PREMIER MEETS WITH THE MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO AND CHIEFS OF ONTARIO

RED RIVER ROOTS
A TEACHER’S GENEALOGICAL DIGGING REVEALS A HIDDEN MÉTIS PAST

MÉTIS VETERANS
MÉTIS FOUGHT WITH LEGENDARY “VANDOOS” IN SOME OF THE LARGEST BATTLES OF WWII

Thunder Bay Métis Council gearing up for 2007 AGA

METIS IN ONTARIO
THE MNO REGISTRY HANDLES AN INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF MNO CITIZENSHIP APPLICATIONS AND DOCUMENTS EVERY YEAR. THE NUMBERS ARE ON PAGE 9

MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO HEALTH CAREERS SUPPORT PROGRAM
New Funding Opportunity for Métis Students pursuing Careers in the Healthcare field! The Métis Nation of Ontario is offering scholarships, bursaries and training assistance to Métis students pursuing careers in health. MORE INFORMATION ON PAGE 8

The Thunder Bay Métis Council raises the blue infinity flag on Louis Riel Day last November at Thunder Bay City Hall.
It was with deep sorrow that we lost one of our dear precious family members. My heart was stretched beyond my wildest dreams. Before we had a chance to announce her birth, one of my grandchildren was taken from us.

Elisha Leigh Ellery, aka Spring Water, was born to my son Phillip John Ellery and Sandra Taggart on November 2, 2006, and she took her spirit journey on November 3, 2006.

Elisha was a precious gift to our family even though her presence and support that was and still is with us. Her presence and spirit with us was short. She taught us all how intensely we could love in a very short time. Elisha was a much loved and welcome addition to our family. She has a large extended family eagerly waiting to meet her.

Chii Migwetch.

Darlene McIsaac is the MNOTI Employment & Training Coordinator for Region 5. She works out of the the North Bay office.

Baby!

Congratulations go out to the soon’s own Kaelin Pelser and her husband Alex. They welcomed 8lbs. 6oz. Staden Pelser to the world on December 26th, 2006.

Bonne Fête

Happy 90th birthday to our mother Abertine (Marion) Roussin, on March 2nd.

— From Your Family

Anniversary

Congratulations to Robert and Carol Ann McKinnon who celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary on February 19th at their residence in Uxbridge, ON.

KENORA: New health resources

Recently, Kenora Métis Health Services was the recipient of a newly built blood pressure monitor.

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Professional Volunteer Opportunities Available!

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T-Bay Métis have busy year in lead up to AGA

By Cameron Burgess

On October 15th, 2006, there was a 90th birthday party for Honourary Senator Edith McLeod—a surprise party held by family and friends. We are pleased to report that Edith is in good health and going strong.

October 24th, 2006, approximately 20 people attended the general council meeting in Geraldton. Tim Pile did a slide presentation on the MNO. It was a good meeting.

November 16th, 2006, Louis Riel Day was celebrated with a flag raising ceremony at City Hall. A representative of the city, Ian Angus, was on hand with the local council and citizens; coffee and donuts followed at our centre (see photo on page 1).

November 17th, 2006, approximately 150 Métis citizens and friends attended a feast honouring Steve Powley and Louie Riel. Our harvesters supplied the meat, and Senator Bob arranged a jam session. Special guests were MNO Chair, Gary Lipinski, MPP Ken Boshkoff and extra special guests were Senator Brenda, Tim Pile and Kim Powley at the Thunder Bay Métis Council Christmas party.

November 18th, 2006, the Thunder Bay Christmas Parade was held. According to the TV and radio stations approximately 25,000 to 30,000 people lined the main streets to view 160 floats. Thanks go to Ken Simard, chairman of this event; President Bill Smith for the use of his truck; Tim Pile for his trailer, and Lakehead University for the use of their voyageur canoe. Council members and citizens followed beside and behind our float passing out treats to kids. This was great exposure for the council and our nation.

Dec 15th, 2006, we held our staff Christmas party. Thanks go to Nancy Thompson our Healthy Babies Coordinator for chairing this event. A gift exchange was held at the office and then we moved the party to Nancy’s house for root beer and a pot luck supper—a nice way to start the holidays.

Cameron Burgess is the PCMNO Councilor for Region 2. He can be reached by phone at the Thunder Bay Council office at 807-624-5017 or by email at cameronb@metisnation.org.

In 2002, at the AGA held in Kenora, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) gave Yvon Dumont a fiddle. As President Tony Belcourt said, “It’s fun to see how some little thing that is done along the way becomes legendary.” Who could have guessed where that fiddle would lead?

It turns out that Yvon was acquainted with a young man named J.J. Lavallee, an accomplished musician, proficient on lead and rhythm guitars, mandolin, bass and drums. One day, Dumont asked him why he did not play the fiddle. Lavallee replied: “Because I don’t have a fiddle.” So, Yvon gave him the fiddle from Kenora. He is now a fiddler in great demand in many parts of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and north western Ontario.

In 2006, Lavallee and his Freebird Band produced an album: Jimmy’s Breakdown, featuring 11 tracks produced by Tom Dutiaume. The album was recorded at the Métis Club of Winnipeg Recording Studio, engineered by Yvon Dumont and mixed by Tom Dutiaume and Wally Ranville. Lavallee composed two of the tracks. J.J. Lavallee might never have played the fiddle if not for the gift that was presented to Yvon Dumont by the MNO at Kenora.

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Two brothers keep a promise made 23 years ago

BY LOUISE LOGUE

John Charles Logue Ramsay and his younger brother James made a promise to their single mother 25 years ago. They both promised to be strong, to work as a team, to be there for each other and to do something positive with their lives. Despite the hardships and challenges of surviving in a single-parent family, they toiled and sacrificed to reach their goals. As young as they were back then, they showed that they understood the value of keeping a promise.

As they made their way through elementary school, they were often reminded by irresponsible adults that they were from a “broken family”, and that they were less responsible adults that they were for those who had two parents. They rejected negative comments made about their family, John and James applied themselves at school. They engaged in sports, and they volunteered. They made many friends as they went on to high-school, they developed a positive name for themselves in their community, as two brothers who cared. They rejected negative comments made about their potential, and opted to stay focused on ‘making it’. Eventually, James left Ottawa to play hockey with the Plymouth Whalers of the Ontario Hockey League, but he returned to Ottawa and was sworn in as a Constable with the Ottawa Police Service in 2005. John left Ottawa to attend University. In 2006 he graduated with two degrees in law from the Law Faculty of McGill University. He had already obtained a history degree (Honours) from Guelph University.

THANKS MNO!

The Ramsay brothers are proud members of the Métis Nation of Ontario. Both express sincere gratitude for the assistance and support provided to them by the 1800 through Training Initiatives, and specifically, former Employment and Training Coordinator for Region 6 Jody Anderson and the current Regional Employment Officer Elaine Jeffery.

John Ramsay graduated from McGill University in 2006

Long time readers of the Métis Voyager, will remember our former reporter and fellow Métis citizen, Cherie Dimaline. It will come as no surprise to you that Cherie has produced a novel. Written in her inimitable edgy style, Red Rooms, published by Aboriginal publisher, Thetis Books, is scheduled for release in May. We wish her the very best.

BOOK REVIEW:

Red Rooms
by Cherie Dimaline
2007, Thetis Books

When I return home from a trip to the big city, the first thing I do is take a bath. Red Rooms gave me the same feeling. The grime and grit of the nameless city in which this first novel is set flakes off the pages. Named or not, it is Toronto—the big smoke—and it is a major character. Ostensibly set in an anonymous beige hotel, the book is comprised of a series of loosely linked stories held together by a frayed red thread of Aboriginal blood. The significant characters are either Métis or First Nations’ people who, for various reasons have washed into the big city on a tide of anonymity.

Each chapter could be a stand alone story set in a different room of the hotel and is, to some degree, seen through the eyes of ‘the maid’. She and several other women, who earn her way by cleaning toilets, changing beds and pushing a vacuum cleaner, lost in the “beigeness” of the hotel where she works, she observes the other brown skinned people who occasionally stay there. Every character is in some way looking for, or looking at, what makes him or her Native. Every voice is different, and the same. Every one of them could be you or me. This is neither a “feel good” book nor is it a book without hope.

Clearly in touch with, and aware of, what can happen to a noble people in a not so noble world, Cherie Dimaline is an author to watch.

ONTARIO TOWN ELECTS MÉTIS MAYOR

BY BERNARD LEROUX

It makes me so proud to look around our province and see all the growth and recognition we now receive as a distinct Métis community due to the diligent work that continues to build awareness and to educate the mainstream about our heritage. More than ever before, we enjoy a strong presence as our Métis community members step forward to be acknowledged for their hard work and leadership. It is vitally important that we continue to do our work and recognize those whose accomplishments reflect back on us as a community of people so that we may all share in their success and benefit from the positive image it imparts. People who contribute to our society in a meaningful and highly visible way, should be applauded for their efforts because it is those leaders who give shape and form to our image and reputation as a community in the general public’s eye.

Cannington, with a population of 1500 people, is within the boundaries of the Oshawa Métis Council. It is a small town in the heart of Ontario near the south east end of Lake Simcoe, where Métis people walk a little taller these days. One man I have known in our community for over 15 years has given us all cause to stand a little taller and believe that much more proud of who we are and what we are accomplishing in a modern context.

In our recent municipal elections, Larry O’Connor ran against several other worthy candidates for the mayor’s seat in Cannington (Brock Township, Durham Region) and won by a solid margin! I met Larry many years ago when I moved to this community from Toronto. The first time I encountered any problems with local municipal services, someone told me to call Larry. When I did, I got a quick response and fast action followed to address my concerns. Larry O’Connor gained my trust and respect very early on—long before I discovered he was a Métis citizen—so you can imagine how thrilled I was to see Larry walk into one of our first Oshawa Métis Council meetings over a year ago.

My main reason for writing this is to publicly congratulate Larry on a solid win here in Cannington and to encourage all of you to continue your work in the community and to acknowledge our Métis brothers and sisters everywhere for their accomplishments both within our own communities and within the larger mainstream community. Congratulations to Larry and to all Métis folks who step up to public life in their communities!

Bernard Leroux is a Métis living in Cannington, ON.

For more information on Larry O’Connor, visit: www.showcase-swr.ca/election-2006.php#oconnor

Larry O’Connor is the new Mayor of Cannington, ON.
The Oshawa Métis Council held their 2nd Annual Holiday Gathering on December 30th, 2006, in Oshawa. The annual event included a potluck dinner and dance, which was attended by 60 people. The food was exceptionally good, with all different types of dishes made from secret home recipes. After the meal, an announcement was made, and a cake was brought out to celebrate President Rob Pilon’s 50th birthday. Boy was he surprised! We then warmed up our dancing legs with a little bit of traditional Métis dancing, with Rob showing us the proper moves to these dances. To help us cool down a little, our new Women’s Representative, Claire Kearns, took the stage and told us some old native legends, which really caught the attention of the young ones in attendance—especially when Claire and her sister, Councilor Cecile Wagar, started playing with their wooden dancing men. The dance continued on into the evening.

Thanks to all who attended and helped to make this night possible and a special thanks to Olive Tiedema for organizing this event. Next year we will hold this event at a bigger hall, with much more dancing room.

Art Henry is Vice-President of the Oshawa Métis Council.
M Y JOURNEY STARTED about 10 years ago, when I was first attracted and intrigued with “Indian” matters. I remember that I was told, “you are one of us.” I was quite surprised and asked how that could possibly be.

I have blue eyes and my skin is so white that I could lose myself on a white, sandy beach! Still, I heard that comment again, and again, to the point where I became especially curious and finally, in 2002, I arranged for an ancestry test (somewhat costly and performed in the U.S by a renowned laboratory). The results confirmed that not only do I have Native blood, but my heritage also includes Black roots; thus, I have three of the four colours of the Medicine Wheel in my veins.

I then became very interested in my background and my ensu-
ing Native connection. I remem-
bered that a cousin had given me my grandmother's genealogy but sad-
lly, that connection was traced back only on her father's side of the family to their roots in France. This trace was performed some years ago as part of a major project for an "old" family of the Province of Québec.

Once I knew my test results, I then discovered that I might belong to a Métis community. Since the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is a member of the Métis National Council of Canada (MNCC), which is recognized nationally by the federal govern-
ment and internationally by the United Nations as representing the Métis Nation in Canada, I thought that the MNO was the nation that I wanted to belong to. Thinking that my genealogy search included enough informa-
tion, I submitted my “dossier” to the MNO.

Coincidently, I mailed it on November 16, 2004, Louis Riel Day. However, I was disappointed when I was not accepted with my first submission. My lineage to my Métis ancestry was incom-
plete. Therefore, more intensive research was required, but this time I consulted a genealogist who specialises in Métis ancestry. It took another 18 months to complete this deeper research. Because my “White” family origi-
nated in La Belle Province or France, one of the first and best approaches in starting this search, was to peruse different dictionaries, such as the “Diction-
naire National des Canadiens Français” by l'institut généalogique Drouin, amongst many others.

During her investigation Lyse— the genealogist—discov-
ered that I am related through my mother to Pierre Esprit Rad-
oin (his father and sister are my direct ascendants). Apparentlly he did not sire any children. Pierre and his father share the same name and many people believe that the famous coureur des bois is their direct ancestor, which, according to the search, is not the case and often creates some confusion.

My great great grandfather, Jean Plante, married Martin Boucher's eldest daughter, Françoise. Lyse also discovered that my mother is a direct descendant of Gaspard (Marto's brother) and Pierre Boucher, making us cousins of Louis Riel (12 times over!). What a great honour and surprise to be related to this man, but still no connec-
tion to my Métis ancestry was rooted out. I was discouraged. I was losing hope of receiving my citizenship card from the MNO. However, I met a wonderful lady named Reta Gordon. She encouraged me to con-
inue my quest. Following her advice, I called Lyse; she was will-
ing to invest more time in my search. This resulted in an excit-
ing telephone call a few weeks later when Lyse called to inform me that she had found my direct Métis link and, as a bonus, she had also discovered that at least two of my ancestors were voyageurs—on my father’s side. However, at this point, we hit a snag: I was not able to officially connect my father to his father, which was very frustrating.

My recommendation to those who are in the same situation in which I found myself is to not give up but to persevere with your research. Amongst others, the use website provides resources and ideas to aid any-
one interested in starting his or her own fascinating and reward-
ing journey into the past. I hope that all who embark on this search will be as pleasantly sur-
prised as I was.

The Canadian Council for Aborigi-
nal Business is pleased to offer its members and supporters the digest of news, events and opportuni-
ties and about the Aboriginal community.
MÉTIS HERITAGE:

BY VIRGINIA (PARKER) BARTER

I f anyone had asked me ten years ago to write about my family history as part of a book on Métis identities in Canada, I probably would have looked at them with a blank stare. My knowledge of “Métis” was limited to those “half-French-half-Indian” people who lived out in Manitoba in the 19th century. They had a leader named Louis Riel who got hanged for treason. You know; the Red River rebellion? At least, that’s all I remembered from school. Then something happened to change all that. One day I came across a National Film Board documentary called, “The Fiddlers of James Bay”. One of the Cree fiddle players in the film was from Fort George on the eastern shore of James Bay. In the film he explains—in Cree—how his great-great-grandparents arrived in the Hudson’s Bay Company. Then his grandfather had come there with the Governor George Simpson. The Waltons, the eldest Spencer family, were my great-great-grandparents! So that’s what launched me on this family history as part of my interest to a new source of rich and colourful tales of the family, which soon directed my interest to a new source of Métis heritage—the Labrador coast.

My family’s fur trade connections go back even further in Manitoba, revealing a vast interconnection of mixed blood Aboriginal/European families. English and French-speaking that spread across the continent from Labrador to Oregon and beyond. It’s a story of a lost and rediscovered native heritage spanning three centuries of fur trade. Like a silver fox, the knowledge of history and family are often just as rare and elusive. My story is a glimpse into that process of illumination and how each discovery spawned yet another, taking me in directions that I never would have dreamed.

Eventually, my research led me to examine the lives of Miles Spencer and his wife Edith McLaren during their years in the Ungava region of northern Quebec and Labrador, as revealed through a wealth of original family letters, photographs and documents. The McLaren family was also famous for its role in the development of the forest industry in Saguenay, where Edith’s father, David McLaren, became the first mayor of Chicoutimi, a place where the stories of Scottish and Montagnais Métis heritage abound. The McLarens too had a long history of service with the HBC and the life-long friendships they developed with Donald A. Smith, Lord Strathcona, proved to be an endless source of rich and colourful tales of the family, which soon directed my interest to a new source of Métis heritage—the Labrador coast.

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The Spencer Family in 1899 in Fort George, James Bay (northern Quebec) when Miles Spencer retired from a lifetime of service with the Hudson’s Bay Company. Back row: Walter John Spencer; Edna Spencer; Stella Spencer; Rev. Wm. G. Walton; Winnie Spencer. Front row: Chrissie Spencer; Lillian Spencer; Miles Spencer, (holding Grace Walton); Cameron “Ronie” Spencer; Edith (McLaren) Spencer; Daisy Alice Spencer; (holding John Ruskin Walton). Note: Missing from this picture is Emily (Spencer) Johnston, the eldest Spencer daughter, who continued to live in Fort George. The Waltons also remained in Fort George until 1924.

SEARCHING FOR THE SILVER FOX

A Fur Trade Family History

The Spencer Family in 1899 in Fort George, James Bay (northern Quebec) when Miles Spencer retired from a lifetime of service with the Hudson’s Bay Company. Back row: Walter John Spencer; Edna Spencer; Stella Spencer; Rev. Wm. G. Walton; Winnie Spencer. Front row: Chrissie Spencer; Lillian Spencer; Miles Spencer, (holding Grace Walton); Cameron “Ronie” Spencer; Edith (McLaren) Spencer; Daisy Alice Spencer; (holding John Ruskin Walton). Note: Missing from this picture is Emily (Spencer) Johnston, the eldest Spencer daughter, who continued to live in Fort George. The Waltons also remained in Fort George until 1924.
Footnote outstanding achievers received 2007 Aboriginal Achievement Awards this year. They included the six of Canada’s winning 2007 Olympic bid, the producer of one of the world’s longest-running TV series, a world-class diver and 11 other First Nations, Métis, and Inuit role models who converted their potential into success.

“The 2007 award winners are an amazing celebration of achievement,” said Roberta Jamieson, CEO of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation.

“We invite all Canadians to join us in recognizing these outstanding persons who have contributed so much to Canada and the world.” The awards were presented at a gala event in Edmonton in March and televised on both Global and ART. Adam Beach, most recently seen in Flags of Our Fathers, hosted the awards, while Jennifer Podemski, prominent producer, actor and writer was the creative producer. Juno award winners, Gemini-nominated actors, and a slate of talent that reads like the who’s who of Aboriginal Canadian entertainers honoured the recipients with performances at the Awards on March 16, 2007, in Edmonton at the Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium.

14 INSPIRING ACHIEVERS
2007 NATIONAL ABORIGINAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS:

**Arts**
Joanne Cardinal Schubert
A writer, curator, lecturer, poet and Aboriginal arts activist, Cardinal-Schubert inspires and enables Native artists across the continent to challenge and reclaim their creative identities.

**Business & Commerce**
Jack Poole
Poole is credited with bringing the 2010 Olympics to Canada and it’s little surprise he’s been called a cautious optimist, a visionary and a modest overachiever; it’s what helped shape him into becoming one of the most successful real estate developers and community builders in North America.

**Education**
Joe Michel
One of the most outspoken advocates and leaders of Aboriginal education in the country, Michel has gone on to develop curricula for linguistic courses in universities and played a major role in bringing the near extinct Secwepemc language back into the schools.

**Culture & Spirituality**
Alestine Andre
A heritage researcher for her community, she successfully combines her gift of Gwich’in traditional knowledge with that of western science.

**Environment**
Chief David Walkem
Walkem builds communication bridges with developers and forestry companies that allow Aboriginal people to benefit from the business of forestry but also allow the land to regenerate and renew.

**Health**
Joe Couture
As the first Aboriginal person to receive a PhD in psychology, Dr. Joe, as he is affectionately known, has built bridges of understanding between two cultures and systematically affected generations of educators and students with his straightforward and profound traditional healing methods.

**Law & Justice**
Wegadesk Group-Paul
Brokr is the first Nu Cha Nulth lawyer in the country. He has been the Director of Self Government for the Assembly of First Nations, and is renowned for his work on Aboriginal child welfare law and protecting Aboriginal children.

**Media & Communications**
Lisa Meeches
Meeches helped lead Aboriginal media into the mainstream by exposing the truth. She buries old prejudices and opens minds with her meaningful and tradition-based approach to television production.

**Public Service**
Lewis Cardinal
Cardinal is designing education systems that integrate traditional knowledge, and is involved in a global forum where the world’s Indigenous peoples meet to share, discuss and participate in building a more sustainable future for everyone.

**Politics**
Freddie Carmichael
Currently a second-term President of the Gwich’in Tribal Council, Carmichael is piloting the direction for a successful cultural and socio-economic future, which includes building a foundation for self-government.

**Technology & Trades**
Monica Peters
Indigenous languages are at risk. By combining modern technology with ancient words she built an instrument that not only gave her identity but has the potential to save threatened languages of the world.

**Athletics**
Wegadesk Group-Paul
A champion diver who began a diving career at age 12, Group-Paul is stirring up the waters in world competitive diving. He has travelled the globe competing against the sports’ top divers in the Pan Am Games, the Commonwealth Games and even the South African National Championships.

**Youth**
James Makokis
Love for his community and a desire to learn the wisdom of his ancestors drives his passion. Makokis shares what he’s learned through nationally syndicated columns, university research projects and in his ongoing quest to further his knowledge.

**Lifetime Achievement**
Bertha Clark Jones
Jones always spoke for the underdog and moved women’s rights forward by strides when she founded the “Alberta Native Women’s Voices” in the late 1960s. That organization blossomed to become the Native Women’s Association of Canada, a powerful voice for Native women.

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Cardinal is designing education systems that integrate traditional knowledge, and is involved in a global forum where the world’s Indigenous peoples meet to share, discuss and participate in building a more sustainable future for everyone.

**Media & Communications**
Lisa Meeches
Meeches helped lead Aboriginal media into the mainstream by exposing the truth. She buries old prejudices and opens minds with her meaningful and tradition-based approach to television production.

**Public Service**
Lewis Cardinal
Cardinal is designing education systems that integrate traditional knowledge, and is involved in a global forum where the world’s Indigenous peoples meet to share, discuss and participate in building a more sustainable future for everyone.

**Politics**
Freddie Carmichael
Currently a second-term President of the Gwich’in Tribal Council, Carmichael is piloting the direction for a successful cultural and socio-economic future, which includes building a foundation for self-government.

**Technology & Trades**
Monica Peters
Indigenous languages are at risk. By combining modern technology with ancient words she built an instrument that not only gave her identity but has the potential to save threatened languages of the world.

**Athletics**
Wegadesk Group-Paul
A champion diver who began a diving career at age 12, Group-Paul is stirring up the waters in world competitive diving. He has travelled the globe competing against the sports’ top divers in the Pan Am Games, the Commonwealth Games and even the South African National Championships.

**Youth**
James Makokis
Love for his community and a desire to learn the wisdom of his ancestors drives his passion. Makokis shares what he’s learned through nationally syndicated columns, university research projects and in his ongoing quest to further his knowledge.
The Métis Nation of Ontario Registry handles an enormous amount of documents here are some of the numbers...

**MNO CITIZENSHIP STATISTICS**

- 1,212 citizenship applications were received & processed (561 women, 651 men)
- 526 applications were withdrawn (243 women, 283 men)
- The remaining 686 applications were assessed and are currently pending, awaiting requested documents.
- 541 applications from previous years were approved for a total of 1,067 new MNO citizens! (473 women, 594 men)
- On December 31st, 2006, the Métis Nation of Ontario counted a total of 12,339 registered citizens (5,724 women, 6,615 men)
- 4,845 applications are currently pending, awaiting additional documents.

**MNO CITIZENSHIP APPLICATIONS by Region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Received</th>
<th>Pending</th>
<th>Approved</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reg 1</td>
<td>1,869</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>1,458</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reg 2</td>
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<td>573</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>17,184</td>
<td>4,845</td>
<td>12,339</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES FROM THE MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO REGISTRY:**

The Métis Nation of Ontario Registry handles an enormous amount of documents here are some of the numbers...

- Processed 1,212 new applications for citizenship
- Assessed another 800 pre-2006 pending applications
- Made and sent 1,067 new citizenship cards
- Assessed and processed 986 applications
- Made and sent 1,067 new Métis citizenship cards
- Processed 1,212 new applications
- Assessed another 800 pre-2006 applications
- Processed 1,212 new applications
- Responded to thousands of calls to applicants
- Cleaned up citizens' files from all regions
- Sent over 4,000 letters
- Responded to thousands of emails
- The registry was fortunate to have 4 summer students to help prepare files for digitization. During their few months with us they:
  - Cleared up well over 1,500 harvest files
  - Cleared up citizens' files from letter A to E
  - Revised the database entries for all these files
  - Assisted with putting well over 4,000 files in order

**MNO CITIZENSHIP APPLICATIONS by Region**

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**New File Assessment Process:**

A new, streamlined file assessment process was introduced last year, which allowed us to surpass the projected 900 new approvals. This new process consists of three phases.

Phase 1: Initial Requirements Assessment and registration, initial contact with applicant.

Phase 2: Primary Assessment of genealogical chart, documents confirming Métis ancestry and supporting documents.

Phase 3: Registration Final Review & Approval Card sent with welcoming package and a MNO pocket calendar.

A large portion of the applications we receive are missing initial requirement items such as birth or baptism records, photo id or genealogical chart. This new process allows the registry team to identify whether an application is complete or not the very day it is received. The applications that are complete can be processed immediately. The applicants who are missing an item are contacted and the file is sent to the file room until the items are received. In the best of worlds all applications would be fully assessed the moment they arrive but the sheer number of intake makes this impossible so we fully appreciate everyone's understanding and patience.

Karole Dumont-Beckett is the MNO Director of Registry.

**MÉTIS VETERANS | REMEMBERING THEIR SERVICE AND THEIR SACRIFICE**

Emberemience Day, November 11th, may be months away, but our veterans are veterans 365 days of the year and they deserve to be honoured more than just one day a year. This is especially true of Aboriginal vets, who have received so little recognition for the service they have rendered to their Homeland.

Oscar Gravelle is such a man; he was in World War II from beginning to end, 1939 to 1945. Oscar fought with the Vandoos, the Royal 22nd Regiment, which gained fame in the First World War—the war Oscar’s father fought in.

Oscar’s son fought in Vietnam as a medic, and his son the medical corps. Sack of the slacks, his son decided to pick battles larger than their own, Oscar says.

There were “terrible battles” Oscar recalls, which culminated in the Battle of Monte Cassino campaign as one of the First Canadian Division (of which the Vandoos were a part), the English 8th Army (General Montgomery’s Desert Rats), and the First Polish Division fought for months (4 January – 19 May, 1944) against a heavily entrenched German army. Day in and day out, back and forth, thousands and thousands died for that monastery on top of a hill. “It was a lot of loneliness, a lot of heartbreak,” says Oscar.

“Believe me you, there’s no glory in it. I was bloody scared most of the time.”

The Battle of Monte Cassino (also known as the Battle for Rome and the Battle for Cassino) was a costly series of four battles in World War II. Fought by the Allies with the intention of breaking through the Winter Line and setting Rome. The Gustav Line was anchored by German troops who were heavily entrenched; they were backed by a rugged ridge carved by the Vandoos and Garigliano valleys and commanded the surrounding peaks and ridges, but not the historic abbey of Monte Cassino, founded in 524 AD by St. Benedict, although they manned defensive positions into the steep slopes below the abbey walls. On February 15th the monastery, high on a peak overlooking the town of Cassino, was destroyed by American B-17 and B-26 bombers. Two days after the bombing, crack German paratroopers poured into the ruins to defend it. From January 12 to May 18, it was assaulted four times by Allied troops, for a loss of 5,000 men. “The loss was 20,000 German soldiers.”

Oscar first saw the dead when he arrived on the beaches of Sicily.

“You get a cold feeling, and sometimes you argue with yourself, he says he wasn’t scared is either a fool or a liar. The funniest feeling is when you take a life yourself,” Oscar says, “and you know you killed him, and that he was alive a few minutes before. You felt sorry for him, but then you’d meet the arrogant ones, the officers who sat on our uniforms when they were taken prisoner—and we proud as hell of our uniform.”

All soldiers ask themselves why they were there, he says. “At times we used to talk among ourselves, at the rest camps, sometimes at the front lines,” he says. “I still wonder what it was all about.”

Oscar served with the Royal 22nd Regiment, the famous Vandoos, during WWII.

Oscar Gravelle served with the Royal 22nd Regiment, the famous Vandoos, during WWII.
Healthy habits can beat diabetes

"If you are of Aboriginal descent, your chances of developing diabetes are high. If your mother, father, brother or sister has diabetes your chances are even higher!"

T he first time my father saw my mother he fell in love and vowed to marry her. They were married for 27 years before my mother passed away from cancer. I am truly blessed to have had such loving parents.

I am the third born of eight siblings. My father, John, was a jack-of-all-trades and worked at several jobs such as commercial fishing. Well known in the community, John, looked after the children and sometimes went out to the bush and worked with him when he had to. He was a dreamer and the fish when he was doing commercial fishing. My father was of fish desert and a renowned storytelling mother, was the kindest woman I have ever known. She was religious and loved the light with people and animals. She could literally charm the birds out of trees and bring the deer out of the wilderness to spend the harsh cold winters in our barn.

My father was born at my grandmother’s farm in Bodmin, Saskatchewan—

New MNO Diabetes Prevention Coordinator in Thunder Bay office:

10
Ernie Matton

The Catch a Fish Not a Buzz program for youths is currently accepting referrals.

Finally, after all the years of work the youth centre doors are open. Councillor, Ernie Matton has been hired as the Diabetes Prevention Coordinator at the Thunder Bay Métis Council.

This new position comes with many challenges. It is my job to develop interactive workshops, education and information sessions, that our citizens will remember, use, and take with them throughout their life.

Bottroatline: Diabetes is running rampant in our communities and affecting our children, youth, adults and elders. Many other diseases—including but not limited to, kidney, liver, heart, eye, foot ulcers and diabetes neuropathy—are a result of diabetes. As the disease progresses the pain and complications worsen. Sadly, some of our citizens who were once active in the community have become stunted at home feeling isolated, lonely, scared, helpless and depressed.

In addition to one of Aboriginal descent, your chances of developing diabetes are high. If your mother, father, brother or sister has diabetes your chances are even higher! There is some good news though. If you live a healthy balanced life you can beat diabetes, it doesn’t have to beat you. The key is awareness, moderation, support and balance.

I am in the process of developing links and partnerships with local schools, Aboriginal organizations, clinics and health professionals. I have also contacted some of our community Elders affected with diabetes who are interested in sharing their struggles, triumphs, tribulations and the lessons they have learned. Their stories are sure to empower our younger generations to stay healthy—physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally.

My colleague, Ashley Moreau, Community Sport Leader, and I have teamed up and in the near future we will be offering jogging sessions to youth at local elementary schools with a high Aboriginal population. We will also be offering skating lessons and after school physical activities, including basketball and floor hockey. It is my intention to offer workshops, support groups, diabetes community kitchens, circles, one on one sessions and walking groups. Requests have been made regarding a diabetes prevention program for employees from various organizations and workplaces in the community. As a result of these requests, I am in the process of developing an interactive program for our front line workers, “Preventing Diabetes at Work.” This program will focus on healthy nutrition, education and exercise.

On a personal note: I have been happily married for 17 years and have four healthy and happy children. Ashley is 15, Tyler, 15, Kevi, 8, and Jasmine, 4. I am so proud of all them as they have proved themselves active and role models with their peers and they tend to bring out the best in their friends.

Over the past 12 years I have had the opportunity to travel extensively throughout Ontario. This afforded me the chance to meet many gifted people, workers, community members and Senators who shared their wisdom, skills and valuable life teachings along the way. I am an active volunteer for the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and I enjoy volunteering at the grassroots level, hosting healing circles, drum circles, empowerment workshops, pallia-
**Red River Roots**

by KRISTY CAMERON

I grew up knowing very little about the heritage of my ancestors. However, after years of research, I not only discovered I had Metis ancestry, but that both of my parents came from the Red River Settlement. It was a place like none other, its history woven with the rich lives of unique people. One ancestor, John McKay, lead a fascinating life. I was able to link him to one tax from a booklet picked up at the Prince Albert Museum. Since then, my genealogy research has blossomed.

Rev John McKay was born in March, 1831, in Edmonton, to James McKay and Marguerite Gladu (a Metis woman from Cumberland House). His father was employed by the Hudson’s Bay Company in the boat brigades and in Arctic expeditions. John and his brothers grew up around Port Edmonton amidst the fur trade, buffalo hunters and plains people, learning a multitude of languages and mail customs.

John’s family moved to the Red River Settlement in 1836, while his father was still on an expedition. His mother, being Catholic, soon had all the boys baptized at St. Francois-Xavier. After his return in 1840, his father, who was Presbyterian, legally married his mother at St. Andrew’s church. His father retired from the Hudson’s Bay Company and the family settled in Red River. John had three more brothers. They all died in 1846 from illness. Two years later, his sister Mary was born.

John did not work for the Hudson’s Bay Company as did his brothers James and Angus. He was a well-known fur trader, buffalo hunter and guide. In 1858 he guided for the Hind Expedition, which travelled from the Red River Settlement to the Saskatchewan River to determine if the land was suitable for agriculture. The party included Henry Yole Hind, geologist and naturalist, Simon Dawson, photographer. In 1859-60, John guided the Earl of Southesk to the Rocky Mountains.

John married Christina (Christy) McBeath (born Oct 12, 1836, daughter of Hon. Robert McBeath and Mary McLean) on April 10, 1862, in Kildonan, ass. That same year, Rev. James Nisbet arrived to settle the Presbyterian minister Rev. John Black. Two years later, James Nisbet married Christy McBeath’s sister, Mary James Nisbet accepted the opportunity to found a “mission to the Indians” in the North-west.

John McKay was large and powerful, with great prowess for buffalo hunting. He spoke Cree and had a good rapport with the plains people. Thus, he would be a great asset to the missionary party and volunteered to join. The party (the founders of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan) consisted of Rev. James and Mary Nisbet with daughter Mary Jane; John and Christy McKay with daughters Mary and Christiana, William McBeath (a cousin), Alexander Polson (hired for a year); and James Green (hired for the trip).

The party left the Red River Settlement in June, 1866, and soon learned of the death of Christy and Mary’s dear sister Jessie McBeath, who had suffered from dysentery. John brought his own cart and three horses in addition to the missionaries’ stock. During the journey, John guided, interpreted and purchased provisions, such as dried meat, tallow, snow and skins, from the plains people. He also ran his own buffalo. This is something John continued to do for the mission after it was established.

Flett was engaged at Carlton House as another interpreter and had secured our possible sites for the mission settlement. The party went ahead on the river, landing on the shores of present-day Prince Albert on July 20, where they immediately began to erect buildings; establish farming and communicate with the Cree. It is hard to fathom such a journey—travelling with small children for two months in a crude red river cart. These images always make me think twice about complaining while travelling in a car.

John McKay returned from the plains to Carlton and finding that the party had moved on, started with his men to locate and cut a trail to their site, which was widely used thereafter. In the spring of 1867, Flett, Polson and McBeath returned to Kildonan. John managed to plough 10 acres despite the frost. Whenever John McKay went to the plains for provisions, he read to, talked to and prayed with the Cree which sparked interest in the mission. John McKay and James Nisbet prepared a Cree reading book. That summer, Adam McBeath arrived to teach school.

Many settlers from the Red River Settlement and elsewhere came to Prince Albert in the years following, after hearing about the rich soil and prospects of industries. John’s father and brother George, who lived on the river lot beside John, and Christy’s uncle, Morrison McBeath, were among the “infidels.” The Cree congregation around Prince Albert began to decline. It was soon obvious that to carry out a successful mission, it would have to be removed from the settlement.

John McKay was ordained by the Presbytery of Winnipeg and then proceeded to carry on the missionary work, remarrying his family and the Cree 70 miles west to Mistawasis in 1881. Mistawasis was the name of their chief and John’s sworn friend. This mission was successful. John “was a naturally born orator, and had all the dramatic eloquence of the Indian with the fire and the intrepidity of the Celt” (Selkirk Settlers in Real Life, 117). Christy proved to have a positive and cheerful disposition, rich Christian virtues and great quali­m which were dutifully used towards their mission work. Her obituary read: “Nothing but sunshine could abide in her presence.” (The Morning Leader, March, 1907). She had taught Sunday School to a class of girls in Kildonan for many years. Through John’s energetic determination, there were built farm houses, stables, a school house and a manse and church, which had a fence and graveyard in front of it. In 1887 John’s father, James McKay was buried there.

John loved to go with the Cree on buffalo hunts. He wrote in his bible: “Cree Indians on the Saskatchewan Reserve were friendly, but when they got ‘firewater’, they acted like savages.” (A Keating Legacy, 472). The men who sold whiskey to the plains people for furs made it hard on everyone.

On one occasion, a bale of clothes arrived from Toronto for the Cree, and the following Sunday, a man came into church with striped pajamas over his clothes. Rev. John McKay had to explain to him that they were to be worn at night when he slept.

Rev John McKay became ill and went to stay at his daughter’s (Jessie, married to Mr. Blain Good­ellow) house in Prince Albert where he died on March 20, 1891. Christy died February 28, 1907 at Mistawasis, “the last survivor of the band of pioneer missionaries,” (Prince Albert Times, March 7, 1907).

Digging up stories from the past has been very rewarding. It was unfortunate that my great grandmother, like many others, felt she had to hide who she was and sever our Metis ties. It wasn’t until long after she died that we learned she was Metis. It has been so wonderful to make connections with lost family members and to Metis society. Thanking for helping me find a part of my history.

Kristy Cameron is an artist and teacher from Airdakan, ON.

**The Reverend John McKay and his wife Christy.**
**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE:**

Climate change is “unequivocal” say the scientific experts. So too is the political climate in Ottawa, and you don’t need to be a scientist or an expert to know that, only an Aboriginal person.

A little over a year ago we had a government who placed the issues of Aboriginal peoples among its top three priorities. Today, we’re not even on the radar screen.

A little over a year ago we had the promise of attention, effort and new funding by all governments, led by the Government of Canada. That was before the federal election. The new government promptly killed Rekowna because it said it could find better and more effective ways to fulfill the promises of the Rekowna Accords. We’ve heard nothing since.

Gone are the days when the Métis Nation Council was regularly engaged in dialogue with the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, the Minister whose responsibilities and duties include the federal constitution obligation to protect the rights of the Métis. There is nothing in the works for a meeting with the Minister anytime soon on the “Métis Nation Framework Agreement”, and a meeting between national Aboriginal leaders and the Prime Minister is, well, unthinkable.

As with the climate change that is unequivocally upon us, we need to try to understand what has brought about the political change in our fortunes and to develop plans to mitigate, accommodate and adjust to those changes. With no relationship of any kind with the government in power, we start from a position of great disadvantage. There is no doubt in my mind that Aboriginal peoples are seen by key political leaders in Ottawa as “the enemy.”

Past political statements by members of the Conservative Party leave no doubt that they came to power with a deep-seeded negative bias towards Aboriginal peoples, their representative organizations and their leaders.

We are faced with a long uphill struggle to educate the current government about its duties and responsibilities. We also need to educate the government about what is being lost by not embracing the opportunity and potential that Aboriginal peoples bring to the more effective administration and delivery of programs and services. We need to educate them about the contributions our people have made and continue to make to the betterment of our communities. Our recent publication of the number of volunteerunteers (388) and the total volunteer hours (50,492) and the value of that volunteer activity ($1,157 million) in one year is stark evidence of how our people are giving.

As well, we need to make those in power in Ottawa aware that great opportunities in business and economic development are being overlooked, opportunities that we, through joint ventures with our partners in industry as well as with the Amherst Island Nation are developing. The xso has invested in renewable technology, that will see new value-added lumber products brought to markets, including softwoods. We are well advanced in plans to develop a virtual call centre and call centre, promote and expand affordable housing that will bring affordable housing to the market to meet market needs and levels. All of these activities, and others, mean jobs and much needed economic development where our people live in mid and northern Ontario.

Despite the “deep chill” in overall relations between the Métis Nation and the new government, all is not discouraging. We have made substantial gains this year, particularly in the area of health. Through funding by Fednor and the Government of Ontario the xso has now installed “Thomazell Health” facilities at our offices in the northem part of the province. These facilities are gradually being added to our offices in the southern regions. Recently, the Federal Minister of Health, the help that our people in need of care have come to depend upon. At the community level, our councils and xso citizens are dramatically expanding their cultural and social activities with ever greater pride and participation by our people in community events. Just as dealing with global warming needs the attention and efforts of all Canadians and not just governments, educating and bringing about a change in the political climate needs the attention and efforts of all Métis citizens. The xso will do its part in parliament and with the government, but Métis people at the community level need to organize their local Members of Parliament to spread the word. Tell the story about the Métis, let them know we exist, that we are active in our communities, and that in the spirit of our ancestors we are continuing to contribute to nation building within Canada.

If you have any ideas or suggestions that would contribute to our efforts I invite you to email me and the other members of the executive, or the MNO. We need to change the political climate–the more ways we find to do so, the better.

email: tonyb@metisnation.org
mail: 500 Old St. Patrick St.
Unit D
Toronto, ON
KIN 9G4

**MNO SPORT INITIATIVE:** Updates from Community Sport Leaders

**THUNDER BAY, ON**
Pre: 807-624-5011
ashley@metisnation.org

**SAULT STE. MARIE, ON**
Pre: 705-474-0935
donna@metisnation.org

**SAULT STE. MARIE, ON**
Pre: 705-249-2000

**REGION**

**Great upcoming Thunder Bay events**

- **Jigging**
- **Aquafit**
- **Canoeing**
- **Shalett numbers**
- **Basketball**
- **Boot-pick-up**
- **Soccer**
- **Wrestling**
- **Walking**

These are possible upcoming events, so please contact me in the Thunder Bay office for times and places. Get in touch with the Sport leader in your region for upcoming events.

**Hey Sudbury! Find Your Sport, Try Them All**

From hockey to strength training, experience the feeling of being active with the Métis Nation of Ontario’s, Sport Initiative Program. Warm up your body and spirits as you take part in a variety of great activities all year long.

We will be running weekly hockey games throughout the winter months and for those of you who want to stay indoors where it’s warm, we have strength training for older adults that will run bi-weekly.

In the near future, we will host a “Find your Sport, Try Them All” event in Sudbury. Use the information below to determine the time and place. So come out and make your family a healthy family.

Pre: 705-249-2000

**Free Yoga Lessons being offered in Toronto**

The Métis Nation of Ontario and the Aboriginal Ontario Early Years Centre are inviting you to enjoy free yoga lessons this winter!

The lessons will take place Tuesdays from 2-3pm and Wednesdays from 5:30-7pm at the Aboriginal Ontario Early Years Centre (1 Wood Street – north of College and Yonge). This is a secure building so you will need to buzz to get in.

All equipment required will be provided. Please wear loose fitting clothing.

Childcare services are available as well.

This activity is sponsored by the Métis Nation of Ontario, the Federation of Native Canadian Women, and the Ontario Ministry of Health.