education and experience in managing an Adult Education Centre. Her background in assisting clients in labour market research, employment counselling and teaching will serve the project participants well.

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raeg@metisnation.org
PH: 705-475-2767
TF: 888-825-1742

ANNE TRUDEL
Project Developer
Navigating Employment Pathways

Anne’s background in research, community development and client case management will be critical in her role as Project Developer. Her knowledge of Métis culture and involvement in the Métis community will be an asset to the project participants.

26 Queen Street East
Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 1Y3
annez2@metisnation.org
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TF: 877-737-6693

RANDI VERREAUDET
Project Developer

Randi comes to MNO with a diverse employment background—most recently, several years of experience working in the training and employment sector. She is bilingual and an active volunteer in her community.

335 Cranston Cres. Box 621
Midland, ON L4R 4L3
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The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) benefits immensely from the dedicated volunteers who are members of our chartered community councils. These hard-working, individual spreads hundreds of hours building and strengthening their Métis communities. Through funding provided by the New Relationship Fund, the MNO has been able to develop and deliver a “Governance and Finance Course” that helps community councils perform their important work. The Governance and Finance Course is delivered by Glenn Lapitski and Ally Lebovich, the MNO’s Consultant and Community Relation Coordinators. During the week of January 27, the course was offered to the MNO Toronto and York Region Métis Council. In the past, courses have been available in Attikamakan, Sudbury, Niagara, Peterborough, Grand River, Credit River and Georgian Bay.

The course is a two-day seminar usually on weekends, in a hotel or meeting hall in each council’s community. The program explains the role of community councils as the MNOs local governments, whose structure and purpose is coordinated through each council’s charter agreement with the MNO. The course covers everything from how to run effective meetings and engage citizens in council activities to budgeting and the various financial practices, regulations and legislation that community councils follow.

The Governance and Finance Course delivers valuable experience in job development, labour market service delivery, life skills training and workshop facilitation.

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NANCY SULLIVAN
Regional Employment and Training Coordinator

Nancy previously worked at Youth Employment Services (YES) in Thunder Bay where she gained valuable experience in job development, labour market service delivery, life skills training and workshop facilitation.

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CHANTAL CÔTÉ
Education Officer/Analyst

Chantal's background is as a teacher and her program development experience will be a great asset to the MNO's education initiatives. She is fully bilingual and a native of Timmins.

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KIRSTEN STEWART
Acting Project Coordinator
Navigating Employment Pathways

Kristen began with the MNO Education and Training Branch as the Job Developer for the Ready to Work project. She is now in a position to ensure this new project gets off the ground smoothly.

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COMMUNITY COUNCILS | TORONTO

Toronto York Métis Council participates in governance and finance training

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by a word or phrase such as that once uttered by Lord Balfour, who said: “Today’s truth can be tomorrow’s fallacy.” And of course, in fairness, also that today’s fallacy can become tomorrow’s truth.

The above Lord Balfour’s remark probably was taken from the Scottish Parliamentary papers. Moreover, the first Balfour to Bruce peerage “transfer” began with Margaret Bruce (d.1769) the sister of Robert Balfour the 5th Lord. It remains extant today with Robert Bruce the 8th Lord. But the heiress presumptive is the present peerage holder’s daughter, the Honourable Victoria Bruce, Mistress of Burleigh (b.1973).

A Peerage was created in 1607 for Lord Balfour of Scotland. Sir Michael Balfour, became Lord Balfour of Burleigh, in the County of Kinross, and was succeeded by his daughter, Margaret (Balfour) Arnott, the second holder of the title. Robert Arnott, assumed his wife’s rightful name and her title as a “Balfour”, he having married Margaret, the daughter of Sir Michael. By the time of their son, the 3rd Lord Balfour, his grandson, the 5th Lord Balfour, was active in the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715. The 7th Lord Balfour was a Scottish Peer from 1922 to 1963, and as of 2010 the 8th peer had succeeded on his father’s death. The named Burleigh Castle was once the seat of the Balfours, and then of the Bruce families near Kinross, Scotland. Another “Bruce” notable was Sir James Bruce, the 8th Earl of Elgin and 12th of Kincardine (b.1851-d.1933), who was formerly the Governor General of the Province of Canada (from 1847 to 1854) and enforced the Crown’s will. This adversely affected the lives of several Métis children. One example concerns a retired and affluent father, a former commissioned officer with the Hudson’s Bay Company, originally from Orkney, Scotland.

In 1840 he had come out of Rupert’s Land in the north country to settle his family in the tiny hamlet of “Amherst”, later known as the “Town of Hamilton”, located in the new Township of Hamilton, in the Counties of Northumberland and Durham, in the District of Newcastle, in the Province of Canada. In the north, the siblings’ aboriginal mother, “Mary”, had died, at age 35, on the 23rd of September of 1823 and was buried in the north. By 1842/1843 the siblings’ father had built a large, beautiful house in the Town of Hamilton. By 1844, when their Ocadian father died, each child had been named as a beneficiary in his substantial will.

However, because the Town of Hamilton’s authorities saw these unacceptable offspring as “half-bred”, they appear to have been considered “Indians”, and therefore not British subjects. Moreover, they were never allowed to benefit directly from their father’s £18,000 will, for a variety of apparently “official” reasons. 1844 to 1854 was, therefore, a decade of misery for the hopefil “beneficiaries” because, in that latter year, a “half-breed” (Métis) son, named William, (b.1818-d.1880), was finally authorised by Governor General, Sir James Bruce, to be the sole “administrator” of his father’s will, but on the strict condition that three notables of the Family Compact gentlemen, a father and his six (four unmarried) children, died and were buried, the last in 1859.

The usurped homestead remains intact to this day as a “Heritage” location in the Town of Hamilton. A symbol of a dishonoured Métis family and the clash of cultures that continues to this day.

_A usurped homestead in Hamilton still stands as a symbol of a dishonoured Métis family and the clash of cultures that continues to this day_
**Adopted to assimilate**

**A Métis woman adopted during the “Sixties Scoop” reflects**

By Rhonda Czech

**MNO Citizens, Region 6**

No one had the right to keep that from me! No one had the right to make that decision for me! That one decision made by the government stripped from me the very essence of who I am!  

My father passed away before I had an opportunity to meet him so I learned about him from records collected in my genealogy. He was a 2nd World War Veteran who loved aboriginal people and he fought for all of our rights and freedoms. I wonder how he would feel if he were alive and knew aboriginal children including his own aboriginal children did not experience the rights and freedoms that our Conservative Government has enjoyed.

Ruth Robbins

Brampton, Ontario

Formerly of Thunder Bay

**Victims of Sixties Scoop seek justice in courts**

continued from page 2

“A Métis woman adopted during the “Sixties Scoop” reflects”

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

Victims of Sixties Scoop

seek justice in courts

The following commentary are solely those of the writer and do not reflect the policies of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) or the viewpoints of MNO officials or staff.

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Every day there is no challenge and another opportunity to help others. I’m always learning new skills and meeting new people. Being in the military is like being part of a close-knit community.

Corporate Tiffani Maian, Norway House First Nation

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Cherchez pour un poste au sein de Forces et une autre occasion d’aider les autres. J’acquiers constant le travaillement compétent et je rencontre de nouvelles personnes. Étre membre de forces canadiennes, c’est comme faire partie d’une collectivité lincoln.

Corporate Tiffani Maian, Premier nation de Norway House

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Canada
MNO releases findings of major Chronic Disease study

Calls for immediate attention to higher rates of chronic disease in Métis population

continued from page 2

The financial support from the PHAC was also recognized throughout the release of the findings. The Public Health Agency of Canada supported the collection of reliable data on chronic disease trends and risk factors, stated Chief Public Health Officer David Butler-Jones, prior to the release. “We are very pleased to have played a role in these findings and in funding this important new research.”

Following the formal launch, the MNO held a guided dialogue session to discuss with health experts the opportunity to discuss the findings in detail. Over 80 people attended the findings launch and guided dialogue session, including representatives from ICES, PHAC, Health Canada, the Canadian Institute of Health Research, Cancer Care Ontario, Statistics Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, National Lung Health Framework, National Aboriginal Health Organization, Institute of Aboriginal Peoples’ Health, Gigué Aboriginal Housing, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Assembly of First Nations, National Association of Friendship Centres, Mental Health Commission of Canada, Provincial Aboriginal Health Networks, Ottawa Public Health, and the universities of Waterloo, Ottawa, Toronto and Ryerson.

The guided dialogue session included presenters from the MNO, ICES, PHAC and several universities. The MNO presenters included MNO Chair, France Picoite; Senior Policy Analyst, Dr. Storm Russell; and, Chronic Disease Surveillance Coordinator, Yvon Allard. Other presenters were: Dr. Baiju Shah, Staff Endocrinologist with the Sunnybrook Sciences Centre and Professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of Toronto; Dr. David Urbach, Professor of Surgery and Health Policy at the University of Toronto, Dr. Eric Crighton, Professor of Geography at the University of Ottawa; Karen Roberts, Senior Epidemiologist in the PHAC Chronic Disease Surveillance and Prevention Division; and, Dr. Martin Cook, with the Department of Sociology and Legal Studies at the University of Waterloo.

The findings released on March 20 represented over five years work, which was spearheaded by the MNO team of Healing and Wellness Manager, Lisa Pagan, and Chronic Disease Surveillance Coordinators, Jo McQuarrie and Yvon Allard. With this ground-breaking study now released, the next challenge for the MNO will be to use these findings to influence public policy to improve health and wellness treatment and disease prevention programs for the Métis people in Ontario.

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Strength & Running Water

Family seeks ways to blend and honour their Métis, Mohawk and European ancestry

By Amanda Dale

HAMILTON

iving in the “traditional way” is a rarity in today’s fast paced world, but the Dale family do whatever they can to hold on to their cultural teachings and pass along those traditions to their six children. They are a blended family of Métis, Mohawk and European ancestry. Amanda Dale, a Métis woman from Hamilton Ontario, was given her spirit name, “Pimpinstone Nibe Awayte Mino Aisin” (Running Water Over Sacred Stone), in a naming ceremony by an Oji-Cree Elder in 2010, eight years after self-identifying as Métis. Her husband, “Strength of Two Buffalo”, is a Mohawk from Six Nations Reserve and was introduced to his cultural identity twenty-seven years ago at sixteen. Although each of them has their separate stories to tell, they have also been on a journey together that started in 2009.

The journey began when Running Water had a dream and in it she was approached by an Elder woman who told her that she was to build a big buffalo hide drum for her husband. She shared with Strength her dream and he told her that he could teach her how to make the drum. He taught her the traditions and building a large drum piece by piece in their garage. It took three months, a lot of sleepless nights, sore fingers and backs to make the drum in the traditional fashion. When the drum was finished it was given its name, “Four Thunders”, and a birthing ceremony was performed to welcome the drum into the community. Over 60 First Nations, Métis, Elders and community members attended the ceremony from all four directions of the province.

Since the birthing ceremony Running Water and the children support Strength in his new role in the community as ‘Drum Carrier’. The Drum Carrier must take care of the drum, live a clean, honest life, and when asked, to go anywhere the Drum Carrier must go. The supportive role for the Drum Carrier’s wife is to watch the men drum and guard against any harm, whether it is spiritual or physical. It is believed that when the men are drumming they are half in the spirit world and half in this world so they are extremely vulnerable to outside influence without the women surrounding them. Our traditional roles as aboriginal men and women are commonly viewed today as sexist because of the lack of understanding of their purpose. Running Water doesn’t mind that she doesn’t drum with the men because she realizes that she has a job to do that is equally as important as drumming.

Traditionally, women didn’t play big drum because it had a much deeper purpose in the community. The story passed down by our ancestors is that a spirit named “White Buffalo Calf Woman” taught the community and on behalf of the Creator brought with her a big drum. In the corn field was an Aboriginal woman to whom the spirit woman gave the drum in order for her to gift it to men. The women were to place it in the community and guard against it. It is seen by those who honour this tradition as inappropriate for a woman to play the big drum because by doing so she would be taking the drum back from the men. Although it is the woman’s right to take back the drum, by doing so, she would also be taking back the healing they were given and counting the men as hopeless. This is not believed by all but for the most part that is why you will see only men drumming on the big drum at cultural events.

Four Thunders is how their story begins but it doesn’t stop there. While making the drum, the couple decided that there is a deeper need, not just at home but in Aboriginal communities as a whole, for the traditional knowledge they have. Running Water and Strength decided it was time to begin holding workshops where Strength could teach the knowledge he gives his children. The Dale family now holds Bow & Arrow, Drum Making and Drumming workshops as often as they can. They travel to different schools and social service agencies where Strength and his wife share the knowledge they have about their cultures, traditional roles and philosophies. Recently, they have begun making medicine to help those who are sick and would like to use traditional healing methods. They struggle, however, to provide ongoing workshops because of the lack of funding to their cultural awareness strategies. They sell T-shirts with the slogan “Prepare to be Unassimilated” in order to subsidize expenses for those who can’t afford to pay. The couple would like to offer it all for free and find it difficult to charge for the workshops.

The workshops and speaking engagements are just a small part of a much bigger dream. Strength and Amanda would like to open a fully funded healing lodge and cultural centre in Ontario. This lodge would provide a healing oasis for those who would like to heal in a traditional manner and learn more about their Aborginal culture.

Strength and Running Water appreciate their struggles in sharing the pride of their culture because they see the reaction of those who learn a bit more about who they are and regain what they’ve lost.

Strengthening the women’s voice, the Dale family is following the examples of other women such as Haida artist, Mabel Peterson, whose work has helped raise awareness about the significant cultural roles of women in the First Nations. In response to this, the Dale family has started workshops as a way to pass along those traditions that are a rarity in today’s fast paced world. The workshops have been successful and have taught the pride of their culture because they see the reaction of those who learn a bit more about who they are and regain what they’ve lost.
Métis Health Research

Chronic Diseases

Diabetes, Cancer, Respiratory Disease and Cardiovascular Disease

RESPIRATORY DISEASE

WHAT IS RESPIRATORY DISEASE?

Respiratory disease is a group of diseases affecting the lungs. It includes asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and lung cancer. This research focused on asthma, COPD and lung cancer. Asthma is a chronic or long-term disease where airways become inflamed and full of mucus making it difficult to breathe. COPD includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema: many people have both. In COPD, airways become swollen and blocked by mucus, lungs become damaged over time and breathing is increasingly difficult. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in Ontario. Non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) is relatively slow growing and is more common than small cell cancer. Small cell lung cancer (SCLC) grows quickly and often spreads to other parts of the body. Each type is treated differently.

WHO WERE INCLUDED IN THE STUdy?

Health related data from four provincial databases were linked to the Métis Nation of Ontario Citizenship Registry data to provide information on rates of asthma, COPD and lung cancer in approximately 14,000 Métis citizens in Ontario. These data were then compared to the general population of Ontario.

HOW WIDESPREAD IS RESPIRATORY DISEASE AMONG THE REGISTERED MÉTIS POPULATION?

• The number of registered Métis living with asthma in Ontario (prevalence rate) was 1.2 times higher than in the general Ontario population in fiscal years 2007/08 and 2008/09.
• The gap in asthma prevalence was greatest among Métis aged 18 to 24 years.
• The prevalence of COPD was 1.7 times higher in the Métis population in 2007/08 and 1.6 times higher in 2008/09.
• The gap in the prevalence of COPD in the Métis relative to the general population increased among people aged 45 years and older.
• There were no significant differences between the Métis and the general population in the number of new cases of asthma diagnosed during the study period (incidence rate).
• The incidence of newly diagnosed cases of COPD was 40% to 50% higher among the Métis.
• Overall emergency department visits among those diagnosed with asthma or COPD were 40% and 30% higher among the Métis compared to the general population.
• Total hospitalizations among those diagnosed with asthma or COPD were 10% higher in the Métis compared to the general population.
• There were no significant differences in the number of new cases of lung cancer diagnosed in the registered Métis population compared to other Ontarians between 2005 and 2007.

HOW SHOULD WE INTERPRET THESE RESULTS?

This landmark research represents the first population-based study of respiratory disease among the Métis of Ontario. These initial findings suggest that registered Métis are suffering from unacceptably high rates of two key respiratory diseases – asthma and COPD – and this is of major concern. High smoking rates among the Métis population of Canada (37% compared to 22% for the general population) are likely contributing to the higher rates of respiratory disease among the registered Métis population.

The reasons for these differences are complex. Social determinants of health such as housing, education levels and lower socio-economic status are likely impacting rates of respiratory and other chronic conditions among the Métis, as well as engagement in risk behaviours. A higher proportion of Métis people live in remote and rural areas in Northern Ontario where access to health care and supports are more limited. This lack of access may be affecting rates of respiratory disease and other chronic conditions, as well as Métis health outcomes more generally.

Results suggest that urgent action is needed to address the disproportionately high rates of respiratory and other chronic conditions among the Métis of Ontario. Métis communities would benefit from programs that increase knowledge and awareness about risk factors for respiratory disease and which improve access to public health outreach programs, and primary and specialist care.

Because respiratory diseases develop over longer periods of time, it is essential that we continue to monitor rates among the Métis of Ontario and begin to identify the reasons for these higher rates. The MNO will use this information to target programs and resources to where they will be most effective and have the greatest impact on Métis health status and outcomes.

Collecting more data over longer periods of time will increase the extent to which we can generalize the results of this kind of research to the entire Métis population in Ontario, which in the 2006 census numbered around 73,000 people.

PREVALENCE OF ASTHMA (2007-08 & 2008-09)

Per 100 Persons (MNO Métis Citizens vs on POP)

Prevalence of Asthma (2007-08)

Ontario General Population (%) MNO Citizens Registry Métis (%)

11.71 14.49

Prevalence of Asthma (2008-09)

12.08 14.76

PREVALENCE OF COPD

Per 100 Persons (MNO Métis Citizens vs on POP)

Prevalence of COPD (years 2007-08)

Ontario General Population (%) MNO Citizens Registry Métis (%)

9.45 16.13

9.55 15.85

Produced by the Métis Nation of Ontario Healing and Wellness Branch

RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY The Métis Nation of Ontario AND The Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences

Little is currently known about respiratory disease in the Métis population or how Métis people with respiratory disease access and receive care in Ontario. This lack of critical health information makes it challenging to target resources and programs where they will be most effective in improving Métis health status and outcomes.

Prevalence of COPD (years 2008-09)

Ontario General Population (%) MNO Citizens Registry Métis (%)

Méthos Health Research 00 Chronic Disease Surveillance Program
MÉTIS POPULATION?
AMONG THE REGISTERED
HOW WIDESPREAD IS CANCER
THE STUDY?
WHO WERE INCLUDED IN
THE MÉTIS OF ONTARIO?
WHY STUDY CANCER AMONG
likely overall to be diagnosed with cancer.
the general population being 1.19 times more
cancer diagnosis for Métis was lower than for
and across all 3 years, the overall rate of
cancers were combined over all age groups
general population.
Ontario population, while in 2006 and 2007,
higher among the Métis than in the general
population. Unfortunately, as we continue to build our understanding of cancer patterns among Métis citizens, the MNO will use this information to target programs and resources to where they will be most effective and have the greatest impact on Métis health status and outcomes. Further research with larger samples and over longer periods of time will help in this ongoing, collaborative effort, as will research to identify interventions that are effective in promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing risk factors like smoking among the Métis.
The Métis Nation of Ontario is committed to working with its stakeholders and partners to reduce the incidence and prevalence of cancer among the Métis people of Ontario.

WHAT TYPES OF CANCER WERE DIAGNOSED MOST FREQUENTLY IN THE REGISTERED MÉTIS POPULATION?
During the two year study period, the top four cancers diagnosed among the Métis were (in order) lung, prostate, colorectal and breast cancer. Compared to (in order) prostate, breast, colorectal and lung in the general Ontario population.

HOW SHOULD WE INTERPRET THESE RESULTS?
This landmark research represents the first population-based study of cancer incidence among the Métis of Ontario.
These initial results suggest that cancer patterns among the Métis are not straightforward and are likely different than those in the general Ontario population. Unfortunately, the small number of incidences of new cancer diagnosis in the registered Métis populations during the 3 year study period (168 in total) did not allow for a more detailed exploration of potential differences in types of cancer, or other factors such as age of onset of cancer between the two groups. Nor could we determine how many Métis people in total are living with cancer in Ontario (prevalence rates).
Nonetheless, the study represents the first important step in addressing the large gap in information about cancer among the Métis of Ontario, and lays the essential groundwork for building the critical knowledge base required to inform health planning and policy development in this important area.

WHY STUDY CANCER AMONG THE MÉTIS OF ONTARIO?
Little is currently known about cancer in the Métis population or how Métis people with cancer access and receive care. This lack of critical health information makes it challenging to target resources and programs where they will be most effective in improving Métis health outcomes.

WHO WERE INCLUDED IN THE STUDY?
Data from the Ontario Cancer Registry were used to identify the number of newly diagnosed cases of cancer (incidence rates) among the approximately 14,000 Métis people included in the Métis Nation of Ontario Citizenship Registry. These rates were then compared to people within the general Ontario population.

HOW WIDESPREAD IS CANCER AMONG THE REGISTERED MÉTIS POPULATION?
A total of 168 cases of newly diagnosed cancers were identified in the registered Métis population during the three-year period 2005 to 2007. For people aged 65 years and older the rate of cancer diagnosis was higher in the Métis than in the general Ontario population, with the gap being greatest among people 75 years and older (rates 1.4 times higher in the Métis). There were no significant differences in the rates of cancer diagnoses in the registered Métis and general Ontario population among people younger than 65 years of age.

Diagnosis rates in 2005 were slightly higher among the Métis than in the general Ontario population, while in 2006 and 2007, cancer diagnosis rates were higher in the general population. When the numbers of newly diagnosed cancers were combined over all age groups and across all 3 years, the overall rate of cancer diagnosis for Métis was lower than for the general population, with people in the general population being 1.19 times more likely overall to be diagnosed with cancer.

WHAT IS CANCER?
Cancer starts when cells in the body begin to divide and grow uncontrollably. When cancer cells spread to other parts of the body this is called metastases. Many cancers are preventable or treatable in their early stages so it is important to identify who is at risk and to catch it early.

Cancers are preventable or treatable in their early stages so it is important to identify who is at risk and to 'catch it early'.
**WHAT IS DIABETES?**

Diabetes is a long term, chronic disease that prevents the body from turning sugar from food into energy. Diabetes can lead to several serious health problems including heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, blindness and amputation.

**WHY STUDY DIABETES AMONG THE MÉTIS OF ONTARIO?**

Little is currently known about diabetes in the Métis population, or how Métis people with diabetes access and receive care. This lack of critical health information makes it challenging to target programming and resources where they will be most effective in improving Métis health status and outcomes.

**WHO WERE INCLUDED IN THE STUDY?**

Health related data from five provincial databases were linked to the Métis Nation of Ontario Citizenship Registry data to provide information on diabetes rates among approximately 14,000 Métis citizens in Ontario. These data were then compared to the general population of Ontario.

**HOW WIDESPREAD IS DIABETES AMONG THE REGISTERED MÉTIS POPULATION?**

The prevalence of diabetes among registered Métis in Ontario was 26% higher than in the general Ontario population, and this is of major concern. The reasons for these differences are complex. Social determinants of health such as housing, education levels and lower socio-economic status are likely impacting rates of diabetes and other chronic conditions among the Métis as well as engagement in risk behaviours.

A higher proportion of Métis people live in remote and rural areas in Northern Ontario where access to health care and supports are more limited. The less frequent visitation to both primary and specialist care among Métis with diabetes may be indicative of these problems with access which, in turn, may be affecting rates of diabetes and other chronic conditions among the Métis, as well as engagement in risk behaviours.

The higher rates of hospitalization combined with the finding of less frequent visits to primary care and specialist physicians suggests room for improvement in the upstream management of diabetes among the Métis.

Together these results suggest that urgent action is needed to address the disproportionately high rates of diabetes and other chronic conditions among Métis citizens. Métis communities would benefit from targeted diabetes prevention and public health promotion as well as programs which improve access to both primary and specialist care.

Because diabetes develops over long periods of time it is essential that we continue to monitor disease rates among the Métis of Ontario and begin to identify the reasons for these higher rates. The MNO will use this information to target programs and resources to where they will be most effective and have the greatest impact on Métis health status and outcomes.

**WHAT ABOUT CARE AND TREATMENT FOR MÉTIS PEOPLE WITH DIABETES?**

- Registered Métis did not visit a primary care physician as often as did the general Ontario population. Only 50% of registered Métis reported seeing a doctor four or more times during the two year study period, compared to 55% in the general population.
- Registered Métis were 18% less likely to receive care from a diabetes specialist.
- Métis seniors with diabetes aged 65 years and older were more likely to use insulin and to test their own blood sugar than seniors in the general population. They were also less likely to receive medication for high blood pressure.
- Métis seniors with diabetes were less likely than diabetic seniors in the general population to try to control their diabetes through diet alone.

**DIABETIC complications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complication</th>
<th>Gen. Pop.</th>
<th>Métis</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congestive Heart Failure</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye Complications</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>1.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heart Attack</td>
<td>0.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hypo or hyperglycaemia</td>
<td>1.22</td>
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<td>Kidney dialysis</td>
<td>0.57</td>
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<td>Lower extremity amputation</td>
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<td>0.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percutaneous to re-opened blood vessels</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroke</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HOW SHOULD WE INTERPRET THESE RESULTS?**

This landmark research represents the first population-based study of diabetes among the Métis of Ontario. The results indicate that registered Métis are suffering from unacceptably high rates of diabetes and this is of major concern. The reasons for these differences are complex. Social determinants of health such as housing, education levels and lower socio-economic status are likely impacting rates of diabetes and other chronic conditions among the Métis, as well as engagement in risk behaviours.

A higher proportion of Métis people live in remote and rural areas in Northern Ontario where access to health care and supports are more limited. The less frequent visitation to both primary and specialist care among Métis with diabetes may be indicative of these problems with access which, in turn, may be affecting rates of diabetes and other chronic conditions among the Métis as well as health outcomes more generally.

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Collecting more data over longer periods of time will increase the extent to which we can generalize the results of this kind of research to the entire Métis population in Ontario, which in the 2006 census numbered around 73,000 people.
WHAT IS CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE (CVD)?
Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a term used to describe a range of diseases that affect your heart and, in some cases, your blood vessels. Diseases that fall under the CVD umbrella include congestive heart failure, heart attack or pre-heart attack, irregular heart beat, stroke and congenital (birth) defects of the heart.

WHY STUDY CVD AMONG THE MÉTIS OF ONTARIO?
Little is currently known about CVD in the Métis population, or how Métis people with CVD access and receive care in Ontario. This lack of critical health information makes it challenging to target resources and programs where they will be most effective in improving Métis health status and outcomes.

WHO WERE INCLUDED IN THE STUDY?

- Health related data from three provincial databases were linked to the Métis Nation of Ontario Citizenship Registry data to provide information on CVD rates among approximately 14,000 Métis citizens in Ontario. These data were then compared to the general population of Ontario.

HOW WIDESPREAD IS CVD AMONG THE REGISTERED MÉTIS POPULATION?

- Over the 2 year study period, rates of heart attack and pre-heart attack and congestive heart failure were 1.8 and 1.3 times higher among Métis compared to the general Ontario population.
- Stroke rates were similar for both populations.
- The incidence of irregular heartbeat was 1.7 times higher among registered Métis.

WHAT ABOUT CARE AND TREATMENT FOR MÉTIS PEOPLE WITH CVD DISEASE?

- The readmission rate for congestive heart failure was over two times higher among the Métis compared to the general Ontario population.
- No significant differences were found in readmission rates for heart attack and pre-heart attack, stroke and irregular heartbeat. However, a related study on diabetes among the Métis also found that registered Métis people with diabetes were 96% more likely to be hospitalized due to a heart attack or pre-heart attack than people with diabetes in the general population.
- The mortality rate for irregular heartbeat was 3.3 times higher in the registered Métis population compared to the rest of Ontario.
- There were no significant differences between the Métis and the general Ontario population in mortality rates for heart attack and pre-heart attack, stroke, and mortality secondary to congestive heart disease.

HOW SHOULD WE INTERPRET THESE RESULTS?

These initial findings indicate clearly that there is an unacceptably high number of Métis in Ontario experiencing the debilitating effects of CVD, and this should be of major concern.

The significant gap in rates of heart attacks and pre-heart attacks between the two groups is especially alarming. The reasons for these differences are complex. A higher proportion of Métis people live in remote and rural areas in Northern Ontario where access to health care and supports are more limited. This lack of access may well be affecting CVD and other chronic disease rates, along with other health outcomes.

The lower socioeconomic status of the Métis population compared to the general Ontario population are likely impacting rates of CVD and other chronic conditions among the Métis.

These results, together with findings from a study of diabetes, suggest that urgent action is needed to address the disproportionately high rates of CVD and other chronic conditions experienced by Métis citizens.

Métis communities would benefit from programs that increase knowledge and awareness about CVD risk factors and which improve access to public health outreach programs, and primary and specialist care.

Because chronic diseases develop over longer periods of time, it is essential that we continue to monitor CVD among the Métis of Ontario and begin to identify the reasons for these higher rates. The MNO will use this information to target programs and resources to where they will be most effective and have the greatest impact on Métis health status and outcomes.

Collecting more data over longer periods of time will increase the extent to which we can generalize the results of this kind of research to the entire Métis population in Ontario, which in the 2006 census numbered around 73,000 people.

CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE
MÉTIS: 25.71% GENERAL POPULATION: 21.84%

HEART ATTACK AND PRE-HEART ATTACK
MÉTIS: 17.55% GENERAL POPULATION: 16.91%

IRRREGULAR HEARTBEAT
MÉTIS: 3.05% GENERAL POPULATION: 2.74%

STROKE
MÉTIS: 26.65% GENERAL POPULATION: 26.53%

THESE RESULTS?

This landmark study is the first time CVD rates among the Métis of Ontario have been studied.

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