The Métis Nation of Ontario’s 13th Annual General Assembly was a successful celebration of citizenship, culture and history. Taking place in the historic Métis community of Sault Ste. Marie, Métis people from across Ontario joined together to hear reports and carve out future priorities for the Nation.
BY LOUISE GOULDING

The Moon River Métis Council once again participated in the MNO’s Annual General Assembly. Although this year we didn’t have pots of chowder we did have smoked fish which went over very well. It was too darn hot for chowder anyway!

Our council had four representatives at this year’s AGA including myself, Senator Ruth Wagner-Millington; Women’s Representative, Verna Porter and Councilor Irene Peel. We all worked very hard in the heat and it paid off as we had very good sales on the two days we set up shop.

We were nicely decorated with MNO flags and balloons flying high. No one could possibly miss us! Besides flags, balloons and smoked fish, we also sold T-shirts, sweatshirts, friendship patches, hats, and Councilor Peel brought an assortment of her crafts.

We also raffled off a capote which was handmade by our treasurer, Lisa McCron. The winner was Ms. Trudell from Sault Ste. Marie, which by the way she earned with all her hard work.

Besides working our booth, we took in the two cultural days. We all attended and enjoyed the festivities at St. Joseph’s Island, especially the pig roast! Although the heat was unbearable, we attended the Voyageur Games— as spectators of course! Some of us managed to include a jigging lesson, genealogy workshops and much more. The evening entertainment was fun and the time spent relaxing with friends, new and old, was grand.

All in all it was a great week. I personally have to thank the husbands of Verna Porter and Irene Peel for all of their hard work in helping us set up and take down the tents, load and unload the truck a hundred times, etc. We couldn’t have done it without you. Thank you Doug Porter and Barry Peel!

The Moon River Métis Council booth was originally set up to sell T-shirts, caps and candy. Seeing a need they began selling coffee, donuts and sandwiches. What entrepreneurship! The voyageurs would be proud.

Moon River Métis
The sand dunes at Ojibway Park on the Garden River First Nation were thick with Métis people straining for a glimpse of the canoe that would signal the beginning of the 13th Annual General Assembly (AGA) of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO). The canoe was soon in sight making for the shore. Before the crew—Métis Canoe Expedition veterans Ginny Gonneau and Chris MacLeod—could get their craft to dry land, MNO President, Tony Belcourt was disembarked and greeting the crowd.

A boisterous procession made its way across the dunes to the big tent where it was standing room only. The Winnipeg Roe-Tappers jigged and whirled to the sound of the Métis fiddle. When the applause finally subsided, Senator Brenda Powley, of the Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council, stepped to the microphone and welcomed everyone to the 13th Annual General Assembly. Brenda then offered an opening prayer. Sixteen-year old Métis fiddler, Sierra Noble, played a heart-stopping musical companion piece to the opening prayer that must be heard to be appreciated (Sierra's performance and other clips of the opening speeches are available on the MNO's website: www.metisnation.org). The serene sounds of Sierra's fiddle set a wonderful tone for the opening ceremonies.

“Each year we hold our AGA to conduct business that needs to be done; assess the work that has been done in the past year and set a vision for work that has to be done in the coming year,” said Gary Lipinski, Chair of the AGA, as he came to the microphone to greet the Assembly and acknowledge delegates and special guests. “We have our work to do, but we will have fun as well. Ladies and gentlemen, let’s have a wonderful AGA.”

Gary took time to thank the many volunteers, the MNO staff and leadership. He saved the highest praise for the Assembly itself: “To the Métis citizens, the support and guidance you have given has helped us propel the AGA to be seen as a very credible and honourable Nation of people within Ontario, connected to and part of a greater Métis Nation. To you most of all we say ‘thank you, sincerely’.”

President Tony Belcourt started his address with mention of the 8th Annual General Assembly that took place at Ojibway Park in 2001. He also gave a vivid description of the significance of the Sault Ste. Marie area to the history of the Métis in Ontario and paid tribute to two sons of Sault Ste. Marie who have a special place in that history, Steve Powley and his son Roddy.

Tony also introduced the Assembly to the MNO’s new President, Tony Belcourt.
One of the most interesting aspects of my first AGA experience was camping with other Métis youth in what was dubbed ‘Tent City’. Although Tent City could have been more aptly described as ‘Tent Village’, or even, ‘Ten Tents’, this particular camp site afforded all who resided there the invaluable opportunity to meet other youth from across the province.

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I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know other Métis youth who were as dedicated to understanding and maintaining Métis culture as I am. Tent City may have had far fewer residents than its name boasted, but what we lacked in numbers we made up for in enthusiasm. I don’t know if having a sense of humour is something intrinsically tied to being Métis or if the youth in Tent City were just extremely funny, but laughter was not hard to come by. Whether I was desperately (and unsuccessfully) trying to start a camp fire or desperately (and unsuccessfully) trying to keep my feet clean, the affect-ionate ridicule of my fellow youth made absolutely every part of my experience in Tent City and the AGA amazing. Thanks guys! See you next year!
teleconferencing resources. A brief video was shown that was recorded prior to the AGA using the teleconferencing technology that has been set up in several Community Council offices across the province.

“I imagine how valuable this will be,” said President Belcourt. “I think the secret of our success is our ability to communicate with each other and talk with each other. This facility is going to make it an awful lot easier.” (Look for more information on the MNO’s new teleconferencing abilities in the next issue.)

Tony also spoke of both the past and ongoing struggle for Métis rights, and finished by affirming the Métis Nation’s strength and pride. “We’ve come a long way in thirteen years. It is because we have built on strong foundations. Fundamental to this is that we are a people, a proud people, a people with a wonderful history and a beautiful place within Canada.”

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FROM PAGE 3...

to their terror that approved the “Suzanne Nelson Toulouse, addressed people and our love for one wonderful culture, our pride as a wonderful history, our working days and let us enjoy discussion here during our “Let’s have some debates and beautiful country.” said Tony.

take our rightful place in that we are a people, a proud people, having built on strong foundations. Fundamental to this is that we are a people, a proud people, a people with a wonderful history and a beautiful place within Canada.”

The Honourable Chris Bentley, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, brought greetings on behalf of Premier Dalton McGuinty. Mr. Bentley said he was aware of the MNO’s long-standing desire to see a Chair of Métis Studies at an Ontario university, and committed to the same goal.

Howard Hampton, MPP Rainy River and leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party, apologized for the fact that this was his first AGA and had kind words for the Assembly. “It is an honour and a privilege to be in the company of women and men who dedicate their lives to making life better, not only for Métis families, not only for Métis communities but for all Ontarians and Ontario as a whole,” said Hampton.

The Member of Parliament for Sault Ste. Marie, Tony Martin, offered his greetings.

Christian Provenzano, Liberal Candidate of Record in Sault Ste. Marie, read a letter from Michael Ignatieff, MP for St. Boniface, expressing appreciation for the invitation.

After a lunch break, Chair, Gary Lipinski, called the Delegates Meeting to order. The Monday afternoon meetings are of a technical nature and consist mostly of procedural items. Because voting issues arise at the AGA, quorum must be established. The agenda for the week is reviewed and accepted by the Assembly. A Resolutions Committee is appointed to help citizens draft the resolutions that will come before the Assembly for voting. Minutes from the previous year’s AGA are reviewed and, if need be, discussed and accepted by the members of the Assembly. By mid afternoon the is were dozed and the r’s crossed and another AGA was well under way.

Following these procedures, President Belcourt mentioned the sad fact that Suzanne Rochon-Burnett, one of the founding members of the 1996, had passed away on April 2nd of this year. President Belcourt announced the launch of a new 1996 website section about Suzanne and a new award to honour one outstanding volunteer per year. Tony discussed the process for volunteers to be nominated for the award, and also asked volunteers to submit their names to receive volunteer recognition certificates and pins for 5, 10 and 20 years of service. A motion was put forward to the Assembly and the Assembly approved the “Suzanne Rochon-Burnett Volunteer of the Year Award” by consensus. (More information on the Suzanne Rochon-Burnett Volunteer of the Year Award and details about Suzanne’s life are available on the MNO’s website: www.metisnation.org)

President Belcourt then put a motion to the Assembly that Suzanne Rochon-Burnett be named, posthumously, as the first recipient of the Volunteer of the Year Award. The vote was unanimous and Suzanne was remembered with a heartfelt round of applause.

With the work of the day done, the big tent transforms from meeting hall to music hall as the Building Bridges Métis Music Festival takes the stage. This was the fifth year the Métis Nation of Ontario Cultural Commission (Suzanne) with the generous support of the Canada Council for the Arts and other sponsors was able to present the music festival as a concurrent event with the AGA.

Early in the evening eager up-and-comers warmed up the crowd as Nancy Gonneau hosted the Métis Idol youth talent show. The competition was fierce as jiggers and comedians dunked it out with karaoke crooners (For pictures of the great entertainment at this year’s AGA see pages 8 & 9). They were all winners but only three made it to Wednesday’s finals (results on page 15).

The Winnipeg Toce-Tappers returned to put on another great
Talking Wild Feathers

BY CLAUDETTE GINGRAS

I just wanted to say that my first sea was amazing! My “Talking Stick” workshop was a success—because Senator Reta Gordon opened it by sharing a story with the children. She explained that tribes at council meetings used the talking stick so as not to be interrupted. When the person with the stick was finished speaking they passed it to the next council member who wished to speak.

I asked the children to really look at their sticks and choose the one that felt right to them. I asked them to let it speak to them and once the class began, the creativity that came out of those children was spectacular.

The two hours flew by as the children did the work on their sticks. Other things I had spoken with or on the children’s mind was “Wow, we always ask our children to respect their Elders but now the children have seen an Elder as a storyteller. Thank you, I thought your class was going to consist of paper and markers. I had no idea I was going to create something so amazing, and the children did the work on their sticks all by themselves.”

Other great moments of the sea occurred when I was finally meeting and putting faces to our MNO citizens. Best of all were the children I had spoken with or on whose files I had worked. Claudette Gingras is the MNO’s Assistant Registrar.

KUDOS FOR THE MNO

Métis Nation of Ontario recognized for commitment to multiculturalism

BY LINDA LORD

A special guest at this year’s sea, Lorena Tridico, Communications Director for the Calabrians Multicultural World Society, spoke on her society’s 21-year involvement in promoting inclusiveness and egalitarianism.

“Canada is a multicultural nation and as such, we should not only be proud to be Canadian, but also make it clear to our cultural backgrounds,” Tridico said. “What makes us unique also makes us similar, because we share common goals and values. In recognizing such principles, we build stronger ties with other people.”

At the Calabrians Multicultural Society, we would like to acknowledge and congratulate you for your continued dedication to raising awareness of Métis rights and for the promotion of history and culture of the Métis people within Sault Ste. Marie and Canada. This award of recognition is presented to the Métis Nation of Ontario for its ongoing promotion and dedication to multiculturalism and Canadian unity.” — Lorena Tridico

First Nations’ peoples, and ensure that common goals and values are protected.”

She then presented a certificate of recognition to the Métis Nation of Ontario for its commitment to equality, inclusion, and multiculturalism; the award was accepted by President Belcourt.

Tridico recognized “Tony’s leadership of the sea and commitment to raising awareness of Métis rights. “The Calabrians

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POWER PLAYERS

Another amazing AGA has come and gone. Thank you to all the volunteers and to the Sault Ste Marie Métis Council for hosting such a wonderful Assembly.

This year the Métis Voyageur Games featured an outstanding list of competitors on both cultural days. I can barely wait to see what happens next year!

There is a lot to be said about the strength our ancestors must have had while competing in our traditional Métis games. I am sure that today’s games are just as difficult. I am happy to say that safety is a top priority for the Métis Voyageur Games staff; we will always hold each competitor’s safety at the highest level of importance. We are all here to have fun but we are also here to play safely.

We tried something a little bit different this year, and the flow of the games went very well.

On Tuesday, we focussed on the Adult Voyageur Games. On this day we started at 9 am and were finished at 5 pm. Again, this enabled the volunteers and the staff to take part in other workshops that were being offered on the last cultural day of the week.

On Thursday evening, Hank Rowlinson and President Tony Belcourt presented the Gold, Silver and Bronze medals to each Voyageur Game finalist. See below and page 15 for the winners in each category.

On a more personal note I would like to thank Kelly Omenye (UMAYC Timmins) and her team of youths who provided fresh fruit, ice cold water and fruity drinks to all of our spectators. You make the difference in our communities and throughout our great Nation. So again, I thank you!

I am proud to say that you don’t have to be a card holder of the AGA to feel a strong connection to the Métis people. For example, my husband Sunny enjoys learning more and more about our culture and about the Métis Nation of Ontario’s magnificent extended “family” and he too feels the connection that we all have. Even though he is not Métis by blood, he knows what it feels like to be a Métis at heart.

Our lives are forever changed when we come across people who are proud of their heritage and their roots. Being the best Métis we can be benefits us all!

Heavy Duty: Strongman Sunny Fonjong makes the 300lb Log Carry look like a game of pick-up sticks during the Métis Voyageur Games at this year’s Assembly in Sault Ste. Marie.

Laurie Fonjong is the MNO’s Registry Administrative Assistant.

### MÉTIS VOYAGEUR GAMES RESULTS 2006

#### ADULT GAMES

**180lb CREAM CAN CARRY**

| 1st        | Luc Lamoureux     |
| 2nd        | Sunny Fonjong     |
| 3rd        | Dave Potvin       |

**300lb LOG CARRY**

| 1st        | Sunny Fonjong     |
| 2nd        | Dave Potvin       |
| 3rd        | Ernie Haliuk      |

**450lb CARRY**

| 1st        | Sunny Fonjong     |
| 2nd        | Keith Hendricks   |
| 3rd        | Dave Potvin       |

**WOMEN’S 90lb CARRY**

| 1st        | Evelyn Powley    |
| 2nd        | Anna Trudeau     |
| 3rd        | Stephanie Michaud|

**ADULT SLING SHOT**

| 1st        | Norm Monaghan    |
| 2nd        | Ernie Haliuk     |
| 3rd        | Jason Defosse    |

**ADULT AIR RIFLE**

| 1st        | Bill Rhody       |
| 2nd        | Laura Bourgeois  |
| 3rd        | Alain Petit      |

**ADULT HATCHET THROW**

| 1st        | Ken Millard      |
| 2nd        | Stan McHale      |
| 3rd        | Scott Rowlinson  |

The games went very well. I would also like to thank the UMAYC staff, Sports Leaders, Hank Rowlinson, Scott Rowlinson, Wayne Trudeau, Lorna Rowlinson, Jason Defosse, Ernie Haliuk, Norm Monaghan, Paul Priorcy, and Douglas Laroche, as well as Jennifer St. Germain and Shelley Gonneville for allowing me to schedule their staff to help run the games this year. You can only imagine how much relief Hank and I felt having your staff help us.

If I have missed anyone, please accept my apologies, I honestly cannot thank these wonderful volunteers enough, without them, the Métis Voyageur Games would not have run so smoothly.

I would also like to thank all of the people who sat in the hot blistering sun and cheered on all of the Voyageur Game participants. You make the difference in how these games are perceived.

Our lives are forever changed when we come across people who are proud of their heritage and their roots. Being the best Métis we can be benefits us all!
Sierra Noble
The MNO was very lucky to have 16 year old fiddling sensation Sierra Noble at the AGA all week. The Winnipeg native has been playing the fiddle since she was 7 years old and studied the Métis fiddle with the legendary Tommy Knott. She has been named Manitoba Junior Fiddling Champion in 2004 and 2006 and Jigging Champion in 2004. You can find out where Sierra will be playing next on her website: www.sierranoble.ca

Loma
Recording artist, TV host, AGA emcee, and MNO Provincial Telehealth Coordinator, Loma does it all.

Beverly Souliere
MNO’s Provincial Aboriginal Problem Gambling Prevention Coordinator has a voice built for the blues. Bev put on another great show this year.
Sandy Scofield
Juno-award nominee Sandy Scofield played on stage and ran music workshops for the Métis youth.

Fairlane Cruisers
The music of the 50’s and 60’s tribute band got socks hopping on Monday night.

Larry Berrio
Sudbury’s Larry Berrio has rocked venues across Canada over the last several years. On Wednesday night Larry brought his raucous brand of country-rock to the AGA’s big tent.

Carey Calder
was joined on stage by musician Shane Belcourt and Métis Canoe Expedition veteran Chris MacLeod.

Gilles Giroux & Whiskey Farmer
Gilles Giroux and his group served as ‘house band’ throughout the Assembly.
Sport Leaders take on their first AGA

BY SHELLIE GONNSVILLE

I t's AGA was particularly special for me. As the MNO Aboriginal Sport Initiative Supervisor I walk "loud and proud" where my "team" is concerned. These unique individuals are heading the Sport Initiative at such a fast and positive pace; I could not have dreamed of accomplishing this alone.

As you are all aware this is a new program in the Métis Nation. What you may not know is that in keeping the door open to deliver programming that suits each individual Métis community the Sport Leaders are left with a blank work plan. Some may say this is an easy way to work, while others understand the frustration and challenges it can bring.

Their presence is welcome as leaders of the daycare activities. Throughout the week they kept an eye out for the most gracious, respectful and cooperative children participating. Activities were divided among three age groups: Tiny Tots, Juniors and Teens. Although all the children received a "sporting gift" at the end of the week, the children were acknowledged in a more personal fashion. A presentation was made in front of all the main tent on Friday. It was the first year for The Senator Rita Gordon Award, which was a sash and a token badge given to outstanding children. Although I am not sure I was able to make all the children feel the pride of being selected. At the same time I was quite impressed! I would also like to thank all the volunteers for allowing us the honour, but also Lisa Pigeau (AHWS, Ottawa) for creating the leather badges for us.

My memories will be cherished forever

I would like to thank all the volunteers who took time from their personal lives to assist in the success of the 13th Annual General Assembly. Appreciation of their efforts can hardly be expressed through words alone.

MÉTIS VOYAGEUR

PATTI MOREAU

I learned what goes into the whole production of an AGA. It is a long process that began back in January, but seeing everyone's smiles and making new friends made it all worth it. As the Community Sport Leader for Region 4 for the MNO Aboriginal Sport Initiative I was productively involved in providing the children and youth with fun activities, as well as assisting with the Voyageur Games. This week, although exhausting, at times provided me the opportunity to grow in many ways. My memories will be cherished forever.

The seac is a time of coming together, meeting new people, learning new things about our culture and experiencing a Métis way of life. It is about sharing, having fun and working.

This year's seac was a very meaningful one to me for two reasons. Being an involved Métis citizen of Sault Ste Marie I learned what goes into the whole production of an AGA. It is a long process that began back in January, but seeing everyone's smiles and making new friends made it all worth it. As the Community Sport Leader for Region 4 for the MNO Aboriginal Sport Initiative I was productively involved in providing the children and youth with fun activities, as well as assisting with the Voyageur Games. This week, although exhausting, at times provided me the opportunity to grow in many ways. My memories will be cherished forever.

I would like to thank all the volunteers who took time from their personal lives to assist in the success of the 13th Annual General Assembly. Appreciation of their efforts can hardly be expressed through words alone.

I am very grateful to take the time to write this letter and say that I was given the opportunity to work with such great people. I would like to thank all those involved in the AGA in Sault Ste Marie. I would like to give thanks to everyone who was involved in the AGA; the week was a lot of fun. When I was working or volunteering my time everyone was friendly; it didn't matter where I was looking there were smiles on a lot of faces.

I have never had the opportunity to attend an Assembly before and I was taken aback by the generosity of people.

I have never had the opportunity to attend an AGA before and I was taken aback by the generosity of people. People who don't know you are saying 'hello'! Even though the heat was horrendous during the Voyageur Games—actually all week—I was amazed at how many participants there were, and shocked at how many spectators we had. This shows me that the seac is a real tight group of people who will open their doors to all others. I would like to thank you all for this treasure.
First ever ‘Senators’ Forum’
preludes the 2006 MNO Assembly

A
other AGA has come and gone and I am still on a high over this year’s success. We Senators were fortunate in obtaining a grant from ‘New Horizons’ which enabled us to hold our first ‘Senators’ Forum’, thanks to a successful proposal submitted by Wenda Watteyne.

Our AGA was held at the Water Tow- er Inn on Friday, July 7th, and all stayed at the same hotel, where we gathered that evening for a ‘meet and greet’. It was so exciting to see one another and to meet new Senators, such as Claire Sears, of the Ontario Council; Patricia Dreyden, Geraldton Council; and Dora McInnis of the GNB.

On Saturday, the 8th, we Senators (along with our invited guests, spouses, partners, family and friends) met in the conference room and brought our concerns and ideas to the table. Senator Elmer Ross discussed such Elders’ needs as housing, health care, monetary care, and help that would enable Elders to live out their golden years in their own homes. It has been said life consists of four hills: infancy, youth, maturity, and old age. Many of our Elders have ascended and descended the first three hills. As we mount the fourth hill, may we then descend this hill in dignity.

The Senators feel that it is time that the 2006 leaders propose to the federal, provincial and municipal governments that they supply funds to enable the 2007 programs into place to see that the needs of Métis Elders are met.

Senator Earl Scofield addressed ways to bring more citizens into the MNO, such as setting up booths at powwows, Aboriginal festivals and at National Aboriginal Day events where 2006 information could be distributed.

Senator Roland St. Germain spoke on the subject of smudging. He pointed out that although some people do not regard smudging as a Métis practice, if we think back to most, likely as our grandfathers were reciting the rosary, our grandmothers were smudging. Following his talk, he smudged us all.

Senator Wagner-Millington discussed the importance of passing on stories told to us by our ancestors. For some time, the Youth Branch has been thinking about meeting with us to record our stories, but so far nothing has happened. Our guest is that we Elders will have to be the ones to get the ball rolling.

With 30 Senators in attendance there were lively debates. We hope this will be an annual event, and a proposal has already been submitted for next year.

On Saturday the 9th, guest speakers were invited to share with us what was happening in the various departments of the MNO. In attendance were President Tony Belcourt, Chair, Gary Lupinski, Director of Health Services, Doug Wilson, Director of Housing and Human Resources, Jean McIsaac-Witika, Chief Registrar, Karole Dumont-Beckett, Director of Education and Training, Jen St. Germain, and from the Youth Branch, Ginny Gonness and Chris McLeod. All of the presentations were most interesting and informative.

You don’t stop laughing because you grow old; you grow old because you stop laughing.

We were all astounded at the growth of the MNO, including the increased number of staff, of citizens and of programs available to citizens. Each speaker received a gift of a beautiful box containing a candle, and medicine bag, and a leather bookmark in the shape of a feather, crafted by Carol Bedford, wife of Senator Gerry Bedford. (Speaking of the Bedfords: A few days after their return from the AGA, their daughter Coral was presented with a beautiful grandbaby named Carter. See the next Voyageur for more on this new Métis citizen.)

On Sunday evening a banquet was held for 60 people to close the forum. Following dinner, Senator Marion LaLumiere and Senator Earl Scofield were presented with Hudson’s Bay blankets in recognition of their status as World War II veterans. Senator Elmer Ross played Amazing Grace on his harmonica in remembrance of our fallen warriors. So ended the first Senators’ Forum.

I could not have put on an event such as this without a lot of help from other people so I owe them a debt of gratitude.

Thanks to Sunny and Laurie Fonjong for the beautiful graphics and printing in the kits and for helping to put the kits together and transport them. They spent many evenings on the computer both at their home and at ours.

Thanks to Patricia Lesjour for setting up the hotel rooms and travel and for ordering the brief cases designed.

Thanks to Mark St. Germain for the beautiful covers on our AGA binders featuring the pictures of the Senators and the Youth.

Thanks to Katherine Pelletier for taking the minutes of the Forum, and for always helping me, no matter what I asked of her.

Thanks to Lisa Pigeau for the lovely magnetic bracelets given to all the Senators, plus all the health needs and the Hudson’s Bay books.

Thanks to Shelley Gonneville for the delectable fruit trays she provided for the Senators on the three meeting days of the AGA.

This year for the first time ever, through a New Horizons programme, the Senators came together for two days of meetings prior to the AGA. Previously, the Senators had met on an “off” day, cramming into four or five hours when we would rather be out seeing the Voyager Games.

This year’s forum was called ‘Building Stronger Communities’ and was the first of its kind. ‘Building Stronger Communities’ and was the first of its kind. It was viewed as the “first step” in a series of Senator-driven activities.

We arrived at the Water Tower Inn on Friday evening. After check-in we had a ‘meet-and-greet’ in the library where we enjoyed tea, coffee, juice and sandwiches. On Saturday a buffet breakfast was available at 8am. At 9am the meeting was called to order and the Métis flags under the care and guidance of Senator Jacques Leroux (St. Joseph Island/Bruce Mines) were paraded into the West Hall, our meeting and eating place for the next two days. The opening prayer was said by Senator Earl Scofield. (Speaking of the Bedfords: A few days after their return from the AGA, their daughter Coral was presented with a beautiful grandbaby named Carter. See the next Voyageur for more on this new Métis citizen.)

In closing I want to single out Brenda Powley and Jack Le carn for all of their hard work and for organizing the forum and for ordering the brief cases designed.

Especially, we thank the Creator for giving us all to this forum and for making it safe.

The dedication of the planning committee that organized this AGA so superbly will be obvious to you from this edition of the Voyager.

In closing I want to single out Michele Dale and her workers and say how very impressed I was with the way the day care was run. Chi Migwetch!

I leave you all with this thought: You don’t stop laughing because you grow old; you grow old because you stop laughing.

Senators’ Spotlight

Seniors’ Forum Overview:

Wisdom & sharing at Senators’ Forum

BY RUTH WAGNER-MILLINGTON
Senators’ Forum overview

FROM PAGE 11...
Senator Reta Gordon herself had worked tirelessly on this forum for months, and had considered every possible little thing which would ameliorate this Forum. We were all presented with a very specially made black briefcase with a snowy owl on it and two senators written below. The Snowy Owl is a symbol of the wise elder/senator and is the Senators’ logo. We were also given personalized Senators’ stationery with the snowy owl logo on it.

Because we were all housed in the same hotel where the meetings were held, it was easy to get to meetings and to chat with fellow Senators. Our breakfasts, lunches and suppers were provided and, compliments to the chef, are in order; everything was delicious. Fruit and juice and water were available at breaks. We were very well cared for, and everyone commented on the preparation which must have gone into such an undertaking.

Wenda went over the objectives of the forum. Even with two days allotted, there was an enormous number of issues which were presented and questioned and discussed. Attention was focussed on strengthening the network of Sena- tors, seniors and elders in the Metis communities in Ontario to become more active and engaged in our community, regional and provincial levels; to promote the spirit of voluntarism and participation, working with and involving the Youth and sharing cultural values and skills.

Many important issues were brought to our attention: Senator Roland St. Germain spoke about smudging and sharing information with our communities—Aboriginal, Métis and Métis-Norval.

Senator Kay Lynch (Kenora) was concerned about how to deal with the new “community code”. Senator Marlene Greenwood proposed that the title ‘Senator’ should be kept after 10 years of service.

Senator Elmer Ross (Veterans Senator) brought forth the issue of small graves under 75, help with lawn, snow, housecleaning, financial assistance, medical alert and seniors’ needs.

Senator Al Roussin (Dryden) was concerned about being able to communicate from the municipal courts to the provincial councils in Ottawa. We have now just inaugurated a tele- imaging system which will, we hope, probably begin to help.

Senator Earl McLeod (Wind- sor) raised environmental con- cern about the use-mouthing and building of new nuclear pow- er facilities while we still have no solution as to the nuclear wasteland which exists now. He also spoke about the sale of water to the US with great concern. Senator Earl felt that in order to increase this thing we should go to events, fairs, powwow and wear our sashes to make people aware of the presence of Metis.

Senator Lois McCallum (Ottawa) asked: “Is the 50th year for families” and expressed her concern about some unfriendly conduct which took place last year in the tent in the evening. She said so wisely, “Children are our future; ensure that they see healthy living.” Perhaps the bar should be opened at 9 pm instead of earlier. Discussion ensued on this item and a good point was raised: how do you regulate a function at a campground where people have their own sites?

Senator Ruth Wagner-Milling- ton (Moon River) felt that we should be documenting our stories, songs, poems, games and music as we hear them from our friends and relatives. What does it mean to be Métis? These should be documented as soon as possible and would make a wonderful history available by book or film for our future generations to be proud of.

Judy Montague from the Horizons pro- gramme spoke about the pro- gramme and what it does. Our Chair, Wenda Watteryne, quizzed us on what we were doing in our own communities in our way of voluntarism, and we heard about wonderful things. The Forum recessed on day one with a closing prayer by Senator Jacques Leroux.

Day two our opening prayer was said by Sena- tor Marion Lab- man (the Grandmother of the province) and our presenters then had presenta- tions and speeches by Presi- dent, Tony Bekourt and Chair. Gary Lipinski (Jean McIsaac-Witala) told us about what the 50th is doing with housing. At lunch we had a viewing of the as yet unre- leased Indigenous Legal Tradi- tions Documentary.

In the afternoon we heard from Doug Wilson about health issues, from Karole Dumont-Beckett about her amazing work in re-vamping our Registry, and from Ginny Gonneau and Chris McLeod about the youth and their upcoming trip to Ecuador, and we were able to view a video of the canoe trip to Baptiste Lake in summer. As an off shooter Ginny asked several of the Senators to take part in a “Talking Circle” with some of the youth at their tent- ground area one evening. We all had a wonderful time listening to and relating stories. It was a delightful mix of young and old. Jen St. Germaine came and spoke of many of her undertakings working at the rangers.

Throughout the two days, each time we had a guest speaker, and as you can see there were many, he or she was presented with a box which contained some Métis crafts hand-crafted by Carol Bedford, wife of ex- Senator Gerry Bedford.

Many of the people who were guest speakers, took the opportu- nity to praise and thank Ex-Senator Reta Gordon for her mar- velous idea of having this forum and for all of her hard work in bringing it to fruition. All the praise given was well deserved. Although we were quite tired after the intensity of the two days, all the Senators were pleased with what we had managed to cover, learn, and accomplish. The 2006 Senators’ Forum was unanimously declared a great success.

Youth Photography workshop:
Nurturing your inner shutterbug

BY BONNY CANN

Sixteen people participated in the photography work- shop during this year’s Building Bridges Festival at the AGA. Amanda Strong and Bonny Cann conducted the workshop with the assistance of Yvonne Scholich and Diane Lipinski. The youth participants ranged from 2 to 20 and were encouraged to get creative and to take pictures of the same things utilizing the shadows, lighting and angles for different effects.

The youth used up 27 pic- tures on disposable cameras. The films were then developed and each participant was able to choose one picture to be framed. Each photograph was exhibited in a gallery for all to view from Wednesday to Friday. The work was very impressive and the workshop a great suc- cess. The youth have requested an extended program for next year. We hope to accommodate this request.

If you were involved in the program and were not able to pick up your photos prior to leaving, please e-mail at bon- nyc@metisnation.org or phone 1-800-466-6684 and we’ll be happy to mail them to you.

Steve Powley, Never Forgotten

BY CAM BERGESS

This year’s assembly was spec- ial to me because it was held in the Powley’s home town. It was nice to see Brenda (Senator) and her family, Paul, Rod, Evelyn and Kim all involved with our Nation as vol- unteers or on council positions. I took the opportunity to visit with it; Steve; pay my respects, and reminisce. The photo above is for those citizens who have not seen his headstone.

There were many highlights during the week: President Bel- court being recognized by the AGA for receiving a National Aboriginal Achievement Award; Scott Carpenter and Olivia Hei- del being recognized by the Ontario Arts Council for their work in preserving and promot- ing Metis history; I was mesmer- ized by 16 year old Sierra Noble with her talent as a fiddler and entertainer.

Congratulations to the ath- letes and competitors from Region 2 in the games and sportsmanship—Gadsdy Choquette; 1st Jigging; Emma Haluk; 2nd Metis Idol; Matthew Choquette; Sportmanship Award; Ernie Haluk; 1st Sling shot and 3rd and the workshop a great suc- cess. The youth have requested an extended program for next year. We hope to accommodate this request.

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Congratulations to the PCMNO Coun- cilor for Region 2.
jigging show. The Toe-Tappers were accompanied by young Sierra Noble who dazzled the Assembly again with a talent and bearing well beyond her years. The Porland Cruisers put a shiny sequined finish on the night with their tribute to the wa-wa-wa-wa-wonderful sounds of the 50’s and 60’s.

**TUESDAY, JULY 11TH**

Tuesday and Thursday at the AGA are cultural days. They pull back from the business and an opportunity to be with friends and family and share in some traditional Métis activities.

A special treat was in store this year as the MNO, in partnership with Parks Canada, held a Métis Heritage Celebration at Fort St. Joseph National Historic Site a short drive from the AGA. Several dozen MNAers took the chance to walk in their ancestors’ footsteps. Métis youth in historical garb served as interpreters at various locations on the site providing a glimpse of the adventures and hardships of the fur-trade era.

Fort St. Joseph was built in the late 1700’s by the British to protect the fur trade from the Americans. Soon the fort was the centre of a thriving community of soldiers, fur traders, officials and Aboriginal people. During the War of 1812 the British used the fort as a base for an assault on the American’s nearby Fort Mackinac. After capturing Mackinac the British moved their garrison there. Fort St. Joseph was burned to the ground by the Americans in retaliation. After the signing of the Treaty of Ghent that ended the 1812 war the British returned Mackinac to the Americans and relocated their garrison to Drummond Island. The isolated area was largely forgotten until the government did several archaeological studies of the old fort by the 1960s. (More information about Fort St. Joseph: www.pc.gc.ca/joseph)

As any Métis event must, the day of historical discovery eventually turned into a party. Red sashes and blue Métis flags were flying as participants gathered on the shore of Potagannissing Bay at the south end of the island. The ever-present Winnipege Toe-Tappers danced to the fiddle as Métis citizens sat down to a fantastic pig-in-a-spear meal prepared by a culinary legend of the near north, Art Bennett. Siesta brought down the house again. The Seniors’ Forum was accompanied by young Tony Belcourt who shared a moment with Bruce Cockburn who dropped in on the MNO’s Build- ing Bridges Festival to catch Sierra’s performance. He stopped in on the AGA, near Sault Ste. Marie, on route to his home in Kingston from a gig at the Winnipeg Folk Festival where he met Sierra, and became impressed by her talents. Tony invited Bruce to return, but next time with his guitar.

Sierra Noble and Tony Belcourt share a moment with Bruce Cockburn who dropped in on the MNO’s Building Bridges Festival to catch Sierra’s performance. He stopped in on the AGA, near Sault Ste. Marie, on route to his home in Kingston from a gig at the Winnipeg Folk Festival where he met Sierra, and became impressed by her talents. Tony invited Bruce to return, but next time with his guitar.

**AGA MONSTER BINGO** by Monique Raymond — Every year, our Elders ask us to have a BINGO. Therefore all Health Branch sites collect donations from their area, and these are the prizes we have at the bingo. Whoever wins a bingo can choose a gift, all of approximately $20.00 value.

**SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD**

**1ST YOUTH JIGGING**
1st Dusty Couturier
2nd Anthony Pawley
3rd David Lannigan

**YOUTH SLING SHOT**
1st Kevin Lackachelle
2nd Dakota Rowlinson
3rd Dalton Mathias

**YOUTH AIR RIFLE**
1st Dylan Hodgesen
2nd Alex Young
3rd Cady Baerg

**YOUTH ARCHERY**
1st Caleb McHale
2nd Alex Young
3rd Cody Baerg

**YOUTH TALENT CONTEST**
1st Dalton Mathias
2nd Emma Halick
3rd David Lannigan

**FISH DERBY**
1st Hollie McHale
2nd Monique Johnson
3rd Lexie Kahoni

**MEN**
1st Pauline Huppe-Parsen
3rd Chris Briski

**HORSESHEOS**
1st Cameron Gravel/Gordon Caldar
2nd Stephanie Cude/Brandon Moon
3rd Tim Pike/Eric Scalford

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**Scenes from an AGA**

Sierra Noble with Tony Belcourt share a moment with Bruce Cockburn who dropped in on the MNO’s Building Bridges Festival to catch Sierra’s performance. He stopped in on the AGA, near Sault Ste. Marie, on route to his home in Kingston from a gig at the Winnipeg Folk Festival where he met Sierra, and became impressed by her talents. Tony invited Bruce to return, but next time with his guitar.

**YOUTH SACK CARRY**
1st Hollie McHale
2nd Alex Young
3rd Dalton Mathias

**MEN**
1st Hollie McHale
2nd Monique Johnson
3rd Lexie Kahoni

**WOMEN**
1st Pauline Huppe-Parsen

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Victoria Spiers of Huntsville, ON, attended the MNO’s Annual General Assembly with her mother Tammy Porter. Victoria entered the jigging contest and did very well. She earned a third place finish along with $25 which she has yet to spend. Proud grandparents are Vern and Doug Porter.

Martin Camire and family at Fort St. Joseph Métis Heritage Celebration on July 11th. Martin is the MNO Long Term Care worker in Kenora. (From left to right Martin Camire, holding Kyle [16 months]; wife, Carrie Camire, with children in front, Matthew age 5, and Jenna age 7.)
We hold our flags up high on Riel Day, fiddle and jig at Nathan Phillips square
We're proud to be Métis from the city, we fiddle, sing and jig like all the rest

MÉTIS IN TORONTO

People say now the Métis are a nation. We now know that the Métis are a nation, "I believed at the time we stepped up to provide the Assembly with a province-by-province overview on current Métis rights-related issues and litigations. (Topics discussed by Jean at AGA-06-01). Jean spoke about the breakdowns of the July 2004 Four Point Harvesting Agreement reached between the two and the Government of Ontario.
Within in months that the government had severely restricted where it would apply, said Jean. The result being that MÉTIS in the area below Sudbury and North Bay were suddenly left out of the agreement and several changes have been laid.
Currently the seas has bunched three of the charges together. We're charging them in court. Marc Laurin, Shaun Lemieux and Roger Lemieux, 2000 Harvest Certificate holders, were charged while fishing for food in the ocean. Jean said the proceedings were moving slowly and she didn't expect a decision before summer 2007. The Crown has agreed to adjourn all cases until this trial is completed. (More information and upcoming updates on Jean's site are available at: www.metis.org)

Jean was not aware of any Métis benefiting from the inter-provincial Harvesting Guidelines, which state that Métis would not be charged while harvesting in areas of federal jurisdiction (i.e. National Parks, military weapons range, coastal waters). She said if someone had benefitted from the Guidelines to contact her, Gary Lipinski or MNO Harvest Agreement reached between the two and the Government of Ontario. (Topics discussed by Jean at AGA-06-01). Jean spoke about the breakdowns of the July 2004 Four Point Harvesting Agreement reached between the two and the Government of Ontario.
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THURSDAY, JULY 13

I was hot all week, and although it’s hard to complain about good weather during short Canadian summers, on Thursday someone really turned up the thermostat: the Assembly was unattended and Ojibway Park was buzzing with activity. The 2006 Financial Branch held a charity Bingo under the big tent. 300 Registrar, Karole Dumont-Boeker, ran the Genealogy Workshop in the nearby Powley tent. 3000 Councilor for Region 4, Brent McHale, organized a fishing derby. The annual scoa horseshoe tournament kicked up some dust. Singer/songwriter Sandy Scofield facilitated a youth music workshop. There was saw-sawing and a jigging workshop. What a day!

Thursday’s main event was the Voyageur Games. Although a merciless sun beat down on the men and women who participated, like our sturdy voyageur ancestors, they persevered under harsh conditions. (more about the Voyageur Games on page 7)

After the activities Métis Youth put on a fundraising fish fry with the help of Art Bennett. The dinner was a bargain at $8 and the funds raised went to help 11 Métis youth travel to Ecuador (more on the Ecuador adventure in our next issue).

That evening musician Sandy Scofield, daughter of Senator Earl Scofield, warmed up the crowd with her unique hand-drum-infused roots music. Then, for the first time at an AGA, a comedy act took the stage. James Kirlham put the packed house in stitches then turned it over to the karaoke crooners, who warbled late into the night.

FRIDAY, JULY 14

Earlier in the week, feet pounded on the roof off the big tent.

FRIDAY, JULY 14

Farmers and their families said “see you soon” and families said “see you soon” and went home. Robert Hocking, and members of the at the Assembly they had done its duty for another year. Chair, Gary Lipinski, thanked the delegates and their families for attending and for taking the opportunity to work together for the common good of the entire Métis Nation.

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Attention was drawn to the importance of delivering the most effective and efficient services to the Métis Nation through the review of the MNO Terms of Reference. The committee is seeking the advice of Aboriginal groups within the Great Lakes Basin during the current review process.

Reports from the MNO’s various branches followed, and the MNO Development Corporation (see page 14) held its annual General Meeting. President Belcourt reported on activities of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Terms of Reference (see page 14). The Assembly then turned its attention to Resolutions (list of resolutions and voting results on page 14 & 15). Soon the debate was over and the votes were counted and the Assembly had done its duty for another year.

Chair, Gary Lipinski, made some closing comments and tribute to the volunteers and staff who made the 13th a a tremendous success: Art Bennett, California regional representa tor Jacques Leroux, Brent McHale, Anne and Neil Trudeau, Senator Berta Gordon, Hank and Loma Rowlin son, and members of the Sault Ste. Marie Regional Council. President Belcourt thanked the fire keeper for tending the sacred fire and Elder Paul Rowlinson for spiritual guidance. He also thanked the delegates and their families for attending and for taking the opportunity to work together for the common good of the entire Métis Nation.

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