The lobby of the Supreme Court of Canada building in Ottawa was crackling with excitement as Métis from across the homeland gathered there the morning of March 8, 2013, to learn the Supreme Court of Canada decision concerning Manitoba Métis Federation v. Canada (the “MMF case”).

The MMF case represented over 140 years of Canadian history and Métis had waited a long time for its resolution. It had gone through almost every legal hurdle imaginable and taken over 30 years to reach the Supreme Court. The case was based on the claim that Canada breached its fiduciary and constitutional obligations owing to the Manitoba Métis by failing to fulfill the lands and benefits they were promised as Aboriginal negotiating partners in Confederation. These promises are embedded within sections 31 and 32 of the Manitoba Act, 1870, which are a part of Canada’s constitution.

The Manitoba Act committed to set aside 1.4 million acres of land for 7,000 children of the Red River Métis, which includes the modern city of Winnipeg. The land grants were meant to give the Métis a head start in the race for land in the new province and were offered in order to settle the Red River resistance, which was caused by Métis struggling to hold onto their land and rights amid concern of encroaching Canadian settlement.

The federal government, however, distributed the land through a random lottery; as a result the Métis became a landless aboriginal people, with few Métis receiving what they had been promised.

When the case finally reached the Supreme Court in December 2011, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) obtained intervenor status in order to offer its support and to ensure that the voice of Ontario Métis was heard in this important case. The MNO was represented at the Supreme Court by Jean Tréillet, the Métis lawyer who, 10 years earlier, represented Steve Powley at the Supreme Court and who is the great niece of Louis Riel. MNO President Gary Lipinski, as well as many MNO citizens and MNO staff members were in the foyer on March 8 awaiting the decision in solidarity with their Manitoba colleagues including MMF President David Chartrand as well as Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras and Métis National Council President Clement Chartier.

“After our long hunt for justice in the landmark Powley case, we knew it was important for us to be here at the Supreme Court,” explained President Lipinski. “We

continued on page 3.
Welcome Jenavieve

Submitted by Darlene Lent
MNO Credit River Métis Councillor

The growing Lent family is pleased to announce and welcome a wonderful addition to our Métis citizenship. Jenavieve Mareena Lent was born on January 24, 2013 in Brantford, weighing 7 pounds 15 ounces. She is the daughter of Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizens Christopher and Melodie Lent. Jenavieve is the first niece to MNO citizen Ian Lent, granddaughter to Darlene and Don Lent and great granddaughter to MNO citizens Bertha and Jim Tolles Senior. Other proud relatives are: Tricia Lent, MNO Credit River Councilor and Ian's son, second cousin Tlitha Tolles. Jenavieve is the first niece to MNO citizen Ian Lent, granddaughter to Darlene and Don Lent and great granddaughter to MNO citizens Bertha and Jim Tolles Senior. Other proud relatives are: Tricia Lent, MNO Credit River Councilor and Ian's son, second cousin Tlitha Tolles. Jenavieve is the first niece to MNO citizen Ian Lent, granddaughter to Darlene and Don Lent and great granddaughter to MNO citizens Bertha and Jim Tolles Senior. Other proud relatives are: Tricia Lent, MNO Credit River Councilor and Ian's son, second cousin Tlitha Tolles.

A founding member of the MNO, George was very involved in the Ottawa community and gave much of his time to volunteering with a myriad of organizations. He also volunteered as Santa Claus at community events and as a City of Ottawa Councilor. A founding member of the MNO, George was very involved in the Ottawa community and gave much of his time to volunteering with a myriad of organizations. He also volunteered as Santa Claus at community events and as a City of Ottawa Councilor.

By Joseph Paquette
President, MNO Veterans Council
MNO President Lipinski welcomes appointment of David Zimmer as Minister of Aboriginal Affairs

MNO hopes to continue work towards objectives agreed upon in the MNO-Ontario Framework Agreements.

(Ottawa) On February 11, 2013, the new government of Premier Kathleen Wynne was sworn in at a ceremony in Queen’s Park. MNA President of Ontario (MNA) President Gary Lipinski attended the ceremony and welcomed the appointment of the Honourable David Zimmer as the new Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, stated President Lipinski, “I am very excited about the future of our government and the relationship with the federal government.”

Framework Agreements, which was signed in 2008. The Framework agreement proved a solid foundation for cooperation between our two governments and something we are very happy with. In 2010, the Supreme Court of Canada affirmed the rights of Métis people to hunt and harvest in Alberta. It is essential that we begin to negotiate with the federal government to ensure our youth have the necessary tools to be able to succeed in the future.

“We look forward to continuing our relationship with the federal government and the Minister Zimmer,” President Lipinski. “Among our key priorities are increasing access to education, employment and economic development.”

“We are looking for Minister Zimmer to continue to work with us towards the objectives agreed upon in the MNO-Ontario Framework Agreement,” stated President Lipinski. “Our key priorities are ensuring that our citizens have access to education, employment and economic development.”

“I have confidence that by working together - we will continue to achieve positive results for Métis citizens, families and communities in Ontario,” concluded President Lipinski.

R. v. Hirsekorn

BACKGROUND: The case – R. v. Hirsekorn – dates back to the Stalnach Government’s 2007 cancellation of a Métis hunting agreement that implemented the Powley decision in Alberta. Following the cancellation of this agreement, the MNA proceeded to organize traditional hunting across the province to protect the cancellation. The Hirsekorn case is one of the charges that came out of those hunts, and was taken as a test case for Alberta Métis.

In the Fall of 2007, Gary Hirsekorn shot a mule deer in the Cypress Hills. At a 42 day trial which included 35 expert and community witnesses, Mr. Hirsekorn was convicted because the trial judge found the Métis had not established a specific settlement area in southern Alberta prior to the arrival of the Northwest Mounted Police in 1874.

On appeal, Chief Justice Wittmann of the Alberta Court of Queen’s Bench ruled the “iricon” test that applies the Powley test to the unique fact situation of the Métis on the prairies resulted in his conclusion that the Métis had no hunting rights. However, he concluded “it would be inappropriate to modify the Powley test at this level of court in light of the weight Supreme Court of Canada authority.”

Historic ruling favours the Métis

wanted to show our support for the MMF and ensure the voice of Ontario Métis is also heard.”

The decision was scheduled for release at 9:45 am, shortly beforehand, the principals of the case gathered in the clerk’s office anxiously waiting for Supreme Court officials to handout the decision. As it was released and they began handing the several hundred page document out, the lawyers and representatives of the Métis began to furiously look through the pages but it only took a couple minutes before the intent of the Court was clear and a resounding cheer rose. They then rushed down the stairs brandishing the decision in their hands and the applause of the assembled.

In a 6-2 ruling in the Supreme Court stated “the Federal Crown failed to implement the land grant provision set out in s.31 of the Manitoba Act, 1870 in accordance with the honour of the Crown.”

The federal government “acted with persistent inaction and failed to act diligently,” the ruling explains, adding that it “would and should have done better.”

“This was not a matter of occasional negligence, but of repeated mistakes and inaction that persisted for more than a decade,” it says.

Writing the reasons for the majority decision, Chief Justice Beverly McLachlin and Justice Andromache Karakatsanis outlined lasting effects of the federal government’s failure to honour obligations.

“So long as the issue remains outstanding, the goal of reconciliation and constitutional harmony, recognized in s. 35 of the Charter of Canadian Rights and Freedoms) and underlying s. 31 of the Manitoba Act, remains unachieved,” they explained, “the ongoing rift in the national fabric that s. 31 was adopted to cure remains unremedied.”

“The unfinished business of reconciliation of the Métis people with Canadian sovereignty is a matter of national and constitutional import,” the Judges added.

In response to the ruling, MNO President Lipinski stated “this is an important day for the Métis. The Supreme Court of Canada acknowledged that there is unfinished business with the Métis and that this includes our land issues. Hopefully the federal government will begin to negotiate with the Métis.”

The MMF have indicated they are ready for negotiations and that they are not looking for the land originally promised but rather for a modern land settlement agreement. The federal government has yet to comment on the decision.

See Also: The Time Has Come - Reconciliation with the Métis by Jason Madden on page 4.
The Time Has Come
Reconciliation with the Métis

By Jason Madden

[The time has finally come for recognition of the Métis as a unique and distinct people.

In 2011, this was the Supreme Court of Canada’s call to action to governments in a unanimous decision called Cunningham v. Alberta. For those who were paying attention, the case was a forewarning of things to come in the recently released Manitoba Métis Federation v. Canada judgment (the “MMF case”).

In the Cunningham case, the Supreme Court recognized that for more than two centuries “the Métis have struggled for recognition of their own unique identity, culture and governance.” The court acknowledged that the historic, unsingleness of governments to recognize and deal with the Métis – as a distinct rights-bearing aboriginal group – had created a legal gap. The court went on to affirm that the inclusion of Métis in s. 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 was intended to change this history of denial and neglect in concrete ways.

While neither the Cunningham case nor the Supreme Court’s landmark 2003 decision in R v. Powley provided an opportunity for the court to address the unfulfilled promise in s. 31 of the Manitoba Act, 1870, that is just and lasting settlements that reconcile the Crown, the highest court of the land has always had a smile and a story or two to tell. RIP, George Kelly.

As the Supreme Court confirms, the Métis were also one of the “indigenous peoples who were living in the western territories” of Canada prior to the assertion of sovereignty. However, the Métis south of the sixtieth parallel have been excluded from the reconciliation processes initiated with similarly situated First Nations in northern Canada, British Columbia as well as parts of Quebec and Ontario. During this same post-Calder era, Canada initiated negotiations with the Métis.

In less than forty years, we are now witness to the claims of the Canadian states reconnected through four modern day treaties being negotiated or finalized with First Nations in northern Canada, British Columbia as well as parts of Quebec and Ontario. Following the Supreme Court’s seminal judgment in Calder v. British Columbia in 1973, which recognized aboriginal title continues to exist in various parts of the country, Canada re-engaged in treaty-making with Indian peoples where their title, rights and interests had not yet been addressed. This has led to modern day treaties being negotiated or finalized with First Nations in northern Canada, British Columbia as well as parts of Quebec and Ontario. During this same post-Calder era, Canada initiated negotiations with the Métis.

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AS the Supreme Court confirms, the Métis were also one of the “indigenous peoples who were living in the western territories” of Canada prior to the assertion of sovereignty. However, the Métis south of the sixtieth parallel have been excluded from the reconciliation processes initiated with similarly situated First Nations in northern Canada and Métis Nation of Ontario. “At the last AGA,” explained President Gary Lipinski, “a motion was passed that to record and the most accessible way to be produced in so that several smaller communities across Saskatchewan with education and other programs for the, 9,800 people who live on the eight Métis settlements.

Rare Manitoba photos of Riel found in Australia

Rare Manitoba photos of Riel found in Australia. The photos were taken in the 1860s and 1870s, were found amongst civil war memorabilia at a recent auction in Australia. The photos are now part of the archives and special collections at the University of Manitoba.

AGA 2013

The Film Has Arrived
Making MNO History

One of the highlights of the 2013 AGA will definitely be the premiere screening of a documentary film about the history of the Métis Nation of Ontario. “At the last AGA,” explained President Gary Lipinski, “a motion was passed that to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the MNO, that the history of the MNO should be recorded and the most accessible way to tell that history would be in film.

The yet untitled film will feature and highlight the creation, development and growth of the MNO over its 18 year history and clearly link the MNO to its roots in Métis history and culture while also looking forward to its continued success. While the film will tell a single coherent story, it will be produced in so that several smaller vignettes can be drawn from the larger narrative and utilized for other purposes on websites and in presentations.

The film will feature interviews with the MNO’s founders and other citizens who have played key roles in the development of the MNO. “In many ways,” stated President Lipinski, “this film will be a tribute to the vision, courage and tenacity of the MNO’s founders whose vision built the MNO into the success it is today.”

The creation of the film is being coordinated by Marc St. Germain, who has worked in the MNO Community Relations office since 1999 and is himself familiar with much of the history of the MNO. “It is both an exciting and daunting task,” said St. Germain. “If you have pictures of important moments in the film, please send them to the address below no later than April 30, 2013. While every picture that is submitted will appear in the movie, the movie will benefit greatly the more people share their pictures with the producers. All submitted photographs will be renamed. Please send your photographs to: Marc St. Germain, MNO History Movie 500 Old St. Patrick Street, Unit D Ottawa, ON K1N 9G4

Metis Youth Suicide Prevention program hits the road

The Métis youth suicide prevention program was officially launched in early December. Facilitators are providing Métis communities across Saskatchewan with education and other programs for the, 9,800 people who live on the eight Métis settlements.
Down on the wind farm

MNO Region Nine Consultation Committee tours wind farm as guests of the Niagara Region Wind Corporation

By James Wagar
MNO Consultations Assessment Supervisor

Over the past two years, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Region Nine Consultation Committee has been meeting with the Niagara Region Wind Corporation (NRWC) to discuss their planned wind power project in south-western Ontario. The Committee wanted to get up close to these turbines and NRWC responded by inviting Committee members on a field trip. In November, Committee members and NRWC officials went to visit ENERCON’s turbines (the manufacturer chosen by NRWC) at an existing wind farm called “Bisnett” and owned by Boralex.

Our tour guide was an ENERCON engineer who answered just about anything Committee members asked, and they had lots of questions. The Committee and NRWC officials first met with their guide in Erieau for a great lunch of local fish and chips and discussed what they were about to see. The turbines in the tour were ENERCON’s E-82s that stand about 120 metres tall.

Upon arrival, the Committee stood under the turbines and were told that these turbines use newer technology, which does require a gear box. Instead, it has a direct drive, which has significantly reduced noise. The interior features a maze of buttons, screens and knobs that a technician used to explain how the machine operated. These turbines use significantly less oil (due to no gear box) reducing possibility of oil spills and fires. The towers are primarily cement and can be readily decommissioned.

Much to the Committee’s surprise, even inside they did not feel vibrations from the large spinning machines and there was hardly any shaking. After a good hour visiting the turbines, the tour was taken 550 metres away, which is the regulated setback for turbines in Ontario. From there, no noise could be heard from the machines.

ENERCON is a Germany-based company that is supporting the Ontario economy by establishing a converter and control panel manufacturing facility in the Town of Lincoln (one of only two in the world) in south-western Ontario. This facility brings with it over 50 high paid jobs. In addition, ENERCON will be building a concrete tower manufacturing facility. The NRWC Project will create approximately 770 jobs annually during the four-year development and construction period and 110 long-term jobs during the subsequent 20-year operational period.

The MNO discussed the importance of contracts and employment for MNO citizens and NRWC agreed to participate in a MNO employment and contractors job fair in the Spring of 2013. This job fair will be co-hosted by Union Gas and include both companies’ sub-contractors.

Captain Ken Simard takes to the skies

Following his duties as Captain of the Hunt (COTH), Simard took part in two flights with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) to conduct a moose survey of Region Two’s harvesting area.

The COTH act as a direct line of communication between Harvesters and the MNO and MNR. They help manage the annual harvest in concert with the province of Ontario, support the implementation of the Interim Harvesting Policy and determine the appropriate management of the harvest in their respective regions.

Correction

On page 17 of the previous issue of the Métis Voyager (No. 74, Winter 2013) in the last paragraph of the article entitled MNO citizens participate in Waterloo Region Museum Festival it stated “The MNO Grand River Métis Council thanks the Windsor Region Museum...”  This should have read Waterloo Region Museum. We apologize for the error.

CAPTAIN’S CORNER

A helicopter-eye view of a pair of moose on the move.
MÉTIS EDUCATION

Métis youth leader speaks out about Aboriginal Education

Jennifer Henry, Post-Secondary Representative with the Provincial Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario recently discussed the future of Aboriginal education and its underlying issues with TVO’s The Agenda host Steve Paikin at Trent University in early March. As part of The Agenda’s Learning 2030 series, Henry represented Métis students in a two-hour panel discussion. Additional panel members included Ryan DeCaire of Wabita Mohawk Territory and David Newhouse, Chair of Indigenous Studies at Trent University. During the one-hour session, Henry discussed the need for Métis history to be further incorporated into the Ontario public school system.

“People tend to make First Nations a synonym for all Aboriginal peoples and this is a prominent issue in the current public school system,” stated Henry. “Indigenous teachings are dominated by First Nations history and Métis and Inuit people tend to be forgotten. Learning about the First Nations is very important, but I believe there needs to be more focus on Métis and Inuit people as well.”

Another underlying issue that Henry expressed regarded the importance of educating the educators about indigenous culture and history.

“It is very important that teachers are educated in what they are teaching,” said Henry. “Currently, a one-day indigenous studies training course is provided to teachers and that is not enough. They should be taught about Canadian indigenous history and culture at a university level.”

Henry does agree that there is a conscious effort by the public school system to promote indigenous culture. “The ball is rolling, we just need to push it further,” she explained.

A suggestion made by Henry, which all panel members agreed with, regarded the lack of contemporary Indigenous knowledge in the Ontario public school system. “We are only talked about as people of the past, we are not just history. Contempo- rary indigenous culture needs to be incorporated into all subjects,” she stated.

Growing up as a source of information to her peers, Henry believes it is important for indigenous students to remain part of the public school system but the underlying issues in regards to the future of Aboriginal education need to be addressed.

Watch video clips or listen to the audio podcast of the panel discussion: http://theagenda.tvo.org/story/looking-future-aboriginal-education

New Staff

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is pleased to welcome three new staff members to the Ottawa office. Each new staff member joined the MNO in March:

ALYSHA AKOODIE

Alysha is a Communications Assistant with the Communications Branch. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Communications Science from Carleton University (Ottawa) and a Postgraduate Certificate in Corporate Communications from Seneca College (Toronto).

Alysha comes to the MNO from the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario (Ottawa), where she was a Communications and Webmaster Assistant and has done contract work as a Social Media and Digital Marketing Specialist for such companies as VPM Marketing (Toronto).

SHEILA GRANTHAM

Sheila is the Postsecondary Education Officer with the Education and Training Branch. She is Métis and hails from North Bay and southwestern Ontario. She is a graduate student at Carleton University (Ottawa) and has worked for the MNO as a summer student.

While attending Carleton, Sheila was very involved in several Aboriginal organizations. She is looking forward to working with the MNO again and meeting all her new colleagues.

KASIA KOZYRA-KOCIKOWSKA

Kasia is an In-Kind Assessment Officer with the Registry Branch. She holds a Master of Arts in Polish Philology from the University of Warsaw. Kasia majored in Polish Language studies and Polish Literature, and minored in Medieval Communications. Kasia came to Ottawa from Warsaw, Poland in 2004. She has a great understanding of the Métis people from studying the history required for her Canadian citizenship. Once she obtained her citizenship she worked as the manager of a well-known downtown therapy clinic.

We are very excited to have Alysha, Sheila and Kasia join the MNO team!
COMMUNITY

We Are Here (On Nay Icit)

MNO Credit River Métis Council participates in grand opening of Aboriginal exhibit at the Peel Art Gallery, Museum and Archives

By Bill Morrison
Vice President and Chair, MNO Credit River Métis Council

O

n Saturday, February 16, 2013, the Métis Nation of Ontario’s (MNO) Credit River Métis Council participated in the grand opening of the Aboriginal exhibit, We Are Here at the Peel Art Gallery, Museum and Archives (PAMA). It was a very proud and meaningful moment for all who contributed and attended. MNO Chair France Picotte spoke at the event and provided the translation of We Are Here into Michif as On Nay Icit.

Before viewing the exhibit, Chair Picotte participated in the symbolic Ribbon Ceremony held during the opening ceremonies where she and Aboriginal representatives (Garry Sault, Carolyn King and Vince Musson) joined red, black, yellow and white ribbons together to symbolize unity and the future.

The exhibit featured a video-station presentation by MNO Credit River Métis Council President Richard Cuddy describing the organization and its activities. A panel board that depicted the history, culture and arts of our nation was also featured. A great deal of pride and dedication was portrayed in all the material presented within the exhibit.

MNO Credit River Métis Council members who attended included: Senator Bill Morrison, Co-Chair; MNO Vice-Chair Sharon McBratney; MNO Councilor Richard Cuddy, Senator Ray Bergie, Vice-President and Chair Bill Morrison and MNO Vice-Chair Sharon McBratney.

Among notable speakers were: Emil Kold, Chair Regional Council and CEO for the Region of Peel; the Hon. Susan Fennell, Mayor of the City of Brampton, Allan Thompson, Acting Mayor for the Town of Caledon; John Sanderson, Councilor for the City of Brampton; Carolyn King, Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation; and Pat Chrisjohn, Oneida First Nation and PAMA member. Members of PAMA’s Aboriginal Committee were also announced and included: Jo-Anne Absolon, Debbie Alves, Kevin Alves, Judy Carter, Pat Chrisjohn, Delmore Jacobs, John KL Keshig, Carolyn King, Damian Mac-Seain, Pauline Sutherland, and MNO Credit River Métis Council members President Richard Cuddy, Senator Ray Bergie, Vice-President and Chair Bill Morrison and MNO Vice-Chair Sharon McBratney.

Following the speeches, participants enjoyed the music of Alorut Inuit Throat Singers, Raiglee and Jennifer Alorut, as well as hand drumming performed by Judy Carte, Pat Chrisjohn and Jo-Anne Absolon and traditional Métis fiddle music performed by Rajan Anderson.

As part of the grand opening celebrations, PAMA hosted a Family Day on Monday, February 18, at the Gallery Museum. The event was a huge success and over 300 visits to the “We Are Here” exhibit.

A number of activities were planned and supported by MNO Credit River Métis Council for the youngsters in attendance. Instruction was supplied by MNO Credit River Métis Council citizens, Kyl Morrison and three of his daughters Matilda, Parker and Jordan. They demonstrated the skills of finger weaving and assisted many children create multi-coloured bracelets. Other activities included paper canoe making, sash colouring and fiddle drawing. The activities were well received and enjoyed as a great Family Day experience.

Fun was had by all and the PAMA staff appreciated the support provided by the MNO Credit River Métis Council children.

GBMC youth group hosts Aboriginal night

By Larry Ferris

O

n February 5, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Georgian Bay Métis Council youth group hosted the Midland 1st Wye Marsh Scouts for an Aboriginal night. Previously the Midland 1st Wye Marsh scouts would receive their Aboriginal badge through contact with the First Nations but this year we were able to teach them about Métis culture.

The scouts were shown beaver and coyote pelts, as well as a stretched moose hide, traps, sashes and different animal horns. Guest speaker, Ken Frazer, also shared some enjoyable Aboriginal stories.

Meals of venison, moose, beaver and duck were served. Scout Leader Ralph Charlesbois commented later, “I can’t believe how much they ate.”

Later in the evening the Midland 1st Wye Marsh scouts joined the Métis youth in some drumming. It was a good night for all made possible by volunteers like John Bermece and Trish Pardis and Janice Ferris.

The Midland 1st Wye Marsh Scouts have since invited the MNO Georgian Bay Métis Council youth group to join them in the activities of safe knife handling and fire starting.

The MNO Georgian Bay Métis Council youth group gathers every Monday night from 6-7 p.m. to participate in a variety of activities.

The most recent meetings have included leather work, creating medicine bags and pouches and listening to stories on Métis culture and history told by elders.

Future events will include an Aboriginal week Camp Kitchi trip to Beausoleil Island. All youth are welcome to join in on the fun.

Metis Voyageur Spring 2013, Issue no. 75
The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Atikokan Métis Council hosted their first Jigging workshop on February 9, 2013. The MNO Atikokan Métis Council was pleased to welcome a group of talented jiggers from neighbouring MNO Sunset Country Métis Council to share in the traditional dance.

“Learning to Jig in Atikokan

Among the guests were: Roger and Cathy Fobister, Judy Morrison, Senator John and Dylinda George and their grand-daughter Grace, and Erma Armit and her grand-daughter Keira.

The eager and lively group had the opportunity to learn the arts of jigging, square dancing and spoon playing. “It was a wonderful afternoon of storytelling, music and dancing,” said Tiffany Burbeck. “It was a joyous way to share the Métis culture with our community.”
MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO SENATORS

MNO Senators: Sharing our Métis culture and heritage

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Senators are very involved with their communities and seldom miss the opportunity to pass on their knowledge of Métis traditions and heritage to young people and the general public.

On March 4, Senator Micheline Boisvert of the MNO Chapleau Métis Council paid a visit to Sacré Coeur Primary School and Trillium High School in Chapleau where she gave presentations on Métis culture and traditions. Using her replica of a voyager canoe that was given to her by Métis canoe builder Marcel Labèlle as a visual, Senator Boisvert the process involved in building a canoe and how the Métis people used them for travelling. She also provided an overview of Métis traditional knowledge, including traditional healing. The students and teachers were given the opportunity to view, touch and smell ceder, tamarac, wild mint, and buffalo sage while learning the benefits of each.

Senator Boisvert provided gifts to the class, friendship bracelets made out of buffalo, deer and moose hide were given to the students and Métis medicine bags were given to the teachers.

Senator Micheline Boisvert ready to visit the students and her Métis canoe replica.

GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE TRAINING FOR MNO COMMUNITY COUNCILS

Three “Rivers” participate in Governance and Finance training

By Richard Cuddy
President, MNO Credit River Métis Council
With contributions from Glen Lipinski
MNO Consultation and Community Relations Coordinator

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) benefits immensely from the dedicated volunteers who are members of our chartered community councils. These hard-working individuals spend 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 Glen Lipinski and Andy Lebelrie, the MNO’s Consultation and Community Relations Coordinators.

The course is a two-day seminar in each council’s community. The program explains the role of community councils as the MNO’s local governments, whose structure and purpose is coordinated through each councils 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 MNO Grand River Métis Council of Region Nine and the MNO Credit River Métis Council of Region Eight teamed up to participate in the two-day Governance and Finance Training from March 9-10 in Milton.

On the first day of training, focused on governance and began with an opening prayer led by Credit River Senator Ray Bergie. Rowlinson and Lipinski began with a “Métis 101” and facilitated participants’ navigation through many subjects covered in parliamentary procedures and meetings. The day ended by covering such topics as visioning, challenges, opportunities and planning for Councils.

On day two, Rowlinson and Lipinski concentrated on Finance and the NRF. They delivered sessions focusing on policies, procedures, aspects of budgeting and general reporting. The day concluded with a closing prayer from Grand River Senator Carol Levie.

During the two-day course, Rowlinson and Lipinski were able to successfully incorporate different strategies that kept the content interesting and lively. Sessions involved discussion, participation and group assignments.

Attending from the Grand River Council were: President Cora Bunn, Senator Carol Levie, Chair Jennifer Parkinson, Secretary Treasurer Darlene Lent, Barbara Lair, Middle row: Glen Lipinski, Jennifer Parkinson, Joyce Tolles, Jean-Marc Maheu, Richard Cuddy, Cora Bure, Hank Rowlinson; Back row: Bill Morrison, Ray Bergie, David Neville and Don Crawford.

MNO Moon River Métis Council members who participated in Governance and Finance Training (left to right) Front row: Rose Lepage, Linda Harbridge; Middle row: Tony Muscat, Larry Duval, Tammy Porte, Lisa McCom, Eugene Boucher; Back row: Richard Whalen.

The course covers everything from how to run effective meetings and engage citizens in council activities to budgeting and the various financial practices...

Members of MNO Grand River Métis Council and MNO Credit River Métis Council participating in Governance and Finance training, (left to right) Front row: Bridget Brown, Carol Levie, Karen Derocher, Darlene Lent, Barbara Lair; Middle row: Glen Lipinski, Jennifer Parkinson, Joyce Tolles, Jean-Marc Maheu, Richard Cuddy, Cora Bure, Hank Rowlinson; Back row: Bill Morrison, Ray Bergie, David Neville and Don Crawford.

The training was a great opportunity socialization and networking. Past courses have been available in Ottawa, Antikkan, Sudbury, Niagara, Peterborough, Toronto and Georgian Bay.

The MNO Grand River Metis Council members who participated in Governance and Finance training (left to right) Front row: Bridget Brown, Carol Levie, Karen Derocher, Darlene Lent, Barbara Lair; Middle row: Glen Lipinski, Jennifer Parkinson, Joyce Tolles, Jean-Marc Maheu, Richard Cuddy, Cora Bure, Hank Rowlinson; Back row: Bill Morrison, Ray Bergie, David Neville and Don Crawford.

Members of MNO Grand River Métis Council and MNO Credit River Métis Council participating in Governance and Finance training, (left to right) Front row: Bridget Brown, Carol Levie, Karen Derocher, Darlene Lent, Barbara Lair; Middle row: Glen Lipinski, Jennifer Parkinson, Joyce Tolles, Jean-Marc Maheu, Richard Cuddy, Cora Bure, Hank Rowlinson; Back row: Bill Morrison, Ray Bergie, David Neville and Don Crawford.
Chartered MNO Community Councils in Region 8 take part in historic first regional meeting

By Richard Cuddy
President, MNO Credit River Métis Council

Chartered Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Community Councils in Region Eight took part in their first historic regional meeting on Sunday, February 24, 2013.

The MNO Toronto-York Region Métis Council hosted the other Region Eight Councils, which are the MNO Oshawa and Durham Métis Council and the MNO Credit River Métis Council.

The meeting was organized by MNO Toronto-York Region Métis Council Secretary Treasurer, Marilyn Hew and was held at a Royal Canadian Legion in Toronto.

MNO Toronto-York Region Métis Council President, Robert Bird, opened the meeting by welcoming council members and other guests. After which, MNO Toronto-York Region Métis Council Senator Ali Kennedy delivered the opening prayer.

In attendance were: MNO Toronto-York Region Métis Council members President Bird, Senator Kennedy, Marilyn Hew, Kate Stewart-McNeil, Patrick Diamond, Jo-Anne Diamond and Christine Skura; MNO Oshawa and Durham Métis Council Interim President Kevin Henry; Senator Coole Wagår, And e Bosse, Claire Kearns, Michael Diotte and Aurèle Diotte; MNO Credit River Métis Council President Richard Cuddy, Bill Morison, Joyce Tolles, Darlene Lent, David Neville and Jean-Marc Maheu; Provisional Council of the MNO Vice-Chair Sharon McBride, Senator Joe Poitras, Region Eight Councillor Anita Tucker and Post-secondary Representative Jennifer Henry.

Guest speaker Mark Bowler, Director of MNO Lands, Resources and Consultations, provided the participants with an overview MNO’s consultation program related to the duty of the Crown to consult and accommodate regional rights-bearing Métis communities throughout the province.

Bowler’s presentation, What is consultation and how does it work?, outlined the MNO’s regional consultation protocols. He led discussions on the definitions associated with consultations and how to strengthen and effectively engage in consultation and accommodation processes.

Bowler explained the potential triggers and desired outcomes of consultations which included examples of what could go right and wrong. He also described the communications surrounding consultation processes and the importance of building relationships with proponents.

Participants were enthusiastically engaged and asked questions or made comments which often led to in-depth discussions. “Mark’s presentation was most helpful. His skill at delivering a large group was a delight to watch,” stated President Bird. “We are most fortunate to have someone of his ability as MNO’s Director of Lands, Resources and Consultations. I hope that he will be available again to offer more insight and another opportunity to discuss further the themes and topics that were introduced.”

Participants learned how the MNO is working for its citizens for the future, for their environment, harvesting, traditional knowledge, culture and language. This long term focus helps the MNO make clear decisions.

Bowler ended the presentation by discussing the responsibilities of the MNO, the community councils and communications with MNO citizens. It is important that citizens understand that the MNO governance structure operates with a high degree of transparency with input all the way down to the community level. This is a rare structure and something that Métis Nation of Ontario citizens should be proud of.

The regional meeting was a very successful opportunity for council members from Region Eight to trade experiences and information, and how to become stronger as a region and nation.
Métis students discover their culture

Over March break, Métis high school students from across Ontario gathered at the Canadian Ecology Centre in Mattawa for a four-day retreat designed by the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) to engage Métis high school students in discussions on post-secondary education and to learn about their Métis heritage.

Provisional Council of the MNO (PCMNO) Chair France Picotte, President of the MNO Veteran’s Council Joe Paquette, Senator Dr. Alis Kennedy and Infinite Reach Facilitators were all in attendance and shared their personal experiences with the students.

The local MNO Mattawa Council provided a feast for the students. It was a great evening where students were able to learn about and appreciate the work of MNO community councils.

Throughout their stay, students participated in various cultural activities. They connected with nature while enjoying a snow shoe hike through the beautiful grounds. They were also taught about different tree types while taking a winter hike along the very same waters their voyageur ancestors traveled through.

Traditional Métis crafts were a big hit. Students spent afternoons making beaded medicine pouches and souvenir paddles. They were also taught how to finger weave traditional Métis sashes.

High school student Josh Freeman thoroughly enjoyed the camp. “I didn’t know much about my culture before attending the camp,” he said. “This was a great experience for me to get in touch with my roots and connect with other Métis youth while learning about the future job market and post-secondary opportunities.”

The Ecology Centre provided a tour of the facilities and showcased their animals which included the opportunity to hold a snake. At night, a wolf howl was held and although no wolves howled back it was enjoyed by all. The evenings consisted of delicious meals, free time and campfire socials.

Along with cultural activities, students were provided an overview on the future job market, information on various post-secondary opportunities, programs and disciplines and took part in a resume workshop.

“Instilling the importance of education is the first step towards something that is truly great,” said Tegan Mandeville, an Infinite Reach Facilitator at Loyalist College. “And you can’t know where you are going in the future if you don’t know where you come from in the past. Being able to help them through this process is pretty amazing.”

Many students showed up to camp as strangers but left as great friends. The camp proved to be a great opportunity for students to build networks not just with each other but with the Infinite Reach facilitators, MNO staff and elected leaders as well.

“This camp gave students the opportunity to regain a sense of cultural value and build a network of community people which one day will benefit them greatly,” said Infinite Reach Facilitator at Sault College Melody Chiislett-Morris.

MNO keepsakes and memorabilia were provided to the students which included an Infinite Reach journal, a reusable water bottle, a traditional Métis sash, a fleece vest and a hoodie messenger bag.

For more information on the Infinite Reach program and how to get involved please visit www.metisnation.org under Education and Training.

Photos: Marc St. Germain

MNO Infinite Reach March Break Camp

André Bourguignon, Tegan Mandeville, Denise Bartolucci, Genevieve Routbier, Scott France and Nikki-Lyn Doucette during a snowshoe adventure.
Celebrating 20 Years of Achievement

In 1993, the citizens of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) celebrated their first Annual General Assembly (AGA) and have been gathering together with our friends, family and colleagues every year since to conduct the business of the Nation, showcase our rich culture, pass on our traditions to younger generations and celebrate our stories.

AGAs are Métis self-government in action, and each year, the MNO leadership has been able to report successes in all the areas outlined in the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose, which was enacted by the MNO founders at its first meeting in 1973. As MNO citizens come together for the 20th AGA, we have two decades of achievement to recognize and by so doing, acknowledge the vision of our founders whose courage and tenacity built the MNO into the champion of Métis people that it is today.

2013 Annual General Assembly

The 2013 MNO AGA is taking place in beautiful Ottawa at the recently renovated Delta Ottawa City Centre Hotel. Located centrally in downtown Ottawa, the Delta is close to Parliament Hill, the Supreme Court, the Canadian War Museum and the Museum of History as well as great downtown shopping and other amenities. The Delta is also close to Victoria Island on the Ottawa River, which will be the site of the AGA Opening Ceremonies and cultural activities. (For more information on the Delta Ottawa: www.deltahotels.com).

Community Council Co-hosts

The AGA is being co-hosted by Region Six MNO chartered community councils; the MNO Ottawa Region Métis Council and the MNO High Land Waters Métis Council. “We are very pleased that the two councils in Region Six have stepped forward to provide the MNO with this opportunity,” stated MNO President Gary Lipinski. “Ottawa is an exciting city with great venues for AGA events including several with important ties to the Métis Nation.”

Tom Thompson Jr., Region Six Provincial Council MNO (PCMNO) Councillor and past President of the MNO High Land Waters Métis Council added “The Métis played an important part in the history of Canada, and the dual anniversaries of the MNO and Powley, make 2013 the perfect year to bring that to the attention of the entire country.”

Among the locations of special interest to Métis are: the Supreme Court of Canada building where the Powley decision was announced, the Stunning Museum of History in nearby Gatineau that was designed by Métis architect Douglas Cardinal, the Aborignal Veterans Monument and the Ottawa River, which was a major fur trade route. The AGA starts the evening of Friday, August 23, but will be preceded during the day and on August 22 with meetings and training, the details of which will be announced in coming weeks. The Friday evening will start with the traditional opening ceremonies and welcome to the AGA campfire hosted by President Lipinski and the PCMNO. This year these events will take place on Victoria Island in the Ottawa River, which is very close to the Delta. No alcohol is permitted there.

Métis leaders and special guests will paddle in canoes to the island where they will be greeted by AGA delegates and their families. This ritual, which connects the MNO with its Métis voyageur roots, is always an exciting part of the AGA. This will be followed by a procession from the shore to the campfire where everyone is encouraged to bring their musical instruments and jiggling shoes for some rousing good times! Victoria Island will also be the location for this year’s Métis Games and Cultural Activities, which are scheduled for the afternoon of Sunday, August 25. (For more information on Victoria Island go to: www.aboriginalexperiences.com).

A community evening hosted by the Region Six Community Councils will take place on Saturday, August 24, with details to be announced in the coming weeks. Through most of the AGA, there will be a trade show featuring many vendors as well as cultural and heritage displays. Other highlights will include the presentation of the Suzanne Rochon-Burnett Volunteer of the Year Award and an elegant gala the evening of Sunday, August 25.

AGA 2013

THE MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO 1993-2013

THE 20TH MNO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY • AUGUST 23-26, 2013 • OTTAWA, ONTARIO

AGA 2013 AGENDA

FRIDAY, AUGUST 23

1 - 4 pm AGA Registration Location: Delta Ottawa

7 - 10 pm Opening Ceremonies and Welcome to the AGA Location: Victoria Island

Bring your music and jiggling shoes and join in the excitement with President Lipinski and the PCMNO

SUNDAY, AUGUST 25

9 am - Noon MNO AGA Business Meeting Delta Ottawa

1 - 5 pm Métis Games and Culture Victoria Island

6 - 10 pm MNO AGA Gala Delta Ottawa City Centre Ballroom

MNO AGA DAY 3 MONDAY, AUGUST 26, 2013

9 am - Noon MNO AGA Business Meeting Delta Ottawa

12:30 pm MNO Cultural Commission Annual General Assembly Delta Ottawa