Celebrations across the province

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“Working together we will achieve reconciliation”

Métis Nation of Ontario President Gary Lipinski speaks during November 16th Louis Riel Day ceremonies at Queen’s Park in Toronto.
The Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act is the first Métis-specific legislation ever introduced in the Ontario Legislature

On December 1, 2015, Bill 153: The Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act was introduced into the Ontario legislature. At the time the Voyageur went to print, the bill had not been voted on but the vote likely took place by the time this paper reached most MNO citizens. This bill is historic because it is the first piece of Métis-specific legislation ever introduced in the Ontario legislature. A copy of this bill, along with updates on its progress and additional background information on the legislation, is available on the MNO website at www.metisnation.org.

This bill is a very positive and existing development in our ongoing quest to advance Métis rights, self-government and reconciliation in Ontario. It is a result of the hard work and dedication of Métis leadership at the local, regional and provincial levels working—together—to put Métis issues and the MNO increasingly on the map in this province.

More specifically, the proposed legislation comes from repetitive and unanimous calls from the MNO Annual General Assembly—the highest governing authority within the MNO where all MNO citizens have a voice—to secure provincial legislation that recognizes the MNO's unique governance structure. These types of resolutions were passed in 2001, 2008, 2009 and 2014. Most recently, following a presentation on the MNO's discussions with the Ontario government on this legislation, the 2015 MNO Annual General Assembly passed a unanimous resolution, which provided clear direction to the MNO's governance structures at the local, regional and provincial levels to advance the goal of achieving provincial MNO legislation.

MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT SESSION

January 16 & 17 9:30 am - 4:30 pm
First Nations House – University of Toronto
563 Spadina Avenue, third floor
Toronto

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) has hosted a number of Youth Engagement Sessions across Ontario this fall. These sessions were held in North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay. If you are a Métis youth between the ages of 15 to 29, we invite you to attend MNO Youth Engagement Sessions in your area! During these sessions, we would like to hear about your insights and experiences as a Métis youth in high school, post-secondary school and in finding employment.

This is a great opportunity to meet other Métis youth, learn about your community, hear about the resources that are available and provide recommendations that will help other youth along their path! Some highlights you can expect from the sessions include cultural activities, learning to jig, networking with education and employment resource people and so much more.

Giveaways, lunch and snacks will be provided.

Please register by January 13
Lee-Anne Van Buekenhout
MNO Partnerships and Projects Coordinator
lee-anev@metisnation.org
Every year, Métis from across the Homeland remember the anniversary of the unjust execution of Louis Riel on November 16, 1885, by holding Louis Riel Day events. Although Louis Riel Day commemorates one of the great tragedies of Canadian history, it is also a day to celebrate Métis culture and the continuing progress of the Métis towards taking their rightful place within Confederation.

Many Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) chartered community councils held flag raisings, feasts and cultural celebrations to recognize Louis Riel Day and, as in the past, provincial ceremonies were held at Queen’s Park in Toronto. Provincial ceremonies take place at Queen’s Park because the “Northwest Rebellion” monument and the Legislative Building are both located there.

Ironically, the Legislature is where a price was put on Louis Riel’s head and the monument recognizes the Canadian soldiers who fought in the Northwest Resistance against the Métis. During the Louis Riel Day ceremony, however, they are the focal points for honouring Riel and the monument is reverentially draped with Métis symbols including a portrait of Louis Riel.

Weather for this year’s provincial ceremony was unseasonably warm and many expressed thanks to the Creator for sparing participants the cold that often marks November 16. Over 100 people were in attendance from the Toronto area as well others from across the province, including some individuals who came from as far away as Thunder Bay, Fort Frances and Kenora.

As in the past, events started with a flag raising ceremony in front of the Legislature. This year for the first time ever, the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, attended the ceremony and with MNO President Gary Lipinski, raised the Métis Nation flag while a crowd of MNO citizens, dignitaries and guests looked on and cheered enthusiastically.

Following the flag raising ceremony, the participants formed a procession led by members of the No. 10 Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion and accompanied by Métis fiddler Alicia Blore. The No. 10 Legion Branch has been participating in Louis Riel Day ceremonies for 15 years and their dedication and service was, as always, greatly appreciated.

The procession made its way to the “Northwest Rebellion” monument where speakers addressed everyone assembled. MNO Chair France Picotte MC’d the ceremony and set a positive tone by welcoming everyone and acknowledging the many guests and dignitaries. In addition to Her Honour, other guests included: the Honourable Dave Levac, the Speaker of the Ontario Legislature; the Honourable David Zimmer, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs; the Honourable Michael Gravelle, Minister of Northern Development and Mines; the Honourable Helena Jaczek, Minister of Community and Social Services; the Honourable Bill Mauro, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry; and several Members of the Provincial Parliament (MPP) including Norm Miller, the PC Aboriginal Affairs

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The No. 10 Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion has participated in Louis Riel Day ceremonies for 15 years.

This year for the first time ever, the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell (left) attended the ceremony.

“Remember to be proud of who you are.”

“(Quoting a Métis slogan from 1887)”

“Stay united like our ancestors did.”

“(Quoting former Prime Minister Paul Martin)”

“Think about our ancestors and their struggles and be grateful.”

“Louis Riel’s contribution was not just to the Métis but to the Canadian nation.”

“(Quoting former Prime Minister Paul Martin)”
Dignitaries and members of the PCMNO. From left PC Aboriginal Affairs Critic Norm Miller, Senator Verna Porter-Brunelle, Vice-Chair Sharon McBride, Secretary-Treasurer Tim Pile, Minister of Northern Development and Mines Michael Gravelle, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs David Zimmer, President Gary Lipinski, Lieutenant-Governor Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Executive Senator Reta Gordon, Chair France Picotte.

continued from page 3 ...

Critic and France Gélinas, the NDP Aboriginal Affairs Critic; as well as Arthur Potts and Grandville Anderson. President Lipinski commented that it boded well for the future that the assembled group represented all of Canada’s political parties.

Among the speakers at the ceremony were Her Honour, Speaker Levac, Minister Zimmer, President Lipinski, Chair Picotte, MPPs Miller and Gélinas as well as PCMNO Senator Verna Porter-Brunelle, Executive Senator Reta Gordon, MNO Vice-Chair Sharon McBride, Jean Teillet, the great grand-niece of Louis Riel, and MNO citizen Joanna Burt, who represented Métis youth (for a selection of remarks from all the speakers please see page 3).

The theme that emerged in the remarks from most of the speakers concerned the process of reconciliation that has been emerging recently, which is really simply embracing ideas and values that Louis Riel had always espoused and was trying to achieve. Minister Zimmer, for example, stated: “Today we acknowledge Louis Riel’s contributions to building Canada and recognize and respect the history, culture and identity of Métis people. It is also an important opportunity to build on the process of reconciliation between Canada and the Métis Nation, and to celebrate the achievements of Métis people.”

MPP Miller commented that Louis Riel was “a tireless advocate for equality,” who played an important role in the history of Canada, while MPP Gélinas stated that Riel brought forward values “we more or less take for granted now.” Speaker Levac pointed out that Riel had initiated the first human rights code in North America because “… he worked to protect the rights of everyone – he was someone who had a vision for all people.” Lieutenant-Governor Dowdeswell explained that Riel helped lay down the framework for minority rights and as a result was a champion

“Although it [Louis Riel Day] commemorates the tragedy of his death it also celebrates the continuing vibrancy of the Métis people.”

“I am Métis and proud of it.”

“The vision we have today is the same vision Louis Riel had 150 years ago.”

“We use this day … to celebrate the ongoing contributions the vibrant Métis community makes to our great and diverse province.”
of not only Métis rights but of diversity in general.

In her address, Jean Teillet also discussed reconciliation and related it to her most recent project, which is to write a popular history of the Métis Nation. She described how members of her family had saved hundreds of unpublished letters from Louis Riel as well as other letters written by Métis to newspapers and government officials asserting their culture and rights. She encouraged those in attendance to follow this example and pick up pens and write to make their voices heard. “Today,” she said, “we don’t pick up guns; we pick up pens.”

This year’s presentation from a representative of Métis youth was made by Joanna Burt. Joanna has become well-known across the MNO as a facilitator with the MNO Summer Youth Cultural Program, her wonder of unpublished letters from Louis Riel as well as other letters written by Métis to newspapers and government officials asserting their culture and rights. She encouraged those in attendance to follow this example and pick up pens and write to make their voices heard. “Today,” she said, “we don’t pick up guns; we pick up pens.”

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To commemorate Louis Riel Day, MNO citizens and communities held events across the province to recognize the many contributions of the Métis to Canada, to celebrate Métis culture and to highlight Métis achievements.

1 - Kingston Thanks to MNO citizen Alvin McKay’s efforts, Kingston’s mayor proclaimed November 26 to be Louis Riel Day. The Métis flag was raised at two locations on Louis Riel Day. At Confederation Park near City Hall, the Métis flag remained flying for the entire day while at the intersection of Princess Street and Division Street, the Métis flag flew for the remainder of the week.

2 - Niagara Region The MNO Niagara Region Métis Council (NRMC) organized four flag-raising ceremonies this year. For the first time, the Métis flag was raised in four major cities within the Niagara region. Members of the MNO NRMC attended the first ceremony in Port Colborne followed by St. Catharines. In Niagara Falls, the Métis flag remained on display for the rest of that week. In Welland, it was the first Louis Riel Day ceremony for Mayor Frank Campion who was very excited to attend.

3 - Carleton University MNO Infinite Reach Facilitators Karly Wilson and Jordin Playne hosted a Louis Riel Day celebration at Carleton University on November 16 with cultural crafts, including finger weaving and embroidery. The highlight of the celebration was the raising of the Métis flag at Paterson Hall. It was the first time an Aboriginal flag was raised on campus.

4 - Guelph On November 14, a Métis flag-raising ceremony took place at City Hall in Guelph, where Mayor Cam Guthrie was presented with a Métis sash. Mayor Guthrie stated he was nearly moved to tears from receiving such a gift. He said he was proud that the Métis flag was flying at City Hall and also acknowledged Louis Riel as a Canadian hero.

5 - Sault Ste. Marie Two Métis veterans were recognized on Louis Riel Day and presented with the Louis Riel Commemorative Medal. MNO citizens Norris Pyette and Willard Folz were both presented with the medal as well as the Louis Riel Certificate.

6 - Sudbury College Boreal in Sudbury held a Louis Riel Day cultural celebration where Métis folklore singers Renée Fournier and Linda Gagnon performed on campus.

7 - Thunder Bay The MNO Thunder Bay Métis Council, MNO staff and MNO Infinite Reach Facilitators gathered at Confederation College on November 16 to raise the Métis flag. Louis Riel Day celebrations launched Confederation College’s Aboriginal Awareness Week activities. MNO Infinite Reach Facilitators provided Métis activities including dot art, games and finger weaving. MNO staff hosted a display and spoke with students about Métis culture and history.

8 - Kenora The MNO Kenora Métis
Council hosted an event-filled day after Senator Karen Cederwall raised the Métis flag at City Hall. Workshops such as Métis dot art, finger weaving and making medicine bags were among the activities. A hay tossing competition brightened things up, along with Métis jigging lessons from MNO citizen Terri Forster and her two children.

9 - Waterloo MNO Infinite Reach Facilitator Melissa St. Amant organized a Louis Riel Day celebration at Wilfrid Laurier University. Melissa hosted a healing blanket workshop and over 10 community members and students attended, including Jennifer Parkinson, President of the MNO Grand River Métis Council. Melissa also cooked up some fry bread for everyone to enjoy.

10 - Dryden Members of the MNO Northwest Métis Council invited everyone to take part in the raising of the Métis flag at Dryden City Hall followed by a Come and Go lunch at the MNO office.

11 - Cochrane On November 15, the MNO Northern Lights Métis Council raised the Métis flag at Town Hall. The day also included their Annual General Meeting, a special luncheon and some family fun at the bowling alley for people of all ages.

12 - North Bay At North Bay City Hall, special guests Mayor Al McDonald and newly elected Liberal MP Anthony Rota participated in the Métis flag raising ceremony. MNO North Bay Métis Council Secretary and Treasurer Denis Tremblay spoke of the significance of the flag to the Métis and of Louis Riel’s dedication, courage, and how he paid the ultimate price for what he believed in his people.

13 - Kitchener MNO Grand River Métis Council President Jennifer Parkinson along with over 90 Grade 7 and 8 students from St. Anne Roman Catholic Elementary School attended a Métis flag raising ceremony at Kitchener City Hall. They were joined by Ward 10 Councillor Sarah Marsh.

14 - Toronto On November 16, the MNO Toronto and York Region Métis Council participated in a flag raising ceremony at City Hall, followed by a celebration. Special guests during their event included Ward 19 Councillor Mike Layton and Ontario Minister of Aboriginal Affairs David Zimmer, who participated in Métis jigging and enthusiastically played wooden spoons.

15 - Windsor MNO Infinite Reach Facilitators Katie Baltzer and Dana Carson organized a Louis Riel Day event at the University of Windsor. The event included Métis dot art lessons, a dream catcher workshop and Métis jigging lessons.

16 - Fort Frances The Town of Fort Frances proclaimed November 16 to November 20 as Louis Riel Week. On Louis Riel Day, the community gathered to raise the flag at Town Hall, followed by a feast of wild rice soup and bannock, fiddling and a bit of jigging at the MNO Sunset Country Métis Council Hall.
The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Toronto and York Region Métis Council (TYRMC) celebrated Louis Riel Day this year at two fantastic events! On Saturday, November 14, the MNO TYRMC hosted its second annual Louis Riel Day Celebration, preceded by the council’s monthly business meeting, in the Nexus Lounge at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. The venue offered breathtaking views of the CN Tower, downtown Toronto and Lake Ontario. Council President Tera Beaulieu, Chair Todd Ross, Secretary-Treasurer Marilyn Hew, Senator Constance Simmonds, Women’s Representative Lindsay DuPré, Youth Representative Christine Skura and Councillors Justin Kogler and Virginia Barter were all in attendance.

Upon arrival, MNO citizens and Métis community members met and mingled. Senator Constance Simmonds opened the gathering by providing a prayer and welcoming remarks, followed by President Beaulieu sharing words of welcome. Everyone was then invited to join in on a potluck feast which included Three Sisters Soup and bannock and a variety of other delicious items.

As everyone was enjoying their lunch, Beaulieu provided an update on the activities of the MNO TYRMC since April 2015. Highlights shared included the MNO TYRMC’s participation in the Pan AM and Parapan AM Games, participation in National Aboriginal Day events, attendance at the Sisters in Spirit Vigil for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Region 8 Consultation Committee activities, participation in Remembrance Day events, and the MNO TYRMC Youth Committee’s success in obtaining a grant to host cultural knowledge exchanges for Métis youth and knowledge keepers in Toronto and surrounding areas over the course of the next year. Beaulieu also provided a preview of some of the upcoming events that MNO citizens may wish to participate in, including a consultation with the Toronto Ravine Strategy on December 8, 2015, and follow up meetings with the Ministry of Transportation to discuss a new 400-series highway in York Region. The MNO TYRMC website contains further details on these meetings.

Beaulieu also reflected on the significance of the community coming together to mark Louis Riel Day and expressed the council’s delight in having so many MNO citizens and community members present to celebrate the history and culture of the Métis Nation. Beaulieu ended her remarks by personally thanking and acknowledging all of the council members in attendance, commenting on the hard work, dedication, and commitment they demonstrate for their community.

Several special presentations were delivered by Senator Dr. Alis Kennedy on behalf of the MNO Veterans’ Council. Senator Kennedy presented a certificate of appreciation to Beaulieu and to MNO TYRMC Youth Representative Christine Skura for their contributions to the MNO Veterans’ Council book, Fighting For Canada Before There Was A Canada: Ontario Métis Veterans Pass the Torch. Beaulieu had submitted the biography of MNO Veteran Kendall Bower, while Skura had written Senator Kennedy’s biography. Senator Kennedy also presented each of them with a copy of the book.

Following these presentations, Senator Kennedy presented MNO TYRMC Chair Todd Ross, and MNO Citizen Réjean Michel, CD, with their Louis Riel medals and certificates for their service in the Canadian Armed Forces. Senator Kennedy also discussed the MNO Veterans’ Council’s planned pilgrimage to Vimy Ridge for Métis youth and veterans. A table was set up for those who wished to purchase the MNO Veterans’ Council books or donate to the pilgrimage.

The Louis Riel Day keynote address was given by Jesse Thistle, an MNO citizen and scholar. Thistle spoke about his research at York University, specifically his paper on...
"Remember you have a thousand ancestors backing you"

Joanna Burt is an MNO citizen and past MNO Summer Youth Culture Program Facilitator who was invited to speak at the 2015 Louis Riel Day provincial ceremony on behalf of Métis youth. Her complete remarks follow:

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I can only speak to what I know. And what I know is that Louis Riel is one of the most powerful and controversial Métis leaders. When I think about pride, it isn’t something that I feel very often. There are a few times that I have felt pride in my life, but I recall a moment that I hold very dear. This past summer, working for the Métis Nation of Ontario, I went with two of my colleagues to a school in Oshawa to give a workshop in Métis jigging and fiddling. Afterwards, the three of us visited some of the other classrooms, where different teachers were sharing their culture with the students. We passed by a room with samba music bursting out the door, so we decided to go on inside and inside was a man from El Salvador. He noticed our Métis clothing and asked if we were Native. We explained that we were from the Métis Nation of Ontario and that we had just been teaching a workshop in the room down the hall. What happened next astonished me! I have never heard anyone speak so passionately about Louis Riel, and this was a man not even born in Canada. He explained that in Latin America, students learn about the life of Riel and regard him as a hero.

I realized that visiting those other rooms, we weren’t just putting in time. Those visits were symbolic. We were creating Métis relations with Italians, with Trinidadian steel pan players, with Middle Eastern belly dancers, with Scottish Highland dancers and with many other cultures. In that moment, when that man spoke so passionately about Louis Riel and the Métis people, and when I saw the passion and love in his eyes, I felt deeply proud to be Indigenous.

In contrast to his other Métis counterpart, Gabriel Dumont, Riel was an academic man. He attended university in Montreal and was possibly one of the first Métis people to climb as high as he did in the education system. Again, I can only speak to what I know. But what I know is that I am the only Indigenous or Métis woman in my post-secondary program, and that can feel extremely isolating. I don’t know how Riel felt being the only Native man in his huge European classrooms but I know this: to be an isolated Aboriginal or Métis woman in school feels like swimming upstream. I know that Riel had a backbone that never broke. Despite a government that took over traditional lands, despite having a bounty on his head, despite having to flee the country in order to save his life, he kept on swimming upstream.

I am from a divorced household and I am not from a well-off family. But no matter how hard it is for me as an Indigenous woman, I pursue my studies because I feel like it is my duty. Even if your dreams are something crazy like being an opera singer, you can make it happen. Even if your dreams are something crazy like fighting for your sovereign people, you can make it happen. Riel came back to Canada to stand up for his people; even though the odds were against him, he came back.

Louis Riel is such an inspiration to me. Whenever I feel like I can’t go on or if I feel like what I have chosen to do with my life is too much or too impossible, I just think to myself, “All I need is to fight even though the impossible seems impossible.” It has been an extremely long road for me as an artist and it is the support from my family and the Métis community that has made this journey possible. It is still an on-going journey but it has been made significantly better with all the support I have. Even when you don’t have the money, you can find a way to make your dreams a reality. Remember that you have a family backing you. Remember Louis Riel’s determination and remember that you have a thousand ancestors backing you. Knowing this makes your dreams worth fighting for.

Louis Riel once said, “My people will sleep for one hundred years, but when they awake, it will be the artists who give them their spirit back.” I feel that this is finally coming true. It is our time as Métis and Indigenous peoples of this beautiful country to show our wonderful culture to the world and to share it with the world. And it is also our time as Indigenous women to rise. Mrs. Universe is from the Cree Nation. Christi Belcourt is from the Métis Nation of Ontario. So, my friends, my sisters, my brothers, and my elders, it is our time to start swimming upstream.

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Joanna Burt
The Road Ahead
Reconciliation with the Métis

The unfinished business of reconciliation of the Métis people with Canadian sovereignty is a matter of national and constitutional import.

Supreme Court of Canada in Manitoba Métis Federation v. Canada (2013)

At one point, Mitch Case, the Youth Representative on the Provincial Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) asked the roundtable what role young people could play in reconciliation. President Lipinski emphasized that it was important that youth be involved in learning as much as possible about the MNO and be involved in all elements of its operations. “The mantle will be passed to you,” he explained, “so be an information sponge.”

Madden added that it is young people who will answer the question “What does self-government look like?” He stated that it is young people who will determine “how we make this government we fought for and what it will look like.”

In his concluding remarks, the recent election of a new federal government allowed President Lipinski to strike an optimistic tone. “When looking at the recent mandate letters to the federal Minister,” stated President Lipinski, “we are in a unique place [and I think] we can now move things forward a little faster.”

The context for the start of the roundtable discussion included the recent calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the several recent and pending Supreme Court cases that will impact Métis, most notably the Manitoba Métis Federation v. Canada and Daniels v. Canada. The discussion centred on what reconciliation looks like for Métis and how it can be accomplished.

Telfer explained that “reconciliation is compelling because it suggests we can change things. The very idea we are talking about it [means] we have opened a door.”

One stream of the conversation concerned how reconciliation depends on more than just court cases. Dr. Russell stated: “Reconciliation is a relationship between people. Law can help [but] you can’t put everything between laws and courts.” In this part of the conversation, Métis history and educating non-Métis about the Métis story was stressed. “We shouldn’t fill up the content of reconciliation with Section 35 of The Constitution Act, 1982. It doesn’t tell the whole story — we can’t depend entirely on court cases. We need to mainstream and normalize Métis history,” stated Telfer. “[We need to] quit asking questions like whether there are Métis [and] whether they have rights,” she also commented. Madden indicated that for Ontario Métis it was particularly important “... to tell the whole [Métis] story not just about the Red River.”

That is the path to reconciliation. “[It] starts with that truth.” President Lipinski explained that reconciliation requires “building a solid foundation about our history blended with the narrative that has become Canada.”

At one point, Candice Telfer, Counsel for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, were MNO President Gary Lipinski; Candice Telfer, Counsel for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs; and Dr. Peter Russell, with the University of Toronto Political Science Department and Chair of the Research Advisory Committee for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples; Métis lawyer Jean Teillet (moderator); Métis lawyer Jason Madden; Candice Telfer, Counsel for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.
Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) President Gary Lipinski offered his congratulations to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for his convincing election victory on October 19.

“We were very pleased that Prime Minister Trudeau addressed important Métis issues during the campaign and are hopeful that his commitment to advancing and achieving reconciliation with the Métis Nation can become a reality,” explained President Lipinski.

In its Métis-specific policy platform, the Liberal Party committed to a renewed “nation-to-nation relationship” with the Métis Nation as well as “establish[ing] a federal claims process that sets out a framework to address Métis rights protected by s. 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, recognize Métis self-government, and resolve outstanding Métis claims against the Crown.” It also committed to “undertak[ing] a collaborative review, in partnership with Métis communities, of existing federal programs and services available to the Métis Nation, to identify gaps and areas where strategic investments are needed in order to improve Métis quality of life” and creating a five-year Métis Economic Development Strategy with an immediate investment of $25 million over five years.

The MNO looks forward to working together with the new Liberal Government in implementing these Métis-specific commitments.”

MNO President Gary Lipinski congratulates Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on election victory

President Lipinski congratulates new Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs

O n November 4, 2015, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) President Gary Lipinski offered his congratulations to Dr. Carolyn Bennett on her appointment as the federal Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

“The MNO was very pleased to hear of the appointment of Dr. Carolyn Bennett as Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs. We have had a long association with Minister Bennett,” explained President Lipinski. “In her previous capacity as Aboriginal Affairs critic for the Liberal Party, she was a regular guest at MNO’s Annual General Assemblies and our Louis Riel Day ceremonies.”

“During the campaign, Prime Minister Trudeau made several important commitments to the Métis Nation,” added President Lipinski. “We are hopeful that with this new government, advancing and achieving reconciliation between Canada and the Métis Nation can finally become a reality.”

We are hopeful that with this new government, advancing and achieving reconciliation between Canada and the Métis Nation can finally become a reality.”

— MNO President Gary Lipinski

During the campaign, Prime Minister Trudeau also committed to meeting with the Métis Nation’s leadership on an annual basis in order to ensure a new, collaborative and respectful relationship is built. “We are looking forward to our meetings with the new government,” explained President Lipinski, “as we believe these will provide the opportunity for the Métis Nation and Canada to begin the important work of meaningful reconciliation.”
Mandate letters to new Federal Ministers reflect commitments to the Métis Nation

“No relationship is more important to me and to Canada than the one with Indigenous Peoples”

On March 13, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau issued mandate letters to his recently appointed cabinet ministers. Through mandate letters the Prime Minister directly instructs his cabinet ministers and outlines his expectations for their upcoming mandate.

These letters are posted on the Government of Canada website and outlines his expectations for their upcoming mandate. These letters are posted on the Government of Canada website and can be found on minister/index.htm. Each Minister’s mandate letter can be found on their individual page.

When discussing the mandate letters at a recent Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) meeting, MNO President Gary Lipinski indicated that it is very encouraging that the mandate letter for every minister included the following statement from the Prime Minister:

No relationship is more important to me and to Canada than the one with Indigenous Peoples. It is time for a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.

Even more encouraging is that the mandate letter for Dr. Carolyn Bennett, the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs contains specific commitments to the Métis Nation.

Below are excerpts from Prime Minister Trudeau’s mandate letter to Minister Bennett that are directly pertinent to the Métis Nation:

As Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, your overarching goal will be to renew the relationship between Canada and Indigenous Peoples. This renewal must be a nation-to-nation relationship, based on recognition, rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership. I expect you to re-engage in a renewed nation-to-nation process with Indigenous Peoples to make real progress on the issues most important to First Nations, the Métis Nation, and Inuit communities – issues like housing, employment, health and mental health care, community safety and policing, child welfare, and education. In particular, I expect you to work with your colleagues and through established legislative, regulatory, and Cabinet processes to deliver on your top priorities.

To support the work of reconciliation, and continue the necessary process of truth telling and healing, work with provinces and territories, and with First Nations, the Métis Nation, and Inuit, to implement recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, starting with the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Develop, in collaboration with the Minister of Justice, and supported by the Minister of Status of Women, an approach to, and a mandate for, an inquiry into murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls in Canada, including the identification of a lead minister.

Undertake, with advice from the Minister of Justice, in full partnership and consultation with First Nations, Inuit, and the Métis Nation, a review of laws, policies, and operational practices to ensure that the Crown is fully executing its consultation and accommodation obligations, in accordance with its constitutional and international human rights obligations, including Aboriginal and Treaty rights.

Work with the Minister of Finance to establish a new fiscal relationship that lifts the 2% cap on annual funding increases and moves towards sufficient, predictable and sustained funding for First Nations communities.

Work with residential school survivors, First Nations, Métis Nation, Inuit communities, provinces, territories, and educators to incorporate Aboriginal and treaty rights, residential schools, and Indigenous contributions into school curricula.

Work, on a nation-to-nation basis, with the Métis Nation to advance reconciliation and renew the relationship, based on cooperation, respect for rights, our international obligations, and a commitment to end the status quo.

Collaborate with the Ministers of Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change and Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to ensure that environmental assessment legislation is amended to enhance the consultation, engagement and participatory capacity of Indigenous groups in reviewing and monitoring major resource development projects.

Work with the Minister of Health to update and expand the Nutrition North program, in consultation with Northern communities.

Work with the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development to launch consultations with provinces and territories and Indigenous Peoples on a National Early Learning and Childcare Framework as a first step towards delivering affordable, high-quality, flexible and fully inclusive child care.

Work, in collaboration with the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, and in consultation with First Nations, Inuit, and other stakeholders, to improve essential physical infrastructure for Indigenous communities including improving housing outcomes for Indigenous Peoples.

Work with the Minister of Status of Women to support the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities in ensuring that no one fleeing domestic violence is left without a place to turn by growing and maintaining Canada’s network of shelters and transition houses.

Work with the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour and the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development to promote economic development and create jobs for Indigenous Peoples.

PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU’S TOP PRIORITIES

for Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs

- To support the work of reconciliation, and continue the necessary process of truth telling and healing, work with provinces and territories, and with First Nations, the Métis Nation, and Inuit, to implement recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, starting with the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Work with residential school survivors, First Nations, Métis Nation, Inuit communities, provinces, territories, and educators to incorporate Aboriginal and treaty rights, residential schools, and Indigenous contributions into school curricula.
- Work, on a nation-to-nation basis, with the Métis Nation to advance reconciliation and renew the relationship, based on cooperation, respect for rights, our international obligations, and a commitment to end the status quo.
- Collaborate with the Ministers of Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change and Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to ensure that environmental assessment legislation is amended to enhance the consultation, engagement and participatory capacity of Indigenous groups in reviewing and monitoring major resource development projects.
- Work with the Minister of Health to update and expand the Nutrition North program, in consultation with Northern communities.
- Work with the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development to launch consultations with provinces and territories and Indigenous Peoples on a National Early Learning and Childcare Framework as a first step towards delivering affordable, high-quality, flexible and fully inclusive child care.
- Work, in collaboration with the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, and in consultation with First Nations, Inuit, and other stakeholders, to improve essential physical infrastructure for Indigenous communities including improving housing outcomes for Indigenous Peoples.
- Work with the Minister of Status of Women to support the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities in ensuring that no one fleeing domestic violence is left without a place to turn by growing and maintaining Canada’s network of shelters and transition houses.
- Work with the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour and the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development to promote economic development and create jobs for Indigenous Peoples.

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Prime Minister’s entire mandate letter can be read at: www.pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-indigenous-and-northern-affairs-mandate-letter
MNO citizen Vance Badaway elected to Parliament

by MNO Staff

Congratulations to Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Vance Badaway, recently elected as Member of Parliament (MP) for Niagara Centre. A record number of Aboriginal people were elected to the House of Commons in the 2015 federal election.

Badaway’s grandparents came to Port Colborne from northern Ontario, moving their French-speaking family to a very English region back in those days. They raised four children while operating a family business for over 50 years and holding on to their Métis culture.

As a local business owner, the new MP has been very active in the Niagara region, serving on several boards and committees in the area. These included Chairman of the Port Colborne Health Services Task Force, the Port Colborne Hydro Inc. Board of Directors and as a member of the Niagara Regional Development Charges Task Force.

On October 25, Badaway attended the annual Métis Harvest Dinner hosted by the MNO Niagara Region Métis Council. Badaway, Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) Cindy Forster and Welland Mayor Frank Campon were presented with Métis sashes by MNO Niagara Region Métis Council President Derrick Pont.

In a recent interview, Badaway discussed the Liberal platform presented by the Liberal party prior to the federal election.

“The entire Aboriginal platform is great. Regardless of ethnic background, [Canada] is a country where everyone belongs,” he said. Badaway served as Mayor of Port Colborne from 1997 to 2003 and from 2006 to 2014, and also served as Regional Councillor on the Niagara Regional Council during those terms.

MNO Senator Laframboise recalls first meeting with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

submitted by Glen Lipinski, MNO Community Relations Coordinator

The recent election results reminded Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Senator Garry Laframboise of his own encounter with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Three years ago, Senator Laframboise attended an event in Welland during Trudeau’s campaign for the Liberal leadership. Senator Laframboise was asked to introduce Trudeau in French.

Due to a bad storm at the time, President Derrick Pont of the MNO Niagara Region Métis Council was unable to attend and Senator Laframboise had the opportunity to present Trudeau with a Métis sash on behalf of the MNO Niagara Region Métis Council.

“He was well aware of the meaning of our sash and was very proud of receiving it…”

“...He was well aware of the meaning of our sash and was very proud of receiving it as I put it on him,” Senator Laframboise shared in an e-mail.

“I knew at that time that he was going to be successful [but] I did not realize that I was putting it on the next Prime Minister of Canada,” he admitted.

For the Senator, it was truly an honour and a great surprise!

MNO Thunder Bay Council President meets Carolyn Bennett

submitted by Bryanna Scott, MNO Thunder Bay Métis Council President

Bryanna Scott, the President of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Thunder Bay Métis Council had the opportunity to meet Dr. Carolyn Bennett, the new Federal Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, at the Charting Our Own Path Forward Education Symposium. Hosted by the Chiefs of Ontario, the Symposium was held November 17-19 in Thunder Bay.
Every year on November 11, Métis from across the homeland participate in Remembrance Day Ceremonies. Being part of these ceremonies is very important to Métis because we have contributed to the defense of Canada as far back as the War of 1812 as well as both World Wars, the Korean Conflict, peacekeeping missions and most recently, Afghanistan. Over the years, many Métis have served and many have made the ultimate sacrifice. By making the Métis presence felt at Remembrance Day services, we show our respect for all Veterans and we remind all Canadians of Métis service and sacrifices.

Since 2004, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) has laid a wreath at the National War Memorial in Ottawa during National Remembrance Day ceremonies. This year, Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) Jaime Lefebvre was asked to lay the wreath. Jaime requested the presence of her father, Richard Lefebvre, who also served in the military and retired as a Master Warrant Officer, and her son Ethan. While Ethan is in the Royal Canadian Air Cadets, he plans to follow in the footsteps of his mother and grandfather, both of whom are MNO citizens, and join the army.

“It’s an honour to be here, remembering the ones who gave their lives.”

– Richard Lefebvre

After the ceremony at the National War Memorial, father, daughter and grandson walked over to the National Aboriginal Veterans Memorial on Elgin Street. Jaime placed a poppy on the memorial and the three of them saluted.

“It’s an honour to be here, remembering the ones who gave their lives,” Richard said.

Together, Richard, Jaime and Ethan, three generations of Métis, continued a Remembrance Day tradition that will keep this vital and honoured ceremony alive.
Métis youth helps student choir commemorate Remembrance Day

Submitted by
Shawna Hansen
MNO Community Wellness Coordinator

Eight-year-old Savannah Hansen, granddaughter of Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Paula Laguens and daughter of MNO Community Wellness Coordinator Shawna Hansen of Sault Ste. Marie, felt very proud on Remembrance Day as she and her classmates performed at the Essar Centre. In 2014, the students in Savannah’s choir at St. Mary’s French Immersion Catholic School put their heads together and decided to create a song for Remembrance Day. They all came up with phrases and words on a poster board that they used to write a song titled ‘A World Without Peace.’ The song was a hit and the choir was asked to sing it during the 2015 Remembrance Day ceremony at Essar Centre. The lyrics contain an important message to remember those who fought for peace:

Sometimes I stop and think,
What would it be like,
If no one remembered,
In a world without peace? 

On Remembrance Day we pray,
Let’s show our appreciation today.
Au jour du souvenir,
Nous devons réfléchir.

St. Mary’s French Immersion Catholic School partnered with another local school for the Remembrance Day performance.

Métis youth helps student choir commemorate Remembrance Day

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Veterans honoured in Blind River ceremony

Submitted by
Yvonne Jensen
MNO North Channel Métis Council President

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Senator Dr. Alis Kennedy, O.Ont, CD, OMC, had the honour of being invited to the Remembrance Day ceremony at Queen’s Park by the Office of the Premier.

During the ceremony, attendees were able to view a video of Premier Kathleen Wynne’s attendance of Remembrance Day ceremonies in Hong Kong. China. Premier Wyne spoke in a video message and afterward her partner, Jane von Houten, placed a wreath at the memorial on the Premier’s behalf.

Speakers at the ceremony included Honorary Lieutenant General Richard Rohmer, Canada’s most decorated citizen; Michael Coteau, the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport; and Brigadier-General Lowell Thomas, commander of the 4th Canadian Division.

During the ceremony, a local resident captured a lovely picture of President Jensen as she humbly placed the wreath.

“I didn’t know this photo was taken,” she shared in an e-mail. “It was sent to me by a friend. He gave me permission to share it.”

Submitted by
Yvonne Jensen
MNO North Channel Métis Council President

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Senator Eugene Contant represented the MNO Northern Lights Métis Council during a Remembrance Day ceremony in Cochrane.

Senator Contant respectfully removed his hat after placing a wreath at the memorial. The wreath was covered in poppies and shaped like a cross.

The MNO Northern Lights Métis Council asked Senator Contant to place the wreath to honour all soldiers on behalf of the MNO.

Submitted by
Jack Courville
MNO Citizen

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Submitted by
Jack Courville
MNO Citizen
Housing Services for Métis people

Ontario Renovates

Ontario Renovates is generally offered through local municipal service managers across the province, however, access and eligibility criteria may vary from one community to another.

Under IAH (2014 extension), funding has been set aside for Métis, First Nations and Inuit people living off-reserve as well as funding specifically targeted to rural communities in Northern Ontario. The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), by way of its agency Infinity Property Services is involved the following Ontario Renovates programs.

Please note that the majority of these programs are open to all people regardless of Aboriginal descent. For all other areas please contact your Local Municipal Service Manager or District Social Services Administration Board.

Assistance for Homeowners

Being a homeowner can be enticing and rewarding, but it also can be challenging, especially if you do not have the means to address repairs or modification required to your home.

There is funding available in many communities to assist eligible homeowners with repairs or modifications. The Ontario Renovates Program is a component of the Investment in Affordable Housing (2014) extension that does just that: it helps low to moderate income homeowners improve their living conditions through financial assistance to repair or modify their homes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Overview</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Contact:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ONTARIO RENOVATES Northern Remote Communities</td>
<td>Assistance for low to moderate income homeowners to repair/modify their home up to an average forgivable loan of $25,000</td>
<td>Communities with a population of less than 2,500 in the districts of Kenora, Rainy River, Thunder Bay, Algoma, Cochrane, Timiskaming, Manitoulin, Sudbury, Nipissing or Parry Sound</td>
<td>Infinity Property Services 1-800-891-5881 Ext 317 Or 1-705-436-5143 <a href="http://www.infinitypropertyservices.ca">www.infinitypropertyservices.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONTARIO RENOVATES Kenora District</td>
<td>Assistance for low to moderate income Kenora District homeowners to repair/modify their home up to an average forgivable loan of $25,000</td>
<td>Kenora District Residents</td>
<td>Infinity Property Services 1-800-891-5881 Ext 317 Or 1-705-436-5143 <a href="http://www.infinitypropertyservices.ca">www.infinitypropertyservices.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONTARIO RENOVATES Rainy River District</td>
<td>Assistance for low to moderate income Rainy River homeowners to repair/modify their home up to an average forgivable loan of $25,000</td>
<td>Rainy River District Residents</td>
<td>Rainy River District Services Administration Board 1-800-265-5349 Ext 231 or 807-274-5349 <a href="http://www.rrdssab.ca">www.rrdssab.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONTARIO RENOVATES Nipissing District</td>
<td>Assistance for low to moderate income Nipissing District homeowners to repair/modify their home up to an average forgivable loan of $25,000</td>
<td>Nipissing District Residents</td>
<td>District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board 1-705-474-2151 <a href="http://www.dnssab.on.ca">www.dnssab.on.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIMUR Home Repair</td>
<td>Assistance for low to moderate income Nipissing District homeowners to repair/modify their home up to an average forgivable loan of $25,000</td>
<td>Métis, First Nations or Inuit living outside of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)</td>
<td>Ontario Aboriginal Housing 1-866-391-1061 ext. 216 <a href="http://www.ontarioaboriginalhousing.ca">www.ontarioaboriginalhousing.ca</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Infinity Property Services (IPS) is an agency of the MNO that provides housing programs and services on behalf of federal, provincial and municipal governments. As part of our work we continue to pursue new business opportunities to maintain our self-sufficient operations while still providing much needed housing services to Métis and other people across the province. For more information, please visit our website: www.infinitypropertyservices.ca
Who are ‘Indians’ within Parliament’s authority and why does it matter?

With these developments, it should be clear to everyone what needs to happen.
Real negotiations on issues such as Métis rights, lands, and self-government must be engaged.”

Métis Voyageur

December 2015, Issue no. 88

The Métis Voyageur has been following Daniels v. Canada for over a decade. On October 8, the case went before the Supreme Court of Canada. Just prior to the case being heard, the magazine Canadian Lawyer published the following article by noted Métis lawyer Jason Madden. Madden, a partner at Pape Salter Teillet LLP, has been involved in much of the litigation on Métis rights over the last decade and was recognized as one of Canada’s 25 Most Influential Lawyers in 2014. He was legal counsel for the Métis National Council in its intervention on Daniels v. Canada on October 8. Now that Daniels v. Canada has been heard by the Supreme Court it is expected that the Court will bring down its ruling sometime in 2016.

On Oct. 8, the Supreme Court of Canada will hear arguments from Canada, Alberta, Saskatchewan, the Métis Nation, First Nations, and other groups in Daniels v. Canada. The Daniels case—initiated by well-known Métis leader Harry Daniels in 1999—will hopefully lead to Canada revisiting its arbitrary and exclusionary policies towards Métis and non-status Indians (i.e., members of First Nations who are not able to register as “status Indians” under the Indian Act).

As acknowledged in Canada’s internal documents that were disclosed in the litigation, these federal policies (or lack thereof) have produced the “most disadvantaged of all Canadian citizens.”

The case will answer the longstanding question of whether the Métis and non-status Indians are included within the meaning of s. 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1982. This head of power grants “exclusive Legislative Authority” for “Indians, and lands reserved for the Indians” to the federal Parliament.

In recent times, Canada has taken an extremely narrow interpretation in relation to this jurisdiction, which conveniently excludes the Métis and non-status Indians. This has resulted in these groups being treated as proverbial “political footballs” and falling between the jurisdictional cracks of this country.

To the words of the trial judge, this gamelessness has created a “large population of collateralized damaged” Aboriginal people.

Based on the voluminous evidentiary record, both the Federal Court and Federal Court of Appeal concluded that s. 91(24) was necessarily broad enough to include all of the aboriginal peoples (i.e., First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) Canada encountered as it expanded from coast to coast to coast post-confederation.

In other words, s. 91(24) was not limited to “Indians” as defined by Canada through the Indian Act. Nor did it exclude the Métis—who emerged as a distinct Aboriginal People in the western territories—prior to Canada becoming the Canada we know today.

On appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, the federal government continued to argue for an arbitrarily narrow interpretation of this unique head of power, which would exclude these groups from treaty-making and thwart meaningful reconciliation with them.

In particular, for the Métis, this case is a part of their “hunt for justice.” After it became apparent that governments were not going to negotiate with them in order to give meaning to their inclusion in s. 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, the Métis have repeatedly turned to the courts to uphold this country’s honour and fulfill the constitutional promise made to them more than 30 years ago.

From R. v. Powley in 2003 (which recognized that Métis communities have pre-existing aboriginal rights protected by s. 35) to Cunningham v. Alberta in 2011 (wherein Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin urged that “the time has finally come for recognition of the Métis as a unique and distinct people”) to Manitoba Métis Federation v. Canada in 2015 (which recognized the outstanding constitutional grievance of the Manitoba Métis flowing from land grant provisions set out in s. 31 of the Manitoba Act, 1870), the Supreme Court of Canada has been consistent and unequivocal: s. 35 demands good faith and meaningful negotiations and reconciliation with the Métis people.

Unfortunately, Canada has not been listening.

The Métis continue to be excluded from federal comprehensive and specific claims processes available to First Nations and the Inuit. They are denied access to desperately needed legal force and effect with s. 91(24)’s certainty.

Hopefully, the next federal government will finally see the writing on the wall and move forward on these issues. If not, the Métis are hopeful the Daniels case will provide additional judicial direction that federal inaction on Métis rights and claims is no longer an option.

With these developments, it will remove one of the last vestiges Canada hides behind to justify its complete lack of leadership and action when it comes to dealing with the Métis.

Notably, independent experts, including some hand-picked by the current federal government, have come to similar conclusions.

In his April 2015 report prepared for Canada on the federal comprehensive claims process, Vancouver-based lawyer Douglas Eyford wrote, “Canada must do more in its relationship with the Métis.” He went on to recommend that Canada “develop a reconciliation process to support the exercise of Métis s. 35 rights and to reconcile their interests.”

In the same vein, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has criticized Canada for not having “a coherent process or policy in place to address the land and compensation claims of the Métis people.”

With these developments, it should be clear to everyone what needs to happen. Real negotiations on issues such as Métis rights, lands, and self-government must be engaged.

Just and lasting settlements with the Métis, whether they are called treaties, modern-day land claims, or some other type of agreement, must be reached and given legal force and effect with s. 91(24)’s certainty.

Hopefully, the next federal government will finally see the writing on the wall and move forward on these issues. If not, the Métis are hopeful the Daniels case will provide additional judicial direction that federal inaction on Métis rights and claims is no longer an option.

Daniels v. Canada was initially brought by Harry Daniels (1940-2004), a charismatic and accomplished Métis leader.

...
MNO signs cooperation agreement with Mitaanjigamiing First Nation

by MNO Staff

On October 13, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) as represented by MNO President Gary Lipinski and the members of the MNO Region 1 Consultation Committee signed a cooperation agreement with the Mitaanjigamiing First Nation. Mitaanjigamiing First Nation is located at the southwestern arm of Rainy Lake, about 70 kilometres north of Fort Frances. The reserve encompasses approximately 1,600 hectares of land comprised of mainland, a peninsula, and two islands. About 140 people are part of this First Nation. The Mitaanjigamiing First Nation is currently involved in a Treaty Land Entitlement Claim and will be selecting Settlement Lands that include parts of the traditional harvesting territory of the Regional rights-bearing Métis community represented by the MNO Treaty #1 Lake of the Woods/Lac Seul and Rainy Lake/Rainy River Regional Consultation Committee (Region 1 Consultation Committee). "The MNO Region 1 Consultation Committee and the MNO support the settlement of outstanding First Nation claims," explained MNO President Gary Lipinski, "including Mitaanjigamiing's Treaty Land Entitlement Claim."

The Mitaanjigamiing First Nation is also involved in discussions with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry concerning formalization of co-management of a campsite on Crown Land at Bobfin Lake, which is frequently used by MNO Region 1 citizens for family and community gatherings. In the Cooperation Agreement, the Mitaanjigamiing First Nations outlines its intention to continue to allow Region 1 MNO citizens access to the Settlement Lands for harvesting and other traditional land use purposes and outlines the conditions for cooperation.

MNO partnership successfully reduces carbon monoxide emissions

adapted from a press release that originally appeared at Benzinga.com

On August 25, the Métis Nation of Ontario—BrightRooft Solar LP (MNO-BR), Ontario Solar Power (OSP) and Calvary Church completed a 190 kW solar project that will reduce the emissions footprint of Ontario’s electricity system by approximately 30 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually.

Located in Peterborough, the Calvary Pentecostal Church has 828 solar panels on the roof. The panels will generate 228 kW of electricity, which is enough to power 26 Ontario households for a year.

MNO-BR leased Calvary Church’s roof in order to install the panels, taking part of Ontario’s Feed-In Tariff program for solar power. Started in 2009 by the Government of Ontario, this program allows individuals and companies to develop renewable energy projects connected to Ontario’s power grid, while receiving a fixed price per kilowatt hour for the energy produced. OSP, developer, engineered and installed the solar project. It’s the company’s first solar project in Peterborough.

“We are very appreciative of the care and attention to detail that Ontario Solar Provider has given throughout the duration of this project,” shared Paul Mallot, Lead Pastor at Calvary Church.

“Their use of a ballasted racking system has kept the integrity of our roof warranty intact, which gives us peace of mind for years to come,” Mallot stated.

Every component within the panel system was manufactured within Ontario, ensuring that the project benefits Canadian companies as well as Ontario residents. “Projects like this solar installation at Calvary Church are a great example of how property owners are partnering with solar developers to leverage their unused rooftops, generating additional revenue for their organizations while supporting the development of renewable energy projects across Ontario,” said Sebastian Seyfarth, President of OSP.

MNO-BR owns more than 30 solar projects across the province.

MNO attends signing of Indigenous Education Protocol in Windsor

submitted by Sharon McBride
MNO Vice Chair

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Vice-Chair Sharon McBride attended the signing of the Indigenous Education Protocol at St. Clair College on Tuesday, September 22, in Windsor. According to CCR, St. Clair College is the 13th Ontario college to sign the protocol.

The Indigenous Education Protocol is made up of seven principles that aim to guide post-secondary institutions towards ensuring that indigenous education is a priority and indigenous students’ cultural needs are acknowledged.

“Gaps still exist between Métis learners and the general population,” Vice-Chair McBride stated in an interview with Blackburn News. “We need to continue to work to ensure Métis learners can see their communities and culture reflected within post-secondary institutions.

The signing took place during an Aboriginal ceremony at the college’s main campus in Windsor with students from the Chatham campus encouraged to view the ceremony via Skype.

MNO Vice-Chair Sharon McBride (centre) with newly elected MNO Windsor-Essex-Kent Métis Council Vice-President Terry Desjardins (right) and self-identified Métis youth and first-year St. Clair College student Matthew Bombardier (left).
Métis Voyageur
December 2015, Issue no. 88

The weekend of October 23 to 25 was truly a Métis fun-filled weekend for old and new Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Infinite Reach facilitators!

Métis post-secondary students in the MNO Infinite Reach Student Solidarity Network gathered in Toronto for the Infinite Reach Midterm Meeting where they were given the opportunity to connect with senior facilitators about their past experiences, as well as connect with MNO Senators, community members and MNO staff.

New and returning MNO Infinite Reach Facilitators (IRF) enrolled in 11 post-secondary institutions from across the province were in attendance. All facilitators participated in a two-day training session to further familiarize themselves with the MNO, the Infinite Reach Student Solidarity Network, and to prepare for the current school year.

This year there were presentations on MNO programs and services in addition to cultural knowledge training. One of the cultural activities included Métis jigging and dancing, facilitated by MNO staff member Anne Trudel. Facilitators enjoyed jigging in group dances such as the Rabbit Dance.

When facilitators were not jigging, they were learning to finger weave, bead, and embroider. Passing on traditional knowledge is very important to the Infinite Reach facilitators who can then take back and share what they learn with their local community and post-secondary institutions.

The MNO is very proud of its Infinite Reach Facilitators; they volunteer their time to support the Métis community in their post-secondary institutions.

A weekend of Métis knowledge sharing and community connections

submitted by
Alicia Blore
MNO Education Officer

Infinite Reach

Infinite Reach is comprised of incoming and upper year post-secondary students who have the common goal of working together to enrich and enhance their post-secondary education experience. Members form a community of Métis learners within their college or university and support each other in their academic pursuits. Infinite Reach Facilitators are upper year students who offer assistance to incoming students by helping them adjust to university life. Infinite Reach Facilitators also work to create and maintain a sense of community among Métis students. Throughout the year, Infinite Reach Facilitators will host/facilitate cultural and informative events to connect students to the local MNO community councils and to the various programs, services and events of the MNO. The Infinite Reach: Métis Student Solidarity Network will serve as a community of learners with the ability to inspire Métis students to achieve their full potential and provide the support of the Métis community.
MNO staff attend training conference in British Columbia

Submitted by
Ted Norris
OARGP Coordinator

The working group members of the Ontario Aboriginal Responsible Gaming Program (OARGP), to which the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) provides provincial coordination support, had a unique and rewarding experience in Vancouver in late September of this year. Following a compelling business case from the MNO to the program’s funder, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, it was agreed that the working group members would benefit from the training, learning and networking opportunities in British Columbia.

The group first attended the Four Directions Aboriginal Problem Gambling conference, which was a joint Canada-United States partnership. Working group members then held their regular in-person working meeting at the Skwachays Lodge in the heart of downtown Vancouver directly adjacent to the infamous “downtown east side” neighbourhood. The Four Directions conference bridged knowledge and expertise of over 200 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal delegates in attendance. Two of the OARGP members were also presenters: Sheila Wahsqunaikezhik from Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Lisa Jackson of Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians.

Also presenters: Sheila Wahsqunaikezhik, Nishnawbe Aski Nation; Elder Ruth Adams, Tsawassen First Nation; Jennifer Cornell, Ontario Native Women’s Association; Loma Rowlinson, MNO staff; Stephanie Pepelinskie, Union of Ontario Indians. Back row, left to right: Ted Norris, MNO staff; Maureen Greely, Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling; Kristin West, Evergreen Council; Angel Maracle, Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres.

Front row, left to right: Angela Voght, BC Responsible Gambling Coordinator; Lisa Jackson, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians; Sheila Wahsqunaikezhik, Nishnawbe Aski Nation; Elder Ruth Adams, Tsawassen First Nation; Jennifer Cornell, Ontario Native Women’s Association; Loma Rowlinson, MNO staff; Stephanie Pepelinskie, Union of Ontario Indians. Back row, left to right: Ted Norris, MNO staff; Maureen Greely, Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling; Kristin West, Evergreen Council; Angel Maracle, Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres.

MNO’s Loma Rowlinson joined Lisa and Sheila in a singing and drumming performance towards the close of the conference. This was just one example of the attention paid to west coast and other Aboriginal cultures which infused every aspect of the conference. All OARGP group members were deeply impressed by all that was shared.

Conference delegates were treated to a feast and cultural performance hosted by the Musqueam First Nation. The evening also featured Métis musicians and dancers.

The MNO’s Loma Rowlinson joined Lisa and Sheila in a singing and drumming performance towards the close of the conference. This was just one example of the attention paid to west coast and other Aboriginal cultures which infused every aspect of the conference.

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.)

The MNO Veterans’ Council is looking for MNO veterans and others who support MNO veterans to consider joining the Vimy Ridge Pilgrimage Committee. Individuals with experience in providing provincial coordination support, had a unique and rewarding experience in Vancouver in late September of this year. Following a compelling business case from the MNO to the program’s funder, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, it was agreed that the working group members would benefit from the training, learning and networking opportunities in British Columbia.

The group first attended the Four Directions Aboriginal Problem Gambling conference, which was a joint Canada-United States partnership. Working group members then held their regular in-person working meeting at the Skwachays Lodge in the heart of downtown Vancouver directly adjacent to the infamous “downtown east side” neighbourhood. The Four Directions conference bridged knowledge and expertise of over 200 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal delegates in attendance. Two of the OARGP members were also presenters: Sheila Wahsqunaikezhik from Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Lisa Jackson of Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians.

Also presenters: Sheila Wahsqunaikezhik, Nishnawbe Aski Nation; Elder Ruth Adams, Tsawassen First Nation; Jennifer Cornell, Ontario Native Women’s Association; Loma Rowlinson, MNO staff; Stephanie Pepelinskie, Union of Ontario Indians. Back row, left to right: Ted Norris, MNO staff; Maureen Greely, Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling; Kristin West, Evergreen Council; Angel Maracle, Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres.

Front row, left to right: Angela Voght, BC Responsible Gambling Coordinator; Lisa Jackson, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians; Sheila Wahsqunaikezhik, Nishnawbe Aski Nation; Elder Ruth Adams, Tsawassen First Nation; Jennifer Cornell, Ontario Native Women’s Association; Loma Rowlinson, MNO staff; Stephanie Pepelinskie, Union of Ontario Indians. Back row, left to right: Ted Norris, MNO staff; Maureen Greely, Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling; Kristin West, Evergreen Council; Angel Maracle, Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres.

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Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Ginny Gonneau was delighted when she received an invitation to the official launch of Sylve Roy’s book Let Me See Your Fancy Steps: Story of a Métis Dance Caller in Regina. She followed a link to Amazon.com and saw the book’s cover for the first time. She was right there on the front with one of her dance mentors, Jeanne Pelletier.

Partial funding for the book was provided through the MNO’s Métis Culture Based Economic Development Grant (MCED), a grant whose objective is to support economic self-determination in cultural industries, such as the arts or culture-related careers.

The MCED is one of the many programs that make up the Aboriginal Original Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) designed to help Aboriginal people, regardless of status or location.

The book chronicles the experiences of Pelletier as she shared her cultural knowledge and dance teachings with many youth, including Gonneau, and about her role as a Métis dance caller, a person charged with guiding dancers during Métis square dances and group dances.

“Let Me See Your Fancy Steps!” says the book. “I can still remember Jeanne’s voice shouting, ‘Let me see those fancy steps!’ [She’s] an amazing woman and dance caller. So cool that I’m on her book,” she said.

The video, released on DVD, is called All My Relations called Yvonne Chartrand, I was part of a special Métis dance instruction video with Pelletier,” Gonneau shared on her Facebook page. The video is available on YouTube.

The book was published in 2015 and is also available in paperback.

The book was launched at the official ceremony on the traditional lands of the Fort William First Nation near Thunder Bay. Their ceremony is a tradition for the way the First Nations seek guidance through ceremony.

“Let Me See Your Fancy Steps!” reflects the ties between Aboriginal medicine and culture. The book provides a guide to traditional Métis dancing.

The MCED is one of the many programs that make up the NOSM’s Strategic Plan 2015-2020: Reaching Beyond Extraordinary Together. It supports the school and provides links to many Aboriginal communities in the north. We are so pleased the Elders chose to attend and thankful for their guidance in determining the future direction of the school.”

The book was launched at the official ceremony on the traditional lands of the Fort William First Nation near Thunder Bay. Their ceremony is a tradition for the way the First Nations seek guidance through ceremony.

“The experience of the ceremony was one Senator Gravelle would never forget.”

PCMNO Senator attends historic Elders gathering hosted by Northern Ontario School of Medicine

““This is a historic first for the Northern Ontario School of Medicine,” said Dr. Roger Strasser, NOSM’s Dean. “The school has actively chosen to engage the Elders in discussions over the past 10 years. Elders play an extremely important role in the school, and the Elders chose to attend and give their guidance in determining the future direction of the school.”

The NOSM will be celebrating its 10th anniversary with the launch of NOSM’s Strategic Plan 2015-2020: Reaching Beyond Extraordinary Together, which many Elders helped to develop.

I learned a lot and have a deep respect for the way the First Nations seek guidance.”

— PCMNO Senator Rene Gravelle

Ginny Gonneau (centre) teaches Métis dance steps to students from Our Lady of Fatima Catholic School in Toronto.

PCMNO Senator Rene Gravelle receiving a plaque from Dr. Roger Strasser, Dean of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. The plaque was gifted to Senator Gravelle for his years of service to the school.

Métis dancing project published thanks to MNO assistance

submitted by
Ginny Gonneau
MNO Citizen

Sadie’s dance project published thanks to MNO assistance

December 2015, Issue no. 88

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Sadie Smith was delighted when she received an invitation to the official launch of Sylve Roy’s book Let Me See Your Fancy Steps: Story of a Métis Dance Caller in Regina. She followed a link to Amazon.com and saw the book’s cover for the first time. She was right there on the front with one of her dance mentors, Jeanne Pelletier.

Sadie was delighted to find a structure that would better reflect the ties between Aboriginal culture and tradition and medicine.

Sadie’s parents shared with her the cultural teachings of their heritage, which included dancing.

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On September 26, 2015, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Toronto York Region Métis Council (TYRMC) celebrated Culture Days with its Métis Roots Cultural Showcase.

Founded in 2009, Culture Days is a non-profit organization dedicated to building a national network of cultural connections across Canada. With the support of volunteer groups at the national, provincial and local levels, hundreds of thousands of artists, cultural workers, organizations and groups, volunteers and supporters host free participatory public activities that take place in hundreds of cities and towns throughout the country over the last weekend of September each year. All activities are promoted on the Culture Days national website.

The Toronto Public Library supports Culture Days each year by providing free venue space to any group who wants to present an activity. The MNO TYRMC took this opportunity to organize a showcase of culture that would introduce the general public to who Métis people are today. A lovely community space for the Métis Roots Cultural Showcase was provided at the Toronto Malvern Branch Library (in north-east Scarborough). The library promoted the event locally. It was a wonderful way to reach out to the community.

There were approximately 50 participants - adults and children. Dancing and finger weaving workshops were facilitated by Métis youth Alicia Blore (fiddler) and Joanna Burt (spoons). The Rabbit Dance was most fun for all. MNO citizen Brad Laforénte from Ottawa was a surprise guest who added some extra "joie de vivre" to the festivities by demonstrating some really fancy Red River Jig steps. After the dance workshop, participants had the option of learning the basics of finger weaving with the girls, or beading with MNO TYRMC Senator Constance Simmonds.

MNO TYRMC President Tera Beaulieu was Master of Ceremonies for the afternoon. Senator Simmonds led the opening and closing prayers. The ladies of the "All Our Relations" drum group from Oshawa joined in with performances and stories highlighting the First Nations traditions. A panel display of Métis culture and history provided an educational focus, along with samples of books, furs and other cultural items. The Gabriel Dumont Institute posters added a colourful splash to it all. This generated much interest and discussion.

MNO TYRMC Secretary/Treasurer Marilyn Hew had a table set with free materials and information on the MNO and the MNO TYRMC, as well as some sashes and spoons for sale. MNO TYRMC Councillor Todd Ross took on the role of official photographer, so there were many memorable shots of the day. Through this Culture Days event the MNO TYRMC was able to share Métis culture with a wide range of people from various ethnic backgrounds in the local community. It also reached out to the Aboriginal Housing Support Services (AHSS) located next door to the library. The AHSS coordinators there were very excited to learn about the activities of the MNO TYRMC and they helped promote the event. Some of their residents attended. The MNO TYRMC hopes to collaborate on more activities in the future with them.

The MNO TYRMC would like to express special thanks to Chan- tel Prasad and the staff of the Toronto Library Malvern Branch for their keen support of this event. The special display of Métis books and resources set up at the entrance of the library in the weeks leading up to Culture Days were especially appreciated as was the colourful poster advertising the event. The library staff did an excellent job of setting the room and all in all it was a very successful afternoon and everyone enjoyed themselves. Everyone hopes to do it again next year.

If you want to know more about how to participate in Culture Days, visit their website at http://culturedays.ca.
MNO North Bay Métis Council holds Harvest Gathering

submitted by
Linda Krause
MNO Employment Counsellor

September 26 was a great day to have a Harvest Gathering! Hosted by the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) North Bay Métis Council, with beautiful sunshine and excellent weather, participants came together at Dutrisac Cottages in Sturgeon Falls. Organizers started the day by setting up their booths and workshop tables.

Visitors attended the festivities from as far as Sudbury, including Provisional Council of the MNO (PCMNO) Region 5 Councillor Juliette Denis, MNO Sudbury Métis Council Chair Maurice Sarrazin and other Métis citizens of Sudbury along with their families.

MNO North Bay Métis Council President Marc Laurin showed off his fire-making skills and started a campfire that lasted all day. Lunch was provided by the MNO North Bay’s Healing and Wellness Branch. Everyone enjoyed traditional moose meat, ban-bonk and a wild meat chili that really hit the spot!

There was much to do and plenty of entertainment. Many of the workshops went on throughout the afternoon and included body scrub making and Métis dot art painting. Special guest Lorraine Montreuil from Mattawa came to teach participants how to make talking sticks, also called a speaker’s staff. She also gave a lesson as to the importance of the sticks being used during Aboriginal gatherings, allowing each person to have a turn speaking his or her mind.

Victor Amyotte, a local camper at Dutrisac Cottages, gave rides in a handmade Thomas the Train pulled by a golf cart. He had lots of fun and so did the kids.

To finish off the day, President Laurin hosted a delicious fish-fry with the help of Region 5 Captain of the Hunt Richard Sarrazin. The MNO North Bay Métis Council brought out a delicious cake for dessert. It was yummy!

Congratulations to all the prize winners and a huge thank you to everyone that made the 2015 Harvester’s Gathering a success!

For upcoming events, check out the MNO North Bay Métis Council website.

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Special guests presented with sashes during annual Harvest Dinner

submitted by
Glen Lipinski
MNO Community Relations Coordinator

On October 25, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Niagara Region Métis Council held its annual Métis Harvest Dinner at the Club Richelieu in Welland. Over 140 people enjoyed an excellent evening. Special guests in attendance included newly elected Member of Parliament (MP) for Niagara Centre and MNO citizen Vance Badawey, Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) Cindy Forster, Welland Mayor Frank Campion and Niagara Regional Councillor Paul Grenier.

During the evening, MNO Niagara Region Métis Council President Derrick Pont presented Métis sashes to MP Badawey, MPP Forster and Mayor Campion. The evening featured an impressive potluck dinner and food provided by MNO staff from the Welland office. Culinary students from École secondaire Confédération also gained real-life experience by preparing additional meals for the Harvest Dinner. Needless to say, no one went home hungry!

Toe-tapping tunes by the Niagara Old Time Fiddlers livened everyone up after the meal when the Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to MNO citizen Amanda Pont-Shanks.
Métis culture highlighted at Sugarbush Maple Syrup Festival

submitted by Bill Morrison
MNO Credit River Métis Council
Senator

From March 7 to April 5, the Credit Valley Conservation Authority (CVC), one of 36 Conservation Authorities in Ontario with a mandate to ensure Ontario’s water, land and natural habitats are conserved, restored and responsibly managed, held its annual Sugarbush Maple Syrup Festival and extended an invitation to the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Credit River Métis Council (CRMC) to be involved. This is the third year the MNO CRMC has participated in the festival. This year’s team was headed by Wendy Elliott, the MNO CRMC’s Women’s Representative, and other council volunteers.

The most active period of the Sugarbush Maple Festival happened around the March break, which took place between March 18 and March 22 this year. The festival attracted close to 1,000 visitors from around the world and of all ages! People from the United States, the Caribbean, Poland and Australia visited the Watershed Learning Centre in the Terra Cotta Conservation Park, where the MNO CRMC’s presentation was on display. Curious people ranged from the age of two years old all the way to 90 years old, asking all sorts of different questions, which the MNO CRMC representatives enjoyed and appreciated.

Visitors got to learn about traditional Métis items such as a hand drum, moccasins, mukluks, deer-skin mitts, a Métis sash, wooden carvings and a quill box. The display included many pictures and materials from the MNO Education Kit, educating visitors about the Métis Way of Life and the Michif language.

Over the years, the CVC Authority has developed a positive relationship with the MNO CRMC and appreciated the expertise that the Métis community brings to the education of the CVC visitors. The opportunity is appreciated and both parties look forward to the next collaboration.

Boo from the Sault

submitted by Patti Moreau
MNO Employment Counsellor

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) staff at the Sault Ste. Marie office got together for a team-building exercise during the week of October 12 to October 16. MNO staff members planned and designed a Halloween-inspired window display for their office. The end result was a spooky display that was entered into the Halowindow contest with the Local2 news channel!

While they didn’t win, it was still a rewarding experience for them and they still had fun being creative and drawing some positive attention for the MNO.

They plan on charging into the next few months with a new themed display and want to issue a challenge to other MNO offices to create a similar team-building exercise and get into the Holiday spirit by decorating either a window or their office space to make it warm and welcoming for visitors for the Holiday Season.

Halloween fun with the MNO Northwest Métis Council

submitted by Mandy Montgomery
MNO Employment Developer

On October 30, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Northwest Métis Council hosted a fun-filled Halloween party with plenty of great activities. MNO staff at the Dryden MNO office collaborated with the council to hold the event.

Kids and adults took part in activities such as cupcake decorating, MNO staff prepared a game of Pin the Nose on the Pumpkin and offered lots of Spooky Snacks, such as hot dogs wrapped up like mummies.

The costumes were so unique and scary that many prizes were awarded for best costume in many different categories.

There were also lots of fun craft activities with sparkles, pom-poms and several other decorating options.

MNO citizens help educate the public at Northern College

submitted by Liliane Éthier
MNO Temiskaming Métis Council
President

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Temiskaming Métis Council hosted a display during Northern College’s third annual Indigenous Cultural Awareness Week in Kirkland Lake.

On September 23, MNO citizens Christina Acton and her son Austin manned the booth, sharing and educating visitors about Métis culture. Their table offered a display of moccasins, snowshoes, examples of Métis beadwork and a Hudson Bay blanket.

The Indigenous Cultural Awareness Week provides an opportunity for staff, students and members of the community to share and celebrate the richness of local Aboriginal cultures present within the areas of Northern College’s campuses in Haileybury, Kirkland Lake, Moosonee and Timmins.

The MNO Credit River Métis Council display at the Credit Valley Conservation Authority’s Learning Centre.

The MNO office’s front window display in Sault Ste. Marie.

Christina Acton (left) and her son Austin at Northern College in Kirkland Lake.
### GTA Métis youth hold sash-weaving workshop

Submitted by Elinie St. Germain
MND Infinyte Reach Facilitator

On Sunday, October 18, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Toronto and York Region Métis Council (TYRMC) Youth Committee hosted a finger weaving and sash teachings workshop in partnership with the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto. This was the first event of the Weaving the Sash project with the MNO TYRMC Youth Committee led project funded by the Laulau Foundation.

The morning started with youth participants socializing and meeting one another over breakfast. After introductions, participants and facilitators were offered tobacco and their own Louis Riel sash designs. The Youth Committee shared with the participants the significance of the title tobacco and their own Louis Riel sash designs. The Youth Committee shared with the participants the significance of the title together of knowledge, relationships and culture for the Youth Committee and project.

TYRMC Women’s Representative and Youth Committee member Lindsay DubPé and MNO TYRMC Senator Constance Simmonds then facilitated a sharing circle on Métis identity. The youth discussed what it meant to them to be an urban Métis youth, how they often feel a lack of community in an urban context but also that their identities depend on these relationships.

After a traditional lunch, Knowledge Keeper Louise Viens offered teachings on the Métis sash and provided instruction in finger weaving. Youth learned about the history and significance of the sash, the different cultures that share the sash and about the different styles of weaving. With Viens’s guidance, participants then had the chance to practice the basics of finger weaving.

While participants chatted, weaved and untangled their Métis sash bookmarks that they were creating, Viens and her family helped the Youth Committee in starting the sash that will represent the Weaving the Sash project. Each member of the Youth Committee chose a colour to symbolize one of the four seasons (red for fall, blue for winter, green for spring, yellow for summer, and white for Mother Nature) to incorporate into the sash. The goal is to have all youth who participate in the upcoming Weaving the Sash event contribute to the project sash by weaving a few of its strands. By the end of the project, there will be one completed, unique, Toronto and York Region Métis youth sash.

At the end of the day, Viens offered these words on the importance of passing traditions down to Métis youth: “Traditions are what give identity to a people. [...] When the youth are asked to be part of their communities, it’s because we believe in them, because the ancestors had a dream for them.”

For more information on the project and to find out how to get involved, including attending events, please contact tumc.youth@gmail.com. For regular updates about the project, please visit the MNO TYRMC at www.torontoarkmetis.com and also check out their Facebook page @TOYOMetis accounts for regular updates.

### MNO citizen receives Entrepreneurship Award for youth film camp

Submitted by Robin Pilon

Cameras rolled again in Trenton this summer as the GetReel Film Camp for youth returned. Kids and teens in Trenton and the Quinte Region got an opportunity to gain first-hand experience in the magic of movie-making thanks to Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen and filmmaker Maddy Pilon.

Pilon, a third-year Byrnes University film production student, founded the GetReel Film Camp as part of the Ontario Summer Company Program. Backed by the Small Business Centre, the first season of the camp was a huge success and earned the great praise from kids, parents and community members alike.

The feedback and involvement in the film camp encouraged Pilon to offer an expanded GetReel Film Camp opportunity to an enthusiastic group of young local talent, some returning for the second year in a row.

Pilon also founded the GetReel Youth Film Festival (GRYFF), a festival to showcase the student films at the Trenton Centre Theatre. A record crowd showed up this year to support the youth film festival that included a variety of comedic, stop motion, animated and dramatic shorts.

“It was great to see so many people come out to watch the films the GetReel campers worked so hard on this summer and did that work ever pay off. The films were amazing,” Pilon stated.

“It was such a talented group this year and I am very proud of each and every one of our young filmmakers,” she said.

Charlene Bessin, Managing Consultant with the Small Business Centre and Ontario Summer Company Program, was on hand at GRYFF to present Pilon with the Outstanding Entrepreneurship Award in recognition of her outstanding initiative.

“We would like to congratulate Maddy on completing her second year in her GetReel Film Camp business. We are so proud of her efforts and honoured to have such an inspiring young entrepreneur in our community,” Bessin said during the presentation.

Pilon is already in the planning stages for GetReel Film Camp 2016 as well as a new after school film-making program, called GetReel After Class, that she is developing to run in Trenton starting this fall.

### MNO Council inspires locals with Métis dot art workshop

Submitted by Amanda Pont-Shanks
MNO Niagara Region Métis Council President

On October 19, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Niagara Region Métis Council hosted a dot art workshop. Council Chair Amanda Pont-Shanks, a graphic artist and early childhood educator, taught the workshop and helped participants throughout the event. Inspired by the amazing artwork of MNO citizen Christi Belcourt, the participants learned how to create their own works and about the history and culture surrounding Métis beadwork and contemporary artwork.

The workshop, situated at the Welland Snowmobile Club, also provided a haven for participants to share their personal experiences of being Métis.

The Métis dot art workshop is one of many that MNO Niagara Re- gion Métis Council plans to put on for its citizens to learn about their history, culture and way of life. In the spring, they hosted a traditional drum workshop. They also have some wonderful events planned for 2016.

For future event info, visit their website or their Facebook page.

#### Traditional Knowledge Keeper Louise Viens demonstrates the sash-weaving technique.

#### Participants of an art workshop organized by the MNO Niagara Region Métis Council.

#### Maddy Pilon with a group of youth who participated in the GetReel Film Camp.
MNO North Channel Métis Council holds 2015 Annual General Meeting

submitted by Yvonne Jensen
MNO North Channel Métis Council President

On September 13, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) North Channel Métis Council held their Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the Blind River Marina. Over 70 people were in attendance.

The day began at 10:00 a.m. with a canoe trip along the Mussa River Delta, guided by nine members of the Algoma Paddlers Canoe and Kayak Club. MNO President Gary Lipinski, Associate Chief Operating Officer Margaret Froh, MNO North Channel Métis Council President Yvonne Jensen, Provisional Council of the MNO (PCMNO) Councillor Ernie Gatien and local Youth Representative Taylor McNally began their journey while listening to stories about the voyageurs that travelled that very river.

The small flotilla glided past an old fur traders’ cemetery and the remains of the Hudson Bay Trading Post that once stood on the banks of the river. On their way to the meeting, the paddlers saw an eagle and agreed it was a good omen.

MNO Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council Senator Brenda Powley, Region 4 PCMNO Councillor Ernie Gatien spoke about the 2015 Annual General Assembly and the upcoming elections for the MNO North Channel Métis Council. Representative Case stressed the importance of Métis youth being involved within the MNO and spoke of the opportunity to hear from all sides.

The meeting ended with a 20-minute presentation by the Algoma Paddlers President Wally Van Dyke, demonstrating the equipment they use when canoeing within the area.

President Jensen presented Van Dyke with a copy of the MNO’s book, Values and Traditions of our Ancestors.

Community Council President discusses Ring of Fire

submitted by Darby Starratt

On October 30, Bryanna Scott, President of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Thunder Bay Métis Council presented the opening remarks to the Ring of Fire conference.

Sponsored by Lakehead University’s Bora Laskin Faculty of Law and the Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Mining and Exploration, the conference provided an opportunity to hear from all sides affected by the Ring of Fire development in Ontario’s far north. This development has been described as the most promising mineral development opportunity in Ontario in almost a century, with a multi-generational potential of chromite production and a significant production of nickel, copper and platinum.

While the economic development opportunity is significant, according to an article published by CBC, challenges such as sustainable development, the duty to consult and impacts on Aboriginal communities must be considered and addressed before the extraction project begins.

MNO citizens kept informed at Mattawa meeting

submitted by Melanie Rose
MNO Mattawa Métis Council Councillor

On April 18, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Mattawa Métis Council held their Annual General Meeting (AGM). MNO citizens of Region 5 met at the Golden Age Club to discuss recent events and make plans for the future.

One highlight that was mentioned was the council’s involvement at the March Break Youth Camp that took place at Samuel de Champlain Provincial Park, located nearby. MNO Mattawa Métis Council Senator Romeo Sarrazin attended the first day, reciting the morning prayer and joining in on the activities. The following day, MNO Mattawa Métis Council President Nelson Montreuil did a presentation about trapping and shared his expertise with the youth group, showing them several pelts and traps and discussing trapping when there are changes in the environment.

During the AGM, special guest Juliette Denis, Region 5 Councillor for the Provisional Council of the MNO (PCMNO), attended in order to provide an update about what the MNO had in store for 2015. Additionally, the Mattawa Lake Nipissing Consultation Committee had worked hard and announced several meetings had taken place to negotiate, sign and deliver final Memorandums of Understanding with the guidance of MNO staff.

Great teamwork everyone!
MNO veteran attends Windsor memorial service

submitted by Shelly Claus
MNO Veteran

On Sunday, September 6, MNO citizen and veteran Shelly Claus attended a service to honour Canadian peacekeepers and Afghanistan veterans at the Afghanistan and Peacekeepers Monument in Windsor. Many Métis veterans served in Afghanistan or on peacekeeping missions. On the south face of the monument, the names of the fallen Canadians who served in United Nations (UN) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement Operations since 1947.

Even though the monument lists the names of the fallen Canadian soldiers who served in Afghanistan and the Arabian Sea between 2002 and 2014, although the monument was unveiled a year ago, organizers didn’t want to interfere with Remembrance Day ceremonies in November. Local veterans hope the memorial service will become an annual event.

Deputy Chief Ron Gignac (second from left) at a special ceremony in Belleville.

9/11 ceremony honours victims of tragedy

submitted by Joseph Paquette
MNO Veterans’ Council President Ron Gignac
MNO Veteran

On September 11, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizens and veteran Ron Gignac, Deputy Chief of Police for the City of Belleville, attended a special ceremony honouring the lost or injured during the 9/11 tragedy in 2001.

Many veterans of the MNO Veterans’ Council, like Deputy Chief Gignac, retired from the Canadian Armed Forces and gained employment in law enforcement, such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Provincial Police or Regional Police Services. Some veterans found employment within local fire departments, as paramedics or in search and rescue services.

We have a special ceremony each year to pray, remember, and pay respect to those lost in that tragedy and to thank our military, police, fire, security forces, and paramedics in our ongoing duties. I was asked to speak at this year’s ceremony and made certain to include our partners in the emergency services, military, friends and families in the United States of America.

Hi friends and greetings.

I wanted to send this photograph for all of you to see. The Chiefs for police, fire, military, paramedics, the Mayor, senior staff for the City of Belleville and many citizens (not seen in the pic) had a special ceremony at our complex in the City of Belleville, Ontario, on the 11th of September. The beam, [a Ground Zero artifact], seen in the centre of the memorial display is from the Twin Towers.

The DNA of many of our families, friends and ancestors is buried at Vimy Ridge.

MNO Staff

Members of the North Wall Riders Association (NWRA) in Windsor made a generous contribution to the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Veterans Council’s planned pilgrimage to Vimy Ridge in 2017.

The NWRA are active towards promoting awareness of military veterans. They were an active force towards the raising of the Afghanistan and Peacekeepers Monument in Windsor.

NWRA President Mike Lepine, Wayne Hillman, Karl Lovette, Ron Jones and Jo-Anne Gignac were the active committee that proposed the monument to the City of Windsor with the full support of the Canadian Vietnam Veterans’ memorial committee.

MNO veteran attends Windsor memorial service

submitted by Shelly Claus
MNO Veteran

On Sunday, September 6, MNO citizen and veteran Shelly Claus attended a service to honour Canadian peacekeepers and Afghanistan veterans at the Afghanistan and Peacekeepers Monument in Windsor.

Many Métis veterans served in Afghanistan or on peacekeeping missions. On the south face of the monument, listed the names of fallen Canadians who served in United Nations (UN) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement Operations since 1947.

The north face of the monument lists the names of the fallen Canadian soldiers who served in Afghanistan and the Arabian Sea between 2002 and 2014. Although the monument was unveiled a year ago, organizers didn’t want to interfere with Remembrance Day ceremonies in November. Local veterans hope the memorial service will become an annual event.

Deputy Chief Ron Gignac (second from left) at a special ceremony in Belleville.

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Deputy Chief Ron Gignac (second from left) at a special ceremony in Belleville.
**Obituaries**

**Manley Morley ‘Moe’ Thompson**

Passed away peacefully on July 14th, 2015, with his family by his side. Loving father to Glenn and wife Debra; cherished Papa to Cody, Justin, Taylor and Caitlin. He will be missed dearly by his best friend Rita Florence. He was a devoted brother to Nora, Lloyd (Con), fellow Métis veteran Tom (Anna Jean), fellow Métis veteran Durwood (Marie), Emma, Eileen and Edith. Moe’s proudest moments were spending time with his grandchildren and serving his country in the 2nd Battalion of the Queens Own Rifles from 1956 to 1966. Moe was also a devoted member of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 255 and served as an executive for many years. Moe touched the hearts of all who knew him. He will be greatly missed.

**We are proud to have known him and will always remember him — a great friend to us all**

**CORRECTION AND APOLOGY:**
An error appeared on p. A26 of the previous edition of the Métis Voyageur (October 2015, No. 87). Manley Thompson was incorrectly identified as Manley Johnson. The MNO apologizes to Mr. Thompson’s family for the error.

**Arthur ‘Art’ Henry**

Art passed away peacefully at Lakeridge Health Oshawa on October 15, 2015. He was surrounded by family until the very end. Art was the best friend, son, uncle and husband of 28 years to Tedine. Devoted father to Brad (Lindsey), Kevin (Mandy), and Jennifer (David). Dear son of Arthur and Rose Henry, and loving brother to Kelly (Gary) and Crystal (Norm). Art also had a nephew, three nieces and many cousins, aunts, uncles and friends to the larger Métis community. He will be missed by the family pets Austin, Poca and Reign, and especially his boy Chief. Art was very involved in the Métis community where he was a dedicated volunteer and cared for 19 years. As the former Vice-President of the MNO Oshawa and Durham Region Métis Council, Art was one of the founding members. He brought Métis culture and celebrations to Oshawa. A large part of the Métis culture that Art loved was fishing and hunting. He was a great fisherman that Art loved was fishing and hunting. He was a great fisherman who kept his family’s freezer stocked. He passed on his knowledge and passion for fishing on to his wife and kids. They have many pictures and memories of fishing both on shore and in his boat. He enjoyed hunting goose, moose and bear the last few years of his life. Art always provided for his family and friends by sharing the meat he hunted. Something Art will always be remembered for was the world-wide email list he made to spread Aboriginal news. He worked hard to keep people informed and aware of everything happening on Aboriginal communities. His family always joked around and called him ‘the Métis Mailman.’ Everyone who knew Art always felt his sense of his care and compassion to help others. The family is overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and support in helping him on his journey to the spirit world. There were various traditional ceremonies and songs sung for Art across Canada. He is now soaring with the eagles. The family sends their sincere thank you to the entire Métis Nation for playing such an important part in his life. Art’s family is in the process of setting up the “Arthur Bradley Henry Bursary,” which will be given to a Métis student pursuing post-secondary education each year who reflects the values and traditions that Art himself carried. If you are interested in donating to the bursary fund, please contact Art’s daughter, Jennifer at jenniferhenry@hotmail.ca.

**Submitted by Jennifer Nicholson (Henry), PCMNO Postsecondary Representative**
Amanda Rheaume launches PledgeMusic campaign

by MNO Staff

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen and award-winning artist Amanda Rheaume recently launched a crowdfunding campaign in order to help finance her new album.

There are already 19 songs prepared but only 10 or 11 will make it onto the album. The crowdfunding, located at PledgeMusic, offers many options towards making a pledge.

Each pledge assures a copy of the album is pre-ordered, either in digital format or on a CD. The bigger the pledge, the more bonuses are given to the pledger. Each pledge offers an AccessPass, which gives pledgers exclusive access to videos, pictures and updates about progress on Rheaume’s new album.

A title has not been released yet but Rheaume provides a theme for each of her albums. “The last album [Keep a Fire] was all about learning more about my family, heritage and as many stories as possible,” Rheaume shared in an e-mail. “This [new] album digs deeper into more personal topics for me including reclamation, self-acceptance, longing, miracles, forgiveness, truth and, above all else, vulnerability.”

“We perform almost every song from Keep a Fire and through that, I tell the story about my great-grandmother Stella and my great-grandfather and how they built their lives in the 1930s in Canada,” she wrote.

Once the crowdfunding goal for the new album is reached, 10 per cent of the additional funds will be donated to the Royal Mental Health Centre in Ottawa.

MNO citizen recognized for courage and bravery

submitted by
Mandy Montgomery
MNO Employment Developer

On September 24, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Gordon Pollard Jr. received the N.H. McNally Award from the Ontario Association of Paramedics (OAPC). The award was given for conspicuous bravery above and beyond the performance of his duties as a paramedic. On May 19, he also received the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Commissioner’s Citation for Bravery in recognition of his courageous and lifesaving actions.

Gordon is a 2014 graduate from Confederation College-Dryden Campus Paramedic Program. After graduation, Gordon passed the compulsory Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care’s Advanced Emergency Medical Care Attendant Certification Examination (AEMCA), launching him into his chosen field.

He became a Primary Care Paramedic in Red Lake. It was there that his courageous actions in the performance of his duties earned him the two awards for bravery.

According to the Thunder Bay Chronicle Journal, on June 26, 2014, Gordon was one of the paramedics that saved the life of a man whose truck was trapped in a sinkhole on Highway 618. His colleague, fellow paramedic Derek Hamilton, also received the Commissioner’s Citation for Bravery for his lifesaving actions and courage during the same incident.

After accepting the award, Gordon commented that he felt “very grateful and appreciative” of the recognition he had received from both the OPP Commissioner and the OAPC.

Belcourt’s Water Song

by MNO Staff

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Christi Belcourt’s award-winning, art-caught-the-eye of Valentino designers and now the fashion line has been spotted on singer and actor Jennifer Lopez.

Todd Lamirande, host and producer for APTN Investigates, tweeted a picture of Lopez, saying, “This is cool. Jennifer Lopez filming a video with a dress that has @Mets artist @chrishabelcourt artwork on it.”

While on the set for El Mismo Sol (“The Same Sun”), Lopez’s new music video, the singer was seen wearing the Valentino two-piece with fabric design by Belcourt. Several pictures of the outfit popped up on the internet, showing Lopez riding a carousel horse from several angles.

In an article published in Métis Voyageur issue 87, Belcourt shared she’d had a very good experience working with the fashion company.
Métis youth heads to Abu Dhabi for bowling championship

submitted by Reta Gordon
PCMNO Executive Senator

Miranda Panas, granddaughter of Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Elmer Ross, will soon be travelling to Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, to participate in the Women’s World Championship in bowling. Panas, a kinesiology student at Brock University, has been bowling since the age of five and her dedication to the sport has made her a champion. She’s currently on both the adult and youth teams for Team Canada.

“I’m pretty excited,” she shared in a Facebook conversation. “It’s always an honour to get to represent Canada at an international event. The group of ladies that I’m going with are tremendously talented and I can’t wait to compete with them.”

In the past, Panas has travelled to competitions held in Colombia and Hong Kong and her talent has earned her awards and scholarships. She plans to participate in the United States Bowling Congress (USBC) Queens bowling event and the US Open.

MNO citizen celebrated for her role in security and defence

by MNO Staff

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Bonnie Butlin, co-founder and Executive Director of the Security Partners’ Forum (SPF) and International Coordinator of the Women in Security and Resilience Alliance (WISECRA), recently won the 2015 Professional Security Magazine’s Women in Security Award (Security Manager Category), a prestigious award as a finalist for the 2015 Executive Women’s Forum Women of Influence Award in the category of Private Solutions Provider.

Butlin is a board member of The Viny Report, an online publication focused on informing Canadians and leading discussions on security and defence issues.

MNO helps launch teacher’s career

submitted by Jade Bourbonnière
MNO Education & Training Operations Coordinator

Ever since he was a child, Eric Seguin, who self-identifies as Métis, knew he wanted to become a teacher. During high school and university, Eric worked at a summer camp where he acquired a great deal of experience working with children, which strengthened his resolve to become a teacher.

To pursue his teaching career, Eric selected the University of Ottawa’s Faculty of Education where his teacher education program prepares students for both French and English schools in Ontario. Eric received financial assistance from the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), which helped him afford tuition and books. Eric’s program included 10 weeks of hands-on real classroom experience with professional teachers.

Today, Eric is enjoying his dream career as a full-time Art and Gym teacher for the Conseil scolaire de district catholique du Centre-Sud in Toronto. The most rewarding aspect of his occupation is seeing young people succeed. When he walks into a classroom and the children are excited and smile back at him, he knows that what he is doing has a positive impact on their lives.

“Each candidate is carefully selected to ensure that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis cultures are well represented and to promote Canadians diverse cultural heritage and values,” he also wrote.

The ALOY badge is awarded to those who are officially members in training within the Canadian Armed Forces. In the article, the OCdts wrote that, “The Badging Ceremony served as a proud reminder to the ALOY members: how far they have come as a team from when they first arrived, how far the rest of this year will take them.”
Métis students gain valuable job skills through Summer Career Placements

The Summer Career Placement is a wage subsidy program designed for Métis youth in school and returning to school in the fall and seeking summer employment. The MNO Education and Training staff work collaboratively with employers to ensure a positive and educational work environment is offered. The advantage of the Summer Career Placement is that employers are provided the subsidy for their contribution by offering work experience to the students. The students learn a variety of life and employment skills that enhance their existing educational journey.

As the end of their placement, students are asked to complete an exit form to share their experiences and to provide feedback to the MNO Education and Training Branch. Here’s what some of them had to say:

“[It] opened my eyes up to various other construction-related tasks present on jobsites. Learning a variety of new things was the best thing about this placement.”
— Dalton Mount, General Labourer, Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre, MIDLAND

MNO citizen Trisha Dupuis.

MNO citizen Trisha Dupuis flourishes as a social worker

submitted by Jade Bourbonnière MNO Education & Training Operations Coordinator [--------------] While attending Fanshawe College, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Trisha Dupuis realized she had a passion for working with and helping women and girls who were victims of violence.

When she graduated from Fanshawe with a diploma in Child and Youth Work (CYW), Trisha enrolled in the social work program at Ryerson University in Toronto to gain a Bachelor in Social Work. The program also had an emphasis on Aboriginal social work, which she was interested in pursuing. Trisha was able to take a course that included travel to a remote First Nations community. She travelled there with a team of students to support the residents in achieving self-defined goals they had prepared.

The team organized a youth and elder retreat to foster youth engagement and cultural identity as well as a Women’s Empowerment Group, and conducted interviews with community members to capture their lived experiences. Trisha believes that this experience was paramount to her education, her desire to continue to pursue her path as a social worker, and her identity as a Métis woman.

During the program, Trisha found that her heavy workload made having a part-time job impossible. She worked hard and received bursaries and the remainder of her program. She is now a Women’s Empowerment Group Coordinator and is involved with support services and is involved with child protection and safety concerns.

Trisha finds her life improved immensely with opportunities to flourish personally and grow professionally in a job where she contributes to the health and well-being of Aboriginal children and families.

As Trisha was nearing the end of her studies, she contacted the MNO and received funding to complete the remainder of her program. She is now employed at a Toronto-based Aboriginal agency where she helps Toronto’s Aboriginal children and families with support services and is involved with child protection and safety concerns. Trisha finds her life improved immensely with opportunities to flourish personally and grow professionally in a job where she contributes to the health and well-being of Aboriginal children and families.

MNO Citizen Trisha Dupuis.

Poetry from our readers

Remember Me Written by a survivor • Anne Huguenin, Penetanguishene, ON

I place the rose carefully into the vase— I think of the young women beyond heaven’s gate. “Remember me”, they cannot speak. Fourteen vibrant women from polytechnique Violence against women, it’s not just one day. It’s every 7 seconds of every day. It’s time to stop this ongoing abuse And change the laws to not be so loose.

A life lived in constant fear Hidden bruises, hidden tears Afraid to tell your closest friend Violence against women, we must end

Teach them young to respect Teach them early to lead Teach them young to be aware Add this to their nightly prayer Good men stand in the name of all good men Report the abuse, a brother, neighbour or friend A broken down soul takes many years to repair So please have mercy and show that you care

If one lives without remorse The violence will just get worse If one lives without repercussions Then what they’ve done simply means nothing

Time is now to take a stand and be heard Don’t let it be just simple words This problem of violence needs to be addressed Stand for those now in heaven’s rest Stand for those who are too weakened to rise Hear their voices, hear their cries Now be their protective wall And end the violence, once and for all

Look now at the vase full of flowers And think of your own mothers and daughters Don’t rest for us, they depend To put an end to violence against women
MNO helps Métis student pursue nursing career

submitted by
Jade Bourbonnière
MNO Education & Training Operations Coordinator
---------------------------------------------

self-identified Métis April Stingsby always knew that she would need the potential, the drive and intelligence to pursue a career in nursing. She had a passion and an interest in the field, and knew those key factors would allow her to succeed.

For as long as April could remember, caring for people always came naturally to her. She knew that if she received her nursing diploma, she would be able to better support her family. After contacting the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), April spoke with an MNO Regional Employment and Training Coordinator to arrange for funding for her dream to become a nurse.

April attended Sault College for the registered practical nursing course. She faced many challenges as a student. At times, it was difficult to overcome them but April refused to give up. When the going got tough, April would listen to the song “You Haven't Seen the Last of Me” by Cher, which still inspires her today.

Today, April has her diploma in registered practical nursing, as well as a diploma in forensics. She also received certificates in IV therapy and Level 1 Palliative Care.

April is now working for the Hospital Network at the Sault Area Hospital. She enjoys her job and is much happier with her new life.

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A better future for young mother’s family with help from MNO

submitted by
Jade Bourbonnière
MNO Education & Training Operations Coordinator
---------------------------------------------

Rebecca Simpson had always been very interested in the clerical side of the healthcare field, and had set her sights on a career within an office environment. Rebecca, who self-identifies as Métis, had applied to several healthcare administrative positions, but it seemed that she was at a disadvantage without a post-secondary diploma.

With a young family and only one income to depend on, it seemed financially impossible for Rebecca to go to college. She contacted the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) and explained her situation.

With the help of the MNO, Rebecca was able to attend Georgian College in Barrie for their two-year medical office administration program. Throughout her time at Georgian College, she gained plenty of hands-on training in many useful areas, which she now utilizes on a daily basis.

Today, Rebecca is working as a Medical Receptionist at a local office for a team of wonderful doctors. The most rewarding aspect of her job is the ability to help other people. She gains so much knowledge from her position every day, while applying all of her training, from Georgian College.

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Finding a more stable career with help from the MNO

submitted by
Jade Bourbonnière
MNO Education & Training Operations Coordinator
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Terri-Jo Tauvette achieved her dream of working in the medical field when she began attending Georgian College in their two-year Practical Nursing program.

In March 2013, self-identified Métis Stacey Cameron was unexpectedly laid off from her job at a factory in Midland. She saw it as a second chance to pursue a new career with more stability.

After contacting the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), Stacey spoke with Jo-Anne Parent, a Regional MNO Employment and Training Coordinator. Stacey was eligible for MNO support and enrolled in the registered pharmacy technician program at CTS Canadian Career College. Two years later, she graduated and is now working at the Guardian Clinic Pharmacy at the Huronia Medical Centre as well as the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital.

The most rewarding aspect of Stacey’s new career is her ability to make a positive change in her patients’ care. Whether it’s teaching them how to use a blood sugar glucometer or trying to put together the most detailed medication history for a doctor, Stacey loves her job and completes continuing education programs online to remain current in her chosen profession.

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MNO citizen finds happiness in caring for others

submitted by
Jade Bourbonnière
MNO Education & Training Operations Coordinator
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While Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Terri-Jo Tauvette enjoyed working part-time at Value Village, it was not the job she envisioned for her future. She wanted to pursue her education and start a career in nursing.

The biggest challenge she knew she was going to face was the cost. To improve her chances for a rewarding career, Terri-Jo contacted the MNO for help.

The financial assistance provided by the MNO allowed her to focus on her classes and put in extra time studying. Terri-Jo enrolled at Sault College in their two-year Practical Nursing program.

She graduated in May 2015 and is now working as a Registered Practice Nurse for ParaMed, a home-care company in Sault Ste. Marie. She works within the community, visiting clients at home and providing nursing services. She feels the most rewarding part of her job is helping people and being able to assist in their care.

Today, Terri-Jo has made the right decision to make a positive change in her life. Her current position gives her a true sense of duty and he takes pride in the high levels of trust and responsibility that he holds.

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MNO supports Métis youth in security industry

submitted by
Jade Bourbonnière
MNO Education & Training Operations Coordinator
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Derek Bilous is a self-identifying Métis who worked in the security industry for six years as a mobile operative. Derek loved the work experience, finding it exciting and he wanted to pursue more opportunities in that field.

He decided to further his education at Sheridan College in Police Foundations. One of his biggest worries at the time was how he was going to pay for school. The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) provided funds for tuition and other expenses without having to worry about working hefty hours at a part-time job. He was able to devote his time, focus and energy into getting good grades.

After two years of hard work, Derek received his Police Foundations diploma at Sheridan College’s Davis campus in Brampton.

Today, Derek works as a Cash Services Agent with GardaWorld. He is truly happy and loves his life. His current position gives him a true sense of duty and he takes pride in the high levels of trust and responsibility that he holds.

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MNO citizen achieves dream career in the medical field

submitted by
Jade Bourbonnière
MNO Education & Training Operations Coordinator
---------------------------------------------

For as long as she could remember, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Nicole Bellcourt always wanted a career in the medical field but financing was a challenge.

Nicole received financial assistance from the MNO and enrolled in the one-year medical office administration program at CTS Canadian Career College.

Today, Nicole works full-time as a Department Secretary in the laboratory at the West Parry Sound Health Centre. She loves her job and knows she has made the right decision to pursue medical office administration.
Making all the right choices

MNO support helps three Canadian Career College graduates in North Bay

Submitted by
Linda Krause
MNO Employment Counsellor

On May 23, 2015, three women, each who self-identify as Métis and who received financial support through Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Employment and Training programs, graduated from the CTS - Canadian Career College in North Bay.

Among these three was Tracy Burns, a mature student who graduated with honors in Addictions Intervention Counselling. Tracy wants to make a difference in her community and what better way was there to do this than to take her life experience and return to school. Tracy worked hard throughout her program and with the support of her family, she was able to achieve her dream.

Another one of the recent graduates was Tanya Hillyar, who completed 44 weeks in-class and an eight-week work placement to become a Pharmacy Technician. Even though Tanya is the mother of five small children and she experienced some health problems while taking this intense program, she was not afraid of a heavy workload and successfully completed her classes. She felt rising to these challenges was setting an example to her children; to show them that if you are willing to work hard the rewards are limitless. Tanya worked at a local pharmacy during her work placement and was hired on there before she even finished her schooling, which is amazing!

The final graduate was Jeanette Laurin who graduated with honors in Hairstyling. Jeanette is the mother of one grown child and decided she wanted to get back into the work force. She believes there is nothing that she can't do if she sets her mind to it and with that positive attitude quickly rose to the top of her field in her chosen profession of Hairstyling. She was the recipient of the Lynn Dolbeau Dragon Fly Award for the student who exemplifies a passion for their chosen trade. She was an excellent choice for that reward as she was always respectful and encouraging toward her peers. She was a true team player. Jeanette also received the President's Award for Academic Excellence for having the highest grades out of all the students in the Hairstyling program. Jeanette's family is naturally and justifiably proud of her achievements.

The support Amy-Lynn received from the MNO paved the way towards a brighter future.

MNO helps citizen achieve her dream career

Submitted by
Jade Bourbonnière
MNO Education & Training Operations Coordinator

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Kailie Dane loves spending time with children and listening to what they have to say. She chose to pursue a career in Early Childhood Education (ECE), which was the perfect choice for her.

Kailie enrolled in the ECE program at Cambrian College in Sudbury. During the two-year program, she acquired the valuable skill of knowing how to approach difficult situations involving children in a professional manner. While enrolled at Cambrian College, Kailie received funds from the MNO for her tuition.

Kailie now has a successful career as an Early Childhood Educator in a childcare centre. Every day, she gets to see the children grow up, learn and improve. She loves her job and feels she has achieved her highest potential.

MNO citizen graduates with Honours

Submitted by
Jade Bourbonnière
MNO Education & Training Operations Coordinator

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Alicia Blore successfully obtained her Bachelor of Arts in Honour’s Therapeutic Recreation with a minor in Gerontology from the University of Waterloo.

Throughout her educational journey, Alicia maintained a position on the Dean’s honour’s list. Alicia is well known throughout the MNO for her skills as a Métis fiddler, often playing during MNO events such as the Annual General Assembly and Louis Riel Day celebrations.

While studying, Alicia was a facilitator for the MNO Infinite Reach Student Solidarity Network. Over the summer, she participated in the MNO Summer Youth Cultural Program (SYCP) and performed during the 2015 Pan AM Games opening ceremony. She was also the winner of the 2013/2014 SUNDANCE Aboriginal Award for demonstrated active involvement in her Aboriginal community.

Alicia is now working full-time for the MNO as an Education Officer. Her passions and family are very proud of her achievements.
Building the MNO Team
The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is excited to welcome three new staff members.

MNO Finance
Submitted by Mary Jessop, Director of Finance

Chanchette Dimitri
MNO Controller, Ottawa

Chanchette is a detail oriented, energetic team player who works well under pressure. She is a third level Certified General Accountant (CGA) and holds a Diploma in Business Administration Accounting from Algonquin College and a Bachelor of Science from the Carlton University. Prior to joining the MNO, Chanchette held senior financial positions at several organizations including MHPM; the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada, CIRI, and the Electricity and Construction Sector Councils.

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

Jaylin Renaud
MNO Region 3 Employment Developer, Timmins

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is pleased to welcome Jaylin Renaud to the Timmins office. Jaylin is joining the MNO in the position Employment Developer for Region 3. Jaylin is a recent graduate of the Social Service Program at Cambrian College in Sudbury. She has experience working at the Sudbury Action Center for Youth (SACY) and the Rainbow District School Board, Barrydowne College, in Sudbury. A large part of her career was spent working with youth facing barriers such as homelessness, employment and education counselling, substance abuse and mental health issues. Jaylin also has experience working with Community Living and District School Board Ontario North East in Cochrane, Ontario.

Within her position, Jaylin will be assisting clients throughout Region 3 to find and secure employment as well as develop and maintain relationships with employers in Timmins and surrounding areas.

MNO Finance
Submitted by Mary Jessop, Director of Finance

Valerie Routh
Payroll Administrator, Ottawa

Valerie is a collaborative professional with superior organizational skills and reputation for high level of accuracy. She is a Certified Payroll Manager (CPM) through the Canadian Payroll Association. She has extensive experience providing senior payroll services for many large firms including Centdian, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Alternia, and Adobe.

Welcome to the team Chanchette, Valerie, and Jaylin!

Letter to the editor:
MNO citizen Barbara (Boese) Bucko recently attended a Tipi raising ceremony and shares her thoughts about it in the letter. This letter represents the opinions of the writer only and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Métis Nation of Ontario. The letter has been edited slightly for grammar and punctuation.

The Conestoga College traditional Tipi Raising Ceremony is truly an amazing event. On Wednesday, September 2, 2015, Aboriginal Student Services, students, volunteers and children participated and watched as volunteers and staff raised a massive white tipi wrapped tightly with canvas and using approximately 15 foot poles fastened with long wooden pins.

The plan was [that] the tipi [would] be placed near the sanctuary on campus in Kitchener, so that people passing by on the 401 highway in their cars would see this beautiful symbol of Aboriginal culture. This tradition is also used as a student “welcome back,” which gives the Aboriginal student body a sense of unity.

The tipi is used for much more than just a symbol of culture. It is a form of socializing and an opportunity for our community to come together. The tipi is used to provide a space for various cultural events such as ceremonies, gatherings, and social events.

The Conestoga Tipi is an important part of our culture and the Métis Nation of Ontario. It is a symbol of our heritage and a reminder of our past. I had the opportunity of watching this beautiful tipi raising with my two children Aiden, 12, and Grayson, 9. For them to see a part of their culture and learn about how our community can help build the future of our culture is a wonderful thing.

The tipi truly is a beautiful piece of our culture. Maybe you will get a chance to see Conestoga’s Tipi along the 401 in your travels!

– Barbara (Boese) Bucko

COUNCIL CORNER
Since the last Métis Voyageur, the following MNO O community councils have had elections. Thanks and congratulations go to all the candidates who participated in these elections and to the new council members listed below.

MNO NIAGARA REGION MÉTIS COUNCIL

| President | Derrick Pont |
| Chair | Amanda Pont-Shanks |
| Senator | Garry Lafraimboise |
| Secretary-Treasurer | Leah Brown |
| Women’s Representative | Giselle Legiehn |
| Youth Representative | VACANT |
| Councillor | Kelly Briske |
| Councillor | Reginald Bernier |
| Councillor | Pierre Carre |
| Councillor | Brian Kon |

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.
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 September 26, 2015, during the Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC)’s eighteenth Annual General Meeting, a certificate of recognition was signed between the MNBC and Williams Scotsman, North America’s leading supplier of workforce accommodations, modular space and storage solutions. The certificate celebrates the incorporation of a newly held business in July 2015: Williams Scotsman Métis Services Inc.

“We view our partnership with MNBC as more than just a business arrangement, we see it as a marriage,” said Dennis Walker, Vice President of Sales and Indigenous Relations at Williams Scotsman of Canada. “We will continually invest in this relationship, to ensure this venture is a success for all involved.”

The joint venture comes as a result of the financer of Choice for Entrepreneurs & security

The collection, titled Country Wives and Daughters of the Country: Métis Women of Manitoba Act, 1870 is a lot of oral history of these women and their contributions,” she told Saskatchewan Weekend.

The Métis community has been so matriarchal, women-centered,” she said. “Through the fur trade era, women were so vital. They were the link. They brought the fur trade into this whole different level.” The collection, titled Country Wives and Daughters of the Country: Métis Women of This Land, will run until December 5.

Visual artist and proud Métis Leah Marie Dorion’s art is currently on display at the Affinity Gallery in Saskatoon. Dorion’s art is inspired by Métis women whose roles were not acknowledged in history.

“These women I felt never really had a visual presence in the history books. There is a lot of oral history of these women and their contributions,” she told Saskatchewan Weekend.

“The history is not new to the Métis Nation. We have always taught our Métis children about our rightful place in history,” said Joan Ledoux, MMF Minister of Education. The resource tool, located at www.legislativeassemblyofassiniboia.ca, aims to give students a better understanding of the evolution of Manitoba and the efforts of those who worked diligently to secure their place in Confederation.

**Alberta**

In Medicine Hat, Alberta, Louis Riel was remembered throughout Métis Week, especially with a special presentation of The Trial of Louis Riel at the Esplanade on November 17.

Actor Wally Garinoch has played the role of Riel since 1996, when he performed the play for the Métis Assembly.

“I think there are misconceptions. A lot of people don’t know what went on in the trial,” Garinoch stated in an interview with Medicine Hat News. “If they hear that from basically Louis’s own lips why the uprising happened—it was not so much a rebellion…they wanted to negotiate with the government, the government wouldn’t negotiate.”

After the play, attendees took part in a bannock competition, sampling and judging a dozen different recipes, and ending the evening with traditional Métis jigging to the sound of fiddles and spoons.

**Saskatchewan**

On October 22, the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) and the Manitoba Government jointly announced the introduction of a new learning resource tool for secondary school students as part of a project to highlight and recognize the contributions of the Métis people and the District of Assiniboia. During the event, Louis Riel’s sash was on display, along with the sessional journal of the Assembly of Assiniboia that holds the records of the ratifying of the Manitoba Act, 1870.

“The history is not new to the Métis Nation. We have always taught our Métis children about our rightful place in history,” said Joan Ledoux, MMF Minister of Education. The resource tool, located at www.legislativeassemblyofassiniboia.ca, aims to give students a better understanding of the evolution of Manitoba and the efforts of those who worked diligently to secure their place in Confederation.

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Source: Facebook

Source: Medicine Hat News

Source: CBC News-Saskatoon

Sources: Facebook, Le Metis
MNO TYRMC Celebrates Riel Day

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the History of the Métis in Toronto. He pointed to the early intermixing of the settler and Indigenous people combined with Toronto's connections to the fur trade through overland and river transport and portage routes as Toronto's being part of the Proto Métis community. As the English defeated the French in Toronto, Thistle pointed to the rise of racism towards “half-breeds” as a factor in the lack of known history of Métis people in Toronto.

A fiddling and jigging performance by MNO citizens Alicia Blore and Simone Blais followed. Blore and Blais had everyone up and on their feet dancing and laughing, with some joining in on the spoons! A special and surprise guest at the event, Senator Olivine Tiedema, was in attendance and also shared a special song with everyone at the gathering, thanking everyone for joining the MNO TYRMC and emphasizing steps to Simone Blais!

Following Councillor Layton, the final speaker was the MNO TYRMC Women's Representative and Youth Committee member Lindsay DuPre, who shared words of inspiration regarding the immeasurable strength and spirit of Métis youth across the nation. DuPre also presented Minister Zimmer and Councillor Layton each with a pair of hand-painted spoons, which DuPre painted herself.

Following the speeches, those in attendance observed the Métis flag being raised outside of City Hall and enjoyed the musical talents of Alicia Blore on the fiddle, accompanied by Simone Blais, Joanna Turcotte, and Elise St. Germain, who led the group in jigging. The MNO TYRMC provided wooden spoons for those in attendance to play along with the fiddling. Highlights from the celebration included Minister Zimmer playing the spoons, after receiving expert instruction from PCMNO Councillor Ernie Gatien, and Councillor Cressy joining in on the jigging and demonstrating his own fancy steps to Simone Blais!

The MNO TYRMC would like to thank all of those who joined the Council and the City of Toronto in celebrating Louis Riel Day in Toronto.

To get your address updated please either call 1-855-798-1006 ext. 2 or send an e-mail to: registry@metisnation.org