Guided by our spiritual values, we aspire to attain our highest potential.

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 Metis 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 Teillet, 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...”
**The Métis Voyageur**

Summer 2013, Issue no. 76

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**Submission Policy:**
MNO encourages contributions from MNO citizens and staff. All submissions are edited to conform to the Canadian press style guide as well as for grammar, repetitiveness, spelling and to accurately reflect the official names and titles of individuals, organizations, bodies and agencies referenced in submissions. Excluding letters to the editor and submissions to the family and passages sections, submissions should not be written in the first person. Submissions written in the first person will either be changed to the third person or not published. The recommended length for a submission is between 400 and 600 words. Submissions longer than that may be edited for length.

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**MNO citizen’s centennial honoured**

Submitted by Sharon McBride
MNO Vice-Chair

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Alexander Boucher turned 100 years old in January this year. This landmark was celebrated at the recent MNO Moon River Métis Council Annual General Meeting (AGM) in MacTier on April 23. MNO President Gary Lipinski, who was on hand for the AGM, and MNO Moon River President Lisa McCron, presented Alexander with a certificate recognizing his personal centennial.

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**OBITUARY**

Alma Adams passing

“Fierce” defender of Métis rights passes

It is with great sadness that I learned that we have lost Alma Adams, another great fighter for Métis rights.

Alma was part of a long line of Métis commercial fishing families that have lived and relied on Lake Nipigon for generations. Her family continues to live in well-known Métis settlement of McDermid today, living off the land through hunting, fishing and trapping.

Throughout her life, Alma proudly carried on her family’s long and proud tradition of representing the Métis Nation and defending Métis rights. Her mother, MNO Senator Edith McLeod, was well-known for her “fierceness” and steadfast commitment to the Métis Nation during the MNO’s early years. Alma’s brother, Larry Desmeules, was the well-regarded President of the Métis Nation of Alberta for over a decade. Alma served as the Regional Councillor for Region 2 on the Provincial Council of MNO (PCMNO) during the MNO’s early years. She was a strong Métis voice that never backed down and a role model for many. After serving on the PCMNO, Alma turned her attention to advancing Métis women’s issues as well as continuing to push to ensure Métis commercial fishermen received proper respect and recognition. Even while she was sick, Alma recently shared her vast knowledge and stories about the Métis around Lake Nipigon for a MNO traditional knowledge study.

On behalf of the MNO, I offer condolences to her husband Gerry, her children Melissa and Eli as well as her extended family. She will truly be missed by many, but her life, spirit and contributions to the Métis Nation will live on.

Gary Lipinski, President, Métis Nation of Ontario

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**What Is My Destiny?**

Raymond D. Tremblay (Ottawa)

Why should I worry the least bit about what my destiny would be? Heaven, Mother Earth and my Creator are constantly nurturing me. All I have to do is continue to have faith and ask for God’s forgiveness. Today, as usual, He’ll fill my spirit, heart and soul with joy and tenderness.

I place my entire being into his divine hands. He will no doubt protect me. Serve the needy! This is what my Creator appeared to be expecting of me.

My spirit was moved by this heavenly calling. I responded with passion. Yes, the Great Manitou blew His spirit into mine. I felt His compassion.

Divine intervention guided every step I took along my earthly journey. Eager to follow His teachings, I unfortunately strayed along the way. Shaken by my wrongdoings, I begged Jesus for his love and mercy. Today, I pledge myself to serve my needy sisters and brothers. I’ll do my best to treat them with respect and as equal partners.

Naturally, my Métis spirit believed in our interconnectedness. You and I are destined to enjoy the sacred fruits of oneness.
In 1993, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) was established through the will of Métis people and Métis communities coming together throughout Ontario to create a Métis-specific governance structure. At its original meetings, Métis representatives from communities throughout the province set out the foundational vision for the MNO. This vision is encapsulated in the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose. The statement is a seminal document for the MNO and it sets out why the MNO was formed, who MNO represents, and what the MNO wants to achieve. The statement has been central to the MNO’s success over the last 20 years.

Accordingly at the 2013 MNO Annual General Assembly (AGA), the MNO will celebrate its past by premiering a movie about the history of the MNO. The movie will demonstrate how the MNO has built on the traditions of its Métis ancestors and how its early leadership laid a solid foundation that made the MNO the dynamic voice of Métis people that it is today. You can learn more about the production of the MNO movie on p.20.

The 20th anniversary will also produce an important legacy in the form of the first-ever unique MNO provincial flag. Once adopted, this flag will be used along with the Métis National Flag at MNO functions and to represent the MNO at national Métis functions. A formal Request for Submissions (RFS) is on p. 6 of the Voyageur. All MNO citizens are invited to submit designs and the RFS provides the criteria and guidelines for participation.

Statistics Canada has recently released the results of its 2011 National Household Survey and it reports a significant increase in the number of people self-identifying as Métis in Ontario.

Statistics Canada has recently released the results of its 2011 National Household Survey and it reports a significant increase in the number of people self-identifying as Métis in Ontario. In the 2006 Census, 73,605 Ontario residents self-identified as Métis but in the 2011 National Household Survey 86,020 people self-identified as Métis. More information on this survey has been posted to the MNO website at metisnation.org.
The Ministry of Children and Youth Services recently approached the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) to organize training sessions for the Ontario Aboriginal community. Due to MNO’s excellent reputation in the field of healing and wellness and its successful relationships with the Ontario Aboriginal community, it was felt that the MNO was a natural choice to bring together a diversity of Aboriginal groups all working in the same areas. Over the week of March 26-28, the MNO hosted twenty Aboriginal organizations in Toronto for a series of training sessions on the topics of trauma and mental health. Coinciding, the MNO provided training for its new Victim Services program, hosted the Women’s Secretariat of the Métis Nation of Ontario (WSMNO) general meeting and the first provincial meeting of the Ontario Aboriginal Responsible Gambling Program (OARGP) working group since the MNO was selected lead coordinator (see page 10).

MNO facilitates healing and wellness training for the Aboriginal community

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Starting at the core

MNO hosts trauma training for front-line workers

Compassion Fatigue Solutions provided a presentation on practical tools for dealing with the effects of workers own compassion fatigue, a normal feeling of emotional and physical exhaustion. Participants were provided with practical strategies for identifying and dealing with the costs of caring in a mental health or traumatic setting as well as coping mechanisms.

“Compassion fatigue is a very real issue for all front-line workers and the information I learned here is extremely useful,” said Michael J Robins, Program Coordinator at the Ga Bëh Sho'o In Men’s Shelter. “I was shown the ability to address trauma in an entirely new way. It was a great opportunity to be part of this training.”

Following this was a two-day workshop: Working with Aboriginal treatment models and attitudes including how to prepare a safe ground for unraveling the many different types of trauma were also discussed.

“The training really gave me a perspective of understanding and provided a great overview of the complexity of cultural sensitivity,” said Maria Swain, Community Wellness Worker at the Ontario Native Women’s Association. “It was great to learn about trauma from an Aboriginal point of view. It will be very beneficial to my position.”


The MNO is thankful to the Ontario Women’s Directorate and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services for providing the funding to make this training possible.
HEALING AND WELLNESS SPECIAL FEATURE

MNO Victims Services Program
Fostering strength and resiliency through Métis culture

In response to the need of Métis specific services, The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) has recently added a new program to its repertoire, Victim Services. The new program’s goal is to expand the range and variety of culturally relevant victim services available to Métis women and children in Ontario.

Based on consultations, the program is a support system to be integrated within main victim service programs in order to help build an understanding of who Métis people are and the underlying issues and histories that surround them.

The new program is founded on 10 principles: the human right to safety, gender equality, cultural responses, personal accountability, integrated approach, coordinated response, voices of women, prevention, evaluation and accountability.

During the week of March 26-28 the Women’s Secretariat of the Métis Nation of Ontario (WSMNO) took part in the first rounds of training for the new Victim Services program.

“At the end of the week of March 26-28, the WSMNO has been able to provide ongoing input into the development of the MNO Victim Services program,” said MNO Vice-chair and WSMNO Spokesperson Sharon McBride. “We look forward to contributing further and prioritizing direction in addressing violence against Métis women provincially.”

The training began with a sharing circle where the women voiced their stories and reasons for being part of the WSMNO and their interests in the MNO Victim Services training.

MNO Victim Services Coordinator Marsha Depoter shared a beautiful “Strong Women Song” with the group. The group closed their eyes and sang along quietly thinking of all the women in the world who are or have been victims of abuse.

Following this was an overview on what victimization and domestic abuse are; the origins of violence in Métis communities and practices to foster Métis cultural strength and understanding; victim services program staff roles and how to access consultation and support, signs of abuse, how to report abuse or potential harm, safety planning and healing.

An interactive healing exercise was the highlight of the training. The group took part in tie blanket making where they wrote words of strengths and healing on the inside of the blankets. The blankets are to symbolize the healing process by wrapping strength, support and comfort around a victim.

Mental health issues in children and youth are on the rise. More and more children and youth are being diagnosed with mental health issues or are suffering in silence. Acknowledging the high demand for mental health services, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) hosted mental health training for Aboriginal frontline staff working with children and youth from across Ontario.

The three-day training session was designed to develop skills that will improve supports to clients who have experienced trauma; learn about the impact of vicarious trauma and discover individual, organized and community strategies for self-care and wellness; help frontline workers provide initial support to someone who may be developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis, and gain insight on resiliency and resource-building for Aboriginal people.

“The training is pertinent to the issues I deal with on a daily basis,” said Jay Smith, Residential Youth Counsellor with Ganishiwawa Family Assault Support Services. “I have gained an overall better understanding of the complex issues I face in my field of work and have gained another set of tools to use when dealing with them.”

Day one began with a presentation by Amanda Desbiens, MNO Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program Coordinator, on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

She spoke about her experience as a front-line worker dealing with cases of FASD and how to implement best practices. This was followed by a workshop on vicarious trauma presented by registered social worker Dana Tulisz of Compassion Fatigue Solutions. She provided practical tools for dealing with the effects of workers own compassion fatigue.

Participants were taught practical strategies for identifying and dealing with the costs of caring in a mental health setting and coping mechanisms.

Following this, participants took part in a two-day workshop, Mental Health First Aid Canada. For adults who work with youth curriculum. This curriculum focused on mental health problems and first aid for youth aged 12 to 24. Participants were taught what to identify mental health problems and the appropriate first aid intervention strategies.

Presentations were also made by MNO Victim Services Coordinator Megan Mulonen and MNO Community Wellness Coordinator Terry-Lynn Lorange.

“A lot of what was discussed in the workshop is used at my agency. It is definitely a confirmation that we are doing it right and the training has offered new tools we can implement,” said Gabriela Boskovic, Child and Youth Worker for Ganshwa’aiwaay Gayenawahwa Program. “I am very glad that the MNO has invited us to be here.”

Organizations that took part in the training included: Nijikwen-didaa Anishinabekewes Services Circle, Aboriginal Peoples Alliance of Northern Ontario, CanAm Urban Natives Homes, Gis Beh Shoo in Anishinabek Women’s Shelter Innisfil Friendship Centre, Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre, Chiefs of Ontario, Ontario Native Women’s Association, Shawanaga First Nation Healing Centre, Independent First Nations, Red Lake Indian Friendship, Ganishiwawa Family Assault Support Services, Independent First Nations, First Erie Native Cultural Centre Inc., Timmins Native Friendship Circle, N’Swakamon Friendship Centre, Hamilton Regional Indian Centre, Nipissing, Hamilton Native Women’s Centre and Fort Albany Shelter.

The MNO is thankful to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services who provided the funding to make this training a possible.

Rising up to the mental health challenge
MNO hosts training for Aboriginal front-line workers

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The MNO is thankful to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services who provided the funding to make this training a possible.

Members of the WSMNO and MNO staff with their healing blankets at the MNO Victim Services training. (left to right) Back row: Pearl Gabona, Kim Powley, Bridget Brown, Marilyn Hew, Susan Van der Rassell, Kelly Camacho, Joanne Hamelin; Front row: Barbaranne Wright, Clair Kears, MNO Vice-Chair Sharon McBride, Karen Derouch, Janniffer Barr and Marsha Depoter.
Searching for a flag for the Métis Nation of Ontario
Request for Submissions (RFS)

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is requesting submissions for a flag that will be used as the official provincial Métis flag of the MNO to go along with the national Métis flag.

A. Process:
- PCMNO sets requirements, parameters and guidelines for submissions;
- PCMNO appoints selection committee;
- Selection committee members will be required to familiarize themselves with North American Vexillological Association standards and apply these to the selection process;
- The RFS will be publicized in the Voyageur, website, eVoyageur and Facebook;
- All designs will be vetted to determine whether designs meet the criteria outlined in the RFS. Only those that meet the criteria will be considered by the selection committee;
- Following the deadline and after vetting to ensure compliance, the selection committee will be presented with all qualified designs. Who the designers are will not be shared with the selection committee;
- The selection committee recommends five designs they feel are most appropriate to the PCMNO;
- From the five designs that are recommended, the PCMNO will select two or three designs which they feel best reflect Ontario Métis;
- A vote will take place at the 2014 AGA among the designs selected by the PCMNO, and the final one will be chosen;
- The design with the greatest number of votes will be selected as the official MNO flag.

B. RFS Criteria:
- Only MNO citizens can submit designs;
- All designs must be rectangular with standard width-to-length proportions of 1:2. Square, triangular or any shape other rectangular at 1:2 proportions will not be considered;
- Designs cannot include tassels, fringes or other extraneous features; designs with extraneous features will not be considered;
- Submissions can be made either electronically or with hard copies; electronic submissions can be made to mnoflagcontest@metisnation.org. Hard copy submissions can be sent to: MNO Flag Request for Proposals 500 Old St. Patrick Street Unit D Ottawa, Ontario K1N 9G4
- Fax submissions are not acceptable and will not be considered;
- Submissions must be in colour;
- Submissions must include a short explanation of the symbolism represented in the design;
- Submissions must include the name, citizen number, mailing address and e-mail address (if she has one) of the designer; those without this information will not be considered;
- Only one submission is permitted per citizen; if multiple submissions are received, the first one received will be the only one considered;
- Designs must conform to the five principles of flag design as outlined by the North American Vexillological Association. Flags that do not meet these principles will not be considered. The principles are:
  1. Keep it simple: a good flag is simple enough that a child can draw it from memory. Flags must be seen from a distance and from their opposite side. Complicated flags are also costly to reproduce;
  2. Use meaningful symbolism: a good flag uses symbolism through a main graphic element, colours and layout;
  3. Use two-three basic colours: The number of colours in a flag should be limited to three, which contrast well and come from a standard colour set. The basic flag colours are red, blue, green, black, yellow and white and there use can range from dark to light. A good flag should also reproduce well in black and white.

- No lettering or seals: Good flags do not include writing of any kind or an organization’s seal or logo etc.; flags are symbols and words defeat that purpose. Lettering is difficult to read from a distance, hard to sew, difficult to read in smaller reproductions and not reversible;
- Be distinctive or be related: Do not duplicate other flags but use similarities to show connections. Never duplicate another flag or design something so similar it could be mistaken for another flag. If there is a direct connection between two bodies and you wish to represent that in a flag that should be accomplished through use of symbols, colours and shapes that recall common heritage, solidarity or connectedness.

*Additional information about North American Vexillological Association standards can be found in their booklet “Good Flag Bad Flag. How to Design a Great Flag,” which is posted on the MNO website.

- The PCMNO reserves the right to alter the flag designs chosen that go forward to MNO citizens for final selection;
- Citizens who submit designs must sign declarations agreeing to turn over all rights of their designs to the MNO, the MNO will have complete ownership of the design, including copyright, and will register the design as an MNO trademark;
- The deadline for submissions is December 31, 2013.

Rubicon Minerals Corporation

Rubicon Minerals Corporation is an advanced stage gold development company, focused on responsible and environmentally sustainable development of its Phoenix Gold Project in Red Lake, Ontario. The Phoenix Gold Project is located in northeastern Ontario approximately 20 kilometres north-west of the town site of Red Lake. The Project site is accessible by a combination of municipal roads and Rubicon maintained gravel road. Rubicon controls over 100 square miles of prime exploration property in the Red Lake gold district and conducting exploration since the late 1990’s. In 2008 it had a gold discovery on its Phoenix Property in East Bay. Since discovery Rubicon has focused on its exploration and development efforts on the Phoenix Gold Project and anticipates gold production by late 2014.

Since discovery the focus of work performed includes geophysical surveys, dewatering of historic underground workings, surface and underground diamond drilling and further underground development. Rubicon released a positive Preliminary Economic Assessment in 2011 with a high-grade resource of 0.5Moz at 14.5 g/t gold indicated and 2.3Moz at 17 g/t gold inferred. Rubicon plans to update Project economics in a new Preliminary Economic Assessment which will include an updated mineral resource estimate and incorporate completed optimization studies in late May to early June of this year.

The current focus of work at the Project is continued shaft sinking (currently at approximately 610 metres below surface) and mill construction. Infrastructure completed to date includes connection to Ontario hydro grid 44KV, shaft access with modern hoisting plant (2500 HP, 14’ diameter hoist), new extended headframe, all-weather road connecting to the town of Red Lake and a 44 man construction camp at site.

Rubicon is committed to the community in which it explores and develops its projects. Consultation with the Métis Nation of Ontario and First Nations is on-going and will continue for the life of the project. Rubicon signed a Letter of Intent with the Métis Nation of Ontario in January of 2012 and continues to build on the relationship with the citizens of Region One.
Métis ruling could benefit here

Métis President Gary Lipinski speaks about the Supreme Court of Canada’s decision on Manitoba Métis land rights.

Original article from Fort Frances Times

MÉTIS RIGHTS

Métis Voyageur
Summer 2013, Issue no. 76

As soon as we had word that it was a win, people just erupted with cheers. It’s quite an exciting moment to be there when this historic decision came down, to be part of it," Lipinski enthused.

"Those cheers were on behalf of the Métis people right across our homelands.

Now that the decision has been made, Lipinski said the next step will be a process where the government will need to negotiate compensation with the MMF.

It would come out in negotiations, so it’s not really fair to speculate at this point," Lipinski warned, noting negotiations will determine who the beneficiaries are and what the settlement will be.

"But without question, with 100 per cent certainty, people in this area and across a number of communities in Ontario and a number of provinces, would be able to trace their ancestry back to that time period," he noted.

However, Lipinski said what’s more important than individual compensation is the precedent set by this case.

"There are historic grievances for Métis people in Ontario, as well as in other parts of our homeland," he remarked, citing the MMF and the Métis Nation of Alberta were able to intervene at the Supreme Court of Canada.

"What has been missing at the federal government level is a process for dealing with historic Métis grievances," he continued.

"We have them similar to First Nations, but the difference is the First Nations have had a comprehensive land claim process set up for a number of decades, where they have a process for dealing with those grievances.

"That has not been available to the Métis people," Lipinski stressed.

"The federal government needs to establish a process for dealing with historic Métis grievances," he argued. "That would allow situations where promises were made to Métis people in Ontario, as well, to be begin to be addressed in that form.

"And the federal government has failed to live up to the honour of the Crown," he remarked.

Lipinski said it was exciting to be part of such a historical moment. "We knew [the ruling] was going to be released at 9:45 a.m., so when the phones were eagerly waiting by the clerk’s office to get the decision," he recalled.

"As soon as we had word that it was a win, people just erupted with cheers. It’s quite an exciting moment to be there when this historic decision came down, to be part of it..."

— President Lipinski

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Lipinski said it was taking near to 30 years to reach this decision.

"The Métis people have continued to raise the point with government that we have unresolved matters that need to be dealt with, but the government failed to deal with them or take them seriously," he charged, saying the highest court of the land now has recognized there are historical grievances for the Métis people.

"The Crown has failed to live up to the honour of the Crown," he remarked.

Lipinski said it was exciting to be part of such a historical moment. "We knew [the ruling] was going to be released at 9:45 a.m., so when the phones were eagerly waiting by the clerk’s office to get the decision," he recalled.

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— President Lipinski

AS CROSS THE HOMELAND

SASKATCHEWAN

Graham Kotowich
honoured by Inspire Awards

Saskatchewan Métis Graham Kotowich was recently recognized at the 2013 Inspire Awards Gala which was held on February 15 in Saskatoon. He received a $10,000 Inspire scholarship towards his career as a professional ballet dancer. Graham’s Métis lineage comes from his great-grandparents who were from Cumberland House. Thirteen other outstanding Indigenous Canadians were also recognized including three Métis from Alberta and Manitoba.

Source: Métis Nation-Saskatchewan

ALBERTA & BRITISH COLUMBIA

Métis Nation Regional Economic Development Engagement Session

Métis Nation citizens from British Columbia and Alberta gathered in Vancouver on March 18 with industry representatives at their second Métis Nation Regional Economic Development Engagement Session. This two-day engagement session was a crucial step towards solidifying the position of Métis businesses and entrepreneurs in the Canadian economic landscape.

Also during the session, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Métis Nation of Alberta and the Métis Nation of British Columbia was signed. It sets out a working relationship between the two Métis governments with respect to economic initiatives which they have in common.

Source: Métis National Council

ALBERTA

Province proposes new rules for Alberta’s Métis settlements

Alberta’s eight Métis settlements will face tougher financial reporting rules, salary caps for councillors and a new code of conduct under proposed changes to the laws that govern them.

Aboriginal Relations Minister Robin Campbell introduced the new accountability standards in the legislature as part of a bundle of amendments to the Métis Settlements Act.

Bill 19 comes one month after the

MANITOBA

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Ben Guidolin: Change maker

Métis Nation of British Columbia (MNBC) Lower Mainland Regional Youth Representative, Ben Guidolin is featured on the cover of the 2013 winter edition of Winds Of Change.

Ben is a strong advocate for Métis youth and has recently started the only active American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) chapter in Canada at the University of British Columbia.

Ben has always been interested in the encouragement and retention of indigenous students in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields.

Source: Métis Nation of British Columbia

MACDONALD

Alberta Hydro
settles longstanding claim with Métis trappers

Métis trappers who harvested fur in the summer of 1952 was recently recognized at the 2013 Inspire Awards Gala which was held on February 15 in Saskatoon. He received a $10,000 Inspire scholarship towards his career as a professional ballet dancer. Graham’s Métis lineage comes from his great-grandparents who were from Cumberland House. Thirteen other outstanding Indigenous Canadians were also recognized including three Métis from Alberta and Manitoba.

Source: The Edmonton Journal

Alberta Hydro set to pay $8.5 million to settle longstanding claim with Métis who harvested fur

Redford government and the Métis Settlements General Council signed a long-term agreement that will direct $8.5 million in social funding to the settlements over the next 10 years.

Source: The Edmonton Journal

Métis Festival

Feature film to honour Cuthbert Grant

Winnipeg’s Sandra Honsky, whose great-great-great-grandfather was Métis leader Cuthbert Grant, will be executive producing a feature film this summer on Grant entitled Warden of the Plains. Key actors being considered for the film include Taylor Launter (from Twilight) as a young Cuthbert Grant and Angus MacFadyen (from Braveheart) as an older Cuthbert Grant. Mada Mikulason (from Walkalla Reimagined) is also interested.

Source: Métis Nation-Saskatchewan

Manitoba Hydro
settles longstanding claim with Métis trappers

Métis trappers who harvested fur in the Summerberry marsh will soon be compensated for the flooding caused by Manitoba Hydro and the Grand Rapids hydroelectric dam. Through the 1940s and the 1950s, trappers from throughout the area, including Grand Rapids, Mooselake, Cameron, Duls Bay, Camperville and other locations, trapped for bearing animals in the Summerberry. Construction for the generating station in Grand Rapids started in 1960 and was completed in 1968.

Source: Manitoba Métis Federation
Challenging Métis youth to get involved

A message from PCMNO Post-secondary Representative Jennifer Henry

As the one-year mark arrives since I have been post-secondary representative on the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO), I would like to reflect on the year as well as share some of the many valuable lessons I have learned. Over the past twelve months I have met many inspiring leaders within the Métis Nation. I have also strengthened my bond with the youth of our Nation and learned an abundant amount of information on numerous topics. I find it hard to believe a year has already flown by.

When I was elected onto the PCMNO, I was 18 years old and just finishing my first year of university. Although I have been an active citizen of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) since I was 11 years old, I felt slightly nervous after being elected onto the provisional council at a young age. Prior to the election, I had never been elected by the citizens of the MNO for a position. Winning came a huge sense of pride, responsibility and determination to ensure I was fulfilling the duties and goals that the citizens wanted to be achieved.

As any newly elected person on a council, especially being a youth, I began to feel overwhelmed with all of the new information I was learning. Also, sitting around the table with leaders who have been involved in the MNO longer than I have been alive is quite eye opening! Although the first PCMNO meeting was filled with information that was slightly overwhelming at the time, this is where my first valuable lesson comes in.

I have learned over the past year that despite how intimidating a new experience can be, you are never too young to get involved. As youth, we need to ensure our voices are being heard. I understand how easy it can be to feel apprehensive as a youth to get involved in our community and attend MNO council meetings, but you must take that first step. It is extremely important for you as youth to get involved because we need to learn where our Nation has grown from, where our Nation is currently and where our Nation is headed in the future.

The MNO will do anything to encourage youth to emerge as the next generation of leaders. I can ensure you that your local councils will be extremely supportive and understanding that this may potentially be all new information for you. The best way to start getting involved is to simply attend meetings, ask questions and begin to learn as early as you can. Your local MNO councils are there to educate, support and help you in anyway possible.

Remember, it is never too late or too early to engage yourself with the MNO and your culture. Please take advantage of the endless possibilities the MNO has waiting for you."

I challenge all MNO community councils to try and have at least two new youth attend a future council meeting. I also challenge all Métis youth to take the initiative and attend your next local community council meeting. If we continue to get our youth involved, our Nation will only grow stronger.

The second lesson I have learned over the past year stems from having the privilege of meeting Senator Earl Scofield at the 2012 Annual General Assembly (AGA) in Sault Ste. Marie. Although I met Senator Earl in August and he passed away in November, I can truly say he became a dear friend of mine.

He would tell me stories of his past fighting in World War II, as well as share his wisdom and passion towards the Métis Nation, a passion that he always carried with him. As I received the shocking news that we had suddenly lost Senator Earl, I realized that not only did we lose a beautiful friend, elder, Senator and veteran, but we also lost a wealth of knowledge and leadership.

In the past few months we have lost an unfortunate number of Métis leaders within the MNO, as well as on a national level. However, we still have many strong, vibrant leaders who are looking to pass on their knowledge and experience. A prime example of a leader we still have in the Métis Nation is who is an overflowing wealth of knowledge is Mr. John Morrisseau, the past President of the Manitoba Métis Federation from 1976 to 1983 and also one of the men who spearheaded the recent Manitoba Métis Federation Supreme Court of Canada case. I had the honour of meeting Mr. Morrisseau twice in March at a residential school forum in Ottawa, as well as at the Métis National Council’s 2013 AGA in Vancouver. I was inspired every time he gave a speech as I continued to learn about his commitment and dedication to the Métis Nation.

Reflecting back on the stories told by Senator Earl and Mr. Morrisseau, this is evidently another reason that as youth we must become involved now. Our elders and leaders will not be here guiding us forever. We must learn their stories, their hardships and their accomplishments to realize how far we have come as a Nation, and how much further we still have to go. It is our responsibility to carry on the work our ancestors have been doing since the days of Louis Riel. We must keep the Métis Nation strong, vibrant and headed in the right direction.

If any youth are interested in learning on how they can get involved with the MNO, please email me at jenniferhenry28@uwentu.ca and I will support you along your journey I will point you in the right direction and connect you to other youth in your area to help create a network close to home. If you would rather meet in person, please attend the 2013 AGA being held in Ottawa. I will definitely be there and hope to be able to connect with many of you on a face-to-face basis. Also, you can join the Facebook group called, “Youth of the Métis Nation”, facebook.com/groups/youthofthemetisnation/ where we are approaching almost 200 youth members across Canada who will also support you. In this group youth share opportunities for involvement, photos of events they have attended, and success stories within their communities.

Another person who is more than willing to support you on your journey is Mitch Case. Mitch is the Youth Representative on the PCMNO. He will connect you with the Youth Representative from your region who will also be an important area of support. Mitch’s email is mitch.case@hotmail.com if you would like to contact him. He will also be attending the 2013 AGA.

Remember, it is never too late or too early to engage yourself with the MNO and your culture. Please take advantage of the endless possibilities the MNO has waiting for you. Begin volunteering today and watch how the MNO will give you confidence, education and support to ensure you create a successful future for yourself, on whichever path you choose.

Researching Métis involvement in the War of 1812

Submitted By Ann Trudel and David Barrett of the MNO Navigating Employment Pathways Project in Sault Ste. Marie

The bicentennial of the War of 1812 has provided an impetus for learning more about Métis involvement in the war. Last year at the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Annual General Assembly held in Sault Ste. Marie, photos of events they will be attending the 2013 AGA. If you would like to contact him. He will also be attending the 2013 AGA. Remember, it is never too late or too early to engage yourself with the MNO and your culture. Please take advantage of the endless possibilities the MNO has waiting for you. Begin volunteering today and watch how the MNO will give you confidence, education and support to ensure you create a successful future for yourself, on whichever path you choose.
MNO President views Ontario budget positively

Points to value of MNO-Ontario Framework Agreement

(Ottawa-May 3, 2013) The 2013 Ontario budget demonstrates that the Ontario government is continuing its commitment to working together with Aboriginal peoples, including Metis, to ensure meaningful participation in decision-making and partnerships that will improve social and economic opportunities.

“We see the budget as an on-going example of how the government is living up to the MNO-Ontario agenda forward. The measures outlined show that Ontario (MNO) President Lipinski, MNO-Ontario is living up to the example of how the government provides an additional five million dollars annually to improve Aboriginal students’ achievement, ” stated President Lipinski, “this builds on the significant programming the government already has in place for Aboriginal learners.”

President Lipinski was also pleased to see the government’s commitment in the budget to work on developing a multi-year Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy. “The MNO is one of the government’s Aboriginal partners in this endeavor. The proposed strategy will focus on building community-driven, integrated and culturally appropriate supports to help Aboriginal children and young people grow up healthy and become all they can be,” explained President Lipinski.

The budget also saw the government renew its commitment to the Aboriginal Loan Guarantee Program (ALGP), which supports Aboriginal participation in the energy sector. President Lipinski was also pleased with the emphasis on improving labour market participation and building a highly skilled workforce. President Lipinski pointed out: “Metis constitute one third of the Aboriginal population in the province and we represent a young and growing demographic. Accordingly, measure in this area whether for the Aboriginal people specifically or the general population will benefit Metis.”

Nominations for the 2013 Suzanne Rochon-Burnett Volunteer of the Year Award close on July 31st, 2013

The Suzanne Rochon-Burnett VOLUNTEER of the YEAR AWARD 2013

In 2012 the Metis Nation of Ontario (MNO) presented the Suzanne Rochon-Burnett Volunteer of the Year Award to Senators Marlene Greenwood and Olvive Bouquet-Tiedema. These two worthy recipients each have dedicated thousands of hours to the betterment of their communities, the advancement of Metis rights and the preservation and promotion of Metis culture and heritage.

Senator Marlene Greenwood has been volunteering and devoting her time, knowledge and wisdom to the MNO and the MNO North Bay Council since their inception. She is present at every Council meeting and event. She is soft-spoken with a big heart and is loved by all who know her. She is known for her honesty, authenticity, charity and devotion to moving the MNO agenda forward.

Senator Olvive Bouquet-Tiedema was instrumental in the founding of three MNO Community Councils, the MNO Toronto-York, Oshawa-Durham and Credit River Metis Councils. In recognition of her dedication and contributions to preserving Metis culture, the MNO Oshawa-Durham Council named their dance troupe the Olvive Bouquet Metis Dancers. Senator Bouquet-Tiedema’s enthusiasm and work for her Metis culture knows no bounds.

OBJECTIVE: The objective of the Suzanne Rochon-Burnett Volunteer of the Year Award is to recognize individuals who contribute as a volunteer to the MNO year round and have done so for a number of years. Each year a volunteer meeting the criteria is named as the recipient of the Suzanne Rochon-Burnett Volunteer of the Year by a selection committee of the MNO.

PROCESS: Any MNO citizen can nominate a volunteer for the award by completing a nomination form and sending it to:

Suzanne-Rochon Volunteer of the Year
Hunter Courchene Consulting Group 1065 Boulevard de la Carriere Gatineau, QC J8Y 4V5

The deadline for nominations is July 31st, 2013. Nomination forms are available on the MNO website in the AGA section.

CRITERIA: The individuals nominated must exemplify the kind of volunteer contribution demonstrated by Suzanne Rochon-Burnett. They will have given generously of their time and effort, are strong advocates of the Metis Nation and their record of selfless commitment has been firmly established. They are seen as caring, giving individuals that others look up to and admire. The candidates will have provided an extended period of service as a volunteer.

Much has been accomplished since the MNO’s inception 20 years ago. We have built a strong political voice of our people. We owe much of this vision to the people of the Metis Reserve of Belcourt and current MNO President Gary Lipinski. The torch has been passed on to President Lipinski and the fire of the torch burns brightly in the hearts of all Ontario Metis. We are honoured and blessed for past and present members of the MNO including the executive team, the Provisional Council, the community councils and of course the volunteers and citizens. All have never lost sight of the Metis dream of not only walking in the footsteps of the past, but making our own tracks and paths with full knowledge of “who we are and where we come from. This is our homeland…”

This year we gather together in Ottawa much more secure of ourselves, more seasoned and ready to continue to push on. I would like to welcome everyone to Ottawa and to the 20th anniversary of the Metis Nation of Ontario.
MNO takes leading role in responsible gambling working group

Collective approach to problem gambling prevention

Last spring, the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care selected the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) to take on the role of lead coordinator of the Ontario Aboriginal Responsible Gambling Program (OARGP) working group. MNO was the successful candidate due to their administrative capacity, experience in working with Aboriginal partners and responsiveness to the needs of the Ministry.

From March 26–28, the MNO hosted the first provincial meeting of the OARGP since being selected lead coordinator.

The OARGP has been in place for a number of years as a place to exchange knowledge and share best practices, resources and tools in regards to responsible gambling. Including the MNO, the members of this working group consist of eight organisations: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), Ontario Native Women’s Association (ONWA), Independent First Nations (IFN), Kenora Chiefs (KC), Association Iroquois and Allied Indians (AIA), Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC) and the Union of Ontario Indians (UOI).

“We are taking a collective approach to problem gambling prevention. Creating this collaboration with other Aboriginal organizations addressing similar issues and challenges allows us to share information and determine best practices,” said MNO Director of Healing and Wellness Wenda Watteyne. “We look forward to strengthening our partnerships and seeing that the OARGP succeeds.”

This was the first meeting since February 2011 and it proved to be a success. The working group reviewed the mission statement and the objectives of the group and set forward a plan for the future.

The agreed upon mission statement is: “A comprehensive First Nation, Métis and Inuit culture based problem gambling prevention program that engages partners in developing a collaborative approach to address the risks associated with problem gambling.”

Re-branding initiatives were also discussed. The MNO will take the lead on the re-branding of the group. Focusing on prevention, the re-branding initiative is reflective of the current and changing environment of Ontario gaming regulations and demand.

Over the next fiscal year the MNO will continue bringing the working group together in order to develop common communications tools and oversee the program evaluation.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 2013.

The MNO is very honoured to have been selected by the Ministry to play the coordinating role and is very pleased with the outcome of this first meeting.

MNO President testifies at East West Tie Transmission hearing

Urges Energy Board to uphold Ontario policies on Métis inclusion

On May 2, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) President Gary Lipinski testified before the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) in the long designations process to a transmitter developer to develop the East West Tie (EWT) Transmission Project in northern Ontario.

President Lipinski was joined by the presidents of the MNO Thunder Bay Métis Council, the MNO Spiritual North Shore Métis Council and the MNO Greenstone Métis Council – Jean Carcamand, Trem Desaulnier and William Gordon. As well, Cam Burgess, the elected MNO Regional Councillor and Ken Simard, the Commander of the Hunt, attended to show support.

The EWT project is a proposed double circuit transmission line that would cross the traditional territory of the MNO in order to advance the aboriginal partnership and participation commitments in Ontario’s Long Term Energy Plan (LTEP) over the last several years. President Lipinski urged the OEB to designate a transmitter that would ensure Ontario’s policy commitments made to all Aboriginal communities – First Nations and Métis – will be advanced.

“This Board cannot be passive or indifferent in relation to these policies. It must embrace and fulfill its important role in the same way the Minister of Energy, the Ontario Power Authority and the Ontario Government has with respect to advancing Aboriginal partnerships,” testified Lipinski.

President Lipinski added, “This Board must get it ‘right’ in this designation, by ensuring the commitments of the LTEP are fulfilled. If not, a negative and dangerous precedent will be set. These policies, if ignored, will become ‘empty promises’ for the Métis as well as other Aboriginal communities. This will breed disillusionment, mistrust and delays with respect to new transmission.”

At the hearing, President Lipinski expressed concerns about some prospective transmitters that completely excluded the potential of Métis partnership. The MNO also highlighted the positive model put forth by some proposed transmitters who have committed to set aside up to 79 per cent equity ownership for Aboriginal communities, inclusive, of both First Nations and Métis.

President Lipinski concluded, “We need to recognize that no matter what happens, First Nations, Métis communities and other communities need to work together. We need this project and a designated transmitter that brings us closer together – not further apart. For the Métis community, we want this project to ultimately be a symbol of the results that come from the respectful and collaborative Ontario Government policies that have been developed to encourage Aboriginal participation in the new green energy economy.”

A copy of President Lipinski’s presentation is available at the MNO website: www.metisnation.org

For more information on the EWT project and the designation process visit: www.ontarioenergyboard.ca

Coming together for the advancement of Métis women

WSMNO hold general meeting

On March 28, The Women’s Secretariat of the Métis Nation of Ontario (WSMNO) held a general meeting in Toronto to discuss the roles and responsibility of the Women’s Representatives within community councils.

During the meeting, the group discussed the MNO policy document on violence against Métis women, prioritized action items and created a one-year plan.

“We are pleased to have the opportunity at the tail end of our training to seek input from the women to plan our direction in the coming year,” said MNO Vice-chair Sharon McBride. “Being part of program input provides us with a renewed sense of pride as our role as Métis women in our communities.”

The WSMNO is comprised of Métis women from Ontario who are committed to promoting women’s issues and advocating on their behalf within the MNO community. The WSMNO also advises the PCMNO on matters pertaining to women and works with community councils, Aboriginal boards, government bodies and women’s groups to assist Métis people with issues of concern specific to women. This work includes policy development and review, coordination, consultation and education. The main goal of the WSMNO is to encourage the full participation of all women within the MNO in helping to build a strong and healthy nation.
Information session attracts potential citizens

Submitted by Pauline Saulnier, PCMNO Councillor, Region 7

Metis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Senator Verna Porter recently invited Lafontaine francophone citizens to an information session on what the MNO is all about. The event was arranged in collaboration with MNO staff member Joanne Paren, MNO Georgian Bay Métis Council Chair David Ducombe and the Board of Villagers (Manse) at Villages in Lafontaine on March 20. The representatives provided a presentation on Métis culture and heritage, the MNO and its activities, the benefits of joining the MNO and how to become a citizen.

The event was a great success, approximately 75 people were in attendance and many took home MNO citizenship applications.

MNO Credit River Métis Council hosts annual meeting

By Richard Cuddy, President, MNO Credit River Métis Council

In April 14, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Credit River Métis Council hosted their second Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Mr. Neville and Jean-Marc Maheu were also formally introduced. Honoured guests Sharon McBride, MNO Viceray and Anina Tucker, Provisional Council of the MNO (PCMNO) Councillor for Region Eight spoke to the citizens on behalf of the MNO. They provided important information, announcements and comments.

The Council President’s report to the citizens consisted of a summary of achievements such as:• Hosting an Election Candidates Platform Panel for candidates running in the MNO Provincial Election. • Initiating a Métis student tutoring program. The Council has also initiated and is continuing to establish relationships with: • The Mississauga Halton Local Integrated Health Network (MH LHIN). • The Region of Peel. • Conservation Halton and Credit Valley Conservation. • The Peel Children’s Aid Society (PCAS). • The Peel Art Gallery Museum and Archives (PAMM). • Ontario Power Generation (OPG). • The City of Brampton. • The Mississauga Halton Local Integrated Health Network (MH LHIN). • The Region of Peel. • Conservation Halton and Credit Valley Conservation. • The Peel Children’s Aid Society (PCAS). • The Peel Art Gallery Museum and Archives (PAMM). • Ontario Power Generation (OPG).

The meeting ended with Council President Cuddy’s reports on Harvinston and Community Events and Lands and Resources completed the agenda. Senator Bergie provided the closing prayer. The Council was pleased to receive valuable input from the citizens during and after the meeting and looks forward to future opportunities. The impact of citizens is crucial for Council operations as indicated in the MNO Community Council Handbook. A citizen is part of a crew of a ship without which the ship would not be able to sail on its own. The captain and officers steer the ship in the direction that the crew wants to go. Citizens are the most important part of the Community Council. The Council exists in order to meet the needs of its citizens. Citizens are responsible for electing their local leadership. The citizen attends meetings and provides general direction as well as volunteers for committees and activities. They support Council, other citizens and work towards the spirit of the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose.

Maple syrup celebration

Submitted by Larry J. Ferris, MNO Georgian Bay Métis Council

It’s that time of year again. The sun is shining, the birds are chirping and the trees are flowing. What better way to celebrate than to call council representative Talitha Tolles to the Penetang? That’s exactly what the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Georgian Bay Métis Council did. On March 18, MNO staff hosted roughly 23 people for a dinner of pancakes, maple syrup, sausage and some tasty desserts.

The evening also featured music by the world famous Georgian Bay Métis Drummers and stories told by Ken Frazer and Mary Mackie.

Maple syrup was also formally introduced. Honoured guests Sharon McBride, MNO Viceray and Anina Tucker, Provisional Council of the MNO (PCMNO) Councillor for Region Eight spoke to the citizens on behalf of the MNO. They provided important information, announcements and comments.
Crafting a beat
MNO Moon River Métis Council holds a drum making workshop

By Rose LePage,
MNO Moon River Métis Council Youth Representative

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizens who are part of the MNO Moon River Métis Council gathered at the Parry Sound Friendship Centre this winter to learn the craft of handmade drums.

Local Wausuaksing First Nation singer and drummer, Jodi Baker, guided the group of fifteen citizens and their families to create their own handmade hand drums. At 93 years of age, the eldest member of the MNO Moon River Métis Council, Pete Grisdale also participated in the activity. The group was honoured to have him teach them how to create a knot that was very beneficial in putting the drums together. The hand drum making activity began with choosing the round and hides that spoke to each participant personally. They laboured to stretch the hides and when someone was in need there was always nearby help. With some do-overs and a little puzzlement, they all managed to weave their long thin strip of hide and sinew to hold it all in place. The hand drums where to be hung up at the homes of the participants while they waited for it to speak to them.

Baker was delightful and kept all the participants entertained with her honesty and humour. She was genuine about the process and gave wisdom with her presence. She instructed the group that the first hand drum made should be given away as a gift and that they would know when the time is right.

It was a great day spent building identity and making connections between and amongst council members and citizens.

The MNO Moon River Métis Council hopes to hold more hand drum making events in the near future.

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MNO Council training
MNO North Bay, Mattawa & Windsor Métis Councils participate in Governance and Finance training

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 Lefebvre, the MNO’s Consultation and Community Relation Coordinators.

During the weekend of April 6-7, the course was offered to the MNO North Bay Métis Council and MNO Mattawa Métis Council in North Bay. The MNO Windsor-Essex Métis Council participated in the training from March 23-24 in Windsor. Courses have also been available in: Ottawa, Atikokan, Sudbury, Niagara, Peterborough, Grand River, Credit River, Milton, Windsor, Toronto and Georgian Bay.

The two-day training course explains the role of community councils as the MNO’s 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.
Métis Fiddler Quartet headline event in Haliburton

By Tracey Dale, MNO Community Wellness Coordinator
Tammy Hoover, MNO Healthy Babies Healthy Children Coordinator

The Northern Lights Pavilion in Haliburton was the place to be on April 10 as the Métis Fiddler Quartet performed to an audience of almost 200 eager listeners.

The quartet was invited by J. Douglas Hodgson Elementary School principal Elaine Fournier to be part of the school’s Celebration of Métis, First Nations and Inuit Culture event. Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) staff, Tracey Dale and Tammy Hoover, helped organize the event.

The Quartet, made up of siblings, Alyssa, Conlin, Nicholas and Danton Delbaere-Sawchuck, has performed in large venues including 2010 Vancouver Olympics, National Aboriginal Achievement Awards and the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian.

To kick off the school’s celebration event the Métis Fiddler Quartet performed a free interactive concert for a community family music night. The crowd grew in numbers as the Quartet completed their final sound check before opening the doors to community members and MNO citizens from near and far.

Each member of the Métis Fiddler Quartet proudly wore their Métis sash as they entertained the crowd. It was for the audience to hold as they clapped their hands and stomped their feet to this energetic fiddling group. Some audience members stood up in front of their seats and started jigging, encouraged the entire audience to join them in singing and presented Tallon Hoover as he proudly stood by the stage looking at his very own set of wooden spoons.

Just as brilliant as the evening before, the Métis Fiddler Quartet entertained 300 students in their school gymnasium to kick start their day of participating in Aboriginal arts and learning about the Métis culture. After the performance the students engaged in one of ten all-day workshops which focused on Aboriginal arts. The workshops included: visual arts, drumming, whistle making, thunder drums, canvas dot painting, legends and turtle canvas paintings, basket weaving, token stone with pouch and film making.

Students were able to pick a workshop that best suited their creative side and at the end of the day they displayed their art for everyone to admire. In the final closing the students that were involved in a performance based arts project were able to present their creations by performing as a group.

After six months of organizational gatherings with Elaine Fournier Principal of J.D. Hodgson Elementary School and Tammy Hoover and Tracey Dale, MNO staff from the Bancroft office, the event was a huge success in gving students a cultural experience like no other. Partnering at the event was Highland Shores Children’s Aid Society staff Ashley Nieman and Ben Wadsworth, Ontario Early Years Centre staff Robin Simpson, MNO staff Rose Boyle and community members including Lyn and Bill Pasiowsky, Laurie Calder and Ada Tinnie. A special thanks to Kees Douglas, a professor at the Ontario College of Art (OCAD), who traveled from Toronto to teach filmmaking to the students.

Harvest Day Celebration

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) North Bay Métis Council will be hosting a Harvest Day Celebration

September 7, 2013 from 1pm to 7pm
LOCATION WILL BE DETERMINED AT A LATER DATE

• Fish Fry Dinner
• Games, Artifact Display, Vendors and More!

For vendors inquiries and event information please visit the northbaymetisouncil.ca website or call Marc Laurin at: 705-495-0196
Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizens from the MNO Sunset Country Métis Council were involved in the creation of the recent exhibit at the Fort Frances Museum, which showcases Métis people and culture. The exhibit entitled, “Our Local Métis Story,” highlights the history of the Métis in the Fort Frances area, as well as, MNO President Gary Lipinski’s contributions to the Métis Nation. The official opening of the exhibit took place on April 22. In attendance were many prominent Métis citizens including President Lipinski and Métis rights lawyer Jason Madden. MNO’s Chief Operations Officer Doug Wilson and Fort Frances Mayor Roy Avis were also in attendance. The evening began with a welcome by Museum Curator Sherry George who spoke of the connections to local history and the alliances that were a direct result of the fur trade. She went on to explain how Fort Frances grew out of a Métis community and how Métis embody the history of the region. She reflected on the advancement of the Métis and how all people can now enjoy their lively music and dance, their fabulous bead work and their continued contribution to the Fort Frances area. Mayor Avis spoke briefly on how he learned the Métis redefined the history Canada and thanked President Lipinski for all his hard work and contributions. President Lipinski thanked all attendees and those responsible for bringing the exhibit together. “This really is our story both historical and contemporary,” he said. He also spoke about the history of Métis in Fort Frances, his home town, and how the region grew out of the Métis fur trade. Were winning more often in court and that the Federal Court of Appeal will be held in September and that the Treaties in Ontario and the West must be addressed. Madden also spoke to an Adhesion to Treaty #2 that stated “half breeds” (Métis) were included. He said they will breathe life into those promises and that the trail of broken promises must be understood and fulfilled. He went on to say the exhibit was important and relevant and this community keeps getting recognized in the courts because of the Adhesion. The exhibit is a joint venture combining the efforts of several organizations: Museum curator Sherry George took a moment to recognize the committee who worked over a year and a half to put together the exhibit. Committee members included: Wanda Botsford, Anna-Marie Armstrong, Bob and Erma Armit, Dylinda & John George and Gerry Guimond of the MNO Sunset Country Métis Council, Wendy Orchard of the Rainy River District School Board, Michelle Tymkyn of the Northwest Catholic School Board, Smokey and Ginny Brysere and Glen Jourdain of Coatchiching First Nation, Art Hunter of Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung and Mev Ahrens, local author and historian. The exhibit will remain open until the end of this school year so the schools can bring students to study the history of the area. Information from: Marlene Deschamps of the West End Weekly and Diane Hult of the Fort Frances Times. With contributions from Wanda Botsford of the MNO Sunset County Métis Council. The original articles can be viewed at: http://www.westendweekly.ca/pdf%20wew%20editions/april_24_2013.pdf and http://www.fftimes.com/node/258980

MNO Credit River Métis Council supports Region of Peel Diversity & Inclusion Charter

By Richard Cuddy, President, MNO Credit River Métis Council

On April 18, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Credit River Métis Council President Richard Cuddy and Senator Ray Berge attended the launch of the Region of Peel’s Diversity and Inclusion Charter. The Charter is the first regional initiative “to foster inclusiveness and equity” in the province of Ontario. Although the Charter isn’t a legal document, the Charter is a living document that supports the implementation of existing national and provincial legislation.” The Region of Peel, comprising of Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga, is amongst the most diverse, fast growing and rapidly changing regions in Canada. This diversity can create both challenges and opportunities. The Charter’s goal is to ensure the full inclusion of all who live, work and play in Peel. Senator Berge provided the opening prayer and blessing for the launch. Council President Cuddy was one of ten dignitaries speaking on behalf of their communities, organizations or governments. His speech included, “On may icw, we are here, the Métis have a robust, vibrant community in Peel that is rich in tradition, culture and heritage.” The MNO Credit River Métis Council is pleased and proud to endorse the Charter. I am confident the Charter will influence the residents, communities, organizations and governments in Peel to continue to strengthen our ties. Together our accomplishments can be limitless and inspire the generations to come.” Other speakers included: Chisanga Pata-Chelwe, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration; Marilyn Morison, Mayor, Town of Caledon, Linda Jeffrey, Minister, Municipal Affairs and Housing; Jennifer Evans, Chief of Police, Peel Regional Police; Matthew Andersson, President and CEO, William Osler Health System; Tony Pontes, Director of Education, Peel District School Board; Shelley White, President and CEO, United Way of Peel Region; Sajedeh Zahraei, Community Engagement Lead, CAMH and Smart Keefer, Director and Curator, Art Gallery of Mississauga. By endorsing the Charter, the MNO Credit River Métis Council is demonstrating the desire to work cooperatively with residents, communities, organizations and governments in Peel. The Council seeks to create change and endeavours to achieve respect and recognition for Métis rights, culture, language and identity, not only in Peel but across the Nation.


Our Local Métis Story

Métis Voyageur Summer 2013, Issue no. 76

MNO President Lipinski with Métis rights lawyer Jason Madden and Fort Frances Mayor Roy Avis at the grand opening of the “Our Local Métis Story” exhibit.

MNO Credit River Métis Council President Richard Cuddy speaking at the Region of Peel Diversity and Inclusion Charter launch.
Three Councils learn the art of loom beading

Submitted by Cora Bunn, President, MNO Grand River Métis Council

On April 27, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Grand River Métis Council held a loom beading workshop in Guelph. Council Secretary/Treasurer Barbra Laird taught over 20 participants how to bead on a loom. Citizens and friends from the MNO Credit River and MNO Hamilton-Wentworth Councils also participated. Some beaders were quite quick to pick up the skill, while others enjoyed visiting with friends and doing a bit of beading.

The MNO Grand River Métis Council will be holding a follow-up workshop in May in order to continue the beading workshop. Many thanks to Barbra Laird for hosting a wonderful workshop.

Some fun in Georgian Bay

Submitted by Pauline Saulnier, PCDMNO Region 7 Councillor

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Georgian Bay Métis Council showed off some Métis culture and spirit by riding through the community on their Métis themed float in the Penetanguishene Winterama Parade on February 15. Fun was had by all and the council won third place for best float.

The MNO Georgian Bay Métis Council also recently held their annual general meeting, with some St. Patrick’s Day cheer, on March 17 at Brian Orser Hall in Penetanguishene.

Third annual Fergus Aboriginal Heritage Festival

By Cora Bunn, President, MNO Grand River Métis Council

The third annual Aboriginal Heritage Festival in Fergus was held April 19-20, at the Wellington County Museum and Archives. The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Grand River Métis Council again played a prominent role in the event, with two council members on the organizing committee and a number of Métis workshops.

The MNO Grand River Métis Council’s display table was a very popular destination for many attendees due to the display of the furs and traps. Visitors loved trying on raccoon and skunk skin hats and having their picture taken with them on. The Council explained smudging, hand drums, medicine pouches and the significance of the historical relationship the Métis had with the Hudson Bay Company. The Métis flag was proudly displayed both days.

During the festival, an “Education Day” was held for students. Schools came from as far as Aurora (north of Toronto) to experience the workshops featuring facilitators from each of the three Aboriginal peoples.

Métis storyteller Virginia Barter, MNO Grand River Métis Council’s banner was Shannen Koostachin (posthumous), received by her sister Seren, the MNO Grand River Métis Council’s banner was Shannen Koostachin (posthumous), received by her sister Seren Koostachin. The movie Shannen’s Dream tells of her advocating for safe and comfortable schools on reserves. In addition to the Youth Heritage Award, the MNO Grand River Métis Council presented her with a Métis sash.

The second award, the Aboriginal Heritage Award, was presented to Atawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence who was the keynote speaker. Chief Spence’s attendance at the two-day festival significantly raised the profile of the event, including major media presence. CTV conducted an interview with the MNO Grand River Métis Council’s banner as the backdrop.

The festival was open to the public and there was great support from the community. In total, 687 people attended the event. Admission was by donation, with the proceeds of $1153.00 being donated to Southern Ontario Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative (SOADI).

Senator Carol Levis was asked to offer a prayer at the opening of Saturday’s ceremonies, which included a big drum, hand drumming by the Good Hearted Singers, Inuit drumming, and dancers.

Participation in the festival was a great opportunity for the MNO to raise the profile of the Métis in the community and to share music, history and culture with the people of Wellington County. The MNO looks forward to many more years of this important Aboriginal festival.
MNO Region Eight tours Pickering nuclear station

By Beth Honsberger
MNO Consultation Intake Clerk

On Saturday April 6, members of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Region Eight Consultation Committee participated in an information exchange with Ontario Power Generation (OPG) and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) concerning the renewal of the Pickering Nuclear Operating License.

Representatives from OPG and the CNSC responded to questions concerning the renewal of the Pickering Reactor Operating License. Thank you to all MNO citizens who participated and the representatives from OPG and the CNSC. The MNO is looking forward to future engagement with Ontario Power Generation regarding the Pickering Nuclear Operating License.

A community gathering was held which brought together local citizens from Region Eight, as well as the MNO Peterborough and District Wapiti Métis Council, to participate in meaningful discussions with OPG regarding the performance of the Pickering Nuclear site and their fish monitoring and diversion measures. An overview of operations at the Pickering site was also provided. After the engagement session, attendees provided their feedback to be submitted to the CNSC regarding the renewal of the Pickering Reactor Operating License.


MNO Region One tour sites around region

Métis Nation of Ontario Consultation Committees have been busy touring different locations as part of our inherent right to self-government and the Duty to Consult.

Recently the Region One Consultation Committee toured the Ariskan Ontario Power Generation (OPG) plant to view the conversion that was set to take place. On a separate occasion, the committee was also given a tour by Goldcorp Inc. of the wetlands at the Red Lake Gold Mine.

The MNO looks forward to future engagement with Ontario Power Generation and Goldcorp Inc.

Region Nine tours Guelph solar plant

Submitted by Donald Crawford
MNO Grand River Métis Council

On March 14, a group of 14 citizens from the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Region 9 Consultation Committee, along with MNO staff member James Wagner, were invited to tour the Canadian Solar manufacturing facility in Guelph. The group was met by the Engineering Manager Ady Vyas and the General Manager Rick Williams.

Founded in 2001, Canadian Solar Inc. currently employs over 8,000 people worldwide with approximately 300 employed at the Guelph, Ontario plant. The company provides turnkey solar solutions for residential, commercial and solar farm markets.

During the tour, attendees were able to see how a solar panel is constructed using highly sophisticated robotic processes from start to finish. The tour was enlightening and educational as the group was shown and taught how the panels are constructed and how each step in the manufacturing process is scrutinized to the highest standards to ensure a quality product.

The plant was on down time during the tour, which enabled the group to see the processes up close. An open invitation to return at a later date to see the plant in full operations was extended.

MNO Region One Consultation Committee touring Red Lake Gold Mine wetlands. (left to right) David Gelderland of Goldcorp, Fred Kelly of Goldcorp, Joel Henley, PCMNO Region One Councilor Theresa Sterlund, Val Pelupes, Joe Daze, SNC Lavlin representative and President Marlene Davidson of the MNO Arikwan and Area Métis Council.
Nuclear Waste Management Organization

Adaptive Phased Management project update

By Melanie Hamilton,
MNO Nuclear Waste Management Liaison Coordinator

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) was established in 2002 in accordance with federal legislation, the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act (2002), to study, recommend and implement an approach for the long-term management of used nuclear fuel in Canada. Used nuclear fuel is presently safely stored on an interim basis at licensed facilities at nuclear reactor sites operated by Ontario Power Generation Inc., Hydro-Québec and New Brunswick Power Corporation. In 2005, the NWMO recommended that Canada proceed in a deliberate and collaborative way to contain and isolate the used fuel in a manner that safeguards people and respects the environment, now and in the future. In 2007, the Government of Canada selected the NWMO’s recommendation, Adaptive Phased Management (APM), as Canada’s approach for the long-term management of used fuel. This approach includes the development of a deep geological repository constructed in a suitable rock formation with ongoing monitoring and potential for retrievability over an extended period of time. In May 2010, the NWMO published the site selection process for the used fuel repository, 18 of which are located in Ontario. They are: Ear Falls, Ignace, Nipigon, Schreiber, Neechauwinet, Neecheauwinet, North Shore, Blind River, Elliot Lake, North Shore, Spanish, Saugeen, Owen Sound, Terrace Bay and Sudbury. To meet with the respective regional consultation committees and to deliver an update on their plans for the long-term management of Canada’s used nuclear fuel during a community gathering. Over 187 Métis citizens attended these community information sessions and although first impressions were positive, citizens requested additional information regarding the geology studies, transportation considerations, and expressed concerns about the land mass needed for the project and how this would restrict harvesting and impacts on future generations. Citizens also stressed the vital importance of familiarizing the community and its neighbours with the NWMO APM project. In all cases, citizens desire future opportunities to become informed and to promote youth involvement.

In December of 2012, the MNO Nuclear Waste Management Liaison Coordinator, Melanie Hamilton, travelled to Toronto, Ontario. During the months of March and April of 2013, the NWMO travelled to Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins, Owen Sound, Terrace Bay and Sudbury. The event was very informative and that our area is more aware of what is happening and understand the issues. They ask very pertinent questions and are genuinely interested in our environment as stewards of the land, air, animals (including humans) and water for the generations to come,” said PCMNO Chair France Picotte.

Looking forward, as with the previous three years, NWMO will be attending the MNO Annual General Assembly to provide an update to assist our leadership to learn more about the project. Future engagements between the NWMO, the MNO traditional territory consultation committees and potential host communities will continue to take place in the future.

If you have any comments and/or questions contact: Melanie S. Hamilton, MNO Nuclear Waste Management Liaison Coordinator Lands, Resources and Consultation Métis Nation of Ontario 380 9th Street East, Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 1P1 Tel: 519.376.0068 MelanieH@metisnation.org

Interested in Procurement Opportunities with Hydro One?

Hydro One purchases a variety of materials and services such as:

- Heavy duty equipment owners and/or operators (floats, trucks, backhoes, cranes, etc.)
- Road construction services
- Aggregate and concrete suppliers
- Fencing
- Forestry/vegetation management services
- Pole digging and rock drilling services
- And more...

For more information on business opportunities and instructions on how to join Hydro One’s Aboriginal Business Directory, please visit us at: www.HydroOne.com/FirstNationsMetis or email us at: NewVendorInquiries@HydroOne.com.
Osisko Awards MNO Youth with Scholarship

At Osisko, we believe that providing financial aid to students in the pursuit of education will result in safer mines, healthier environments and a more productive workforce within the mining industry. To that end, we have instituted in 2012 the Osisko Aboriginal scholarship program to help Aboriginal students complete their postsecondary education and to strengthen the links between Osisko Mining Corporation and Aboriginal communities. The program was established in collaboration with Aboriginal communities in order to encourage new generations to consider postsecondary careers within the mining industry. A financial award is given to deserving candidates to help defray their educational costs when pursuing studies in a field that prepares them for work in the mining industry. In September, a Métis summer student at Osisko Hammond Reef Gold project became the first recipient to be awarded this scholarship for her work in field of geology at the University of Manitoba.

While Rebecca’s intention had always been to pursue a university education, it was really only once she was exposed to various mining careers that she became passionate about geology. Rebecca’s current choice of studies is due in large to her summer employment experience on the Osisko Hammond Reef Gold project near the town of Atikokan in Northwestern Ontario.

On behalf of Osisko Mining Corporation: scholarship well deserved Rebecca!

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Veterans’ Council presents Louis Riel certificates to MNO citizens who provide the Council with documentation verifying their military service. Recently the MNO Veterans’ Council received the documentation from MNO citizen and Veteran Peter Grisdale. Although Veteran Grisdale was not able to attend a presentation of the certificate personally, at the MNO Moon River Métis Council Annual General Meeting in MacTier on April 23, his sister Emily Arnold was able to accept the certificate on his behalf.

The certificate was presented by MNO President Gary Lipinski, MNO Moon River Métis Council President Lisa McCron and MNO Veterans’ Council Sergeant-at-Arms Greg Garratt.

Submitted by Greg Garratt, MNO Veterans’ Council Sergeant-at-Arms

Lakehead Supports Métis Learners

Lakehead University is committed to helping Métis peoples further their educational aspirations. Aboriginal programs at Lakehead offer academic, research, and cultural support services tailored to Aboriginal needs.

Office of Aboriginal Initiatives
aboriginalinitiatives.lakeheadu.ca
1-807-766-7219 or toll free 1-888-558-3388

Specialization & Access Programs
Department of Indigenous Learning
Native Nurses Entry Program
Native Access Program

Aboriginal Education
Honours Bachelor of Education (Aboriginal) P/J
Native Teacher Education Program
Native Language Instructors’ Program

Administrative & Support Services
Office of Aboriginal Initiatives
Aboriginal Cultural & Support Services
Métis Student Liaison Facilitator
Nanabijou Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement
Lakehead University Aboriginal Alumni Chapter
Lakehead University Native Students Association
Elders Program
Encouraging Métis youth entrepreneurship
MNO Generation Innovation challenge

By Kyle Burton, 2012 Generation Innovation Finalist

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), in partnership with the Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation and its sponsors held the 2013 Generation Innovation: Métis Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge from March 16-17.

Modelled after the popular CBC TV program Dragon’s Den, the Generation Innovation: Métis Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge is a project designed to provide Métis youth (aged 15-29) with confidence, motivation and, above all, concrete business skills and mentoring.

Métis youth from across Ontario were invited to submit applications describing their business or innovation, in order to receive business training and compete for prizes in a Dragon’s Den style competition, where they would pitch their business ideas to a panel of judges.

Deanna Parker, a recreation therapist from Dryden, was awarded first place. Parker pitched an idea for a Sioux Lookout Aquatic Rehabilitation Centre that she hopes to start in the “Hub of the North” where she can practice aquatic therapy. She hopes to expand across the region in the next 10 years.

“The experience was amazing,” said Parker, who won a $1000 cash prize, a new laptop computer and a printer. “I felt like a movie start! I was very surprised at the amount of work that goes into one show!”

From the applications received, seven Métis youth were chosen to receive online training from the GoForth institute as well as face to face business and pitch training from Peter Smith, President of the Commerce Assessment Group.

Andre Laurin, President of Ocean Transportation Services Freight Forwarding Inc. provided the trainees practical business advice. The candidates also had the opportunity to receive pitch and business advice from Ryan Foley, President of Aboriginal Health Care Services Inc. and past contestant on CBC’s Dragon’s Den.

Based on the business plans of the seven trainees, three finalists were chosen to pitch to the judges in studio. The 2013 judges were Chinyere Eji, National Director, Aboriginal and Public Sector Markets at RBC; Peter Smith, President of Commerce Assessment Group; Larry Mah, Director of Programs at Youth in Motion; and Paul Untermaier, Manager of Government Affairs at Union Gas.

Contestant Renée Michaud, a Liaison Officer with the University of Ottawa, came in second place with an idea for a mobile restaurant (food truck) serving Aboriginal cuisine cooked over a wood fire. Taylor Hari, a Ph.D. Candidate from the University of Ottawa, placed third with a pitch for an exclusive sock design company that manufactures with an emphasis on quality material and fit.

The Generation Innovation project stimulated the entrepreneurial spirit in its participants while providing them with confidence, motivation and, above all, concrete business skills and mentoring.

For more information on the contests proposals please see p.xx in the President’s Update on children and youth.

Métis craft featured at Mississauga Sports Hall of Fame

By Ed Hass

On April 16, 2013 Ed Hass accompanied Métis birch bark canoe builder Marcel Labelle to the Mississauga Sports Complex to present a replica four foot birch bark canoe. Labelle had been commissioned to build the canoe to be displayed in the Mississauga Sports Hall of Fame.

Upon arrival, the two were warmly greeted by Catherine of the Mississauga Sports Council. She was extremely pleased when she saw the beautiful craft that Labelle presented her, a true work of art. The replica sported two hand carved paddles nicely tied in with a miniature Métis sash.

Hass was pleasantly surprised that the Sports Hall of Fame was interested in displaying an item hand crafted by Marcel,” said Catherine. “With support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and in partnership with Heritage Mississauga and the City of Mississauga, the Sports Council is building new partnerships and preserving our sports legacy by looking back to Mississauga’s early sports roots, especially those along the Credit River.”

The Mississauga Sports Council will be exhibiting the canoe in the Mississauga Sports Hall of Fame and in its Sports Hall of Fame Road show, through its Sports Hall of Fame Hazel McCallion Physical Education Program.

Marcel Labelle with replica canoe made for the Mississauga Sports Hall of Fame.
A little help goes a long way

Congratulations Amber!

Amber Kelly-Birns, a self-identified Métis, has always had a passion for travel. Meeting and learning from new and different people and about their cultures is exciting and rewarding to her in so many ways. She knew that one day she wanted to fill her life with a job or purpose that would allow her to do just that. Amber is also proud of her culture and where she came from and wanted to share that with others. She truly loves Canada and its diversity and after searching for several months she finally decided to pursue a career in the travel and tourism industry.

Without proper training or education, jobs were very difficult to come by so Amber enrolled in a two-year travel and tourism program at Fanshawe College in London, Ontario. However, living on her own and supporting herself while attending a full-time college program was going to be a struggle. It was at that time she reached out to the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) for their help and she is forever grateful that she did.

With the support and funding from the MNO, Amber was able to dig deeper and that is what lead me to my Métis heritage in Canada. It was because of this, I realized that I needed to learn more about my own roots and where I come from so I hired a genealogist.

After discovering her roots, Lemay plans to apply for MNO citizenship. He also hopes to create a sequel to Native Young and turn the films into a series that focuses on the many different issues affecting Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

The MNO Annual film festival will be showcased at the MNO’s 20th Annual General Assembly in Ontario.

Awards-winning Métis filmmaker part of MNO projects

Award-winning filmmaker Matt Lemay has been hired by the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) to help create a documentary film about the history of the MNO.

Lemay, a self-identified Métis, is working alongside the MNO’s Senior Communications Coordinator, St. Germain, in creating the MNO’s 20th Anniversary film. The film is a documentary project chronicling the past 20 years of the MNO. It highlights members of the MNO from across the province and has them describe where the MNO came from and where it is today.

This work with the MNO is not the first; Lemay has also been working with the MNO in creating a series of success story videos for MNO’s Education and Training Branch. He and St. Germain have traveled across the province interesting Métis citizens to highlight their achievements and accomplishments.

“These projects with the MNO have been a real history lesson for me,” stated Lemay. “Through the creation of these videos, I have come to realize that my experience in finding out about my Métis heritage later in life is not unique. It is very similar to many of the people I have the chance to interview and it is very inspiring.”

The accomplished writer, director and videographer discovered his Métis heritage while in the worlds of his two award winning documentary’s Great River and Native Young.

Lemay was recently honoured at the Canadian International Film Festival for his documentary film 20th Anniversary film. He received the Award of Excellence in the documentary category once they have become a veteran. He also hopes to create a sequel to Native Young and turn the films into a series that focuses on the many different issues affecting Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

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MNO Veteran recognized in Owen Sound

Information contributed by Joseph Paquette, President, MNO Veterans’ Council and Pauline Saulnier, Region Seven PC/MNCO Representative

On March 23, 2013, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Great Lake Métis Council presented MNO Veteran Peter Gendron with the Louis Riel Commemorative Certificate.

Louis Riel Certificates are issued to veterans by the MNO Veterans’ Council once they have become a certified veteran.

MNO Veteran Peter Gendron was a second Lieutenant in the First Battalion of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada and served in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Brigade in Germany.

The certificate was presented at a Traditional Feast in Owen Sound by MNO Great Lake Métis Council President Peter Coture.

Métis veterans are encouraged by the MNO Veterans’ Council to provide the necessary documents to the Council so they can be verified. The Veterans’ Council is grateful to chartered MNO Community Councils like the Great Lake Métis

MNO Veteran Peter Gendron accepting his Louis Riel Certificate from MNO Great Lake Métis Council President Peter Coture (right).

Congratulations Christine!

Congratulations to Christine Hannah who graduated from Western University School of Health Sciences with an honours degree in health sciences specializing in health promotion and a minor in global health.

Christine will be pursuing a Master of Arts in political science at University of Waterloo in the fall of 2013. She is married to Métis citizen Brennan Hannah, and is the daughter of Brian and Cora Bunn, President of the MNO Grand River Métis Council.

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Métis Veteran honoured by Royal Canadian Legion

The Royal Canadian Legion honoured Métis Veteran Edward Dorion by presenting him with a commemorative Aboriginal Veterans Pin on April 18.

The commemorative pin recognizes Canada’s Aboriginal Veterans and their significant contributions. The pin acknowledges the efforts and sacrifices of veterans from all Aboriginal communities.

Veteran Dorion joined the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals in 1954 as a cipher clerk. He spent his first six years residing in Kingston until he served with the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). In 1964 he was posted in Ottawa and Carp and 1974 he was with the United Nations Emergency Force, Middle East (UNEFME). Four years later Veteran Dorion again served with the United Nations until his retirement in 1978.

Nominations open for vacant position on MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO VETERANS’ COUNCIL

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Veterans’ Council is seeking nominations for vacant positions of its board. Positions the MNO Veterans Council wishes to fill are:

- Veterans Senator
- Secretary
- Women’s Representative

Requirements to hold these positions are:

- Must be MNO citizen
- Must be recognized by MNO Veterans’ Council as a Métis veteran
- Must have access to e-mail
- Must be available to attend quarterly MNO Veterans Council meetings including the Annual General Assembly

Nominations must be filed in accordance with the MNO Veterans’ Council Charter which can be found on the MNO website on the MNO Veterans page under Governance.

For further information please contact:

Joseph Paquette, President
MNO Veterans’ Council
josephstarman@rogers.com

The Métis Voyageur Development Fund’s

Board of Directors and staff would like to thank everyone involved in a successful first year, supporting Métis resource sector businesses.

The high level of interest from Métis entrepreneurs saw all of this year’s funding received from our partner, the Government of Ontario, used towards a mix of established and start-up Métis businesses.

We look forward to working with you in the years to come, as we serve the Métis community in Ontario.
Infinity Property Services

Infinity Property Services is a new agency of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) building on MNO’s over 15 years of experience in providing social housing solutions. Infinity Property Services manages, repairs and inspects properties in Ontario. Providing a one-stop shop for clients, Infinity Property Services delivers expertise in property management, property administration, lease administration, marketing, building condition assessments, financial management and reporting, construction administration and management, asset management and eco-energy audits.

With a staff of nine in Thunder Bay and Innisfil, Infinity Property Services offers three certified energy auditors and four technical advisors who have established a record of delivering property management services, program administration, home inspections and energy assessments.

In its program administration role, Infinity Property Services provides full spectrum administration under contract with the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing’s Ontario Renovates Remote, a component of the Investment in Affordable Housing program, and with Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services Corporation, and the Rural and Native Housing program.

“This includes everything from reviewing and processing applications to inspecting the properties, establishing a scope of work, approving the projects under the program guidelines, dispersing funds, arranging for legal restrictions and finalizing the capital work to ensure it meets quality standards,” explained Don Tront, the General Manager of Infinity Property Services who has over 25 years of experience in housing management.

Closely tied to its administrative role, Infinity Property Services property management services include accounting, contract administration, tenant management and facility services.

Property inspections and building conditions are another main focus of Infinity Property Services. Currently, Infinity Property Services provides home inspections for programs under their management as well as the District Social Services Administration Boards in Kenora, Thunder Bay and Nipissing.

Infinity Property Services has also recently launched its new energy auditing services. “We are in the process of partnering with Greensavers and First Nations Engineering to perform energy audits for the Housing Assistance Program and the Aboriginal Conservation Program,” explained Tront.

“We are always looking ahead in order to develop and grow the business,” said Tront. “Right now we are looking at a new business line that combines home inspections and energy audits.” He explained how conducting both services in one visit is better economically and provides a greater value of service for the client. Infinity Property Services is also looking to start managing private properties in the Thunder Bay and Northern Ontario area.

“We hope to become the first Aboriginal independent Energy Auditor Aboriginal peoples turn to for home inspections, energy audits either on reserve or off reserve...”

We hope to become first Aboriginal independent energy contractor that Aboriginal peoples turn to for home inspections, energy audits either on reserve or off reserve...”

Experienced
Professional
Versatile

Infinity Property Services
An agency of the Métis Nation of Ontario

infinitypropertyservices.ca

236 May Street South, Thunder Bay, ON P7E 1B4
Tel: 807-626-9300 | Toll-free: 1-800-891-5882
E-mail: housing@metisnation.org
The story of a tragic Métis family

This article was edited according to the Métis Voyageur submission policy. All opinions expressed are those of the writer and do not reflect Métis Nation of Ontario policies.

By Donn Fowler

The latest information, from various sources, on our aboriginal Fowler, [Latin, Auceps,-upis m Fowler] “roots” must begin with the pre-contact period of our known indigenous history. However, that indigenous “source” approaching close to the actual contact period, well before 1842, and Columbus, it was that period prior to the 11th century (the Viking arrival and departure time, c. 1000, of the so-called “New World”). Our personal conjectures therefore must begin with the mating that occurred between the unknowns, both of an indigenous male and a native female, which in turn produced a child who eventually became labelled with the contact with some “Indian” sounding word that could be spelt, correct or incorrectly, with the letters of the English alphabet. That single child became identified as Puckerwhansik, who was said by some to have been the “father” (quite possibly the “mother”) of a baby girl, similarly English-named, with our alphabet as Mistigoose. We’ll learn more about Mistigoose with our alphabet as Mistigoose.

By some to have been the “father” of a baby girl, similarly English-named, with our alphabet as Mistigoose.

Frenchmen and Indian women co-habited and were later followed in that cohabitation in a family manner by the English-speaking men who began cohabiting too, both European groups thereby learning where and what to do in order to survive in the North and to live with their very knowledgeable Native women. The children thus produced and by these profitable matings became derogatorily labelled as “half-breeds” or “mixed-bloods” children, by the “white immigrants” and when such mixed-blood children played together they soon developed their own Mischflug language for communication, a language known as a mixture of both the French and the Indian dialects.

Of course all this new cultural development began with the French. Initially, that “Canadians’ fraternalization pattern did not apply to the employees of the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) in Rupert’s Land because mating with the Indian was strictly forbidden, moreover, the HBC men were not about to be dictated to by the HBC Officers and Directors back in England. The HBC Officers eventually saw the real commercial value of the Indian women’s knowledge as a great asset to the success of the company’s inland traders, and especially to the extensive advantage of the fur business.

Two major organisations in the trading business were the North West Fur-Trading Company (NWTC) at Montreal and the HBC headquartered in London, England. These two companies became extremely competitive and competed often violently with occasional bloodshed. One example is known today as the story of the killing which took place at Eagle Lake, a major conflict between NWTC and HBC men over trade practices with Indians.

With this brief background there is an opportunity to introduce three European men who became indentured with the August HBC in Rupert’s Land. Namely three gentlemen who were seen in the order of their respective and initial HBC contracted dates, as follows (respective births and death dates are in square brackets): 1765: Jenkins Daniel of Glamorganshire, Wales, [b. ca 1748-d. 1824/25] wife unknown; 1781: Robert Goodwin of Yoxford, England, [b. ca 1761- d. 1805] husband of Mistigoose; 1700: Jacob Corrigal of Orkney, Scotland, [b. 1773 (not 1772)- d. 1844] husband of Mary.

By some to have been the “father” of a baby girl, similarly English-named, with our alphabet as Mistigoose.

Secondly, the lives of Daniel, Goodwin and Corrigal are entwined with respect to the beloved [Indian, Anishinhabe] woman English-named as Mistigoose, the mother of Robert Goodwin’s four daughters and one son, namely Caroline, Nancy, Margaret (“Peggy”), and Mary. Mary was born on Aug. 6, 1788, 23 years after Jenkins Daniel came to the HBC in 1765, and the son, William Adolphus Barnaby Goodwyn, also was born on Aug. 6, 1788. Since Mary Goodwin was born two years before Jacob Corrigal had arrived in 1700, and Robert Goodwin had arrived seven years before Mary’s and William’s birth in 1781, the twins, Mary and William Goodwin, were both eight years old in 1796. This is the year before Mistigoose died, or, before, the year before 1797. However, while Robert and Mistigoose’s children were named as beneficiares in their fathers first substantial will, the name of Mary was deliberately omitted in the will of April 24, 1800, registry number 16990, the same date as number 17124, for whatsoever reason.

It is important to note that a long-hand copy of the final will, with a codicil change, shows clearly that the date of Aug. 6, 1788 has three times been crossed out, on folio 17311 of registration number 16990. Reference is also then made for one to “... see #17124,” also, with the codicil dated April 22, 1803, which two years before the very ill Robert met his untimely death, entrode to Maria Fuller, were Mary would naturally have been age 17, the same age as William. Mary was also now the happy and beloved wife and mother of Jacob Corrigal’s children, namely, probably near Lake St. Ann (now Lake Nipigon, in Ontario), Charlotte, b.1805-d. 1897, Mary Corrigal, b. 1811-d. 1862 named after her 23 year old mother, Mary; Elizabeth b.1813-d. 1897 (note that Charlotte and Elizabeth died within a month or two of each other in 1897), Catharine, b.1814-d. 1909, and William, b.1818-d.1890. These four Mistigoose Corrigal’s remained three spinster and one bachelor all of their tragic lives in Cobourg following the death of their father in 1844. Jacob Corrigal’s will named them all as beneficiares of his quite substantial will, including the beautiful house and properties. But Jacobs will was officially deferred for over nine long years because these four Corrigal young adults were not seen as British subjects. But that is another long and tragic story of intentional or unintentional fiduciary malfeasance on the part of the Colonial administration in Britain and the local District Commissioners in the Newcastle district reported for instructions to the Governor General located in Canada. The Corrigal family had come down from the North Country to the tiny hamlet of Amherst in 1840. Jacob bought his property for $75 and built their lovely estate house on William Street in 1841/42 in the Village of Hamilton (now Cobourg, Ontario) of Hamilton Township. They were living affluently and well, albeit briefly. By 1840/1841 the former massive space occupying the province of...
AGA 2013
THE MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO 1993-2013
THE 20TH MNO ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY • AUGUST 23-26, 2013 • OTTAWA, ONTARIO

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENT

I n 1993, the citizens of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) celebrated their first Annual General Assembly (AGA) and we 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 Purpose, which was enacted by the MNO founders at its first meeting.

In 2013, 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.

THE 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 Canadian Museum of History in nearby Gatineau that was announced, the stunning Canadian Museum of History in nearby Gatineau that was designed by Métis architect Douglas Cardinal, the Aboriginal Veterans Monument and the Ottawa River, which will be the site of the AGA Opening Ceremonies and cultural activities. (For more information on the Delta Ottawa go to: www.deltahotels.com Hotels/Delta-Ottawa-City-Centre).

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 Provisional Council of the 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 this 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 Canadian Museum of History in nearby Gatineau that was designed by Métis architect Douglas Cardinal, the Aboriginal Veterans Monument and the Ottawa River, which was a major fur trade route.

The Friday evening will start with the traditional opening ceremonies and welcome to the AGA hosted by President Lipinski and the PCMNO. Métis leaders and special guests will paddle in canoes from Victoria Island to the Museum of Civilization 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 into the Museum where AGA delegates will be able to view the world premiere of the new History of the MNO documentary movie. Victoria Island will 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.aboriginalalex-petences.com/#_victoria-island)

The evening of Saturday, August 24th will feature a 20th Anniversary Feast and Celebration. All AGA delegates are encouraged to attend wearing their most beautiful traditional Métis attire in a special event that will honour the MNO founders and our Métis ancestors.

A community evening hosted by the Region Six MNO Community Councils will take place the evening of Sunday, August 25 with details to be announced in coming weeks. Other highlights will include the presentation of the Suzanne Rochon-Burnett Volunteer of the Year Award the premiere of a movie about the History of the MNO.

Local Attractions

- National War Museum
- Parliament Hill
- Supreme Court of Canada
- Canadian War Museum
- National Library and Archives of Canada
- National Arts Centre
- Rideau Centre Shopping Mall
- Rideau Centre
- Confederation Park
- Queen Elizabeth Dr
- Chaudiere Bridge
- Portage Bridge
- Alexander Bridge
- Wellington St
- Sparks St
- Laurier St
- O'Connor St
- Bank St
- Elgin St
- Albert St
- Kent St
- Slater St
- Lyon St
- Sussex Dr
- Queen St
- Ontario Ave
- Booth St
- Elgin St
- Mackenzie Ave
- Bank St

AGA Venues:
- Victoria Island
- Delta Ottawa City Centre
- Canadian Museum of Civilization

AGA 2013 AGENDA

Thursday and Friday: Workshops/Training for invited delegates/staff

FRIDAY, AUGUST 23

1 - 4 pm AGA Registration Location: Delta Ottawa

7 - 10 pm Opening Ceremonies and Welcome to the AGA Museum of Civilization Following the arrival of the Voyageur canoes from Victoria Island, AGA delegates will attend the world premiere of the History of the MNO movie in the Museum of Civilization.

MNO AGA DAY 1 SATURDAY, AUGUST 24

8 am - 5 pm MNO AGA Business Meeting Delta Ottawa

6 - 10 pm MNO 20th Anniversary Feast & Celebration Delta Ottawa City Centre Ballroom Come in your best Métis attire and honour our founders and ancestors.

MNO AGA DAY 2 SUNDAY, AUGUST 25

9 am - Noon MNO AGA Business Meeting Delta Ottawa

1 - 5 pm Mètis Games and Culture Victoria Island

6:30 - 9 pm MNO AGA Community Evening Details to be announced

MNO AGA DAY 3 MONDAY, AUGUST 26, 2013

9 am - Noon MNO AGA Business Meeting Delta Ottawa

MNO Development Corporation Annual General Assembly Delta Ottawa

Noon

12:30 pm MNO Cultural Commission Annual General Assembly Delta Ottawa
GUIDED BY OUR SPIRITUAL VALUES, WE ASPIRE TO ATTAIN OUR HIGHEST POTENTIAL

— From the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Gary Lipinski
President, Métis Nation of Ontario

In my previous career as teacher at Fort Frances High School, prior to being elected as a full-time Métis political leader, there was a student in one of my classes who was always struggling. He was able to pass most of his tests but it was only with the greatest difficulty. On one occasion, however, he did very well and received an “A.” That evening after marking papers, I phoned his parents to inform them of their son’s achievement. When I called and identified myself to the father as his son’s teacher, there was a noticeable change in his voice. Clearly he was expecting a negative report and it was reflected in his tone. Naturally, as I explained my reason for calling, his voice became more at ease but the biggest change my call caused was to his son. I assume that the father spoke with his son about this achievement because the next day the son came to school smiling and had an enthusiasm for learning that had not been there before. That positive attitude carried over for the rest of the school year and demonstrated first-hand one of the most valuable life lessons, the power of positive support and encouragement.

It was with that young person in mind, that in my President’s Report at the last Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Annual General Assembly (AGA) in Sault Ste. Marie I called upon all MNO citizens to focus on what we can all do to encourage Metis children and youth to become “the best they can be.”

Gary Lipinski
President, Métis Nation of Ontario

Just as one phone call those many years ago led to the encouragement one young person needed, today young people across the homeland also need our support and encouragement. That encouragement can come from parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, neighbors, friends and any other adults who cares for a child.

Encouragement and the expectation of success are an important first step but we also need plans for success. In this report you will find information about how to set up a Registered Education Savings Plans (RESPs) for children. Putting money aside today will help ensure our young people have a bright future and setting up RESPs will trigger contributions from the government.

It is by encouraging our young people to seek out all the opportunities that are available to them and by helping them plan for success, that we can create intergenerational positive effects. If our children go on to higher education, the result will be well paying jobs and a better life style which will foster a future where they can fulfill their dreams. In this report you will hear the voices of our many young MNO leaders who are participating at every level in advancing the MNO agenda.

President, Gary Lipinski and Chair France Picotte
meeting with MNO Youth Council at the 2012 MNO Annual General Assembly.
Why Way of Life matters to youth

These are our lands. They are the lands of our past which nurture us today and which we value as the precious foundation of our future.

—From the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose.

The words of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Statement of Prime Purpose express the deeply rooted connection Métis people have to their natural environment. It is this connection that guides the need to protect Métis traditional land use, culture and rights for the future generations.

In accordance, the MNO established the Lands, Resources, and Consultations (LRC) Branch in 2009. MNO staff work with community leadership to serve and respond to the diverse needs of Métis citizens, their communities and their regions, while providing the necessary scientific and technical expertise required by the larger Métis collective.

"By aggregating resources and working together as a Nation," said MNO President Gary Lipinski, "we can ensure that all Métis citizens and regional rights-bearing Métis communities can be more effectively engaged in meaningful consultations on issues, policies and projects that affect our rights, interests and Way of Life." The Métis Way of Life Framework (WOLF) is the MNO’s unique way of documenting Métis Traditional Knowledge acquired through time spent living on the land. Traditional knowledge is part of the collective memory of a community and is passed down orally from one generation to the next through songs, stories, actions and observation. WOLF also encompasses all aspects of the Métis Way of Life including biological, ecological, economic, social, cultural and spiritual.

"The goal of WOLF is to document the Traditional Knowledge of the Métis so that it cannot be lost, so that our history, stories and contributions will carry on for generations to come," said President Lipinski. These documentations are critical because it allows MNO communities to determine the potential effects of proposed development projects. It also assists MNO communities in their consultation activities and ensures that Métis culture is maintained in the future.

Each new road, mine, forestry operation and energy project has an impact on the surrounding habitat and the Métis Way of Life. In order to assess these changes, MNO communities, working together under MNO Regional Consultation Protocols, engage in consultations with project proponents.

An essential part of this consultation project is the incorporation of Métis Traditional Knowledge and land use information into the project assessment phase. "The overarching goal of the protocols is to ensure that all Métis citizens who are members of regional rights-bearing Métis communities have an opportunity to be consulted on policies, plans, projects, and developments that have the potential to impact the collective rights and interests of the Métis," said President Lipinski.

Each protocol includes a regional consultation committee comprised of the MNO’s regional councillor, a representative from each community council in a given traditional territory and the Captain of the Hunt. The committees work in collaboration with the MNO staff to ensure that consultations are inclusive, transparent and meaningful.

Since the creation of the LRC Branch, the MNO has made great strides toward ensuring that proponents and all levels of government recognize the need for including Métis interests in planning and resource consultations throughout Ontario.

The MNO continues to build relationships with Ontario’s leading mineral developers and recently attended the 2013 Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) Convention. The MNO has also engaged with numerous proponents and organizations through Traditional Knowledge Seans and information exchanges. Consultation committee tours have been provided by the Ontario Power Generation, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, Goldcorp Inc., Tembec and the Niagara Region Wind Corporation to name a few.

The goal of WOLF is to document the traditional knowledge of the MNO so that it cannot be lost, so that our stories will carry on for generations to come...— President Lipinski
Cost sometimes makes post-secondary education seem out of reach but there are measures that Métis individuals and families can take that will make the dream of higher education a reality.

Government of Canada Registered Education Savings Plans (RESPs) are a great way to plan for a child’s future education costs and can be an important component to ensure it will happen.

RESPs are a tax-sheltered education savings accounts that are registered with the Government of Canada. RESP can be opened at most financial institutions, such as a bank, credit unions, or through a certified financial planner.

There are three types of RESPs:

1. Family RESPs: In a Family RESP money can be put aside for one or more children that are related to the donor by blood or adoption.
2. Individual RESPs: Through an Individual RESP contributions are made for one child whether they are related to the donor or not.
3. Group RESPs: Group RESPs allow contributions for one child and the savings are combined with those of other Group RESP donors. The group savings are usually put in low-risk investments. These plans are provided by group dealers.

Those who open a RESP are eligible for the Canada Learning Bond and the Canada Education Savings Grant.

The Canada Learning Bond is $500 offered by the Government of Canada. Also, a child could get $100 every year until he or she turns 15 years old to a maximum of $2,000.

To be eligible for the Canada Learning Bond the child must be born after December 31, 2003 and the parent must receive the National Child Benefit Supplement under the Canada Child Tax Benefit (also known as the family allowance).

The Canada Education Savings Grant is money that the Government of Canada will add to RESPs savings. This grant has two parts:

1. Basic Canada Education Savings Grant
   No matter how much money a family earns, the Basic Canada Education Savings Grant will give 20 per cent on every dollar of the first $2,500 contributed to a child’s RESP each year. This means that for every $10, the government will add $2.

2. Additional Canada Education Savings Grant
   Depending on the net family income, an extra 10 or 20 per cent could be received on every dollar of the first $500 saved in a child’s RESP each year. This means that for every $10 saved, the government will add an extra $1 or $2.

Many individuals are now providing a financial contribution to a child’s RESP at events such as baby showers, birthdays, good grades incentive and graduations as a method of helping to both support and encourage higher education!

For more information:

Call: 1 800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232) or Toll free at: 1-800-926-9105
Visit: CanLearn.ca
Or visit a Service Canada Centre near you
This information is from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada at CanLearn.ca
...We (youth) need to do our part to prepare ourselves to be ready to take on the responsibility that has been cared for on our behalf.

— Mitch Case
Metis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizens volunteer thousands of hours every year to support the work of chartered MNO community councils. MNO community councils do everything from hosting fish fries to engage proponents in Duty to Consult meetings.

To create more opportunities for MNO citizens to network, almost every week of the year, the MNO and its councils organize functions and events that strengthen Metis communities. This year, community festivals were held near or in Wiarton, Bancroft, Fenelon Falls, Sudbury, Port Dover, Port McNicoll, Iroquois Falls and Welland. In Fort Frances and Peel, MNO community council members helped develop museum exhibits and participated in the grand openings. Local beaching workshops were held in Guelph, conservation efforts in Oakville and weekly youth group meetings in Georgian Bay.

Other exciting events have included numerous jigging, historical and seasonal celebrations, medicine poultice making workshops, Metis information booths at community and educational events, and creating Metis specific floats for community parades. The goal is to help foster cultural understanding and acceptance within Ontario communities and they would not be possible without the dedication of MNO community council members.

One of the key members of any MNO community council is the youth representative, each who provides a voice for Metis youth in their respective council.

"As youth representative we hold events for children and youth so they can meet each other and know that they are not alone," said MNO Credit River Metis Council Youth Representative Talitha Tolles. "When I was growing up, before we knew we were Metis, I had a really hard time because I couldn't identify with other kids. I joined the council because I want the kids who were like me to experience that there are other people who are just like them."

"As youth representative, we listen to ideas from youth and represent the youth voice within council, said Danielle Secord, Youth Representative for the MNO Georgian Bay.

"Youth involvement in the MNO community councils also open doors to other opportunities outside of the MNO. Tolles recently started a new position as Aboriginal Program Facilitator for MNO for the Children. She says, "I owe my new position to her involvement in the MNO community councils." She would not have my current job without the volunteering I have done with the council," said Tolles. "I would not have my current job without the volunteering I have done with the council," said Tolles. "The amount of experience I gained by volunteering really gave me the upper hand through the interview process and being able to showcase my experience through articles in the MNO Metis Voyager really helped. I couldn't have done it without the support and encouragement of the MNO Credit River Metis Council members."

Along with pertinent work experience, MNO community councils sometimes can support youth in other ways as well. Recently, the MNO Georgian Bay Metis Council used its funding of $3,000 from Bruce Power for the purpose of an education bursary entitled the "Helen Bradley Memorial Bursary." Senator Dora MacIntosh presented this bursary to Youth Representative Secord during the May 1 council meeting.

"It is crucial that young people are involved in the activities of MNO so they will have the knowledge and training to build on..." — President Lipinski

Youth council members, along with MNO community councils, sometimes can support youth in other ways as well.

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"It is crucial that young people are involved in the activities of MNO so they will have the knowledge and training to build on..." — President Lipinski
THE MNO-ONTARIO FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

Continues to build a brighter future for Métis young people

On November 17, 2008, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) President Gary Lipinski and the Honourable Brad Doguid, who was then Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, signed the historic MNO-Ontario Framework Agreement. The Framework Agreement established a collaborative relationship that reinforced the commitment of both parties to work together to improve the well-being of Métis children, families and communities while building knowledge and understanding of Métis culture among all Ontarians. Few agreements between a Métis government and another government have proven more valuable to building a brighter future for the Métis people than the Framework Agreement.

The Framework Agreement was timely and necessary as the Métis population in Ontario is increasing dramatically. Métis represent fully one-third of the entire Aboriginal population in Ontario. Statistics Canada 2011 National Household Survey states that 96,020 Ontario residents self-identified as Métis compared to only 73,605 in 2006, an increase of nearly 17 per cent. The Métis population is also young with over 20 per cent being 15 years or younger, suggesting that Métis youth will play an increasingly important part in Ontario’s future.

Since becoming Premier and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs respectively, Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Honourable David Zimmer, have continued to cooperate with the MNO in advancing the goals of the Framework Agreement and it has created a number of important advances in the last year.

A key area where the MNO is working hard to ensure that the interests of young Métis are protected concerns efforts to reform the Aboriginal Child Welfare System in Ontario.

For the last two years, the MNO has provided Métis Education Kits to community members, educators and school boards. The wide use of these led to the first review of Métis content in Ontario’s thirteen universities faculties of education in a report entitled Our Place in the Circle (Divon 2012). This report is a step towards a better understanding of the needs of Ontario’s Métis students and classrooms to provide improved strategies in educating students about the Métis.

The MNO has also commissioned a research report entitled Repercussions on Métis Education in Ontario’s K-12 Schools. This pioneering research examines barriers and opportunities for Métis education in Ontario’s kindergartens to high school classrooms. The researchers contacted school boards, directors of education, as well as government officials. The findings show several promising practices which address pedagogical, curricular, and staffing needs. Each addresses the importance of awareness, understanding, and appreciation of Métis knowledge, history, learners, families, and communities in Ontario’s schools.

All reports are available online at the MNO website (metis.org under Education and Training/Education).

The signing of the Framework Agreement has also led to the MNO signing Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and 13 post-secondary institutions. Niagara College is the most recent post-secondary institution to sign a MOU with the MNO. Like all such agreements, it recognizes and addresses the unique needs of Métis and agrees to work in partnership to ensure that programming offered at the college addresses those needs. The MOU with Niagara College is part of a larger relationship building process of bilateral partnerships with post-secondary institutions.

The MNO has worked tirelessly with the Ontario government and other Aboriginal partners to address the issue of violence against Aboriginal women. Many of the women who suffer violence are young and their lives are forever scarred by the experience.

The MNO has participated in five summits on ending violence against Aboriginal women as an active member of the Joint Working Group since its inception in 2010, and is a full signatory to the Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women.

Recently in September, MNO President Lipinski and MNO Chair France Picotte participated with the Joint Working Group in a meeting with the Minister responsible for women’s issues and Premier Wynne.

The meeting was the first opportunity for the Joint Working Group, which consists of ten provincial ministries, to report on its progress. The MNO commended the Government of Ontario for supporting efforts to reduce the very high rates of violence affecting Métis, First Nations and Inuit women in Ontario and called upon the two lead Ministers to report back to their cabinet colleagues on progress and ongoing challenges articulated in the meeting.

The MNO has also been integrating awareness about the initiative within the MNO and in particular the Women’s Secretariat of the MNO has been heavily involved in this critical issue.

A major aspect of the MNO’s work in the area of violence against women is the new Victim Services Program. The program’s goal is to expand the range and variety of culturally relevant victim services available to Métis women and children in Ontario. The program is a support system to be integrated with mainstream victim services programs in order to help understanding of who Métis people are and the underlying issues and histories that surround them.

These are just some of the recent highlights that add to the foundation that has been built through cooperation and collaboration since 2008. More details on some of these programs can be found throughout this report.
Growing up healthy
MNO PROGRAMS BENEFIT YOUNG CHILDREN & THEIR FAMILIES

The key to a successful future is a healthy beginning. The MNO’S wish is to provide Métis communities with culturally supportive health programs and services that help foster healthy and happy futures for Métis children and youth...— President Lipinski

Amanda Desbiens is part of a team of Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) staff who work in programs that make a difference in the lives of Métis children and their families. She works in the MNO Healthy Baby Healthy Children (HBHC) program, which along with Canadian Prenatal/Postnatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) and the Community Action Plan for Children (CAP-C) are programs the MNO operates that provide assistance to mothers during pregnancy and families with children under six years of age.

Desbiens has worked as a HBHC Coordinator since 2005 and in that time has been able to help Métis families live healthier and happier lives.

In her role, she provides cultural support, advocacy, information and prenatal and postnatal health intervention to families who are at risk. Desbiens has many experiences with families that the program has helped support from pregnancy onwards.

“Families I have worked with have indicated that they are doing well and have fruitful happy lives,” said Desbiens. “A teenage mother who asked for help with parenting and coping with stress and anxiety worked with the program through participating in home visits, family wellness planning and peer support. Currently, she is a functioning single mother who graduated in university, has re-established key family relationships and indicates her daughter is doing well developmentally.”

The MNO HBHC program, funded by the provincial government is a prevention and intervention program for families in the prenatal period as well with children 0-6 years of age. The program is designed to support all families requiring holistic parent-child health, parenting and family support services. It provides an environment for the healthy development of children through a series of services, supporting families and helping them achieve health and happiness. The HBHC program provides many culturally appropriate programs and services to families. Desbiens has worked as a HBHC Coordinator since 2005 and in that time has been able to help Métis families live healthier and happier lives.

The HBHC program provides services to Métis families, provides support, advocacy, information and prenatal and postnatal health intervention to families who are at risk. Desbiens has many experiences with families that the program has helped support from pregnancy onwards.

“Families I have worked with have indicated that they are doing well and have fruitful happy lives,” said Desbiens. “A teenage mother who asked for help with parenting and coping with stress and anxiety worked with the program through participating in home visits, family wellness planning and peer support. Currently, she is a functioning single mother who graduated in university, has re-established key family relationships and indicates her daughter is doing well developmentally.”

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The MNO HBHC program provides culturally supportive health programs and services that help foster healthy and happy futures for Métis children and youth. This is what led to the development and the continuation of the HBHC program.

The HBHC program provides many culturally appropriate participant based activities including Gestational Diabetes, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and healthy relationship building workshops.

“One great component is we are able to offer culturally appropriate activities for these children in order to enhance self-identity and self-esteem,” said Desbiens. “The MNO North Bay office where I am located is very much involved with the Best Start Initiative to ensure that any Métis child being seen in the community is being referred to the appropriate cultural services if there are issues.”

Desbiens, who specializes in FASD, has seen many success stories from her clientele over the years.

“As a HBHC Coordinator I also provide direct support to families who may feel their children and/or grandchildren may have FASD,” said Desbiens. “Recently I was supporting a family through a process of acquiring diagnosis of FASD through our partnership with Motherisk. I was able to increase awareness of the child’s unique needs, both internally and externally which is why I view it as a success.”

The HBHC program also provides transportation for families with children to help get to medical appointments, provide a clothing exchange program and provide client supplies such as baby clothing, diapers and car seats.

“We also facilitate access to a cost-free provincial telepsychiatry program which is available to the public. We also facilitate access to a cost-free provincial telepsychiatry program which is available to the public. The public should they require support services for mental health,” stated Desbiens.

“HBHC is an amazing program that really helps our Métis families acquire support in times of need,” she continued. “The most rewarding part of my job is to see families use the tools they’ve learned to enrich their lives, as well as providing opportunities to them that they would otherwise not have the chance to participate in.”

The public can access the HBHC program and its services by self-referral or through referrals from external agencies. The MNO HBHC program provides assistance in a variety of means including in-office visits to an accessible building, home or community visits and telephone support.
MNO Education & Training programs open doors for Métis youth

To encourage academic and skills development and to enable citizens of the Métis Nation to attain their educational aspirations...

– From the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose

A
s stated in the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Statement of Prime Purpose, the MNO has always made education a high priority. A key objective of the MNO is to ensure young Métis citizens uncover and embrace the will and determination to live a successful life. In its pursuit of achieving this goal, the MNO offers a range of supports and services for the educational success of all Métis across Ontario beginning in early childhood, continuing through kindergarten to grade 12, on to post-secondary education and into adulthood.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Recognizing the absence of dedicated post-secondary financial assistance for Métis students, MNO initiated a bursary program in 1998. Métis students can apply for the Métis Student Bursary Program (MSBP) at the financial aid office, Aboriginal student liaison centre or through student support services at the participating college or university. There are currently 36 schools across Ontario offering the bursary. Applications are available to students following registration in the fall. Deadlines are school specific and bursary recipients are announced at the beginning of each school year. Students may reapply for bursaries and/or scholarships each year when they register for school. The amount of bursaries will vary depending on the accumulation of interest earned each year.

MÉTIS YOUTH PROGRAM

In order to gain pertinent work experience that will help jump-start careers, the MNO also provides services for training in the workplace. The Métis Youth Program (MYP) is designed to provide support to unemployed youth between the ages of 15 and 30 through a number of program options that are available through individual client purchase or as community-based programming. Assistance can be provided through three ways: the MNO internship program, the community service program or the labour market information program.

MNO Internship Program

The MNO Internship Program supports internships with employers that provide youth with skill enhancement, work experience and entrepreneurial assistance to help them make a successful transition into the labour market.

Community Service Program

In order to create opportunities for youth who face barriers in finding employment the MNO offers the Community Service Program. The program provides support and develops work opportunities for such youth through participation in community service projects. The aim is to help young people develop the life skills and work experiences necessary to enter the labour market. Through the Labour Market Information Program, the MNO provides youth with labour market information they need to make decisions about their education and careers.

Summer Career Placement Program

A Summer Career Placement (SCP) program is also provided to Métis students who are seeking summer employment opportunities. Employers from the private, public and non-profit sectors can receive wage subsidies and/or mandatory employer related costs to create beneficial job experience opportunities for Métis youth.

The MNO continues to foster partnerships between communities and school boards, colleges and universities, and other key stakeholders to foster a culture of lifelong learning in communities that support student education.

PARTICIPATING COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

Region 2:
- Confederation College
- Lakehead University

Region 3:
- Northern College

Region 4:
- Sault College
- Algoma University

Region 5:
- Cambrian College
- Canados College
- Laurentian University
- College Boréal
- University of Sudbury

Region 6:
- Carleton University
- Queen’s University
- Algonquin College
- Loyalty College
- St. Lawrence College
- University of Ottawa

Region 7:
- Sir Sanford Fleming College
- Georgian College
- Trent University

Region 8:
- Ryerson University
- University of Toronto
- George Brown College
- Humber College
- Sheridan College
- York University
- Ontario College of Art & Design (OCAD)
- University of Ontario Institute of Technology
- Seneca College

Region 9:
- University of Western Ontario
- Brock University
- Conestoga College
- Fanshawe College
- Lambton College
- Mohawk College
- Niagara College
- St. Clair College
Melanie-Rose Frappier is a Métis high school student from Sudbury who has plans to one day become an orthopedic surgeon. Like many youth her age, Melanie-Rose has worries about the transition from high school to university but after attending the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Infinite Reach program’s March break camp, she realized for the first time that she wasn’t alone.

The MNO Infinite Reach: Métis Student Solidarity Network is comprised of incoming and upper year post-secondary students who have the common goal of working together to enrich and enhance their post-secondary education experience. The program is designed to ease the transition of Métis students to post-secondary education by creating a network of Métis students from across the province that can share experiences and support one another in their academic pursuits.

An integral part of the Infinite Reach Network is to ensure that Métis high school students can accomplish the transition to post-secondary studies knowing they will be supported by members of the Métis community. A key way this is accomplished is through the Infinite Reach March break camp. The camp is designed to engage young Métis students interested in higher education in a retreat that focuses on the benefits of college and university education. Students also learn about Métis history and are involved in cultural activities throughout their stay.

“The camp helped me make decisions and they answered my questions in regards to post-secondary education and the different options available,” said Melanie-Rose. “It’s comforting to know that there are people out there to help me and I have made friendships that will last a lifetime.”

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The MNO is looking for postsecondary students interested in becoming Infinite Reach facilitators. If you or someone you know is interested in becoming involved with Infinite Reach contact Sheila Granham at 1-800-263-4889 extension 137 or e-mail infinitereach@metisnation.org. Application forms and more information are also available on the MNO website at www.metisnation.org. Deadline for applications is August 15, 2013.

“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.”

MNO Infinite Reach facilitators are upper year students who can offer assistance to incoming students by helping them adjust to university life. They also work to create and maintain a sense of community among Métis students. Throughout the year, Infinite Reach facilitators host cultural and informative events to connect students to the local MNO community councils and to the various programs, services and events of the MNO. The Infinite Reach Network serves as a community of learners with the ability to inspire Métis students to achieve their full potential and provide the support of the Métis community.

“The camp was an experience of a lifetime. I made so many good friendships and I will never forget it,” said Melanie-Rose. “I wouldn’t have wanted to spend my March break any other way!”
YOUTH LEADERS SPEAK ABOUT METIS RIGHTS

As a youth, these cases mean everything to my future and the generations which will follow. The federal government has a duty to consult with our Nation and will hear my voice...

—Jennifer Henry

AN UPDATE ON MNO FINANCES

Setting an example of fiscal responsibility

By Gary Lipinski

One of the most important things we can do for future generations is to leave a legacy of a strong, financially solvent Metis Nation of Ontario (MNO). Leaving behind a financially sound MNO will help ensure that generations to come are able to continue and build upon our work to advance the interests of and for Metis citizens in Ontario.

In 2008, we were in a serious financial situation and on the verge of bankruptcy. MNO’s debt from the years 1999 through 2008 had accumulated to some $1.5 million and an estimated 24 years for repayment, but owing to Service Canada and Ontario for the Employer Health Tax (EHT), the amount owing to EHT was $1.5 million and an estimated 24 years for repayment, but as of March 31, 2013 this has been reduced to $1.06 million and only two and a half years left to repay. The amount owing to EHT was originally $737,000 in 2008, as of March 2013 it has been reduced to $144,000.

The amount owing to CRA was originally $2.1 million, this debt as of March 31, 2013 has been completely paid off. The repayment of this debt took only three years instead of the estimated 11.5 years originally planned, eight and a half years ahead of schedule.

The MNO has additionally significantly reduced its debt owing to Service Canada and Ontario for the Employer Health Tax (EHT). The amount originally owing to Service Canada in 2008 was $1.5 million and an estimated 24 years for repayment, but as of March 31, 2013 this has been reduced to $1.06 million and only two and a half years left to repay.

In 2009 we doubled the size of our Financial Branch in Pembroke and collectively our efforts and sacrifices over the last few years have brought us much closer to this goal. We wanted to build a solid financial plan to ensure deficits became a thing of the past. We wanted to continue working for future generations.

Today, I am pleased to report that our efforts have made tremendous progress. In only four years we have reduced the MNO’s debt by roughly 70 per cent. As of March 31, 2013 the MNO’s debt repairable has decreased to $1.4 million. The MNO has been able to completely pay off its Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) debt. The amount owing to CRA was originally $2.1 million, this debt as of March 31, 2013 has been completely paid off. The repayment of this debt took only three years instead of the estimated 11.5 years originally planned, eight and a half years ahead of schedule.

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MÉTIS YOUTH IMPRESS INDUSTRY LEADERS

MNO Generation Innovation challenge

Recreation therapist, Métis youth and Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Deanna Parker’s dream is to build an aquatic rehabilitation centre where she can practice aquatic therapy for communities in need. As part of the second MNO Generation Innovation challenge, Parker was given the opportunity to pitch her business idea to a panel of judges for a chance to win $1,000, a laptop and a printer.

Modeled after the popular CBC television program, The Dragon’s Den, the Generation Innovation: Métis Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge is a MNO project designed to provide Métis youth (aged 13-29) with confidence, motivation and above all, concrete business skills and mentoring.

Parker pitched to the panel of judges her business plan for an aquatic rehabilitation centre that she hopes to start in the Sioux Lookout, commonly known as the “Hub of the North,” which would be first of its kind in the region. She plans to provide aquatic therapy for the 29 remote First Nation communities in her area. Totalling a market of 30,000 people, the centre will help prevent the need for urgent care visits. Along with costs, projections and statistics, Parker’s business plan included the designs for a culturally appropriate rehabilitation program for elders and an overview of the benefits of aquatic therapy versus more traditional physiotherapy methods.

“I am very privileged and honoured to have been selected to participate,” said Parker. “This opportunity is very important to me because I have gone through everything possible in trying to complete my business plan and now with the support of the MNO Generation Innovation challenge I have completed it.”

The MNO Generation Innovation panel of judges were very impressed with Parker’s business plan and awarded her first place.

The judges included: Chinyere Eni, National Director, Aboriginal and Public Sector Markets at RBC; Peter Smith, President Commerce Assessment Group; Larry Mah, Director of Programs at Youth in Motion, and Paul Uenigerman, Manager of Government Affairs at Union Gas.

Contestant Renée Michaud, a Liaison Officer with the University of Ottawa, placed second for her business plan for a mobile restaurant (food truck) that would serve Aboriginal cuisine cooked over a wood fire. Proposed menu items included deer sausage, buffalo burgers and side salads while promoting Aboriginal cultures through her truck design and music. Michaud’s goal is to provide a “cultural experience for the eyes, the ears and also the taste buds.”

Although the judges were very impressed by Michaud’s passion they believed the business plan required a little more work due to the competitiveness of the mobile food industry.

“It was really nice having a company organization backing me up and helping me get there,” said Michaud. “I only recently found out that I am of Métis descent so this experience is allowing me to get to know a bit more about my culture.”

Taylor Hart, a Ph.D. candidate from the University of Ottawa, placed third for his pitch for an exclusive sock company “Sockterate.” Following the business model “everything for someone and not something for everyone,” Hart planned to target the “QQ” man by providing a new and sophisticated style for business socks. His plans also included future expansion to diversify his product into a clothing line.

Acknowledging the great potential in the niche market, the judges believed that Hart’s business plan has great opportunity but were questionable on whether manufacturing the product overseas was the right route for his product.

“The training has helped because just learning off of everyone else around me and getting different opinions on how I am delivering my material is bettering my delivery and product,” said Hart.

Through the MNO Generation Innovation challenge contestants gained valuable business experience and insights to jump-start their entrepreneurial dreams. The MNO hopes that all contestants continue to move forward with their business plans.

For more information on the MNO Generation Innovation challenge please see p.19 in issue 76 of the MNO Métis Observer.

Discovering, building & promoting Métis identity

THE MNO SUMMER CULTURAL PROGRAM

“My story has come from a background that had consisted of very little to no Métis knowledge or teachings,” said Genevieve Rouxbar, a previous Summer Youth Cultural Interpreter (SYCI), “coming on board to work with the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) through the Summer Youth Cultural Program was definitely a life changing experience.”

Designed to strengthen and share Métis culture and history, the MNO Métis Summer Cultural Program (MSCP) is a community-based initiative comprised of two key components. The first involving comprehensive training of all summer students in culture and history including workshops on MNO programs and governance, Métis history and culture, finger weaving, beading, embroidery, snowshoe making and paddle making.

The second and primary part of the program is the actual delivery of Métis culture and history programs by the students to community groups.

“This program allowed me to gain valuable work experience while gaining personal interest, culture and history, building a stronger community and stepping out into the workforce with a sense of individuality all the while having a great summer,” said Melody Chiullit-Morris, past SYCI.

The MSCP gives enthusiastic Métis students the opportunity to go out into the community and share their experiences and raise awareness about Métis. The participation in community events allows knowledge sharing in an interactive and engaging manner. Each Métis student brings a unique voice to the project and will continue to grow through the learning experience.

“This program allows you to be who you are and build on that confidence in a warm and friendly environment,” said Chiullit-Morris. “The SYCI position has helped me gain a stronger sense of who I am both as an individual and as a member of a team.”

This year’s MSCP has an added focus on highlighting the Métis contributions to the War of 1812. Participants will take part in the re-enactment of the war along with building upon the success of previous years cultural activities.
The leaders of tomorrow today

Our mandate is to prepare and make sure we are ready to someday do our part in the leadership of the Métis Nation...

—Mitch Case

“Young Métis are stepping up to fill leadership positions in the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) and among them are Jennifer Henry, Provisional Council of the MNO (PCMNO) Post-secondary Representative; Mitch Case, PCMNO Youth Representative; and MNO Youth Council (MNOYC) representatives Kristie Cauette, Janine Landry, Brianne Gosselin, Sylvie Forest, Phoebe Mandy, Kyle Grenier, Nicholas Delhaire-Sawchuk and Alexander Young.

MNOYC is part of the MNO governance structure with the mandate to identify issues impacting Métis youth and to work with the MNO to ensure those issues are addressed. Métis youth are represented by the PCMNO Youth Representative, who holds a voting seat on the PCMNO and each MNO community council has a position for a local Youth Representative who promotes youth initiatives, works directly with the MNOYC and represents the voice of Métis youth in his or her area.

Members of the MNOYC take part in meetings across the province, including the MNO’s Annual General Assembly, attend national conferences such as the National Métis Youth Role Model Conference and also sit on the Métis National Advisory Council. The MNOYC representatives are elected in province-wide elections held every three years.

Recently, Henry has represented the Métis youth voice at conferences such as: Circle of Light: First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education, the Aboriginal Education Advisory Circle, and the Minister of Education’s Student Advisory Council.

“We need to let our voices be heard as we have a strong and important voice in our communities,” said Henry. “We are the future, therefore we need to ensure that we encourage our youth to emerge as the next generation of leaders.”

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“Our mandate is to prepare and make sure we are ready to someday do our part in the leadership of the Métis Nation,” said Case. “We try to involve ourselves as much as we can to bring the youth voice and opinion to all aspects of the Métis nation.”

Participation at the community, regional and provincial level enables Métis youth across Ontario to have a voice and ensures Métis youth are engaged in all levels of governance, decision-making and policy-making, both within and outside of the MNO.

The MNO has been a vocal supporter of this self-identification approach and has not only encouraged students and families to self-identify but has worked with school boards to encourage policy development and implementation. While the Ministry of Education has recently reported that every school board has adopted an Aboriginal self-identification policy, these remain at varying stages of implementation. As such, the ability to acquire detailed data on Métis student achievement and graduation rates will require a sustained effort.

Métis families and communities are encouraged to self-identify as it can result in added funding and resources dedicated to Métis students. In the school system, this is critical to determining the successes and challenges that may still exist within schools across Ontario. The ability to have Métis specific data on students will allow for programs and resources to be targeted to assist students to be all they can be.