Resistance, Resilience & Remembrance

Louis Riel Day marked across the province

See pages 5-7

The Honourable Dave Levac watches and MNO President Froh raises the Métis flag at the Ontario Legislature.

The Path to Métis Self-Government
Pages 3-4

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

This edition of the Métis Voyageur covers the fall and the early winter, which are always very busy times for Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizens. While our harvesters spend many days in the forest hunting and gathering the food that our families and communities depend on over the winter, we also keep very active organizing harvest events and other community celebrations. Through all of this activity, the important work of the MNO, advancing Métis rights and self-government continues to advance at a quickening pace.

MNO Registry and Self-Government Readiness Process

On October 22, the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) launched one of the most important initiatives in the nearly 25 year history of the MNO. The MNO Registry and Self-Government Readiness Process (RSRP) will involve a review of all existing MNO citizenship files and is grounded in solidifying the integrity of the MNO Registry and preparing for upcoming negotiations on Métis rights and self-government. You can read more about the RSRP on page 3.

The importance of moving ahead on the RSRP is highlighted by the story on page 9 about the MNO’s participation in a First Ministers meeting in October. As the MNO is actively engaging in government-to-government meetings with both the federal and provincial governments, the RSRP is an essential part of ensuring the MNO is in the strongest position to move forward on negotiations that will bring benefit for Métis in Ontario for generations to come.

Remembrance Day and MNO veterans

This issue dedicates several pages to Remembrance Day and the amazing work being done by our MNO veterans. On Remembrance Day we rightly recognize the sacrifices and contributions of our veterans through military service but what is perhaps most impressive about our veterans is that even though they have already given so much they still continue to give even more of themselves to the Métis Nation. You can learn about some of their recent efforts on page 13.

Louis Riel Day

Louis Riel Day is always one of the most important dates on the Métis calendar right across the homeland. This year, for the first time and in accordance with the resolution at the last MNO Annual General Assembly, the provincial Louis Riel Day ceremony was not hosted at the Northwest Rebellion monument. The ceremony was moved near the Legislative Building at Queen’s Park where it continued to demonstrate the MNO dedication to the legacy of Louis Riel. Stories about Louis Riel Day can be found on pages 5-7.

Métis communities: the heart of the MNO

In every issue of the Voyageur, I am always impressed by and grateful for, the many stories about what MNO citizens are doing to advance the Métis Nation right in their own communities. This issue features stories about numerous cultural events, honouring our Métis ancestors, building relationships with local and provincial officials, taking action to reduce violence against Indigenous women and girls and working to restore the environment. Please check out the Community section from pages 14-22 to read about all of this incredible work.

Métis success stories

Another favourite section of mine is dedicated to the achievements of our MNO citizens. Starting on page 23 you can read about one of our older citizens who continues to excel in sporting competitions even while approaching his senior years and another story talks about one of our younger citizens who is making a name for herself in synchronized swimming. We are also always very proud when one of our citizens, like Ernest Matton receives the Order of Ontario, for his outstanding work in the field of health and wellness.

Best of the season

This will be the last edition of the Métis Voyageur for 2017. This was another banner year for the MNO and I am grateful to be part of this dynamic nation. I want to thank my fellow members of the PCMNO, the members of the MNO chartered community councils, the MNO Youth, Women’s, and Veterans’ Councils and all MNO citizens who took on leadership roles or gave of themselves to make a greater Métis Nation this year.

Next year will be the 25th anniversary of the founding of the MNO in 1993. It will undoubtedly also be another landmark year on our journey towards self-government and taking our proper place within Confederation.

I want to wish all MNO citizens all the best of the season and I look forward to sharing an exciting new year with you all!

Marge

Council Corner

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) benefits immensely from the dedicated volunteers who are members of its chartered Community Councils. These hard working individuals spend hundreds of hours building and strengthening their Métis communities. MNO Councils are the cornerstone of a strong foundation for the MNO in its push toward its inherent right to self-government.

Since October, the following MNO 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 here.
OCTOBER 22, 2017, as an important step towards Métis self-government, the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (“PCMNO”) passed a resolution that has initiated a review of all MNO Registry citizenship files in order to prepare for the issuance of new MNO Citizenship Cards that will verify each new card-holder as a member of a rights-bearing Métis community and a Métis rights-holder under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. This review—which is being called the MNO Registry and Self-Government Readiness Process (the “RSRP”)—is being done because of government and Métis rights negotiations undertaken in anticipation of formal self-government and Métis rights negotiations. It is also being done because of changes to the MNO citizenship definition of Métis, which have impacted whether all of these citizens are Métis rights-holders. For many MNO citizens, they will simply receive a new card—free of charge—in the mail. If there is documentation missing in a MNO citizen’s file, a letter will be sent to the citizen informing them of what is necessary to complete their file and they will be provided a reasonable amount of time to provide the necessary documentation to the MNO Registry. In addition, the MNO will be retaining the consulting firm Know History to assist with this review, as they are widely recognized as leading researchers on Métis history in Ontario. Further, materials will be provided that will provide assistance and suggestions on how a citizen’s file could be completed, including, how to use the recently completed Ontario Métis Root Ancestors packages that are available on the MNO website.

Through the RSRP, the MNO Registry will also be able to obtain a better understanding of exactly “who” the MNO represents for future negotiations on self-government and Métis rights. For example, as a part of the review the MNO will know how many of its citizens ancestrally connect to one of the seven recognized rights-bearing Métis communities in Ontario as well as how many ancestrally connect to the Métis Nation in western Canada, but now live in Ontario. In order to show leadership on this issue and provide MNO citizens certainty that they are being represented by Métis rights-holders at the regional and provincial levels, the RSRP will start with the elected leadership, beginning with the PCMNO.

Over the next few months, the MNO will be developing additional communication products on the RSRP as well as create a dedicated webpage for MNO citizens to explain the process further.

QUICK FACTS

- The MNO was created in 1993 by Métis representatives from rights-bearing Métis communities across Ontario coming together to establish a province-wide, Métis-specific and democratic self-government representative body.
- The MNO’s foundational purpose—as set out in the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose—is to advance Métis rights and self-government in Ontario. Central to this is ensuring that the MNO Registry is able to verify that MNO citizens are Métis rights-holders and the MNO knowing “who” it represents for the purposes of self-government and Métis rights negotiations.
- Since its creation, the MNO has maintained a centralized Registry in Ottawa to identify Métis citizens, however, since 1993, there have been significant political, legal and administrative developments, including changes to the MNO definition of Métis, which have impacted whether all existing MNO citizenship files are complete.
- The MNO currently has over 20,000 registered citizens. It is the MNO’s position that all of these citizens are Métis rights-holders. Through the RSRP and issuance of new MNO Citizenship Cards, MNO citizens will have certainty that their file is complete and they are a verified Métis rights-holder consistent with constitutional requirements and the Supreme Court of Canada’s decision in R. v. Powley.
- Individuals with complete citizenship files will automatically receive a new MNO Citizenship Card in the mail—at no cost to them. Individuals with incomplete files will receive a letter identifying why their current citizenship file is incomplete and what they need to provide in order to receive a new MNO Citizenship Card.
- In early 2017, the MNO and Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding to Advance Reconciliation that contemplates arriving at a Framework Agreement that will set out a formal negotiations process to address Métis rights and self-government.

1. These identified Ontario Métis communities include the Georgian Bay and Erieau/History Métis Community, the Sault Ste. Marie and District Métis Community, the Northern Lake Superior/History Métis Community, the Abitibi Inland/History Métis Community, and the Matane/Ottawa River and Environs Métis Community, the Rainy River/Lake of the Woods/Treaty 1 History Métis Community.
THE PATH TO MÉTIS SELF-GOVERNMENT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Is this process meant to remove MNO citizenship from individuals?
A: No. This is about preparing the MNO for self-government negotiations, solidifying the integrity of the MNO Registry and demonstrating what MNO has always believed—that all of our citizens are Métis rights holders.

Q: Why is the MNO doing this?
A: The credibility of the MNO in future self-government and Métis rights negotiations is tied to its ability to say that it represents Métis rights-holders. This process will validate what the MNO has always believed—that all of our citizens are Métis rights holders.

Q: I thought all MNO citizens were “grandfathered”. Why is MNO doing this?
A: While it was previously decided to “grandfather” all MNO citizens who may have incomplete files (i.e. to not require them at that time to complete their files), this did not make these individuals Métis rights-holders. In Powley, the Supreme Court of Canada made it very clear that “no matter how a contemporary community defines membership, only those members with a demonstrable ancestral connection to the historic community can claim a section 35 right.” This process will verify that individuals who receive new MNO Citizenship Cards are Métis rights-holders.

Q: Will this process remove MNO citizens who do not ancestrally connect to the Red River Settlement or Métis communities in western Canada?
A: No. In order to be a MNO citizen, you can ancestrally connect to a historic Métis community in Ontatio or to a historic Métis community in western Canada. In August 2017, the Ontario Government recognized with the MNO that there are, at a minimum, seven historic rights-bearing Métis communities throughout Ontario that meet the requirements of the Powley test. MNO citizens—who will be identified as Métis rights-holders—can ancestrally connect to one of those seven historic Métis communities in Ontario or to the Métis Nation in western Canada.

Q: Am I still able to use my existing MNO Citizenship Card or Harvester Card?
A: Yes. While the review is in process existing MNO Citizenship and Harvester Cards will continue to be valid until the review is complete and new cards are issued.

Q: Can I still make an application to the MNO Registry for Citizenship or a Harvester Card while this process is ongoing?
A: Yes, the MNO Registry continues to process cards in accordance with the MNO Registry Policy as well as the MNO Harvester Card Policy. The processing of pending applications remains the utmost priority.

Q: Am I still able to access MNO programs and services during this process?
A: Yes, there will be no impact on your ability to access MNO programs and services during this process. MNO programs and services will be made available.

Q: Are there other benefits to issuing new MNO Citizenship Cards?
A: Yes. Following Powley, the Métis Nation of Alberta undertook a process where all of its existing members needed to re-register to obtain new cards. In 2013, it cancelled its old cards and only now recognizes the new cards that identify Métis rights-holders. The Manitoba Métis Federation has a membership list that includes 50,000+ individuals, but has now re-registered 22,000 individuals with new cards that identify these individuals as Métis rights-holders.

Q: Are other Métis governments doing this?
A: Yes. Following Powley, the Métis Nation of Alberta undertook a process where all of its existing members needed to re-register to obtain new cards. In 2013, it cancelled its old cards and only now recognizes the new cards that identify Métis rights-holders. The Manitoba Métis Federation has a membership list that includes 50,000+ individuals, but has now re-registered 22,000 individuals with new cards that identify these individuals as Métis rights-holders.

Q: If I currently have a valid MNO Harvester Card, will I automatically get a new MNO Citizenship Card?
A: Yes. All of the existing 1,450 MNO Harvester Card holders have already been validated as being Métis rights-holders. As soon as the new MNO Citizenship Cards are designed, these will be issued to the 1,450 valid MNO Harvester Card holders as well as other MNO citizens who have completed files.
The themes of resistance, resilience and remembrance figured prominently at the Louis Riel Day provincial ceremony at Queen’s Park in Toronto on November 16, 2017.

Louis Riel Day is widely recognized as a day to pay respect to the legacy of Louis Riel and celebrate Métis culture and heritage. As in the past, Métis communities across Ontario are holding Louis Riel Day events and the provincial ceremony took place in Toronto at Queen’s Park. For the first time, in accordance with a resolution passed at the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Annual General Assembly (AGA) in August, the provincial ceremony did not take place at the Northwest Rebellion monument at Queen’s Park but rather at the flag pole near the Legislative Buildings.

Louis Riel was the great Métis leader executed by the Canadian government for leading the Northwest Resistance in defense of Métis rights and the Métis way-of-life. Every year Louis Riel Day is held to remember what Riel sacrificed and renew the commitment to complete his work. In Ontario, the Métis struggled to protect their rights, communities and families. The MNO celebrates Louis Riel Day to recognize the many contributions of the Métis to Canada and to highlight the challenges that Métis continue to face.

The ceremony started with raising the Métis flag at the Legislative Building and a procession of all in attendance led by Métis musicians and Liam and Alica Blore and a Legion Honour Guard. MNO Chair France Picotte served as Master of Ceremonies and the opening prayer was given by Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) Senator Renee Gravelle. Following speeches and greetings from MNO leaders and invited dignitaries a wreath was placed by MNO veterans and a moment of silence was observed.

Among the dignitaries who spoke was the Honourable Dave Levac, Speaker of the Ontario Legislature. Speaker Levac said that, “there are three words that I have learned to be proud of, I am Métis.” He indicated as one demonstration of his Métis pride that he wore his Métis sash when sitting for his official portrait that will be displayed at the Legislature.

The Honourable David Zimmer, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Levac represented the Government of Ontario at the ceremony. He also spoke of the growing pride that Métis feel and encouraged Métis to continue building a better future for themselves and all Ontario people. He stated: “On behalf of the province, I am honoured to be here to pay tribute to the incredible life and legacy of Louis Riel. This day is not just about the past and its mistakes, but the acknowledgement of what can be done now to recognize past wrongs, rectify them, and reconcile for a brighter future. Louis Riel will continue to be a beacon for this, and I am proud to honour him today.”

In addition to Speaker Levac and Minister Zimmer, Progressive Conservative (PC) Member of the Provincial Parliament (MPP) for Huron-Bruce Lisa Thompson and New Democratic Party (NDP) MPP for Algoma-Manitoulin Michael Mantha brought greetings on behalf of PC Leader Patrick Brown and NDP Leader Andrea Horwath.

MPP Thompson said: “We have the great privilege in this province to have such a vibrant Métis culture, and I am pleased that the Métis in Ontario are increasingly succeeding and playing a significant role in our province and nation’s diversity, prosperity and growth. A strong partnership with the Métis is...”

Some of the highlights from the Queen’s Park Louis Riel Day Ceremony:
1. Jean Teillet, renowned Métis lawyer and great-grandniece of Louis Riel.
2. PCMNO Senator Renee Gravelle provides the opening prayer.
3. The Legion Colour Party led the procession.
4. A blustery day could not keep Jean Teillet or members of the PCMNO and their families from taking part in the ceremony.
5. MMP Michael Mantha.
7. The Honourable David Zimmer, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
Historic Métis communities and root ancestors focus of Law Society event

This year MNO Region 2 MNO Youth Council Representative Paul Robitaille spoke about the fact that while relationships with Canadian governments are improving we know from history that everything will not be easy and Métis youth will need to play a role in strengthening the Métis Nation. Representative Robitaille stated: “With open arms and open hearts we welcome all who wish to paddle with us in the spirit of respect, reciprocity and collaboration. Because it is only by working together—across communities, across organizations, across governments and across generations—that we can hope to build a brighter, more prosperous Métis Nation and Ontario for us all.”

Another Riel Day tradition is the address by Jean Teillet. Ms. Teillet is a renowned Métis lawyer who was lead counsel for Steve and Roddy Powely during the landmark R v. Powely case. She is also the great-grandniece of Louis Riel and her direct family connection to Louis Riel always makes her remarks especially poignant. “This year Ms. Teillet told the story of “Old Nick” a Métis who had proposed to ambush the soldiers coming to fight the Métis. She explained that Louis Riel had opposed the ambush on humanitarian grounds and it provided a great example of Métis taking the high moral ground.

In her conclusion she drew on the themes of resistance, resilience and remembrance that had been touched on by the other speakers. She explained: “In spite of everything that has been done, in spite of every denial, and those denials unfortunately are still happening today, of who we are as Métis people, as the Métis Nation, we are still here and we are still moving forward and in fact we have made some great advances.” In addition to past accomplishments, President Froh also highlighted the current discussions to sign a framework agreement with Canada and Ontario. She said: “We are to be going forward negotiating a government for the Métis Nation in Ontario. There are many great things that we have achieved–there are many more great things in front of us.”

“His is really what we are here to do today,” she added in closing her formal remarks, “to remember Louis Riel, to remember Steve Powley, to remember all those Métis leaders who have gone before us and the legacy they have left for us.” Then when speaking about the importance of Métis youth, she added: “While we remember—we are always looking forward.”

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In addition to the MPPs who spoke, a number of other MPs took the time to attend the ceremony to show their support for the MNO. These included Minister of Economic Development and Growth Brad Duguid, Minister of Finance Charles Sousa, MPP for Scarborough-Agincourt Soo Wong and MPP for Beaches-East York Arthur Potts.

The participation of these MPs in the ceremony at the event demonstrated the positive relationship the MNO has built with Ontario through the signing of the MNO-Ontario Framework Agreement, which was renewed in 2014; and by the all-party support for the passage of the MNO Secreatrian Act in 2015.

This year’s event focused on the recent agreement between the MNO and Ontario recognizing six new historic Métis communities in Ontario to develop better opportunities for the Métis people in Ontario to develop better opportunities for them and continue the important process of reconciliation. La contribution de la Nation Métis pour l’Ontario et tout le Canada est des plus importantes.”

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**A sense of mixed emotion**

I t is a great honour and privilege to offer a few words on behalf of Ontario’s Métis Youth. On a day such as this, as we collectively confront and work to reconcile our shared history, one cannot help but be overcome by a genuine sense of mixed emotion. And while we each must search within ourselves to discover what this important day means to us, for myself—like many of our young Métis leaders—I stand before you today filled with a resounding feeling of cautious optimism.

I am optimistic, because like many of our Métis Youth, I have been blessed to be born into a strong, loving family and community and to have the unending support of many inspiring leaders, role models and mentors—a number of whom surround me today. Because of this, I know who we are. Because of this, I know our shared Métis story. And, because of this, I know our collective story in Ontario and how that story and those relationships between Métis People and Ontario have evolved over time. In seeing that trajectory—that evolution of those relationships—I cannot help but be optimistic for the future.

However, I also remain cautious in that optimism. I remain cautious precisely because I do understand our collective story and I do understand the history of our relationships. I am keenly aware of the follies of the past. And, through understanding, I am also keenly aware that the insidious tactics of divisiveness, deceit and empty promises that were used in Riel’s time are still sadly employed all too frequently today.

So while there is much to celebrate today, we must also remain humble in the realization that there is still much more work to be done. Fortunately, our young Métis leaders are eager to take up that calling. They are eager to assume that burden of responsibility and to continue that paddle toward self-determination—toward recognition of our rights, of our nationhood and of our unique place within Ontario and Canada.

A sense of cautious optimism that we can move forward.

And in seeing that trajectory—that was started so long ago. With open arms and open hearts we welcome all who wish to paddle with us.

“With open arms and open hearts we welcome all who wish to paddle with us.”

– MNO Youth Council Rep for Region 2 Paul Robitaille

**Raising the Métis flag across the Niagara Region**

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The Council was honoured by the presence of Member of Parliament (MP) and MNO citizen Vance Badawey, MP Chris Bittle, Niagara Region Chair Alan Caslin, Niagara Region Mayors Frank Campion, Patrick Darte, Sandra Easton, Ted Lucaics and Jim Diodati. Also in attendance was Niagara Region Councillor Paul Grenier and MNO NRMC Councillor Derrick Pont. The MNO NRMC gifted Métis flags to each municipality as well as the Niagara Region and asked each to raise their flags on November 16, 2017, to honour Louis Riel and for his bravery on giving his life for the Métis people.

Following raising the flag, kind words were spoken about Louis Riel from MNO NRMC President Derrick Pont, MNO NRMC Chair Brian Kon, MP Badawey and MP Bittle. After the remarks, the Council invited everyone inside for refreshments, cultural music and dancing. The following day, November 16, 2017, the Métis flag was raised by MNO NRMC Senator Gary Laframboise at Club Richelieu in Welland, MNO NRMC Chair Brian Kon at Niagara Region Native Centre in Niagara-On-the-Lake and Treasurer Laura Burey at the Niagara Military Museum.

This day not only marked a day of remembrance and education but a day of unity between the Métis people and all other citizens in the Niagara Region.
From September 11 to 14, 2017, Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) Senator Verna Porter-Brunelle attended the first ever Gathering of Elders in Edmonton Alberta. Senator Porter-Brunelle attended the gathering as a member of the Elders Justice Committee, which was formed in 2017 by the Ministry of the Ontario Attorney General. Senator Porter-Brunelle was among 13 respected Indigenous Elders from diverse communities across Ontario appointed to the Committee. Ontario established the Elders Justice Committee to provide advice to the Attorney General on how to improve the justice systems’ responsiveness to the needs of Indigenous people and support the reclamation of Indigenous legal systems. Senator Porter-Brunelle joined approximately 4,600 elders and helpers from across the country.

The Gathering allowed the Elders to collaborate on how to improve Canada’s education and legal systems from an Indigenous perspective. It offered the opportunity to share knowledge with youth, which helps to bridge the generation gap and allows the younger generations to demonstrate respect, regard and honour for their Elders.

At the Elders Gathering, Senator Porter-Brunelle wore her Métis sash, which became a special conversation piece that allowed her to share her Métis heritage.

During the three day event, group sessions included Reconciliation, Climate Change, Revitalization of Culture and Language, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Indigenous Health. The keynote speaker for the Language and Cultural Traditions session that Senator Porter-Brunelle attended was Member of Parliament (MP) Robert-Falcon Ouellette. MP Ouellette is an Indigenous veteran and a former university professor. There were many Indigenous entertainers including Métis jiggers and fiddlers, Inuit throat singers and First Nations dancers who performed in their traditional regalia. Attendees enjoyed traditional food such as moose and the event was a great experience. The Elders Justice Committee has already received two requests to host the next gathering in 2018.

During the Gathering, Senator Porter-Brunelle and the other members of the Ontario Elders Justice Committee also travelled to Jasper to hold a ceremony. PCMNO Senator Rene Gravelle and PCMNO Region 2 Councilor Cam Burgess also attended the Gathering. Senator Porter-Brunelle had the opportunity to meet with both Senator Rene Gravelle and Councillor Burgess during the event.

The Representation Statute Law Amendment Act, 2017 has been passed in the provincial legislature. This is an important step forward that will ensure a strong voice for Northern Ontarians at Queen’s Park.

This Act includes reforms to create two additional ridings in Northern Ontario for a total of four, called Kiiwetinoong, Mushkegowuk-James Bay, Kenora-Rainy River, and Timmins. These ridings will replace the current electoral districts of Timmins-James Bay and Kenora-Rainy River.

These new ridings will be in place in time for the scheduled provincial election in 2018. The government will be consulting with affected communities to determine a final name for the new riding of Mushkegowuk-James Bay.

The government is committed to working closely with community leaders in northern Ontario and appreciates their continued support as work continues towards building a stronger, more representative election system.

For more information on the National Gathering of Elders please visit ngekamata.com

New ridings established in Northern Ontario

submitted by Yasir Naqvi
Ontario Attorney General

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MNO takes part in First Ministers Meeting

On October 3, 2017 in Ottawa, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Acting President France Picotte participated in a meeting of Canada’s First Ministers and Indigenous leaders. Acting President Picotte was a member of the Métis Nation delegation along with other members of the Métis National Council (MNC) Board of Governors. Prior to the full meeting of First Ministers, Prime Minister Trudeau met with MNC President Clément Chartier, Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde and Tapiriit Kanatami President Natan Obed. The Indigenous leaders including Acting President Picotte were also part of a meeting that included all the First Ministers. “As Canada and Ontario have a role to play in advancing reconciliation with the Métis it was important to have our voice heard at these meetings,” explained Acting President Picotte. “We look toward to continued conversations with both levels of government on the issues that are critical to our families and communities in Ontario.”

Access to mental health services through the MNO for children and youth expanded

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is seeking Métis community members who are interested in volunteering

REGионаl Adivsory Committee (RAC) & MÉTIs Awards Committee (MAC)

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is seeking Métis community members who are interested in volunteering their time as members of Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) or Métis Awards Committee (MAC). These roles offer an opportunity to make a valuable contribution to the Métis community across Ontario. RAC and MAC members assist in the review of employment and training services in keeping with program Principles, Policies and Procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities:
• RAC members review and recommend training proposals through an anonymous review process with the assistance of the Regional Employment and Training Coordinator (RETC).
• Reviews are ongoing however time commitment is limited in nature.
• MAC members are required to review bursary applications once or twice a year.
• All RAC and MAC business is to be completed by fax, e-mail and/or teleconference wherever possible. MNO will provide the tools necessary to assist us with making informed decisions.
• RAC/MAC work is strictly voluntary.

For further information feel free to contact:
Wendy Stewart
MNO Manager of Mental Health and Addictions
wendys@metisnation.org
613-798-1488 x125.
submitted by
Grag Garrat Paquette
MNO Veterans' Council Secretary/Treasurer

Métis Voyageur
December 2017, Issue no. 98

MNO Veterans’ Council releases replica statues of “The Métis”

Durig the summer of 2016, a monument called “the Métis” was unveiled in Penetanguishene as part the Champlain Legacy Sculpture Project. The “Métis” was one of seven sculptures created by Timothy Schmalz and depicts the rise of Métis Nation in Canada before there was Canada, the Métis veterans history book; as well as the Vimy Commemoration Project. The presentation took place at a MNO Cultural Immersion event this November and a number of veterans were present and able to take part in the presentation. It was very appropriate that this presentation was made during the month of remembrance.

Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of the replica statue should contact Greg Garratt at: greg-garratt58@gmail.com. The cost of each statue is $80.00 (taxes included) plus postage and handling. Please note quantities are limited.

Durig 2015, 2016 and 2017, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen and veteran Bernie Pepin C.D. successfully competed in three provincial and three national shooting competitions. Pepin started shooting after joining the Army Cadets in 1973 and continued to shoot competitively for several years. Although he participated in shooting during most of his military career that started when he joined the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) in 1981, he stopped competing in 2012. Pepin was able to return to competitive shooting in 2014 thanks to support from some current and retired military shooters. In 2015, Pepin won a prestigious shooting award, receiving the Lieutenant Governor’s Prize for the top target rifle shooter and receiving second place for the Mercer’s Grand Aggregate. The same year, Pepin went on to win the Strachan Challenge Trophy for top sharpshooter in Canada. He placed twenty-second in the Canadian Target Rifle Championships and placed thirty-first in the MacDonald Stewart Grand Aggregate. In 2016, Pepin placed fourteenth in the national Canadian Target Rifle Championships and forty-ninth in the national MacDonald Stewart Grand Aggregate. In 2017, Pepin placed forty-second in the provincial Mercer’s Grand Aggregate, twenty-first in the national Canadian Target Rifle Championships and fifty-fourth in the national MacDonald Stewart Grand Aggregate.

MNO veteran continues his winning ways

submitted by
Joseph Paquette
MNO citizen & veteran
MNO Veterans’ Council President

Durig 2013, 2016 and 2017, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen and veteran Bernie Pepin C.D. successfully competed in three provincial and three national shooting competitions.

Pepin started shooting after joining the Army Cadets in 1973 and continued to shoot competitively for several years. Although he participated in shooting during most of his military career that started when he joined the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) in 1981, he stopped competing in 2012. Pepin was able to return to competitive shooting in 2014 thanks to support from some current and retired military shooters. Although he is retired from the military, Pepin continues to compete in civilian competitions alongside some current and retired military shooters. In 2015, Pepin won a prestigious shooting award, receiving the Lieutenant Governor’s Prize for the top target rifle shooter and receiving second place for the Mercer’s Grand Aggregate. The same year, Pepin went on to win the Strachan Challenge Trophy for top sharpshooter in Canada. He placed twenty-second in the Canadian Target Rifle Championships and placed thirty-first in the MacDonald Stewart Grand Aggregate.

In 2016, Pepin placed fourteenth in the provincial Mercer’s Grand Aggregate, fourteenth in the national Canadian Target Rifle Championships and forty-ninth in the national MacDonald Stewart Grand Aggregate. In 2017, Pepin placed forty-second in the provincial Mercer’s Grand Aggregate, twenty-first in the national Canadian Target Rifle Championships and fifty-fourth in the national MacDonald Stewart Grand Aggregate.

Pepin is not only a proud of his achievements as a competitive shooter but also proud of his Métis background and heritage. Pepin’s mother had often spoken to him about his Métis background and heritage. As a young age, Pepin knew that both of his grandparents on his mother’s side were Métis, but he never thought of it further until he participated in the unveiling of a plaque in memory of his ancestor Pierre Falcon in 1985. Furthermore, during World War II, his Métis grandfather served with the Royal Winnipeg Rifles (also known as The Little Black Devils), a regiment that ironically engaged the Métis at Fish Creek and Batoche during the Northwest resistance of 1885.

Today Pepin continues to enjoy competitive shooting as a veteran as he did throughout his military career.

MNO veteran Bernie Pepin C.D. (center) with other members of the Canadian Rifle Team in 2017.
MNO Veteran hangs significant mementoes for Georgian Bay Métis Council

submitted by
Greg Garrett
MNO Veterans’ Council
Secretary-Treasurer

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Georgian Bay Métis Council operates out of the MNO office in Midland and on October 4 the MNO Veterans’ Council represented by Sgt-At-Arms Doug Woods helped the Council out by hanging several important pictures in the office. Among the items hung in the office were pictures and gifts from the 2017 MNO Canoe Expedition gifted to the Council when the Expedition stopped in Midland during the summer. Sgt-At-Arms Woods also hung dot art portraying the seven grandfather teachings gifted to the Council by MNO Veterans’ Council Senator Guy Mandeville, C.D. He also hung a paddle featuring artwork from veterans and youth gifted to the MNO Veterans’ Council at Annual General Assembly in Sault St. Marie in 2012 as well as certificates of appreciation that have been presented to the Council.

MNO Veterans’ Senator educates youth about Métis contributions to WWI

submitted by
Joseph Paquette
MNO citizen & veteran
MNO Veterans’ Council President

On October 2-3, 2017, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Veterans’ Council Senator Guy Mandeville C.D. made presentations at the Waterloo Region Museum to over 900 students about Métis involvement in World War I (WWI). The workshops Senator Mandeville provided were for grade 10 students from several Kitchener and Waterloo high schools and he spoke to approximately 16-25 students in each workshop. It was a great opportunity for the MNO Veterans’ Council to meet and educate the youth about what Métis contributed to Canada’s WWI effort.

MNO Veterans’ Senator teaches Métis dot painting workshop

submitted by
Guy Mandeville C.D.
MNO Veterans’ Council Senator

On September 21, 2017, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Veterans’ Council Senator Guy Mandeville C.D. taught Métis Dot Painting at a workshop hosted by the Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Trenton Defense Indigenous Advisory Group (TDIAG) located at the Three Sisters Garden Cariboo Lodge in Trenton. Twenty people from the base, including both military and non-military personnel attended the workshop. The sessions were conducted as a lunch and learn activity. Although many of the participants were first time artists in this medium they did outstanding work. Senator Mandeville will be conducting a future session at the Military Family Resource Centre at CFB Trenton in October 2017.

MNO Veterans’ Council Senator Guy Mandeville C.D. (standing) teaching students about the Métis involvement during the World War I.

MNO Veterans’ Council Sgt-At-Arms Doug Woods hangs pictures at the MNO office in Midland.

MNO Veterans’ Council Senator Guy Mandeville C.D. (standing) teaches Métis Dot Painting at the Three Sisters Garden Cariboo Lodge.
Wilfred Rochon's face bursts into a warm glow when he talks about leaving his small, northern Ontario town of Gogama to join the army during the Second World War.

Interviewing with CBC Windsor, Wilfred Rochon laughs as he tells the story of enlisting in the army because it didn't go so well the first time he tried in 1944. Rochon is a Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen and Métis veteran.

"When I was 17, they sent me to Toronto," said Wilfred. "I knew the doctor there. He's a doctor from Gogama, and he sent me back home because I was too young." That unlikely coincidence couldn't keep Rochon from his desire to serve.

"I figured they needed someone to go to war, you know, to help them out," said Rochon, who even to go to war, you know, to help keep Rochon from his desire to serve. "You don't think about that. You just keep tackling things day by day."

The United States of America dropped the world's first atomic bomb over the Japanese city of Hiroshima, effectively ending the war. With the front-line battle won, Wilfred was transferred to Gravenhurst, Ontario to guard prisoners of war. At this point, Rochon's son, Jon Rochon takes over the story.

"We had to be ready anytime, it didn't matter where we were," said Wilfred, adding that never felt nervous of a possible deployment to the front lines.

"It's not forgotten," said Jon. "It's not fogetten.

"You know they're friends of yours," said Wilfred, with a smile. "You don't think about that. You just keep tackling things day by day."

Jon stated, "It's not forgotten."

Wilfred Rochon's face bursts into a warm glow when he talks about leaving his small, northern Ontario town of Gogama to join the army during the Second World War.

"They were young guys and they didn't matter where we were," said Wilfred. "They were called the 'Happy Gang,'" said Jon.

"There was a group of soldiers that he was guarding, some Germans and Italians that were officers," said Jon. "They were called the 'Happy Gang,'" said Jon.

"The guards were like a referee of sorts, just holding them back against each other," said Jon. Wilfred's story is part of a display honouring Métis veterans at the Chimczuk Museum in Windsor.
Every year on November 11, Métis from across the homeland participate in Remembrance Day ceremonies. It is very important for Métis to be a part of these ceremonies because we have contributed to the defence 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 what Métis men and women have done for 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, MNO citizen Richard Lefebvre, C.D., who served in the military for close to 33 years and retired as a Master Warrant Officer laid the wreath on behalf of all MNO citizens. This is the second year in a row that Lefebvre has performed this duty.

Lefebvre has also been laying a wreath on behalf of the MNO for the past nine years at the National Military Cemetery at Beechwood in Ottawa during the National Memorial Ride (NMR). The NMR is an annual commemorative event that brings together motorcycle enthusiasts and supporters on the first Sunday of June to remember and commemorate Canada’s Fallen Veterans. This event was started by the National Memorial Riders and was taken over by the Royal Canadian Legion. Lefebvre’s group is the only motorcycle group allowed in Beechwood cemetery.

In 2017, we will mark the 100th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge and the 150th anniversary of Canada, and it is very important that we mark Remembrance Day, let us honour the veterans, especially those Métis men and women, who have served so bravely in war and in peace. The Métis have a strong tradition of military service. Our involvement in the defense of Canada started in the War of 1812, and Métis have served in both World Wars, the Korean Conflict, in Peacekeeping missions and most recently in Afghanistan.

In 2017, we will mark the 100th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge and the 150th anniversary of Canada, and our MNO Veterans Council will be working with our citizens and friends to join the MNO in supporting them in this important work.

On November 11, as you attend Remembrance Day ceremonies wherever you are, please take the time to thank our friends, neighbours and all of our relations who have served – and who continue to serve – and to show our love, our support and our gratitude for their bravery and sacrifice, not just with words but with actions throughout the year.

A message from the government of the Métis Nation of Ontario

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MNO joins signing of Indigenous Education Protocol

submitted by
Annie Trudel
MNO Education Officer

On June 12, 2017, the Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB) with representatives from the Métis Nation of Ontario, First Nation and Inuit partners signed the Indigenous Education Protocol (IEP). This summer kindergarten to grade 12 protocol is the first IEP for any district school board in Ontario. The signing ceremony was held at West Gate Public School in Windsor.

The dignitaries were drummed in by the members of the Whitefish Junior Singers.

Provincial Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) Region 9 Councilor Peter Rivers signed for the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO). Signatory for the Inuit was Anne Marie Kadluikj, Garrick and Director of Education Erinn Kelly signed and spoke on behalf of the GECDSB.

The ceremony included two First Nation students. The inclusion of the students displayed a focus on the school's Indigenous youth and highlighted their cultural knowledge. All of the Indigenous leaders in attendance spoke positively about the signing of the protocol as a basis for the future.

Other officials that were present at this special occasion from the GECDSB included the District School Board Trustees Julia Burgess, Ron Leclair who self-identifies as Métis. These School Trustees were responsible for putting a motion forward requesting the IEP. The following GECDSB educators who were pivotal in the protocol work and present at the signing included Dr. Clara Howitt Superintendent of Education, Debra Laforest Principal of West Gate Public School, Tina Decastro Teacher Consultant, Stonehouse Moore of Secondary First Nation Métis Inuit Education (FNME) Language Instructor and FNME Student Support Workers Paula Hedgepeth and Jamie Kechego.

Councilor Rivers recognized the protocol as a step forward. He stated, “I felt that the Métis Nation needed to be part of the conversation and I am grateful for the kindness shown to me at the table as we got down to the work of getting this protocol done.”

— MNO Windsor-Essex Métis Council President Donna Grayer

The second activity was creating a banner and Faceless Dolls Workshop that addressed knowing who is who in the community, the MNO encouraged and promoted cooperation and cultural understanding between providers.

During the event, each provider and their organizations who offered what in the community, the MNO encouraged and promoted cooperation and cultural understanding between providers.

Knowledge who is who in the community is significant when it comes to referrals and social support systems. The Service Provider Gathering brought together MNO staff to connect to other providers and who they could potentially refer their clients to in the future.

The banner and Faceless Dolls were donated to the Mattawa Hospital to bring awareness of MNO programming to those who may not know who they are. The Gathering helped identify service gaps that exist in the community.

WECM President Donna Grayer for her representation of the Métis in the development of the principles and ongoing participation in Métis education. Councilor Rivers also thanked Anne Trudel MNO Education Officer for the educational resources she was able to provide through the MNO.

In 2015, President Grayer had been involved in writing the IEP for St. Clair College and she brought this experience to the process of writing the GECDSB IEP, a process that took an entire year. President Grayer identified the relationship building takes time. She states, “I got involved to show that we are a recognized Indigenous people with historic, ancestral ties in order to clear up misunderstandings associated with the Métis. I felt that the Métis Nation needed to be part of the conversation and I am grateful for the kindness shown to me at the table as we got down to the work of getting this protocol done.”

The diversity of the area and schools means its students represent a few Indigenous Nations. It is historically recognized as three Fires Confederacy, with a five Nation Treaty Coalition presently in place. The process was complicated. President Grayer explained that, “It was hard at times, but worth the tears and frustration to address the concerns brought forward and to make sure there was no exclusion within each and among student populations, each distinction acknowledged while respecting the territory on which it was being done.”

The protocol has seven principles to guide the next actions of the GECDSB and the First Nation, Métis and Inuit partners. The first principle of the protocol is to make First Nation Métis, Inuit education a priority at every level. Another principle is to support students and employees to increase understanding and reciprocity among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

“Now the work will continue with curriculum changes, job opportunities and coming to the leadership at the table for who should represent or teach or speak for us within classrooms and so forth, even within the Elder role,” stated President Grayer.

MNO hosts Service Provider Gathering in Mattawa

submitted by
Lisa Poulin
MNO Métis Healthy Babies and Healthy Children Coordinator

On September 25, 2017, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) staff hosted a Service Provider Gathering in Mattawa. MNO programs that participated included the Métis Family Wellbeing, the Métis Healthy Babies/Healthy Children, Community Wellness Worker and Community Support Services programs as well as Employment and Education program staff.

The Service Provider Gathering brought together MNO staff with other agencies in the Mattawa area that provide services to the same clientele. It provided an opportunity for all involved to network and learn from each other.

The MNO staff members acted as a team to promote the MNO programs to the service providers who attended. The objective was to raise awareness of what the MNO has to offer to the community and to the local service providers.

By collaborating with other service providers in the area, MNO staff are strengthening relationships between the providers and their organizations in the Mattawa area. The MNO staff provided workshops at the Gathering to give an idea of the kinds of services the MNO offers.

The first activity was a Faceless Dolls Workshop that addressed the critical issue of violence against Indigenous women and girls.

The second activity was creating a banner titled “These Hands Don’t Create Violence.” All participants painted their hands and placed them on the banner. They then wrote their names under their hand print.

“Now the work will continue with curriculum changes, job opportunities and coming to the leadership at the table for who should represent or teach or speak for us within classrooms and so forth, even within the Elder role,” stated President Grayer.
Take Back the Night in Mississauga

submitted by
Catherine Corbett, MNO Métis Family Wellness Coordinator

On September 21, 2017, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizens and staff participated in the second annual Take Back the Night event and rally that took place at the beautiful Streetsville Square in Mississauga. The event was hosted by the Peel Committee Against Woman Abuse (PCAWA). The MNO is a proud member of PCAWA through its Brampton office.

Take Back the Night is an anti-violence vigil to increase awareness and support every woman’s right to live without fear. Over 150 people attended the event and supported the PCAWA by speaking out against violence against women. Some honoured guests who came to support the event were Member of Parliament (MP) Sven Spengemann and City of Mississauga Councillors Sue McFadden, Matt Mahoney and George Carlson.

Take Back the Night included displays by community organizations and began with a delicious Boston Pizza and samosa dinner. The emcees came from the Newcomer Centre of Peel and the United Food and Commercial Workers of Canada. The opening included a prayer from an elder and the acknowledgement that Mississauga sits on Indigenous lands.

Survivors who spoke included post Renee McPhee, Sylvie Noutte and singers Adri Noromha and Lushana Sathyanathan. Those who attended were moved and found strength as these amazing women opened up about their experiences.

In the evening, the group of women and children gathered in the streets of Mississauga. If you or someone you know is living with abuse in the Credit River area, please contact the MNO staff in Brampton: Catherine Corbett 905-450-444 Ext. 304 Rose Colacci-Fines 905-450-444 Ext. 305

At the end of the evening the crowd’s voices were raspy but everyone was full of positive energy. The MNO staff of Brampton had a great time partnering with the PCAWA on this event and look forward to the next event to end violence against women. 

MNO Mattawa Métis Council contributes to Splashpad Project

submitted by
Melanie Rose, MNO Mattawa Métis Council Secretary Treasurer

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Senator Reta Gordon, MNO Mattawa Métis Council (MMC) contributed $1,000 towards the Mattawa Splash Pad project in June 20-2017. The Splash Pad is a Canada 150 project that when complete will build a $200,000 facility in Timmins Park in Mattawa. Approximately half the funding is coming from the town of Mattawa but fundraising for the project is also being carried out by a group of volunteers who have solicited funds from local businesses, interest groups, associations and Mattawa residents and former residents. The MNO MMC was very happy to support this worthy project.

Honorary MNO Senator Reta Gordon takes part in Covenant Chain Link Gathering

submitted by
Devora Cascante
MNO Toronto and York Region Kawasaki Canada Administrative Associate

On October 19 and 20, 2017, Honourable Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Senator Reta Gordon participated in the opening and closing ceremonies at the Eighth Annual Covenant Chain Link Gathering, which took place at the Confederation Education Centre in Ottawa.

Covenant Chain Link Gathering is an annual, Ottawa-based event that brings together First Nations, Inuit and Métis representatives, agencies and individuals with teachers, students, church groups, education consultants and members of the general public to share ideas and learn from each other about the evolving relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.

This event gets its name from the Covenant Chain, which was an alliance between the Iroquois Confederacy and the British colonies of North America. Embodied in the Two Row Wampum treaty, the Covenant Chain respected the dignity and integrity of the two peoples involved in this agreement, stresses non-interference and was based on the principles of peace, friendship and mutual respect.

The theme of this year’s event was Empowered and Empowering Youth. Participants were treated to a number of youth-led workshops on cultural appropriation, proper ally etiquette, storytelling and sharing circles. The opening keynote presentation was by author and educator Dr. Jenny Kay Dupuis, a proud member of Nipissing First Nation.

MNO Senator Reta Gordon kindly participated in the opening and closing ceremonies. She was joined by Elders Sally Webster and Victoria (Vicki) Grant Boucher. Senator Gordon welcomed participants to the gathering with her beautiful prayers and inspiring words of wisdom.

Senator Gordon also attended the workshops and took the time to chat with all the youth presenters. Her presence throughout the day helped create a safe and open environment where participants were able to explore our common history and exchange ideas while getting to know each other.

“Every year I so enjoy and learn so much from these meetings,” said Senator Gordon. Upon closing, she shared thoughtful memories of her past in connection with the youth leaders in the room.
Another successful MNO Georgian Bay Métis Council tree planting project

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

This property already includes a Three Sisters Garden planted by the Orillia Native Women’s Group and another local group Ambie Tigadaw, which brings attention to food security issues for Indigenous people. There are also allotment-based community gardens in Orillia operated by the city.

The MNO GBMC was asked to help out with the trees planting. The Council carefully prepared a list of trees that Métis historically used, including Cedar (a traditional medicinal plant), Saskatoon Berry (used to make pemmican), Spruce (used in spruce tip tea) and Sugar Maple (used for maple syrup).

Placing the trees was a community effort. Planters included faculty and students, representatives from the Orillia Native Women’s Group and MNO GBMC volunteers.

MNO GBMC Senator Ken “Two Dogs” Fraser started the event with a smudging and a prayer. For some of the participants it was their first smudging. Pat Taylor, the MNO GBMC’s Women Representative, drummed and sang a song. As always, she was a strong voice for the women.

Greg and Heather Garratt were fantastic ambassadors of the MNO GBMC and members of the community believe Greg deserves the Aboriginal name “Many Hats.”

After the openings and introductions, MNO GBMC volunteers planted the trees. It was very nice to have the young students helping out. Not only were they able to do the jobs quickly, they brought great enthusiasm.

Council members were able to talk to other planters and answer some questions. There were great discussions with the Lakehead University staff about further partnerships. Allysha Wassegijig, the Aboriginal Initiatives Coordinator for the Orillia Campus, has been partnering with Provisional Council of Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) Post-Secondary Representative Katlynn LaCross.

A big thank you goes out to the MNO GBMC volunteers for their hard work and to Lakehead University for so warmly receiving the Council, especially with Wassegijig and Dr. Linda Rodenburg.

The MNO GBMC recognizes and thanks the Central Canada Sustainable Forestry Initiative Implementation Committee for their generous grant that allowed the MNO GBMC to undertake this project.

MNO citizen and her daughters participate in Red Dress Project

Submitted by
Colleen Brunelle
MNO Grand River Métis Council Women’s Representative

Recently, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Grand River Métis Council (GRMC) Women’s Representative Colleen Brunelle and her daughters Avaline and Stella participated in a photo shoot with photographer Carly Hunt on the grounds of the GRMC Women’s Representative Colleen Brunelle and MNO Grand River Métis Council Women’s Representative Avaline Brunelle.

On October 4, 2017, Colleen, her daughters and over 100 community members attended the Sisters in Spirit Vigil held at the Boat House and Maryanne’s Park on the Speed River. Event staff from Women in Crisis streamed an APTN Taken episode outlining the case of Cheyenne Fox. At the end, those in attendance were encouraged to share one word which described how they felt about the episode. Emotions of sorrow, anger, regret and shame were shared. Participants then proceeded across the river, candle in hand, to Maryanne’s Park where the candlelight vigil was held.

Many Women in Crisis staff, thanked Colleen and her daughters for contributing to the Red Dress project and were very interested in understanding the meanings behind the Brunelle’s Metis-sash. It was a great conversation starter that attracted the media who requested interviews and photos.

Part of the Red Dress Project social media campaign that raises awareness about missing and murdered Indigenous women. (Left to right): Avaline Brunelle, Stella Brunelle and MNO Grand River Métis Council Women’s Representative Colleen Brunelle.
MNO North Bay Métis Council hosts annual Harvest Gathering

submitted by Amanda Farrell
MNO Métis Family Wellbeing Program Coordinator

On September 23, 2017, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) North Bay Métis Council (NBMC) welcomed 120 participants to its annual Harvest Gathering at the Callander Community Centre in Callander just outside of North Bay.

The MNO NBMC takes pride in maintaining connections with its citizens, families and community members. The Council works collectively to provide cultural experiences to the communities they work with and to protect and practise the Métis Way of Life. The MNO NBMC, with the MNO staff from the MNO North Bay office embraced a team-work approach to provide an exceptional community gathering.

One of the highlights of the Harvest Gathering was a presentation by MNO NBMC Youth Representative Sophie Laroque. She shared her experiences growing up within the Métis community and talked about her present role as a leader within the MNO NBMC.

Sophie said, "The Harvest Gathering was a great success this year. As the Youth Representative for the North Bay Métis Council it was my honour to greet everyone at the registration table. Citizens from all over Northern Ontario came to celebrate our Harvest Gathering. It was a beautiful day to have a sacred fire to connect with spiritually and receive knowledge. The Harvest Gathering brought back many memories of when I was a little girl and my father first started to bring me to gatherings and how excited and proud I would get to wear my sash even though I did not fully understand our culture or our heritage. As I am always expanding my knowledge, I feel more confident and able to share with the youth of my region. I am looking forward to many more of these events being hosted and connecting with the youth, the elders as well as new people interested in the culture and help them connect with this amazing heritage I can share with them."

To promote an inclusive environment, the MNO NBMC provided an allergy-friendly diet with of traditional food selections for lunch and dinner. The Council had indoor and outdoor activities that promoted a harvest theme available to everyone that included: archery, Métis Voyageur Games, basket weaving, dot art, sacred fire, storytelling, live bilingual music, Clydesdale horse wagon rides, cultural displays and vendors.

The MNO NBMC with MNO staff from the North Bay MNO office look forward to sharing more cultural programming to promote the Métis Way of Life within their community.

Please contact the office at 705-474-2767 for more information of upcoming programs.

MNO participates in Sisters in Spirit Walk in Midland

submitted by Tracy Bald
MNO Community Wellness Coordinator

On October 4, 2017, the MNO Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizens and staff participated in the Sisters in Spirit Walk in Midland.

Sisters in Spirit Walk is a day where people honour the lives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). The violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls in Canada is a national tragedy. Family members, Indigenous community members and concerned citizens gather for a march every October 4 to honour the memory of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Matches take place in many communities across Canada as well as internationally. These gatherings serve to raise awareness and to provide support to families who have lost a loved one.

The Sisters in Spirit Walk started at the office of the Georgian Bay Native Women’s Association and over 100 people participated from numerous community organizations. Participants carried signs, banners and flags honouring the lives of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

The Walk concluded at Neezhoday Park where a candle light vigil was held.
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On June 9, 2017, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Great Lakes Métis Council (GLMC) Senator Ralph Wolf Thistle and MNO GLMC Office Coordinator Susan Staves-Schank met the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. They met her Honour at an event marking the 100th anniversary of when Billy Bishop received the Victoria Cross for a dawn raid on a German aerodrome on June 2, 1917.

Senator Thistle and Ms. Staves-Schank provided a gift of sage and sweet grass to Lieutenant Governor Dowdeswell during the meet and greet at the event. The sweet grass was grown from the MNO GLMC community garden.

Her Honour also hopes Canadians would look ahead at "what it is that we're going to need for this country to move forward even in the next 50 years and what it is we need to protect and safeguard about the way in which we live."
MNO Clear Waters Métis Council host a fall picnic feast

submitted by
Jerry Clarke
MNO Clear Waters Métis Council President

On September 9, 2017, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Clear Waters Métis Council (CWMC) Senator Maryjane Buttenham and proved to be a great success. The Council supplied a wonderful feast for the approximately 65 citizens in attendance. The local Tim Hortons sponsored all the coffee for the event. There was a variety of entertainers including the astonishing Métis music of the Anderson Family along with the excitement of the MNO Voyageur Games. Citizens and other attendees had the opportunity to learn jigging and try axe throwing as well as target practice with rifles and sling shots. A large trappers tent on site featured an array of cultural displays, as well as MNO program materials. The event was well received and the Council is planning on making it an annual event.

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MNO Georgian Bay Métis Council venture into Beausoleil Island National Park

submitted by
Larry J. Ferris
MNO Georgian Bay Métis Council Chairperson

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Georgian Bay Métis Council (GBMC) made another trip to Beausoleil Island National Park with staff from the MNO office in Midland as well as some great volunteers. September 21, 2017. Back in August 2016, the MNO GBMC visited Beausoleil Island to celebrate some of the achievements and work they had completed at the Cemetery of the Oaks as reported in past issues of the Métis Voyageur. The MNO GBMC, MNO staff and volunteers participated in a guided walk with the park staff and enjoyed a wonderful barbeque lunch hosted by Brian Charles of Parks Canada.

The group also saw the trees they had previously planted on the Island and how well they were doing. To recognize the council’s hard work, Parks Canada erected a sign acknowledging MNO GBMC. During the guided walk, the park interpreters told other groups about MNO GBMC’s contributions to the Island.

The MNO GBMC also toured the Cemetery of the Oaks, which is one of the first cemeteries where First Nations and Métis people have been laid to rest. Signage at the Cemetery is written in Anishinaabe, English, French and Michif. This cemetery is special to MNO staff member Lorraine Mountney as some of her close relatives rest there. Mountney came back glowing and said, “I found some of my relatives here and I would never had known this if I hadn’t come.” This was Mountney’s first trip to the Island and it won’t be her last.

The story of Louis Riel’s accordion

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

On October 5, 2017, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Peterborough and District Wapiti Métis Council (PDWMC) Chair Christa Lemelin was invited to the Peterborough Museum and Archives to learn about a very important artifact in their collection. The artifact was an accordion that once belonged to Louis Riel. Museum staff gave her a behind-the-scenes tour and explained where the artifact was from and how it came to be a part of their collection. A close examination of the accordion reveals that Louis Riel’s initials “L.D.R” inscribed on it. According to the information on file, the accordion was found in the belongings of Louis Riel in Batoche and was taken by Canadian soldier Walter Stewart after the 1885 Resistance in which many Peterborough men served.

Walter Stewart was the first person into the Batoche and the accordion was taken as a trophy of souvenir (this is reportedly the same group that brought the Bell of Batoche to Peterborough). Stewart then sent the accordion to George Stewart, who’s family donated it to the original Peterborough Museum over 100 years ago.

In 2002, the Peterborough Museum contacted the Saint-Boniface Museum suggesting that the accordion should be repatriated back to the Métis people so that it could be placed where it belonged. At that time, Saint-Boniface said they would be happy to discuss this option, but told the Peterborough Museum to keep it safe in the meantime.
On September 26, 2017, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Women’s Council Representative Pearl Gabona had the honour of presenting Bishop Riscylla Shaw with a MNO Women’s Council Shawl while she was the guest speaker at the Anglican Church Women’s 50th Anniversary Lunch at St George’s in Newcastle.

On September 21, 2017, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Great Lakes Métis Council Senator Ralph Wolf Thistle spoke with Bishop Douglas Crosby of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hamilton about current developments between Métis Nation and Canada around truth and reconciliation. Senator Thistle and Bishop Crosby met in Walkerton Ontario at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church. During the meeting there was an exchange of gifts and expressions of respect and recognition.

After the service, Senator Thistle met with many members of the congregation and had positive conversations on how the Church and Métis can move forward to make Canada a better place by advancing the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

MNO Senator speaks to Bishop about advancing truth and reconciliation

submitted by
Susan Schank
MNO Great Lakes Métis Council Office Coordinator

Bishop presented with MNO Women’s Shawl

submitted by
Pearl Gabona, MNO Women’s Council Representative

On September 26, 2017, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Women’s Council Representative Pearl Gabona had the honour of presenting Bishop Riscylla Shaw with a MNO Women’s Council Shawl while she was the guest speaker at the Anglican Church Women’s 50th Anniversary Lunch at St George’s in Newcastle.

Bishop Shaw is an MNO citizen and daughter of Honourary MNO Senator Ruth Wagner. She was recently installed as a Bishop of the Anglican Church of Canada and is one of the first Métis to achieve this high position in any Christian Church in Canada.

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Métis Voyageur
December 2017, Issue no. 98

Celebrating Métis
MNO Toronto and York Region Métis Council hosts first Rendezvous

submitted by
Todd Ross, MNO Toronto and York Region Métis Council Chair

On October 14, 2017, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Toronto and York Region Métis Council (TYRMC) hosted its first ever Rendezvous at Black Creek Pioneer Village on the border of the MNO TYRMC’s jurisdiction. The MNO TYRMC Rendezvous was a celebration of Métis culture and provided an opportunity for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people alike to gather together to learn about and celebrate the Métis Nation in the Toronto and York areas.

The event featured entertainers, children’s activities, Métis Voyageur Games, traditional teachings, vendors, beadng juggling lessons, historical and cultural displays.

The space at Black Creek Pioneer Village was divided into several zones including a main stage. At the main stage, MNO Youth Council President Mitch Case was the host. He introduced and bridged each performance with education about Métis history and culture. The day featured some of the best musicians and fiddlers around including Amy Pinkus and Nathan Bidezout who played folk-endure fiddle and guitar duets; the Métis Fiddler Quatet members Conlin and Alyssa Delhaare-Savichuk, who were joined by double bassist Scott Kemp, the country band Southwell, all the students in the Humber College Bachelor of Music program, and Alicia and Liam Frole who played fiddle and guitar while the Toronto Métis jiggers demonstrated traditional jigs. The final act was the Ivan Flett Memorial Dancers who travelled from Winnipeg and practically lit the stage on fire with their high energy traditional dances mixed with modern hip hop jigs.

At the center of the grounds was a fire pit where MNO TYRMC Senator Constance Simmons and Virginia Pappas and MNO Métis Family Wellbeing Coordinator Justin Southwell led a jiggong workshop for participants; MNO Community Relations Manager Hank Rowlinson facilitated rifle shooting and hatchet throwing; and Brittany Matthews and Connor McNamara facilitated Métis beadwork workshops throughout the day. They were assisted by a number of York University students who participated as part of a course credit offered through a collaboration with York University.

The day took an incredible amount of planning which began in the fall of 2016. The Council put a tremendous amount of effort into planning and was incredibly fortunate for all of the support numerous volunteers who came forward to assist with the planning as well as the help throughout the day. All of this was made possible by some very generous donations.

The Toronto Foundation Canada 150 Community Foundations of Canada provided a grant for the Rendezvous. It was with careful consideration that the Council applied for a grant tied to “Canada 150”; however, the Council agreed the opportunity to offer MNO citizens the Council’s own grand scale celebration to honour the Métis stories, culture and heritage. The Council’s own grand scale celebration to honour the Métis stories, culture and heritage outweighed those concerns and the Council’s was incredibly grateful to the Toronto Foundation Canada for providing funding for their precedent setting Rendezvous.

The Council was also received support from the Canadian Imperial Bank of Canada (CIBC), Printing House, York University, the Bank of Montreal Sharing Circle, Scotiabank, JobReady CPR, Taking IT Global and Gangster Cheese.

This precedent-setting event would not have been possible without the Councils dedicated volunteers, planning committee, partners, generous sponsors and a lot of work from the Council. The Council thanks all who made this event very successful.

After an opening prayer by Senator Simmons, President Beaulieu offered a welcome to all participants. Special guests at the Rendezvous included members and/or representatives from the Provincial Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario, the MNO Youth Council, the MNO Veterans’ Council, the MNO Women’s Council, the MNO Oshawa Durham Métis Council, the MNO Credit River Métis Council, the MNO Niagara Region Métis Council, Mississaugas of New Credit First Nation, Regional Municipality of York, Toronto City Council and the Toronto Foundation. Greetings were also sent from the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation David Zimmer who was unable to attend.

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Five Councils participate in Governance and Finance Training

submitted by
Glen Lipinski, MNO Community Relations Coordinator

In the last few months, five Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) communities participated in the MNO Governance and Finance Training. On September 23-24, 2017, the MNO Thunder Bay Métis Council (TBMC), MNO Greenstone Métis Council (GMC) and the MNO Superior North Shore Métis Council (SNSMC) received training together in Thunder Bay. On October 14-16, 2017, the MNO Northern Lights Métis Council (NLMC) participated in a Governance and Finance Training that was held in Cochrane and on November 4-5, 2017, MNO Toronto and York Region Métis Council (TYRMC) received their training in Toronto.

Each of these training workshops were facilitated by the MNO Community Relations Coordinator Glen Lipinski.

The MNO benefits immensely from the dedicated volunteers who are members of its chartered communities. The MNO uses these volunteers to reach out to the community councils, which are the building blocks of the Métis community and provide an opportunity for the MNO to receive input on governance and financial issues.

The MNO’s community councils are self-governing entities and are responsible for determining their financial needs and priorities. The MNO Governance and Finance Training is designed to provide community council members with the knowledge and skills they need to effectively manage their finances and make informed decisions about how to allocate resources.

The training covers a range of topics, including financial management, budgeting, accounting, and the legal and regulatory frameworks that govern financial decisions. Participants receive practical training and receive handouts and resources that they can use to improve their financial management skills.

The training is facilitated by MNO employees and volunteer trainers who have expertise in financial management and governance. The training is delivered in both English and French, and is designed to be accessible to community council members who speak either language.

The MNO is committed to providing its community councils with the support they need to be successful in their financial management. The MNO Governance and Finance Training is one of the ways we are fulfilling that commitment.

The MNO hopes that the training will help community council members improve their financial management skills and make informed decisions about how to allocate resources to meet the needs of their communities.

The MNO would like to thank the MNO community councils for their participation in the Governance and Finance Training. We encourage all community councils to participate in future training opportunities to improve their financial management skills and make informed decisions about how to allocate resources to meet the needs of their communities.

All opinions represent the views of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the positions and policies of the Métis Nation of Ontario.
2017 PETRO CANADA FUELLING ATHLETE AND COACHING EXCELLENCE GRANT (FACE)

MNO citizen receives grant for athletic excellence

submitted by
Kristin McCoy
Manager, Regional Training Centre
Synchronized Swimming in Ontario

On September 18, 2017, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen and synchronized swimmer Maura McLean was awarded the Petro-Canada Fuelling Athlete 2017 Grant.

Every year, Petro-Canada selects 55 promising athletes from across Canada to receive these grants as part of their Fuelling Athletes and Coaching Excellence (FACE) Program. These athletes and their coaches are awarded a $10,000 FACE grant to help them along their journey, with $5,000 going directly to the athlete and $5,000 going to their coach. FACE grants are often used for training, equipment, coach education and travel expenses for competitions.

Maura and her synchronize swimming coach, Jennifer Koptie both received the FACE grant.

Maura started synchronized swimming when she was six years old. She quickly fell in love with the sport and moved from a recreational program to the provincial-level, and then the national-level program at Variety Village in Scarborough, Ontario. Three years ago Maura was selected to train at the Regional Training Centre in Ontario as a national-level high performance athlete.

Maura is a three-time Canadian national team member and has won several awards, including placing first in Canada in the 13-15 year old diet category, as well as receiving gold in the 12 and under solo category.

Her favourite part of the sport is the team event and she has been fortunate to swim with excellent teams under the direction of great coaches. Maura’s various teams have won many gold and silver medals in several different age categories at various Canadian competitions throughout the years.

Now at the 15-18 years old or junior level, Maura especially loves combining her overall athleticism with the artistic elements of the sport, making it both extremely difficult and rewarding. She trains 10 hours a week at Toronto Pan Am Sports Centre and works hard at juggling a full-time high school schedule with the high demands of synchronized swimming, a sport which requires many hours of land training in strength and flexibility as well as countless hours of water training.

Showing her well-rounded approach to life, Maura said: “My dream is to be a good person who is kind to others and who always does her best at everything she tries, both as an athlete and in life.”

MNO citizen wins karate gold at World Police and Fire Games

submitted by
Reta Gordon
MNO Honourary Senator
with files from MASUCCESS Martial Arts News

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Perry William Kelly won a gold medal for the Karate during the 2017 World Police and Fire Games in Los Angeles on August 14, 2017. Kelly won in the over 50 years of age and under 75 kilograms (165 pounds) division.

Fifty-nine year old Kelly proved that participation in martial arts can last a lifetime. Having returned to Karate in 2016 after a 45-year hiatus, he ran up a string of gold-medal performances at various competitions such as the North American Police and Fire Games and the Montreal Open Invitational. Kelly’s success led to his 2017 championship victory in Karate at the World Games, which attracted 7,000 participants from all over the world to compete in 70 sports.

Kelly is also a multi-martial arts instructor who uses his success in competitive Karate as a platform to raise awareness of the problem of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in law enforcement, military and first responders.

Kelly is a former MNO representative to the City of Gloucester (now part of Ottawa) and is also a lawyer, author and former criminology professor. He recently retired from the Department of Public Safety and over the course of his 30 year career received five executive departmental commendations for his contributions in the fields of Law Enforcement Training and Use of Force from: the Correctional Service of Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; and the Deputy Minister of Public Safety.

Since retiring, he has filled up his free time by writing his fourth book and winning gold medals at the Montreal Open Invitational Karate Tournament and the North American Police and Fire Games in Drummond Quebec. Most recently, he has been featured on CTV’s Interesting People with Joel Haslam where he discussed using his profile as an internationally successful athlete to raise awareness about Law Enforcement PTSD.

MNO citizens have recognized Kelly’s past accomplishments and he has been previously featured on the MNO website. Kelly will turn 60 in November of this year and he intends to fight in the 60 plus division of major martial arts tournaments in 2018.
MNO citizen receives Order of Ontario

submitted by
Debbie Ferris-Giannmattolla
MNO Health and Wellness Community Support Services Coordinator

On June 28, 2017, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen “Little Brown Bear” Ernest Matton was one of 28 people invested into the Order of Ontario. The Order of Ontario is awarded to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding qualities of individual excellence and achievement.

Matton was selected to receive the Order because of his work with the Michael Garron Toronto East-Health Network family. There, he manages and facilitates the newly accredited Aboriginal Healing Program, a program he has spent the past six years developing.

Matton blends Indigenous teachings with Western information to provide holistic healing approaches for Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the community. According to Matton: “Being Aboriginal is not a life style it is a way of life.

Matton is an expert in the areas of trauma, addiction, and mental health, and he is both a sought-after speaker and effective group facilitator.

Matton wears the yellow Métis Sash with pride to signify that he honours missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and that he speaks to the commitment to breaking the cycle of violence and abuse.

Matton’s guiding philosophy is simple: “People don’t care how much you know. They want to know how much you care.”

MNO citizen receives Order of Ontario

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MNO citizen receives Order of Ontario

submitted by
Debbie Ferris-Giannmattolla
MNO Health and Wellness Community Support Services Coordinator

On September 5, 2017, a celebration of life was held for Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Alphonse Joseph Breland at the Branch 123 of the Royal Canadian Legion in Waterford. Alphonse passed away on September 1, 2017. The celebration was organized by his daughter, MNO citizen Angele Watson.

Alphonse was one of 15 children born to Wilfred Alfred Breland and Ida Robinson in northern Alberta. Ida was Wilfred’s second wife. They lived in St. Xavier, St. Paul and then moved to Peace River. He was sent to live with other families sporadically from the time he was five until he set out on his own when he was around 14.

He was proud to have driven teams of five horses on various farms. He also drove the horses moving trees from the forest to the mill in various lumber camps and was part of the team that cleared the land for the Cold Lake Air Force Base.

Once retired, Alphonse moved south to Waterford and was thrilled to join the Métis community there. He loved going to the occasional gatherings that Métis and Six Nations hosted and also enjoyed making moccasins and joining the potluck dinners.

Alphonse’s roots trace back to Egg Lake in northern Manitoba where we found his grandfather’s family listed in the 1901 Census. Pascal Breland, who is famous for his association with Louis Riel, was the brother of Alphonse’s great grandfather Alexander Breland.

Submitted by
MNO citizen Angele Watson