AGA 2014
Ontario Métis to gather IN THUNDER BAY
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Joseph Oliver Brabant – “GUS”  
March 11, 1947 – September 24, 2013  

I t is with immense sadness that we announce Joseph Oliver Brabant’s (Gus) passing, in his 67th year, with his family by his side. Gus will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by his wife, Sally (nee Ladouceur), his sons Joseph (Lindsay), Arthur (Susan), and Bob (Gina), and his grandchildren Taylor, Naomi, Benjamin, Tristan, Cali, Ryder and Ryan. He is survived by his brother Marcel (Norma) and predeceased by his parents, Joseph and Lena, his sisters, Stella (Estelle), Lucy, Lorraine, Theresa and his brother, Allan. His many relatives, friends and community will dearly remember Gus, his warm embrace and his generous heart. A celebration of life was held in his honour on the October 4, 2013 at the Penetanguishene Legion. All the staff at the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Midland office will miss Gus’s visits and his cheerful attitude. Gus was very caring and spent many hours as a volunteer driver for the MNO Healing and Wellness Branch.

Vanessa Black (Bennett) passes

T he Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is sad to report that Vanessa Black (Bennett) passed away on February 6, 2014. Vanessa worked as a MNO Healthy Babies Healthy Children Coordinator in 2007-08. She is survived by her daughters, Teaha and Christina, her mother Gale, her dad Ed, birth father Erick, her partner Artius as well as many other family members and friends. Vanessa or Nessa, as she was affectionately known, had a kind-hearted nature with the sensitivity to help anyone in need. She had compassion and empathy towards everyone and her wonderful sense of humor will be missed. Funeral Services will be held at Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, Kenora, Ontario at 11:00 am on February 12, 2014 with Inremembrance to take place at the Sioux Narrows Cemetery in Sioux Narrows with a luncheon to follow at the Sioux Narrows Community Hall. Vanessa’s family would like to acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude the people of Sioux Narrows/ Nestor Falls.

A Christmas surprise

Submitted by: Jennifer St. Germain, MNO Director of Education and Training

The St. German-Calder family received a very exciting gift this Christmas, the birth of their beautiful baby girl.

A Métis treasure

Submitted by: Yvonne Jensen, President of the MNO North Channel Métis Council

Proud parents Renee and Robert Jensen Jr., and big brother Cameron, all from Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) North Channel Métis Council, welcomed their little girl Morgan born August 18, 2013. Grandparents to this little treasure are: Tim and Suzanne Lamour, Region 4 Councillor Ernie Gaten and Rob and Yvonne Jensen, President of the MNO North Channel Métis Council.
The 2014 AGA
THUNDER BAY, AUGUST 22-25

The 2014 Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Annual General Assembly (AGA) will be hosted by the Region Two MNO Chartered Community Councils in Thunder Bay. The formal AGA will start the evening of Friday, August 22 with the traditional arrival of the voyageur canoes and continue all day Saturday and Sunday before wrapping up around noon on Monday, August 25.

“We are very excited to bring the AGA back to Thunder Bay,” stated Region Two Councillor Cam Burgess. “We have had many great AGAs here in the past and we are confident we will be continuing that tradition this year.”

“We are very pleased that the three Region Two MNO Chartered Community Councils are coming together to host this year’s AGA,” MNO President Gary Lipinski stated. “The Greenstone, Superior North Shore and Thunder Bay Métis Councils will each bring something special to their role as host and this kind of regional cooperation is great to see.”

Thunder Bay is an excellent location for an AGA as the area has been important to Métis for centuries, going back to its earliest history when it played a pivotal role in the fur trade to more recent times such as in 2004, when the MNO and the Ontario government signed the Interim Harvesting Agreement at the AGA that year. Today, Métis are important players in the culture and economy of Thunder Bay through Memorandums of Understanding between the MNO and resource companies such as Osisko, Detour Gold and Union Gas as well as with similar agreements with educational institutions such as Lakehead University and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. It is through agreements like these that the MNO contributes to building a stronger future for Métis people in Ontario.

During their stay in Thunder Bay, MNO citizens can explore spectacular natural wonders like Eagle Canyon and Kakabeka Falls, sail on the waters of Lake Superior, and golf at the luxurious Whitewater Golf Club. They may also unwind from outdoor pursuits by visiting art galleries and museums or taking in musical and stage shows. And don’t forget to travel back in time at Fort William Historical Park – the world’s largest reconstructed fur trade post!

Mark your calendar for the 2014 AGA and look for announcements about AGA registration, activities, venues, accommodation and meals on the MNO website and Facebook page.
I was recently announced that the third Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Canoe Expedition will take place this summer. MNO Canoe Expeditions celebrate Métis history and culture and inspire Métis pride across the homeland. Expeditions provide Métis youth with a unique, once in a lifetime opportunity to follow in the shadows of their ancestors by retracing the historic Métis voyageur trade routes.

Past expeditions took place in the summers of 2003 and 2005. The 2003 expedition followed the North West Company trading route from Laciniére, Quebec towards the Great Rendezvous at Old Fort William in Thunder Bay, Ontario. In the 2005 expedition, youth began their journey in Thunder Bay, Ontario and were bound for Batoche, Saskatchewan where they joined the annual Back to Batoche celebrations. These expeditions were extensively covered by many news outlets including the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), The Weather Network, CBC Radio and numerous local media along the routes.

This year, 10 adventurous Métis post-secondary students will put their limits to the test and participate in this life changing experience. Details regarding the route are still to be determined but you can be certain it will follow one of the historic paths of the Métis voyageurs and end at the 2014 MNO Annual General Assembly in Thunder Bay (see page 3).

The MNO Canoe Expedition will provide our Métis youth with not only a unique opportunity where they will paddle in the wake of our Métis ancestors, stated MNO President Gary Lipinski, “but an opportunity to build concrete life skills that will help them succeed on and off the water.”

Youth participants will spend their days paddling, portaging and camping in Ontario’s wilderness. Throughout this journey, youth will connect with nature and their heritage as well as re-live the past through experiences similar to those of their Métis ancestors.

“I never felt more alive than I did when I was on the Métis Canoe Expedition,” wrote Ginny Gonneau who participated in both previous expeditions. “I was living the adventure of a lifetime, seeing all the most beautiful and pristine parts of Ontario’s wilderness.”

— Ginny Gonneau

“My experiences from the Métis Canoe Expedition have definitely changed my life,” wrote Gonneau. “I have a new interest in my Métis heritage and a continuing desire to learn more about Métis culture. The voyage was a test of my courage and ambition and it is something I am very proud to say I accomplished.”

TOP: Past MNO canoe expeditions have been remarkable experiences and are an incredible way to spend the summer! BOTTOM: MNO President Gary Lipinski greeting participants of the 2005 Métis Canoe Expedition along their journey from Thunder Bay, Ontario to Batoche, Saskatchewan.

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M N O  C a n o e  E x p e d i t i o n

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— Ginny Gonneau

For the second year in a row, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), in partnership with the Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation and other sponsors held the Generation Innovation Métis Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge. It was held March 16-17, 2013 and was modeled after the popular CBC TV program The Dragon’s Den. The Generation Innovation Challenge is a project designed to provide Métis youth (aged 13-29) with confidence, motivation and, above all, concrete business skills and mentoring. Also for the second year, the challenge was recorded and edited into a fast-paced and exciting video that is now available on the MNO website. In the video, viewers get a taste of the training and the excitement of the competition.

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 pitched their business idea to a panel of judges.

Deanna Parker, a recreation therapist from Sioux Lookout, came in second place. Parker pitched an idea for a Sioux Lookout Aquatic Rehabilitation Centre that she hopes to start in the ‘Huh of the North’ where she can practice aquatic therapy. She hopes to expand across the region in the next 10 years.

“Business was a test of my courage and ambition and fit.”

— Deanna Parker

First Place Winner
One Hundred
Second Place Winner
First Hundred

The judges and the participants in the 2013 Generation Innovation challenge.

For more information contact:
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MNO Generation Innovation Challenge video

Métis Voyageur
Winter 2014, Issue no. 79
Métis youth ready to work

MNO two-day workshop on transitions to the labour market

Submitted by: Guylaine Morin-Cleroux, MNO Education and Training Operations Coordinator

From January 18-19, Métis youth from across the province gathered in Owen Sound to attend the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Métis Youth Ready to Work: Transitions to the Labour Market workshop. This two-day workshop offered a unique opportunity for Métis youth to connect with Métis culture and history, develop new skills and experiences, as well as engage with their fellow Métis youth. The workshop featured an overview of the MNO including an in-depth focus on MNO’s Education and Training programs. A resume writing workshop, job preparedness orientation and a budgeting class were also facilitated. Students were full of energy and left the session knowing more about the different offerings the MNO provides and felt optimistic about what their future careers will hold.

Extending the MNO’s blanket of care with the introduction of Home Flee Kits

Submitted by: Jennifer Lord, MNO Manager of Mental Health and Victims Services

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) offers culturally relevant victim services within all its healing and wellness programs to address, deter, and end violence against Métis women and children. These services address the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual impacts of victimization and are available as part of the MNO’s Victim Services Project. The Victim Service Project enhances the core programs offered by the MNO such as Community Wellness, Community Support Services and Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children programming. This project is led by two victim services coordinators, each located in the northern and southern regions of Ontario. MNO Victim Services Coordinators are dedicated to assisting victims of crime by working with clients so they may live free from violence and begin their healing journey. They are also available to support MNO staff members.

Beginning in February 2014, the MNO Victim Services Project will embark on a new initiative in the area of Home Flee Kits. Home Flee Kits are a safety measure and will be available to persons in need at all MNO community offices. The kits provide essential personal hygiene items as well as a few additional items such as a change of clothes, personal cosmetics, a favourite toy and snacks to individuals and their children who are leaving abusive relationships or dangerous situations. In many cases, when someone leaves their home and goes to a shelter, they leave quickly without the basic necessities.

This initiative is part of the MNO’s commitment to supporting its citizens to live healthy productive lives free of violence. If you know of someone who has just left or may be in an abusive or dangerous situation and is in need of a Home Flee Kit, please contact the MNO office in your community.

Participants and staff of the MNO Métis Ready to Work workshop. (Left to right) BACK ROW: Jessica MacLean, Channelle Lorocque, Ashley Desjardins, Deirdre Thomson, Sydney Ducharme, Gabrielle Payant and Senator Roland St. Germain. MIDDLE ROW: Rebekah Wilson, Sandy Child, Sarah MacLean, Steven Pelletier and Freeman Jones. FRONT ROW: Tegan Mandeville-MacKay and Guylaine Morin-Cleroux.

Métis documentary film now online

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) was founded in 1993, making 2013 its 20th anniversary. To recognize and commemorate this landmark, the MNO produced a 48 minute documentary film telling the story of how the MNO was founded and its growth and achievements over two decades.

The Métis Nation of Ontario: 1993-2013 features interviews with some of the MNO’s founders and early leaders including Tony Belcourt, Gary Lipinski, Jean Tessier, Jason Madden, Louis Goulding, Senator Reta Gordon and many others as well as rare archival interviews with Steve Powley and Marion Larkman. The film features hundreds of photographs and rare video clips that show the amazing work of the MNO citizens who worked so hard to build the Métis Nation in Ontario. The film describes the MNO’s beginnings and then relates the gripping tale of the “Hunt for Justice”; the ten years of litigation that finally resulted in the historic victory of the Powley case in the Supreme Court of Canada. It explains how the MNO used its legal victories to convince the government that it was time for Ontario and the MNO to work together and how this led to many successes. In this film, viewers get an appreciation for the incredible work of MNO leaders, senators, veterans, women, and youth who built the Nation into the strong and vibrant Métis government that it is today. Finally the film looks to the bright future of the MNO as it provides opportunities for Métis youth to aspire to achieve their full potential.

After a well-received showing at the 2013 MNO Annual General Assembly, and the premiere of the final version at the Powley Anniversary dinner during Louis Riel Day events in Toronto, DVD copies have now been provided to all 29 MNO Chartered Community Councils.

The full movie is also available on the MNO website at www.metisnation.org.

Celebrating 20 years of achievement

MNO documentary film now online

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"We are not amused!

About “Access to [Civil] Justice”

Submitted by: Donna Fowler

All opinions expressed are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect Métis Nation of Ontario policies.

D uring the long reign of Queen Victoria she once spoke unkindly but with a plenitude, when she exclaimed her famous comment that: “We are not amused!”, meaning—supposedly—the word of the English royals in their role as the reigning monarch, of the then entire “British Empire” on which “the sun never sets”, was, of course, quite supportive of late father’s Royal Proclamation of 1763, especially, that part which concerned the forever present rights and protection of her North American “In- dians”, who were located within the vast areas of the English colonial territories of the “New World”. All was following the final conquest of “New France”. Of course, there was the demise of “New England”, which ultimately became absorbed by the United States of America, and the demarcation agreement of the 49th parallel, which made the distinction between the new “American”, to the south, and the very first “Province of Canada”, established in 1869/91. (This period also saw the collapse of the British colonies, followed suite and became, respectively, the Provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and eventually Prince Edward Island. However, the former extremely massive “Province of Quebec”, possessed by France, was reduced to what is today known simply as the Province of Quebec. But all remained a British possession to 1867 and until the autonomy of 1862, give or take a “Statute of West- mister” or two in the interim.

The years 1840 to 1844 were a wonderful time for Jacob Corrigal and his unwed Métis adult children, because they had left behind them the harsh decades of life, living in the rugged Rupert’s land, beginning in 1790 until 1840. The family’s futures were planned, they were ordered, they were obeyed, they were destined. In this instance, an Orkney, Scot- land, born father’s lawful will, with a clearly well intended desire to benefit his named children and grandchildren. Regrettably, the Cor- rigals, for a wide variety of reasons; not the least of which was that their Metis status was seen derogatorily as being an “Indian” could not possi- bly inherit wealth, directly, even as a truly intended beneficiary, or even of one’s own European “white-skin”, and in this instance, an Orkney, Scot- land, born father’s lawful will, with a clearly well intended desire to benefit his named children and grandchildren. Apparently, there was no such thing as true “Access to Civil Justice” for Aboriginals in those days. This matter of “Access to Justice” brings up another contemporary subject which is always relevant.

Beginning at least in 2005 the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, The Right Honourable Bever- ley McLachlin, PC, CS, has been ask- ing, quite publicly and frequently, for a legal solution to the problem of giving legal “Access to Justice” to those Canadians who do not have the means for “Access to Justice”. It is therefore the opinion of this writer that while the Chief Justice has not specifically referred to the need for “Access to Civil Justice”, it seems obvious that the Chief Justice has been extremely well taken care of, financially, by either our per- sonal taxes alone, and/or through the federal governments’ borrowing of money on which we the tax-payer contribute toward the payments on the borrowed debt, and the inter- est on that debt, or more and more taxation. The problem appears to be that we Canadians can pay incom- plete amounts of money for Criminal Justice court actions; for police, lawyers, judges, courts, jails and penitentiary etc. expenses, but there is simply no money available for acceptable or urgent Civil Justice court actions. In summary then, we who are the unhappiest masses of the middleclass are likely to be too affluent for legal assistance through the so-called “Legal Aid” plan, and not sufficiently affluent enough to pay the huge cost of a desired “Civil Court Action”, as a plaintiff, without having possible to sell our homes and all our possessions. Criminals don’t have to pay a cent when con- victed and incarcerated; but we the honest citizens are truly doomed what the good Chief Justice is seeking as a remedy, namely, better and more available “Access to Justice” for all, including those who wish to go be- fore the courts, as a plaintiff, and with a reasonable cause for non-criminal court action, even in some instances without the legal “hammer” of the “Statute of Limitation” prevailing.

Finally, I believe the Chief Justice and the Supreme Court of Canada needs all the help it can get from all of us, in order to solve the problems found in the need to obtain a true “Access to Justice” in Canada, espe- cially so, in matters of the wanting of Civil Law changes. A great deal of money will be needed in order to meet such qualified civil actions; therefore, could the “Lottery” systems in Canada not pay half of all major top-line wins to the Department of Justice, earmarked for justified Civil Actions? That way we could all benefit when one of our fellow Canadian citizens is arrested and incarcerated; the Department of Justice could and per- haps should administer the necessary establishment of policy and the req- uisite funds made available, in Trust, for such approved civil actions al- lowed. Failure would mean an even greater loss of respect for the “Rule of Law” throughout Canada =

ALBERTA

Neil Young tour raises $500,000 for ACFN

Neil Young finished his Honour the Treaties tour in the backyard of Alberta’s major oilsands companies on January 19, bringing in $500,000 in support of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation’s (ACFN) legal defense against the expansion of the Athabasca oilsands. This is a letter of support from 20 Canadian actors, authors, musicians and scientists.

The biggest project the ACFN, supported by the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA), is opposed to is Shell’s expansion of its Jackpine Mine. The ACFN’s expansion bring will the mine’s output to 300,000 bar- rels per day.

The ACFN and the MNA argue the project will harm land, damage culturally and historically significant, and have not been ad- equately consulted by Shell Canada.

The ACFN’s legal defense fund will receive 100 per cent of proceeds raised from the conc- ert tour — will go towards fights against challenges on projects and legal challenges.

Source: Fort McMurray Today

BRITISH COLUMBIA

“Vive Les Voyageur”

Festival

From January 25-26, 2014, rep- resentatives from the Métis Nation of British Columbia (MNBC) at- tended the Vive Les Voyageur Festival which was held at Historic Fort Langley Site in British Columbia. The event, hosted by Parks Canada, cele- brated the vibrant Métis-Canadian culture that thrives today in British Columbia, and first emerged in the region when the Hudson’s Bay Com- pany arrived in 1827 at Fort Langley.

Visitors had the opportunity to watch and learn traditional Métis dance, try their hand at finger- weaving, make their own bannock and butter after the bak- ing presentation. They also could fill up on delicious maple taffy and hot chocolate while listening to Voyageur-style music.

One of the highlights of the week- end was the performance by the Golden Era Métis Jiggers. As soon as the music started crowds would gather around and join in the fun.

Source: Métis Nation of British Columbia

SASKATCHEWAN

All-female indigenous talk show takes off in Regina

A show unlike any other has taken to the screens of Regina, Saskatchewan. The Four is an all- female indigenous talk show where four co-hosts share their unique perspectives.

Two of the four co-hosts are Métis, Robin Morin and Shannon Fayant. Morin works as a mentor co-ordinator for a non-profit organi- zation and Fayant works in educa- tion. They are joined by Beawain Fox and co-producer Dr. Shaeuen Pete.

The Four premiered on Jan. 24, 2014, and airs on Tuesday nights at 7 p.m. on Access Communications in Regina, Saskatchewan. Access Communications is sub- mitting the talk show to the Yabik Film Festival and also to the Red Nation Film Festival in the United States.

Source: CBC News

MINNESOTA

MNF, Norwegian House partner on Aboriginal- owned pharmacy

On January 7, 2014 the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) teamed-up with Norwegian House Crew Nation to open an Aboriginal-owned phar- macy.

An agreement is in place to open another at Sagkeeng First Nation and MMF President David Chartrand said the MMF has been talking to Aboriginal groups across Canada and the United States about further expansion.

One outlet of the MMF-owned MEDO Care Pharmacy has been open at the MMF headquarters on Henry Street in Winnipeg for more than a year.

Chartrand said they believe oper- ational systems and enough market intelligence is now in place to allow the enterprise to expand.

There is also interest in provid- ing pharmacy services to Aborigi- nal people. Chartrand said the first three stores could generate as much as $60 million in revenue over a 10- year period.

Source: Martin Cash, Winnipeg Free Press
Métis Nation of Ontario veterans attend levées

Métis veterans started the New Year by attending levées that increased their visibility in communities throughout the province.

Levées are New Year’s Day social events traditionally held by representatives of the Crown but can also be hosted by other officials. This tradition dates back to the 18th century, originating in France.

One levée was held by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Honourable David C. Onley. This will be his last levée as his term is nearing completion.

Held at Queen’s Park in Toronto, the event was well attended by Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizens including MNO Veterans’ Senator Dr. Alis Kennedy CD, OMC.

Métis veterans also attended a levée in honour of Her Worship, Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion. Celebrating her 36 years in office, the event marked Mayor McCallion’s last levée. Held at the Mississauga Civic Centre, the event was attended by many, including MNO Veterans’ Council President Joseph Paquette.

MNO Veterans’ Council

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Veterans’ Council is open to all MNO citizens who have served in the Canadian Forces (Regular Forces and/or Reserves, have completed the Military Occupation Course and were honorably discharged). If you fit that description or know of a family member or friend that does, the MNO Veterans’ Council wants to hear from them.

Métis veterans pledged to protect this great country and its people, and the MNO Veterans’ Council continues to help them live up to that pledge. The Council represents Métis veterans within the MNO, works with youth and community councils to encourage recognition of veteran contributions and achievements and participates in veterans events. The Council supports veterans by helping where and when it can and works to insure that the great sacrifices made by every veteran are remembered and commemorated.

For more information about the MNO Veterans’ Council and its activities contact the following:

- President Joseph Paquette
  mnovc@rogers.com
  Region 8
- Chair Guy Mandeville
  gmmandeville@sympatico.ca
  Region 8
- Senator Alis Kennedy
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  Region 8
- Treasurer Chris Plummer
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- Woman’s rep Zisa Tessier
  lisa.tessier@yahoo.ca
  Region 7
- Sgt-at-arms Gregg Garratt
  peggarratt63@gmail.com
  Region 7

Beloved MNO citizen and Métis veteran passes

It is with great sadness that I inform you of the passing of Peter Jacques Grisdale. Pete just celebrated his 94th birthday on February 6th. He passed away peacefully the morning of February 13 with his daughter Deb by his side.

Pete like many Métis people grew up being denied his Métis heritage. He would ask his father questions like; why is our skin so dark? And the answer he would receive would be that he spent too much time in the sun. He knew in his heart though that he was Métis even if he was never able to openly be proud of who he was or where he came from.

In his 85th year, Pete learned of a meeting of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Moon River Métis Council and even though he had just undergone a second leg amputation, with the Council’s help he was able to attend the meeting and apply for his MNO citizenship. He had been a citizen since then and was Moon River’s eldest citizen.

Pete had many accomplishments. He loved to hunt and fish, was a formidable trapper, a guide, and a boat builder. He was an amazing gunsmith, even making his own gun stocks. He was even quite the artist and he loved woodworking and created unbelievable leather work. Eight years ago Pete became a published author, when he wrote his autobiography. During a presentation honouring Pete at the 2011 MNO Annual General Assembly (AGA) President Gary Lipinski congratulated Pete for his many achievements commenting that his shining example demonstrated that it is never too late for someone to re-claim their Métis heritage.

Pete was also a Métis veteran who proudly served his country in World War II as a Royal Engineer. At the 2011 AGA, the MNO Veterans Council presented Pete with an Eagle Feather and Métis National Council (MNC) President Clement Chartier recognized his military service by presenting him with the Order of the Métis Nation, which is the highest honour the MNC can bestow. He was also recognized by the MNO Veterans’ Council with a Louis Riel certificate in 2013.

Pete’s legacy will be forever remembered in the many publications that the MNO Moon River Métis Council has published over the last several years. He was a remarkable man and will be missed by many.

A celebration of life will be held in the spring.

Beloved MNO citizen and Métis veteran passes

Submitted by: Louise Goulding, MNO Deputy Chief Captain of the Hunt
Statement from MNA President on Hirsekorn case

On January 23, 2014, the Supreme Court of Canada announced that it would not hear an appeal on the Hirsekorn case. As reported in past issues of the Métis Voyageur, the Hirsekorn case involved a Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) citizen, Garry Hirsekorn, who was charged with illegally hunting in the Cypress Hills in southeastern Alberta. The MNA had defended Hirsekorn on the basis that while Hirsekorn was not from the area where he was hunting, because Métis were a highly mobile people, his harvesting rights should be extended to the Cypress Hills, which was a traditional area for Métis harvesting.

After being unsuccessful at several lower courts, the MNA asked the Supreme Court to hear the case but the Court declined the request. Following the decision, MNA President Audrey Poitras released this statement on January 23, 2014:

As you may have already heard, the Supreme Court of Canada did not agree to hear our appeal in the Hirsekorn case. This is extremely disappointing, but we remain committed to our ‘hunt for justice’ in this province. Alberta Métis are not going anywhere and we will not be deterred in continuing to advance our rights as a distinct Aboriginal people.

Next week, the MNA Provincial Council will be meeting with our lawyers and discussing options and next steps. We will be consulting with MNA members, locals and regions to see what our people want to do. I will also be meeting with the new Minister of Aboriginal Affairs in Alberta in order to discuss issues related to Métis harvesting and Métis consultation in order to see if some progress can be made on these issues through negotiations.

As MNA President, I still strongly believe we have harvesting rights in southern Alberta that flow from our ancestors—the Métis buffalo hunters of the plains. I stand by our position that we have rights throughout Alberta as a part of the larger Métis Nation. We will continue to fight for the recognition of our rights throughout the province, but we will need to develop new strategies and approaches as well as respect the law as it currently stands in Alberta while we continue to push forward.

We have to remember that our ancestors never stopped fighting to have their distinct identity as Métis and rights recognized. Neither will we! One day true justice will be achieved for our people. Unfortunately, today wasn’t one of those days. But we will start writing a new chapter starting tomorrow.

Best regards... Audrey

On January 23, 2014, the Supreme Court of Canada announced that it would not hear the appeal on the Hirsekorn case. As reported in past issues of the Métis Voyageur, the Hirsekorn case involved a Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) citizen, Garry Hirsekorn, who was charged with illegally hunting in the Cypress Hills in southeastern Alberta. The MNA had defended Hirsekorn on the basis that while Hirsekorn was not from the area where he was hunting, because Métis were a highly mobile people, his harvesting rights should be extended to the Cypress Hills, which was a traditional area for Métis harvesting.

After being unsuccessful at several lower courts, the MNA asked the Supreme Court to hear the case but the Court declined the request. Following the decision, MNA President Audrey Poitras released this statement on January 23, 2014:

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Lakehead University is committed to helping Aboriginal 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
Lakehead University Native Students Association
Nanabijou Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement
Lakehead University Aboriginal Alumni Chapter
Elders Program
The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) congratulates Amanda Desbiens on her new position within the MNO and is pleased to welcome six new staff members to MNO offices in Ottawa, Dryden, Kingston, Bancroft and Timmins.

AMANDA DESBIENS

Amanda, who has been part of MNO team since 2005, has now become the Community Support Services Supervisor and continues to work out of the MNO North Bay office. Previously a Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program Coordinator, Amanda gained valuable experience working with children, youth and families in the areas of prenatal health, FASD and addictions. Amanda completed her studies at Canadore College where she received a diploma from the Drug and Alcohol program. She also holds a diploma in Social Work.

DANIELLE DELARONDE

Danielle joins the MNO Dryden office in the position Community Action Program for Children Coordinator. Danielle comes to the MNO from L’arche Canada where she worked as a Developmental Service Worker. Danielle also has experience as a teacher’s assistant. Danielle holds a diploma from the Educational Assistant Program at Confederation College.

JUDY GREENWOOD-SPeERS

Judy joins the MNO in the position of Site Manager with the MNO Urban Aboriginal Services in Kingston.

JENNIFER B. LORD

Jennifer joins the MNO Ottawa office in the position of Manager of Mental Health and Victim Services. Jennifer is a passionate and dynamic Métis woman originally from Lac Ste. Anne (Edmonton, Alberta) who embraces her traditional roles as wife and mother. Jennifer has more than eight years of experience in the field of Violence against Aboriginal women. You may already be familiar with her advocacy work on missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls through the October 4 Sisters In Spirit Vigils and the Faceless Dolls Project.

ELLE SARE

Elle joins the MNO North Bay office in the position of Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Coordinator. Elle comes to the MNO from Larche Canada where she worked as a Developmental Service Worker. Elle also has experience working with the Alzheimer’s Society.

ROBIN SIMPSON

Robin joins the MNO Timmins office in the position of Community Wellness Coordinator.

RYAN PLANTE

Ryan joins the MNO Timmins office in the position of Community Wellness Coordinator. Ryan comes to the MNO from the Jubilee Centre in Timmins where he worked with clients facing mental health and addiction issues. Previous to that, Ryan worked as an outreach worker at a homeless shelter in Sudbury, ON. Ryan holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Laurentian University and a diploma in Community and Justice Services from Loyalist College. He is also currently working towards a certificate in Addiction Studies.

The MNO is very excited to have these new staff members join the team and congratulates Amanda on her new position!
On November 21, 2013, the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) announced completion of the first phase of preliminary assessment in collaboration with eight of the 21 communities that expressed interest in learning about Canada’s plan for the safe, long-term management of used nuclear fuel. Preliminary assessments are the third of nine steps in a multi-year process for evaluating potential suitability to host a deep geological repository for Canada’s used nuclear fuel and an associated Centre of Expertise. Recognizing community leadership of expertise.

Four communities will continue to more detailed study; all eight recognized for leadership

At this milestone in the process, the NWMO is recognizing the contribution all eight communities have made to advancing Canada’s plan for safely managing used nuclear fuel over the long term. Through their multi-year participation, each community has built understanding of the project and helped shape and deliver engagement and ensure meaningful involvement of citizens.

“Through their leadership, these communities have advanced this major national project on behalf of all Canadians,” said Kathryn Shaver, Vice-President of APM Engagement and Site Selection at the NWMO. “Each has helped design and lead dialogues to ensure important questions about safety are asked and learning continues. By working within their communities, and through early outreach to neighbours and Aboriginal peoples, they have underscored the importance of working together and helping set the stage for the next several years of study.”

In acknowledging these significant contributions to the process, the NWMO will provide $400,000 to each of the eight communities upon establishment of a Community Well-Being Reserve Fund. Administered by the communities, these funds will support continuing efforts to build community sustainability and well-being.

Recognizing community leadership

Next steps

For communities that continue, the next phase of work involves more intensive community learning and engagement. Work will take on a broader focus to include First Nations and Métis peoples, and surrounding communities.

“The NWMO acknowledges and respects the unique status and rights of Aboriginal peoples – First Nations, Inuit and Métis,” said Bob Watts, NWMO Director of Aboriginal Community Relations. “The NWMO has sought to develop its processes and plans with the involvement of Métis people, laying a foundation for ongoing consultations and engagement that are respectful of traditional practices and approaches to decision-making.”

Annual updates on Adaptive Phased Management during the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Annual Assembly and a close working relationship with the MNO have provided excellent opportunities to share information on this work. Community meetings in 2013 and in the continuing work in Phase 2 will build the strong foundation that is so important to mutual learning and ensuring that decision-making takes into account the interests of the whole community and includes the wisdom that can be derived from Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge.

As individual studies are completed, the NWMO will continue to gradually narrow its focus to areas with strong potential to be suitable for hosting a repository. Ultimately, the project will only proceed at a site that can safely contain and isolate used nuclear fuel, with the involvement of the interested community, First Nations and Métis peoples, and surrounding communities, working together to implement it.

It is expected to take several more years to complete the necessary studies to identify a preferred site and an informed and willing host.

To learn more, please contact:

Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO)
22 St. Clair Avenue East
Sixth Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M4T 2S3 Canada
Tel: 416.934.9814
Email: contactus@nwmo.ca
Website: www.nwmo.ca

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) wants to hear from its citizens about this project. If you have any questions or comments please e-mail consultations@metisnation.org or call the MNO Land, Resources and Consultations Branch at 1-888-466-6684.
Métis Voyageur  
Winter 2014, Issue no. 79

Passages

MNO remembers Nelson Mandela, an honorary Métis

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) mourns the loss of Nelson Mandela. An inspiration to the world, Mandela’s legacy will always be remembered. The MNO pays tribute to this great man by sharing the story of how Mandela became an honorary Métis citizen.

Mandela became an honorary Métis during his visit to Ottawa on September 24, 1998, when he was presented with a Métis sash by the late Métis Senator John B. Boucher. Boucher had the privilege of wrapping the sash around Mandela’s waist and presenting Mandela with an honorary Métis name, “Diamant”, which means Diamond in French. Mandela wore the sash proudly for the remainder of the day, even during his induction into the Order of Canada.

A distinctive honour, the Métis sash is given to special people as a symbol of honour, pride and respect. This monumental moment was captured in a beautiful portrait which is and will remain on display at the MNO head office in Ottawa. Mandela’s struggle for justice and equality holds deep meaning to the Métis. His courage and selflessness serves as an example of excellence to the world.

Mandela was a visionary hero; he truly ‘belongs to the ages.’

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Submitted by: Rick Zonadah Meilleur

Remembering “Augie”

Rick Zonadah Meilleur con- sidered himself very fortunate to have met Canadian-born actor August Schellenberg in 2004 while visiting Thessalon, Ontario. Schellenberg, who is fondly nicknamed “Augie”, is a famous Aboriginal actor who had major roles in such films as The Black Robe, Free Willy and The New World to name only a few. In 2012, he performed the title role in the all-Aboriginal production of William Shakespeare’s King Lear at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa (see page 15).

Meilleur remembers meeting Schellenberg in Thessalon when he was playing music with the famous Giroux family. After a performance, he decided to go to a local restaurant. Proud of his ancestry, Meilleur’s personalized license plate said “Métis”, which attracted Schellenberg’s attention.

After leaving the restaurant, Meilleur found Schellenberg and his wife, Joan waiting by his car. “He told me that he wanted to meet a Métis from the Northern part of Ontario,” explained Meilleur. They headed back inside the restaurant and shared stories and some good laughs, which led to them becoming good friends. “He was a people person, a down to earth kind of guy,” said Meilleur. “We kept in contact and shared gifts. Anyone who knew Augie, knows the kind of person he was.”

Sadly, Schellenberg passed away on August 15, 2013 at his home in Dallas, Texas after a long battle with lung cancer.

“I was saddened to hear that my good friend had passed,” said Meilleur. “I will miss our conversations and his laugh that always came straight from the heart. Be in peace my brother.”

He was a people person, a down to earth kind of guy... I will miss our conversations and his laugh that always came straight from the heart.”
MNO citizens join community members walk to oppose violence against women

From Bancroft This Week

A group of about 75 Bancroft community members came out to walk and participate in a vigil marking the 25th National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, which takes place every year on Dec. 6.

On Dec. 6, 1989 a man killed 14 young women at the École Polytechnique in Montreal because they were women. This awful event galvanized Canadians to create a yearly day of remembrance for all the women and girls who have suffered violence, and to reflect on and to eliminate it.

Support for the local walk came from the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), Maggie’s Resource Centre for Women, local members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, and other concerned community members.

Bancroft is one community that has been observing this day of remembrance since the beginning. Bancroft Deputy Mayor Wayne Wiggins and Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk Hazel Lambe attended on behalf of Mayor Berence Jenkins who was out of town.

During the event, Marsha Deporter, MNO Victim Services Coordinator read a message issued by MNO President Gary Lipinski on December 6, which included this passage:

Part of the legacy of colonialism is the cycle of intergenerational trauma resulting from systemic abuse that has left generations of Aboriginal women particularly vulnerable to acts of violence and crime. There are over 3,000 missing or presumed dead Aboriginal women across Canada and many communities have walked to bring awareness, to bring change and to acknowledge and remember these lost women.

We have called for action and public inquiries into the missing and murdered Aboriginal women, but we still wait for answers.

Deporter also spoke about the collective work of a number of Aboriginal groups in Canada to address these serious problems, and the current working group’s report to government ministers responsible for women’s issues and Aboriginal affairs.

Keeping the tradition: A Métis hunting tale

Lucille Nelson has been an avid hunter for the past 25 years. She usually hunts with a rifle but on Christmas Day 2012 she received a compound bow so with a little practice, the technique of using a bow came back to her in no time.

As a young adult Nelson hunted with a recurve bow so with a little practice, the technique of using a bow came back to her in no time.

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Wanting to continue her success when she realized her great accomplishment, Nelson was on a mission to get the meat up so she purchased a cow tag and waited for the groundhog to make its appearance. After waiting for about 10 minutes, she spotted it and at 27 yards away she took her shot and the rest is history.

Wanting to continue her success with the bow, this August Nelson and her husband purchased bear tags and went hunting for a week. From 22 yards away, again with a single shot, she managed to catch her very first bear. Adrenaline rushed through her veins when she realized her great accomplishment. Nelson was able to retrieve a good amount of meat from the bear and it also provided a lot of traditional necessity. Nelson gave the bear fat to her local elders for making medicine and glue and the hide went to making moccasins.

Next on her hunting list was a moose. Nelson could not wait for the September harvest to arrive. But before she could go hunting for moose, she needed work on her pull weight. Nelson was on a mission to get the weight up so she purchased a cow tag and went hunting. Unfortunately, after a long week it came to a close and all she was able to catch was three grouse. Nelson was determined to get more volunteers for next season.

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Credit River Métis Council members embarked on a community garden, a small venture which has yielded substantial rewards.

The Métis Community Garden Project was created by Council members Rochelle Ethier and Councillor Darlene Lent. The Métis Community Garden grew over 500 pounds of fresh produce throughout the season. This fresh produce was donated by the Council to needy Métis families and to charities such as The Knight’s Table and St. Leonard’s House.

To highlight the project and its success, Ethier created the short film documenting the garden project that was shown at the Council’s Riel Day gathering. The documentary was created in hopes that it will inspire more volunteers for next season. After the viewing of the documentary, there was thunderous applause from the audience for Councillor Lent and Ethier.

"This is a great way to promote one of the positive ways Métis give back to their communities. Not just the Métis communities but to the towns, municipalities and the province we live in," said MNO Credit River Métis Council President Richard Cuddy. "We are excellent partners and collaborators. We care, we share, and our culture and traditions have so very much to offer.”

Regional Councillor for Wards 3 and 4 in the City of Brampton John Sanderson was in attendance at the Riel celebration and was so impressed with the project and its outcomes that he plans on personally donating to project.

Community Garden grew over 450 pounds of fresh produce throughout the season. This fresh produce was donated by the Council to needy Métis families and to charities such as The Knight’s Table and St. Leonard’s House. The garden also provided most of the vegetables for the Council’s Louis Riel Day gathering.

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Métis Voyageur
Winter 2014, Issue no. 79

MNO Hamilton-Wentworth Métis Council Christmas potluck

Submitted by: Jerry Clarke, President of the MNO Hamilton-Wentworth Métis Council

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Hamilton-Wentworth Métis Council held a Christmas potluck on Saturday, December 14, at the Church of Latter Day Saints in Hamilton. Even with the onset of a terrible winter storm, a large number of MNO citizens attended the event.

It was a festive gathering that boasted an array of live festive music, including the sounds of the Trailblazers, a women’s drumming group, along with the musical talents of guitarist Jordan Clarke and accompanying vocalist Jennifer Cain.

This family fun event also featured a children’s colouring corner and medicine bag craft table organized by Tobias Clarke as well as a drum and sacred medicine display organized by newly elected Council Traditional Knowledge Keeper, Leon Fleury. Of course, there was also a great variety of food and drink.

The Council used the event to introduce its newly elected members. Newly elected Council President, Jerry Clarke, was the acting Master of Ceremonies for the day.

A great success, the event was organized by Margaret Fleury, Terese Clarke and newly elected Council Chair Suzanne Jackson.

Not your typical “Jam Night”

Submitted by: Larry Ferris

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Georgian Bay Métis Council youth group recently held a “Jam Night” without any musical instruments. Instead of a traditional “Jam Night”, council member Janice Ferris and youth members made homemade strawberry jam from scratch.

The youth were included throughout the entire process from “mushing” the berries to mixing and of course sampling. All participants were able to bring the strawberry jam home with them and some was donated to elders.

Métis family Christmas potluck

Submitted by: Fern Tremblay

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Timmins recently held their annual Métis Family Christmas Potluck at St. Dominique Parish Hall. Roughly 80 adults and 30 youth attended the festive occasion. Even jolly old Saint Nick made an appearance.

A special treat for the youngsters, Santa handed out gifts and posed for photos before heading back to the North Pole to get ready for the big day.

The event was enjoyed by all and kicked off the Christmas season surrounded by loved ones and friends.

Join the MNO Facebook community!

Take part in the conversation and connect with fellow MNO community members from near and far.

The page features:
- Daily postings and updates on weekdays
- Photo galleries of pictures often not seen elsewhere
- Fun and friendly comments from the MNO community

Don’t miss out. Join the over 800 MNO fans who have already liked our page!
**Métis Voyageur**

**COUNCILS participate in MNO Governance & Finance Training**

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) benefits immensely from the dedicated volunteers who are members of its Chartered Community Councils. These hard-working individuals spend hundreds of hours building and strengthening their Métis communities.

The MNO developed the Governance and Finance course to help community councils perform their important work. Recently, the MNO Sudbury Métis Council and the Peterborough and District Wapiti Métis Council participated in this two-day seminar.

The MNO Sudbury Métis Council participated in the training from November 30-December 1. It was facilitated by Glen Lipinski, MNO Community Relations Coordinator and Hank Rowlinson, MNO Community Relations Manager.

The MNO Peterborough and District Wapiti Métis Council took part in the training from January 25-26 and it was facilitated by Lipinski and Beth Honsberger, MNO Community Relations Coordinator.

The training explains the role of community councils as the MNOs local governments, whose structure and purpose is coordinated through each council’s charter agreement with the MNO. The course covers everything from how to run effective meetings and engage citizens in council activities to budgeting and the various financial practices, regulations and legislation that community councils follow.

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**ADVERTISING**

As the voice of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), the Métis Voyageur is the best vehicle for reaching one of the fastest growing demographic groups in the province. It is also a respected source of information about Métis issues and events that is used by government, business and educational institutions across Ontario.

**Rates** for Corporations & Governments

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**Rates** for MNO Community Councils, MNO Citizens & other Métis Governments

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*Double the price for an ad to appear in full colour.*

Multiply the price by 2.5 for an ad to appear on the back cover (always in full colour). Rates effective as of October 13th, 2011.

**Advertisement Sizes**

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⅛ page - 8" x 5" or 2.5" x 16" or 10" x 4"
⅛ page - 4" x 2.5" or 1.25" x 8" or 5" x 2"
Listing (business card) - 2" x 3.5"

**2014-15 Publishing Schedule**

- March 7, 2014 (publication date April 11)
- May 2, 2014 (publication date June 16)
- September 6, 2014 (publication date October 1)
- November 1, 2014 (publication date December 12)

For more information please contact Alysha@metisnation.org
MNO Infinite Reach hosts the largest Métis specific event ever held at the University of Waterloo

A Métis cultural event held in November at the University of Waterloo was not only a great success but it was also the largest Métis specific event the university has seen. The event was hosted by Alicia Blore who is the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Infinite Reach Facilitator for the University.

This was Blore’s first time hosting an event in her position as a MNO Infinite Reach Facilitator. The event was held at the university’s Aboriginal Education Centre and provided an opportunity for Métis culture to the university’s students and faculty. It also served as an outreach opportunity for Métis and other indigenous students who were unaware of the university’s Aboriginal community.

The event had an amazing turn-out of roughly 100 people. The opening prayer was presented by the MNO Grand River Métis Council President Cora Bunn and Senator Levis on Métis people, history and culture, including background on the MNO.

Other aspects of the event included a finger weaving workshop, several display booths, a community development board where attendees wrote down what community means to them, and traditional bannock and hot cedar tea tastings.

The event would not have been complete without the toe tapping sounds of traditional Métis fiddling. Accordingly, the talented Blore played the fiddle and taught several audience members how to jig the “Red River Jig.”

Blore’s favourite moment at the event was when a Métis student who was not very familiar with the university’s Aboriginal centre or very knowledgeable of his Métis heritage, dropped in and tried his first piece of bannock!

A first of its kind at the university, many of the attendees have requested for more Métis events in the future.

Submitted by: Alicia Blore, MNO Infinite Reach Facilitator for the University of Waterloo

Hanging with the Hendricks

MNO citizen to be featured in documentary

In 2012, MNO staff member and citizen Theresa Hendricks and family were volunteer actors in the all-Aboriginal production of William Shakespeare’s King Lear at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa.

Starting the late August Schellenberg, the production was Schellenberg’s long-time vision which after 40 years, became a reality. The play was a great success and it is currently being made into a documentary.

Creating the documentary entitled The Making of King Lear is the production company Ungrateful Daughters Productions (UDP) Documentary Inc.

The Hendricks family was approached by UDP and asked if they were willing to be featured in the documentary. Eager to take part in the project, Theresa, her husband Keith and their two daughters Marina and Jordan were set to film a “day in the life” sequence.

Each day a camera crew would follow one of the family members from morning to night. They followed the girls to school, Keith to his job as a Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Officer whose current position is with the Prime Minister Protective Detail, and Theresa to the MNO head office.

The documentary is set to air on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN). A release date is yet to be determined but it is anticipated it will complete by late 2014.

TOP: MNO Infinite Reach Facilitator Alicia Blore (left) with University of Waterloo students who attended the Métis cultural event. MIDDLE: Bannock and hot cedar tea tastings. BOTTOM: Alicia Blore (right) teaching an attendee how to finger weave.
"We Are Here" exhibit recognized by the Ontario Museum Association

Awarded Honourable Mention for Excellence in Exhibitions

Submitted by: Richard Cuddy, President of the MNO Credit River Métis Council

In 2013, the Peel Art Gallery Museum and Archives (PAMA) embarked on a project to represent the Aboriginal identity and history in the Region of Peel. Accordingly, an exhibition entitled "We Are Here" or "On Nay Icit" in Michif, was created.

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) was heavily involved in this project having three citizens part of the project committee. Representing Métis on committee were MNO Vice-chair Sharon McBride, MNO Credit River Métis Council President Richard Cuddy and MNO citizen Bill Morrison. The committee worked with the Vilnis Cultural Design Works to make the project a reality. Through innovative presentation and authentic voice, this exhibition provided visitors with an understanding of the Aboriginal experience over the past two centuries.

On November 7, the "We Are Here" exhibit was recognized by the Ontario Museum Association (OMA) for outstanding contributions to the Ontario museum community. The exhibit was awarded the Honourable Mention for Excellence in Exhibitions at the 2013 Awards of Excellence Ceremony in Markham, Ontario.

MNO Vice-chair McBride and MNO Credit River Métis Council President Cuddy attended the ceremony and accepted the award on behalf of all Métis. The award was presented by Honourable Michael Chan, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

The OMA awards are designed to recognize outstanding contributions to the Ontario museum community with an emphasis on innovation, to advance the museum profession in Ontario and to encourage high standards of excellence in the museum field.

PAMA generously donated a duplicate of one of the actual display panels from the exhibit to the MNO Credit River Métis Council where it will soon be on display at the Council office.

The "We Are Here" exhibit will continue to be displayed at PAMA with the intention to continually update the content, keeping the experience fresh and expanding the learning potential.

MNO co-chairs first Annual Investing in Aboriginal Canada (Mawiomi) Conference

Submitted by: Jide Afolabi, Managing Director, The Commons Institute

December 9–11, 2013 marked the first Annual Investing in Aboriginal Canada (Mawiomi) Conference which was held at the Ottawa Convention Centre.

The conference was presented by The Commons Institute, an Ontario-based policy promotion organization. This newly created event brings together Aboriginal leaders, Canadian businesses, entrepreneurs, researchers, government actors, consultants, negotiators and many others from across Canada. The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) was approached by the institute to Chair the conference. MNO Manager of Natural Resources and Consultations, James Wagar, was chosen to Chair the conference alongside Steve Van-Isleified from the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council.

The three-day conference offered updates on matters across the full spectrum of Aboriginal affairs. It enabled business to business matchmaking and featured an exhibition of artisan goods and services. The conference also showcased business offerings, new research findings and best practices. Emphasis was placed on social issues and business as well as education. Discussions included resource extraction partnerships, the duty to consult, treaty relations, education, financial management, and corporate social responsibility.

This conference truly illustrated the potential that exists within the Aboriginal community... We are organized, we are experienced and we have the resources needed to see tremendous leaps forward in the years to come.” — James Wagar

Notable speakers included: Jean Paul Gladu, Canadian Centre for Aboriginal Business; Kelly J. Lindsay, Aboriginal Human Resource Council, Amanda Liptrot, Southern Ontario Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative; Chris Henderson, Aboriginal Power on Clean Energy and the Future of Canada’s First Peoples; Michelle Porter and Perry Barnaby, Abenaki Associates; Amy Desjarlais, Dendam Kanonhsa; Carolyn Remett, Liberal Party; Rob Clarke, Conservative Party; and Scott Munro, First Nations Financial Management Board.

In addition to the conference, the First Nations Financial Management Board provided a dinner on December 9 at the Ottawa Convention Centre.

A raffle was also held with proceeds benefiting the Koochta Charity, a charity created by the Aboriginal Human Resource Council.

The conference was a safe space designed to facilitate discussions on Aboriginal issues and provided organization representatives the opportunity of working together to create positive change for the future. Relationships were built, networks were expanded, all while gaining more knowledge.

A bottlenose dolphin, called Winter, came to visit the conference.
On August 1, 2013 TransCanada Corporation announced plans to move forward with the Energy East Pipeline project based on binding, long-term contracts received from producers and refiners.

“We are very pleased with the outcome of the Open Season for the Energy East Pipeline held earlier this year and are excited to move forward with a major project that will bring many benefits across Canada,” said Russ Girling, TransCanada’s president and chief executive officer. “This is a historic opportunity to connect the oil resources of western Canada to the consumers of eastern Canada, creating jobs, tax revenue and energy security for all Canadians for decades to come.”

Girling added that interest in Energy East supports refiners’ desire to have access to a stable and reliable supply of Western Canadian crude oil – pushing out more expensive crude oil from foreign regimes. Eastern Canada currently imports approximately 700,000 barrels per day. It also confirms the desire producers have to support safe and innovative ways to get their crude oil to market.

“Energy East is one solution for transporting crude oil but the industry also requires additional pipelines such as Keystone XL to transport growing supplies of Canadian and U.S. crude oil to existing North American markets,” added Girling. “Both pipelines are required to meet the need for safe and reliable pipeline infrastructure and are underpinned with binding, long-term agreements.”

The Energy East Pipeline project involves converting a portion of natural gas pipeline capacity in approximately 3,000 kilometres (1,864 miles) of TransCanada’s existing Canadian Mainline to crude oil service and constructing approximately 1,400 kilometres (870 miles) of new pipeline. The pipeline will transport crude oil from receipt points in Alberta and Saskatchewan to delivery points in Montreal, the Quebec City region and Saint John, New Brunswick, greatly enhancing producer access to Eastern Canadian and international markets. The pipeline will terminate at Canaport in Saint John, New Brunswick where TransCanada and Irving Oil have formed a joint venture to build, own and operate a new deep-water marine terminal.

With 60 years of pipeline experience, TransCanada has learned that to advance a project of this size, open and meaningful discussions with Aboriginal communities and stakeholder groups are key. TransCanada has been out in the field collecting data and engaging with Aboriginal and stakeholder groups for the past several months as part of its initial design and planning work for the project and that will continue.

Currently, TransCanada operates its facilities near many Aboriginal communities across Canada and prides itself on the positive partnerships it has developed over many years. TransCanada believes that by developing positive, long-term relationships with the Aboriginal communities whose lives may be impacted by its activities, it can conduct its business while respecting community interests.

TransCanada has developed an Aboriginal Relations Policy that is guided by trust, respect, and responsibility. This policy must be flexible to address the legal, social and economic realities of Aboriginal communities across Canada.

TransCanada is a leading North American energy infrastructure company with one of the best safety records in the industry. Energy East will be designed and operated with safety being a top priority – that is what Canada expects, and that is what TransCanada will deliver. TransCanada recognizes that oil is essential to our daily lives, from heating homes to the thousands of products relied on every day. We will ensure this oil is delivered in a safe and responsible way.

TransCanada intends to proceed with the necessary regulatory applications for approvals to construct and operate the pipeline project and terminal facilities in early 2014.

For more information on the Energy East Project, please visit www.energyeastpipeline.com and for TransCanada’s complete Aboriginal Relations Policy, please visit www.transcanada.com.

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) wants to hear from its citizens about this project. If you have any questions or comments please e-mail consultations@metisnation.org or call the MNO Land, Resources and Consultations Branch at 1-888-466-6684.

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Citizens and staff of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) know Rebekah Wilson very well. Not only is she a proud citizen who worked at the MNO as a Communications and Registry Assistant, she was also an indigenous dancer in the opening ceremonies of the 2010 winter Olympics. A Sheridan Institute of Technology Alumni, Wilson currently works for Motivate Canada as a GEN7 Program Coordinator. Adding to this list of accomplishments, Wilson has now become a successful author.

Wilson recently authored a children’s book entitled *The Tiny Voyageur: A Young Girl’s Discovery of Métis History*. The story is beautifully illustrated by her father Jeffrey Wilson and is also available in French.

The story is inspired by Wilson’s late great grandfather Rudy Couture and his journey of identity. “He hid his Métis heritage for many years as it was something he was taught to be ashamed of,” explained Wilson. “In his early 80s, he began to speak about his own family history …For the remainder of his life, my grandpa Couture was fiercely proud to be Métis. He was a huge part of the inspiration behind the book because seeing how proud he was made me proud to be Métis as well.”

The idea for the story arose when Wilson was working on a project while a journalism student at Sheridan College. “We were asked to create a fictional project about the part of our history that we most identified with,” explained Wilson. “I had learned about my own Métis heritage about four years before and felt a strong connection to my roots so I chose to write this story. I had a lot of great feedback on it, and in turn applied for funding from the MNO and it has been such an exciting and worthwhile process!”

Wilson is thankful to the MNO for providing funding that helped her make the concept of the book into a reality. Wilson received funding through MNO’s Métis Culture Based Economic Development Grant (MCED) program. This grant is available to MNO citizens seeking to launch an arts or culture related career.

Wilson hopes that her book will create a greater awareness about Métis history and heritage in young people. “I’m so proud of my Métis roots and I want others to feel the same, and for those who are not Métis, just for them to get an idea of the culture and know who we are.”

Wilson’s book already has one big fan, MNO President Gary Lipinski. “It is great to see our youth in touch with their Métis heritage,” said President Lipinski, “this is yet another example of Métis youth succeeding and becoming all they can be. We are very proud of Rebekah.”

MNO staff member appointed to Carleton University Aboriginal Education Council

Sheila Grantham who is the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Post-Secondary Officer and a Carleton University PhD student has been appointed to sit on Carleton University’s new Aboriginal Education Council. Her role is to ensure the Métis perspective is represented in the university’s Aboriginal strategy.

The 33-member council was announced on November 19, 2013. In a statement from Carleton announcing the council’s formation, its purpose was described as “providing knowledge and guidance on programs, courses and services that have an Aboriginal focus and it will be the main resource on education and support needs of Aboriginal students, staff and faculty.”

“I have been a student at Carleton since 2001,” stated Grantham. “Ever since I started there I have worked towards greater inclusivity and supports for indigenous students. I continue this important work in my position at the Métis Nation of Ontario as such my role with the council provides me with a greater voice for Métis and other indigenous students to help ensure that they succeed in school and look to Carleton as a place where they can reach their full potential.”

The council meets once a month and includes Carleton students, staff and faculty, as well as several representatives from First Nation and Inuit communities.

As an indigenous student, I know what it is like to have additional barriers in post-secondary, as such my role with the council provides me with a greater voice for Métis and other indigenous students.”

— Sheila Grantham

MNO Bursary awarded to 11 Algoma University students

On January 15, Algoma University celebrated the academic achievements of its students at its 20th Annual Algoma University Student Awards. Among the numerous awards, 11 Métis students were presented with the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Bursary.

The MNO Bursary is one way the MNO strives to create more opportunities for Métis students in post-secondary education. Recognizing the absence of dedicated post-secondary financial assistance for Métis students, the MNO initiated the bursary program in 1998. Today, 36 post-secondary institutions across Ontario offer the bursary.

Recipients of the bursary include: Diandra Bellerose, Corey Caple, Mitchell Case, Kimberly Cavanagh, Megan Gjos, Jocelynn Morain, Bernadette Pizsey, Taylor Smith, Kristal Strawbridge, Chelsey-Ann Waddell and Lyndsay-Lee Waddell.

Congratulations to these deserving Métis students!

Moving up the ranks
Métis youth benefits from MNO programming

Jessica Boulard is yet another example of a young Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen who has benefited from MNO’s education and training programs.

A recipient of the MNO bursary and participant of the MNO Summer Career Program, Boulard is very grateful for the assistance the MNO has provided her. Assistance she believes allowed her to obtain and achieve her educational goals.

In June 2013, Boulard successfully obtained a master of arts (MA) in psychology, specifically in the experimental stream, at Laurentian University. Boulard’s degree specializes in shared book reading and eye movements, which relates to all child and adult reading activities.

During her studies, Boulard completed her thesis which was recognized by the Canadian Psychology Association. Her thesis entitled “Si je pointe, est-ce que tu regardes?” examines ophthalmic gaze and its translation to “If I point it out to you, do you look at it?” was awarded Certificate of Excellence 2013 from the association.

Through MNO’s Summer Career Program, Boulard obtained the position of Payroll Clerk with Ferus Industrial Contracting, where she still works today. Boulard has moved up the ranks and currently holds the position of Finance and Administrative Manager.

Continuing her work in the field of psychology, Boulard also works part-time at Laurentian University as a Professional Researcher, in collaboration with Dr. Anne Roy-Charland and Dr. Nancy Young, on a research project aiming at developing a process and tool of health self-reporting for Aboriginal children.

This measure will allow health care specialists to evaluate the health status of Francophone Aboriginal children, generate data which will lead to health interventions, and help reduce the unjust disparities related to health care. Part of the project includes the translation and modifications of a questionnaire aiming at evaluating the quality of life of Aboriginal children. Boulard is currently working with Métis children on the Métis-specific component of the research project.

Starting in January 2014, Boulard will begin teaching a course offered by the Psychology Department at Laurentian University entitled “Histoire de la psychologie” (History of Psychology).

The MNO has not only helped Boulard financially through bursaries and summer career placement, but they also allowed her to further her knowledge about Métis culture and traditions.

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Based on the article originally published by Carleton University

Photo Credit: Carleton University

Moving up the ranks
Métis youth benefits from MNO programming

Submitted by: Juliette S. Denis, PCMNO Councillor for Region 5

Jessica Boulard during her graduation at Laurentian University in June 2013.
The Métis Nation of Ontario invites all Métis youth ages 10 – 29 to participate in an exciting poster contest.

Theme of the contest is

“What is Family? What is Safety?”

7 winners will receive one (1) prize each of a Dell 16 GB Android Tablet.

Posters should be created on standard 8.5 x 11 inch paper.

Winners will be awarded according to the following categories:

10 – 14 years – 2 winners
15 – 18 years – 2 winners
19 and older – 3 winners

All entries should be of the original work and submitted via mail. Please do not use fax or email, and do not send copies. Winners will be contacted in writing by April 20, 2014. Should you have any questions, please contact Shelley Gonneville at 1-800-263-4889 or Jason Jamieson at 1-704-474-2767 ext: 308.

All submissions become the sole property of The Métis Nation of Ontario, which can use the posters to for promotional purposes. Artists will be credited when their poster is used.