Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne visits the MNO SYCP facilitators at the 2015 Aboriginal Pavilion during the 2015 Pan AM Games. See stories on pages A9, A10, & A11.

Métis youth experience the 2015 Pan AM & Parapan AM Games

MNO puts Métis culture & communities on display

Crown-Métis Consultation Agreement
Page A3

Representing the Métis at the Pan AM Games
Pages A10 - A11

MNO Annual Report
Three Generations of Métis

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Annual General Assemblies (AGAs) are great family events and therefore it should not be too big of a surprise that they often provide opportunities for various sizes of family reunions. One such small reunion took place at the 2015 AGA in Midland where PCMNO Senator Verna Porter-Brunelle was able to spend quality time with both her daughter Tammy Porter and her granddaughter Victoria Spiers. Tammy is currently on contract with the MNO and working out of the MNO office in North Bay while Victoria is entering Grade 11 where she is contemplating a future in environmental law.

MNO Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council

President
Kim Powley
Treasurer
Shari Smale
Chair
John Konawalchuck
Councillor
Ken Smale
Senator
Brenda Powley
Women’s Representative
Shirley Loubert
Secretary
Stephen Gjos

Letter to the editor:

The following is a personal appeal from an individual. All opinions and information are those of the writer and do not represent the official position of the Métis Nation of Ontario.

Dear MNO citizens:

To start off I would like to tell you about myself. My name is Dawn Archibald and I live in the small northern town of Dryden, Ontario. I am a single mom of an amazing 15 year old son named Seth and I myself recently turned 40. Where did the time go? I own and operate my own small business and I am a part time social media and marketing manager. In my free time I volunteer for Dryden Merchants online, a marketing and selling tool I created on Facebook.

The reason I am writing to you is because I am looking for a little help. I was diagnosed several years ago with a debilitating illness called Ataxia. Ataxia is a rare genetic disorder that is progressive. It causes muscle weakness, fatigue, poor balance, severe lack of mobility and a wide range of other symptoms. There is unfortunately no cure, medicines or treatments available for this disorder. I have been offered the opportunity to attend the Beter a Being Hospital in Bangkok, Thailand this summer for Stem Cell Treatment. The cost is enormous - $34,000. My friends have put together a gofundme campaign and are planning a barbecue, social and an online auction to help raise money. They are amazing - I am truly blessed!

We are looking for donations of any kind - money, food, products, gift certificates - anything we can use in one of our events to help raise money. Anything and everything would be greatly appreciated!

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,
Dawn Archibald

gofundme.com/DawnArchibald

Three Generations of Métis

submitted by Verna Porter-Brunelle
MNO Senator

COUNCIL CORNER

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.

MNO councils are the cornerstone of a strong foundation for the MNO in its push toward its inherent right to self-government. MNO Councils are important communication hubs who play a significant role in fostering community empowerment and development for Métis citizens living within the geographic territory of that council.

Since the last Métis voyager, the following MNO community councils had elections. Thanks and congratulations goes to all the candidates who participated in these elections and to the new councils.

The MNO would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the newly elected council members and thank all council members for their time and dedication to the citizens of the MNO.
MNO and Government of Canada finalize first Crown-Métis Consultation Agreement

Historic agreement advances recognition of Métis rights in Ontario and builds on MNO’s proven and successful consultation model

This agreement represents an important step in Canada’s recognition of rights-bearing Métis communities.” — MNO President Gary Lipinski

ensure meaningful consultation is undertaken with MNO citizens and regional rights-bearing Métis communities. These Committees are made up of Métis leaders who are elected at the local and regional levels, as well as the regional Captain of the Hunt in an ex-officio capacity.

President Lipinski said, “This agreement represents an important step in Canada’s recognition of rights-bearing Métis communities. That is recognized and the envy of other Aboriginal governments. I want to acknowledge the efforts of all the MNO citizens, leaders and staff who have made this happen. It demonstrates what we can do when we work together.”

President Lipinski also acknowledged the Ontario Government’s significant financial investment, through the New Relationship Fund, in assisting the MNO in developing and implementing its consultation model since 2008. The MNC Consultation Agreement now commits Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada to financially contribute to the MNO’s consultation model, which is largely supported by the New Relationship Fund.

President Lipinski concluded, “I am optimistic that this agreement signals that the Government of Canada is beginning to realize that it must do more to advance reconciliation with Ontario Métis communities. From the recent Eyford report that made specific recommendations on dealing with Métis rights and claims to the appointment of a Ministerial Special Representative on Métis rights to the upcoming appeal in the Daniels case at the Supreme Court of Canada, it is clear that the status quo is not an option. This agreement shows progress can be made on these important issues, when there is political will.”


QUICK FACTS

- The MNO’s consultation model and LRC Branch were first established in 2008 following province-wide community consultations with MNO citizens led by MNO President Lipinski, which resulted in a “What We Heard” report and the envy of other Aboriginal governments.
- The MNO’s consultation model involves 29 MNO Chartered Community Councils, regionally elected Métis leadership and the LRC Branch as a “centre of excellence” working together to ensure effective consultation with regional rights-bearing Métis communities throughout Ontario.
- Since 2008-09, the MNO has received over $15 million from Ontario’s New Relationship Fund to support its consultation model. In 2014-15, the MNO LRC Branch received and processed over 3,504 consultation notices and leveraged over $2.5 million in additional consultation capacity funding from industry.
- Since 2009, the MNO has executed over 200 consultation agreements and MOUs with industry, including impacts and benefits agreements with Hydro One, Ontario Power Generation, Detour Gold, New Gold and Canadian Malartic to name a few.

Make Your Vote Count!

October 19, the date of the 2015 federal election, is swiftly approaching and polls suggest it will be one of the closest elections in Canadian history and the first where all three major parties are crowdfunding. There is a need for government to be perceived as more positive and inclusive, and this election will be one of the closest elections in Canadian history and the first where all three major parties are perceived to be equally strong.

The Métis National Council’s 2015 Election Consultation Model was created to ensure meaningful consultation is undertaken with MNO citizens and regional rights-bearing Métis communities. These Committees are made up of Métis leaders who are elected at the local and regional levels, as well as the regional Captain of the Hunt in an ex-officio capacity.

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We are happy to help brighten the Métis Nation of Ontario Annual General Assembly

Lighting half of the homes, schools and businesses in Ontario and millions more around the world
Immortalizing a Métis mother’s legacy

When Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Michele-Elise Burnett, daughter of founding MNO citizen Dr. Suzanne Rochon-Burnett, heard of the Six Nations and Native allies commemorative memorial, it inspired her to reach out to the Métis community her mother had fiercely promoted. Dr. Suzanne Rochon-Burnett passed away in 2006. She won several prestigious awards, including being named to the Order of Canada and the Order of Ontario. Every year, in honour of her outstanding service as a volunteer, the MNO presents the Suzanne Rochon-Burnett Volunteer of the Year Award to recognize individuals who contribute as volunteers to the MNO.

The memorial, called Landscape of Nations, will be built in Queenston Heights, Ontario. It commemorates when the Six Nations and Native allies fought in the War of 1812. According to the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, “The completion of Landscape of Nations is to coincide with the bicentennial commemoration of the historic Council of Peace and Reconciliation held at Niagara between the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, those of New York and the British Crown on August 31–September 1, 1815.”

Burnett hopes to secure one section of the memorial, called the Longhouse, to pay homage to her late mother. So far, it’s the only Aboriginal naming level at the memorial. “This endeavor gives me the opportunity to continue the passionate legacy my late mother started, one to give our people a voice of pride and help educate people about our true history,” Burnett shared in an e-mail. To date, there has been $25,100 raised towards securing the naming level and Burnett is confident she will achieve her goal of $50,000.

Anyone interested in making a donation may send a cheque or money order to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and Burnett is confident she will achieve her goal of $50,000. Anyone interested in making a donation may send a cheque or money order to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and Burnett is confident she will achieve her goal of $50,000.

Jean Teillet receives honorary Doctor of Laws degree

Jean Teillet was honoured with a Doctor of Laws, honoris causa (LLD) by the Law Society of Upper Canada during the Call to the Bar ceremony in Toronto on June 26, 2015.

Teillet, a great-grandniece of Louis Riel, was lead counsel in the historic R. v. Powley case that affirmed the constitutional protection of Métis harvesting rights.

The honorary LLD is conferred upon individuals in recognition of outstanding achievements in service and benefit to the legal profession, the rule of law or the cause of justice. In a tweet posted on May 13, Teillet announced she and a colleague will be teaching a course on Métis Law at the University of British Columbia. The course is scheduled to begin in January 2016.

President Lipinski meets with Ontario’s Lieutenant-Governor

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) President Gary Lipinski had the opportunity to meet with the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, when she visited Fort Frances on Wednesday, August 26. President Lipinski, along with Fort Frances city councilors and several First Nations chiefs met with Lieutenant-Governor Dowdeswell during a tour of the Fort Frances Public Library Technology Centre. President Lipinski had the opportunity to speak with her Honour about the important historic role that Métis played in Northwest Ontario as well as the MNO’s growing role in helping build prosperity in the region.

Jean Teillet (seated) signs the Doctor of Laws (LLD) register. Left to right: Justice Katherine van Rensburg, Bencher Dianne Corbiere and Law Society Treasurer Janet E. Minor

MNO President Lipinski (left) and the Honourable Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.
NWMO talks safe containment of used nuclear fuel with MNO citizens

by MNO Staff

The Métis Nation of Ontario’s (MNO) Lands, Resources, and Consultations (LRC) Branch continues to be committed to fostering open dialogue between the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) and MNO citizens. As such, the NWMO was invited to offer a comprehensive workshop to MNO leaders, including the Provincial Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO), MNO chartered community council presidents, Senators; the MNO Veterans’ Council, MNO Youth Council and Women’s Secretariat of the Métis Nation of Ontario, on August 21st, 2015, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in Midland. Aly Alibhai, MNO Director of the MNO LRC Branch, opened the workshop and prayers were shared by PCMNO Senators Verna Porter-Brunelle and René Gravelle.

During the workshop, the NWMO team explained the evolution of their proposed Adaptive Phased Management (APM) project, which involves the safe containment and isolation of Canada’s used nuclear fuel in a Deep Geologic Repository (DGR) as well as the current status of their APM project and updates regarding the site selection process. The geographical and underlying geological characteristics of the potential host communities remaining under consideration for NWMO’s APM project were also discussed in detail.

NWMO’s Jim McLay described the various stages of geophysical drilling and mapping that might be pursued as the NWMO APM site selection process advances. Another presentation was devoted to the various considerations for transportation packages and methods. Although transport by rail was presented as an option, NWMO has expressed that used fuel transport by road is most likely. The final NWMO presentation detailed a multiple barrier system for the proposed safe storage of used nuclear fuel. In this presentation the NWMO highlighted its Used Fuel Storage Container and a DGR design as intrinsic components to their multiple barrier system.

MNO citizens actively contributed during the intermittent question periods, as well as during the discussion time allotted. The LRC Branch documented all questions and commentary discussed throughout the NWMO event as a manner to best direct future community engagement. Some of the general topics noted are summarized below.

Technical Safety and Security

Questions were raised on the subjects of DGR safety in the event of natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, or rock bursts and air pressure accumulation during construction at depth. Concerns and questions were also raised with respect to the safety procedures planned for transportation, as well as storage package design and on-route emergency response.

Long-Term Knowledge Transfer

Given the lengthy planning and knowledge-gathering process inherent with NWMO’s APM, there is a need for skills and knowledge about the development of the project to be managed over time. Concerns on this topic were shared at the workshop, notably regarding NWMO’s preparedness for transfer of research and technical skills at the internal level. Moreover, the importance of MNO youth participation at NWMO Information Sessions was highlighted along with the acknowledged need for maintaining accurate records of engagements. These actions will ensure genuine knowledge and relationship transfers.

Scheduling

Additional comments and questions arose with respect to NWMO’s timelines for geotechnical testing and walking the land studies. The LRC Branch recognizes that MNO citizens must receive information of any further studies planned for their respective traditional territory or harvesting lands. To this effect, any requests for proposals from drilling and geotechnical contractors should also be brought forward to the LRC Branch, who can then forward these opportunities to the applicable PCMNO regional councillors.

As the NWMO APM project unfolds, the MNO’s LRC Branch expects to continue coordinating regular engagement activities in MNO Regions. The discussion points and questions highlighted from the recent workshop are not comprehensive but rather, a way to inform future engagement between MNO and NWMO. It is anticipated that upon future engagements, additional comments and questions will arise. In the meantime, any inquiries can be addressed to MNO’s LRC Branch at NWMO/commcoﬁcations@metisnation.org.

About NWMO:

NWMO has developed a proposal for the long-term storage of Canada’s existing used nuclear fuel which aims to prioritize environmental, social, and technical elements. Of the 21 municipalities initially engaged in site screenings, nine communities have been retained by the NWMO for further suitability studies. The remaining nine communities still being considered as the potential host community for the NWMO APM project are Blind River, Elliot Lake, Ignace, White River, Manitouwadge, Hornepayne, Huron-Kinloss, South Bruce and the Municipality of Central Huron.

NWMO talks safe containment of used nuclear fuel with MNO citizens

MNO Senator Brenda Powley tours the NWMO Used Fuel Transportation Vehicle on display at NWMO workshop on August 21, 2015.

MNO Used Fuel Transportation Manager Ron Ross speaking at the NWMO Workshop.

MNO Secretory-Treasurer Tim Pile and Senator Gary L Lafraimboise inspect nuclear fuel rods during the NWMO workshop.

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Montré kèsé kon sé
Sharing what we know

by |MNO Staff |

On August 20, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) held a workshop for MNO leaders including members of the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO), chiefs, presidents, Senators, the MNO Veterans’ Council, the MNO Youth Council and the Women’s Secretariat of the Métis Nation of Ontario (WSMNO). The workshop was entitled Montré kèsé kon sé. France Picotte, Chair of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), a Michel speaker and prominent leader in the MNO’s efforts to restore the use of the Michel language, explained the significance of the workshop’s title.

“Montré kèsé kon sé, it means ‘sharing what we know,’” she said, “which is what we are going to do today. We are going to share and pass down our traditional Métis knowledge.” Under this title, there were two workshops: one called Passing On Knowledge held in the morning and the other called Knowledge Matters held in the afternoon. During the 2014 MNO Annual General Assembly (AGA), MNO youth indicated they would appreciate more opportunities to gain more knowledge and hear the stories from traditional knowledge holders. These workshops were held in part to meet this request from the Métis youth.

MNO President Gary Lipinski addressed everyone and shared that being together felt like an extended family gathering. “We’ve done so much together, watched each other get old,” he said, humorously speaking to people he’d known for many years. “We’re telling our stories—your stories—for future generations.”

Due to long-standing prejudice towards Métis people, many Métis families had to maintain secrecy in order to be accepted in society. Métis culture—or Aboriginal ancestry in general—was a thing to be either hidden away or outright neglected or ignored. Thankfully, things are improving towards a brighter future but passing on stories is still crucial. To help that process the workshops were set up so that youth sat at every table meeting older citizens and asking questions to bring out traditional knowledge.

During a presentation, Brian Tucker, Associate Director of Education and Way of Life, said that there were two key ways to transfer knowledge through storytelling and through experience. Tucker shared pictures of his own family. In many of the pictures, he himself was present, either as a child with his parents and grandparents, fishing or hunting, or as an adult with his own kids, taking them fishing, hunting or gathering much as was used to do while growing up. “[My grandparents] were very keen in teaching the way of life,” he said. “It’s about making sure the next generation of youth learn from us.”

These days, Métis youth eagerly reach out to the traditional knowledge holders to collect as much as possible about their culture and traditions to pass on to the next generation.

Kelly Duquette, an MNO Youth Council representative and a facilitator in the MNO Summer Youth Cultural Program (SYCP), attended the workshops to listen and learn what it was like growing up in a society where reaching out to your elders was met with a wall of silence. “It’s so important to have a connection with the elders [now],” she shared in an interview. “I learned a lot about Métis culture, their families and how they grew up...Knowledge is passed through generations.”

The first activity during the workshop involved one or two youth joining the traditional knowledge holders at their table with a poster board. MNO SYCP facilitator Alicia Blore joined the table with Executive Senator Berta Gordon and Senator Lois McCallum. The two sisters shared their stories about growing up unaware of their Métis heritage.

During their childhood, people weren’t allowed to talk about their Métis ancestry but the two sisters still remember occasions during their childhood where their heritage would shine through. “Saturday nights were Métis nights,” they said, remembering how their relatives would come together and each family would bring a different ingredient to bake a cake for everyone. There was dancing as well, when their father would tell them to “Jig, jig, jig!”

When they were old, they said, remembering how their grandparents would pass on what it means to be born Métis. The posters were then posted on the wall for everyone to review.

David Dusome, President of the Ontario Métis Federation (OMF), sat down, creating a diagram expanding on what it now means to be part of a culture where things are changing for the better and nothing is hidden.

In the afternoon, during a workshop hosted by Shared Value Solutions, the elders viewed a film called In the Blood, a documentary produced with the MNO Moon River Métis Council. The film includes the story of Pearl Gabona, an MNO citizen who discovered her Métis ancestry late in life. Many viewers became emotional during the film, knowing exactly what Gabona had gone through.

Afterward, the traditional knowledge holders were asked what they do to tell their Métis story and educate others. Senator Porter-Brunelle shared a story about a Métis youth she met during a March Break Infinite Beach camp, who would wear his sash to school once a day, every month, and who encouraged others to “Flash your Sash” as well. “It’s a way to have people come up to us and say ‘What is that?’ or ‘I know what that is.’ It’s a way of reaching, at the same time,” she said.

Openly sharing knowledge about Métis culture is paving the way towards a brighter future for today’s Métis youth.
The Métis Nation of Ontario ("MNO") and KGHM International Ltd. ("KGHM") are pleased to announce that they have formally signed a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") to guide their working relationship with regards to the development of the Victoria Project (the "Project") in Sudbury Ontario.

"This agreement is very important to the Métis people," explained MNO Chair, France Picotte, "because it guarantees that Métis rights will be protected and the Métis Way of Life in the Sudbury area is being respected. We are pleased to continue working with KGHM. Agreements like this one are another benefit that we see coming from the MNO-Ontario Framework Agreement, which was first signed in 2008 and renewed this past year," she added.

Ian Horne, Community and Permitting Manager of KGHM added: "We have been consulting with the Métis Nation on the planning and development of the Victoria Project since 2010. One of their key goals was to undertake a Traditional Knowledge and Land Use (TKLU) study of the project area before any significant development occurred. This study is currently underway and we look forward to integrating the knowledge gained into our project plan going forward."

The MOU sets out the way in which the local Métis community, as represented by the MNOs Mattawa/Lake Nipissing Consultation Committee will be consulted regarding the development of the Project and details how the partners will work together to address any potential impacts the Project may have on Métis rights, interests and way of life. The MOU demonstrates KGHM’s commitment to continue to collaborate and consult with the surrounding community to build long-lasting positive relationships.

MNO Regional Councillor Juliette Denis, Chair of the Mattawa/Lake Nipissing Consultation Committee, commented: "Our community is very proud of the relationship that we have built with KGHM. We see this relationship as an opportunity to foster new collaborations while working together to protect our traditional values and way of life. We look forward to continuing to strengthen our relationship with KGHM as their project progresses."

ABOUT KGHM: KGHM is a global company that employees 34,000 people around the world and has been a leader in copper and silver production for more than 50 years. KGHM International Ltd., the wholly owned subsidiary of KGHM Polska Mied S.A., operates mines in Canada, the USA and Chile and is actively advancing the Victoria Project in Sudbury, Ontario, and the Ajax project in Kamloops, British Columbia. The Sierra Gorda mine located in Region II, Chile, commenced production in 2014 marking an important milestone for the company as one of the largest copper and molybdenum mines in the world. www.kghm.com.
An unforgettable summer

by | MNO Staff

It’s a student’s dream: a summer job that’s fun, very different and a job that’s creative while getting to learn more about yourself.

This year’s Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Summer Youth Cultural Program (SYCP) was filled with exciting experiences for its student facilitators. They were involved in celebrations for Champlain’s 400th Anniversary since his arrival in Ontario, National Aboriginal Day events, Canada Day festivities and even the 2015 Pan AM and Parapan AM Games and Aboriginal Pavilion (see pages A10 - A11)

Throughout the summer, MNO SYCP programming gave facilitators the opportunity to show their creativity and skills, thanks to their training, by designing games, arts and crafts activities and educational displays about Métis culture. “The training they receive allows for [the facilitators] to open up and be creative with their presentations,” says Scott Carpenter, the MNO’s Manager of Education, Way of Life and Special Projects. “One student made up a great Mischief matching game,” he added, saying that the word game would be something to keep for next years program.

Everything the facilitators learn becomes skills that can also turn into fun and beautiful hobbies. During her time as a MNO SYCP facilitator, Kelly Duquette learned Métis beadwork. She became so proficient that her skill earned her first place in a beading competition held among the facilitators. Before joining the program, she’d never done any beading, and now she has a beautiful beaded satchel she designed herself and a great souvenir of a fun summer.

Throughout the 2015 AGA, the SYCP program was about more than just gaining job experience. “I came for the job that’s fun, very different and just gaining job experience.” I came into this not knowing anything about Métis culture,” she shared, adding that the program taught her about her heritage.

At the end of the summer, the facilitators leave the program with their lives enriched by unforgettable experiences, new friends and traditional skills integrated into a modern world. This year, the MNO SYCP program was located in eight different communities: Midland, Orillia, Sault Ste Marie, Timmins and Thunder Bay.

Aspire & Honour

by | MNO Staff

During the 2015 AGA, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) President Gary Lipinski and Chief Operating Officer (COO) Doug Wilson were presented with two special Métis dot art paintings primarily created by MNO Summer Youth Cultural Program (SYCP) facilitators Alexis Chapman, Karly Chapman and Melissa St. Amant. Each painting included a written description provided by the MNO SYCP members.

Aspire: We would like to dedicate this dot art painting we designed, titled “Aspire,” to thank President Gary Lipinski for always encouraging the youth to be all they can be. The “Aspire” flower tree resembles the growth and prosperity of youth, their potential in life and their role in the Métis Nation of Ontario. All of the flowers are different, yet all are beautiful and unique in their own way, like every youth in the nation. Every tree has strength that comes from its roots just as the Métis gain wisdom and strength from our elders and ancestors because together we are strong. The flowers, the tree and the roots are symbolic of youth, elders and ancestors and our Métis way of life. This dot art painting celebrates our Métis culture and demonstrates its everlasting beauty.

Honour: We would like to dedicate this painting, titled “Honour,” to Chief Operating Officer, Doug Wilson. The “Honour” painting represents the Métis veterans and their sacrifices that they made to defend Canada as well as Métis identity. This art painting symbolizes our connection to our ancestors and represents the strength they have demonstrated within our Nation. Our ancestors, elders and veterans have shown the youth how important it is to fight for our rights as Métis people which will ensure that our culture will endure forever. Because of all that our ancestors, elders and veterans have done and all that they stand for, we are proud to be Métis and will continue to honour, share and love our culture.

Métis Voyageur
September 2015, Issue no. 87
Leading up to the Pan AM and Parapan AM Games there were two separate torch runs—one for each games. As it made its way towards Toronto, they brought all Canadians together and the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) actively participated in both relays.

In Windsor, the local MNO community council played a big part in a Pan AM Torch ceremony while in Ottawa and Brampton, MNO citizens actually carried the flame. In Hamilton, an MNO citizen participated in the Parapan AM Torch relay.

The Pan AM Torch Relay arrived in Brampton on June 24, where MNO Veterans’ Council Senator Alis Kennedy wore her sash as she carried the torch along its route. Senator Kennedy was given special permission to represent Métis veterans, wearing her military undress ribbons in addition to her sash.

Kennedy was nominated to carry the torch by the Ministry of Veterans Affairs. On June 30, MNO citizens Jennifer St. Germain and Bryce Johnson took part in carrying the torch through Ottawa.

St. Germain carried the torch through a part of the city that holds a special meaning to the Aboriginal population.

“It was an honour to be asked to participate in the Torch Run in Ottawa and humbled to have the opportunity to raise the torch past the National Aboriginal Veterans Monument,” St. Germain shared. “It was a joy to have my family there and to see many Métis sashes along the route.”

The Pan AM Torch arrived in Windsor on June 16, greeted by a traditional drumming ceremony organized by the MNO Windsor-Essex-Kent Métis Council and other local Aboriginal groups. MNO citizen Donna Grayzer, the former Women’s Representative for the MNO Windsor-Essex-Kent Métis Council, played a huge part in helping to organize the event. Sienna Rochon, 8, and Matt Bombardier, 18, represented the local Council’s youth at the ceremony, wearing their Métis sashes.

When Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Fern Tremblay learned that his grandson, Shawn Harvey, had been chosen to take part in the Parapan AM Games Torch Relay, he felt very proud. Harvey, also an MNO citizen, was born in Timmins but now resides in Hamilton. He was chosen to carry the torch during its journey through Hamilton, on its way to Toronto for the 2015 Pan Am Games.

In a letter to his grandson, Tremblay shared his pride, stating that Harvey found himself “in this well-deserved opportunity to let people know that you all believe in participants who have handicaps of sorts but have the will to try and achieve some of their dreams by competing in games such as the Parapan AM Games.”

The 2015 Pan Am Torch Relay ran from August 3 to August 7. Two separate torches were lit, one in Ottawa and the other in Niagara Falls, before being united in Toronto to light the cauldron at the Opening Ceremony.

With 250 torchbearers for its five day journey, this torch relay was the largest ever held for the Parapan AM Games.

MNO citizens and communities take part in Pan AM and Parapan AM Torch Runs

Carrying the torch

by | MNO Staff

It was a joy to have my family there and to see many Métis sashes along the route.”

- MNO Citizen Jennifer St. Germain

Sienna Rochon (centre-left) and Matt Bombardier (centre-right) represent the Métis community at Pan AM Torch Run festivities in Windsor in June.

Senator Dr. Alis Kennedy carries the Pan AM Torch wearing her sash to display her pride as a Métis veteran.

MNO Citizen Shawn Harvey and his wife Andrea at the Parapan AM Torch Run in Hamilton.

MNO Citizen Bryce Johnson carrying the Pan AM Torch in Ottawa on June 30, 2015.

MNO Citizen Jennifer St. Germain waves as she carries the Pan AM Torch in Ottawa.
Métis culture and communities highlighted at Pan AM Games

by | MNO Staff

As reported in the past several editions of the Métis Voyager, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) has been very involved in the Pan AM and Parapan AM games since signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Games Organizing Committee in September 2013. The MNO has been an active member of the Games Aboriginal Leadership Partners that participated in planning Aboriginal involvement in the Games and in the Aboriginal Pavilion that was a major Pan AM and Parapan AM venue.

After years of preparation, on July 10, in front of a sold out audience of 45,000 people and an international television audience in the millions, the 2015 Pan AM Games got off to a spectacular start with Opening Ceremonies at the Rogers Centre in Toronto.

In recognition of Métis traditional territories in Ontario, MNO President Gary Lipinski was a member of the official party of dignitaries at the ceremony. Other members of the party included Governor General David Johnston, several First Nations chiefs and provincial cabinet ministers Brad Duguid, Glen Murray and David Zimmer and Toronto Mayor John Tory.

Vice-Chair McBride was joined by MNO Toronto and York Métis Council President Beaulieu and Amanda Rheaume, who also performed in the Aboriginal Pavilion, located at Fort York National Historic Site, was a hive of activity throughout both Games. At the Pavilion MNO Summer Youth Cultural Program (SYCP) students, dressed in traditional Métis clothing, recreated a traditional Métis encampment from the fur trade era, including Lieutenant-Governor Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Premier Kathleen Wynne, provincial cabinet ministers Brad Duguid, Glen Murray and David Zimmer and Toronto Mayor John Tory.

In addition to the encampment, the Aboriginal Pavilion had several prominent visitors including Governor General David Johnston, Governor General Dr. Alis Kennedy, Senator Dr. Alis Kennedy, and Senator Dr. Alis Kennedy. The Pavilion included the First Nations, the MNO Citizens and the Aboriginal Pavilion.

Many MNO citizens participated in different aspects of the Pan AM and Parapan AM Games. Below are some thoughts from a few of them:

Alicia Blore
Performer, in the Opening Ceremonies

“The rehearsals were long and intensive but the reward of representing our nation in an international event was an extreme honour! It was especially important to us to represent various aspects of our culture such as jigging, fiddling, the birch bark canoe, spoons, guitar, our traditional clothing and way of life. I am incredibly grateful to have been given this once in a lifetime opportunity!”

Simone Blais
Aboriginal Pavilion Métis encampment facilitator

“I am incredibly honoured to be doing this work because I understand the paramount importance of education. We’re creating new narratives that most people have never heard before.”

Versions of Canadian history which include the First Nations, include the Inuit and of course, includes the Métis.”

Brianne Gosselin
Aboriginal Pavilion Métis encampment facilitator

“The most memorable moments were during our visit to the Six Nations of the Grand River! I felt proud of representing my Métis culture at such a large event! It was an honour.”

Senator Dr. Alis Kennedy
Vice-Chair, with National Aboriginal Sports Committee (which oversees the Pan AM Games) due to ability in Spanish language, works with teams from several Spanish-speaking nations.

“On July 9, 2015 at the Pan Am Games dress rehearsal opening, I had the great honour to participate in the athletes grand entrance. It was quite an experience to walk as a Cuban ‘athlete’ of course I was wearing my MNO Veterans’ Council veteran sash, but over my right leg was wearing my MNO Veterans’ Council veteran sash, but over my right leg.”

The Métis people of Ontario are excited to welcome athletes and other visitors from the Americas and the Caribbean to the games and share with them our unique history and culture.”

- MNO President Gary Lipinski

In their own words

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- MNO President Gary Lipinski
COMMUNITY

Métis Heritage Celebration a success in rain and sunshine

submitted by | Cecile Wagar
Senator, MNO and Durham Region Métis Council

The 2017 Pilgrimage to Vimy Ridge, Veterans’ Council fundraiser to send MNO veterans and Métis youth to Vimy and France, the 2017 Métis Drum Circle, followed by MNO ODRMC’s All Our Relations Drum Circle, returned to the celebration this year, fiddling and singing with such lovely harmonies. Heather Burn’s of the 2014 MNO Canoe Expedition delighted the crowd with stories of her amazing experience on Ontario’s waterways last summer. Heather was followed by Owen Sound Métis fiddler Rudy Couture. Then it started to rain and it didn’t stop until Sunday afternoon but not even that hindered the festivities. A variety of interactive activities for all ages were well planned and set up: spoons and jigging workshops taught by the MNO SYCP performers Alicia Blore and Simone Blais, fiddle workshops under the trees facilitated by the fiddlers of Ariko, the youth tent crafts, the “passport” incentive, and the return of the Voyager Games. Tepees and canoes were set up for returning presenters Archie Martin and Andre Bosse. Storyteller and local Women’s Representative Claire Kearns and medicinal plant expert and enactor MNO ODRMC Councillor Ted McNally also shared their knowledge.

Many of the exhibitors returned last year, including MNO staff with the MNO Healthy Babies Healthy Children and the MNO Education and Training Branch, and representatives from the MNO Veterans’ Council, the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Trent University, Durham College, Canadian Forces Recruitment, Oshawa Community Health Centre and especially to Co-Chair Amy Nault and the amazing committee and volunteers, entertainers, presenters and especially to Co-Chair Amy Nault and the amazing committee who, year after year, have made it possible to offer a taste of Métis culture to MNO citizens and the general public of southern Ontario.

Festival-goers enjoy a jig during the Ninth Annual Métis Heritage Celebration in Oshawa.

So ended the Ninth Annual Métis Heritage Celebration with spirits lifted by joyous Métis fiddling, dancing, laughing and cheering. Despite the rain, all that mattered was that the best committee ever came together for a Métis cultural event and worked so well together. Everyone helped each other reach the goal from start to finish. And now the MNO ODRMC is pumped to do it all over again for the 10th Annual Métis Heritage Celebration on June 25-26, 2016.

Un gran marco to所有的赞助商: Celebrate Canada 150 City of Oshawa, Ontario Power Generation, Via Rail (donor of the silent auction Grand Prize), La Quinta Inn & Suites and all the exhibitors, vendors, entrepreneurs, presenters and especially to Co-Chair Amy Nault and the amazing committee who, year after year, have made it possible to offer a taste of Métis culture to MNO citizens and the general public of southern Ontario.

A Volunteer’s Story

submitted by | Terri Head

The MNO Oshawa and Durham Region Métis Council is very thankful that Terri Head decided to step up and volunteer. It is a great way to see a community in action. And for us, the Métis community, it was delightful to have a person with fresh new ideas and resources to work with. I encourage MNO citizens to get involved with their community. Offer your talents and ideas for the betterment of all your community and your council, will be very appreciative. And you will become an active participant of a wonderful family.

MNO Oshawa and Durham Region Métis Council Senator Cecile Wagar.

Once upon a time, there was a woman who wanted to give back to her Métis heritage because of the generous support of her community. She has been returning for quite a few years ago. Here was a struggling young man who didn’t really know what to do in life when he was given an opportunity to receive a grant from the Métis Nation of Ontario for a training program. What guy doesn’t like digging in the dirt—yes, he is now a Heavy Equipment Operator and has been employed with the same company for over seven years. As a mother, there is nothing more that you want than for your child to be happy. He is.

When I saw an ad in our local paper calling for volunteers to help out with the Ninth Annual Métis Heritage Celebration I thought—great—I can do that. Members of the Committee welcomed me at the first meeting and we hit the ground running after that. Having a behind the scenes perspective really makes you appreciate the success of such a fantastic community event. I helped obtain donations for a Silent Auction, printed posters, pitched tents, and “manne” the Silent Auction table during the event. Tear down, silent auction item pick-up etc. were all part of the volunteer experience as well.

Yes, it is a lot of work but as they say “many hands make light work”. The end result was well worth it and I look forward to helping again next year.

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Local MNO council celebrates National Aboriginal Day in Ottawa

by | MNO Staff

On June 21, Métis across the homeland celebrated National Aboriginal Day. In Ottawa, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Ottawa Region Métis Council joined other Aboriginal people at Vincent Massey Park in a weekend festival to celebrate both National Aboriginal Day and the summer solstice, the official arrival of summer.

The Council set up a tent where children excitedly joined in at the arts and crafts workshops where MNO Summer Youth Cultural Program (SYCP) facilitators helped the kids with Métis dot art, beadwork and pouch making. The MNO SYCP facilitators had participated in similar activities throughout the festival.

Benny Michaud, President of the MNO Ottawa Region Métis Council, warmly greeted Senator Reta Gordon, Executive on the Provi-sional Council of the MNO, as she stopped by on Sunday afternoon. The two women discussed a beaded work vest Michaud was working on.

Despite rain and muggy weather on Sunday, many curious visitors stopped by to ask questions about Métis culture, admire the kids’ art-work, purchase sashes or listen to fiddle music.

Quenten Lundie also brought bags of wild rice and some wild rice pudding he’d made himself. It was a hit!

Throughout the weekend, strawberries were given out to visitors who stopped by. A small pamphlet contained a quote stating, “The strawberry teaches forgiveness and peace. The strawberry is shaped like a heart, and strawberries are known to our people as heart berries.”

“I am grateful for all of the support we have had from the MNO, particularly all the enthusiasm the summer youth students have brought,” Michaud stated.

Students from East Northumberland Secondary School’s Native Studies class and their instructor, Guy Mandeville (front row, left).

Students take part in National Aboriginal Day

submitted by | Guy Mandeville, CD
MNO Veterans’ Council Chair

On June 21, students from East Northumberland Secondary School (ENSS) in Brighton went to Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Trenton to participate in National Aboriginal Day celebrations.

Many of the students attended the Native Studies course available at the school. The course is taught by Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Veterans’ Council Chair Guy Mandeville.

The ENSS students took part in the opening and closing ceremonies by using the six-person ceremonial drum to accompany Mohawk singer and drummer Dustin Brant from the Tyendinaga reserve.

ENSS drummers also led the Round Dance. Some of the activities at the celebration included drum making and leatherworking workshops and the students created poster boards of the Eastern Woodland Clans that were put on display at the celebration.

The ENSS Native Studies course began in 2009 and Mandeville stated, “Aboriginal awareness is a major focus in the Native Studies class and the students are like sponges, they want more every week.”

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Students from the Grade 10 Civics class and Grade 11 Sociology class also attended the National Aboriginal Day celebrations with the Native Studies students.

National Aboriginal Day at Fort York

submitted by | Joseph Paquette
MNO Veterans’ Council President

On Sunday, June 21, National Aboriginal Day and the summer solstice were both celebrated across Canada.

Na- Me-Res (Native Men’s Residency) sponsored the celebration at Fort York in Toronto. Several Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizens from the MNO Toronto York Region Métis Council were represented. Joe Paquette, President of the MNO Veterans’ Council participated in the grand entry by proudly carrying the Métis flag which was provided by the First Nations organizers.

A young participant shows off her handiwork after participating in a dot art workshop facilitated by the MNO Healing & Wellness branch for National Aboriginal Day.

It was a great day to celebrate Métis culture and rekindle old friendships.

Students from the Grade 10 Civics class and Grade 11 Sociology class also attended the National Aboriginal Day celebrations with the Native Studies students.
Peterborough MNO Council races Dragon Boat for charity

submitted by Christa Lemelin
MNO Peterborough & District Wapiti Métis Council Chair

**O**n June 13, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Peterborough and District Wapiti Métis Council (MNO PDWMC) participated in the Dragon Boat Festival on beautiful Little Lake in the heart of downtown Peterborough.

The purpose of this festival was to raise money to help support the services needed for the Peterborough and Regional Health Center's Breast Assessment Center. This goal for this year’s festival was to raise $215,000 to purchase new imaging equipment. The MNO PDWMC race team raised over $1,500, with a goal of raising even more next year.

Since paddling on the water is found deep in Métis roots, the MNO PDWMC felt this was a fantastic way to help such a great cause in their community. The race team consisted of MNO citizens and friends of the community.

The team participated in two races, placing first in the first race, and third in their second race. Congratulations to all who participated!


Métis flag flies in Lafontaine

by MNO Staff

O**n** July 1, Senator Verna Porter-Brunelle of the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) felt a sense of pride upon seeing her heritage prominently displayed near her home.

Living at Le Villageois, a retirement community in Penetanguishene, Senator Porter-Brunelle watched as the Canadian flag, the Franco-Ontarian flag and the Métis flag were raised together. “I was very proud to speak on behalf of the Métis and also share that our flag was the oldest (of the three flags),” she shared in an e-mail. According to Senator Porter-Brunelle, a high portion of Villagois residents are Métis, and a Métis flag hung in the foyer of the residence as an expression of their pride. The event commemorated Canada Day but it was the first time the Métis flag was raised in the community. It now flies there daily.

The local parish priest gave a benediction for the Canada celebrations, witnessed by the residents and MNO citizens attending the event, followed by a luncheon in the main hall.

The Franco-Ontarian flag, the Canadian flag and the Métis flag.

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[resolvefp.com/Sustainability](http://resolvefp.com/Sustainability)
Constable Andrew Parr (right) and Corporal Keith Hendricks (left) running in full uniform.

MNO citizen runs for Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada

submitted by | Theresa Hendricks
MNO Citizen

On May 23, during this year’s Tamarack Ottawa Race Weekend, Corporal Keith Hendricks, a citizen of the Métis Nation of Ontario, and Constable Andrew Parr ran the entire 10-kilometre race in full uniform in just over an hour. In the process, Corporal Hendricks was able to raise $1,067.33 for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada. Both officers are part of the Prime Minister’s Protection Detail (PMPD). The mission of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada is to provide a safe, supportive place where children and youth experience new opportunities, overcome barriers, develop positive relationships and build confidence and skills of life.

The Tamarack Ottawa Race Weekend is Canada’s largest race weekend with 49,439 participants this year. Participants running for charitable causes raised $800,000 and counting—a significant increase over $625,000 in 2014.

MNO Council hosts wildlife dinner

submitted by | Christa Lemelin
MNO Peterborough & District Wapiti Métis Council Chair

On June 16, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Peterborough and District Wapiti Métis Council (PDWMC) held their third annual Wildlife Dinner and Comedy Night at the Canadian Canoe Museum in Peterborough on June 6. The event was a hit starting with a tour of the museum, followed by an amazing mix of wildlife cuisine prepared by Miguel Hernandez. Speakers included staff from MNO Education and Training, Healing and Wellness, and Community Relations. Special guest speaker Dr. Rhonda Paulsen, Doctor of Education and Project Manager for the Indigenous Bachelor of Education program at Trent University, was also in attendance to provide insight into how the upcoming Trent University program will include Métis history and culture.

The evening ended with the comedy stylings of famous comedian and writer Rick Currie. Currie is known for his writing contributions for the CBC’s popular show The Rick Mercer Report.

A Métis Rendezvous

Adapted from an article that originally appeared at Simcoe.com

On June 16, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) staff organized a Métis Rendezvous for the Simcoe County District School Board. MNO Summer Youth Cultural Program facilitators based in Midland and MNO Health and Wellness staff planned a full day of activities, including making bannock, sampling smoked fish, jigging lessons and learning to weave. Huron Park, Bayview and Mundy’s Bay public schools and James Keating and Victoria Harbour elementary schools participated in 12 activities centered around Métis culture.

Bayview Kindergarten teacher Charleen South shared her experience on Twitter. “Had a wonderful time with students at Huron Park today at the Métis Rendezvous,” she tweeted to Huron Park’s principal.

The Métis Rendezvous was held at the Huron Park Public School library.

Clockwise from left: Michael Poole, Sarah Robitaille, Aaron Zurawski, Calum Perrault, Rory Armstrong, Amelia Perrault and Abby Goneau.

Thank You
to the Friends of the MNO for their generous support of the 2015 AGA
Métis participation shines in Fort Frances at Harmony of Nations Festival

submitted by | Wanda Botsford
MNO Citizen

With additional information from the Fort Frances Times

The Second Annual Harmony of Nations Festival in Fort Frances was deemed a success by the Fort Frances Times and even made some dreams come true, this past summer.

Métis Nation of Ontario citizen Sarah Marusyk, the Youth Representative for the MNO Sunset Country Métis Council, was one of many volunteers who helped organize the event, held on July 17 and 18, 2015. Marusyk represented the Métis community during the festival’s opening ceremony. “Music-wise, my favorite was when the Métis Fiddler Quartet played with Ashley MacIsaac,” she stated in an interview for the Fort Frances Times.

Headlining artist Ashley MacIsaac and the Métis Fiddler Quartet’s performance was organized in a rather impromptu fashion. MacIsaac called the Quartet on Saturday afternoon and asked them to join him on stage that night. There was no rehearsal and the Fort Frances Times described the performance as an "energetic set."

“Just the excitement on (the Métis Fiddler Quartet’s) faces made planning the whole thing worth it,” Marusyk shared.

The performance was a dream come true for Nicholas Delhaere-Sawchuk of the Métis Fiddler Quartet. MacIsaac, a true Canadian artist, has been an inspiration to Delhaere-Sawchuk since he was young. It was MacIsaac’s music that encouraged the Métis fiddler to learn to play the violins when he was growing up. The music and arts festival featured Canadian, American, First Nations and Métis artists and musicians, performing and hosting workshops at the Sorting Gap Marina. The Métis Fiddler Quartet organized two workshops: the Clap, Clog, Hop and Sing Along workshop and the Instrument Jam workshop. Due to the success of this year’s festival, there are plans for a third festival to take place next year.

With additional information from the Fort Frances Times

MNO vet enjoys a shore lunch

submitted by | Ronald Gignac
MNO Citizen

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) veteran Ron Gignac enjoys being outdoors. As an MNO citizen, fishing and hunting have always been part of his life. Spending time in a boat on a calm northern lake and upon rushing rivers in Ontario is a good way to re-connect with the land and the bounties it provides.

Gignac recently spent a memorable fishing day near Nakina, Ontario. There, together with good friends and family, he secured a fine catch of pickerel. Makes your mouth water, doesn’t it?

To Gignac and his family, the wilderness is a favorable place. Over the years, in those far distant lands while serving in conflict areas, Gignac would often reminisce and dream about the beautiful and rugged terrain of Canada, especially northern Ontario. The peace and solitude from thinking of his next adventure, and memories of past fishing, trapping, and hunting trips with family and friends were refreshing even in the midst of the dangers of those past conflicts.

Gignac affirms that God’s creations are marvelous and the experience of being in the wilderness brings that sense of comfort and wholesomeness that so many simply drive past in our hurried and demanding society. He encourages fellow Canadians, and especially our veterans, MNO citizens and their families to get reacquainted with our beautiful wilderness and the adventures that wait within it.

The sense of peace and tranquility that so many seek is available to all of us. The fresh air and the grandeur of the landscape are marvelous and the expanse of the wilderness can provide that sense of comfort and wholesomeness. This is the reason why Gignac and his family decided to go fishing up around Parry Sound.

With very nice weather in their favour, the drive was long but definitely worth it. After about four hours of fishing, they walked away having lost four fish and caught five.

Some of the fish were dropped in a bucket for Jim’s parents, Jim Senior and Bertha. No time was wasted in the cleaning and storing. There were smiles all around and a great meal was anticipated.

On June 16, Opération Envol de la MNO citoyen Jim Tolles and Joseph Paquette decided to go fishing up around Parry Sound. With very nice weather in their favour, the drive was long but definitely worth it.

After about four hours of fishing, they walked away having lost four fish and caught five.

Some of the fish were dropped in a bucket for Jim’s parents, Jim Senior and Bertha. No time was wasted in the cleaning and storing. There were smiles all around and a great meal was anticipated.

After having a great supper at the Tolles’, they headed back home to the streets of the big city. It is always important to share with and take care of the elders. Remember, they took care of their children and their children should later take care of them.

Jim Tolles (L) and Joseph Paquette with their catch.

Gracie George (left) and Cloe Dolony (right) represented the Métis community with MNO Sunset Country Métis Council Youth Representative Sarah Marusyk during the opening ceremony.

(Photos sources: Lindsay Campbell, Heather Latter, Fort Frances Times.)

Ron Gignac with his catch of pickerel near Nakina.

Jim Tolles and Joseph Paquette with their catch.
The UNDOF Memorial is decorated with linesman's spurs which are used to climb towers, communication poles or trees.

Ron Gignac speaks to the press.

The UNDOF Memorial is decorated with linesman’s spurs which are used to climb towers, communication poles or trees.

MNO veteran named as new Deputy Chief

Ron Gignac, a Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) veteran, was announced as the new Deputy Chief of Police during a news conference at Belleville’s City Hall on June 23.

Gignac was hired after a six-month search.

“It was definitely worth the wait...I think you’ll see that in our new deputy chief,” stated Cory MacKay, Belleville’s Chief of Police.

Gignac, who was recently Chief of the Deep River municipal police service, is a former member of the Canadian Army. He served during the Persian Gulf War and in the Middle East.

He has also been an Emergency Response Team Tactical officer and served as a paratrooper in the Airborne Engineer troop in the Canadian Airborne Regiment Battle group.

Gignac joined the Belleville Police Service on July 2.
Métis Voyageur Development Fund:
Northern mining supplier set to expand

Adapted from an original article by Ian Ross that appeared at northerntariobusiness.com

Cerry Lafontaine, president of Excalibur Bits and Steel, a mining services company situated in Kirkland Lake, is preparing to open a second location in Dryden this upcoming fall.

The Métis Voyageur Development Fund (MVDF) provided $150,000 to Lafontaine and his wife, Carole, when they purchased a 9,000-square foot building in Kirkland Lake a year ago. He has another application submitted to the MVDF for $100,000 to finance the Dryden expansion. Lafontaine also hopes to hire and train locals in the Ring of Fire, a mineral-rich section located in northern Ontario.

“That's where I'm pushing to go, wherever I can open up in remote areas,” he informed Northern Ontario Business.

Due to lenders' reluctance to assist a start-up business, securing finances was a huge challenge when Lafontaine made the decision to move his company. They had originally been located in Eliz Lake but moved to Kirkland Lake in 2013 as a wiser business location for the industry.

Lafontaine and his wife, Carole, dipped into his pension in order to finance the Dryden expansion. He has another application submitted to the MVDF for $100,000 to finance the Dryden expansion. Lafontaine also hopes to hire and train locals in the Ring of Fire, a mineral-rich section located in northern Ontario.

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On July 6, he arrived in Sudbury and visited the MNO offices where he spoke with members of the MNO Sudbury Métis Council, including President Richard Sarrazin. Minister Zimmer also travelled to the MNO office in North Bay and spoke with MNO North Bay Métis Council President Marc Laurin.

The Minister returned to Toronto in time to attend the opening ceremony of the 2015 Pan AM Games.

The WMN discussed a variety of issues within the MNO, including President Richard Sarrazin.

Among the issues addressed during the Assembly were the pursuit of projects funding in a number of areas including economic development, violence against women, residential schools, economic development, health and wellness, traditional knowledge, housing and education. McBrine is also a Board Member of the WMN Board of Directors. The Board holds responsibility for the overall governance and accountability of the WMN.

Additional information about the WMN can be found on their website at www.metiswomen.org.

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Citizen Gabe Picard was one of seven men recently honoured during the National Aboriginal Day powwow held in Thunder Bay.

Picard received the “Honouring our Men” Award from the MNO Thunder Bay Métis Council. He plays a very active role in the community as President of the Oshki Anishinabek Student Association and an Infinite Reach Facilitator.

Picard recently began working at Dilico Anishinabek Family Care. He plans to work with Aboriginal children and ensure they are cared for in a loving and culturally appropriate environment.

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Citizen receives special award

submitted by Darby Starratt
MNO Citizen

Thanks to participants in MNO Moon River Council events

submitted by Rose LePage
MNO Moon River Métis Council

From May 22 to 24, Sharon McBrine, Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) Vice-Chair and Spokesperson for the Women’s Secretariat of the Métis Nation (WSMNO), attended the Women of the Métis Nation (WMN) National General Assembly in Brimish-Columbia.

She was among 50 delegates representing all five Métis governments within the Métis Homelands.

The WMN discussed a variety of concerns, including child welfare, food security, missing and murdered Indigenous women.

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The Council looks forward to repeating these workshops in the spring of 2016. The council can be contacted at moonrivermetis@gmail.com to reserve spots or get more information.

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WSMNO represented at Women of the Métis Nation Assembly

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submitted by Rose LePage
MNO Moon River Métis Council
Métis woman uses art to teach students gift of giving

Submitted by Nate Smelle that appeared at bancroftthisweek.com

An artist, educator and self-identified Métis Jaime Koebel recently attended an assembly at York River Public School in Bancroft. The assembly, titled “Think Indigenous,” included participation from Métis and other Aboriginal representatives.

Koebel led a workshop on Métis culture and teachings, discussing how the Métis people would communicate and share with each other by using what she calls a “giving tree.”

The giving tree was used to leave messages to allow Métis people to exchange information or to leave useful things like spare moccasins, medicine, food and tools for others who may need them.

The only requirement to take part in the giving tree system was that if an item was taken, then another item had to be given.

Part of the Métis culture involves taking care of each other. Koebel believes the core values and strength of the Métis people is well defined by the Cree word Omimpenasuk: “(It) roughly translates in English ‘to the people who are their own boss’ or ‘the people who own themselves,’” she stated.

The assembly was a day-long set of activities meant to make the First Nations, Métis and women from the area feel represented and their culture recognized.

Métis traditional knowledge holder Jim Tolles assists Arlo Gray Jibb during the MNO CRMC Archery 101 Workshop.

MNO Credit River Métis Council hosts archery workshop

Submitted by Andrea Jibb that appeared in MNO Nownet

On Saturday, August 8, 2015, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Credit River Métis Council (CRMC) hosted an Archery 101 workshop at the home of Senator Bill Morrison in Caledon, Ontario.

Facilitated by traditional Métis knowledge holder Jim Tolles, participants learned about the different types of bows, from longbows to crossbows, and gained hands-on experience with shooting.

Bows and arrows are a hunting tool used by many Indigenous Peoples including the Métis, for whom archery was a way of life.

Tolles, a seasoned harvester, assisted participants of all ages, some as young as four years old, shoot at a variety of targets. He shares: “Hunting is a big part of our heritage whether it’s hunting, fishing, trapping or gathering plants. It’s in our heart and in our blood. We all need to do our part in keeping our heritage alive. Get outside, go for a walk. The bush has healing powers for your mind, body and soul. Learn something new and try something new every day. Life’s all about learning and sharing!”

Following the workshop, participants enjoyed a BBQ that included two traditional foods: fresh rainbow trout and corn on the cob. Participants had also been asked to bring a non-perishable food item suitable for donation to the Food Bank.

The Archery 101 workshop is one of many public events hosted by the Council with the help of a Trillium grant to promote Métis culture and way of life.
I want to give other Métis youth the same experiences that I had growing up,” said Christine Skura at the first annual meeting of the leaders of a brand new initiative for urban Métis youth called Weaving the Sash: Métis youth, culture, and connection.

Skura, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Toronto and York Region Métis Council (TYRMC) Youth Representative, brought together a group of spirited and community-minded young women—Alicia Blore, Elise St. Germain and Lindsay DuPré—to partner with the MNO TYRMC on a project that will take place over the next year. The project will offer urban Métis youth the cultural experiences that they may not otherwise have access to and a chance to build relationships with Senators and Elders, knowledge holders, the land, and each other.

With the invaluable guidance of MNO TYRMC President Tera Beaulieu, the group applied for the Laidlaw Foundation’s Youth-led Community Change Program’s annual grant. In May 2015, the group was ecstatic to hear that they had been granted the maximum amount of $25,000, an impressive achievement.

With its Youth-led Community Change Program, the Laidlaw Foundation seeks to empower youth with “wildcard” ideas to create the critical change they wish to see in their communities and to have the conversations that may not be happening anywhere else. Skura, Blore, St. Germain, DuPré and the MNO TYRMC are very grateful to the Laidlaw Foundation for the opportunity to strengthen the diverse and vibrant urban Métis youth community and, by extension, the broader Métis and Aboriginal communities of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

The young women organizing Weaving the Sash have strong ties to the MNO. Skura is a Registered Nurse and graduate of Ryerson University. She is an MNO citizen and is currently the Youth Representative of the MNO Toronto and York Region Métis Council. At a young age, Skura was closely involved with the MNO youth in the community to guide the project. Skura was closely involved with the MNO community and its youth, and is deeply connected to her heritage.

DuPré recently completed her Master of Social Work degree at the University of Waterloo with a degree in Therapeutic Recreation and Senology. Also a highly involved and knowledgeable MNO citizen, DuPré has had the chance to build a strong Métis identity and has experienced the positive impacts that cultural-based programming can have and would like to provide that opportunity to other youth.

St. Germain is entering her fourth year of Aboriginal Studies and Environmental Studies at the University of Toronto. She is eager to collaborate on this project because she has a vision for a network of Métis youth leaders to be invited to share their ideas for the culture-based workshops they are planning. The programming will include workshops on identity, history, arts and crafts, and traditional ways of life.

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Weaving the Sash aims to offer cultural-based programming that will strengthen Métis youth identity, create a network of Métis youth in the GTA, build relationships with traditional knowledge holders like Senators and Elders, increase knowledge about Métis culture and history, promote healthy living, and reconnect Métis youth with the land.

These goals will be accomplished with a four-part event beginning in the Fall of 2015 and running until the Summer of 2016, with one event offered per season. The program will include workshops on identity, history, arts and crafts, and traditional ways of life on the land, among other aspects of Métis culture. Before the first event takes place this fall, there will be two Weaving the Sash events held, one in Toronto and the second in the York Region, where Métis youth will be invited to share their ideas for the culture-based workshops they would like to see offered. An online survey has also been developed for Métis youth to fill out as the youth leaders hope to gain feedback and direction from Métis youth in the community to guide the project.

Submitted by

Elise St. Germain
MNO Citizen

Weaving the Sash
Toronto and York Métis youth granted $25K for cultural program
Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Paul Robitaille graduated from McMaster University with a degree in Environmental Science but lacked the hands-on experience that many employers look for when seeking to hire new graduates.

“Unless you’ve gone for engineering or nursing or another applied degree, employers aren’t really knocking on your door,” Paul shared.

With MNO financial support, Paul enrolled in the two-year Forestry Ecosystem Management Technician program at Confederation College in Thunder Bay and since then, the opportunities have gone above and beyond his expectations.

Paul, who is from Melanee, loves the forest and was on track to becoming a forestry technician. But several opportunities came his way including working on a college-led bio-energy study in remote First Nation communities, facilitating student engagement for the MNO, and becoming the Confederation Student Union’s Sustainability Ambassador.

Northern Ontario has been a good place for Paul, allowing him to immerse himself in the Thunder Bay community and be involved in ways that will help him in his career. His experiences in the north made him realize there was still so much more he wanted to learn as a student.

After completing the two-year program, Paul decided to continue his studies instead of leaping into the job market. “By the time graduation came around, I never really considered getting a job, the opportunities I had over the last two years have just kept snowballing,” he admitted.

Paul has spent much of his spare time volunteering and being a role model for other students. He proudly became a student counsellor/tutor for the MNO and a Youth Representative for the MNO Thunder Bay Métis Council.

At his convocation ceremony, Paul received the 2015 Governor General’s Award, an honour bestowed upon the student who has achieved the highest academic standing at the Confederation College in the final year of a diploma level post-secondary program earning an average of 80 per cent or better.

Thanks to all the opportunities presented to him, Paul has decided to continue his education. He was accepted into the Masters of Forestry program at Lakehead University.

MNO youth graduates with honours

by/MNO Staff

CMNO Youth Representative Mitch Case recently completed his degree program at Algoma University and graduated with an Honours Bachelor’s degree in History and a certificate in Indigenous Studies. When reflecting on why he chose his course of study Mitch says, “Someone needs to tell our story, we need to tell our story, and tell the truth about our people.”

Mitch recently completed his Honours the- sis in History which focused on the intercon- nections within Great Lakes Métis commu- nities. Mitch’s idea was to bust the myth of the “do or die” map, the idea that Métis com- munities are disconnected from each other and not part of a whole. Based on primary source research that involved the records of Métis families from communities all around the Great Lakes, the research concluded that the Métis communities in the Ontario part of the Homeland are not disconnected from each other and are part of a web of families, economies and stories.

Algoma University, which is located in Sault Ste. Marie, is situated where the former homelands of the Three Fires Mi’kmaq, Saulteaux and Ojibwe people once again. In the night sky, the darkness is softened by the light of the stars. For the Métis Nation, our elders have been those stars in the night, the youth are the sunrise emerging from the darkness.” — Mitch Case

Mitch encourages all Métis youth to pursue their goals and their passions and to strive for academic excellence. “Métis youth are rising stars,” he says. “The Métis Nation has gone through a lot of dark times. The sun is rising on the Métis Nation once again. In the night sky, the darkness is softened by the light of the stars. For the Métis Nation, our elders have been those stars in the night, the youth are the sunrise emerging from the darkness.”

Paul Robitaille attends his graduation from the Forestry Ecosystem Management program at Confederation College in Thunder Bay.

Mitch Case wore his Métis sash pin and an eagle feather on his convocation cap as a nod to his roots.

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For clarity that counts, call Collins Barrow.
MNO citizen plans picture perfect future

by MNO Staff

For Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Andrée Wagar, the decision to return to school might not have been possible if it weren’t for the MNO.

For eight years, Andrée worked as an instructor for a company that helped people prepare for new jobs. When the company had to close its doors, this presented her with an opportunity to begin a second career.

“After seeing so many of my former students go to college to change careers, I thought ‘Why not me?’” Andrée shared.

In 2005, Andrée and her family learned they had Métis heritage. Since then, they have been learning more and more about Métis culture and getting involved whenever possible.

With her decision to return to school, Andrée turned to the MNO for assistance with tuition and the costs of some of the required equipment for her program. She enrolled in the Digital Photography program at Durham College.

“Because of that financial help, I was able to concentrate on my classes instead of how I was going to pay for school,” she says.

Due to her diligence in her studies, Andrée was on the Dean’s List for all four semesters of her program. She also graduated as the highest ranked graduate in the Digital Photography program for 2014.

These days, Andrée works for two companies as a photographer and also does freelance work for local businesses in her hometown of Whitby. In the future, she hopes to open her own photography studio to offer portraits and cover special events.

“The decision to go back to school was a difficult one for me to make,” she admits. “Knowing that the MNO would be able to help me accomplish that goal made it easier for me to take that next step towards a new career. I am extremely grateful for the support the MNO provided.”

A father’s pride in his daughter

submitted by Richard Lefebvre

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Jaime Lee Lefebvre recently finished her law degree with the University of Ottawa and was called to the bar as a lawyer on June 22.

She accomplished all this with her husband being posted in Kingston and three children at home.

Jaime Lee is presently the Regimental Sergeant Major of the 28 Medical Company Ottawa. She’s completed a Bachelor of Military Arts and Science through correspondence from the Royal Military College in Kingston.

Richard Lefebvre, Jaime Lee’s father and MNO citizen and veteran, is proud of his daughter’s accomplishments.

“There is nothing a Métis person cannot accomplish with a lot of hard work,” Richard wrote in an e-mail about his daughter.

Jaime Lee and her father both wore their Métis sashes to the June 22 ceremony to show their pride in their heritage and to encourage Métis youth to make their dreams reality.

Graduating to a better life with MNO assistance

by MNO Staff

During the 2013 to 2014 academic year, Katrina Richard found herself struggling to make ends meet. She had been accepted at the esthetics program at Collège Boréal in Sudbury but times were hard.

Katrina’s parents were unable to provide her with financial assistance and she only received income from a part-time job where she worked a sparse 10 hours per week.

At a loss, Katrina reached out to the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) for assistance through MNO employment and training programs.

Thanks to the MNO, Katrina was able to complete her studies and receive her diploma as a certified esthetician. She was able to focus on her studies without worrying knowing her finances were secure.

Today, Katrina works at Nails Plus by Nicole providing manicures, gel nails, pedicures, waxing, facials, body treatments and many other cosmetic services to her clients.

“If it weren’t for the MNO, I would not have been able to go to school and become what I am today,” she said.

Since gaining employment in her chosen field, Katrina’s life has improved. It never feels like work now that she does what she loves for a living.
Métis receives Officer’s Commission

submitted by Guy Mandeville, CD
Chair, MNO Veterans’ Council

Charles Mandeville, the son of Guy Mandeville, CD, Chair of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Veterans’ Council, has become a commissioned officer and promoted to Sub-Lieutenant in Her Majesty’s Royal Canadian Navy. He received his commission at Canadian Forces Station (CFS) Leitrim in Ottawa in a ceremony on July 13.

(For an edited excerpt from his Commissioning biography)

Charles Mandeville joined the Canadian Armed Forces Reserves in August 1997 as a Signals Operator with 772 Reserve Electronic Warfare (EW) Squadron in Kingston. Although he should have known better after three years in the Reserves, he enrolled in the Regular Force in July 2000 as a Communications Search Operator at Canadian Forces Recruiting Centre (CFRC) Kingston.

After completing his Developmental Period (DP) 3 training, he was first posted to Canadian Forces Station (CFS) Leitrim in May 2001, where he served in a variety of positions on shift as an analyst.

Following his DP2 training in February 2004, he returned to CFS Leitrim as a Processing and Reporting (PR) Analyst, and member of the Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) Support Element (SSE) at the National Defence Command Centre (NDCC). Due to his outstanding performance, he was selected for, and completed, Persian Farsi language training at the Canadian Forces Language School (CFLS) before being posted in 2009 to Canadian Forces Information Operations Group (CFIOG) Detachment in Fort Gordon, Georgia.

This location afforded him and his wife the opportunity to make regular sojourns to “The Happiest Place on Earth,” Disneyworld, in Florida. Returning to CFS Leitrim in 2010, Charles was employed as a Duty Shift Supervisor before being sent on a continuous French language course at CFLS. Upon completion he completed his language requirements. Since January 2013, he has been employed in Echo Troop in a variety of positions including the SIGINT Development (SIGDEV) Task Manager, Target Discovery Team Lead, Cyber Discovery Team Lead, and Echo Troop Warrant Officer. In March 2015, he was selected for the Commissioning from the Ranks (CFR) program as an Officer in the Intelligence Branch.

Throughout his career to date, Charles has deployed to the former Yugoslavia as a member of Operation PALLADIUM, and as the Cryptologic Deployed Support Element (CDSSE) Team Lead on the HMCS Vancouver in support of Operation MOBILE and Operation ACTIVE ENDEAVOUR.

Charles is an extremely motivated, intelligent, and dedicated member of the Canadian Armed Forces who has the potential to be an outstanding officer.

MNO helps youth become Early Childhood Educator

submitted by Jade Bourbonnière
MNO Education & Training Operations Coordinator

Heather Van Wyck, a self-identified Métis, was living on her own and supporting herself by working in retail. She knew that the cost of postsecondary education would be an obstacle to her goal of becoming an Early Childhood Educator, so she approached the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) to see if it could help her. She was able to obtain funding assistance through the MNO as well as help applying for many bursaries and scholarships.

She enrolled in a two-year Early Childhood Education program at Georgian College, where she was very successful in both her studies as well as in other areas of student life. She earned her First Aid CPR Certificate. She was selected the “Classmate of the Year,” for two consecutive years, received two volunteer certificates and earned a Certificate of Professional Development at the Ontario Native Education Counselling Conference. She was nominated to attend the 2013 Annual Georgian College Leadership Conference in Barrie.

Heather was also a peer mentor through Georgian Bay Aboriginal Services, which opened many doors for her. She became a MNO Infinite Reach Facilitator. She found that this position strengthened her self-esteem and gave her the confidence to believe she is capable of achieving her goals.

At Georgian College, Heather was able to learn so much more about her Métis culture and it made her into the person she wanted to be. She enjoys teaching others about Métis culture and for two years in a row organized and facilitated Louis Riel Day at Georgian College.

Heather graduated from Georgian College in June 2015 and has accepted a position at a child care centre as a registered Early Childhood Educator. She will be educating children up to 12 years of age as part of before/after school programs.

Heather credits the financial support and other help provided by the MNO as crucial to her success.
MNO citizen and musician represents Métis culture at Aboriginal Pavilion

by | MNO Staff

When Jamie Dupuis received his Métis Nations of Ontario (MNO) citizenship card, his family was elated. For Jamie, receiving him as an MNO citizen and presenting him with a Métis sash, I am very proud. I did this now since the part of my broken family, when he was born, he was part of the Métis nation, I believe it’s time to recognize the Métis Nation Council, including his grandparents, in June, and at the Aboriginal Pavilion in Sudbury. The day was spent recognizing and celebrating the Métis culture. Dupuis was able to perform during the Aboriginal Pavilion’s opening night as a representative of the MNO and the Métis community.

He accepted the sash and was very proud. It was his first time performing in Toronto and to be showcased at the opening night as well as represent Métis culture in the Aboriginal Pavilion were both opportunities Dupuis couldn’t miss. DUPUIS said, “I’ve always been a big part of the Métis culture, so much talent in the Aboriginal culture— it was amazing.”

MNO citizen celebrates university graduation

by | MNO Staff

On June 17, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Katie Baltzer graduated from the University of Windsor. She received her combined Honours degree in Social Work and Women’s Studies. Now that she has obtained her degree, Katie plans to continue her studies. She’s enrolled in the Master of Social Work program this fall at Queen’s University. Last June, she completed her training in the field she loved.

“Being a part of the whole show, with so much talent throughout North America,” she shared in an interview.

A teacher in training

by | MNO Staff

Jennifer Nicholson is the Post-Secondary Representative on the Provisional Council of The Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO). She faced her share of private challenges before she received her diploma at Trent University’s convocation ceremony this year. Jennifer’s father is struggling with lung cancer but she worked hard and stayed on top of her studies while helping to care for him. She graduated on both the Dean’s List and the President’s List, which means she maintained an average of 80 per cent.

On June 3, Jennifer proudly wore her Métis sash over her graduation gown. “It looked awesome,” she shared in an email. Jennifer spent four years studying at Trent University for a Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in Indigenous Studies and History. One of those years was spent as an exchange student in the United Kingdom, at the University of Birmingham. Jennifer is pursuing a career as a teacher. She’ll be entering the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program this fall at Queen’s University.

MNO helps turn an interest in cooking into fulfilling career

submitted by Jade Bourbonnière

MNO Education & Training Operations Coordinator

Self-identified Métis Chad Marion was interested in a career in Culinary Management because it combined two of his interests: food and science. To pursue these interests, however, Chad had a few challenges to overcome, most of them being financial. He lived with his mother and worked in a minimum wage dishwasher job that did not provide him with enough money to take a part-time Culinary Management course where he could learn the proper methods process of storing, cooking, preparing and serving food.

Like many other Métis, Chad approached the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) and with MNO assistance, Chad was able to enroll in the two-year Culinary Management program at Canadore College in North Bay. There Chad received his Smart Serve, Basic Food Safety Training, and WHMIS. During his program, Chad learned many valuable skills such as culinary planning/preparation, essential nutritional principles, ensuring a well-maintained kitchen environment, performing effectively as a member of a food and beverage preparation service, self-management, cost control techniques and knowledge of kitchen management techniques. Chad enjoyed the training because it demanded he be creative. He was encouraged to play with the food so as to make delicious and beautiful meals that people would enjoy.

Today Chad works at the Midland Golf and Country Club as a Line Cook. He prepares and cooks the food and maintains and closes the kitchen. He is now on track for the career in Culinary Management that he had wanted. He credits the support and services of the MNO as a crucial part of his success with the completion of his training in the field he loves.

Father plans bright future for family

by | MNO Staff

For Jamie Aide, learning that he was about to become a father was a life-changing event. Jamie was working as a gas station clerk when he got the news. It was then he decided he needed to make some important changes in his life in order to better provide for his family. He knew that, without help, securing a career with health benefits would be a challenge.

With financial assistance from the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), Jamie was able to attend Durham College’s AZ Driver skills training program. Successful graduates of the program gain an A-level driver’s license, allowing them to tow trailers which weigh in excess of 4,000 kilograms, in addition to gaining a Z-endorsement to operate any vehicle with air brakes within the province of Ontario. After two months of training, Jamie received his Certificate of Completion.

Today, Jamie is a professional truck driver at Mackie Transportation, Inc. He loves his job and he gets to travel to see new places throughout North America. Most importantly, Jamie is now able to provide a solid financial foundation for his family’s care and his children’s future.
**Barbaranne Wright**

It is with deep sadness that the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) mourns the passing of Barbaranne Wright on Sunday, July 26, 2015.

Barbaranne was a published author and passionate genealogist as well as a devoted citizen and volunteer within the MNO. She was the first chartered President of the MNO Niagara Region Métis Council and afterward became the Women’s Representative for that region. In 2012, she received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her active volunteerism.

She is survived by her children, Lisa Risewick (Wain Matthews) and Brian Risewick (Sandy Westenberg), her grand-children, Christopher, Calen, Nicholas, Hunter, Merissa, Leanne and Kate, her great-grand-child, Benjamin, her siblings Alice Lacovio (Gerry), Monique Gagne (Donald), Richard Aubin (Linda), Lisa Ansenak (Paul) and Vivianne Regimbald (Daniel), and her mother, Irene Aubin.

She was passionate about her family, her heritage, gardening and did award-winning needlepoint and beadwork.

She will be dearly missed by all who knew and loved her.

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**Colette Risewick**

With great sorrow, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) mourns the passing of Colette Risewick on Wednesday, August 5, 2015, at Bingham Memorial Hospital in Matheson, Ontario. She was 69 years old.

Colette started working at the MNO Timmins Métis Council office on October 1, 1997, and later joined the MNO’s Education and Training branch at its Timmins office.

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**Parker Sabourin-Omenye**

Parker-Omenye, Parker - 1997 - 2015. The family announces with great sorrow his sudden and unexpected passing at the Timmins & District Hospital on Tuesday, May 19, 2015 at the age of 18 years. Beloved son of Kelly Sabourin and George Omenye. Loving brother of Isaac and Sahayma Omenye. Cherished grandson of Denise (née Doug Russell) Timmins and Mary (née Dominic) Mageau of Mombasa, Kenya. Dear nephew of MNO Citizens Lorraine Fonjong (Sunny) of Timmins, Scott Russell of Timmins, Norm Beaudouin (Ashleigh) of Cambridge, Anne Omenye of Kenya, Jacqueline Omenye (Joshua) of Kenya, Christine Omenye (Joseph) of Baltimore, Marilyn and Isaac Omenye of Kenya. Parker was an outdoors enthusiast. Enjoyed riding his dirt bike, playing hockey, skiing and snowboarding. What he cherished most was to be surrounded by his friends and family. Funeral services were held at 3:00pm on Sunday, May 24, 2015 at the Mirron-Wilson Chapel (Pastor Paul Douglass officiated). Remembrance donations to Kids Help Phone would be greatly appreciated. The family received friends from 2 - 4 pm and 6 - 8 pm on Saturday, May 23, 2015 at the MIRRON-WILSON FUNERAL HOME, CREMATION AND RECEPTION CENTRE 150 Balsam St. S. Timmins.

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**Manley Morley ‘Moe’ Johnson**

Passed away peacefully on July 14th, 2015, with his family by his side. Loving father to Glenn and wife Debra; cherished son of Isaac and Sara Omenye. Cherished grandson of Dorothy (née Morris) and Harold (Maggie) Pearson. He is also survived by his sister Linda (Serge) Russell and brothers Larry (Gladdie) Mageau and Harold (Maggie) Pearson. He was also a devoted member of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 235 and served as an executive for many years. Moe touched the hearts of all who knew him. He will be greatly missed.

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**Henry Mageau**

The family of Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Henry Mageau is sad to announce his passing on July 15, 2015, at the Ottawa General Hospital at the age of 83. Henry was born in Timmins and moved to Ottawa over 30 years ago. He worked in the hospitality industry as a cook and his specialties were amazing breakfasts.

Henry had a generous heart and an incredible sense of humour. Henry was pre-deceased by his parents, Jean and Aldege Mageau and survived by his sister Linda (Serge) Pearson and brothers Larry (Gladdie) Mageau and Harold (Maggie) Pearson. He is also survived by his nieces Michelle Millette, Collette Cout; Lisette Duguay and nephews Jamie and Jason Mageau, Beck Duguay and Dylan and Jared Pearson.

He will forever be missed and loved.

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Submit by MNO citizen Teri Sabourin
Birth Announcements

eizak JENSEN

Proud parents Renee and Bob Jensen Jr. would like to share a picture of their son Eizak, born May 20, 2015. Eizak’s proud grandparents are MNO North Channel Métis Council President Yvonne Jensen and Bob Jensen, Councillor for Region 4 Ernest Gatien and Suzanne and Tim Lamour.

ava maureen DRAINVILLE

Proud Grandpa Tim Pile is happy to welcome the arrival of his Métis Voyageur Granddaughter, Ava Maureen Drainville, born March 30, 2015, at 9:40 p.m., 7 lbs 11 oz and 20 inches long. Proud Parents Kaitlyn Pile and Alex Drainville welcomed their beautiful daughter at Thunder Bay Regional Health Science Centre.

Building the MNO Team

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is excited to welcome two new staff members who are returning in different roles.

MNO Education and Training

Ginny Gonneau
MNO Policy Analyst/Projects Coordinator
Ottawa

Ginny has worked in the non-profit sector for the past 10 years. Previously she worked as the Director of Youth for Métis Nation of British Columbia (MNBC), Project Manager for the Society of Children and Youth of B.C. (SCY), and Provincial Youth Coordinator for the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO). For the past seven years, she has been self-employed as an independent contractor with various Ontario and BC based consultants and organizations. This included six years with the BC Centre of Excellence for Women’s Health (BCCEWH) assisting the Director of Knowledge Translation on various projects related to women, girls, substance use, trauma and mental health.

She worked with Sue Howard Inc. Consulting based in Surrey, B.C., on developing a provincial First Nations-specific prescription drug use community awareness curriculum for the Alberta First Nations. For the MNO, she has recently completed two program evaluations for the Infinite Reach Métis Post-Secondary Student Network. Ginny completed a bachelor’s degree in Women’s Studies and History at Carleton University. She started her career working at the MNO during her university studies when she was 18 and has participated in two of the MNO’s summer-long Métis youth canoe expeditions paddling from Lachine, Quebec, to Batoche, Saskatchewan. She is also a Registered Massage Therapist (RMT) and loves to jig! Ginny is excited to be returning to the MNO and looks forward to working within the MNO Education and Training Branch.

Infinite Property Services

Submitted by Doug Wilson, MNO Chief Operating Officer.

Dianne Lampi
General Manager of Infinite Property Services
Thunder Bay

Dianne served as a Senior Housing Analyst with the MNO in 2009-10. She has a wealth of experience in all elements of the housing industry and social housing. Besides her time with the MNO, she was also Supervisor of the Housing Portfolio for the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board; a Housing Regulatory Analyst with the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board; and the Housing Manager with the Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board. She also has many years of experience in managerial and administrative positions including most recently as the Manager of Suomi Koti of Thunder Bay Incorporated where she was responsible for all aspects of operations including supervision, maintenance, planning, finances and tenant relations.

Welcome back to the MNO team, Dianne and Ginny!
ACROSS THE HOMELAND

“...we call those lands the Métis Homelands. The Homelands stretch from the lakes and rivers of Ontario, cross the wide prairies, traverse the mountains into British Columbia and into the northern reaches of the Northwest Territories. They include the hills, and valleys of the north-central American States.” — from the Métis Nation of Ontario Statement of Prime Purpose

British Columbia

On August 31, the Métis Nation British Columbia and the Ktunaxa Nation signed a Health Protocol Agreement agreeing to increase planning and access to health services for Métis and all Aboriginal people residing in Ktunaxa Territory.

“This agreement will ensure that any and all health services, from the planning stage to the provisioning stage, will include input from Métis and all Aboriginal people in Ktunaxa territory,” Whitehead stated in an interview for The Daily Townsman.

The agreement was signed by Ktunaxa Nation Council Social Sector Director Debbie Whitehead, Ktunaxa Nation Council Social Sector Chair Codie Morigeau, Métis Nation British Columbia Regional Director for the Kootenays Marilyn Taylor and Métis Nation British Columbia Minister responsible for Health and Vice-President Annette Maurice.

Source: The Daily Townsman

Alberta

On August 7, the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Fort Edmonton Park, a parkland along Edmonton’s river valley, in an agreement formalizing the inclusion of Métis cultural programming with the park’s Indigenous People’s Experience.

Audrey Potrias, President of the MNA, and Douglas Goos, Fort Edmonton’s management company Board Chairman, agreed that the MOU assured that both parties “will work collaboratively and in good faith to ensure the diversity, richness and integrity of Métis history and culture incorporated into cultural programming accurately,” according to Goos.

The MOU signing took place during the MNA’s 2015 Annual General Assembly (AGA) in Edmonton, Alberta.

This is the second MOU Fort Edmonton Park has signed in 2015 to expand the Indigenous People’s Experience.

Source: The Edmonton Journal

Saskatchewan

Retired Saskatchewan farmer and artist Don Wilkins created eight metal sculptures depicting Métis history. They have been placed along the Louis Riel Trail, which is the most traveled highway in the province going from Regina to Saskatoon.

The sculptures portray historical Métis accounts between 1850 and 1895. While they depict parts of the Northwest Rebellion, the stories behind the history are not all doom and gloom.

“The Métis people were a great, joyful bunch,” Wilkins told CBC News. “After the buffalo hunts and during the winter months [they] had a fiddle fest.”

Each sculpture has been donated by Wilkins and comes with no burden to taxpayers.

The Louis Riel sculpture is located near Bladworth, while the second other sculptures can be seen between Prince Albert and Regina.

Source: CBC News

Manitoba

The Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) called upon Elections Canada to recognize MMF citizenship cards as acceptable voter identification in the upcoming federal election.

As a result, Métis voters in Manitoba will be able to use their citizenship cards as legal proof of identification. MMF President David Chartrand hopes that this will lead to more Métis citizens casting ballots on October 19.

“They’re hard to forge,” Chartrand stated about the cards. “So it’s very important that this card gets its recognition.”

According to Chartrand, democracy among the Métis can be traced all the way back to the days of the buffalo hunt, when a captain of the hunt would be elected to lead the hunting parties.

Chartrand hopes that the new change will encourage the 52,000 MMF citizens to vote.

Sources: ChrisD.ca, CBC News

The financier of Choice for
Métis Entrepreneurs in Ontario

Financing up to $1,000,000 for resources and related sector businesses

Rates & security customized to promote Métis business success

Contributions for business plans and ongoing support

mvdf.ca 1-855-798-0133
An air of celebration prevailed as MNO leaders and dignitaries landed at Pete Pettersen Park. Paddlers greeted the crowd on shore with raised paddles and big smiles.

MNO Citizen Amanda Rheaume performs We Aspire.

This year the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Annual General Assembly started with a song

Entitled “We Aspire,” the song is based on the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Statement of Prime Purpose and was produced for the MNO by MNO citizen and award-winning musician Amanda Rheaume. The soaring lyrics proclaimed, “It is our time to rise,” which captured the spirit of the 400 MNO citizens and leaders gathered in Midland to provide a dynamic example of Métis self-government in action. (See page B4 for more about the song.)

As in past years, on Friday evening, prior to the official start of the AGA on Saturday, August 22, the traditional Welcome to the AGA event was held, this year at Pete Pettersen Park in Midland. There, excited citizens gathered as four canoes paddled by members of the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO), Métis youth and numerous dignitaries landed on the beach and marched in a short procession led by MNO veterans. Following remarks from MNO President Gary Lipinski and greetings from the Honourable Helena Jaczek, Minister of Community and Social Services (who could not attend events the next day), a spontaneous celebration broke out in the park as Métis youth started traditional dances and MNO citizens and dignitaries renewed acquaintanceships in a festive atmosphere.

The following morning MNO Chair France Picotte called the AGA to order and ran the meeting with her usual efficiency and good humour. Ably assisted by MNO Vice-Chair Sharon McBride, Chair Picotte reminded delegates it was their job to both “work hard and play hard and if you want to play hard you need to earn it by working hard.” — MNO Chair France Picotte

... if you want to play hard you need to earn it by working hard.” — MNO Chair France Picotte

MNO Chair France Picotte
Dignitaries & Special Guests

Most of the same dignitaries who had been part of the Welcome to the AGA even brought greetings during the Opening Ceremony Saturday morning. These included Aboriginal Affairs Minister David Zimmer, Ontario Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown, Members of Parliament Carolyn Bennett and Bruce Stanton, Member of the Provincial Parliament France Gélinas, Midland Mayor Gordon McKay as well as several Ontario Deputy Ministers and the Presidents of other Métis governments: President Audrey Poitras from the Métis Nation of Alberta, President David Chartrand from the Manitoba Métis Federation and President Élément Chartier from the Métis National Council. Video greetings were also viewed from Premier Kathleen Wynne and provincial New Democratic Party leader Andrea Horwath. (See page B6 for more on what the special guests had to say)

State of the Nation Address

During his State of the Nation address, President Lipinski took advantage of the presence of political leaders of all stripes to encourage MNO citizens to make their presence felt in the upcoming federal election. He encouraged MNO citizens to ask candidates questions about parties’ policies on Métis issues. “Pay very close attention to what the parties are saying, but even more importantly, to what they are not saying,” said President Lipinski.

President Lipinski also reviewed the long list of achievements made by the MNO in 2014-15 (see the Annual Report Highlights section in this paper for more details) and outlined the major issues that the MNO will focus on in the upcoming year.

Among these issues is establishing a process for federal land claims for Métis. “Métis communities have been excluded from the federal claims process for far too long,” explained President Lipinski. “This is unacceptable to Ontario Métis. Moreover, this federal exclusion can no longer be sustained based on Métis inclusion in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 as well as the Supreme Court of Canada’s decisions over the last decade. Negotiations are the only way forward.”

President Lipinski pointed to the recent appointment of Vancouver-based lawyer Tom Isaac as a Ministerial Special Representative on these issues and the upcoming Supreme Court of Canada hearing the landmark case of Daniels v. Canada as hopeful signs that a federal land claims process may finally become a reality. To further move the government in that direction, on the final day of the AGA, the delegates passed a unanimous resolution calling on the federal government to establish a process to address outstanding Métis rights and claims. (See pages B13 - B15 for the AGA Resolutions)

Resolutions & Rights Advancement

The AGA also passed unanimous resolutions to advance Métis harvesting rights with the Ontario Government (see page B13 for more details), to ensure Métis rights and interests are addressed in any potential sale of Hydro One, to draw increased attention to the need for rail safety in order to protect the traditional territories of Ontario Métis communities as well as to call on both the provincial and federal governments to ensure Métis inclusion in the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action (see pages B13 - B15 for the text of all AGA resolutions).

During the AGA, delegates received reports on Métis rights and legal issues, and an overview of Métis economic development progress through the Métis Voyageur Development Fund as well as the MNO’s recently created business arm, Métis Infinity Investments, from MNO Legal Counsel Jason Madden.

In keeping with Chair Picotte’s admonishment, however, it was not all work for the delegates. On Saturday evening, the MNO hosted a dinner and dance that was kicked off by the MNO Summer Youth Cultural Program students who energized and entertained delegates with sing-alongs of traditional voyageur songs. This was followed by a concert from Amanda Rheatme (see page B4) and then a local Métis country band, Rosewood.

Métis Voyageur
September 2015, Issue no. 87
Region 7 Hosts

The AGA was hosted by the Region 7 MNO Community Councils: the MNO Georgian Bay Métis Council, the MNO Great Lakes Métis Council, and the MNO Moon River Métis Council, which held a barbecue for lunch on Sunday. Sponsored by Bruce Power and Ontario Power Generation, the barbecues corresponded with a number of cultural activities that afternoon where families and friends could meet, participate in artistic workshops, voyageur games and enjoy some warm haddock. Sash weaving, fiddling, beading and making jams were among the many activities for all to enjoy (see pages B8 & B9 for photos from the Sunday cultural activities).

The Region 7 Councils also hosted a community supper on Sunday evening, further extending their hospitality to visitors to their region. Sponsored by Bruce Power, the packed supper featured a delicious meal and Métis entertainers including the Métis Ladies Drumming Group, Tricia Paradis, Marg Raynor, Sharon Blandino, Leah Gravelle, Nick Howell and the Copegog Brothers (see pages B8 & B9 for photos from the community supper).

After an exciting and productive AGA, MNO citizens returned home secure in the knowledge that the MNO continues to aspire to attain our highest potential and in the words of our new anthem: “...to be the best we can be.”

MNO Veterans’ Pilgrimage to Vimy Ridge in 2017

The capture of Vimy was more than just an important battlefield victory. For the first time all four Canadian divisions attacked together: men from all regions of Canada were present at the battle. Brigadier-General A.E. Ross declared after the war, “in those few minutes I witnessed the birth of a nation.”

— Dr. Tim Cook, noted historian with the Canadian War Museum and Carleton University (source: www.warmuseum.ca.)

1) Manitoba Métis Federation President David Chartrand receives a hug from Senator Lois McCallum. 2) Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) President Audrey Poitras presents MNO Chair France Picotte with a beautiful fiddle she won in an MNA draw. 3) The Region 7 Community Councils did a great job hosting the AGA. They were recognized for their hard work during the opening ceremony. From left: President Peter Couture of the MNO Great Lakes Métis Council, President David Dusome of the MNO Georgian Bay Métis Council, PCMNO Senator Verna Porter-Brunelle, President Tony Muscat of the MNO Moon River Métis Council and Andy Dufrane, President of the MNO Peterborough and District Wapiti Métis Council. 4) The hard-working MNO Resolution Committee, from left: MNO Vice-Chair Sharon McBride, Senator Gary Lafreniere, PCMNO Region 7 Councillor Pauline Richardson, Youth Representative Mitch Case. (See pages B13 - B15 for resolutions.) 5) MNO Veterans’ Council President Joe Paquette (left) chats with MNO SYCP facilitators at their AGA booth. 6) PCMNO Senator Verna Porter-Brunelle.

For more information and to express your interest in being a part of the Vimy Ridge Pilgrimage Committee, please e-mail: mnovc@rogers.com.
AGA 2015 Highlights

MNO and Union Gas renew Relationship Agreement

Union Gas and the MNO enjoy a longstanding positive relationship and Union Gas has consistently been a model proponent in terms of respecting Métis rights and the duty to consult and accommodate. During the AGA, MNO and Union Gas signed a renewal of their Relationship Agreement.

Fighting for Canada before there was a Canada

During the AGA, Fighting for Canada Before There Was a Canada: Ontario Métis Veterans pass the Torch was released. Featuring biographical stories of over 40 veterans, the first edition sold out within a few hours. The book represents hundreds of hours of painstaking research, writing and editing by the MNO Veterans’ Council.

We Aspire premiere

MNO citizen and award-winning artist Amanda Rheaume delivered a barn-burning concert capped off with the world premiere of the new Métis anthem, “We Aspire,” which drew a standing ovation. Amanda’s songs reached deep into her Métis roots and got everyone up and jigging especially during the encore when her fiddler, Anthony Brascoupe, left everyone wanting more.

Planning for the future

Twenty youth attended the MNO Youth Council meeting where they planned how to build a stronger future for the MNO. The proposal for a youth leadership conference generated enthusiasm and a resolution to investigate the potential for such an event was submitted to all AGA delegates, where it was passed unanimously.

WSMNO meeting honours Barbranne Wright

The absence of Barbranne Wright, who passed away in July, was clearly felt on August 21 as members of the Women’s Secretariat of the Métis Nation of Ontario (WSMNO) met for their yearly update. Members discussed ways of honouring her memory, read and revised their Terms of Reference, and reviewed the work being done by representatives in each of their regions.
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 First Nations and Métis communities expect, and that is what TransCanada will deliver. TransCanada believes by developing positive, long-term relationships with the First Nations and Métis communities impacted by our activities, we can conduct our business while respecting the community interests.

Our proactive approach to First Nations and Métis Relations has been an integral part of our operations for over 30 years.
The government recognizes the importance of economic development for the Métis community because of the extent the Métis community is successful in the world of business and economics. [This success is] better for the community, it’s better for the province, it’s better for the country…we all benefit from these initiatives.”

David Zimmer
Ontario Minister of Aboriginal Affairs

“...there are no shades or partisanship when it comes to the support for the Métis Nation and as the official opposition, we’d be happy to support you along the way.”

Patrick Brown
Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario

“As the MP who has served this riding since 2006...I know how deeply we hold the relationship with Ontario’s 18,000 Métis: you are a root of our province and trace your lineage to the very first settlements, among them this community here on Georgian Bay.”

Bruce Stanton
Member of Parliament for Simcoe-North

“Vous avez beaucoup de pain sur la planche et beaucoup de belles initiatives qui s’en viennent. Je vous garanti que si vous avez besoin de nous, si on peut vous aider, ce serait un honneur et un privilège pour les Néo-Démocrates d’appuyer la Nation Métisse.”

France Gélinas
Member of Provincial Parliament for Nickel Belt

“As the MP who has served this riding since 2006...I know how deeply we hold the relationship with Ontario’s 18,000 Métis: you are a root of our province and trace your lineage to the very first settlements, among them this community here on Georgian Bay.”

Bruce Stanton
Member of Parliament for Simcoe-North

“Vous avez beaucoup de pain sur la planche et beaucoup de belles initiatives qui s’en viennent. Je vous garanti que si vous avez besoin de nous, si on peut vous aider, ce serait un honneur et un privilège pour les Néo-Démocrates d’appuyer la Nation Métisse.”

France Gélinas
Member of Provincial Parliament for Nickel Belt

“I am excited as we embark on this next chapter as allies. I am excited as we see non-Indigenous Canadians wanting to know more. This is an exciting time...We have so much work to do.”

Carolyn Bennett
Member of Parliament for St. Paul’s

“This gathering stands as a clear signal of the strength of the Métis Nation of Ontario. Your positive presence today strengthens our community.”

Gordon McKay
Mayor of Midland

“This gathering stands as a clear signal of the strength of the Métis Nation of Ontario. Your positive presence today strengthens our community.”

Gordon McKay
Mayor of Midland

“Your government not only says words, they actually follow through...we’re getting new leadership that’s started embracing the issues and rights of the Métis Nation.”

Clément Chartier
President of the Métis National Council

“I am excited as we embark on this next chapter as allies. I am excited as we see non-Indigenous Canadians wanting to know more. This is an exciting time...We have so much work to do.”

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“We have a long-standing partnership with the MNO and we’ve had that for some time in collaboration of shared goals of supporting Métis student achievements and well-being and raising the awareness of all Ontario students regarding the richness of the MNO.”

George Zegarac
Ontario Deputy Minister of Education
Ernie Gatien named Volunteer of the Year

by MNO Staff

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen volunteers are the heart and soul of the MNO. These hard-working individuals spend thousands of hours annually building and strengthening Métis communities and it is through their continuous efforts that the MNO is able to perform its important work. Every year at the Annual General Assembly, the MNO recognizes the selflessness of outstanding volunteers. This year, the Suzanne Rochon-Burnett Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Councillor Ernie Gatien, the Provisional Council of the MNO (PCMNO) Councillor for Region 4.

Councillor Gatien was nominated for the award by MNO North Channel Métis Council President Yvonne Jensen. She shared that, “Ernie is available any day and time. He gets himself involved in all possible activities, he sits on lots of committees, he has a lot of knowledge on Métis ancestry and shares that knowledge at the meetings he attends.”

As early as 2006, Councillor Gatien began attending Council-sponsored sessions in Sault Ste. Marie. These sessions were the beginning of his involvement as a volunteer within the Métis community. While still working for the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), he also acted as Assistant Captain of the Hunt for several years before being elected to the PCMNO.

While giving his acceptance speech, Councillor Gatien spoke of all the other volunteers who were involved with the MNO. Humbled to have been nominated, he accepted the award on their behalf as well.

“I think it’s important to recognize people for what they do because there are so many people deserving of recognition. I feel that all those folks around me should have an award as well. So I accepted it on behalf of all of them.” – PCMNO Councillor Ernie Gatien

Nominations for the Volunteer of the Year Award required a written letter, limited to 1,000 words, describing why the nominee should be selected. Each year a volunteer meeting the criteria is named as the recipient by a selection committee of the MNO.


Ernie Gatien began attending Council-sponsored sessions in Sault Ste. Marie. These sessions were the beginning of his involvement as a volunteer within the Métis community. While still working for the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), he also acted as Assistant Captain of the Hunt for several years before being elected to the PCMNO. While giving his acceptance speech, Councillor Gatien spoke of all the other volunteers who were involved with the MNO. Humbled to have been nominated, he accepted the award on their behalf as well.

“I think it’s important to recognize people for what they do because there are so many people deserving of recognition. I feel that all those folks around me should have an award as well. So I accepted it on behalf of all of them.” – PCMNO Councillor Ernie Gatien

Nominations for the Volunteer of the Year Award required a written letter, limited to 1,000 words, describing why the nominee should be selected. Each year a volunteer meeting the criteria is named as the recipient by a selection committee of the MNO.


I continue to be inspired by the youth that I have had the opportunity to work with and I look forward to the next assembly in North Bay where we will gather again to continue the important work of our people.
We Aspire

Looking up so high, to the sky
Dreams come true, when you try
These are our lands
This is our home
It is our time to rise

We aspire, we are
Reaching higher, so far
To be the best we can be
We are the Métis Nation of Ontario

Leading with many voices of one mind
Our spirits have grown stronger in time
Sisters and brothers, nation inspired
Hand in hand we rise!

We aspire, we are
Reaching higher, so far
To be the best we can be
We are the Métis Nation of Ontario

~ Music and lyrics by Amanda Rheaume~
1) The Lefaive family were part of the entertainment during cultural activities on Sunday afternoon.
2) Many local entertainers participated in the Community Supper on Sunday evening.
3) MNO SYCP facilitators Aaron Oakes (left) and Gerald Lavallee (right) challenge each other at the voyageur games.
4) President Lipinski dancing with his wife Dianne at the Dinner and Dance on Saturday night.
5) The canoe flotilla arrives at Pete Pettersen Park.
6) Hanna St. Germain-Calder tries her hand at Métis dot art.
7) Amanda Rheaume performing at the Dinner and Dance.
8) Senator Larry Duval and MNO Georgion Bay Métis Council President David Dusome were decked out in their best attire for the Welcome to the AGA.
9) The Manitoulin Soap Factory was one of the many vendors at the AGA’s trade show.
10) Bill and Dora Ellis during cultural activities on Sunday afternoon.
11) Marg Raynor performed at the Community Supper.
12) MNO SYCP facilitators dancing at the Welcome to the AGA.
13) Senator Brian Gouliquer takes part in a beading workshop.
14) Members of the Region 7 Councils man the grill during the barbecue lunch on Sunday afternoon.
15) David Zimmer, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, tries out a blow horn while Senator Gary Lefebvre looks on.
16) Métis jig dancers were part of La famille Lefaive’s performance during the Voyageur Games on Sunday afternoon.
17) Gerald Lavallee and Senator Brenda Powley admire fox fur at the Métis fur trade camp.
18) Senator Brenda Porter, MNO SYCP Facilitator Joanna Burt, MNO SYCP Facilitator Alicia Bloom and Senator Cecile Wagar performed a moving rendition of Amazing Grace at the close of the AGA.
19) Participants show off their cornhusk dolls at the Sunday AGA workshop.
20) Friends and family enjoy a meal together at the Community Supper hosted by the Region 7 Councils on the final night of the AGA.
MNO Leaders and Governing Bodies

AGAs provide the opportunity for MNO citizens in leadership positions throughout Ontario to get together and discuss issues impacting their respective jurisdictions.

Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario

BACK: (l-r) Peter Rivers (Region 9), Pauline Richardson (Region 7), Cam Burgess (Region 2), Vice-Chair Sharon McBride, Secretary-Treasurer Tim Pile, Theresa Stenlund (Region 1), Anita Tucker (Region 8), Marcel Lafrance (Region 3), Ernie Gatien (Region 4), Youth Representative Mitch Case, Associate Chief Operating Officer Margaret Froh (Ex officio). FRONT: (l-r) Juliette Denis (Region 5), Senator Joseph Poitras, Chair France Picotte, President Gary Lipinski, Executive Senator Reta Gordon, Senator Verna Porter-Brunelle, Post-secondary Representative Jennifer Nicholson. (Insert) Tom Thompson Jr. (Region 6).

MNO Senators at the 2015 AGA

MNO Presidents’ Meeting

BACK: (l-r) Marc Laurin (North Bay), Tera Beaulieu (Toronto), Joel Henley (Kenora), Peter Couture (Great Lakes), Ronald Robinson (Northwest), Kim Powley (Sault St. Marie), Tony Muscat (Moon River), Nelson Montreuil (Mattawa), Richard Sarrasin (Sudbury). MIDDLE: (l-r) Brady Hupet (Sunset Country), Derrick Pont (Niagara), Marlene Davidson (Atikokan), Andy Dufraine (Peterborough), Yvonne Jensen (North Channel), Scott Lloyd (High Land Waters), David Hamilton (Chapleau), Lillian Ethier (Temiskaming), Urgel Courville (Northern Lights), Parmallia Burgie (Ottawa), Kristin Randall (Oshawa). FRONT: (l-r) Bryanna Scott (Thunder Bay), Jerry Clarke (Clear Waters), Jennifer Parkinson (Grand River), Gary Lipinski, David Dusome (Georgian Bay), William Gordon (Greenstone), Trent Desaulniers (Superior North Shore).

Métis youth who participated in the MNO Youth Council meeting at the 2015 AGA

BACK: (l-r) Amilia DiChiara, Cassidy Eames, Paul Robitalle, Gabe Picard, Kate Hellssen, PCMNO Youth Representative Mitch Case, Dustin Hoogsteen, Region 7 Youth Representative Kyle Grenier, Britney Matthews, Courtney Wall. MIDDLE: (l-r) Natasha Lafraniere, Region 1 Youth Representative Kelly Duquette, Sarah Bibeau, Simone Blais, Region 3 Youth Representative Brianne Gosselin, Alexandra Dusome, Devin Taylor. FRONT: (l-r) Aaron Oakes, Gerald Lavallee.

Métis Nation of Ontario Veterans’ Council Executive

BACK: (l-r) Secretary Greg Garratt, Treasurer Chris Plummer C.D., Sergeant-at-Arms Robert Baskey, Women’s Representative Lisa Teissier C.D., FRONT: (l-r) Chair Guy Mandeville C.D., President Joseph Faquette, Veterans’ Senator Dr. Alla Kennedy O. ONT., C.D., O.M.C.

Participants in the Women’s Secretariat of the Métis Nation of Ontario meeting at the 2015 AGA

BACK: (l-r) Amanda Pont-Shanks, Bernadette Picco, Giselle Legedfin, Jeannette Brumelle, Wendy Elliott, Tobias Clarke. MIDDLE: (l-r) Juliette Denis, Jo-Anne Secord, Sandy Trickle, Lorraine Mountney, Theresa Stenlund, Pat Taylor. FRONT: (l-r) Representative (Regions 2 and 6) Rosalyn Calder, WSMNO Spokesperson Sharon McBride, Representative (Regions 5 and 8) Perel Gabona.
HONOURING MÉTIS WOMEN IS PART OF OUR CULTURE

submitted by Sahra MacLean
MNO VAAW Coordinator

In 2014, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizens unanimously adopted a resolution calling for a National Public Inquiry on Violence Against Aboriginal Women. This resolution included the adoption of the Métis Nation Declaration to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women.

One way the Métis Nation Declaration is being moved forward is the creation of an education campaign: Honouring Métis Women is Part of Our Culture. The success of this campaign is rooted in the strength and determination of our MNO leadership, from elected council members and Senators to elders and veterans to Women’s Representatives and youth. Together we can effect change.

In 2015, the Healing and Wellness Branch engaged leadership once more through a series of interactive stations.

At the first station, participants made a pledge declaring how they will honour the Métis women in their lives. These pledges were written on pictures of a beaded five petal rose and pasted on the wall to display the work being done across the MNO. Personal pledges ranged from hosting a workshop or speaking at a vigil, to becoming a positive role model and mentor.

The second station built momentum for the campaign. Participants took Polaroid pictures with a frame cut out that read “Honouring Métis Women is Part of Our Culture” and printed out as souvenirs. Participants amplified the reach of the campaign through social media.

At the third station, participants received a special lapel pin, as well as a Community Engagement Toolkit. The toolkit provides resources for community engagement with the education campaign through the Healing and Wellness Branch and includes a poster of the five-petal beaded rose.

The three stations were incredibly popular, with AGA attendants eager to show their support for Honouring Métis women is Part of Our Culture. Our staff are thankful to all who attended, and grateful to work for and with strong and passionate advocates for ending violence against Aboriginal women.

Over the next year, the EVAAW campaign will collect and share success stories from citizens and leadership effecting change in their communities. If you have a story to share, please contact Sahra MacLean, VAAW Coordinator at SahraM@metisnation.org.

I am participating in the “Honouring Métis Women is Part of Our Culture” education campaign in the following ways…

To continue work with women and children to live free from harm!”

Add the “Honouring Métis Women is part of our culture” picture to my Facebook profile to spread awareness of the education campaign.”

Hosting blanket workshops and doing projects in school about missing and murdered Aboriginal women.”

Sharing EVAAW Prayer, Métis Faceless Dolls projects, Beading Rose, talking and educating people.”

“Have discussions in the workplace about Honouring Métis women and ending violence against Aboriginal women.”

“Educate others about consent and being committed to safe relationships.”
Among the most important work carried out at AGAs are the resolutions that are brought up for discussion. When passed these resolutions provide direction to the MNO leadership in crucial areas of governance and operations. The following are the resolutions passed at the 2015 AGA:

**Special Business Resolutions:**

**Resolution #: AGA-SPECRES2015-001**
Title: AMEND MNO PROSPERITY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY LAW
Mover: Gary Lipinski
Seconder: France Picotte

WHEREAS the PCMN met on June 25-26, 2015 and approved proposed changes to the MNO’s Self-Sufficiency Law based on the recommendation of the MNO’s legal counsel; AND WHEREAS the exact wording of the proposed changes to section 2 of the “Infinity Investment Structures”, “MNO Infinity Investments Op Inc.” and “MNO Infinity Investments LP” 7, 12, 16, 18, 21-22, 23-29, 35-36 and 42 of the MNO Prosperity and Self-Sufficiency Law are attached; THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 2015 MNO AGA adopts the changes to the MNO Prosperity and Self-Sufficiency Law, which are attached to this resolution.

**RESOLVED BY CONSENSUS (AGA-SPECRES2015-001)**

**Resolution #: AGA-SPECRES2015-002**
Title: AMEND MNO REGISTRY POLICY
Mover: Gary Lipinski
Seconder: France Picotte

WHEREAS the MNO has been engaged in collaborative research on Métis health with the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES), which has brought attention to Métis health priorities and has been used to secure resources to address Métis health needs and improve MNO service delivery and program development; AND WHEREAS amendments to the MNO’s Registry Policy are required in order to address both ICES and the MNO’s privacy obligations and ensure that the research collaboration can continue; AND WHEREAS the current MNO Registry Policy does not include a mechanism for appeal of the MNO Registry’s reconsideration decision in relation to a Harvester’s Card; AND WHEREAS the current MNO Registry Policy is no longer consistent with the Policy on Conditions for Limitations that May Apply to MNO Citizens, effective February 21, 2015; AND WHEREAS the exact wording of the proposed changes to page 3 of the MNO Registry Policy (“Independent and Confidencial Registry”) and pages 30, 31, 32, 34, 39, 40 of the Registry Policy Guidelines, and the proposed Appendices A are attached; THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 2015 MNO AGA adopts the changes to the MNO Registry Policy that are attached to this resolution.

**RESOLVED BY CONSENSUS (AGA-SPECRES2015-002)**

**Resolution #: AGA-SPECRES2015-003**
Title: AMEND THE MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO (MNO) STATEMENT OF PRIME PURPOSE
Mover: Lawrence O’Connor
Seconder: Jennifer Henry

WHEREAS we state in the Métis Nation of Ontario Statement of Prime Purpose that: “The strength of our society is based on democracy, freedom, fairness, equality, generosity, justice and the customary and written laws of our people. Above all, we cherish harmony and peace; AND WHEREAS, consistent with the statement we declare as one of our arms and objectives: to establish good relations with all Aboriginal peoples for the pursuit of our common interests and goals; THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this objective be amended to read: to establish good relations and maintain our historic alliances with all Aboriginal peoples for the pursuit of our common interests and goals.

**RESOLVED BY CONSENSUS (AGA-SPECRES2015-003)**

**Resolution #: AGA-SPECRES2015-004**
Title: AMEND THE MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO (MNO) STATEMENT OF PRIME PURPOSE
Mover: Lawrence O’Connor
Seconder: Jennifer Henry

WHEREAS it is a value of the Métis people to respect and honour Mother Earth; AND WHEREAS this value is contained the Statement of Prime Purpose as follows: “We are a Nation, born of independence, and self-sufficiency whose teachings are founded on the values of honesty and truth. We are proud of our rich heritage. We are inspired by the values and traditions of our ancestors. The strength of our society is based on democracy, freedom, fairness, equality, generosity, justice and the customary and written laws of our people. Above all, we cherish harmony and peace; THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the following text be added to the aims and objectives of the Métis Nation of Ontario: to protect and preserve the land sand waters within our homelands for future generations.

**RESOLVED BY CONSENSUS (AGA-SPECRES2015-004)**

**Resolution #: AGA-SPECRES2015-005**
Title: MNO HARVESTER CARDS
Mover: Nelson Montrul
Seconder: Kim Powley

WHEREAS the advancement of Métis rights is the upmost priority for the MNO; AND WHEREAS the 2004 MNO-MNR Harvesting Agreement always contemplated the MNO and Ontario working together to increase the 1250 cap on Harvester Card allowable under the interim arrangement and for the eventual negotiation of a longer-term, rights-recognition agreement; AND WHEREAS through the MNO-ADM Working Group the MNO and Ontario have reached common understandings with respect to historic Métis communities in all of the harvesting areas that the MNO now issues Harvester Cards in; AND WHEREAS MNO has now undergone an internal assessment of all Harvester Cards that has cancelled all incomplete Harvester Card files; THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the MNO is close to issuing its 1250th Harvester Card; AND WHEREAS constitutionally-protected Métis rights cannot be capped.

**RESOLVED BY CONSENSUS (AGA-SPECRES2015-005)**

**Resolution #: AGA-SPECRES2015-006**
Title: PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION RECOGNIZING THE MNO
Mover: Mitch Case
Seconder: Jo Anne Young

WHEREAS past MNO AGAs have called for the MNO’s leadership to work with the Ontario Government to secure legislation that recognizes and respects the MNO’s unique governance structure; AND WHEREAS the MNO’s leadership and legal counsel have presented the MNO AGA on the progress that has been made on this issue as well as the proposals being considered.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**
1) That the 2015 MNO AGA fully endorses the MNO moving forward on securing provincial legislation that recognizes and respects the MNO’s unique governance structures; 2) That, when in its strategy, all of the MNO’s governance structures at the local, regional and provincial levels will provide letters of support to the provincial government and opposition parties in an attempt to secure unanimous support within the legislature for this historic legislation.

**RESOLVED BY CONSENSUS (AGA-SPECRES2015-006)**

**Resolution #: AGA-SPECRES2015-007**
Title: PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENT AND RAILWAY SAFETY
Mover: Thomas A. Thompson
Seconder: Brady Hupet

WHEREAS the protection of the environment is an obligation the MNO owes to future generations; AND WHEREAS many railways carry hazardous or dangerous materials if spills and are in close proximity to Métis communities that rely on their territories for food as well as spiritual and cultural well-being; AND WHEREAS the MNO is increasingly concerned that there are insufficient environmental and safety protections in place in relation to railway transportation;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**
1) That the MNO’s leadership be directed to commence immediate negotiations with the MNR to have the number of MNO Harvester Cards under the MNO-MNR agreement increased and to move quickly on completing the independent review contemplated in the MNO-MNR agreement so there will be no future cap on MNO Harvester Cards; 2) If a negotiated arrangement with the MNR cannot be reached by the end of September 2015 that the MNO be directed to begin issuing Harvester Cards over the allowable 1250 number for valid Harvester Card holders and the MNO will defend these harvesters in court if they are charged by MNR; 3) The MNO leadership be directed to attempt to secure a formal negotiations process with the MNR in order to arrive at a long-term, rights recognition agreement.

**RESOLVED BY CONSENSUS (AGA-SPECRES2015-007)**

**Resolution #: AGA-SPECRES2015-008**
Title: MÉTIS LAND CLAIMS
Mover: Gary Lipinski
Seconder: Kim Powley

WHEREAS the advancement of Métis rights is the upmost priority for the MNO; AND WHEREAS the MNO has repeatedly called on the federal government to establish MNO’s claims and policies or include the MNO in the existing federal claims policies; AND WHEREAS the Alasko First Nations in the Northwest Territories have challenged the federal government’s ability to enter into a modern day land claim with the Northwest Territorial MNO Nation; THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED;
1) That the MNO AGA renew its call for the federal government to finally begin dealing with outstanding Métis claims in Ontario through the negotiation of modern day land claims or treaties; 2) That the MNO’s legal counsel be directed to investigate the ongoing litigation in the Northwest Territories for potential negative implications for Ontario Métis and the rest of the Métis Nation and report to the PCMN on options to protect and advance Métis rights.

**RESOLVED BY CONSENSUS (AGA-SPECRES2015-008)**
WHEREAS energy development in Ontario has a legacy of damage to the rights, territories and way of life of Ontario Métis;

WHEREAS through the innovative and progressive policies of the Ontario government over the last decade, new relationships and partnerships have been developed between Hydro One and Metis communities;

WHEREAS there remains a legacy of outstanding Metis claims that have not been addressed by Hydro One in relation to past transmission developments;

WHEREAS through the sale of Hydro One the MNO is concerned that the Ontario government will not be available to address these outstanding claims as well as to ensure that Hydro One continues to be mandated and available to advance relationships with Aboriginal communities that advance reconciliation;

WHEREAS the MNO asserts that these factors create an environment within the governments duty to consult the MNO on the sale of Hydro One;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the MNO President be directed to write to the Ontario government on this issue with a view to establishing a consultation and potentially a negotiations process with the province to ensure that the rights, interests and claims of Ontario Métis communities are protected and addressed in any sale of Hydro One.

RESOLVED BY CONSENSUS (AGA-RES2015-009)

Resolution #: AGA-RES2015-010
Title: FRENCH LANGUAGE
Mover: Brionne Gosselin
Secondor: Verna Porter-Brunelle

WHEREAS if resources and the MNO Website are maintained in both French and English as they are important material and have great content for MNO citizens as well as raise Metis awareness in the world;

AND WHEREAS the French language is an important part of our Métis heritage and identity for MNO citizens;

AND WHEREAS the MNO is effectively excluding entire francophone community by providing its materials in English only;

AND WHEREAS the MNO is preparing to develop francophone culture and heritage by not actively including francophone communities;

AND WHEREAS by not actively including francophone communities MNO is implicitly promoting the loss of the French language of Ontario as a the most pressing social issue of our time;

AND WHEREAS as the reconciliation process moves forward it will take all people to come together to achieve the goals of reconciliation;

AND WHEREAS the MNO has often forgotten the larger scale of “aboriginal programs” and by participating in these things we can do something about that;

AND WHEREAS the Goals of reconciliation are not only about understanding our collective past, but also preparing for a better, more productive and respectful future it is important that young people be prepared to and allowed to take on leadership roles in the reconciliation journey;

AND WHEREAS youth from the MNO have participated in 4R’s events in the past and seen the benefits of this initiative;

AND WHEREAS the National youth serving organizations and the National aboriginal organizations have come together to establish a framework for allowing Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth to come together and work towards reconciliation, this structure is known as the 4R’s Youth Movement;

AND WHEREAS the MNO National Council via the Metis Nation - British Columbia represents the Metis Nation on this important initiative;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the MNO AGA endorse the 4R’s Youth Movement as a vehicle for advancing the goal of Reconciliation;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MNO President send a letter of commendation to 4R’s steering committee and board of directors expressing the appreciation of the MNO for the work they do in promoting the development of reconciliation that is truly inclusive of and respectful to Métis people and our unique history and culture.

RESOLVED BY CONSENSUS (AGA-RES2015-012)

Resolution #: AGA-RES2015-011
Title: SUPPORT THE 4RS YOUTH MOVEMENT
Mover: Mitch Case
Secondor: Brionne Gosselin

WHEREAS the goals of reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous communities in the land that is now known as Canada is the most pressing social issue of our time;

AND WHEREAS as the reconciliation process moves forward it will take all people to come together in order to achieve the goals of reconciliation;

AND WHEREAS the MNO has often forgotten the larger scale of “aboriginal programs” and by participating in these things we can do something about that;

AND WHEREAS the Goals of reconciliation are not only about understanding our collective past, but also preparing for a better, more productive and respectful future it is important that young people be prepared to and allowed to take on leadership roles in the reconciliation journey;

AND WHEREAS youth from the MNO have participated in 4R’s events in the past and seen the benefits of this initiative;

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AND WHEREAS the MNO National Council via the Metis Nation - British Columbia represents the Metis Nation on this important initiative;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the MNO AGA endorse the 4R’s Youth Movement as a vehicle for advancing the goal of Reconciliation;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MNO President send a letter of commendation to 4R’s steering committee and board of directors expressing the appreciation of the MNO for the work they do in advancing the identity of reconciliation that is truly inclusive of and respectful to Métis people and our unique history and culture.

RESOLVED BY CONSENSUS (AGA-RES2015-013)

Resolution #: AGA-RES2015-014
Title: FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANNING IN ONTARIO AND ITS EFFECT ON THE CITIZENS OF THE MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO
Mover: Ernie Gatien
Secondor: Peter Rivers

WHEREAS the integrity of the lands and Waters is of ultimate importance to the Métis Nation of Ontario Citizens and for their future generations;

AND WHEREAS the Forest Management Planning process, as practiced by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, has jurisdiction over all Crown Lands in the Province of Ontario;

AND WHEREAS many community Councils and citizens have witnessed impacts to their way of life and proper forest management is necessary for the protection of not only our forests, but our way of life;

AND WHEREAS there are literally thousands of roads and water crossings each year being constructed throughout the homeland within the Metis Nation of Ontario’s input or consultation;

AND WHEREAS it has been made evident by virtue of many Metis Nation of Ontario Chartered Community Councils that have made registered motoring to support Lands Resources and Consultation in moving forward with the Forestry agenda and move the forestry priority to top or near top of its priorities;

AND WHEREAS we realize that the forestry agenda does not generate any significant monetary return to the Metis Nation of Ontario but that is not the driving force of our Metis culture;

AND WHEREAS the continued integrity and maintenance of the land and waters for future generations of the Metis people is being disregarded as forest harvesting proceeds;

AND WHEREAS Forest Management Planning is and has been proceeding in most cases on all of these lands in Ontario without the participation of the Metis Nation of Ontario and it’s citizens’ rights and interests in mind;

AND WHEREAS there has been no true consultation has taken place in these Forest Management Plans;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Metis Nation of Ontario by means of its Lands and Resources Branch have the appropriate number of staffing put in place (where funds are available) to deal effectively with these outstanding issues before the next General Assembly of the Metis Nation of Ontario in 2016.

RESOLVED BY CONSENSUS (AGA-RES2015-014)
Resolution # AGA-RES2015-015
Title: TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION IMPLEMENTATION
Mover: Mitch Case
Seconded: Kenneth Smale
WHEREAS after 6 years the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has concluded their comprehensive study of Canada’s genocidal experiment known as the Residential School System; AND WHEREAS the summary report contained 94 recommendations for Canada, the Provinces, Municipalities, Industry and Media on how to reconcile between Indigenous and settler communities; AND WHEREAS although the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and the Truth and Reconciliation mandate largely excluded Métis from the TRC process, the legacy of Residential Schools has impacted and affected the Métis Nation and continues to affect our people; AND WHEREAS the process of reconciliation is going to take multiple generations for Indigenous peoples and Canada to reach a place of respect; AND WHEREAS it is and large, Métis Youth understand the need for reconciliation; and it will be Métis Youth who will do the “heavy lifting” of reconciliation moving forward.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the MNO AGA 2015 call on all levels of Government in Ontario and Canada to act to implement the 94 recommendations of the TRC; BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MNO President write a letter to The Premier of Ontario and the Prime Minister (after the fall election) to demand that any steps toward implementation include Métis Individuals, families and communities; AND FINALLY BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED MNO actively engage youth via the MNOYC in any reconciliation related programs or partnerships.

RESOLVED BY CONSENSUS
(AGA-RES2015-015)

Resolution # AGA-RES2015-016
Title: COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL
Mover: Walter Gabriel
Seconded: Jennifer Parkinson
WHEREAS the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose states that its guiding principles are to:
• Encourage the full participation of all Métis in the Métis Nation;
• Promote and foster community development;
• Provide care and support necessary to meet the fundamental needs of citizens of the Métis Nation; and
• Establish means of communication for the Métis Nation; AND WHEREAS MNO citizens are represented at the local level through MNO Chartered Community Councils;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the MNO develop a “Community Relations Communication Protocol” using the LRC - Community Relations team as the liaison between the MNO branches, MNO staff, MNO Regional Councils, MNO Community Councils, MNO Veterans, MNO Senators, MNO Captains of the Hunt, MNO Women Secretariat and the MNO Youth Council to ensure advanced communication regarding engagements, consultations, gatherings, MNO branch events, etc. happening in their regions and communities to ensure full representation and participation from MNO citizens.

RESOLVED BY CONSENSUS
(AGA-RES2015-016)

Resolution # AGA-RES2015-017
Title: SUPPORT A MÉTIS YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
Mover: Mitch Case
Seconded: Kelly Duquette
WHEREAS the MNO has always put youth as a top priority; AND WHEREAS the future of the Métis Nation depends on a strong and healthy youth population who are engaged and involved in the nation and have the necessary skills to carry on the legacy of the Métis Nation; AND WHEREAS it is not if all other provincial aboriginal organizations already have an annual provincial youth conference; THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MNO seek funding to support a Métis youth leadership conference; BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MNOYC be engaged in and direct the process of planning the content of the conference; BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the conference be geared towards building leadership capacity; culture, skills development; BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the conference should be aimed at being an annual event; and,

AND FINALLY BE IT RESOLVED that the community councils be called upon to sponsor youth where possible.

RESOLVED BY CONSENSUS
(AGA-RES2015-017)

Resolution # AGA-RES2015-018
Title: ETHICAL INVESTMENT
Mover: Mitch Case
Seconded: Ernie Gatien
WHEREAS the Métis Nation was born from the land on which we now call homeland AND WHEREAS as Indigenous people we have a special relationship with the land AND WHEREAS our land has always provided for our people, even in the darkest of circumstances and loss of land; AND WHEREAS we as Métis people have rights which stem from our indigenous connection to land and our prior use of and connection to land prior to “effective control.” While these rights are entrenched in Canadian law, our customary law of the Métis Nation emphasizes not only our rights, but our responsibilities, to land; AND WHEREAS the Métis Nation of Ontario has established Infinity Investments to facilitate the MNO to benefit from our rights and land; AND WHEREAS climate change, caused by human activity and carbon emissions is the biggest threat humanity has ever faced, and AND WHEREAS to deny the science behind Climate Change is unethical and is becoming a more well known issue for humanity to deal with; AND WHEREAS many Canadian universities and other organizations and institutions are divesting themselves of heavy carbon emitting investments.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 2015 MNO AGA direct the PCMNO to work with MNO legal council to develop a policy to direct Métis Infinity Investments on what types of investments we find to be socially and environmentally responsible. This is not intended to bind Infinity from doing their job or generating profit but it is intended to create guidelines of the types of industry that simply do not fit with our Métis Worldviews. For Greater certainty, the goal of this resolution is limit MNO investments from investing in heavy carbon emitting industries.

RESOLVED BY CONSENSUS
(AGA-RES2015-018)

Resolution # AGA-RES2015-019
Title: COMMUNITY MÉTIS SPORT AND GAME INITIATIVE
Mover: Anita Tucker
Seconded: Jennifer Henry-Nicholson
WHEREAS the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose states that its guiding principles are to:
• To promote the history, values, culture, languages and traditions of the Métis Nation and to create an awareness of our proud heritage; • Promote and foster community development; and • To promote the improved health and wellness of the individual, the family and the whole Métis community; AND WHEREAS sport has been shown to play a primary positive role in youth development, including improved academic achievement, greater confidence and self-esteem, stronger peer relationships and family attachment, fewer behavioural problems, better psychosocial development and greater involvement in volunteer work; AND WHEREAS the playing of sports has repeatedly been shown to improve critical components of positive youth development such as competence, confidence, character, and caring; AND WHEREAS sports provide lifelong skills for those that play, such as the discipline of training, teamwork learning, following the leadership of coaches and captains, and learning to lose; AND WHEREAS the MNO is committed to improving the health of all its citizens by encouraging healthy weights, active living and culturally appropriate interventions to achieve these goals; AND WHEREAS a growing body of research points to community sport’s fundamental role as a primary generator of social capital within communities including improved social inclusion, crime prevention, fostering economic development and environmental sustainability; AND WHEREAS sport and traditional Métis Voyager games have always been a significant community activity for the Métis people; AND WHEREAS MNO citizens are represented at the local level through MNO Chartered Community Councils;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the MNO develop a strategy to foster, develop and initiated both organized and traditional sport at the community and regional levels within the province of Ontario.

RESOLVED BY CONSENSUS
(AGA-RES2015-019)
Thoughts from the AGA

We asked people to share what really stuck with them at this year’s AGA. Here’s what some of them said:

“Alicia Blore
MNO SYCP Facilitator

“What’s happening right now [with the SYCP facilitators at the fur trade camp], that’s a highlight for me: all of us here together, having a good time, sharing our knowledge and passing it on.”

“Derrick Pont
President, MNO Niagara Region Métis Council

“Every year, I always look forward to listening to the legal updates: where the Métis Nation is and where the Métis National Council is, the court cases and the advancing of Métis rights.”

“Wendy Elliott
Women’s Representative for MNO Credit River Métis Council, speaking at the WSMNO meeting

“I want to know everything there is right now… I can’t tell you how happy I am to be at this meeting today. This is exactly what I wanted – to meet all of you.”

“Kelly Duquette
Region 1 Representative on MNO Youth Council

“It’s nice to connect to everyone and connect to the elders I don’t see often.”

“Mitch Case
PCMNO Youth Representative

“Seeing all the culture happening with so many young people is inspiring for me… There’s an ebb and flow, where youth were kind of dormant but now we’re coming back. Youth are taking a leadership role in every aspect of the MNO.”

“Gerald Lavallee
MNO SYCP Facilitator

“My ancestor was actually a guide for Samuel de Champlain… voyageur games, canoeing, they connect me to my culture and my ancestors.”

“Brenda Powley
Senator, MNO Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council

“Sometimes, once a year, you get to see everybody and it’s great. It’s family.”

“Pearl Gabona
PCMNO Executive Senator

“With the loss, first of all because she was ill, and then with the ultimate passing of, Barbaranne [Wright], we weren’t always able to have meetings or get things accomplished. As we’re here today, she’s with us, and we’re going to accomplish and get ahead and that’s good.”

“PCMNO Youth Representative for Regions 5 and 8, speaking at the WSMNO meeting

“The highlight of this AGA was the Veterans’ Book. I saw my late brother’s picture in there and they’re going to go to Vimy. I just hope the people get behind us for this!”

“PCMNO Executive Senator

“We asked people to share what really stuck with them at this year’s AGA. Here’s what some of them said:”
In the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Statement of Prime Purpose we declare that “we aspire to attain our highest potential.” Building towards that ideal, in 2014-15 we continued to work together for Métis rights, improve social conditions for our people and promote Métis culture and heritage. I am pleased to report that in the last year, the MNO has continued to move towards the objectives of the Statement of Prime Purpose and that we will see even more success in the years to come.

Our ongoing success has been the product of our dedicated citizens and the representative government that our founders put in place. The Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) takes its direction from MNO citizens at the Annual General Assembly (AGA) and works closely with the 29 chartered community councils and their democratically elected leadership. At each AGA, you the citizens review the work of the MNO leadership and consider the MNO’s direction for the future. That is because for all the lists of achievements in this highlight of the current Annual Report and all the work done for the last 22 years; everything done in the past is ultimately to build a stronger future.

SIGNING THE NEW MNO-ONTARIO FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

Before discussing this year, however, it is worth remembering that together in 2008, we set an agenda that built on our past achievements and has been the basis for the MNO’s work since then. A key foundational element of that agenda was the MNO-Ontario Framework Agreement, which had a five-year term and was signed November 17, 2008.

The original Framework Agreement outlined mutually agreeable objectives for: strengthening the MNO; recognizing and promoting Métis history and culture; enhancing the well-being of Métis individuals, families and communities; and facilitating the recognition of Métis rights in Ontario. It proved to be the lynchpin for our relationship with the Ontario government and has led to a number of Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with other Ontario government ministries, agencies and post-secondary institutions. It has also facilitated economic development initiatives that were part of the MNO’s first strategic plan and economic development strategy.

As 2013 was the last year of the first agreement, the MNO and
ADVANCING MÉTIS RIGHTS

As always, the protection and advancement of Métis rights and self-government are front and centre in the MNO’s agenda. In early 2012, the Federal Court of Canada ruled in Daniels v. Canada that according to the Canadian Constitution, Métis fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government. This has potential wide-ranging benefits to Métis but unfortunately, the federal government appealed this case and it went to the Federal Court of Appeal in October 2013. Due to the significance of this case to Métis rights, the MNO successfully sought intervener status and Métis lawyer Jean Teillet represented the MNO. The Court released its decision on Daniels v. Canada on April 17, 2014, and upheld key aspects of the lower court rulings that asserted that Métis are the responsibility of the federal government and should be recognized as “Indians” under sections 91(24) of the Canadian Constitution, 1867, in the same way as First Nations and Inuit are recognized, and therefore the federal government should move to negotiate similar rights and benefits with Métis governments. In a related matter, on May 15, 2014, Kenuarios v. Ontario appeal at the Supreme Court of Canada. The MNO intervened because it concerned Treaty 3, which is the only historic treaty negotiated with First Nations where Métis - as a distinct Aboriginal group - collectively adhered to a treaty. This appeal also has broader implications with respect to Canada’s ongoing jurisdiction and responsibility to protect treaty and Aboriginal rights under s. 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867 as also established in Daniels v. Canada.

The federal government has now appealed our lower court victories in Daniels v. Canada to the Supreme Court. A tentative hearing for the Daniels appeal has been set for October 8, 2015. We will continue to keep citizens updated on developments with respect to this crucial case. The Daniels case is critical because by upholding key aspects of the lower court rulings that asserted that Métis are the responsibility of the federal government and should be recognized as “Indians” under section 91(24) of the Canadian Constitution, 1867 as also established in Daniels v. Canada, the Daniels case has potential wide-ranging benefits to Métis but unfortunately, the federal government appealed this case and it went to the Federal Court of Appeal in October 2013. Due to the significance of this case to Métis rights, the MNO successfully sought intervener status and Métis lawyer Jean Teillet represented the MNO. The Court released its decision on Daniels v. Canada on April 17, 2014, and upheld key aspects of the lower court rulings that asserted that Métis are the responsibility of the federal government and should be recognized as “Indians” under sections 91(24) of the Canadian Constitution, 1867, in the same way as First Nations and Inuit are recognized, and therefore the federal government should move to negotiate similar rights and benefits with Métis governments. In a related matter, on May 15, 2014, Kenuarios v. Ontario appeal at the Supreme Court of Canada. The MNO intervened because it concerned Treaty 3, which is the only historic treaty negotiated with First Nations where Métis - as a distinct Aboriginal group - collectively adhered to a treaty. This appeal also has broader implications with respect to Canada’s ongoing jurisdiction and responsibility to protect treaty and Aboriginal rights under s. 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867 as also established in Daniels v. Canada.

Accordingly, the MNO has been actively involved in federal consultation processes. I met with Doug Eyford, the Federal Government’s Special Representative on the Comprehensive Claims Process, in November 2014. We were very pleased when Mr. Eyford released his recommendations on April 17, 2015, that he called for Canada to develop a process to support the exercise of Métis rights under section 35 (1) of the Constitution Act, 1982.
and for the reconciliation of Métis interests. In addition, I also had the opportunity to meet with Benoit Pelletier, the federal government's Special Representative on the Specific Claims process on March 13, 2015. I am optimistic that the Special Representative will also recognize the need for the existing policies to be modified to include Métis and that a distinct Métis claims process be established.

Very likely, changes to these policies will not occur immediately, however, the writing is on the wall and at some point in time, Métis rights, interests and claims will finally be addressed by the federal government.

While we have been very vigilant concerning federal Métis issues, the MNO continues to work with the Ontario government on Métis rights issues as well. This important work has informed our negotiations with respect to the removal of the current 1,250 cap on Harvester Cards, Crown consultation and other rights-related issues.

Notably, in December 2014, the historic research project on the Mattawa-Nipissing region, which was overseen by a tripartite steering committee consisting of the MNO, Ontario and the federal government, was completed. This report is now available on the MNO’s website under the Registry/Historic Research section. Based on our interventions and positive relationship with the Ontario Government, we now have confirmation that the MNO will be included within Ontario’s recently announced Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Strategy. This is a very positive development and will provide the opportunity to tell the Ontario Métis story, as a part of the history of treaty-making in this province as well as the contemporary recognition of Métis rights. In this fiscal year, we have received funding to consult with our citizens and communities on what initiatives we would like to see undertaken as a part of the Strategy. In addition, we continue to move towards finalizing joint assessments of the existing historic research on Ontario Métis communities.

ENCOURAGING MÉTIS CHILDREN AND YOUTH TO BE ALL THEY CAN BE

In my President’s report at the 2012 AGA, I challenged all MNO citizens to think about how we all can encourage our Métis children and youth to take advantage of every opportunity and become all they can be. The MNO currently offers programs that help parents expecting children, pre-school and school age children as well as young adults in post-secondary education, which is how we should look at children and youth; as being from the womb to young adulthood.

Providing every opportunity to our young people is not simply the responsibility of MNO staff that facilitates programs and other supports. Every MNO citizen needs to step forward and encourage young people to be their best. This may mean helping them save for a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) or simply communicating to our sons, daughters, nieces, nephews and grandchildren that completing high school and going on to post-secondary, the trades, or business is not only possible but something they should expect. Our youth should be encouraged to “go for their dreams,” and know that with hard work anything is possible.

This year, MNO citizens and staff continued to respond very positively to my challenge and there are many indications that we are achieving success. The highest profile symbol of that success was the amazing MNO Canoe Expedition. On May 26, 2014, eight young Métis from across the province set out from Ottawa on an over 2,000 km canoe trek to Thunder Bay, where they arrived on August 22. It was the adventure of a lifetime but was also a great example of how the MNO helps young Métis become all they can be. The MNO Canoe Expedition provided the young voyageurs with experiential learning and taught them leadership and employability skills that will help them build their future careers.

The MNO Canoe Expedition also promoted Métis heritage and pride as our modern voyageurs were dressed in authentic Métis clothing from the fur trade era and as they stopped at Métis communities throughout their journey, they participated in community festivals, events and demonstrated Métis cultural practices. I was filled with pride when along with a large number of other MNO citizens, I welcomed the Expedition members in Thunder Bay prior to last year’s AGA.

Even with the MNO Canoe Expedition complete, our young voyageurs continued to be a source of pride for the Métis Nation. On February 27, 2015, the members of the Expedition received the Lieutenant-Governor’s Ontario Heritage Award. In the Fall of 2014 they were invited to speak to thousands of students at the Kitchener We Day. They were so well-received at that event that they were then invited to speak at the National We Day event in Ottawa on April 1, 2015. There in front of an audience of 15,000 young people and broadcasting to a national audience, they spoke...
Jigging at the Halfbreed Hustle in Ottawa.

MNO James Bay/Abitibi-Témiskamingue Consultation Committee and MNO staff during their site visit of the Detour gold Mine near Cochrane, Ontario.

of their pride in their Métis culture and heritage. They are a living example of the vision of the Statement of Prime Purpose being realized through the work of the MNO.

While the achievements of the MNO Canoe Expedition were impressive to say the least, it is only one element of the MNO’s continuing efforts to assist Métis youth. As we have in the last several years, this summer the MNO trained a strong contingent of facilitators through the MNO Summer Youth Cultural Program (SYCP). Located at MNO offices across the province, these young people promoted Métis heritage and culture at events and workshops while also learning valuable skills that will help them in their future careers.

The MNO Infinite Reach: Métis Student Solidarity Network is another highly successful MNO youth project. Twenty-eight Infinite Reach facilitators from 16 Ontario post-secondary institutions were trained this year. These enthusiastic Métis youth assist other Métis students adjust to academic life and identify services and programs that can help them. They also encourage our students to participate in the wider Métis community and embrace their heritage. The facilitators play a key role in the exciting March break camps that the MNO organizes to help prepare Métis high school students for post-secondary education. This year’s March break camp was the largest ever, attracting 30 students from across Ontario.

Along with these exciting youth projects are the MNO’s long-standing employment and training programs that are supported by the federal government’s Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS). ASETS funding supports a wide range of employment services for Métis people across Ontario including job training programs such as Navigating Employment Pathways and the Métis Mining Strategy as well as job search assistance, client assessment, case management, action plan development, labour counseling, job placement and follow up.

The funding also helps MNO staff maintain job boards, toll-free phone lines, research material, computer access and updated reference materials for clients. Through these programs and services the MNO has helped so many Métis people. In 2010, the MNO signed a five-year $30.6 million employment and training agreement through ASETS. The MNO’s solid employment and training delivery foundation combined with an ongoing commitment to partnership and skills development resulted in the MNO being the first ASETS agreement approved in Ontario. The ASETS agreement was scheduled to end on March 31, 2015, however on November 17, 2014, the agreement was renewed for one year. We expect this will be long enough for the federal government to launch a new version of ASETS or announce new ASETS funding sometime in 2015-16.

One of the clearest indications that the MNO is successfully reaching young people is the large number of youth who are now attending MNO AGAs. Not that long ago we had but a handful of youth delegates at most AGAs but we have seen impressive numbers at both the 2013 and 2014 assemblies. I was very touched at the 2014 AGA when the zazible youth contingent at that assembly presented me with a beautiful beaded vest.

It has been especially gratifying for me to see our young MNO citizens step forward to increasingly play leadership roles in our government. Whether it is the expanding activism of the MNO Youth Council, the larger roles for Youth Representatives on MNO chartered community councils or the greater interaction we are seeing between MNO youth and MNO veterans and senators; there can be no question that our younger generations are readying themselves to build a wonderful future for the Métis Nation in Ontario.

The future our young people will build is all the more promising because of the strides the MNO has made over the last several years towards economic self-sufficiency. Key elements in building self-sufficiency so far included the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Economic Development with the Ontario government in 2011, at the same time as the Métis Voyageur Development Fund (MVDF) was established. In its first 15 months of operation the MVDF became the fastest growing Aboriginal financial institution in Canada and is already the second largest in Ontario.

The MNO took one of its most important steps towards economic self-sufficiency at the 2013 AGA when it passed its first...
law; the MNO Advancing Prosperity and Economic Self-Sufficiency Law. This law is advancing Metis self-government and is proving to be a significant landmark in Metis history along with other watersheds such as R. v. Powley and the MNO-Ontario Framework Agreement. The MNO Prosperity and Self-Sufficiency Law mandated the MNO to create Infinity Investments Limited Partnership (LP) as an independent and arms-length corporate structure to pursue business and economic development opportunities on behalf of Ontario Metis at the provincial, regional and local levels. Infinity Investments LP will consolidate all of the MNO’s business operations and opportunities under one corporate structure. These MNO business ventures and opportunities already include over 50 rooftop and ground mounted solar projects throughout Ontario through MNO-Brightroof LP; impacts and benefits agreements with the Detour Gold and New Gold as well as several strategic joint ventures with other industry partners. In December 2014, Scott Patles-Richardson, a seasoned senior executive with over 20 years of experience in finance, corporate development and leadership was selected as Chief Executive Officer of Infinity Investments LP.

Infinity Investments LP will complement the mandate and work of the MVDF, which provides funding and support for resource or related sector Metis businesses. With Infinity Investments LP, the Metis Voyager Development Fund and our positive relationships with both government and industry, I believe the MNO is building a solid foundation that will enable our nation and communities to create wealth and become economically self-sustaining in the future. I look forward to Scott helping Ontario Metis in achieving that goal.

LEADING THE WAY IN HEALING AND WELLNESS

The MNO enjoys a strong reputation as a leader and a strong partner that follows best practices in the field of Aboriginal healing and wellness. Three key areas where the MNO led the way this last year were in the development of a provincial Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy; taking action on the critical issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women; and continuing our ground-breaking research on chronic diseases within the Ontario Metis population.

On January 21, 2015, I, along with MNO Chair France Picotte and MNO senior staff, participated in the third Metis and Urban Aboriginal Leadership Roundtable focused on the issue of developing an Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy. Other participants in the meeting included the Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and Children and Youth Services as well as representatives from the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC) and the Ontario Native Women’s Association (ONWA).

This meeting marked the final stage in an 18-month process of developing an Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy and approved a framework proposal that will now go before the provincial Cabinet for consideration. The MNO made a valuable contribution to the creation of the proposal, which is another example of the importance of the positive relationship we have built with the Ontario government through the MNO-Ontario Framework Agreement.

The MNO has been working to address the issue of violence against Aboriginal women almost since its inception. In November 1994, the MNO, which was barely a year old at the time, sent representatives to the first meeting to develop the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy (AHWS), a major focus of which was the prevention of violence against Aboriginal women. Now 20 years later, the MNO has developed victim services programs, is a full partner in Ontario’s Joint Working Group to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women and a signatory to the Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women.

As part of its ongoing efforts to bring attention to violence against Aboriginal women, the MNO held a full-day workshop on the issue in Thunder Bay prior to the 2014 AGA.

During the workshop, the MNO provincial leadership including the Provincial Council of the MNO (PCMNO), chartered community council presidents and other community representatives, Captains of the Hunt and MNO staff were familiarized with all aspects of the violence against Aboriginal women issue as well as the efforts currently underway by the MNO to take action. During the AGA itself, I brought forward a resolution, seconded by Sharon McIntire, the Spokespersons for the Women’s Secre-
tariat of the MNO (WSMNO), calling for a national inquiry on the epidemic of murdered and missing Aboriginal women and for the adoption of The Declaration to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women. The resolution passed unanimously and as required by the resolution, I wrote Prime Minister Harper to call for a national inquiry on the issue.

Throughout 2014-15, MNO Victim Services staff members have developed resources to help individuals and communities address the issue of violence against women and I have been very pleased with the response of MNO citizens and communities. We have seen large numbers of Healing Blanket and Faceless Dolls workshops, as well as support for the Walking With Our Sisters campaign and other similar programs and events.

In cooperation with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and the Institute for Clinical and Evaluative Science (ICES), the MNO continued our ground-breaking research on chronic diseases within the Ontario Métis population. To date the MNO Chronic Disease Surveillance Program has done impressive work on the preponderance of diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular, respiratory and kidney diseases, asthma, arthritis, osteoporosis, mental health and addictions and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in the Ontario Métis population.

The full range of this research was showcased February 22-24, 2015, when over 200 health researchers and other professionals from 42 different agencies gathered in Toronto for the 2015 MNO Health Summit. Delegates represented non-profit organizations dedicated to disease prevention and cures, hospitals and other health institutions, government ministries and agencies, universities and colleges, Local Health Integration Networks, Aboriginal agencies involved in healing and wellness, and other Aboriginal organizations and consulting groups. These representatives included medical doctors, university professors and researchers, government policy makers and elected officials.

The Summit included sessions on the latest data on coronary heart disease, diabetes, cancer, respiratory disease, musculoskeletal disease, renal disease, mental health, and health risk factors in the provincial Métis population. The data demonstrates that significant health disparities exist between Métis and the general Ontario population. The Summit also provided insight on the importance of the MNO continuing its work on chronic diseases as well as its many other Healing and Wellness programs.

Keeping the MNO Fiscal House in Order

When I accepted the position of President, one particularly important commitment I made was to strengthen the MNO’s financial management, administration and accountability. Although this has proven to be the most challenging of all the commitments, I am proud to have been able to report ongoing improvements in this area at every AGA. I know that we all felt a great deal of satisfaction at the 2014 AGA when for the first time in many years the audit did not include an “Emphasis of Matter.”

MNO citizens posing with their Métis healing blanket created during the MNO Ending Violence Against Aboriginal Women workshop.

Katelyne Stenlund plays the fiddle during the MNO Community Information Session held in Fort Frances.
audited organization that could potentially threaten its ability to remain “a going concern;” meaning to continue to operate. While the MNO has been steadily improving its financial picture since 2008, the 2013-14 fiscal year is the first where enough improvements have been made that the auditor was willing to provide an “unqualified” financial statement, which is a statement without an “Emphasis of Matter.”

I am pleased to report that in the past year we have continued to keep the MNO’s fiscal house in order. As reported last year the MNO has already completely paid off its Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) debt and Employer Health Tax (EHT) debt. The repayment of this debt took only three years and four years respectively rather than the original 25 years the MNO had negotiated.

The MNO has additionally significantly reduced its debts owing to Service Canada and Health Canada. The amount originally owing to Service Canada in 2008 was $1.6 million with an estimated 24 years for repayment, but as of March 31, 2015 this has been reduced to $592,011 with only three years left to repay. The amount owing to Health Canada was originally $261,000 in 2008, but as of March 2014, it has been reduced to $138,527.

While we continue to receive accolades and acknowledgement from our funders for these dramatic improvements, we must continue to demonstrate real effort and diligence on this front as both are critical to ensuring the MNO remain strong for the future.

MEETING THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

The list of highlights I have provided can leave no doubt that the MNO had a busy and successful year. These successes are in no small way owed to the contributions of our citizens. We take every opportunity to remind all levels of government and other funders of the contributions of our
Our women, men, young people and seniors are called on more often than those of any other Aboriginal group to support the work of advancing Métis rights and interests. This is a testament to the firm commitment we hold as citizens of the MNO, that we all are committed to advancing the Métis agenda and helping our fellow Métis.

On a personal note, I would like to thank and acknowledge the PCMNO, MNO community councils, Women's Secretariat, Veterans' Council, senators, Youth Council and Captains of the Hunt and all others who hold leadership positions in our government. Nothing that took place in the last year could have been achieved without their selfless dedication and vision. I would also be remiss if I did not give a standing ovation to our dedicated, hardworking staff who so ably support the leadership in all areas of activity. Future generations owe a tremendous debt to all these amazing women and men.

Considering the incredible contributions of all our volunteer leaders and citizens, it is very appropriate that on April 10, 2014, all of our MNO volunteers were acknowledged with the June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Award for Voluntarism. This award recognizes individuals and groups for superlative volunteer contributions to their communities and to the province of Ontario. The award is named after the late June Callwood, a Canadian journalist, author and social activist. She committed her life to action on social justice issues, particularly those related to women and children. She founded, or co-founded, more than 50 Canadian social action organizations. The award recognizes dedicated individuals and organizations who, like the late June Callwood, demonstrate exceptional leadership, creativity and innovation in their service to their communities and others.

I was honoured and humbled to accept this award on behalf of the volunteers who founded the MNO and all our past and present leaders. Our volunteers are the heart and soul of the MNO. These hard-working individuals spend thousands of hours annually building and strengthening our Métis communities and it is through their continuous efforts that we are able to perform our important work.

Following in the footsteps of our founders and early leaders, we all continue to move forward together guided by the Statement of Prime Purpose and directed by MNO citizens at every AGA. With ever increasing attention from governments at all levels, industry proponents and the public, there may never be a better opportunity to capitalize on the gains made to date. “We aspire to attain our highest potential,” is a worthy goal that I challenge all MNO citizens to embrace.

— Gary Lipinski
President
Métis Nation of Ontario