MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

MARGARET FROH

As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), this edition of the Métis Voyageur marks another milestone in the MNO’s history. In its 100 editions, this paper has provided a way for us to tell you about the hard work of the Provincial Council of the MNO (PCMNO), all of our councils, volunteers and citizens. All of that work is helping to build a stronger Métis Nation. It is a very exciting time for the MNO.

ADVANCING MÉTIS PRIORITIES

In June, it was my pleasure to sign the first sub-Accord, under the Canada-Métis Accord, which outlines the federal government’s investments in employment services, skills development and job training. The sub-Accord gives us control over how the money is allocated and allows for longer-term stability of the MNO’s education and training programs (see page 6). Later the same day, I met with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Cabinet Ministers to discuss our priorities for the year. The meeting reinforced the government’s commitment to working with us. While further agreements will continue to take some time, I’m happy to say things are moving in the right direction.

At the end of April, the MNO signed a new Harvesting Framework Agreement with the province, representing an important milestone in the ongoing Métis hunt for justice (see pages 9). MNO citizens have been waiting for this for a long time, and I’m pleased we have achieved a long-term Agreement.

As we continue our efforts towards self-government, the PCMNO was proud to release the final summary of the findings of the MNO Commission on Métis Rights and Self-Government (see page 3-4). I was so pleased with the feedback during these sessions and the level of engagement of our citizens. I know this document will be vital in our work moving forward and with the provincial and federal governments. Wrapping up the work of our commissioners is just the start of a long journey ahead, and I look forward to rolling up my sleeves and working to implement the 19 recommendations made in the report.

MÉTIS YOUTH ARE OUR FUTURE

It was my pleasure to attend the Ways of Knowing: Promising Directions for Métis Research symposium in Ottawa (see pages 9-10). It was an extraordinary event that highlighted just how necessary it is to provide opportunities for youth and academics to come together to learn from each other in a Métis-specific space. The weekend was extremely motivating and I hope we can build on these types of collaborations in the future to promote Ontario Métis research and scholarship.

Our Métis youth have also been busy learning more about Métis way of life and connecting with their Métis roots by attending MNO youth camps, including the brand-new Métis Youth Cultural Camps (see pages 12-13). They have also had their voices heard at national summits and forums (see pages 11, 15). At every turn, I continue to be inspired by their pride, their courage and their resolve as they learn more about their Métis identity and push for recognition for Métis people and Métis rights.

CELEBRATING OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Since the last Voyageur, there is certainly a lot to celebrate, including the vast achievements of MNO citizens. They are achieving their goals in areas as diverse as the arts, athletics, politics and volunteering. Earlier this year, Yvonne Boyer became the first MNO citizen to be appointed to the Canadian Senate (see pages 7). She will provide an important voice for the Métis community in her role. Several MNO citizens were also recognized for their putting their communities first with volunteer awards (see pages 31-33). The achievements of our MNO citizens are a true reflection of our strength and perseverance as we reach for our goals and make significant contributions within our communities.

IT’S ALL ABOUT COMMUNITY

Whether it’s a new community council, an inspired painting for an MNO office, a blanket or dot art painting workshop, the Community section of the paper is full of stories showing Métis pride across Ontario (see pages 21-30). Our MNO citizens are participating in local events, hosting their own and spreading the word about Métis culture and history. From the Métis arts and culture, to events promoting health and wellness, our community councils and citizens are building Métis awareness at the grassroots.

IN THE DAYS AHEAD

I wish all MNO citizens and friends of the MNO a wonderful summer and I look forward to seeing everyone at the 25th MNO Annual General Assembly from Aug. 17-19 in Peterborough. The AGAs are an important part of our governance structure and I look forward to engaging with you and reflecting on all of the work and progress made of the past year.

Merci - Thank you - Marsee

Upcoming Submission Deadlines

NEXT ISSUE: September 7, 2018

• November 2, 2018
• February 8, 2019
• April 26, 2019
COMMISION REPORT RELEASED:
Advancing Métis Rights & Self-Government: What We Heard

n May 25, the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) released Advancing Métis Rights and Self-Government: What We Heard, the final summary of the findings of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Commission on Métis Rights and Self-Government.

The formation of the MNO Commission on Métis Rights and Self-Government was announced on Aug. 27, 2016, at the MNO Annual General Assembly in North Bay. Seven MNO citizens were selected as Commissioners to represent the MNO’s diverse communities and ensure a balance of age, gender, language, geography and the diversity of roles within the MNO.

The Commission was established to document, through a process of consultation and engagement with MNO citizens, their perspectives on the MNO’s governance processes; how the MNO can better reflect Métis community identity and culture within our governance; and how the MNO can move forward on issues related to harvesting and self-government.

Engagement sessions were held in all MNO communities and with the MNO Youth, Women’s and Veterans’ Councils between February and May 2017. Approximately 1,400 MNO citizens participated in these engagement sessions and the views heard in these sessions have been summarized in the report. The Commissioners made 19 recommendations based on what they heard (see page 4), which will provide direction for the MNO leadership in coming years.

“We are so pleased that the Advancing Métis Rights and Self-Government: What We Heard report is now available,” said MNO Chair France Picotte. “It is very comprehensive, details a number of priorities and makes key recommendations regarding the future directions of the MNO. It is expected that we will be able use this report to inform and help guide the MNO’s broader collective effort to advance Métis rights and self-government including its work with the federal and provincial governments.”

In her remarks at an event celebrating the release of the report, MNO President Margaret Froh stated, “This will not be one of those reports that sits on the shelf and gathers dust. These are the words of our citizens and these will be there to guide us moving forward. The work now really is going to begin.”

The full report is available on the MNO website and hard copies of the document are available in MNO offices.

Karen Drake
“I am incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to visit Métis communities throughout Ontario and to hear from MNO citizens about their aspirations and visions for the MNO. Your insights and ideas for the MNO make me very optimistic about our future.”

Marlene Greenwood
“I think the MNO benefited as a whole from the Commission as it provided the opportunity for citizens to meet one-to-one and voice their concerns and recommendations. Hopefully this will help advance Métis self-government in Ontario.”

Pearl Gabona
“The report of the Commission is important to all MNO citizens because it provides the vision and direction we need for our future. Relying on this report, our leaders can forge ahead in our quest for self-government; confident that the decisions they make and the steps they take are based on the voices of our citizens. Our future is bright! I am proud to have been a part of this incredible venture.”

Victor Brunelle
“I am very thankful for the opportunity of serving on the Commission and as a Commissioner; I feel this report is an honest reflection of the views of Métis Nation of Ontario citizens. I sincerely hope our leaders will give this report the respect and show genuine dedication to its recommendations, which will provide a better future for generations to come.”

Kim Powley
“As a commissioner it was an experience beyond what I expected. Travelling to each Métis community gave us an opportunity to hear what was some barriers, wants and needs are in each community and how they are different from the north to the south communities yet very similar as a whole across the MNO. We took some time to see the beauty in each community, although I have met so many wonderful people throughout the years it was great to put faces to their home communities.”

Nelson Montreuil
“It was a valuable experience traveling to Métis communities and listening to our citizens express their hopes and aspirations. This report is a valuable document that records the voices of our citizens and which will provide vast benefits in determining our future.”

Paul Robitaille
“This report represents far more than mere words on paper. It is the collective voice of our citizens. It is our collective vision and our collective call to action. It now becomes our shared responsibility to make that vision a reality. We must each take up that call and assume our share of the burden. Every one of us holds unique and valuable gifts, ideas, talents and passions. The time has now come to share those gifts. The time has now come to harness the immense creative energy of our Nation. It is only together that we can build a stronger, more vibrant Métis Nation for us all.”

Issues no. 100, July 2018

Métis Voyageur
WHAT WE HEARD
RECOMMENDATIONS

The MNO Commission on Métis Rights and Self-Government made 19 recommendations in four areas. These recommendations were based on what citizens told the Commissioners at community engagement sessions across the province.

MÉTIS GOVERNANCE

1. The MNO should develop a communication strategy with a specific emphasis on facilitating communications between the various components of the MNO’s governance structures and MNO staff. This strategy should focus on developing local supports and building capacity for community councils, with particular attention paid to establishing a process for sharing best practices amongst councils.

2. The MNO should undertake a review of the current local governance system and set out recommendations for reform with a specific emphasis on ensuring all citizens’ voices are being heard.

3. The MNO should prioritize the acquisition of core governance funding for Community Councils, the Métis Nation of Ontario Women’s Council, the Métis Nation of Ontario Veterans’ Council, and the Métis Nation of Ontario Youth Council.

4. The MNO should prioritize the acquisition of funding for the MNO’s registry while in the interim focusing on the development of policies that will promote a more efficient and streamlined application review process.

5. The MNO should develop a registry communication strategy to increase the number of updates applicants receive throughout the application process.

6. The MNO should prioritize the responsible acquisition of property and community spaces for Métis citizens.

MÉTIS IDENTITY CULTURE & COMMUNITY

1. The MNO should continue to work on the development of educational curricula with a particular focus on telling the story of Métis in Ontario.

2. The MNO should continue to work with both the Federal and Provincial Governments to ensure that the Métis are being adequately consulted on the development of any and all cultural competency training materials (including materials used to train government employees or the public) that highlight Indigenous communities in Canada.

3. The MNO should prioritize the acquisition of funding to increase MNO capacity to participate in curriculum discussions, development, and delivery.

4. The MNO should create a Métis cultural strategy with a renewed focus on cultural symbols like the sash and the Métis flag. The cultural strategy should prioritize the documentation of historic Métis community narratives—both historic and contemporary, with specific emphasis on Métis Women and two-spirited community members—and the development of education materials, which will empower Community Councils to tell their stories.

5. The MNO should prioritize the acquisition of funding to engage in a cultural commission so our communities can continue the discussion about defining and understanding Métis culture.

6. The MNO should develop a registry communications strategy to increase the number of updates applicants receive throughout the application process.

HARVESTING

1. The MNO should prioritize the development of additional harvesting policies and procedures to address issues related to co-management, qualifications/training for Captains of the Hunt, potential enforcement mechanisms for non-compliance with harvesting policies, etc. The MNO should consider establishing a harvesting policies and procedures committee that could regularly and consistently engage with communities to review and update harvesting policies/procedures on an ongoing basis. To ensure the sustainability of the harvest as more people obtain their Harvesting Card, there is an urgency to ensure this is in place.

2. Throughout the Commission process the Commissioners heard a diverse range of opinions regarding mobility, likely because so many perspectives on this issue stemmed from deeply personal stories and experiences. As a result, there is still a notable lack of consensus on the mobility issue. While the Commission heard wide-spread agreement about the need to support mobility of harvesting rights, in order to ensure that any proposed mobility system is well-developed and consistent with the wants/needs of communities, the MNO should establish a commission to further explore this issue. This commission should engage in further consultation and engagement with citizens, including Métis harvesters. As part of the commission’s mandate, a priority should be to speak with citizens and explore/develop a set of Métis values and principles (e.g. conservation, community sharing, kinship ties, etc.) that would help inform the MNO’s approach to mobility both now and in the future. The commission’s mandate should also involve the development of proposed set of policies and procedures with respect to mobility.

3. The MNO should engage in a process of reviewing the harvesting map that underlies the 2004 MNO-MNR Harvesting Agreement. As a part of this process the MNO should consult with citizens on issues and concerns surrounding the areas and their borders so that this can be addressed in any future discussions on this issue.

4. The MNO should prioritize improving education for all of our harvesters on harvesting issues and place a greater emphasis on supports for transferring harvesting knowledge to our younger citizens.

5. The MNO should explore ways to improve the existing harvesting surveys in an effort to prioritize a more data-based approach to conservation. As a part of this the MNO should consider developing more detailed policies and procedures with respect to such surveys.

SELF-GOVERNMENT

1. The MNO should emphasize and rely upon the priorities identified through the MNO Commission on Métis Rights and Self-Government in ongoing negotiations with the Governments of Ontario and Canada.

2. The MNO should begin the process of developing an MNO Constitution. The first step in this process should be the development of a commission or engagement process with MNO citizens that would focus on informing and designing a process for the development of the MNO’s constitution.
Métis Nation leaders met with federal representatives on March 19 for the second Métis Nation Permanent Bilateral Mechanism Leaders Meeting in textbook.

The meeting comes after the signing of the Accord last April, which established annual meetings with the Prime Minister, semi-annual meetings with key Cabinet ministers and quarterly meetings with Assistant Deputy Ministers and other senior officials. Among the representatives in attendance were Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) President Margaret Froh and the Presidents of all the Métis National Council governing members, including Métis National Council President Clément Chartier, Métis Nation British Columbia President Clara Morin Dal Col, Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras, Métis Nation-Saskatchewan President Glen McCollam, Metis Nation Federation President David Chartrand and Les Femmes Michif Otipemiswak President Melanie Omennihoo, as well as Métis Elder Oliver Boulette.

The meeting’s focus was on the progress in key areas of early learning and child care, employment and social development, housing and attendance. It discussed the second priority areas of the Accord including education, child and family services, economic development and the new fiscal relationship. Time was also spent discussing the investments made in Budget 2018, the recognition and implementation of Indigenous rights framework, the Sixties Scoop and the need for a supported process that would ensure Métis individuals will be part of the discussion, and the importance of addressing Métis Veterans issues.

“These meetings offer an opportunity for the Métis governments from Ontario to British Columbia to come together with the federal government in order to address collective concerns and priorities within the Canada-Métis Nation Accord,” said President Froh. “While also recognizing that we all have distinct needs that will require specific government to government approaches.”

Dr. Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs; Jane Philpott, Minister of Indigenous Services; Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development; Patricia Hajdu, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour; Scott Brison, President of the Treasury Board and Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Health also attended.

“Today’s important discussions as part of the Permanent Bilateral Arrangement with the Métis National Council truly represent significant progress on our relationship based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation, and partnership,” said Dr. Bennett in a news release.

The new Agreement outlines a process for further long-term and substantive agreement on Métis harvesting and to do so in a way that advances our mutual objectives of promoting and protecting and sustaining Ontario’s natural resources,” President Froh said.

Under the Agreement, the MNO will share data collected about the Métis harvest with the MNRF to help assist provincial management of natural resources. It also outlines a process for further negotiations to reach a long-term agreement in the future. Some of those discussions will clarify other rights-related matters, including activities incidental to the harvest, mobility and geography associated with those rights.

“This agreement, from our perspective, represents the culmination of all the work that we have done with the province of Ontario and the commitment and patience shown by our Harvesters and all citizens across Ontario to do the work necessary to get to a new Agreement that sets out a really good process for us to continue to move forward with discussing Métis rights and the importance of sustainability and conservation,” President Froh said after the signing.

For more information on the agreement visit: www.metisnation.org/register/harvesting
Leaders meet at annual Crown-Métis Nation Summit

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) President Margaret Froh and the Presidents of the Métis National Council governing members met with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for the annual Crown-Métis Nation Summit on Parliament Hill on June 15.

The Summit was the second annual meeting of the Prime Minister, key Cabinet Ministers and the Presidents of all the Métis National Council governing members, since the signing of the Canada Métis Nation Accord last April.

The Accord sets out a permanent bilateral process that includes annual meetings with the Prime Minister, semi-annual meetings with the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and Cabinet Ministers, and quarterly meetings with various Assistant Deputy Ministers and other senior officials.

During the Summit, they reviewed progress made in the last year and also confirmed priorities for the coming year. The priorities identified include: Métis veterans, education, child and family services, economic development, environment, clean growth, infrastructure and the new fiscal relationship.

“The Métis Nation of Ontario is pleased with the progress made over the past year and we look forward to advance on areas of priority that respect and address the unique needs of Métis throughout Ontario and create real positive change for families and communities,” stated MNO President Froh.

Throughout the next year, the Métis Nation will work with the federal government to advance these priorities and both parties will report back on any progress made at the next Crown-Métis Nation Summit.

In his opening remarks, Prime Minister Trudeau outlined commitments made in the 2018 budget to the Métis Nation, including $500 million over 10 years to support a Métis housing strategy, $10 million in 2018-19 to support Métis Nation post-secondary education and $6 million over five years to support the Métis Nation in gathering health data and developing a health strategy.

“The next step after investment is of course implementation, which is why I’m committed to working with you to ensure that resources get to your communities,” he said.

“The next step after investment is of course implementation, which is why I’m committed to working with you to ensure that resources get to your communities,” he said. These meetings provide an important opportunity to hear directly from leaders of the Métis Nation about their unique needs and concerns. We will continue to work together with the Métis Nation as partners to address these needs, and strengthen the Canada-Métis Nation relationship for the benefit of our country and all Canadians,” he said in a statement.

Métis National Council President Clément Chartier, who co-chaired the meeting, Manitoba Metis Federation President David Chartrand, Métis Nation British Columbia President Clara Morin Dal Col, Métis Nation Alberta President Audrey Poitras, Métis Nation Saskatchewan President Glen McCallum and Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak President Melanie Omenhio, as well as Métis elders Angie Crerar, Oliver Boulette and Norman Fleury also attended the Summit.

Cabinet Ministers in attendance included: Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Dr. Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous Services Canada Dr. Jane Philpott, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour Patricia Hajdu, Minister of Health Ginette C. Petitpas Taylor and Minister of Veterans Affairs Seamus O’Regan.

YOUTH ARTISTS WANTED!

Showcase your work through the Métis Nation of Ontario Youth Council vendor table at the Annual General Assembly in Peterborough from August 17-19

For more information or to express interest in showcasing your work, contact:
Lane Bourbonnière
MNO Youth and Special Projects Operations Coordinator
613-798-1488 ext. 169 laneb@metisnation.org

Spaces are limited and pre-registration is required.
Métis leaders sign historic Métis Nation Skills and Employment Training Accord

by MNO Staff

The signing of the Accord comes after the federal government promised more than $625 million over 10 years for the Métis Nation stream of the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training program in the 2018 budget. The program replaces the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy.

“This is a significant investment for Métis people in Ontario” said President Froh in a statement. “Not only does this sub-Accord show the federal government’s commitment to advancing its government-to-government relationship with the Métis Nation. It respects and builds upon our recognized province-wide employment and training delivery structure and will result in real and positive impacts for our families and communities throughout the province.”

The signing of this Accord is an important step forward to ensure the long-term stability and continued success of one of MNO’s foundational programs and will allow for greater planning and investments in Métis citizens, families and communities. The Accord was signed by Patricia Hajdu, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Métis National Council President Clément Chartier, Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras and Métis Nation British Columbia President Clara Morin Dal Col.

PCMNO looks to new provincial government to advance reconciliation

Following the results of June 7 provincial election, the Provincial Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) has indicated the importance of working with the new Progressive Conservative majority government to continue advancing the recognition of rights, interests and aspirations of Métis families and communities throughout Ontario.

In a letter congratulating Premier Doug Ford, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) President Margaret Froh stated that the existing long-term agreements between the Ontario government and the MNO provide a strong basis for strengthening our government-to-government relationship. “The MNO looks to work with the new government in matters of mutual priority including Métis self-government, health, employment, education and housing,” stated President Froh.

The MNO also extends a congratulations to New Democratic Party (NDP) Leader Andrea Horwath and her party for achieving Official Opposition status in the upcoming legislature. MNO also fully acknowledges and appreciates the important contributions of outgoing Premier Kathleen Wynne and her cabinet to advance reconciliation with the Métis in Ontario. In her letter of congratulations to Premier Ford, President Froh extended an invitation to attend the upcoming MNO Annual General Assembly in Peterborough. “It is important that we establish working relationships with the new government and move quickly in the areas identified in the MNO-Canada-Ontario Framework Agreement,” stated President Froh. “The MNO looks forward to meeting with Premier Ford and his Cabinet to discuss how we can continue our work with Métis from Ontario for Métis and all Ontarians.”

Recently re-elected PC MPP Norm Miller speaking at the 2016 MNO Annual General Assembly in Kenora. MPP Miller has been a mainstay at provincial Louis Riel Day ceremonies, AGAs and at Métis community council events for many years.
Métis Infinity management and staff continue to seek economic opportunities that will enhance the financial outlook of the Métis Nation of Ontario and its citizens.

Our Joint Venture with ASAP Secured continues to grow. Recently, our contract with Detour Gold has been extended. ASAP Secured provides Security Services at Detours Timmins mining operations. As always, we are committed to seek Métis citizens who wish to embark on a career that is a segway to the mining industry.

As mentioned in our 2017 Annual Report, our partnership with Redrock Camps continues to grow. Not only were we awarded Detour Gold’s camp assembly, we were subsequently awarded their camp retrofit. In both instances, the call went out for Métis citizens seeking employment opportunities.

With the establishment of Infinity Equipment Rentals Inc., and in partnership with United Rentals, we are well positioned to respond to equipment rental opportunities throughout the province. In our 2017 Annual Report, we introduced our Board of Directors, and CEO Scott Patles-Richardson. Since that time, we continue to grow.

On May 1st 2017, Joel Henley accepted the position of Manager of Business and Community Relations. Joel comes with over 30 years in the Forestry field, with a background in Human Resources. His 10 years spent on the Métis Nation of Ontario’s Region One Consultation Committee gives Joel unique experience dealing with Industry Proponents and both the Provincial and Federal branches of the Ontario Governments. Joel’s role will be the point of contact for industry, local and regional governments as well as Métis locals and business in Ontario. Furthermore he will assist in developing and negotiating agreements, partnerships and joint ventures while facilitating collaborative ongoing communications between Métis Infinity Investments LP and all stakeholders and partners. Joel is based out of Kenora.

In September 2017, Gerry Lafontaine, Business Development Consultant came onboard. As a Métis Nation person with 39 years of mining experience, Gerry is able to coordinate and attract other groups of companies to possible Joint Ventures. As a consultant he represents Infinity Investment Group Joint Venture partners with solid commitment to the mining companies that we successfully engage with.

As a consultant Gerry is able to identify multiple resources to answer the most perplexed issues we may face on the mining front. Gerry is based out of Sudbury.

Contact Information:
Scott Patles-Richardson • 613-447-4600
Joel Henley • 807-465-5619
Gerry Lafontaine • 705-626-7909
From April 27 to 29, Métis post-secondary students had front row seats to learn about the latest in Métis research. They were among nearly 100 people who attended the Ways of Knowing: Promising Directions for Métis Research symposium, which was co-hosted by the Métis Nation of Ontario and the Chair of Métis Research at the University of Ottawa. The event brought together scholars from across the homeland to share their work and create a dialogue about Métis-focused research.

The goals of the symposium were to provide an opportunity for post-secondary students to interact with academics, to see themselves in the research, to promote further education and to highlight research gaps. “This is something that’s really extraordinary. There are very few spaces that are created specifically for Métis academics to talk about the work that they are doing,” said MNO President Margaret Froh. “I’m hoping that we are planting some good seeds. We’re absolutely making some good connections and some good networking.”

Chair of Métis Research at the University of Ottawa, Brenda Macdougall, PhD, said many post-secondary students feel they don’t have anything to contribute to research, but the event showed the opposite. She said attendees were engaged in the forum’s many topics and they asked important and thoughtful questions. “I want young people to actually see themselves in the possibility of actually being professors. It’s not a career people aspire to, but we can’t expect change if we aren’t the people there making those changes, so we have to pursue these opportunities,” she said. “Each person that has presented saw something that was missing and decided to fill it. We can’t complain and then not actually do something about it.”

The vast majority of speakers at the Ways of Knowing symposium identify as Métis. Among those presenting were MNO Associate Director of Education and Way of Life Brian Tucker; University of Ottawa Associate Professor Darren O’Toole; Osgood Hall Law School Associate Professor Karen Drake; Carleton University School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies Assistant Professor Jennifer Adese; University of Winnipeg Assistant Professor Chantal Fiola; University of Toronto SJD Anna Flaminio; Carleton University Assistant Professor Zoe Todd, Know History Director Ryan Shackleton and University of Alberta Associate Professor D’Arcy Vermette.

“WAYS OF KNOWING:
Symposium spotlights latest in Métis research
submitted by
MNO Staff

This is something that’s really extraordinary. There are very few spaces that are created specifically for Métis academics to talk about the work that they are doing.”
Margaret Froh
MNO President

continued on page 10
MNO citizens’ work and research on display

continued from page 9

their research topics. “I think that’s something that’s really important,” said Casidy Caron, Métis Nation British Columbia Minister for Youth. “We are all struggling to uncover what Métis identity is and be a really strong and proud Métis Nation.”

Jean Teillet, Senior Counsel with Pape Salter Teillet LLP, gave the keynote speech called Walking in the Footsteps of My Ancestors, which highlighted her family’s history. She spoke about how important it is to tell Métis history through those personal stories. The symposium featured a number of MNO citizens’ work and research, which was featured during panels that addressed a variety of themes.

Karen Drake, Associate Professor at Osgoode Hall Law School, spoke during a panel about racialized law and legal orders’ impact on identity; MNO associate Director of Education and Way of Life Brian Tucker, PhD, spoke during a panel focused on life on the land; and later, Tera Beaulieu, PhD candidate at the University of Saskatchewan Assistant Professor Cheryl Troupe answered questions following their presentations, which centred on trade, gender, family: setting the context.

In between presentations by the speakers, there was time for questions and mingling. Coming off the podium, attendees flocked to presenters with questions or comments about possible research and other opportunities.

MNO Youth Council Chair Paul Robitaille found the symposium was full of energy and enthusiasm. He said hearing from academics about their research and the process they went through to complete it was an exciting opportunity. “Just to hear the voices of people who have been through it, it’s validating and affirming and it gives me the energy to move forward,” he said.

“There’s so much exciting stuff happening out there, but it’s often hard to find it,” Robitaille said. The symposium put all of that research centre stage, and provided the opportunity for academics to showcase their work in one space, to point out the gaps that still exist in Ontario Métis research, and to encourage others to fill them.

“I think it’s about time we did this,” he added.

The final panel, about the intersection of education and reconciliation, featured speakers Jennifer St. Germain, PhD Candidate Carleton University and MNO Chief Strategy Officer; Benny Michaud, Acting Assistant Director, Centre for Indigenous Initiatives, Carleton University; and Sheila Grantham, PhD Candidate, School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies, Carleton University.

MNO research was also highlighted by Know History Director Ryan Shackleton, who talked about identifying the historic Métis of Ontario. His work with the NMO is ongoing and has contributed to various projects including the MNO Registry and Self-Government Readiness Process.

Following presentations and discussions, on April 28, attendees participated in a cultural evening with banding workshops led by MNO youth and a jigging workshop led by Ginny Gonneaux with Alice Blore on the fiddle and Liam Blore on guitar. Opening and closing prayers at the event were given by MNO Ottawa Region Métis Council Senator Parmallia Burgie.

The event was inspiring for youth, said Katelyn LacRoix, PCMNO Post-Secondary Representative. “I think a lot of students are intimidated by research, so creating spaces where academics can be seen as people and not just these amazing, invisible authors is a way to kind of see research as accessible and as personal to their own stories, in their own lives.” She added the entire event not only showcased the importance of community, but it helped create it by bringing everyone together. “Youth need and want this. They crave this kind of connection and it’s exciting,” she said.

University of Ottawa Professor Nicole St-Onge, Consultant and Historian Victor Lytwyn and University of Saskatchewan Assistant Professor Cheryl Troupe answered questions following their presentations, which centred on trade, gender, family: setting the context.

VIA Rail’s Indigenous discount reduces the cost of an adult fare by 33 per cent. To access the discount, login or create a profile prior to booking. When booking a ticket, on the passenger information screen, select “Corporate Rate” as the discount type and use code 13299. A serial number is required.

Passengers are required to show their Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizenship card on board (not required for children 15 years old and younger travelling with an adult who provides proof of citizenship). The discount has been offered to MNO citizens since September 2017.

For more information: www.viarail.ca/en/indigenous
MNO youth shares firsthand experience with child welfare system

submitted by Paul Robitaille, MNO Youth Council Chair


MNO youth leaders included Mitch Case and Paul Robitaille, who were joined by 2014 and 2017 MNO Canoe Expedition participant Gerald Lavallee.

“All that kids need is love and attention,” said Lavallee, who shared his own story of perseverance and reconnecting to community and culture during the meeting.

Lavallee, who lives in North Bay, was a crown ward from age eight to 14 and is passionate about supporting other young people involved in the child welfare system. “We can’t change the entire world by ourselves, but each of us can do a little bit of it.”

The three youth leaders were invited to participate in a special conversation circle focused on developing meaningful programs and support networks for young people who are in, or are transitioning out of, the child welfare system.

Some of the key messages included:

• The importance of having consistent opportunities to build meaningful, loving relationships with healthy, supportive elders, knowledge holders and role models within their communities.

• The need for funding and policies to be inclusive of Indigenous cultural and community supports existing outside the formal child and family welfare system, including those developed by Indigenous grassroots community groups.

• The importance of having consistent opportunities to build meaningful, loving relationships with healthy, supportive elders, knowledge holders and role models within their communities.

The gathering focused on developing youth-led, strengths-based initiatives like We Matter, the Hope Forum and the MNO’s mental wellness platform are incredible relevant to them in their lives. Initiatives such as We Matter, the Hope Forum and the MNO’s mental wellness platform are incredible first steps towards investing in the well-being of our Métis youth.

The goal of We Matter is about promoting hope, culture and strength, according to its Co-founder Tunchai Redvers.

“It’s about creating a space for Indigenous youth to feel loved and supported,” said Redvers.

“Suicide is an issue in all Indigenous communities, regardless of cultural differences. All we want to feel cared for and like we belong. It’s in finding strength in identity and culture, and talking about our shared challenges, that makes us feel like we’re not alone.”

Youth experiencing mental distress can access the numerous mental health supports offered by the MNO at www.keepingitreal.ca.

MNO signs community engagement agreement with Prodigy Gold

by MNO Staff

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) has signed an Impact and Benefit Agreement with Prodigy Gold, the developer of the Magino Mine, near Wawa.

On April 21, MNO President Margaret Froh, MNO citizens, the MNO Historic Sault Ste. Marie Traditional Territory Consultation Committee and the MNO Lakehead Nipigon Michipicoten Traditional Territory Consultation Committee attended the signing ceremony.

The Magino Gold Mine began operating in 1956 until its closure in 1992. After four years of consultations, the MNO and Prodigy have finalized the agreement, which is designed to provide accommodations to the Métis rights bearing community to address concerns the MNO has raised about the reopening of the Magino Mine.

Magino is being evaluated by Prodigy Gold as an open-pit mining opportunity with the potential for deeper, higher grade gold production.
A Métis Winter Camp Experience

by MNO Staff

Méts youth wouldn’t let anything get in the way of attending the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Hivernant Winter Camp Experience.

A group of 14 Métis youth travelled to Thunder Bay for the MNO Métis Youth Cultural Camp (MYCC) the weekend of March 23-26.

The camp is the first of four, happening seasonally throughout 2018. They connect youth from across Ontario, in the same way the MNOs annual March Break Camp, where several of the campers first met.

“Every time I come I have fun, I retain a lot of information, I have good memories and I make really, really good friends,” Pose Chartrand said of the camp experience.

The camp, called Hivernant, which is French for winterers, aimed to teach participants outdoor skills used at the winter villages during the fur trade. It took place at Fort William Historical Park, which recreates the days of the North West Company and the Canadian fur trade with its heritage and modern buildings on 250 acres.

This was Dalton Latondress’ first time attending a MNO youth camp. He said being at the historical park was a special experience because he felt as though he was walking in the footsteps of his ancestors.

“The camp is probably the best place for Métis youth to come and stay connected to their traditions and their culture, to find a sense of identity and meet some amazing Métis youth,” he said.

Friendships form fast. For MNO Manager of Education, Way of Life and Special Projects Scott Carpenter, it’s one of the best parts of seeing the camps come to fruition.

“You see them develop socially, as well as learn more about their culture and you see that pride in them grow as the days progress,” Carpenter said, adding a goal of the experience is to instill that pride, so that it’s passed down for generations to come.

The cultural program for the camp included a mixture of outdoor activities — which focused on teaching leadership, survival skills and spending time on the land — and activities like beading and quillwork.

These activities support the youth in discovering their Métis heritage and identity. It has made a difference for Grade 12 student Reagan Sicard, from Markdale. She describes going through a rough patch personally and said things started to change after attending some of the MNOs camps, including Hivernant.

“I don’t feel like something is missing anymore. These camps are important not only because they teach us, but because they connect us,” Métis culture and heritage hasn’t always been celebrated, but that’s changing, according to MNO citizen Courtney Vaughan, who works as an Assistant Coordinator for Challenges Canada, which helped facilitate the camp, she also was part of the 2017 MNO Canoe Expedition. She has noticed a new level of acceptance and identity in today’s Métis youth.

“I don’t hear that fear in the youth and I think that’s so powerful. There’s this excitement and this pride.”

During the first day, campers travelled about an hour northwest of the historical park to a secluded lake where they learned about ice safety, manually drilled holes for ice fishing, dropped fishing lines and started a fire. Back at the Fort, they received lessons in stripping quills from a porcupine and how to use them in the art of quilling.

The next day, at Pass Lake, campers used what they learned out on the lake and were taught about trapping, creating snares and stretching a beaver pelt.

To commemorate the experience, the students were presented with sashes, and flint and steel to fill the striker bags they created.

In honour of the first Métis Youth Cultural Camp, campers sign the Métis Flag on the last full day of the Hivernant winter camp.

A Camper Josh McBride uses an ice auger to create a hole for ice fishing on a lake about an hour northwest of Fort William Historical Park, in Thunder Bay.


Middle row, left to right: Saphryn Powley, Challenges Canada Assistant Coordinator Courtney Vaughan, MNO Education Officer Melody Chislett-Morris, Challenges Canada Owner/Operator Michael Richardson.

Front: Josh McBride. Absent Page Chartrand.
Walking among blooming trilliums that covered the forest floor, 13 Métis high school students from across the province foraged for morels and leeks during the first ever Printen: A Métis Spring Camp Experience.

In the bush, campers found crinkle root, large patches of wild leeks and even a few false morels. The leeks were added to the evening’s dinner.

The experience was part of a four-day Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) camp from May 24-27, which taught the Métis students about how their ancestors lived off the land. The campers also tried their hands at catching, cleaning and cooking fish, compass navigation and embroidery.

The camp is the second in a series of five Métis Youth Cultural Camps, funded by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. The camps coincide with the seasons to expand youth understanding of traditional knowledge and languages and to provide leadership skills training through land-based activities.

The name of the camp, “Printen” is Michif for spring.

Of the 13 students who attended, five participated in the previous winter Hivernant camp.

“I really wanted to come to this camp, because where I’m from there aren’t a lot of people who share my (history) that are Métis that I can find,” said Leah St. Germain, a first-time camp participant from Oakville.

“I also wanted to learn a lot more about myself. I wanted to learn a lot more about my culture so that I could feel more connected to my past because it’s a really rich culture and an amazing opportunity.”

Though pretty confident with her fishing skills before arriving, she said she still had a lot to learn. The campers caught some catfish and perch and learned how to clean trout.

“It has been easier to learn what my ancestors did instead of learning in a classroom,” said Noah McKenzie, from Windsor. “Doing what they did actually makes you feel more connected.”

That’s the whole idea behind the camps, according to Scott Carpenter, MNO Manager, Education, Way of Life and Special Projects.

“We’re trying to share these traditions like they would learn from their parents, their grandparents, their aunts and uncles, or friends in a very social way,” he said.

“Every season had something that our ancestors did in order to prepare for winter. Even talking to our youth about preserving — it’s just those simple things that
MNO representatives attend 2018 PDAC convention

submitted by MNO Staff

A mong the more than 25,000 people who attended the 2018 Proxy pectors and Developers Asso ciation of Canada (PDAC) con vention on March 6-7 in Toronto, were a number of Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizens who are members of MNO Consultation Committees.

The convention is put on by the national association representing the minority exploration and development industry.

The MNO attends every year as part of its mandate to foster new relationships with mining companies that operate within traditional Métis territories. Mineral proponents impacting lands and waterways traditionally used by Métis have the duty to consult with and accommodate the Métis rights-bearing communities in these areas.

During the convention, the MNO citizens had the opportunity to speak with former Ontario Min ister of Northern Development and Mines Michael Gravelle.

MNO representatives who attended include Jean Camirand, President MNO Thunder Bay Métis Council; Dan Boulard, Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) Region 5 Council; Nelson Montreuil, President MNO Mattawa Métis Council; Ernie Gatien, PCMNO Region 4 Councilor; Nina Henley, Secretary of MNO Kenora Métis Council; Yvonne Jensen, President MNO North Channel Métis Council; Brady Hupet, President MNO Sunset Country Métis Council; Jennifer Jensen, Secretary Treasurer MNO North Channel Métis Council; Maurice Sarain, Chair of the MNO Sudbury Métis Council; and Marc Laurin, President MNO Sudbury Métis Council.

The recognition was based primarily on Know History’s work on Métis history in Ontario. "We do have a deep understanding of the Métis communities in Ontario and I think that’s partly what the award recognizes us for. It’s not just going in and writing a report. It’s a way of working with the Métis, to do all of the documentation, present their past and hopefully preserve it," said Shackleton.

Know History’s work has also included a documentary filmed in Region 5, Traditional Knowledge interviews in Region 5, oral history training and the Mattawa Research Report. Know History currently assisting with the MNO Registry and Self-Govern ment Readiness Process. Know History’s work with the MNO has involved completing more than 300 interviews and has created a database of 20,000 Métis individuals that have been researched to see how they interrelate historically. It uses a research tool called social network analysis, which is something no other company does. It uses a program that analyses all of the kinship data collected and it creates massive charts showing those interrelations.

It’s pretty ground breaking work and we are applying it to historical communities," Shackleton said.

When Shackleton started Know History, he wanted to create a company with specific values and a team with passion. He wanted to do more than document manage ment; he wanted to really dig into the history, present it and document it.

"I think about a lot of special moments in a lot of projects that I’ve worked on. It’s the people you get to work on them with. There’s some Métis elders that are now gone and I remember sitting at the table interviewing them and having pizza with them; those are my favourite parts of projects," he said.

He added the work Know History does differs from academia. It’s more goal driven, and there are also time and budget constraints, he said.

"The Métis Nation of Ontario has done an exceptional amount of work to help us really dig into the history, present it and document it.

"They’re ancestors had to do in order to survive and we’re sharing that with the kids. Hopefully they’ll get an appreciation for what their ancestors had to go through.

"When Shackleton returned from page 13

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continued from page 13

every day. Every day they had to find some way of feeding their families and that had to come from harvesting of some sort and it was different in every season," said Bruneau.

"We’reMétis can leave here with some pride, some honour and some respect about where they’re from and the people around them and what they are trying to teach us, that if they take that home and grow from that, that’s worth a lot."

The camp isn’t the end, said Pro visional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) Senator Veronique Bruneau in her clos ing remarks, which was followed by the president of Métis leaders to first-time Métis campers.

"It sounds like you really put your heart and soul into this but this isn’t where it ends. When you leave here you’re taking what you learned with you. Bring it to your friends, bring it to your commu nity, talk to them and tell them what you learned. This is where we spread the Métis word that we are Métis and we are a proud people.”

Know History Director recognized for work with Métis Nation of Ontario

continued from page 13

by MNO Staff

Know History Director Ryan Shackleton, who has worked extensively with the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) on historical research, genealogy and tradi tional knowledge projects, was recognized by the National Council on Public History (NCPH) at an awards ceremony on April 21.

During the 2018 NCPH Awards breakfast in Las Vegas, Nevada, Shackleton received an Honour able Mention for Excellence in Consultation for contributions to the field of public history through consulting or contract work. Shackleton is among only 20 recog nized in the category in its 10 year history.

NCPH is an international association for museum professionals, historical consultants, historians, archivists, professors and others with an interest in public history. Each year, at its annual general meeting are honoured the best in public history.

This is Shackleton’s first time being recognized at the NCPH Awards. "There’s not a lot of awards out there for this kind of work," he said. "From my knowledge, I’m the first Canadian to have received it, so that’s kind of special.”

Though it is Shackleton’s name on the award, he credits the recognition to his entire team at Know History.

Established in 2011, Know History has two offices, one in Ottawa and the other in Calgary. It employs about 35 full-time employees, including researchers based in Guelph, London, Ont., and Victoria, B.C.

Know History’s work is varied and can include anything from researching the history of a building, to developing curric u lum for an Indigenous group. Its focus is on researching Cana dian history and presenting it in an accessible way for the public, whether through museum exhibits or reports.

Know History is also well known for its research on Métis history.

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The recognition was based par tially on Know History’s long-term work completed with the MNO on the Root Ancestors project. Know History’s work has also included a document ary filmed in Region 5, Traditional Knowledge interview es in Region 5, oral history training and the Mattawa Research Report. Know History is currently assisting with the MNO Registry and Self-Government Readiness Process. Know History’s work with the MNO has involved completing more than 300 inter views and has created a data base of 20,000 Métis individuals that have been researched to see how they interrelate historically. It uses a research tool called social network analysis, which is something no other company does. It uses a program that analyses all of the kinship data collected and it creates massive charts showing those interrelations.

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"They’re ancestors had to do in order to survive and we’re sharing that with the kids. Hopefully they’ll get an appreciation for what our ancestors had to go through."
The MNO Infinite Reach March Break Camp once again took place at the Canadian Ecology Centre in Mattawa, teaching upper year high school students about post-secondary opportunities as well as Métis way of life.

**An experience you can’t get anywhere else**

by MNO Staff

From snowshoeing and beading, to learning about post-secondary scholarships and resume writing, the 2018 Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Infinite Reach March Break Camp invited students to celebrate Métis way of life and learn about post-secondary opportunities.

The camp was held March 11 to 15, at the Canadian Ecology Centre in Mattawa and brought together Métis students from Grades 10, 11 and 12 with Infinite Reach Facilitators, who are upper year post-secondary students who assist new students adjust to university and college life.

The camp provides an opportunity for youths from across Ontario to meet, share new experiences and connect to Métis traditions. “A lot of Métis youth feel disconnected from their culture and it’s very helpful for them to have a place to come to learn these things,” said Kaitlyn Anderson-Mitchell, a Grade 11 student from London, Ont., who is also part of the MNO Thames Bluewater Métis Council. “Traditionally they would just be taught by their parents and grandparents — not everyone gets that opportunity. So it’s great for youth to be able to come here and learn these things.”

The four-day retreat included workshops on the job market, the value of post-secondary education and the MNO Infinite Reach program. Finger weaving, beading, making leather moccasins, jigging, playing historical games and taking in presentations from elders about trapping and maple sugar tapping were among the cultural activities offered, according to Tomas Lucas, one of the Infinite Reach Facilitators.

Campers also snowshoed several kilometres around the Canadian Ecology Centre and enjoyed cooking over a campfire. Grade 12 student Jacxsen Cress, from Sudbury, learned a lot about Métis culture. “This camp has taught me a lot about things my ancestors would have done that I had no idea about,” he said.

PCMNO Senator Ray Bregle feels the March Break Camp plays an really important role for youth “it introduces them to new friends and more importantly brings them back to the land and their roots — this is so important as the youth are our future.”

INFINITE REACH: MÉTIS YOUTH STUDENT SOLIDARITY NETWORK

**MNO Infinite Reach Facilitators attend gathering in Toronto**

submitted by

Michael V. Smith
MNO Education Officer

Over the weekend of Jan. 27-28, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Infinite Reach Facilitators from across the province gathered in Toronto to share their experiences and learn more about Métis culture.

Infinite Reach Facilitators are upper year post-secondary students who assist new students by helping them adjust to university and college life. They create and maintain a sense of community among Métis students by hosting cultural events and information sessions.

The 25 facilitators spent the weekend participating in discussions and taking in presentations, which provided information about post-secondary education scholarships, bursaries, financial assistance and employment opportunities.

Facilitators also participated in Métis cultural training including jigging and Métis traditional games. To assist facilitators in hosting events that honour women and work toward ending violence against Indigenous women, MNO Honouring Women is Part of Métis Culture Engagement Toolkits were also distributed.

“The weekend was a wonderful opportunity to get together and network with Infinite Reach Facilitators from other post-secondary institutions,” said one participant. “We shared our experiences as Métis in post-secondary, discussed events we’ve hosted as Infinite Reach Facilitators, and talked about ways of supporting each other, Métis students at our schools and the Infinite Reach Network as a whole.”

Throughout the school year, facilitators host Métis cultural and information events to connect students to the local MNO community councils, as well as various programs, services and events offered by the MNO. Some examples of events that facilitators have hosted include cultural activities such as Métis dot art painting, beading, finger-weaving, as well as information events such as a high school outreach and Métis 101 presentations.

“Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Infinite Reach March Break Camp once again took place at the Canadian Ecology Centre in Mattawa, teaching upper year high school students about post-secondary opportunities as well as Métis way of life.”

MNO President Margaret Froh, who had an opportunity to attend part of the camp, hopes the experience will inspire the Métis youth who attended. “This camp is a celebration of who we are as Métis people, to share and experience our culture and traditions here in what is an absolutely beautiful area,” she said.

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The first issue of the Métis Voyageur was published late in 1997. It included coverage of Louis Riel Day ceremonies in Toronto, profiles of members of the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario and a story about the previous summer’s Annual General Assembly in River Valley near Sudbury.

In March 2003 arguments in R v. Powley were heard at the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC). In September of that year the SCC handed down its historic decision. Steve Powley was quoted as saying, “It would have been happy with them saying, yes, we were Métis and we do exist, but we got the whole ball of wax that we initially went to court for. It was just amazing. People were screaming and yelling in the lobby.” Sadly, less than a year later the Voyageur had to report on the pre-mature death of Steve Powley. (Above) Steve Powley at the Supreme Court of Canada on September 19, 2003.

The fourth issue of the Métis Voyageur was devoted to covering the 1998 Annual General Assembly in Kenora. Some of the entertainment included First Nation dancers, pipers, legendary Métis musician Ray St. Germain and the then-Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians the Honourable Ralph Goodale.

You can catch a snapshot of the Métis of Ontario (MNO) through the Métis Voyageur, a bi-monthly newsletter also known as “bushes”. Those of the Métis in any community, from pounding a fur trade route to a Métis lawyer and Riel descendant Jean Teillet; PCMNO Region 4 Councillor, Art Bennett; MNO President Gary Lipinski; Métis fiddler Roger Giroux and Bob Goulais, Nipissing Region One...
For many years the Métis Nation of Ontario Annual General Assembly was held outdoors under a large tent. This photo shows the big tent going up to the 2004 Annual General Assembly in Thunder Bay.

In June 2004 harvesting negotiations with the province had come to head. Tensions were running high and the Voyageur wondered if a “Battle in the Bushes” was imminent. During the AGA in Thunder Bay, last minute negotiations led to an interim harvesting agreement. In the photo above delegates to the AGA in Thunder Bay erupt in joyous applause as the announcement is made.

The Voyageur covers the big stories: historic Métis rights court cases, game-changing agreements signed with government and industry, but tries to stay grounded in Métis culture and way of life. The cover story of issue #94 is about an important MOU signing with the government of Canada, but also features a profile of Nelson Montrueil who keeps the Métis trapping tradition alive. Two very different stories but both important to our future as Métis people.
The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Youth Council is excited to announce Métis youth Katie Baltzer and the Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre (SOAHAC) as the first recipient of a MNO Youth Council Grassroots Grant.

Baltzer, who is a volunteer with the MNO Windsor-Essex-Kent Métis Council, will receive $500 to support Métis Monday Youth Socials at the SOAHAC community garden.

The SOAHAC Community Garden Youth Socials are a safe space for Indigenous youth to come together and learn teachings about the land, on the land, in a region where many young people lack other opportunities to do so. The grant will allow Baltzer and SOAHAC to include more Métis-specific content and traditional activities in community garden programming and will help empower Métis youth to connect with Métis culture, elders and other Métis youth.

The Grassroots Grants Program is part of the MNO Youth Council’s ongoing commitment to supporting the creative potential of Métis youth across the province. It is designed to challenge Ontario’s Métis youth to develop new and innovative approaches to community building in their local areas. The program will provide up to $500 to Ontario Métis youth-led, youth-focused initiatives in one of two priority areas: youth engagement and empowerment or Métis arts, language and culture. Applications are now being accepted and will be funded on a priority basis, as funding becomes available.

For more information about the Grassroots Grants or to submit an application, please email the MNOYC (mnoyc.grants@gmail.com).

MNO Youth Council presents first Grassroots Grant

submitted by Paul Robitaille, MNO Youth Council Chair

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For more information, about Métis Monday Youth Socials, contact Katie Baltzer: kbaltzer@soahac.on.ca
A longitudinal Indigenous youth from across the country; Métis Nation of Ontario citizen kieran McMonagle addressed the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples on June 6. Her presentation was part of Youth Indigenize the Senate, which took place in Ottawa. This is the third year that the Committee has invited people from across the country to participate in the project through employment, training, business development and ongoing consultations involving the mining project.

Several MNO representatives attended the signing including Joanne Meyer MNO Chief Operating Officer, Jacqueline Barry, MNO Consultation Assessment Coordinator, Ken Simard, Senator and Region 2 Captain of the Hunt, William Gordon, President MNO Greenstone Métis Council, Dave Benson, NAP Senior Geologist, Mike Wanecki, NAP Environmental Superintendent, Christine Konzenko, NAP HR Superintendent, Jean Camirand, President MNO Thunder Bay Métis Council and Jill Maxwell, NAP Sr. Project geologist. (Front row) Cameron Burgess, Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) Councilor and Chair of the Region 2 Consultation Committee and Jim Gallagher, NAP President and Chief Executive Officer.

MNO signs MOU with North American Palladium

By MNO Staff

In April 4, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with North American Palladium (NAP) in relation to the Lac des Iles Mine Project in Thunder Bay.

The MOU sets out the principles that will guide MNO representatives and NAP in developing a relationship that includes meeting regularly and mitigating any impacts from the future development of the mine site or exploration area on Métis rights and interests in the territory. The MOU provides the Métis rights holding community with an opportunity to participate in the project through employment, training, business development and a new youth program.

McMonagle identified some areas that could be improved, including recognizing Indigenous languages as students’ first languages, so they can access English as a second language program.

There is better student retention and academic achievement. “That again puts them at a disadvantage, so even though we are trying to support and remove barriers, institutionally and systemically those barriers are still there.” Following her comments, McMonagle answered questions posed by the senators and Senator Mary Jane Mccaulum, who represents Manitoba, thanked McMonagle for her presentation.

“It was just so incredible and so heartwarming that we have youth that are so articulate so intelligent... it’s so good to hear this,” she said.

MNO President speaks at Indigenous Women’s Leadership Forum

by MNO Staff

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) President Margaret Froh shared her story of her journey and encouraged women to use their voices during the Indigenous Women’s Leadership Forum on Feb. 22 at the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health.

“Women leaders, we bring our gifts, we bring our energy, we bring a different approach. We are change makers inherently, the Creator has made us change makers,” President Froh said during her keynote address.

“As women, I think our voice is incredibly powerful. We change everything we go along; it’s inherent in who we are.”

Froh, the first woman and first two-spirited person to be elected as MNO president, shared some of her personal experiences with attendees.

“I, like many of you in the room have suffered harm; I have been targeted as a girl, as a young woman. And in our society, we are taught that we are somehow responsible for that.”

“I, like many of you have had hard times in my life and I have questioned because of those things if I am worthy of love.”

President Froh said feelings of isolation, feeling like you aren’t respected or your voice isn’t heard is disturbing.

“...it’s so good to hear this,” she said.

McMonagle addressed the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples on June 6 as part of Youth Indigenize the Senate.

MNO citizen kieran McMonagle addresses the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples on June 6 as part of Youth Indigenize the Senate.
Meet the MNO’s newest community council

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before the founding of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Thames Bluewater (Interim) Métis Council (TBMC), Métis in the London area could only connect at local friendship centres, First Nations or other Indigenous events.

In attending such events, Russell Green, who became MNO TBMC President, spoke to many people who turned out to be Métis. “We sort of got swallowed up by the Indigenous community around us. It’s not bad that we have friends in other cultures, at the same time, we were void of that cultural, personal identity that says we are Métis.”

After Green reached out to a neighbouring council - MNO Clear Waters Métis Council - for help in creating events and opportunities for Métis elders and citizens, he began to realize there was a gap in the area because there wasn’t a local council.

“We all realize that we are part of that Indigenous culture, but we were missing that distinct portion that is Métis that no group could provide here.”

That gap no longer exists, as the MNO TBMC held elections last October, has created subcommittees and is “hitting the ground running,” Green said. “We have a really enthusiastic, professional council.”

One of the goals of the council is to forge new connections through its own events. Green hopes the new council will bring back the music, food, impromptu kitchen jigging and more that is distinctly Métis, so that Métis youth and children can grow up knowing their culture.

“We all realize that we are part of that Indigenous culture, but we were missing that distinct portion that is Métis that no group could provide here.”

There are more than 250 MNO citizens living within city limits and another 250 living just outside them. The council hopes to get a good sense of what the community’s wants and needs are. “We are really reaching out — not just to the Métis community, but the community as a whole and letting them know we are here,” said Green.

Members of the MNO’s newest community council are missing that distinct portion of that Indigenous culture, but we have a really enthusiastic, professional council.”

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There are more than 250 MNO citizens living within city limits and another 250 living just outside them. The council hopes to get a good sense of what the community’s wants and needs are. “We are really reaching out — not just to the Métis community, but the community as a whole and letting them know we are here,” said Green.

They were part of the Fanshawe College powwow on March 22, where they handed out information to attendees. Following up on the powwow, the council hosted a meet and greet event on April 7. A third event also took place in An Indigenous Garden/Métis Festival and plans to wear their pair of moccasins to walk on their healing journeys.

The planning is part of a busy few months. Earlier this year, on Feb. 10-11 members participated in the MNO’s Governance and Finance Training, facilitated by MNO Manager of Community Relations Hank Rowlinson and MNO Consultation and Community Relations Coordinator Glen Lipinski.

The training included a “Métis 101” presentation and navigation through subjects covered in parliamentary procedures and meetings. Subjects also included budgeting, general reporting, finance policies and procedures, as well as governance challenges, opportunities and planning.

The community has already shown its support for the new council.

According to Green, Fanshawe College has created an opportunity for someone from the council to be a part of their Aboriginal Education Council and a local Indigenous family centre is also looking for a representative for one of its committees. The Thames Valley District School board has also reached out for members of the Métis community to visit its schools.

The community backing was evident from the first meeting about setting up the council when more than 80 people attended. “I think it’s the emergence of people really trying to find who they are and having that sense of community again. That’s what probably helped drive that interest,” Green said. “Knowing where you come from can help you as a person grow and get in touch with your community. That way you can receive the community and those support structures that are in the community.”

To keep up with what’s happening with the MNO Thames Bluewater (Interim) Métis Council, find them on Facebook and Twitter.

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) staff held two Walking Our Path Moccasin Workshops with local service providers on March 15 and March 20 at the MNO office in Brampton.

More than 30 participants from the Toronto Police, Peel Police, University of Toronto, Town of Halton Hills, City of Brampton, Victim Services of Peel, Peel Children’s Aid Society, Trillium Health Partners-Chantel’s Place and Safe City Mississauga each made a pair of leather moccasins at one of the two workshops.

The workshops provided an opportunity for service providers, whom the MNO works with in a number of capacities, to experience a hands-on, traditional activity that the MNO provides. They also learned about the programs and services the MNO offers in Peel Region and across the province.

The event included time for networking and discussions about the need for mental health support and self-care for service providers, as well as clients.

Each participant enjoyed the workshop and plans to wear their pair of moccasins to walk on their healing journeys.

If you have any questions about the MNO Métis Family Wellbeing Program in the Peel Region, please contact Catherine Corbett at 905-450-4844 ex. 304 or catherine@metsnation.org or Rose Colacci-Fines at 905-450-4844 ex. 305 or rosec@metsnation.org.

More than 30 people attended two separate moccasin workshops in Brampton on March 15 and March 20, including (back row, left to right) Kristina Lombardi, Mariam Fares, Jennifer Keeler, Catherine Corbett, Maria Soto, Crystal Fares, (front row, left to right) Brian Boros, Beth Boros, Baron Boros and Brycen Hansberger.
Students learn dot art painting during MNO workshop

submitted by Karen Derocher
MNO Credit River Métis Council President

About 50 Grade 3 students from Guardian Angel Catholic Elementary School learned all about dot art painting, hunting and trapping at a Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Credit River Métis Council (CRMC) workshop on Feb. 27, in Brampton.

Facilitated by MNO CRMC Treasurer Darlene Lent, the workshop gave students a chance to express their artistic talents and experience dot art painting, which replicates traditional Métis beading patterns.

The student-made paintings were framed and given as Mother’s Day gifts.

While preparing for this workshop, Lent had a chance to engage her mother, MNO citizen Bertha Tolles, in the process of dot art painting. They spent an evening painting and concluded that this activity would appeal to people of all ages.

“We decided it should be shared with not only the young, but those of all ages, promoting Métis traditions and culture, engaging all in our community,” Lent said.

When the dot art was finished, students heard a presentation on hunting and trapping from a Métis perspective. The students were extremely receptive, and asked a lot of questions. They were also given the chance to touch different furs and at the end, students showed an understanding of hunting and trapping as being an integral part of the Métis way of life.

Stirring up friendship in the MNO community kitchen

submitted by Tammy Wintle
MNO Community Support Service Coordinator

After receiving many compliments and requests for the recipe for its Métis Friendship Soup over the last 10 years, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) staff in Thorold decided to make it for its community kitchen workshop on Dec. 18, 2017.

The event was attended by 21 people. Staff gathered all the ingredients in bulk for the soup. They made an assembly line, sterilized jars, scooped ingredients, applied labels with directions and decorated the jars. Clients joined in on the fun and learned the secret ingredients. Staff discussed the nutritional benefits of the soup and how to make it with the jar of dry ingredients at home.

The Métis Friendship Soup gave staff an opportunity to reach out to clients in need and make deliveries. Once at the client’s home, instructions were provided on how the soup is made; staff also took the time to talk with individuals and in some cases were even invited inside.

The Métis Friendship Soup lived up to its name. Sixteen clients received the soup along with a visit from MNO staff which cemented the client/staff relationship, which is truly a “friendship.”

MNO Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council builds relationship with OPP

submitted by Stephen Gjos
MNO Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council Secretary

On Jan. 23, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council (HSSMMC) met with members of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Provincial Liaison Team. The team made a presentation to the council, providing information about its function and duties.

The liaison team provides a different approach to policing, ranging from relationship building and assisting with different Indigenous communities, to working with and mediating between stake holders involved in protests.

The police team was formed following recommendations from the Ipperwash Inquiry.

The inquiry’s report, released on May 31, 2007, followed the death of Dudley George, who was shot by police during a protest by First Nations representatives at Ipperwash Provincial Park.

A total of 100 recommendations were made, aiming to improve relations among government, police and Indigenous people.

Members of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Liaison Team meet with the MNO Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council (HSSMMC) on Jan. 23. Pictured are (from left to right) Dan St. Louis, MNO HSSMMC Vice-President John Konawalchuk, OPP Const. Marilyn Cameron, MNO HSSMMC Women’s Representative Shirley Loubert, MNO HSSMMC Councilor Ken Figures, MNO HSSMMC Treasurer Shari Smale, Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario Region 4 Councilor Ernie Gatien, MNO HSSMMC President Kim Powley, OPP Const. Francis Endanawas, MNO HSSMMC Secretary Steve Gjos, MNO HSSMMC Youth Representative Meagan Gjos, OPP Const Todd Showan and MNO HSSMMC Senator Brenda Powley. (Front) Memphis and Rayden.

At a community kitchen workshop, hosted by MNO staff in Thorold, clients learned the secret recipe to its Métis Friendship Soup.
MNO celebrates partnership with local health unit

submitted by
Robin Simpson
MNO Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children/Community Action Program for Children Coordinator

On March 22, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) office in Bancroft opened its doors to celebrate its partnership with the Hastings Prince Edward Public unit. About 45 people attended the open house, including local physicians, nurses, dietitians, child and family experts, as well as past and present participants of the North Hastings Food for You: Food for Two program. The partnership between the MNO and the health unit started a year ago, when the North Hastings Food for You: Food for Two program, which is the local name for the Canada Prenatal Nutrition program, relocated to the MNO office on Chemishghon Road. The move followed an announcement by the federal government that future funding would be given to programs that focus on improving health of pregnant women and infants, and strengthening maternal and family capacity, skills and social supports. Another goal is to strengthen the community’s capacity to address the public health needs of pregnant women, new mothers and their infants. According to Hastings Prince Edward Public Health, at the weekly drop-in program, families are provided a healthy snack, receive free groceries, milk and prenatal vitamins, and have the opportunity to consult with public health nurses and dietitians with questions and concerns about infant feeding.

A number of traditions also form part of the program, recalled Calista Wilkinson, a Food for You, Food for Two participant. “Being Métis, having a connection to Métis culture is very important to me,” she said.

Wilkinson remembers making moss bags for babies, participating in a smudge and enjoying a hand-drummed song delivered by MNO Victims Services Coordinator Marsha Depeters. “All of the kids gathered in the room clapping their hands to the heartbeat. The loving and relaxing feeling you get here is incredible,” she said.

The program is available to low-income families, those with inadequate housing or those struggling with food insecurity, as well as lone-parent households and individuals lacking supportive relationships, including pregnant teens or older mothers, individuals experiencing situations of violence, or tobacco or substance misuse. The MNO looks forward to continuing with this partnership, while continuing to support Métis families in our community through inclusion, care and support.

Painting unveiled for MNO Thorold office

submitted by
Laura Burey
MNO MMM: Treasurer

Sitting on the edge of a mountain, towering trees and water as smooth as glass frame a trapper’s cabin in a new painting that hangs in the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) office in Thorold.

The painting, created by long-time MNO Niagara Region Métis Councillor Pierre Carre, was unveiled following the council’s Annual General Meeting on April 18. Carre said that the mural represents the waterways that Métis voyagers once travelled in the north. He added it was an honour to be asked to create the work for the MNO. He dedicated the painting to fellow Councillor Reg Bernier, who was a founding member of the MNO Welland Métis Council that evolved into the MNO Niagara Region Métis Council. Councillor Carre wanted to honour his colleague’s work on council and the support he has provided to the community over the years. “I don’t really like my own work, but it means a lot to me to have been asked, to have created something for the MNO and to dedicate it to a good friend. I’m proud of doing it,” he said.

The cost of the painting was financed through community hub funding administered by the MNO to create safe, culturally rich and welcoming community spaces. Councillor Carre has been drawing his entire life, but took up painting more than five years ago. The painting is five feet by four feet and it took him about five hours to complete.

The painting now hangs in the Voyaguer Room, which is the main meeting space in the MNO office.

MNO blanket workshops promote healing

submitted by
Chantalle Gagnier
MNO Métis Family Wellbeing Coordinator

The workshop is called Mending Broken Paths and more than 20 people attended. During the event, participants and staff spoke about how therapeutic the process was and how it supported the opportunity for togetherness throughout the Hamilton community.

The MNO also planned a healing blanket workshop for youth on March 12, at the Hamilton Regional Indian Centre, at 34 Ottawa Sr. N., Hamilton, Ont.

More than 20 people attended a recent open house at the MNO office in Bancroft to celebrate the MNO’s partnership with the Hastings Prince Edward Public Health Unit.

MNO Niagara Region Métis Councillor Pierre Carre unveils his painting for the Thorold office following the council’s Annual General Meeting on April 18.

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More than 20 people attended a healing blanket workshop at the Hamilton Regional Indian Centre on Jan. 24.
Welland Museum revives Métis exhibit

submitted by
Derrick Pont
MNO Niagara Region Métis Council President

written by
Kris Dube, special to
The St. Catharines Standard

A n exhibit celebrating Métis culture, one that hasn’t been seen for years, was back this spring at Welland Museum.

The museum hosted Métis Day on Feb. 18 with engaging presentations, art and artifacts, to celebrate the unique culture and its people — and to give people a glimpse of the exhibit that has been closed for several years.

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Niagara Region Métis Council president Derrick Pont said the museum’s Métis Day, along with the efforts made by other groups in the country, are vital to the nation’s identity.

“We do whatever we can to bring back that awareness — and to try and bring back a part of Canadian history that was lost for so many years,” said Pont.

He said times have changed significantly and Métis people are regarded today as having an incredibly distinct heritage and story behind their culture.

Brian Kon, also a member of the MNO Niagara Region Métis Council, shared information about the MNO Niagara Region Métis Council presentation at the King Street museum, referencing that the artwork, much of it involving floral patterns, is inspired by the beadwork that Métis people were known for.

Using a cotton swab, knitting needle or end of a paintbrush, dot art painting tries to replicate those beadwork patterns. Métis visual artist Christi Belcourt’s work has been influential in popularizing the art form, sparking workshops and demonstrations.

Museum Curator and Manager Penny Morningstar said what was on display during the event took about 18 months to assemble, with the support of different Indigenous groups as well as a Canada 150 grant.

“We’re really fortunate to be a host site where so much cultural knowledge can be shared,” she said.

Most of the museum’s contents had to be moved off-site for an extensive renovation. A formal relaunch of the Métis exhibit was promoted on social media before its May opening.

“Spirits are high, and excitement is building for us to get back to having it open full time,” said Morningstar.

This is a modified version of an article that originally appeared at www.stcatharinesstandard.ca/2018/02/19/metis-exhibit-to-be-revived-at-welland-museum

MNO Peterborough and District Wapiti Métis Council meet with school board

submitted by
MNO Staff

O n Feb. 1, a delegation from the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Peterborough and District Wapiti Métis Council (PDWMC) met with the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board at the MNO office in Peterborough. The MNO PDWMC delegation consisted of President Andy Dufrane, Superintendent Tim Moloney, MNO PDWMC President Andy Dufrane.

The meeting was requested by the School Board to discuss relationship building and Métis representation on the School Board. President Dufrane presented sashes to each representative of the Board by President Dufrane. The exchange of information and engagement was very valuable to both bodies. It is expected that going forward that the School Board and MNO PDWMC will continue to build their relationship.

MNO Grand River Métis Council take part in powwow

submitted by
Diane Kilby
MNO Grand River Métis Councilor

M étis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Grand River Métis Council (GRMC) representatives participated in the 8th Annual Traditional Pow Wow at Conestoga College in Kitchener on Feb. 24.

MNO GRMC President Jennifer Parkinson proudly carried the Métis flag in both the grand entry and the closing retreat. Councilors and citizens provided a display table and answered questions about Métis history and culture.

Throughout the event there was drumming and dancing, as well as dancing, traditional food, artisans and crafts. The potato dance was a huge hit.

The MNO GRMC enjoyed participating in the event and it looks forward to being part of the powwow again next year.

MNO citizen Brian Kon works on his dot art at Métis Day celebrations in Welland on Feb. 17. Photo Courtesy of Kris Dube.

MNO Grand River Métis Councilor Diane Kilby, Secretary Pandora Wilhelm, Councilor Pat St John and Treasurer Leslie-Anne Muma attend the Annual Traditional Pow Wow held at Conestoga College on Feb. 24.

MNO Grand River Métis Councilor Diane Kilby, Secretary Pandora Wilhelm, Councilor Pat St John and Treasurer Leslie-Anne Muma attend the Annual Traditional Pow Wow held at Conestoga College on Feb. 24.
More than 60 Métis women gathered in Sudbury on Feb. 25 and 26 to be a part of a two-day event dedicated to the empowerment of Métis women. The event is the brainchild of Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Sudbury Métis Council Women’s Representative Berni Picco, who is an advocate for increased awareness, funding and missing and murdered Métis women. Picco recognized the importance and the need in Sudbury to shed a new light on Métis women, a light that brings about empowerment.

The event included Métis traditional activities that helped everyone get to know each other. Participants began by introducing themselves to the group and revealing their “superpowers.” They included things like being a single mother of three children, a truck driver, cancer survivor, foster mom, baker, artist and more.

Afterwards, they participated in a self-defense class, led by Royal Canadian Mounted Police Cpl. Cheryl Hayden. Hayden showed how to make a proper fist, what a stable self-defense stance looks and feels like, how to jab and block. She also talked about where the pressure points are located, provided tips for increasing personal safety, including the importance of being aware of your surroundings. Melanie Smits led participants in a jiggling workshop. She showcased different footwork patterns and how to use props. Jiggers danced to fiddle music by Jocelyn Trudeau, who was accompanied by Jeff Wiseman. Local artist Maritime Fortin also performed on an acoustic guitar.

Around the perimeter of the hall, stations were set up where attendees could showcase items representing Métis culture, talents and crafts. Some of the items on display included floral art made of cedar, handmade cards with thread art, jars and jellies, moccasins, wildlife artwork painted on feathers and wood, and jewelry using a bear’s claw and teeth.

The participants later recreated the Métis flag; the white infinity symbol on a blue background, out of beads using safety pins and a pattern.

On day two of the weekend event, Hayden gathered all the women to participate in improvisation exercises. They enjoyed cedar and blueberry tea and snacked on pemmican made by the MNO Sudbury Métis Council while listening to music by Métis artist James Bolin.

Participants also learned how to shoot a bow and arrow during a Métis Olympics that used an inflatable archery station with five targets. Before the event came to an end, participants created medicine bags from deer hide to hold cedar, tobacco, sage and sweet grass.

Special thanks to those who donated 30 door prizes and giveaways to the participants, including Michelle Durocher from McDougall Energy, Métis artist Jessica Somers, Denis Lefebvre and more.

Empowering Métis women in Sudbury

submitted by Brigitte North, MNO Sudbury Métis Council Representative

Strongening Métis families

submitted by Lisa Poulin, MNO Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Coordinator with information from the Canadian Pediatric Society

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Veterans’ Council represents and advocates for Métis veterans during an Aboriginal Veterans Day ceremony at Canadian Forces Base Borden on May 24. As in previous years, members of the MNO Veterans’ Council and the community attended and participated with First Nations veterans.

The event has helped build bridges and relationships between Métis and First Nations. Many in attendance were not aware of the post-contact history of the Métis and First Nations, which was retold by both commissioned and non-commissoned officers through an interactive story. The Defense Aboriginal Advisory Group organizes the event every year on Canadian Forces Bases. The MNO Veterans’ Council is proud to attend the annual event, which is now in its fifth year at Borden. MNO Georgian Bay Métis Council Youth Representative Dalton Latondress also attended the event. Latondress is considering the Aboriginal Leadership Opportunity Year (ALOY) program with the Canadian Forces after finishing high school.

A goal of the MNO Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children program is to strengthen the bonds of Métis families through culture, advocacy and education. Part of the MNO Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children program is to address issues that can get in the way of building healthy families. One of these issues is the challenge presented by over exposure to computers and mobile devices.

One of the goals of the program is to encourage parents, who have children under six years of age, to reduce screen time and engage in a hobby or craft that can connect them with their children and other family members. According to the Canadian Pediatric Society (CPS), there are risks to young children who spend too much time on a computer or mobile device. These include language/speech delays, nighttime sleep problems, cognitive delay issues, reduced interest in social interaction and behaviour issues.

Too much screen time can mean more family engagement and memories that will last a lifetime.

MNO Veterans’ Council attends Aboriginal Veterans Day

submitted by Greg Garratt, MNO Veterans’ Council Secretary/Treasurer

A child’s needs change rapidly in the first five years, and by providing consistent face-to-face interaction, you’re encouraging your baby to explore and learn about him/her/their environment. Don’t forget, less screen time means more family engagement and memories that will last a lifetime.
Hundres of dancers and spectators gathered the weekend of March 3-4 for the 13th annual Gathering at the Rapids Powwow at Algoma University.

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) partners with the Algoma University Shingwagon Anishinaabe Students’ Association every year for the event. According to MNO Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council Secretary Steve Gjos, it’s a very important partnership, in part because of the deep history between the Métis and rapids of the St. Marys River in Sault Ste. Marie.

Considered the largest powwow in the area, the gathering drew more than 200 dancers, 11 large drums and drummers. Gjos carried the Eagle Staff during all three of the grand entries; two on March 3 and one the following day at noon.

“This is a huge honour and very sacred to me. It is one of the most important things I do all year,” said Gjos. “This powwow makes me very proud to be Métis.

The partnerships we have been building with other First Nation communities and the City of Sault Ste. Marie are amazing.”

The event also included a dance competition for performers of all ages, as well as prize money for old style jingle dress dancers. Vendors also filled the gathering space with crafts and traditional food. The master of ceremonies for the powwow was Joel Syrette, with Whitefish Bay providing the host drum.

The partnering system was at Madame Elaine Christensen’s Grade 2 students at Riverside Public School. There they and their grandson, Owen Porter, gave a presentation to the students.

With beads, a fiddle, furs and more on display, they also explained what the Métis used to cook with, how they made fires and travelled by canoe. Owen spoke about his sash and how proud he is to wear it. The students also enjoyed some bannock and maple syrup.

Senator Brunelle and her husband Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Victor Brunelle, were invited by the Sys-tems Support Librarian of Oxford County in Ingersoll, Ont., to be part of a panel discussion following the screening of documentary film Bee Nation on March 7.

The documentary is about the first-ever First Nations provincial spelling bee that took place in Saanich in 2016. Winners from the competition went on to the national championship in Toronto.

The conversation that followed focused on getting input not only from First Nations individuals, but also Métis community members to find better ways of identifying the needs of Indigenous members of the community.

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**Métis artists attend first open forum**

submitted by
Karen Derocher
MNO Credit River Métis Council
President

On March 28, Grandmothers, mothers, aunts, sisters and daughters attended a Midwifery and Healing Medicine workshop in Brampton. The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Credit River Métis Council (CRMC) hosted the event with the Mississauga Halton Local Health Integration Network at the MNO office.

During this introductory workshop, attendees took the time to remember traditions, explore modern midwifery practice, learn about the safe use of herbal medicines and discuss paths to connect with or train as a midwife.

The historic role of helpers/midwives during childbirth was common in most Indigenous communities until hospitals and modern medicine began to take over the role. However, there has been a recent resurgence of midwifery for expectant mothers in Ontario and across Turtle Island. Darlene Lent, MNO CRMC Women’s Representative, facilitated the gathering and opened it with a warm welcome, a prayer and smudge ceremony.

Guests introduced themselves and shared their memories and experiences of midwifery, home births and hospital births. Sharing their stories was an emotional reflection of excitement, joy and also some tears and sadness about their experiences. A few men also attended and their memories brought unique insight about either being included or excluded in birthing practices. They spoke of how this affected family bonding.

Natalie Lucas presented background on midwifery and philosophy of midwifery care and then showed a documentary. She spoke about training, emergency skills and the differences between Indigenous midwifery and mainstream midwifery. She is a Métis student midwife, entering her fourth and final year of the midwifery program at Ryerson University, and is also working with the Six Nations Midwifery program. Stefania Ruffalo, an Herbal Medicines Knowledge Keeper, explained the difference between traditional medicine versus herbal medicine. She spoke about the safe use of some herbal medicines, and how we use medicine, during pregnancy, birth and postpartum.

Participants in the event included Lucas’ mentor, Melodie Smith from the Six Nations Midwifery program. MNO Credit River Métis Council Women’s Representative Tobias Clarke and Mississauga Halton Local Health Integration Network partner Elizabeth Molinaro attended as guests. The workshop provided a great opportunity for a local service provider partner and neighbouring Métis council to build community relationships.

![Rick Nolan and Karen Lediard (absent) had two tables displaying their carpentry and fine wildlife pillows at the Open Forum for Métis Artists on April 11 at the MNO office in Midland.](image)

**Métis artists attend first open forum**

submitted by
Pauline Richardson, PC/MNO Region 7 Councillor

More than 50 people attended the Open Forum for Métis Artists on April 11 at the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) office in Midland.

The event was organized by MNO citizen and artist Maurice Cadieux and his wife Donna. Their passion for the arts, their family and friends sparked the idea to give back by inviting other Métis artists and providing a venue for them to interact and show their work.

Artists filled every table with displays of beading, sculptures, carpentry, visual arts and photography.

True to Métis spirit, the hall was filled with laughter and music throughout the evening. Everyone had an opportunity to interact with the artists, ask questions and develop friendships.

Comment cards from participants showed they loved the event.

The event is just the first, according to Cadieux, who is already planning for the next open forum.

Special thanks to the MNO Georgian Bay Métis Council for their donation of the facilities, food and beverages. Maurice and Donna would also like to thank their family and friends for their support throughout the organization of the event.

![Métis artists filled every table with displays of beading, sculptures, carpentry, visual arts and photography.](image)

**Métis artists attend first open forum**

submitted by
Susan Staves
MNO Great Lakes Métis Council Office Co-ordinator

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Great Lakes Métis Council invited an experienced trapper to teach wilderness survival techniques on Feb. 24. Attendants were taught by Johnny Borton, a licensed trapper for more than 20 years, from Listowel, Ont.

Twenty-seven people of all ages attended. They learned 18 ways to survive in the bush, including how to trap different animals. They also took part in hands-on demonstrations, showing how to make snares and skin animals, sharpen knives and cook their catch.

Borton also taught the group about muskrats and beavers—how they survive and reproduce, and how to keep a healthy population using good stewardship practices.

For lunch, they dined on wild rabbit and various traditional wild game pepperettes.

![Twenty-seven people attended a course on wilderness survival techniques held by the MNO Great Lakes Métis Council (GLMC), on Feb. 24. (Back row from left to right) Ed Olsen, R. Sandy Bell, Patrick Stranks, Summer McWatch, Jim Stranks, MNO GLMC Senator Ralph Wolf Thistle, Jamie Coture, Tony McWatch and Pat Vanwycz. (Middle row left to right) Johnny Horton, Chantel Lougheed, Michael Hegi, Steve McGillivray, Carol Marietta, Dustin Coture, MNO GLMC President Peter Coture and Billy VanWycz. (Front row left to right) Azzie Lougheed, Pauline Lavoie, Michael Smith, Jason Partington and Jeff Boddy. Missing from the photo are Tracie Partington, Murray Hillyer and Susan Staves.](image)
Newest MNO Council hosts garden opening and Métis festival

submitted by
Russell Green
MNO Thames Bluewater Métis Council President
Files from CTV News London and CBC News reports

A morning downpour didn’t dampen the spirits of those planting London’s first Indigenous Medicine Garden.

On May 19, volunteers and representatives from the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Thames Bluewater Métis Council (TBMC) gathered at South Branch Park to plant traditional medicines, including sweet grass, sage, cedar and tobacco, as well as strawberries, corn, beans and squash. The garden is named Mushkeekii Gitigan, which is Ojibwe for medicine garden.

The idea for the garden came from MNO TBMC President Russell Green, who also planned the event, which included a Métis Festival with fiddle music, jigging, Métis art and a wildlife exhibit. About 75 people attended.

In an interview with CTV News London, Green said he hopes the garden will be used by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members to learn about Indigenous cultures.

“It gives an opportunity for the Indigenous community to come out, but it brings a bridging opportunity for Indigenous people to work with non-Indigenous people to create a relationship to foster goodwill,” he said.

The medicine garden takes up only half of the space. There is also room for gatherings or workshops, and it’s open for all members of the community.

“The purpose was also to show people that Indigenous culture is heavily present within the Hamilton Road area,” Green told CBC News.

He’d like to secure funding to offer drumming, moccasin, dot art, beading and Indigenous language workshops or lessons in the garden.

“You can feel a bit of energy — positive energy — here. When you sit back here, for a moment you forget you’re in the city because it’s so nestled in this forest area,” Green said.

MNO Peterborough and District Wapiti Métis Council hold successful AGM

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

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Peterborough and District Wapiti Métis Council (PDWMC) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the Canadian Canoe Museum in Peterborough on Feb. 2.

The AGM was very successful and after the meeting participants were treated to a special free tour of the Museum, which had recently updated and expanded its Métis exhibit.

There was a great turnout and highlights included greetings from Julie Davis, Vice-President of External Relations and Advancement with Trent University, and Jack Nigro, Superintendent of Education, First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education at Kawartha Catholic School Board.

Among his other kind words Nigro said that one of his proudest moments was this past November when the Métis flag was raised at the School Board office for Louis Riel Day.

The AGM also included free snacks and refreshments; crafts and other activities for the children; and information about MNO services.

Métis flag, games, dot art on display during First Peoples Festival in Waterloo

submitted by
Alicia Hamilton
MNO Grand River Métis Council Chair

The Métis flag, games, dot art on display during First Peoples Festival in Waterloo

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MNO Grand River Métis Council Treasurer Leslie-Anne Muma teaches students about the Métis flag during the Region of Waterloo Museum’s First Peoples Festival, held Sept. 26-28, 2017.
Community holiday party in Brampton submitted by Catherine Corbett MNO Métis Family Wellbeing Coordinator

G lass and silver bowls filled with fruit, bread and meatballs, fresh fruit, Italian Ciabatta sandwich, pasta salad, and Italian antipasto were enjoyed by all. The guests were welcomed by the Novice of Canada and MNO Métis Family Wellbeing Coordinator Catherine Corbett who expressed her appreciation for MNO Métis Family Wellbeing Coordinator Catherine Corbett who expressed her appreciation for the MNO Métis Community Support Services Coordinator Carmen Prégent who organized the event. MNO Clear Waters Métis Council and veteran Don Kennedy represented the Métis Nation and took part in presenting the flags at the event. Full Moon Ceremony at city hall in the month of June. The flags were raised during a Full Moon Ceremony at city hall on May 29. Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Clear Waters Métis Council and veteran Don Kennedy represented the Métis Nation and took part in presenting the flags at the event. The event was organized in partnership with the Hamilton Urban Indigenous Strategy, Hamilton Aboriginal Advisory Committee and De Dua Da Dehs Nyel Aboriginal Health Centre.

National Indigenous History Month marked in Hamilton submitted by Jerry Clarke, MNO Clear Waters Métis Council Coordinator

T he month of Hamilton is celebrated with a special event focused on the month of June. The flags were raised during a Full Moon Ceremony at city hall on May 29. Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Clear Waters Métis Council and veteran Don Kennedy represented the Métis Nation and took part in presenting the flags at the event. The event was organized in partnership with the Hamilton Urban Indigenous Strategy, Hamilton Aboriginal Advisory Committee and De Dua Da Dehs Nyel Aboriginal Health Centre.

Families participate in sugar bush gathering submitted by Larry Ferris, MNO Georgian Bay Métis Council Chair

T he MNO is proud to have worked on these projects and know that the good was achieved throughout the day, including a sacred outdoor fire, maple syrup storytelling, walk through the forest, snowshoeing, buffet, taffy, sleigh rides and drumming. The all-day event took place at the Sand Road Maple Farm and MNO volunteers provided transportation to and from the sugar bush. The event, which is a partnership between the MNO and the Mi’kmaq Whisnash Lodge, was a great success with more than 70 participants for the day.

MNO Georgian Bay Métis Council completes environmental projects submitted by Carmen Prégent MNO Community Support Services Coordinator

MNO Georgian Bay Métis Council worked on a stream reclamation project at Le Villageois de Lafontaine and planted a buffer zone between the stream and the adjoining farmland to prevent runoff.

MNO Métis Family Wellbeing workshops held in Midland submitted by Kim Wright MNO Métis Family Wellbeing Coordinator

A healing blanket and healthy eating workshop were just two of the activities featured by Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Clear Waters Métis Council. Held in the MNO Office in Midland on Jan. 31 and Feb. 7 respectively, the blanket workshop aimed to honour Métis women and foster self-worth and strength from within the participants, and the healthy eating event promoted traditional recipes and ways to cut food costs.

Later on, the Métis Earth Angel Ornament workshop sparked the creativity of both children and adults, who filled clear ornaments with a wide array of items to make the ornaments decorative for their own trees, or as gifts. The ornament workshop is an ongoing campaign recommended by MNO Victim Services Program as a symbol of honour and remembrance. It encourages participants to remember loved ones who have passed and create a physical keepsake or representation of them. The activity made for a lot of positive conversation, laughter and joy. The event ended with guests receiving hot food to take home along with the beautiful Métis Earth Angel Ornaments they created.

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MNO Georgian Bay Métis Council completes environmental projects submitted by Larry Ferris, MNO Georgian Bay Métis Council Chair

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Toronto Paramedic Services
Chief receives Métis sash

by
MNO Staff

On February 20, representatives of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Toronto York Region Métis Council (TYRMC) presented Toronto Paramedic Services Chief Gord McEachen with a Métis sash on February 20.

The gift, woven in the colours of the local council, was presented by MNO TYRMC Senator Constance Simmonds, in appreciation of the Chief’s attendance at last year’s Louis Riel Day. The occasion also included a prayer and smudging led by the Senator.

John Budarick, a councillor with the MNO TYRMC and a member of the Toronto Paramedic Service was pleased when the chief arrived at the flag raising. For him, it was a welcome step toward reconciliation.

“Much to my surprise, Chief Gord McEachen attended the event to officially give his nod towards the Métis Nation of Ontario,” he said.

“This was a grand gesture for me personally, as I had finally felt acceptance and compassion from my employer—a place where I have countless important personal relationships, where I pour my heart and soul into my career, where I can be a positive influence on society.

“As a community, this was also a large step forward, as it was a nod saying, we accept you, we hear your one voice and we acknowledge the Métis.”

The Chief’s attendance at Louis Riel Day was especially poignant because just a few years before Budarick asked to attend the annual event in his uniform, but his request was denied.

In fact, Budarick recalls being somewhat offended by the response he received, but he didn’t let that keep him from attending. Instead, he went in plainclothes and attended on his own time.

On the advice of a friend, Budarick decided not to attack the issue head-on, but approach it with compassion and be a diligent advocate for involvement in the Métis community, hoping that it would eventually change the views of the paramedic service.

“I had to resist attacking and lashing out, as I found the issue preposterous.”

Over the next several years, working with MNO TYRMC, and even starting his own business that emphasized Indigenous employment and training, Budarick made “progress in developing connections and credibility, and the service began to open its doors.”

That progress was highlighted when the Chief chose to attend the event, and Budarick was also permitted to wear his dress uniform for the 2017 ceremony.

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MNO service provider networking event

submitted by
Rebecca Vander Sanden
Healthy Babies Healthy Children/Community Support Services Coordinator

A Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) networking event for service providers created the opportunity to learn more about the work being done in the Niagara Region.

The March 1 event, attended by more than people, was hosted by MNO Healing and Wellness staff at the Thorold office.

It began with a prayer by MNO Niagara Region Métis Council (NRMC) Senator Garry Laframboise and a blessing for all the service providers and the work they do in the community.

Following time set aside for networking, MNO Community Wellness Coordinator Terry Lynn Longpre invited each service provider to explain their service to attendees and allowed time to ask questions as well.

Participants enjoyed a nutritious meal while interacting with each other and listening to the speakers. Door prizes were drawn throughout the event.

During the event, the MNO NRMC, MNO staff and volunteers were also honoured with a Canada 150 Award handed out by Niagara Centre Member of Parliament and MNO citizen Vance Badawey. They were recognized for their community building and volunteerism initiatives.

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MNO Niagara Region Métis Council receives Canada 150 Award

submitted by
Glen Lipinski
MNO Community Relations Coordinator

In March 1, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Niagara Region Métis Council (NRMC) was honoured with a Canada 150 award by Niagara Centre Member of Parliament (MP) and MNO citizen Vance Badawey.

The MNO NRMC and MNO Thorold office staff were recognized for their community building and volunteerism initiatives. The Canada 150 award was presented during a service provider event.

In 2017, MP Badawey commissioned a special commemorative medal to acknowledge the efforts of individuals and groups in Niagara Centre. Nominations were accepted until mid-July for people and groups exemplifying leadership in community building, volunteerism, environment, business, education, youth leadership, and senior leadership.

Seven-five people were chosen for the awards.

Recipients of the Canada 150 award were nominated anonymously by family, friends, neighbours and colleagues. The MNO NRMC would like to thank the nominator for recognizing their hard work and contributions to the community.

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**AROUND OUR MÉTIS COMMUNITY**

### World Maternal Mental Health Week

In honour of World Maternal Mental Health Week, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children and Community Action programs in Bancroft hosted a Wear Blue Walk on April 30. Moms, babies and families came together for a stroller walk to discuss, promote and draw attention to the mental health concerns for mothers and families.

According to the World Maternal Mental Health Day campaign, as many as one in five new mothers experience some type of perinatal mood and anxiety disorder, which frequently go untreated, often with long-term consequences for both mother and child.

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### Métis Council gifted healing blankets

A number of volunteers chipped in during a Métis Nation of Ontario Métis Credit River Métis Council (CRMC) workshop to make 18 healing blankets to be distributed to Métis families and local women’s shelters. The MNO CRMC met its goal of creating 18 blankets during the four-week workshop, which reconnected old friends and helped make some new ones. The blanket represents inner beauty and strength and the gifting of the blanket symbolizes a blanket of care—a reminder that the women are important, cared for and loved within the Métis nation.

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### MNO GLMC President Peter Coture’s birthday

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Great Lakes Métis Council (GLMC) President Peter Coture celebrated his birthday on April 20, 2018 with Midland staff, MNO GLMC President Dave Dusome, MNO Moon River Métis Council Senator Tony Muscat, MNO Moon River Métis Council Senator Larry Duval, Region 7 Captain of the Hunt Greg Garrett, Region 7 PCMNO Councilor Pauline Richardson, as well as MNO President Margaret Froh and MNO Chief Operating Officer Joanne Meyer.

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### New library for MNO Thorold office

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### Honorary Senator speaks at town hall

On April 27, Minister of Indigenous Services Jane Philpott and Deputy Minister Jean-François Tremblay held a Town Hall meeting with staff to discuss departmental vision and priorities. Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Honourary Senator Reta Gordon was invited to speak, as well as Algonquin Elder Claudette Commanda and Inuk Elder Pita Inumik. Pictured left to right: Claudette Commanda, Jane Philpott, Piita Inumik, Reta Gordon and Jean-François Tremblay.

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### Faceless Dolls project in Sault Ste. Marie

Students in Grades 5 and 6 at St. Mary’s Catholic School in Sault Ste. Marie participated in the Faceless Dolls project led by Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) North Channel Métis Council President Yvonne Jensen on April 18. The workshop started with a prayer by Fern McCoy.

The Faceless Dolls project, originally created by the Native Women’s Association of Canada has been customized for the MNO as a way to engage the community through the MNO Aboriginal Sexual Violence Community Response Initiative.

### GBMC Women’s Circle holds skirt making workshop

On April 21, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Georgian Bay Métis Council (GBMC) Women’s Circle held a skirt making workshop. Picture (from left) are Sue Fraser, Annabelle Deguire, Rose McArthur, Vicki Jenkins, MNO GBMC Women’s Representative Patricia Taylor, Bernice Paradis and MNO GBMC Secretary Lorraine Mountney. The Women’s Circle was created in March of 2010 to promote Métis culture and offer support to women and families.

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### Council hosts a Métis Kitchen Party

On May 28, the University of Windsor hosted the 2018 First Nations, Métis and Inuit Symposium for 300 Native Studies students from three local high schools. Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Windsor Essex Kent Métis Council (WEKMC) representatives hosted a Métis Kitchen Party with storytelling, music, bannock and more. They spoke about Métis history, the Hudson’s Bay Company blanket, Métis veterans, the Métis flag, sash, medicines, dot art and beadwork. Picture (left to right) are teaching consultant Tina DeCastro, MNO WEKMC Women’s Representative Sharlene Lance, MNO WEKMC President Donna Gray, MNO WEKMC Women’s Veteran Representative Shelly Clais and teaching consultant Melissa Cavallin.

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Picture above (left to right) Karen Derocher, Debra Keaney, Darlene Lent, Jim Tolles, Kyl Morrison, Barb Welburn and Natalie Lucas.
Métis teacher represents Canada at Muay Thai championships

Métis school teacher Sarah Carter, who lives in Winnipeg, represented Team Canada at the World Muay Thai Championships, placing second in the division. The Championships took place May 10-19. Originally from Dryden, Ont., she competed in the Championships in Cancun, Mexico, which featured more than 1,000 athletes from around the world.

She also teaches children’s Muay Thai classes and also trains every day at the Nak Muay gym after work. “There’s nothing I’d rather be doing right now,” she said. Source: CBC Online: May 10, 2018

Manitoba

Two Métis women appointed provincial court judges

Two Métis women have been appointed provincial court judges by the Government of Saskatchewan. Appointed to the bench in Saskatoon and La Ronge were the late Crooks and Mary McAuley respectively.

Crooks is the chair of a national committee for the Parole Board of Canada that provides advice on issues impacting Aboriginal offenders, victims and communities.

McAuley worked as a Crown prosecutor, legal aid defence lawyer and in private practice. Her clients have mostly been Métis and First Nations individuals and she is also one of the only fluent Cree-speaking female lawyers in the province. Source: Global News: March 24, 2018

Saskatchewan

McMurray Métis purchase land for cultural centre

McMurray Métis have purchased land from the province of Alberta to build a new office and cultural centre. The land has been leased by McMurray Métis for the last 35 years and came at a cost of almost $810,000.

“There is going to be a difference now and for generations to come,” she said. Source: Fort McMurray Today: May 29, 2018

Long-awaited cultural gathering centre being contracted at Métis Crossing

The construction of a new cultural gathering centre at Métis Crossing is underway. The new indoor space will include meeting rooms, classrooms, exhibit and interpretive spaces. According to Infrastructure Canada, the new centre will be used for indoor programming for the first time.

“Métis Crossing is a place of pride where we not only share culture and tradition, but offer an opportunity for others to learn and experience Métis culture. Our long awaited Cultural Gathering Centre, that has been a dream of Albertans’ Métis people for decades, is finally underway and will open up so many more future possibilities for visitors to enjoy in every season,” said Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras.

Métis Crossing, a Métis cultural interpretive centre, is located along the North Saskatchewan River and is 512 acres. Other features on the site include a historical village, restore homesteads and nature trails. It was also the site of a number of outdoor programs, including Voyageur canoe trips, festivals and camping in Métis trappers tents.

The federal government has committed $3.5 million for the construction and the Government of Alberta has set aside $1 million. Completion of the cultural centre is planned for late summer 2019. Source: Métis Nation of Alberta, May 19, 2018

Alberta

Historic marathon runner Terry Fox has Métis roots

The family of Marathon of Hope runner Terry Fox has Métis roots. Fox’s brother, Darrell, a Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) citizen, recently learned his grandmother, Marion Wark (Glade) was Métis. Marion’s great-grandmother, Madeleine Poitras, was Métis. Her husband Charles Glade, is also believed to be Métis.

The search for Marion Wark’s roots was prompted from a desire to set the record straight for future generations.

“Métis Nation British Columbia is proud, as it is with all Métis people in the province of B.C., that the Fox family was able to discover their Métis ancestry and made the decision to register,” MNBC said in a statement to the Globe and Mail. Source: Globe and Mail: Jan. 5, 2018

Métis Nation British Columbia taking Métis child and family services into their own hands

Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) will be taking Métis child welfare into its own hands by 2022. On June 7, Minister of Children and Family Development Katrine Conroy and MNBC President Clara Morin Dal Col signed a Joint Commitment that will transfer authority of child welfare to the Métis Nation.

“By signing this joint commitment, we assert the right to develop our own laws, our own policies, and our own practices in accordance with our traditions. As we reclaim authority, we will focus on the restoration of our most vulnerable children and families to our kinship networks, to our communities and to our Métis Nation,” said MNBC President Clara Morin Dal Col. “We will focus on building a system of preservation and restoration, a system based on the successes of the five Métis child and family service agencies, for our people throughout the province. I am pleased to be working with the Province on this historic step forward for Métis children and families in B.C.”

There are about 520 Métis children and youth in government care, receiving support through the provincial ministry. Source: Government of British Columbia News Release: June 7, 2018

British Columbia
Peterborough is home to a number of theatres, historical and Indigenous heritage sites, scenic parks, trails and museums, including the Canadian Canoe Museum. The Otonabee River passes through the centre of the city and the Trent Canal forms its eastern edge. The canal’s lift lock was built in 1904 and at that time was the highest in the world.

The primary venue for AGA 2018 will be the Showplace Performance Centre, located in Peterborough’s downtown and close to many restaurants and hotels. As is tradition, the AGA will start with the arrival of the historic voyageur canoes. This year it takes place at Beavermead Park, on Thursday, Aug. 16, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Join the MNO President and the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario as they welcome everyone to AGA 2018 and cheer on the arrival of the voyageur canoes, to be paddled by MNO leadership, special guests and dignitaries. This year’s arrival is planned for 7 p.m.

The MNO will coordinate accommodation and travel for MNO citizens designated to attend by MNO Community Councils, which will include Presidents, Senators, Youth and Women’s Representatives, as well as the members of the MNO Youth, Veterans’ and Women’s Councils. Council designated citizens will be contacted by the MNO directly in the coming weeks for registration purposes.

The MNO AGA is open to all citizens, whether they have been designated to attend by their local councils or not. Registration will take place on site at the AGA. The MNO encourages citizens who may be travelling to Peterborough to book accommodations (hotel or camping) as soon as possible, as facilities are limited and the AGA is taking place at the height of tourist season.

Stay tuned for more details on activities and announcements. Updates will be posted on the MNO website.

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Stay tuned for more details on activities and announcements. Updates will be posted on the MNO website.
ACHIEVEMENTS

MNO citizen’s album nominated for Indigenous Music Award

Leah Gravelle’s album, Country Air, has been nominated for an Indigenous Music Award. Gravelle also goes by the stage name Leah Belle.

by MNO staff

At just 15 years old, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Leah Gravelle’s first album was nominated for an Indigenous Music Award.

The album, Country Air, received a nomination in the 2018 Best Producer/Engineer category. Gravelle, who goes by the stage name Leah Belle, spent four years working on the album with producer Jace Martin.

“I never thought something like this would happen and I’m just so, so grateful,” Gravelle said.

The award ceremony took place on May 18 in Winnipeg. Though the album didn’t win, it was one of the only five nominated in the category.

“It’s overwhelming but in a good way,” she added.

In Winnipeg, Martin and Gravelle planned to play some acoustic versions of Gravelle’s music at some of the events happening around the awards ceremony.

“We are looking forward to networking, to meeting festival promoters and radio people and just kind of introducing Leah to the music world,” Martin said.

Martin, who is Mohawk from Six Nations, is no stranger to the music scene, having won five Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards for his own music.

This is his first nomination as a producer. “I’m really happy for Leah, it’s her first album and her first nomination in her early, young career,” Martin said, adding the recognition is shared. “Leah had to [perform] for the judges to say it’s one of the top five albums. It’s really good for both of us.”

While still promoting Country Air and performing its songs, Gravelle is already looking forward to what comes next, including a second record with at least one song influenced by her Métis heritage.

“Faded Memories,” was written entirely by Gravelle.

“The reason why I wanted to record music and to become a singer in general was for my love of it, to let other people hear my hard work in recording these songs and writing these songs and seeing the smiles on people’s faces knowing that I made one person happy with my music.”

Country Air is available for download on iTunes, Spotify and SoundCloud.

MNO Youth Representative recognized with volunteer award

submitted by
Larry Ferris
MNO Georgian Bay Métis Council Chair

The award recognizes the number of volunteer hours completed by students. Each year, the award is presented to one graduating student at each of Ontario’s secondary schools. In Ontario, each student must complete 40 hours of community service to receive their Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

Latondress greatly exceeded that, putting in more than 330 hours with even more planned.

As part of the MNO GBMC, Latondress not only attends events, but is a great representative of the council and MNO. He provides a strong voice for youth when volunteering his time with both the MNO Veterans’ and Youth Councils.

The well-deserved award shows Métis youth like Latondress not only demonstrate their excellence within their own community, but can succeed and compete with any community.

Métis youth like Latondress not only demonstrate their excellence within in their own community, but can succeed and compete with any community.

The MNO GBMC would like to congratulate Latondress and wish him well in his post-secondary endeavours.
Métis youth finds her calling

Submitted by
Tiffany Miller
MNO Employment Counsellor

A her starting her post-secondary education in French Studies at York University, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Faith Bell realized her real dream was to pursue a career in nursing.

Bell first needed to upgrade some high school credits in math and science before applying to nursing programs. Then she was accepted into Lakehead University’s Native Nurses Entry Program. This nine-month preparatory program includes English, chemistry, mathematics and biology courses, a field placement and more. Students learn a mixture of traditional and western medical practices, as well as culturally appropriate care for Aboriginal patients.

The program gave her the edge to be accepted the following year into a compressed three-year Bachelor of Nursing Program. Bell’s dedication to her studies has not only allowed her to complete the compressed Bachelor of Nursing, but she graduated early.

During her studies, Bell found out about the MNO’s Training Purchase Program as a participant of the MNO’s Infinite Reach network. She credits the MNO’s financial assistance for greatly reducing the financial stress as she continued her education while still in high school. The championships were held in female and male in March.

“Nursing clinical training is so demanding it makes it so that a student cannot possibly work and dedicate the time required to their studies,” said Bell.

Bell now works full time as a Registered Nurse at a mental health hospital. Her training taught her how to provide a broad spectrum of client care, from basic personal care to treating complex medical conditions.

Her favorite part about her job is working with patients. “The patient isn’t the only person that benefits from nursing. The reward is also for the nurse who is gifted the opportunity to get to know the patients and connect with them,” she said.

She enjoys working with her patients, getting to know them on a personal level, finding the opportunity to learn words in a new language or practising her French with clients.

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Rebekah Trudel takes the top spot on the podium as a National Junior Champion in Montreal.

MNO citizen wins gold at Junior Wrestling National Championship

Submitted by
Anne Trudel
MNO Education Officer

M étis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Rebekah Trudel is a National Junior Champion in wrestling after winning the gold medal match in March.

“It’s a huge honour being a National Junior Champion, especially when achieving it before I turned 20 years old,” said Trudel to Saultsports.com. Trudel is from Sault Ste. Marie and attends Simon Fraser University (SFU) in British Columbia.

“As for my future plans, I’m not entirely sure. Once again I just want to thank my coaches, teammates and my faith for my success.”

The championships were held in Montreal from March 16-18. Trudel represented the Burnaby (BC) Mountain Wrestling Club. Trudel competed in the 76 kg Junior Women’s Freestyle Championship and won gold in her opponent, Mary Adarkwa of York Wrestling Club, during the match to claim the title.

“Rebekah has made a ton of improvements in her first year at SFU as well,” said SFU women’s wrestling head coach Justin Abdou, in a story on the university’s website. “She was put into our starting lineup and got a ton of matches this year. It paid off in her performance at this tournament.”

Trudel is no stranger to success on the mat.

She won bronze in 2017 at the Canadian Wrestling Championships in St. Catharines, and while still in high school at Superior Heights Collegiate and Vocational School, Trudel won gold at the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSSA) wrestling championships.

With this latest win, Trudel could compete at the Junior World Wrestling Championships in Slovakia and in the Junior Pan American Championships, according to Wrestling Canada’s website.

MNO council President recognized by Town of Lincoln

Submitted by
Amanda Pont-Shanks, MNO K-12 Education Officer

M étis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Niagara Region Métis Council (NRMC) President Derrick Pont was recognized by the Town of Lincoln at the annual Good Citizen Awards on April 20.

“Every year the Town of Lincoln honours local volunteers who go above and beyond to make their community a better place,” President Pont said.

President Pont joined the MNO NRMC in 2008 and quickly became the council chair. He is currently in his second term as president and sits on many committees to support the needs of and advocate for MNO citizen residents in the Niagara Region.

During the recognition celebration, Town of Lincoln Mayor Sandra Easton thanked President Pont and the community council for providing resources and support for last year’s Louis Riel Day ceremony. She also said the town will raise the Métis flag for Louis Riel Day again in 2018.
Métis leaders recognized as Champions of Reconciliation

By MNO Staff

The Sovereign’s Medal for Volunteers presentation on Jan. 26 in Toronto. MNO Youth Council President Mitch Case with renowned Métis lawyer and historian Jean Teillet at the presentation of the Sovereign’s Medal for Volunteers and Ms. Mattatoo. Both the Medal and Service Cross are given out throughout the year to recognize different types of service with the group recognized in this ceremony being celebrated as Champions of Reconciliation.

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housing@metisnation.org • www.infinitypropertyservices.ca

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizens Mitch Case and Ernest Matton (Little Brown Bear) were recognized as Champions of Reconciliation when they received the Sovereign’s Medal for Volunteers on Jan. 26, in Toronto. They were recognized along with long-time MNO legal counsel Jean Teillet who received the Meritorious Service Cross at the same ceremony.

The Sovereign’s Medal for Volunteers and the Meritorious Service Cross were presented by the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario on behalf of Her Excellency Julie Payette, Governor General of Canada.

The Sovereign’s Medal for Volunteers is awarded to Canadian citizens who have made significant, sustained and unpaid contributions to their community. Medal recipients have demonstrated an exemplary commitment through their dedicated volunteerism.

Nominations for the Sovereign’s Medal for Volunteers are carefully researched and reviewed by an Advisory Committee, which makes recommendations to the Governor General. The selection process is non-partisan and merit-based.

The citation for Mr. Case’s medal reads: “A role model and inspiration nation-wide, Mitch is president of the Métis Nation of Ontario Youth Council. He is an advocate for his people and works throughout the province of Ontario to improve the quality of life for Indigenous youth.”

“It always amazes me when I received these awards for doing the things that I love doing; it is truly a blessing.”

Mitch Case, PCMNO Youth Representative

Case, who has received other honours in the last few years commented: “It always amazes me when I received these awards for doing the things that I love doing; it is truly a blessing.”

The citation for Matton’s medal reads: “Ernest W. Matton / Elder Little Brown Bear (Athehsa Niohkwá:rita:a) is a respected Métis helper, community capacity builder and spiritual ambassador. He blends Indigenous teachings with Western information to provide holistic healing approaches for Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the community. He says that “being Aboriginal is not a life style it is a way of life.” As an expert in the areas of trauma, addiction and mental health, he is both a sought after speaker and effective group facilitator.”

“I am a proud member of the Michael Garron Toronto East Health Network Aboriginal Healing Program,” said Matton, “a program that I spent the last six years developing. I wear the [Honouring women is part of Métis culture] yellow sash with pride to recognize missing and murdered Indigenous women and to speak to the commitment to breaking the cycle of violence and abuse. My guiding philosophy is people don't care how much you know. They want to know how much you care.”

The Meritorious Service Cross recognizes highly professional acts that are of considerable benefit to Canada in such fields as athletics, diplomatic relations and humanitarian activities.

The citation that accompanied Teillet’s Meritorious Service Cross reads: “Métis lawyer Jean Teillet was instrumental in founding the Métis Nation of Ontario, and the Métis Nation Lawyers Association as well as organizing the first National Aboriginal Must. An author and preeminent lecturer on such issues as human rights, resource development and social justice, she has shaped public policy and helped to ensure the rights of Indigenous peoples into Canadian law.”

Case and Matton were among nine recipients of the Sovereign’s Medal for Volunteers and Ms. Teillet was among seven recipients of the Meritorious Service Cross. Both the Medal and Service Cross are given out throughout the year to recognize different types of service with the group recognized in this ceremony being celebrated as Champions of Reconciliation.

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Honorary MNO Senator Olivine Tiedema passes

Senator Olive Tiedema, née Bousquet, Skura, will be missed by her children Sharon (Robert), Denise (Ed), Eric (Sue), Greg (Pat), Steven (Virginia), and Len, as well as grandchildren, great-grandchildren and sister Annette.

Senator Olive was the granddaughter of Napoleon Bousquet and his wife Camille Carrière and grew up in St. Boniface, Man.

She served on the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) as a Senator from 2002 to 2005. On behalf of the Métis Nation, MNO President Margaret Froh expressed her condolences to Olive’s family.

“Honorary Senator Olivine Tiedema will be profoundly missed at the Métis Nation of Ontario. She will be remembered for her amazing spirit, knowledge and passion for Métis culture,” stated Froh.

“We are blessed to have been a part of her journey and my thoughts and prayers are with her family.”

Senator Olive received the Rochon-Burnett Volunteer of the Year Award from the MNO in 2012 for her work in founding three MNO Community Councils, the MNO Toronto and York Region Métis Council, Oshawa-Durham Region Métis Council (ODRMC) and Credit River Métis Council.

The ODRMC named its youth dance troupe the Olivine Bousquet Métis Dancers in honour of her 80th birthday.

In her support of the dancers, Olive made and sold medicine bags as a fundraiser and wore the dance troupe’s sash, which displays her picture.

“Olivine loved to dance, she was a jigger and so now I choose to believe that she’s dancing,” said Honourary MNO Senator Ruth Wagner. “She was just an amazing woman.”

Wagner said Olive wasn’t afraid to speak her mind and was known for it.

“She meant well and was to the point. I don’t think she had a mean bone in her body. She was also a caring, loving, hard-working lady.”

She also cared deeply about her Métis culture.

“She worked so hard to bring Métis culture to people,” she said, adding when Olive first moved to Toronto she felt the lack of her Métis culture terribly. To overcome it, she helped found the Toronto and York Region Métis Council, and then when she moved across the region she did it again.

“She kept being an advocate for the Métis people and knit scarves and made bags and donated them to be sold. She did things non-stop for the Métis Nation.”

Her passion for Métis rights started early.

According to the Métis Museum, Olive went to grade school with Rita Riel, a niece of Louis Riel at Academy St. Joseph in St. Boniface, Manitoba. During her schooling the nuns taught a negative description of Louis Riel and referred to the Métis as traitors. Olive would later recount how she refused to write their version of history when she was tested, and as a result, she never passed French History. After spending three years in Grade 8, she left school when she was 16.

In a Facebook post, her granddaughter Amanda Strong said, “She was a warrior. The centre of her life was her family. I always said, ‘Mom, you are a warrior.’”

Wagar said Olive wasn’t afraid to speak her mind and was known for it.

“Senators who have given much to our nation have earned and should be given the designation Senator Emeritus.”

— Senator Poitras
Grace LeBlanc
1935-2018

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Grace Joanna Florence LeBlanc, surrounded by love at the Gaebel General Hospital, passed away on April 9, in her 83rd year. Grace, née Marcusot, was the wife of Reginald LeBlanc: for 60 years and the mother of Claude (Danielle), Gloria, Marie (Ron) and Annette (Bobdan). She was also the loving grandmother of Stephanie, Hanta, Theresa (Jason), Angela (Jon), James, Geoffrey (Lisa), Christopher (Sarah), Joanna and Ryan, and the special great-grandmother of Bryan, Teddy, Shaymus, Everett, Owen, Evan, Carson, Chase, Jasper and Tristan.

Grace was survived by her sisters Bob, Dianna (Barry) and Pat (Kim) and by an extended large and loving family of nieces and nephews. She will always be fondly remembered by Sally, Paul, Jeffrey and Lois. Grace was predeceased by her parents Emmett and Mary (nee Goodchild) Marcusot and by her sister Rita and her brother Don.

Grace was devoted to her entire family. She was proud of her Métis heritage and was an active member of the MNO. She enjoyed researching her roots and spent 12 years researching and writing a book for the Langlade descendants in her family. The book, called On My Mother’s Side, was published on her 79th birthday; in the book, she wrote: “As a result of my efforts in proving my direct lineage to my grandfather Charles De Langlade, born in 1729 the son of a French fur trader and an Ottawa glade, born in 1729 the son of a grandfather Charles De Langlade, was published on her 75th year. He was surrounded by friends and family, his wife Cathy, daughters Amanda and Christine (Jonathan Killing). He is survived by his grandchildren Emma and Owen Lamoureux, and Sophie and Kayla Killing, his brother Allen Fournier (Rita) and nieces Tanya Fournier and Melanie Fournier and nephew Patrick Garret (Amanda).

He will be missed by his many great nephews. He is predeceased by his parents Leo and Irene Fournier, and his sister Brenda Garret. He is a descendant of Genevieve Vasseur and Touissaint St.Ogone Letard.

Ken loved all things wild and free. Hunting, trapping, and fishing were a part of his daily life and even while working he was thinking about being in the bush. For fun he was a part of a band and often won Battle of the Bands in the 60s and early 70s. If he didn’t have a gig, there was a party going on at home.

In his younger days, he was a carpenter and worked in construction. As he aged, he worked as a building inspector starting at Victoria Harbou, and moving to Penetanguishene, Tay Township and finally ending in Georgian Bay Township. There, he loved being back to his roots, and was able to do his work in the wilderness and travel by boat, Seadoo, Skidoo, and scoot to the homes and cottages he inspected.

He was a man who tried to help people and would be willing to give a hug, lend an ear, give a beer or the shirt off his back if you really needed it. A Celebration of Life will be scheduled at a later date. If desired, memorial donations to the Canadian Cancer Society or Alzheimer’s Society would be appreciated and will be received by LeCreaL Cremation Centre.

subscribed by Catherine Fournier

Kenneth Fournier
1946-2018

MNO citizen Kenneth Walter James Fournier passed away peacefully on April 24, 2018, at Hillcrest Village in his 72nd year.

Reg was a mentor for Métis youth. During events, campments and parades, he told them wild tales about his childhood and kept them laughing. He had a kind and loving heart and spoke often of the love he had for his family. His children and grandchildren helped him at events and it made him so proud to pass along his Mētis pride.

A Funeral Mass was held at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Welland on May 28, 2018, followed by an internment at Holy Cross Cemetery. The MNO Niagara Region Métis Council (NRMC) lost a friend, mentor and an integral member of its council.

In 2000, Reg became a member of the MNO Welland Métis Council. It later evolved into the MNO NRMC in 2008. During his time as a councillor, he often volunteered at events, shared his experience as a Mētis citizen, and he provided guidance and support to his fellow councilors.

Each June, since 2008, MNO NRMC has participated in the Welland Rose Parade. Reg always offered his construction yard as a place to set up the parade float. During the parade, members of the community called out to him or ran up to the float to give him a cold drink. Over time, Reg became a somewhat unofficial king of the Rose Parade.

Before the MNO office moved to Thorold, Reg connected the NRMC to the Welland Snowmobile Club to host workshops and events. No Christmas was complete without sharing a cup of soup with Reg at the Christmas Party.

Reg often came to the MNO office to visit with staff and share stories about being Mētis. He talked about his childhood and how his mother spoke “dirty French.” When he he repeated it at school, he told them he was saying the words incorrectly. It was not until he was an adult that he learned that his mother was speaking Michif. He also shared stories of the fourtiers his family made and how he once worked for the Ontario Provincial Police in Welland, but decided to step down when asked to relocate. He did not want to move his wife and young children at the time. Reg was a mentor for Métis youth. During events, campments and parades, he told them wild tales about his childhood and kept them laughing.

He had a kind and loving heart and spoke often of the love he had for his family. His children and grandchildren helped him at events and it made him so proud to pass along his Mētis pride.

A Funeral Mass was held at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Welland on May 28, 2018, followed by an internment at Holy Cross Cemetery and a reception. During the funeral mass a photo of Reg, fellow NRMC members, and summer students participating in the 2013 World Canoe Championships was proudly on display. Father Mirosław Olaszewski stated in his eulogy “Reg is no longer in the body, but is on the other side of the shore with God.”

Reg will be deeply missed not just within the Niagara Mētis community but across the Nation and Welland is missing their Rose King.

submitted by Norm Willett

Métis veteran Gerard (Jerry) Albert Legault
In Memory of a Wonderful Brother

We hold onto our memories The ones that is so dear
To have you for our Brother
We will always cherish the memories we have of you.

We will never forget you.

But we will never forget you

And we know we have been blessed

To have you for our Brother Because you were the best.

A full obituary for Jerry was published in the March edition of the Métis Voyager.
At the end of March 2018, I was asked to attend the Summit on Métis Child and Family Services in Winnipeg. This was a good opportunity for me because I attended the original Summit on Métis Child and Family Services in 2016, and I was very interested to see what had transpired since then.

There was representation from all five provinces in the Métis National Council – British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. We were honored to have Maori representatives, Indigenous people of New Zealand, also attend.

Throughout the summit, there were presentations about what was happening in each province.

Survivors of the ‘60s Scoop gave moving testimony about their experiences and detailed how they were moving forward in their lives.

Interestingly, some moved on to careers in law, moving forward in their lives. Interestingly, some moved on to careers in law, moving forward in their lives.

While success stories were shared, there were some ongoing issues that still stand out in all provinces.

The impacts of Residential Schools remain. Generations of people were, and are, not aware of how a normal family lives. They do not know how to nurture themselves let alone a family.

In some cases, serious depression from this inability has led to drug addiction and alcoholism, leading to families being ripped apart. Child welfare agencies have taken babies from the hospital or taken children from schools, changing their names and relocating them.

In effect, they vanish and cannot be located by the birth parents and are placed non-Aboriginal foster homes and in adopted homes. These children become invisible to their parents, their home community and their culture.

If and when they expressed a desire to know who they were, they were told that their parents were dead and their Métis descent was never mentioned. There were a few foster/adopted parents who did involve the children with their culture, but they were not the norm.

We were honored to have a presentation from the Maori people, who traveled here from New Zealand to share what had worked for them. First, they acknowledged they suffered racism and persecution. Similar to what happened in Canada, they also had their children go to Residential Schools. They tried to work with the child and family welfare system, but were unable to establish their rights. What happened was the Maori took control of Maori child welfare. This led to proper counseling, drug addiction re-habilitation, healthier families and child re-unification with their families.

They admit it is a work in progress. It is not easy to correct more than 100 years of abuse, but they are on the right track, and are providing culturally appropriate care.

At the 2010 Summit on Child Welfare, Métis Nation Alberta Elder Angie Cerrar spoke with passion about her time at a Residential School, and the serious damage it did to her and all the children, who felt lost, abandoned and wanted their parents. I remember she stood with her fist clenched up in the air and said, “We must stand firm” and get our children back.

For more than 150 years, Métis people have been the target of racism in Canada. We have a different culture and language, and rather than get to know who we are, many have been afraid of the unknown. Fear breeds racism. The mandated solution from the government has been to make us disappear, become invisible, melt into the white population. They take our children away and white-wash them, so that they are not aware of their own identity.

Well guess what Canada? The Métis people have not disappeared. We have not gone away. We have survived, and are reappearing with a strong voice. Human rights need to be observed, and we need to do it with our families intact.

On the opening day of this summit, at the first opportunity to come to the microphone, Crerar raised her fist again and said, “We must stand firm” and get our children back.

The last panel of the summit was a group of Métis elders, of which I was one. We were told to re-cap what transpired during the summit, and leave on a positive note. At the beginning, after an opening prayer, we all stood, raised our fists and said loudly “Stand Firm,” and the audience followed. We did this again at the close of the elders panel.

This is the message Métis have to take with us, and have implemented for our child welfare and the welfare of the Métis families. We have rights, we need to reclaim them and take control of our rights and our children, as a nation of Métis people.

In closing I would like to say that the Métis Nations are instrumental in the development of Canada. The two cultures came together to create a unique culture. They shared their foods, survival skills, medicines and found their place in Canadian history with a language of their own. For example, the Scottish people brought bannock, a bread historically used in Ireland, Scotland and Northern England. The Aboriginal shared wild rice, corn and other crops that grew well in the cold climate.

As a Métis, it was important to me to seek out information in order to understand all parts of my unique Métis culture.

The information I have gathered of my European side has led me to the Orkney Islands of Scotland. My ancestors answered a poster ad from the Canadian government asking them to consider coming to Canada with the hopes of obtaining land, employment and a new start. My great-great grandfathers John and William came and was hired by the Hudson Bay Company on May 26, 1821. He held the job of laborer, labourer and cattle herder, laborer and blacksmith and also owned property on the Red River. His son followed in his footsteps in the 1870s. I feel it is important to know these men, their history, our surnames.

Scottish men were not the only ones to answer the call. Men came from France and England to take their place in forming the Métis people.

I would like our Métis council and community to get together to share their European history with each other. We could come together for a feast and an evening of sharing. I would also like to challenge other Métis councils and communities to do the same. I’m sure we would be pleasantly surprised to discover that many in our regions and communities are related to each other.

This information sharing might unearth some new found stories, which could be interesting to share in our Métis newspaper. In closing I would like to say that I believe it is very important that both parts of our culture be at the forefront of who we are as Métis people. Thank you for letting me share. Marise and Miligeech.

Regards,
Eric Fagerdahl

EDITORIAL: All opinions represent the views of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the Métis Nation of Ontario.

European ancestry should also be celebrated

To the editor:

As a Métis, I feel very proud to be a product of the fur trade, the joining of two cultures, when a European man married an Aboriginal woman. Our people were instrumental in the development of Canada.

The two cultures came together to create a unique culture. They shared their foods, survival skills, medicines and found their place in Canadian history with a language of their own. For example, the Scottish people brought bannock, a bread historically used in Ireland, Scotland and Northern England. The Aboriginal shared wild rice, corn and other crops that grew well in the cold climate.

As a Métis people embrace our Anishinaabe history but I feel we fall short on celebrating our European background. We need to mix blood, and I think it is very important to talk about our European history as well. We must understand where our European names came from and their countries of origin. As a proud Métis, it was important to me to seek out information to understand all parts of my unique Métis culture.

The information I have gathered of my European side has led me to the Orkney Islands of Scotland. My ancestors answered a poster ad from the Canadian government asking them to consider coming to Canada with the hopes of obtaining land, employment and a new start. My great-great grandfathers John and William came and was hired by the Hudson Bay Company on May 26, 1821. He held the job of laborer, labourer and cattle herder, laborer and blacksmith and also owned property on the Red River. His son followed in his footsteps in the 1870s. I feel it is important to know these men, their history, our surnames.

Scottish men were not the only ones to answer the call. Men came from France and England to take their place in forming the Métis people.

I would like our Métis council and community to get together to share their European history with each other. We could come together for a feast and an evening of sharing. I would also like to challenge other Métis councils and communities to do the same. I’m sure we would be pleasantly surprised to discover that many in our regions and communities are related to each other.

This information sharing might unearth some new found stories, which could be interesting to share in our Métis newspaper. In closing I would like to say that I believe it is very important that both parts of our culture be at the forefront of who we are as Métis people. Thank you for letting me share. Marise and Miligeech.

Regards,
Eric Fagerdahl
Giving back

submitted by Jim Tolles, MNO Credit River Métis Council Senator

I am a cancer survivor and while going through my battle with cancer, I took several classes at Wellspring Chinguacousy, a cancer support centre in Brampton. These classes helped to distract me during a difficult time of my life and after reflecting on this, I knew that I needed to give back to them. I wanted to do something to help other cancer patients and survivors.

I had recently learned how to create dot art thanks to the teachings of Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Credit River Métis Council Women’s Representative Darlene Lent and I found dot art very relaxing and therapeutic. I knew from first-hand experience that dot art takes your mind off everything for a while.

I decided to give back by offering to teach an art class and I knew that I wanted to create a dot art painting of a butterfly. The butterfly is a symbol of change and joy. They represent transformation because of their impressive metamorphosis. I felt this also closely symbolizes a person’s journey with cancer, as both the butterfly and cancer patient go through a life changing experience and learn to embrace a beautiful new way of being.

I survived cancer and through that experience I realize the importance of living each day to its fullest and of learning something new every day. I strongly believe life is about learning and sharing, and I am grateful that I can give back in a meaningful way.

Participants in a dot art painting workshop show off their butterfly creations following a workshop at Wellspring Chinguacousy taught by MNO Credit River Métis Council Senator Jim Tolles.

Poetry

By Christopher Punyi

Ice Fishing

fishing
in
a crystal ball
oracle
in
the snow
cigars
lantern
2 day beards
hovering
over
a hole

A Woman

I remember a woman who waits for me
by a phone.
by a window.
on a bed.
I remember her in a mirror beside me
once....
& she swore she’d never let me go.

Owl

to animal nightmare.
disguised as wind
i am a night’s shadow
swiftly tearing

Wolves (mythology)

wolves are there
at the precipice
guardians of history
& the moon.
they choose distance
& exile, luminous
observation
they do not want to be human.

The Chicken War

A house burning in the country, at night.
There’s a moon in the sky. Stars are out. Occasional
flicker of animal eyes at the edge of the forest.
This is an event.
Talk of the woods is that a coyote did it.
People are stupid, he says. Guy tried to shoot me
for taking a chicken. If I can’t have one, they all fry!
He’s the new hero. Cunning-dangerous general.
Strange how he changes their eyes.

Man and woman on their knees crying. Woman howls
(-they like her). Water-men water fantastic fire,
privately enjoying the view. Too bad about the
chickens.

Métis Poet Christopher Punyi, from Port Colborne,
has had his work appear in Canada, the US and Japan.

Milestones

submitted by Jerry Clarke
MNO Clear Waters Council President

The Clarke family would like to announce the birth of their newest family member, Colin.
Colin was born Jan. 30, 2018, and was welcomed by his proud parents; Tobias and Greg, his siblings; Morgan and Madeline and his grandparents; Jerry and Terese.
Jerry Clarke is the President of the Métis Nation of Ontario Clear Waters Métis Council.

The photo was taken by Colin’s older sister, Madeline, an aspiring Métis photographer.  

First Communion

submitted by Yvonne Jensen
MNO North Channel Métis Council President

Jenna Descoteaux, age 7, of Blind River, received the sacrament of First Communion on June 2. Jenna is the daughter of MNO citizen Pete Descoteaux and Suzie Descoteaux.

Welcoming Colin Clarke

submitted by Jerry Clarke
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Métis Poet Christopher Punyi, from Port Colborne,
has had his work appear in Canada, the US and Japan.
I have noticed a lot of people I meet seem to be interested in the Indigenous ways. It would seem that there is a growing interest in emulating certain aspects of our culture, be it First Nations, Métis or Inuit.

There seems to be more stores selling native art and clothing, people wearing aboriginal-type jewelry, dream catchers and other types of art hanging on their car’s rearview mirror.

For us, the Aboriginal people, we should be proud that there is an interest in our culture. I’m actually referring to the non-Aboriginal folks that have never before explored what our culture is all about. When I tell someone I am Indigenous and Métis, some will inquire, how long have you been an Indian? What part of you is Indian? You don’t look Indian! Why didn’t you say you were an Indian before?

I try to answer by saying that we are not Indians! That, of course, usually falls on deaf ears. These conversations take place when I wear my medicine bag, because it brings attention and interest as they wonder what it is. There are the usual jokes like ‘what’s the bag for?’ Is that where you keep your dope? Can I see what’s in that bag? And jokes and comments like that. They aren’t being rude; they just don’t believe there is such a thing as a Métis.

Because our roots have been hidden for most of our lives, and we are now celebrating it out in the open, these same people think we are now celebrating it out in the open for most of our lives, and as a Métis.

I then feel compelled to explain that the Indians are killing everything. The ones I know around our area have hunting cabins around the North Bay Area. They tell me that the Indians are killing everything in sight and they ought to be stopped. Harvest is permitted under treaty rights, and the Métis can harvest in their area as well. They don’t understand that we can only take what we can eat, and have to answer to our Captain of the Hunt and the Ministry of Natural Resources. If I try to clarify what all this means, they turn a blind eye to it, so there is still a lot of racism going on when it comes to harvesting.

I notice we are making progress, though, but we all must stay vigilant and do our part to educate the public of the real facts. I try to educate myself on all aspects of every culture within the Indigenous world of Turtle Island. There is so much to learn and so much to remember about my ancestors.

I try to avoid this at all costs because these people have their mind made up about how we are entitled to take as many animals as we want. Of course, this couldn’t be further from the truth, but it is what they have heard and it is what they believe.

I’m sure there are some Indigenous harvesters that go over and above their legal limit just as our white counterparts do the same.

I get lured into a conversation about harvesting rights.

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I then feel compelled to explain that we are the real deal, and proceeded to explain our culture and customs. For the most part though, people are catching on to our history, on TV, books in schools and from us. We are rights bearing people, something that they must understand and accept.

Sometimes things seem simple and other times there is so much meaning to one thing that I wonder if I will ever remember any of it.

There is a wealth of information on the Internet though, and I have books about my ancestors, the Cree, Assiniboin, Dakota, Lakota, Métis and white.

It is such a wonderful journey for me that I never get tired of learning and passing that information on.

The next generation won’t know anything of this unless we pass it on to them. I have mentioned to my friends and acquaintances that the eagle is an important element in the Aboriginal world. Since then, these same people have told me what they have noticed in nature. We compare stories from when we were young until the present time. The animals that were here, and aren’t anymore, and the animals that weren’t here and are in abundance now.

One example is the geese. As far back as I can remember, there were no geese around this area. There was only one place where you could see them. A man named Jack Miner had a bird sanctuary in a small town called Kingsville, about 40 kilometres from Windsor. He fed the ducks and the geese came too, but that was where you had to go to see them. In the past 20 years, there has been an abundance of geese everywhere. They don’t migrate anymore. Actually, there are so many that they are becoming pests. Cormorants are here now. Blue birds in the spring, and the eagles are back. There are nine of them out on the ice in front of our house the other day. Two of them usually sit in a large tree a few hundred feet from our house.

When I was young boy riding the school bus, we had to go down a long dead-end gravel road to pick up a couple of kids. At the end of the road, way up in a stand of old oak trees were a couple of old eagle nests, but I never saw any eagles in those days.

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Some have an idea of what a Métis is, but to them we are just white Indians. To them we are an anomaly.

If there is time during the conversation, I will try to give them a brief outline of who we are and where we come from, and then they seem more receptive as the conversation progresses. I keep my answers short and to the point, because it is so complicated for them to understand.

I can tell when they want to change the subject, and that’s OK. It makes me feel good to explain some of the details to those who do have time to listen. Some folks are genuinely interested in the story when you connect the dots back to First Nation ancestors, the fur trade and the hardships our relatives endured. Like First Nations people, we encountered very similar atrocities, sometimes worse.

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