

MÉTIS VOYAGEUR

DECEMBER 2007



OFF THE MAP

MÉTIS ARTIST CHRISTI BELCOURT EXHIBITS HER NEW PORTRAITS IN MANITOBA.

P.20

ADVENTURE BOUND

SEEKING HARDY MÉTIS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE THIRD MÉTIS CANOE EXPEDITION.

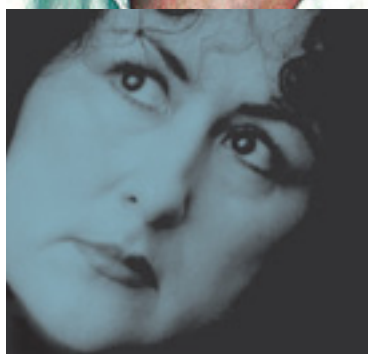
P.13

GOOD BETS, BAD BETS

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRADITIONAL GAMES OF CHANCE AND THE MODERN GAMBLING INDUSTRY... P.13



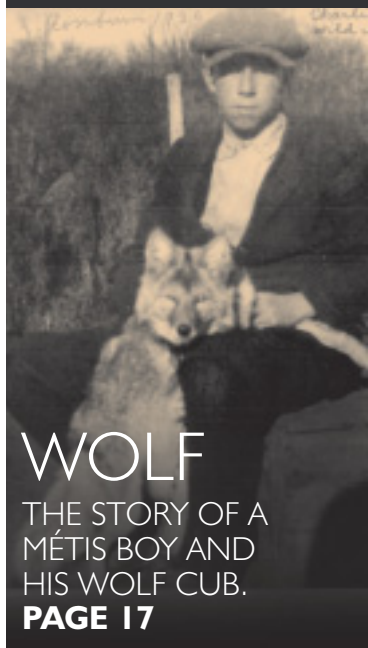
Generations: The spirit of Marian Larkman marches on in the form of her grandson, Jason Defosse and her great grandson as they carry the Métis Nation staff during the procession to the Northwest Rebellion monument at Riel Day ceremonies on November 16th, 2007. Marion Larkman passed to the Spirit World last December. More about the 15th Annual Riel Day Commemorative Ceremonies on **page 10**



STARS

THE 9TH ANNUAL CANADIAN ABORIGINAL MUSIC AWARDS PRESENTED AT TORONTO GALA.

PAGE 15



WOLF

THE STORY OF A MÉTIS BOY AND HIS WOLF CUB.

PAGE 17



PHOTO: Marc St. Germain



BOO!



HOUSING BRANCH GETS INTO THE HALLOWEEN SPIRIT!
Included in photo are Paul Kytayko, Denise Kowalski, Florence Shaw, Irene Amirault and Terry Desaulniers. Can you tell who's who?

THE MÉTIS VOYAGEUR

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Linda Lord

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Marc St. Germain

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deadline:	date of events:
January 1st	15 Feb–15 Apr
March 1st	15 Apr–15 Jun
May 1st	15 Jun–15 Oct
September 1st	15 Oct–15 Dec
November 1st	15 Dec–15 Feb



Senator Scofield saluted at Six Nations



Métis Nation of Ontario Senator, Earl Scofield of Region 9, was invited to the Remembrance Day service and parade at Ohsweken, Six Nations, where he was honoured to take the salute when the parade marched past. Senator Earl says, “I was also given a beautiful beaded veteran’s neck piece that I wore that day. It was a great day with beautiful weather. The Creator blessed us, with a very good turn out of veterans and spectators.”

A PRAYER from Senator Earl Scofield

Creator, God of love and father to us all, we wish to thank you for the time you gave us to be alive with our comrade Senator, Marion Larkman, grandmother, a faithful warrior to the very end.

Creator, we pray that her spirit is with you and her ancestors in heaven.

Marion Larkman, may God bless you and give you well-earned rest and peace. We also pray for all our comrades who made the supreme sacrifice and served in all wars from the war of 1812, the Boer War, the 1st Great War of 1914 to 1918, the Korean War, the 2nd World War from 1939 to 1945, the Vietnam conflict and now the war in Afghanistan.

Lord God all mighty we pray for peace and safety for all our brave warriors--men and women--in Afghanistan. The MNO is proud of our troops, in the morning and at the going down of the sun. We will remember them.

Oh Great Spirit we thank you for the Métis Nation of Ontario; please bless our leaders, and grant us success in negotiations with all governments. Thank you for bringing us all together for the 14th Annual General Assembly of our nation.

Thank you for the fresh air we breathe and for the water we drink; we tend to forget all the blessings you provide for us. We praise you for being the creator of the universe.

We have met in your name, seeking your presence and wisdom.

Thank you for your presence in our fellowship. Please keep our women strong to raise the children to be proud Métis.

Lord for all these blessings, Chee Miig weetch getchee manitou, Amen.



CONGRATULATIONS!
Métis artist David Hannan and Kate Stevens recently tied the knot in Las Vegas, Nevada. We wish them all the best.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

THINKING ABOUT INFINITY

I sit here thinking about being Métis—the infinity sign, the fusion of two nations, symbolising who we are. I think about how special this is to me, this coming together of two cultures to create a new nation. We are so very blessed.

However, I feel the infinity is off balance at this time. When I think of the infinity symbol we use, I feel we do not often honour both sides. I have attended a few gatherings in the short time that I have had my citizenship, the biggest being the AGA this past July. I couldn't help but feel I missed something in terms of balance there.

I met wonderful people at the AGA. There was lots of fun to be had, a few events to attend, entertainment and of course the Sacred Fire. However, for me the event came short of something and puzzled me when I went in

search of what I thought would be present at a Métis gathering.

I had expected the entertainment to be people from our Nation, using our traditional songs, dances, and including music from more modern Métis artists for those who want a more modern touch and for our younger people. I think we have enough talented Métis people to have been entertained for the entirety of the AGA.

I wondered where all the Elders were. I had expected Métis Elders to be present to tell stories by the fire for the children and the grown up children. I thought they would teach and share about some of our traditions, about how our parents, our

“
I think we have enough talented Métis people to have been entertained for the entirety of the AGA.”

grandparents, our great grandparents and so on lived in both worlds as both sides were brought together; you know, the other part of the infinity. I won't name it as there are two halves and both have important teachings so really there is no naming of sides. Truly, there is no side when I look at the infinity symbol, as there is no beginning and no end, a fusion you could say of two cultures, one running smoothly into the other.

I would like to have seen both the fiddling, jigging, drumming, dancing, crafts, story telling, and for those who would like to attend, the traditional ceremonies from our Elders. I would like to have honoured and

enjoyed all the smoothness of the infinity. For this to happen, I believe we need our Elders to help organise and give us some direction in what to include in our gatherings. We need to invite our Elders. I believe we need to be conscious of having Métis artists and entertainers come to our events. I know this is possible. We can choose as individuals what to attend or not attend at events. We are free to choose; this is the gift of being Métis. How unique and special is that?

If anyone would like to contact me and share please do at donnagrenier@hotmail.com

— DONNA GRENIER

The *Voyageur* encourages the respectful sharing of experiences and opinions. **Letters to the Editor** should be sent to llord@kingston.net.

OBITUARY

The Métis Nation of Ontario offers its sincere condolences to the families and friends who have lost a loved one. Senator Dora MacInnis in the loss of her spouse, veteran, Bill Larocque, on November 10, 2007.

NOVACK, Clemence - Peacefully at home surrounded by her family on Wednesday October 3, 2007. Dear wife of John Novack, in her 65th year. Loving mother of James (fiancée T.J.), Jerry (wife Tammy), and Tina Novack. Proud grandmother of Mia and Jeffrey Novack, Jessica and Brianna Novack, and Kane Johnston. Survived by her brothers Emile Trahan, Marcel Trahan, and sister Rachelle Boulerville. She will be sadly missed by her aunt Lorraine Lamothe. Predeceased by her beloved son Jeffrey Novack.

A very special thank-you to granddaughter, Mia Novack, for helping care for grandma for all of these years! Thank you to Larry and Helen Novack for all of your support, the amazing staff at V.O.N., and to Dr. Trenker. Without his care, we would not have had mom as long as we did.

Interment was at Ste. Theresa's Cemetery, Eau Claire. A donation to the Northern Cancer Research Foundation would be gratefully acknowledged. Send condolences to www.martynfh.com.

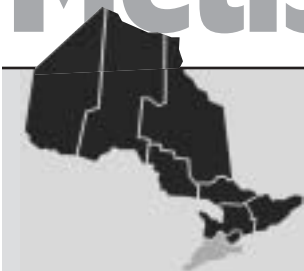
POETRY

Who Loves You? Awena Shákéyishk? (Michif)

Anger is depression erupting outwards,
Depression is anger twisting inwards.
Love is forgiving others,
Forgiveness is loving yourself.

by John D. Hamilton,
Citizen, Métis Nation of Ontario

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NEW AND REVITALIZED MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO COMMUNITY COUNCILS OFF AND RUNNING

New Métis council to cover Niagara

Newly formed Niagara Region Métis Council marks Louis Riel Day in Welland

BY RICK PAQUETTE

The newly formed Niagara Region Métis Council is off and running.

We have only been together three weeks (at time of printing) and under the leadership of President Barbaranne Wright and with the diligent work of Senator Stephen Quesnelle, things are starting to take shape. With assistance from the rest of the council, Glen and Shawn Lipinski; Barbaranne's husband, Harry; we have managed to get our council office running, complete with generously donated furniture.

Although it was very short notice, Senator Quesnelle was able to make contact with the mayor of Welland and two city councillors to request that they put forward a motion before council to have a ceremony at city hall in honour of Louis Riel Day. With the Senator's perseverance, all this came to be on November 16th, 2007 and we met at city hall in Welland at 8:45 am for the ceremony.

The prayer was offered by Chair, Rick Paquette, followed by



left to right: **Amanda Lipinski, Councillor; Glen Lipinski, Addictions Wellness Co-ordinator; Stephen Quesnelle, Senator; Welland's Mayor Damian Goulbourne and Rick Paquette, Chair.**

a flag raising ceremony. Glen Lipinski delivered a speech about Louis Riel which included many interesting and historical facts about the leader of the Métis Nation. It was not a huge turnout, but the council was pleased with the number in attendance, many of whom wore their Métis sashes.

The day started out dark and

dreary, but as the ceremony began and the flag was raised, the sun came out and shone brightly on all of us. As the speeches ended, a gentle breeze brought the flag to attention. As I looked up at it I remembered many Remembrance Day services in which you would see the veterans with their poppies and medals, tired with age, but as the cere-

monies began, they would snap to attention full of youthful pride. As I looked back at the gathering, I could see the same pride on all the faces in attendance. It was truly a wonderful moment and hopefully a positive sign of future success for our council.

Rick Paquette is the Chair of the Niagara Region Métis Council.

NEW GRAND RIVER MÉTIS COUNCIL COVERS THE KITCHENER-WATERLOO AREA

NEW MÉTIS COUNCIL AIMS TO BRING COMMUNITY TOGETHER

BY RAVEENA AULAKH
Waterloo Record Staff

Growing up, Carol Levis didn't know what it meant to be Métis.

"I was embarrassed to admit my heritage as I didn't understand it," said Levis, a member of the Grand River Métis Council, which will become official on Oct. 29 when it signs an agreement with the Métis Nation of Ontario.

Levis hopes the Grand River Council will help other Métis understand their heritage and be proud of it.

When the Grand River Métis Council signs the charter agreement it will be the region's first Métis council.

"It means that our community has been officially recognized," Levis said.

Métis are a distinct Aboriginal people with unique language and culture. Levis estimates there are between 300,000 and 800,000 Métis in Canada, taking into account that many are not registered, she said. She added that there are a couple of thousand Métis in Waterloo Region.

Ruth Robbins, interim president of the council, started working months ago to bring the local Métis community together.

"This (council) will ensure that the Métis citizens in our area will have a voice at the provincial level...and more importantly a place in which they can get general information," Robbins said.

Levis hopes the Grand River Council will help other Métis understand their heritage and be proud of it."

Levis says it was the first time a significant effort was made to bring local Métis together.

"Ruth really worked hard on this—she was diligent. I hope it (the council) leads to better understanding of the Aboriginal people," Levis said.

Members hope the council will educate young people about

their culture.

Citizenship in the council is open to all Métis in Waterloo region and surrounding area, Levis said. More members means better understanding of problems and solutions, she said.

Métis account for more than 20% of the Aboriginal population across Canada.

There are over 300 Métis communities, most in western Canada, both in remote and urban communities.

The charter signing ceremony was held at Conestoga College Doon Campus on October 29th.

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MNO is on the grow!

Recently, the MNO family increased with the creation of two new community councils. Welcome to the Niagara Region Métis Council, and the North Channel Métis Council.

The **Niagara Region Métis Council** came into being at a general meeting, facilitated by the MNO held October 27, 2007, at the Days Inn in Welland. An interim council was formed.

In attendance were Gary Lipinski, MNO Chair; France Picotte, MNO Co-Chair and Hank Rowlinson, MNO Senior Policy Analyst and many MNO citizens of the Niagara Region.

The office will remain in Welland at its present location, but will serve the entire Niagara Region, not just one city or area. At the time of printing this edition, the official name was not yet cast in stone, but many people seem to favour the *Niagara Region Métis Council*.

NIAGARA REGION COUNCIL MEMBERS

President Barbara Wright
Chair Rick Paquette
Sec/Treas Karen Pierce
Senator Stephen Quesnelle
Councillor Amanda Lipinski
Councillor Janice Booth

On October 25th, 2007, the former Thessalon and Bruce Mines / St. Joseph's Island councils united to form the **North Channel Métis Council**. The new interim council encompasses the territory from Blind River to Echo Bay along the north shore of Lake Huron.

"This action will strengthen the voice of MNO citizens in the area and will provide strong local governance," said MNO President, Tony Belcourt.

MNO Chair, Gary Lipinski, added, "With a strong voice at the community level, communities can identify and set their own priorities while working to improve the social conditions of their citizens, as well as ensuring Métis rights are being respected and dealt with."

"This new united community council will better serve the Métis citizens of the north shore through a larger volunteer base and enable us to pool our resources to secure programs and services for the Métis citizens in our area," said Art Bennet, the newly appointed interim president.

NORTH CHANNEL COUNCIL MEMBERS

President Art Bennet
Chair Stan McHale
Sec/treas vacant
Senator Jacques Leroux
Councillor Richard Bennett
Councillor Larry Foltz
Councillor Chris Belisle
Councillor Wayne Tonelli


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GREY-OWEN SOUND | REGION 7 MÉTIS COUNCILS A WHIRLWIND OF ACTIVITY

Council keeps a high profile

The Grey-Owen Sound Council never passes up an invitation to take part in larger community

BY JEFF WILSON

This summer has been a whirl of activity, with the Grey-Owen Sound Métis community participating in so many events in Owen Sound and farther afield.

In June another successful Aboriginal Day Picnic was well attended and provided great fun for about 100 of our community. This year we received a small grant from the Heritage Canada Committee. We enjoyed great entertainment from our musicians (consisting of music ranging from Métis fiddling to the blues) and shared a huge Aboriginal Day cake with the attendees. Our youth were active, demonstrating their many talents. A delicious pot-luck dinner was enjoyed by all. We were honoured by the presence of various levels of government dignitaries.

At the "Hottest Yard Sale" the Grey-Owen Sound Métis exhibit offered information to the many visitors who stopped at the display. It was an enjoyable day, and definitely HOT.

During Homecoming Week, thanks to Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy (AHWS) Outreach, Diane and a representative of the Métis Nation (Malcolm Dixon did the honours), were invited to attend the planning committee meetings, resulting in a lot of preparation on their part followed by a busy week.

A Children's Day Workshop with crafts, scavenger hunt, story time, etc. was very well received. Diane and Mal assisted by several volunteers did a great job.

During the Amazing Race, a stop at M'Wikedong Native Friendship Centre featured Ralph Cadotte, Métis fiddler, accompanied by me on the autoharp, and Diane Owen on the spoons entertaining the contestants.

A float entered into the Homecoming Parade completed the busy time. Malcolm Dixon led in constructing a Red River Cart with Métis-specific trappings, and Clare and Donna Hillyer floated the tour de force. (Plans are in the works for a float in the Christmas Parade too).

As Senator, I was honoured to attend the annual AGA at Thunder Bay, representing the Grey-Owen Sound Métis Council. The Senators' Forum was a two-day session with 31 of the 33 Senators of the Métis Nation of Ontario attending. The AGA, as always, provided interesting reports to keep the various representatives informed and current, as well as providing opportunity for entertainment, fun and socialising.

August brought around Scott Carpenter's Métis Day celebration at Discovery Harbour in Penetang. It featured displays, activities, music, etc. for a record crowd. Jane and Rollie St. Germain had their tobacco display



2007 GREY OWEN SOUND MÉTIS PICNIC: (left to right) Peter Gendron, Senator Leora Wilson, Acting Owen Sound Mayor Tom Pink, Tony Couture, Bruce Grey Owen Sound MPP Bill Murdoch and Ernie Coates.

there, and Rudy and Jean Couture were featured musicians.

The 2nd *Weaving our Communities Conference* held at the Outdoors Education Centre near Wiarton was a huge success (Diane again included in planning committee). Métis presence was very evident there as well. A Métis display by Scott Carpenter, a Michif language workshop by Rene Laurin, and Métis fiddling by Ralph Cadotte were a few highlights of the two-day event.

On September 22nd an informational meeting with Hank Rowlinson, Gary Lipinski and Doug Wilson was held at the Owen Sound Coliseum. Gary Lipinski updated guests on diplomatic and legal scenarios involving the MNO. He told of the current court cases that will define the Métis hunting rights. It is an ongoing process, and each time a case is won, there are more rules needed to prove Métis heritage. Therefore we need to present more genealogical research.

Doug Wilson shared info on the ground-breaking health initiative and we learned how much work is being done on our behalf. We lead the field in health with a



GREY-OWEN SOUND MÉTIS COUNCIL 2007 COMMUNITY GARDEN COMMITTEE: (Back row) Marie Monette, Adam Brown, Susan Schank, Diane Owen, Jackie Brown; (seated) James Morton, Malcolm Dixon.

"Tele-Health" system already in place in some communities. This allows people in remote areas to have access to specialists in the field of medicine by computer. Another breakthrough is a corporate sponsored semi truck touring the north with medical and dental support, plus capabilities to do necessary testing, etc. These innovations are models for other organisations.

Hank Rowlinson made it clear that a local election must be undertaken to maintain the community's charter status. Mr. Rowlinson was subsequently elected returning officer and will handle the Grey Owen Sound community election.

The *Rendezvous* at Lafontaine closed September, with many events to attract Métis: games; vendors; music; hide skinning; crafts; a barbecue and a fish fry.

We are fortunate to be represented by our directors, who continually work towards a national registry, better housing, health and recognition for the Métis people. There are bursaries available for health-related careers, training and employment oppor-

tunities. There are youth opportunities, seniors' programs, all waiting for some innovative person to write a proposal and make it happen.

We are blessed with a roomy, comfortable gathering place in Owen Sound. We have a library of Métis/Aboriginal reading material. There is a full kitchen where we can have potluck gatherings or just a cup of tea. The large room is perfect for a few friends getting together to knit or quilt or do beadwork. There could be a dart night, moccasin workshop (hopefully soon) leather vest making, basket making, finger weaving, traditional capote making. We are even blessed with a computer with internet access. You can make use of the computer for genealogical research, to write a resume, to send online applications for long birth certificates, passports, etc, or to print out applications. This computer system has been donated to the GOMSC by the United Way.

Jeff Wilson is the son of Senator Leora Wilson of the Grey-Owen Sound Métis Council.

Thanksgiving Prayer

BY LEORA WILSON

O Creator,
This is a time of giving thanks.

We offer our gratitude, O Creator, for the contribution made by the brave men and women who gave all they had to give to ensure our freedom. We are grateful for that freedom, to be allowed to think and speak our thoughts and to realise our dreams.

We offer thankfulness for the time that we have here on this amazing planet Earth. Time is such a precious commodity. Let us be thankful for each moment of each day. Let us live it to the fullest.

We are grateful that our families are nourished with the bounty provided by Mother Earth.

We thank You for the beauty that surrounds us, for sunrise and sunset, for clear clean waters, and unending blue heavens. Thank you for the forests and the trails that allow us to walk in the beauty of Your creation.

Let us pledge to do our part to keep Mother Earth in a sustainable order

We thank you, Creator, for family and the warmth of the love that surrounds us as we near the holiday season.

Be with those who suffer loss and illness. Keep them strong in faith and grant them peace and hope.

We send our prayers to those less fortunate people across this earth who suffer indignities, atrocities and hatred, and we pray that one day all mankind will walk together in peace and harmony.

Thank you, Marcee, Migwetch

Leora Wilson is the Senator of the Grey-Owen Sound Métis Council

“We enjoyed great entertainment from our musicians (consisting of music ranging from Métis fiddling to the blues) and shared a huge Aboriginal Day cake.”

Senator Ruth Wagner-Millington (left) and Senator Leora Wilson (right) provide a little Métis music during the harvest celebrations at Lafontaine.



PHOTOS: Marc St.Germain

A Métis Rendezvous

Métis celebrate the bounties of the harvest and hunt at Lafontaine

BY SCOTT CARPENTER

On September 29th, 2007, the southern Georgian Bay Métis community hosted the third annual Métis Rendezvous at its new location, the Lafontaine Parks and Recreation Centre.

The Métis Rendezvous is a community gathering that is held every year to celebrate the history and culture of the Métis people who have resided in the area for many generations since around 1828. The activities

began at 10:00 a.m. and the music didn't stop until 2:00 a.m. Sunday morning.

This year's event also celebrated the Métis victory on June 12, 2007, in the Ontario Court of Justice. The Court ruled that the historic harvesting agreement entered into by the Métis Nation of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources is legally binding on the Government of Ontario and that the laying of charges by the MNR against three Métis harvesters violated the terms of that agree-

ment. In light of this decision, charges against local Métis harvesters were subsequently dropped.

The Rendezvous provided plenty of hands-on activities for children and adults alike, including cultural activities and demonstrations at scheduled times throughout the day. Jeanette Brunelle, one of the many Métis demonstrators, provided beading sessions where participants could purchase a beading kit at a reasonable cost and bead along with her. Ruth Quesnelle

AHWS Coordinator Tracy Bald ran a cornhusk doll-making workshop at the Rendezvous.



Bernie LePage fillets fresh caught whitefish for the Rendezvous. The fish dinner brought over 200 people from the surrounding community to Lafontaine Park.



demonstrated how to finger-weave a bookmark. Finger-weaving is a Métis art that is used to make the famous ceinture fléchée or arrow sash that is one of the most recognisable Métis symbols.

Think you can fillet a fish fast? Competitors put their fish filleting skills to the test against the LePage Fisheries team. There were many other cultural activities including the Métis Voyageur Games (hatchet throw, air rifle, sling shot, etc.), corn husk dolls, skinning and stretching pelts,

dressng the game, snowshoe making, gourd art, Michif, traditional tobacco and smudging, quilting, and a variety of activities for children and youth.

The Métis market "Vendor's Village" featured a wide array of Métis wares, including unique hand made arts and crafts.

There was something for everyone, and everyone had a good time.

Scott Carpenter is the Regional Employment and Training Coordinator for MNO Region 7.

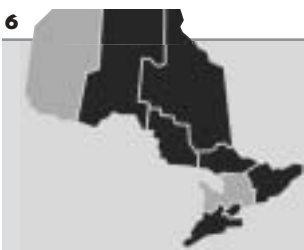


right:
Senator Roland St. Germain (left) and Grey Owen Sound Métis President Pete Couture.



PHOTOS: Scott Carpenter




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SUDBURY & NORTH BAY | REGION 5 MÉTIS COMMUNITY HARVEST GATHERING AT STURGEON FALLS

The Hunt & the Harvest

Region 5 Métis mark the Harvest with Gathering at Sturgeon Falls

BY LINDA KRAUSE

Our Harvest Gathering was held on Saturday October 13th, 2007, at Dutrisac Cottages in Sturgeon Falls. With a back drop of autumn colours and crisp cold air the Harvest Gathering was once again a success. Thanks to the devotion of the employees and councils of MNO Region 5 everyone who attended the event enjoyed themselves. A big thanks goes to each person who helped make this a memorable occasion.

We started our day at 11:00 am with registration and Métis cultural displays. A lunch of salads, hamburgers, hotdogs, chilli and stew followed—great fare for a cold day.

There was a fire that was kept going throughout the day.

The afternoon was full of such activities as moccasin making, paper tole making, beading, dot painting, all kinds of kids' games and crafts, lots and lots of socialising between friends and family, all accompanied by live Métis music. Our local television network came out to interview some of us. A very good friend brought her drum with her and sang some songs for us.

“AS YOU KNOW, WHEN MÉTIS PEOPLE GATHER, FOOD IS ALWAYS IN ABUNDANCE.”

Jason Jamieson, our Community Wellness worker here in North Bay, hand painted a paddle to go with the five beautiful photographs taken by Walter Deering as some of our door prizes. The winner of the paddle was Mr. Jean-Guy Gingras, and the following people each received a beautiful photograph, Amanda Desbiens, Normand Gingras, Christine McLaughlin, Ann Marie Smith and Fernand Tessier. Congratulations to everyone. Linda Krause of MNOTI donated door prizes for each child.

To end our beautiful day we had a succulent fish fry dinner with all the trimmings, down to home-made sugar and pumpkin pies for dessert. As you know, when Métis people gather, food is always in abundance.

As we said good-bye to the last of our guests we felt a bit sad that it was ending, but we consoled ourselves with, “hey, we’ll see you next year”. ∞



clockwise from top left: **Claudette Amyotte, AHWS Coordinator and pancake flipper Jason Jamieson, Walter Deering, an assortment of Métis paraphernalia, Pierre Malette and Senator Marlene Greenwood and friend Vince.**



DRYDEN | NORTHEAST MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO NEWS:

Dryden ‘energised’ by new council offices

BY ALVINA CIMON

The North West Métis Nation of Ontario Council is now in its new bigger and better location on King Street in Dryden’s downtown. The new office opened on September 13th, occupying the former “Penny’s for Lunch” site. Now, the NWMNO; Long Term Care (LTC); Healthy Babies, Healthy Children; Métis Training Initiatives; Community Action Plan for Children, and a telehealth connection are all under

one roof.

“It’s really energised us,” said LTC Co-ordinator, Don McDonald. “It’s an arrangement where not only the community council has a good facility, but they’ve included programs that are vital to the community.”

The grand opening was well attended by both local residents and dignitaries, who toured the facility, met the staff, and even did some jiggling.

The North West Métis Nation of Ontario Council and Health Staff would like to thank every-

one who contributed to the successful opening of their new facilities: IGA; Macdonald’s; M&M Meats; Norma Collins; the Dryden Parks Department; all of the people who worked so hard as volunteers; out-of-town guests, who made the time to come, and music makers, the McIvor Brothers and Ken Denby. From the bottom of our hearts, Megwech, Merci, Thank-you.

Alvina Cimon is the President of the Northwest Métis Nation of Ontario in Dryden.



Alvina Cimon, Northwest Métis Nation of Ontario Council President, addresses a crowd gathered to celebrate the grand opening of the Council’s new offices in Dryden.

PROVINCIAL & NATIONAL NEWS



Louis' New Day

Manitoba honours the Métis hero with new provincial holiday

BY LINDA LORD

On September 25th the Province of Manitoba created a new holiday to be enjoyed on the third Monday in February. It will be called "Louis Riel Day".

Although the actual date seems to have nothing to do with Riel, who was born 22 October, 1844, and hanged 16 November, 1885, the idea of a February holiday is popular and prior to the recent election, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty promised to enact one. The name for the day was chosen by a panel of students assigned the task by the NDP government. There were dozens of submissions, including singer-songwriter Neil Young, women's rights advocate Nellie McClung, former premier Duff Roblin, and my personal favourite, Manisnowba Day.

Even if the actual date is irrelevant, Riel isn't. His name and image can be found throughout Manitoba. There are large statues of Riel at the Manitoba legislature and a local university. A school division, an arts centre and a library in Winnipeg are among the many entities that bear his name. Riel is also acknowledged as the father of Manitoba and a builder of Confederation, so it's about time he had his own day, even if it is the third Monday in February.

Métis Nation of Ontario welcomes new Cabinet

Naming of new Ontario Cabinet viewed as important 'turning point' in Crown-Aboriginal relations in province

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) leadership enthusiastically welcomed the announcement of Premier Dalton McGuinty's new cabinet. MNO President, Tony Belcourt, attended the swearing-in ceremony on October 30th.

"This new Ontario Cabinet signals an important point in the relationship between the government and Aboriginal peoples in this province. The appointment of the Honourable Michael Bryant, as the first minister to solely represent the interests of Aboriginal peoples around the cabinet table, is truly historic. For years, Aboriginal leaders have pointed out the inherent conflict of having the Attorney General or Minister of Natural Resources also acting as the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. Premier McGuinty has not only acted to address this issue, but he has appointed the ideal person for the job—a person who knows our issues, who is sensitive to them and who has the kind of political currency needed in order to advance our issues at the cabinet table," said Belcourt.

Métis Nation of Ontario Chair, Gary Lipinski, added: "With Minister Bryant's appointment and the recommendations from the Ipperwash Inquiry report, we have strong momentum to move forward on

strengthening the relationship between the government and the Métis people. More specifically, we look forward to moving forward on our priorities of signing an Ontario-Métis Nation Framework Agreement, improving the educational outcomes for Métis students in the province and addressing the pressing housing needs of Métis families with Minister Bryant and Ministers Watson, Milloy, and Wynne."

President Belcourt also welcomed the appointments of the Hon. Donna Cansfield as Minister for Natural Resources, the Hon. Gerry Phillips as Minister for Energy, and the Hon. Michael Gravelle as Minister for Northern

Development and Mines. "We look forward to working with these three ministers to ensure Ontario is meeting its constitutional obligations to consult and accommodate Métis communities in relation to energy and resource development across the province."

"Both Ministers Phillip and Gravelle know the Métis people well and we look forward to once again working with these hon-

ourable men," added Belcourt. We also look forward to working with Minister Cansfield on implementing the historic MNC-MNO harvesting agreement and renewing our discussions with

"...we look forward to moving forward on our priorities of signing an Ontario-Métis Nation Framework Agreement."

— Tony Belcourt, MNO President



Ministry of Natural Resources, Policy Officer, Aboriginal Affairs Unit, Jan Martin presents to Captains of the Hunt



The Hon. Jim Watson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (left) and the Hon. John Milloy, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities (right) with MNO President Tony Belcourt at the swearing-in ceremony of the new Ontario Cabinet on October 30th, 2007.

MNR on harvesting and other Métis access to resource issues.

The MNO also acknowledged the efforts of David Ramsay in his former roles as Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Minister of Natural Resources. "David Ramsay was the first minister in Canada to negotiate and enter into an agreement on Métis harvesting rights following the release of the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in *R v. Powley*. His efforts show that if the political will is there, Aboriginal peoples and governments can resolve their issues at the negotiating table, rather than in the court. On

behalf of the Métis people in this province, I want to thank him for doing the right and honourable thing," said Chair Lipinski.

President Belcourt concluded: "Premier McGuinty's new team signals an exciting road ahead for the Métis people in this province. We see today's announcement as a positive and proactive approach to Aboriginal issues, so that our work is focussed on co-operative approaches rather than those which are confrontational. We are very optimistic for the future."

MÉTIS LEADERS MEET ON NATIONAL ISSUES



OTTAWA—The leaders of four of the five governing members of the Métis National Council (MNC) met recently in Ottawa to discuss how to best move the MNC forward and their future relationship with the federal government.

The meeting came in the wake of the failure of the MNC General Assembly to elect a national president at its meeting on October 13 and 14, 2007,

leaving the Board of Governors without a quorum or the ability to make decisions. The federal government announced it would not flow any new funds to the MNC until this situation was rectified.

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) President, Tony Belcourt, said, "We need to act quickly; we need to protect the staff working in Ottawa, and we need to work together to ensure that the MNC is able to continue representing the 350,000 to 400,000 Métis Nation citizens across Canada."

The four governing members, including Belcourt; Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) President, Bruce Dumont; Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) President, Audrey Poitras and Métis

Nation – Saskatchewan (MN-S) President, Robert Doucette, met on October 31, 2007, with officials and with Rod Bruinooge, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Federal Interlocutor for Métis. The four governing members also invited President of the Manitoba Métis Federation, David Chartrand, to attend the meetings.

"It is up to us to move the MNC forward, to meet and to focus on a solution," President Poitras said. "Above all, it is up to us to ensure that the various programs and services delivered from the MNC to the provincial and community levels continue to grow and thrive."

While the federal government has committed to honour exist-

"WE ARE AT A CROSSROADS This is the time for us to come together for the common good of the Métis community..."

— Robert Doucette, MN-S President

ing funding deals, the four leaders are concerned about the future of many significant MNC initiatives relating to Métis rights, health, and labour market programming, among others.

"I think it is obvious that we need to work out some issues on a leadership level," President Dumont said. "But what is also obvious is that as leaders, the most important thing is for us to work together to overcome our problems and to continue building the relationships we have developed on a federal level."

"We are at a crossroads," President Doucette concluded. "This is the time for us to come together for the common good of the Métis community and develop solutions that are based on fairness, democracy and the will of our people."

The *Voyageur* will feature an in-depth look at the MNC hiatus in our next edition.



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SAULT STE MARIE | REGION 4 MÉTIS MAKE PRESENTATION TO ALGOMA SCHOOL BOARD

Soo Métis teach the teachers

BY ANNE TRUDEL

Years ago, a Métis mother was “protecting” her children from hurtful people. Surely, she was not aware that these same choices she made to hide her children would one day be shared with people of influence. Like the mother who “protected” her children, so many Métis parents have taken steps to “hide” us from the hurtful people and in so doing have even hidden much from us, the Métis children, about our people’s story. This is about to change. Inherently, some of the people who came before us maintained our ways, and now documents that affirm our existence are starting to surface, to be understood and accepted. Who better to know our Métis story than educators?

Brent McHale, PCMNO Region 4 Councilor, told his story. He talked about growing up in an historical Métis community surrounded by a large First Nation population, and yet having to hide his heritage. Who listened to his story? Algoma District School Board (ADSB) educators--principals and teachers from towns and villages such as Wawa, Sault Ste. Marie, Chappleau, Desbarats, Blind River, and Elliot Lake listened intently.

So how and why did Brent McHale have this opportunity? Kime Coliver, superintendent of the ADSB brought together an Aboriginal focus group. The group included First Nation people from Batachewana, Garden River, Indian Friendship Centre, North Shore Tribal Council, and local and provincial level Métis Nation of Ontario representatives. Being only one or two Métis voices at a very large table may seem overwhelming, but no voice at the table was lost thanks to Ms. Coliver.

The ADSB of Sault Ste Marie and area on October 12, 2007,



left to right: **PCMNO Councilor for Region 4, Brent McHale; Dr. Pam Toulouse, Laurentian University; Senator Brenda Powley and Bryon Brisard from the Ministry of Education.**

held an aboriginal workshop titled, “Educating Our Educators, Educating Our Students: An Aboriginal Focus”. In a short time frame--since the spring of 2007--the group produced a guide for staff that reflects First Nation and Métis knowledge.

On the day of the workshop, participants and presenters were welcomed to Garden River First Nation’s Recreation Centre by Chief Lyle Sayers. Greetings were given to all by Mario Turco, Director of Education and Wanda McQueen Chair of the ADSB. Principals and teachers from elementary and high schools were overwhelmed with information from key note speakers, breakout sessions, and aboriginal community agency displays such as Tammy Webb’s for the Region 4 MNO office.

Elder, Shirley Roach of the Garden River First Nation gave a personal account of her residential school experience and the treatment of First Nation people. This was followed by Dr. Pam Toulouse of Laurentian University who enthralled teachers with

the discoveries that belonged to the First Nation people. Other speakers included Ministry of Education’s Bryon Brisard and his educational journey.

“**WHO BETTER TO KNOW OUR MÉTIS STORY THAN EDUCATORS.**”

During breakout sessions, Brent McHale had roughly three 45-minute sessions to educate the participants about the Métis. With Neil Trudel’s assistance, the new audio visual equipment aided the presentation while Brent spoke. These same educators were given the opportunity to feel the Métis fiddle rhythm of our culture through the social dance which I instructed.

Senator Brenda Powley, and

community Elder, Susan Labatte participated in workshops. Senator Powley and Brent McHale were given special recognition by Kime Coliver. In turn, Brent presented Kime Coliver with a Métis sash for her ongoing efforts.

Sitting on the ADSB aboriginal focus group has given us (Councilor McHale and I) the opportunity to provide Métis-specific information. Through these meetings, workshops and school requests for speakers, elements of Métis culture such as our Michif language, social dances, the historical significance of the Métis people, and the role of Métis people in Canada today, will be disseminated. Already, since the workshop presentation, we have been requested to do class room teaching throughout this whole region.

For more information, please contact Brent McHale or me through mno-culture@shaw.ca.

Anne Trudel is the Secretary of the Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council.

New Food Guide reflects First Nations, Inuit and Métis values and nutritional needs

The Nutrition Unit of the Community Programs Directorate has launched “Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide - First Nations, Inuit and Métis”, a new national food guide that reflects the values, traditions and food choices of Aboriginal peoples.

This food guide complements the *Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide* released in February, 2007. The *Canada’s Food Guide* translates the latest science on nutrition and health into a practical pattern of eating. The First Nations, Inuit and Métis food guide provides guidance on the amount and types of food needed and on the importance of being physically active every day.

Why is *Eating Well* unique? It communicates the recommendations of Canada’s Food Guide in a manner that recognises the importance of both traditional and store-bought foods for First Nations, Inuit and Métis. This tailored food guide depicts store-bought foods that are generally available, affordable and accessible in remote and urban locations.

Eating Well was developed through consultations with First Nations, Inuit and Métis consumers, nutrition educators working with Aboriginal individuals and communities, and national Aboriginal organisations who shared their views and contributed their expertise. An advisory group guided the development of this unique food guide.

You are encouraged to use the *Guide* as a foundation for nutritional education activities.

This guide provides the basis for nutrition policies and programs across the country. In addition, the tailored food guide can be an important tool for individuals, families and communities to learn about and share ideas on eating well and being physically active.

Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide - First Nations, Inuit and Métis can be accessed, viewed, downloaded, and ordered online on the Health Canada web site at: www.health-canada.gc.ca/foodguide.

North Bay Canoe club racers bring home 22 gold medals

BY JENNIFER KING

Members of the North Bay Canoe Club brought home 22 gold medals after competing at the National Aboriginal Regatta in Montreal.

The competition featured athletes from Ontario, Quebec, BC and the Maritimes, and North Bay athletes dominated the marathon and sprint racing events.



Leading the way were Jaydan Jackson, Ben Robitaille and Dylan Jackson, with six golds medals each, while Zaffia and Zeyana Laplante chipped in with two golds apiece.

Jaydan Jackson was golden in peewee, bantam and midget K-1 and K-2 events, while Ben Robitaille and Dylan Jackson picked up gold in three-km and six-km C-1 and K-1 events.

Following the long distance events, Dylan Jackson and Robitaille recovered well and teamed up to claim gold in the midget and open C-2 and K-2 events.

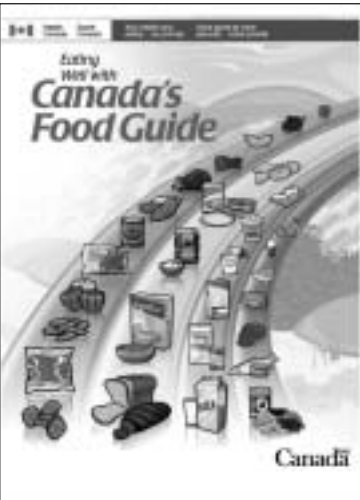
Zaffia and Zeyana Laplante put in strong performances in their K-1 races and topped the field in K-2 and K-4 races respectively.

The club is coming off one of

left to right: **Zeyana Laplante, Zaffia Laplante, Jaydan Jackson, Ben Robitaille and Dylan Jackson with their coach Shawna Fournier at the Onake Canoe Club in Kanesatake, QC.**

its best seasons and is proud of the fine sportsmanship and fair play its athletes have demonstrated. The regatta was the first of its kind and was held at the Onake Canoe Club, home of Canada’s 1984 Olympic kayaking gold medallist Alwynn Morris.

The club also hosted fall training sessions and is looking forward to next season. For information, call 476-2030.



MNO HEALTH BRANCH LONG TERM CARE SITES AND STAFF:				
Kenora Martin Camire & Vanessa Bennett 807-467-2555	Thunder Bay Barbara Hartman 807-624-5010	North Bay Lise Malette 705-474-2593 or 877-772-7709	Midland Michelle Foster-Millard & Sue Wilson 705-526-6335	Windor Patricia Messenger 519-974-0860 or 888-243-5148
Dryden Don McDonald 807-223-4535	Timmins Louise Cloutier 705-264-3939	Maynooth Judy Simpson & Robin Davey 613-338-3111 or 877-407-1180	Toronto Kim Sicker 416-977-9881 or 888-466-6684	
Fort Frances Sabrina Stoessinger 807-274-6230	Sudbury Nancy Martel 705-669-0710	Ottawa Carmen Prigent 613-798-1488 or 800-263-4889	Welland Tammy Wintle & Rebecca Van der Sanden 905-735-1112 or 877-292-3522	

Is the Long Term Care Program for You?

BY NATALIE LLOYD

Wondering where to go for help? I want to spend a few moments with you, and I hope to answer your questions.

It is the goal of the Long Term Care (LTC) Program to help individuals remain in their homes for as long as possible and to share the responsibility for care provided by informal caregivers, such as family members. The clients of LTC are often seniors who have little or no support, but want to remain in their homes. We also have clients who are younger but are dealing with cancer treatment, heart ailments, dialysis and other medical conditions that require assistance. Sometimes our clients are even children who have terminal illnesses and the family caregivers need support.

Transportation: We offer assistance with transportation so our clients can get to medical appointments. Often, the people who use this service don't have a vehicle or means of going to their appointments.

Friendly Visits: We also provide friendly visiting services to seniors who are housebound or are isolated, or Métis seniors who are in seniors' homes and would like to have contact with someone who understands Métis culture. We do security checks on our clients who are frail, or recovering from surgery or illness and may have a tendency to fall. These are brief calls to make sure they are okay.

Caregiver Support: We know that caregivers need support as well, and we are there to provide referrals when needed; supportive listening; information, such as diabetic cooking; resources available, etc.. We also visit clients in the hospital or at home in order to allow caregivers a chance to



go out for groceries, pay bills or get some needed rest themselves. Before such a visit can occur, coordinators need to know in advance so they can arrange for a volunteer or go themselves.

Other Services: We also provide supportive services to our clients who have Long Term Care needs such as advocacy work when needed, assistance with forms or other documents. We have helped locate financial support for medical devices, at times through generous donations from

community members and the public at large.

There is a lot we are able to do, and if we can't do it we will do our best to find the resource the client needs. So, if you are facing illness, or are isolated, or want support to stay in your home for as long as possible, then contact the nearest LTC Coordinator to see what we can do for you.

Natalie Lloyd is the MNO Health Branch's Long Term Care Supervisor. She works in Ottawa.

Long Term Care Needs Volunteers!

For years, the Long Term Care (LTC) Program has been serving Métis citizens who are dealing with health problems like cancer, diabetes, HIV, and other illnesses. We also assist seniors who are isolated and need support and we offer help to those who are caring for loved ones. Many of our offices are trying to meet these needs with only one staff member, and this is difficult.

We need caring, responsible and dependable volunteers to help in various areas. If you are looking for something to fill up some of your spare time or want to help out with an event then contact us. We are also looking for volunteers who are in outlying areas to help us best serve our clients in need.

Volunteers are needed for the following:

- **Transportation:** Drive clients to their appointments, if needed to the pharmacy or grocery store after, then home.
- **Friendly Visiting:** Meet with clients who are isolated in their homes or in the community and spend time with them. Share stories, play cards and listen. For some people the Friendly Visitor is the only reliable outside contact.
- **Office Help:** Filing, stuffing envelopes, doing posters, etc.
- **Season Specific:** Shovel snow or cut grass for seniors who have no one else to help them. We also require help with Christmas events in the community.
- **Fundraising:** LTC gets a lot of requests that cannot be met by our program dollars. Therefore, we need help with fundraising for needs that are community specific.

If you can help us help community members who are already facing a lot, then please contact your nearest LTC Coordinator.

GREY-OWEN SOUND: Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy Update

BY DIANE OWEN

The Community Garden yielded an abundance of medicines and foods. We had carrots, tomatoes, sunflowers, spinach, and basil galore. Our crop of amaranth and lambs quarters led to some inquisitive looks from passers-by, but our harvest of rich grain from both of those friends, makes the looks worth while. We had a rich supply of St. John's Wort for tea and have made medicinal oil for abrasions, etc. We are off to a good start.

One of the most interesting and fulfilling workshops I attended recently featured renowned speaker, Bea Shawanda's Lateral Violence presentation at M'Wikwedong. Lateral violence can be peer-

to-peer, or community-wide. Bea defined lateral violence as "harmful behaviours that become 'collective' expression[s] of unresolved grief, usually by people stuck in the grief emotion of rage". The attacker/s will "normalise fear-based power and control techniques" and will determine to damage an individual who represents or introduces change. The 'attack' is not necessarily open and honest, but will be insidious, through rigidity, blaming, shaming, manipulation, game-playing and encouraging 'ganging up' against the target, or through gossip and even lies. Sometimes the attacker will threaten your livelihood, or person. Gossip and lies however, are a usual and very



Grey-Owen Sound Métis Council Community Garden.

destructive behaviour. The "need of power and control" is often masked by "terror, or pain".

The only time to address this kind of violence is when it starts, through constructive feedback and communication. Unfortunately, attackers do not often recognise themselves and their place in lateral violence, and often do not tolerate feedback or "truly cannot

hear" it. Often the victim will be told, "you are just over-sensitive" or "s/he did not really mean that", or "just live with it and carry on". Sometimes nothing is said at all-silence, or changing the subject, leaves the situation hanging and implies support for the attacker.

If you have ever been victimised by lateral violence, it is a difficult road. The best strategies for coping

are to create a support network for yourself in which change can be carried through. If you want to learn more, I have good resource information in the office.

To support the Aboriginal Day of Action in a quiet and educational way, AHWS with Susan Schank, invited some local service-providers to the homestead of Catherine Sutton, Nahneebahwequa, for a picnic and stories. You may know 'Nahnee' was a Nawash woman, married to William Sutton. Her name means 'upright woman', and so she was, as she travelled to England to meet with Queen Victoria, to fight for land claims. Susan is a great, great granddaughter of Catherine Sutton and one of our Métis friends. She led our picnic, with stories of Catherine, her home and the land. It was a privilege to hear her and it was wonderful to look across the water to the Métis territory in 'Mudtown'. We are welcome to make this picnic a yearly event.

A TIMELINE OF LOUIS RIEL’S LIFE AND LEGACY



Riel’s father, **Louis Riel Sr.**, the son of a voyageur is born in Saskatchewan in 1806. He was educated in Quebec and worked for the Hudson’s Bay Company as a fur trader in the Fort Frances area. He later settled on a lot on the Red River and became a respected leader of the Métis community.

Louis Riel is born in the Red River Settlement in Rupert’s Land, the present day City of Winnipeg



Riel was a bright student and was sent to Montreal in 1858 to study. After working jobs in Quebec and Minnesota, Riel returns to Red River in 1868



1806

1844

1868



PHOTOS BY: Marc St. Germain and Jordan O'Connor



“WE SHARE THE SAME GRANDMOTHERS”

Grand Council Chief of the Anishinabek Nation, John Beaucage, offers Métis Nation of Ontario President Tony Belcourt an eagle feather to be put on the Métis Nation staff. This sacred gesture, which according to Grand Chief Beaucage, goes “beyond treaties, beyond any written word”, will further cement the bond between the Métis Nation and the Anishinabek Nation.



Gary L

John T
Ontario

LOUIS RIEL DAY AROUND THE PROVINCE:



LONDON: Congratulations to Alvin McKay and all of the Métis in the London area. This year, for the first time, the City of London flew the Métis flag on Louis Riel Day.



TIMMINS: Close to a dozen people gathered in the frosty temperatures and marched from the MNO office on Spruce Street to the Cenotaph to pay tribute to Riel



FORT FRANCES: Sunset country Metis President and many others gathered for the raising of the MNO flag in honour of 'Riel Day' outside the Civic Centre in Fort Frances.



THUNDER BAY: Thunder Bay celebrated Louis Riel Day with representation from the City of Thunder Bay Council, and NDP MP Tony Martin from Sault St Marie.

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In 1869, the sale of Rupert's Land to the Dominion of Canada prompts delegates from Red River to form a provisional council to negotiate with the federal government. Riel becomes president. The group establishes a list of rights.

Thomas Scott, a militant Orangeman and prisoner of the provisional government is tried and executed. Riel flees to the U.S. to avoid capture.

After years of injustices and the invasion of settlers, the Métis cry out for Riel's return. Riel and his family move to Saskatchewan. He re-forms the provisional government.

A skirmish at Duck Lake between Métis and Northwest Mounted Police prompts the Canadian Government to dispatch troops to the northwest. The Métis are defeated at Batoche and Riel, after ensuring the safety of his family, surrenders to federal forces.

Riel is pronounced guilty of high treason. The judge ignores the jury's plea for mercy and sentences Riel to death. Louis Riel is hung in Regina on November 16, 1885.

1869

1884

1885

November 16th, 1885

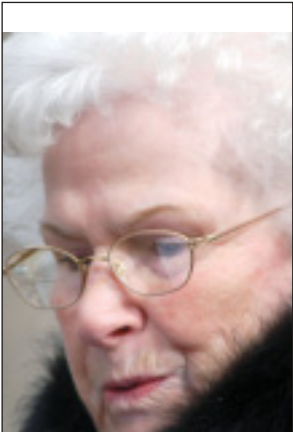
RIEL DAY

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16th, 2007

The Hon. Michael Bryant, Ontario's first stand-alone Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.



ipinski, MNO Chair



Senator Olivine Tiedema, Oshawa Métis Council



Michael Prue, MPP (NDP) Beaches-East York



ory, Leader of the io PC Party



Senator Reta Gordon, PCMNO



Senator Roland St.Germain, PCMNO

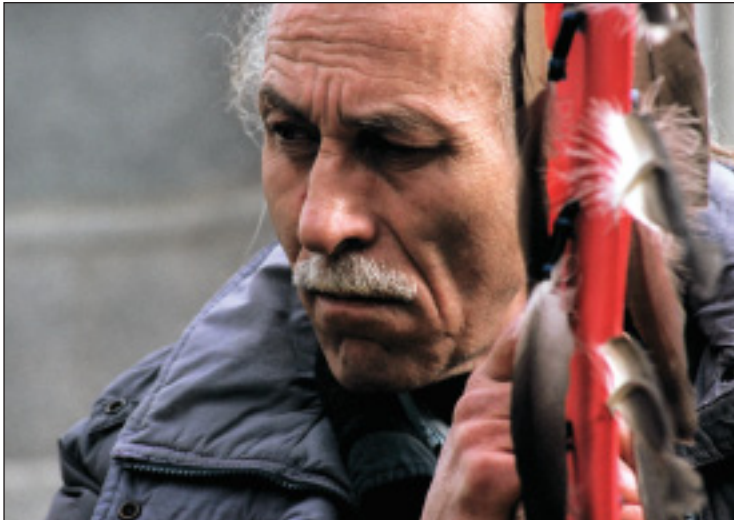
ISTRY OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS PRESS RELEASE: McGuinty Government Marks Louis Riel Day at Queen's Park

On November 16th Michael Bryant, Ontario's new Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, invited everyone in Ontario to the culture, language and heritage of Métis as he took part in the 15th Annual Louis Riel Day Commemoration Ceremony at the Ontario Legislature. "It is all about strengthening our relationships with the Aboriginal community," said Bryant. "We recognise that the establishment of concrete, co-operative relationships is the basis for ensuring the well-being and prosperity of Aboriginal communities, now and for the future." Bryant also delivered greetings to the Métis Premier McGuinty when he addressed a Louis Riel Day public forum hosted by the Law Society of Ontario at Convocation Hall at the University of Toronto that afternoon. The Minister reiterated Ontario's commitment to recognize the unique needs of the Métis in Ontario by

working in collaboration with the Métis Nation of Ontario and the federal government to identify priorities and approaches to addressing the Ipperwash Inquiry Report recommendations. A key step is developing a bilateral framework agreement that reflects the social and political growth within the MNO-Ontario process. Earlier this year, Ontario made an initial investment of \$6 million to support the implementation of the new First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework. "It is important for all school children to learn the rich history and continuing contributions of the Métis people," Bryant said. Louis Riel's role as a nation builder was not recognised during his lifetime. It is only recently that Canadians have begun to acknowledge Riel's contributions in shaping the bilingual, multicultural Canada that we live in today. Louis Riel Day is an important opportunity to share in this rich history.



RIEL'S LEGACY: Jean Teillet, a Great-Grand Niece of Louis Riel, speaks to the assembled about Riel's ongoing influence and the strength and perseverance of his people, the Métis.



Elder Joe Paquette



Roger Giroux

NORTHERN ONTARIO MEDICAL SCHOOL PROFILES:

Métis medical student hopes to give back to near northern community

BY RICK GARRICK

Carole Tessier enjoys using her French language skills while on her eight-month Comprehensive Community Clerkship in her home community of West Nipissing.

“That’s why I’m back,” says the third-year Northern Ontario School of Medicine medical student and Sudbury Métis Council women’s representative. “I have family here and I like that it’s bilingual, so I can use my mother tongue.”

Tessier grew up in the community of River Valley, which is now part of the Municipality of West Nipissing, and had been practicing as a midwife for three years in the nearby community of Sudbury before deciding to join NOSM’s charter class in 2005.

Once she completes her MD, Tessier wants to bring her knowledge back to the area and serve the Francophone and Métis community. “I want to work with the Métis people,” Tessier says. “Hopefully, I will provide more Métis people with a physician.”

Tessier is one of 56 NOSM third-year students who are working on clerkships in 10 communities across northern Ontario, all the way from Kenora in the west to Bracebridge in the east. Three of NOSM’s six third-year Aboriginal students are located in Timmins while the other two are in Fort Frances and Sioux Lookout.

Tessier usually puts in eight-hour days Monday to Friday at the West Nipissing General Hos-



Northern Ontario Medical Student Carole Tessier is currently on a clerkship in Sturgeon Falls.

pital and her supervising physician’s office and 12-hour shifts in ER (emergency room) at the hospital at least once a week.

“We usually start at 8:00 in the morning doing our rounds in the hospital to see our patients,” Tessier says. “Then we go to the primary care physician’s office to see patients who have appoint-

ments. In family medicine you see a lot of the same concerns, diabetes, high blood pressure, sometimes depression, and sometimes it’s just aches and pains.”

Tessier begins her examination by doing a complete history of the patient and then a physical examination. “Then I go out and give my findings to the physi-

“In family medicine you see a lot of the same concerns, diabetes, high blood pressure, sometimes depression, and sometimes it’s just aches and pains.”

cian,” Tessier says. “She usually comes back in the examination room with me to confirm my findings and to make sure we have a good plan in place. The patients are very open to having students involved in their care.”

While Tessier did three ER shifts this past week, on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, she still hasn’t had an OB (obstetrics) shift yet. “But I used to be a midwife,” she says. “So I’ve delivered many babies.” Although Tessier was a midwife, she explains that the knowledge she has as a midwife is only a portion of what she is learning at NOSM.

“Obviously, I still have as much to learn as anyone else,” she says, noting that she is finding the learning curve at NOSM to be “pretty steep. There is a lot to learn and there is a lot of self study.” But she is also enjoying the clinical style of learning during clerkship. “For me, this is how I learn best,” she says. “Hands on and seeing cases. It helps me to remember more.”

Tessier and her fellow student in West Nipissing usually work together during Monday and Thursday morning classes held via videoconference with the other students in their groups of eight at their clerkship sites across northern Ontario.

The students work in pairs during the clerkship, continuing their study of the five themes from years one and two, Northern and Rural Health, Personal and Professional Aspects of Medical Practice, Social and Population Health, Foundations of Medicine and Clinical Skills in Health Care, increasing their knowledge of medical care through clinical encounters with patients and their families, enhancing their personal and professional development, and improving their clinical thinking and lifelong learning skills.

Because Tessier is one of many NOSM students who has a family at home, in her case a husband and stepson, she has to balance her studies and family life with any community events, such as the welcome barbecue and boat ride that she and the other students took part in at the beginning of their clerkship.

Tessier finds that the community, which consists of large segments of Francophone, First Nation and Métis people, has responded well to her clerkship. “Overall, it helps that I’m from the community,” she says. “I have a pretty strong interest in West Nipissing. I want to give back to my community after I’m done with medical school.”

MNO Staff Professional Development:

MNO Health staff receive training in addictions

BY GLEN LIPINSKI & NATALIE LLOYD

The Health Branch held another successful training week, September 24th-27th at the Providence Care facility in Kingston.

The theme for the training week was “Addictions and the Family”. Approximately 50 health staff participated in the four days of training involving such topics as “Motivational Interviewing”, “Concurrent Disorders”, “Addictions and Mental Health”, “Addictions and the Forensic System”, “Drug Identification” and “Gambling Awareness”.

Instruction was delivered by numerous experts from Providence Care. Training was headed up by Murray Hilliard and included Dr. Jim Muirhead, Kimberly Walker, Niki Kiepek and Louise Logue of Ottawa Police Services (See *Métis Voyageur*, May-June, 2007, for more on Louise).

The days were long; the training was intense, and at times a bit overwhelming. Everyone was tired but appreciative of the tremendous amount of valuable



Glen Lipinski



Natalie Lloyd

knowledge and information that was gained.

Motivational interviewing included the principles, philosophy and techniques involved in good interviewing. Health staff learned about addictive behaviors and mental health. Various screening and assessment tools were discussed and practiced. Addictions and the Forensic System dealt with stigmas, intervention, risk management and community reintegration. Drugs and addictions from the street perspective—with rather intense and at times disturbing content—was passionately delivered by Métis citizen, Louis Logue (Ottawa Police Service), who gave staff a comprehensive overview of the identification of street drugs and drug use. This included very

graphic and sometimes unpleasant images of what street drugs can do to people and their families.

Overall, it was an ambitious agenda for the week to say the least!

The four days of training allowed staff to acquire skills and knowledge that will be very beneficial to the delivery of Métis Nation of Ontario Health programs and services to all Métis.

Training such as this provides ever increasing upgrading and development for the health staff who can then, in turn, pass on their training and knowledge to our citizens throughout all of our communities in the Métis Nation. The next health branch training will be held January 7th-10th, 2008, and will, once again, be in Kingston with Murray and his team. We are looking forward to another opportunity to develop our skills. ∞

Glen Lipinski is the MNO’s Community Wellness Coordinator and Natalie Lloyd is the MNO Health Branch’s Long Term Care Supervisor.

MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO HEALTH CAREERS SUPPORT PROGRAM

Do you want to be a health professional? Have you wanted to go back to school but not had the opportunity? Are you currently pursuing a health career and having difficulty making ends meet? If so, the Métis Nation of Ontario may be able to help you through a new funding program designed to assist Métis students from Ontario.

Métis Nation of Ontario
500 Old St. Patrick Street, Unit D
Ottawa, ON K1N 9G4
Ph: 613-798-1488
or 1-800-263-4889 (toll free)
www.metisnation.org

Santé Canada **Health Canada**
Funding made available through the Métis Health Human Resources Initiative, a four year national program funded by Health Canada.

A Good Bet?

The MNO's Addictions Wellness Coordinator Glen Lipinski examines the contrast between traditional games of chance and the modern gambling industry...

BY GLEN LIPINSKI

It is that time of year again, the holiday season, a time for gift giving, feasting, good times and abundance. Many of us give lottery tickets, scratch tickets and pull tab tickets as gifts (often stocking stuffers) to our family members and children. Scratch tickets may seem like the ideal stocking stuffer, but Santa's gift could begin or fuel a gambling problem. Young people can't legally buy scratch tickets or lottery tickets on their own, but many parents and grandparents buy tickets and put them in children's stockings, and that could begin a lifelong gambling addiction. We do this and think nothing of it; the fact is that our actions may be seen as promoting and condoning gambling.

Consider the following:

✕ One recent study reported that approximately 80% of adolescents aged 12-17 have gambled in the last 12 months.

✕ The top five gambling activities for youth as reported in a 2006 survey of 499 youth are:

- 1) raffle tickets
- 2) scratch/pull tab tickets
- 3) dare or challenge bets
- 4) lottery tickets,
- 5) poker

✕ Over 27% of 15 to 17 year olds said their most common gambling activity was ticket gambling.

✕ More than a third of the revenue from gambling in Ontario, or \$2.3 billion, comes from ticket gambling and yet many people don't consider buying tickets as gambling.

Don't get me wrong, most things done in moderation and kept under control are fine. After all, buying lottery/scratch tickets can be fun and entertaining and millions of us do it. I point this out to you so that all of you are aware of the potential risks and consequences that many of us may face, particularly our youth who may pick up the gambling habit at a young and impressionable age.

Gambling historically involved the community and family. Aboriginal people played games of chance (or gambled) long before European contact. Early Aboriginal gambling activities were focused on development of skills. Gambling was never done in isolation, and in fact, gambling often occurred at large community events accompanied by songs, traditional teachings and feasts.

Early traditional gambling brought communities together for socialization; included traditional elder teachings; contained a spiritual component; instilled a sense of pride, and taught people to share ideas and resources. Early gambling practices also taught people how to build on skills such as memory and hand-eye coordination, taught them how to play and work as a team or group and aided in conflict resolution, leadership development and anger management.

Some of the early Aboriginal games that were played were:

Moccasin Game – hide an object under 1 of 4 moccasins and wager a bet as to which moccasin the object is under;

Baggattaway – a wild and relatively unstructured original ver-

sion of lacrosse, bets were placed on who would be the winning team;

Snow snake – played with a spear that had a blunt head (resembling a snake) spear was thrown for distance and accuracy and bets were placed on the outcome;

Pagessan – also known as “the bowl game”, dice-like objects were placed in a wooden bowl and bets were wagered on which side would turn up when the bowl was struck.



“
YOUNG PEOPLE CAN'T LEGALLY BUY SCRATCH TICKETS OR LOTTERY TICKETS, BUT MANY PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS BUY TICKETS AND PUT THEM IN CHILDREN'S STOCKINGS...”

Note: If anyone is aware of any other Aboriginal games of chance (Métis-specific if you know of any) that were played by Métis people either historically or present day, please let me know. I can be reached via the information below.

Now, fast forward to more modern times. In 1969 the criminal code of Canada was amended to make lotteries legal if authorized by federal or provincial governments. This opened the door for huge changes to contemporary Aboriginal gambling and by 1976 every province and territory in Canada was running a lottery.

The very first Canadian Aboriginal casino opened March 1, 1996, at the Golden Eagle Casino in North Battleford, SK. In July, 1996, Casino Rama opened. Full-scale Aboriginal casino style gambling was underway.

Since 1992 there has been a 2.5% increase in the number of people gambling at casinos and using video lottery terminals (VLTs). These two activities alone accounted for nearly 60% of government revenues from gambling in the year 2000. Government net revenue from gambling activities in 2002 was 11.3 billion dollars. In 2003/04 gross profit from government run gambling activity was 12.8 billion. Gambling currently accounts for 10% of total leisure expenditures, making it one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy.

Did you know that the odds of winning a Lotto 6/49 jackpot are about 1 in 14 million and your odds of winning Super 7 are about 1 in 21 million? Your odds of being struck by lightning in

your life time are 1 in 6 million. Therefore, you are twice as likely to be struck by lightning as to ever win the lottery jackpot.

Did you know that there are over 10,000 lottery ticket outlets in Ontario? The total gross lottery ticket revenue for 2004/05 in Ontario was \$1,101,191,000.

Today the impact of gambling on Aboriginal families and communities is much different. Gambling has become an accepted enterprise or economic fund raiser. Activities such as bingo, lottery/scratch tickets and casinos have become commonplace. Unity among families and communities has diminished; community and individual spirit has been diluted; children are often left to fend for themselves, lacking proper nutrition. Money is leaving the community, going to gambling establishments; crime and corruption are increasing. There is a loss of productivity in communities due to gambling and a loss of dignity and respect.

This is much different from the early days when Aboriginal people played their games of chance in the community!

This Christmas lets all put some extra thought into the gifts we give to our families and friends, especially the stocking stuffers, and remember to have a “Responsible Gambling Season” this year.

Glen Lipinski is the MNO's Addictions Wellness Coordinator.

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glenl@metisnation.org



MÉTIS CANOE EXPEDITION 3 SEEKING YOUNG ADVENTURERS

The Métis Nation of Ontario is looking for Métis individuals to participate in the Third Métis Canoe Expedition. This adventure of a lifetime will take place between May and August, 2008.

Two weeks of training will be arranged, but applicants are encouraged to be in good physical condition. Applicants must submit the following: a current resume; three (3) references; Registration Form; Métis verification form; medical form; an essay (max 500 words) describing why you want to be a part of this project and why you should be selected for the expedition. Please include details

regarding your involvement with the Métis Nation of Ontario or the Métis Community, your leadership experience and any other qualifications or information you feel are relevant.

The Canoe Expedition connects Métis youth with Métis culture and heritage while immersing them in the out-

doors. These journeys demonstrate the courage and integrity of Métis youth and what they are capable of accomplishing. They create youth leaders and role models who embody the strength and pride of the Métis Nation. More information and form are available on line at: www.metisnation.org

CONTACT:
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the Métis
Nation of
Ontario

MNOYC:

Métis youth partner with province on youth magazine

Métis Nation of Ontario Youth Council (MNOYC) Secretary, Joni Labbe, has been working on a newsletter in partnership with the Government of Ontario, Ontario Women's Directorate. Titled, "Métis Youth as Leaders", the three page magazine is well worth your time. Here are a few excerpts.

“...an Elder told us a story about leadership in geese. He said that geese fly in a “V” and, when the leader gets tired, he goes to the back and a new one steps up. This means you don’t always have to be the leader; you can step back and let some one else have a turn. You don’t always have to be in charge. Everyone can have a turn offering ideas—it’s not just about one person...”

by Sarah Aiken

“...Some senators spoke about how they grew up Métis, showing some items and explaining them; some played the fiddle and sang. At the end of the gathering, we took the tobacco to the fire keeper at the sacred fire....”

by Anthony Powley

“...Many Métis in the Sault area that also live and practice the Métis ways of life are very proud of Mr. Steve Powley and his son Rodney Powley. If they hadn’t stood up for the rights of their people in this area, then the Métis might have become a dying breed. But thanks to their courage, the Métis no longer need to call themselves “The Forgotten People!...”

by Hunter Leffler

For more information on “Métis Youth as Leaders” contact Region 4 Métis Nation of Ontario Youth Council representative **Joni Labbe:** jonilabbe1925@msn.com

ABORIGINAL STUDENTS RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIPS

Again this year the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation saluted some outstanding Aboriginal laureates from this year's millennium excellence awards. The awards recognise students for their leadership skills, community involvement, academic achievement and interest in innovation.

Hard work and dedication have spelled success for:

Jillian Eunson, a First Nations student affiliated with Mikisew Cree First Nation will receive a National Award;

Kate Russell, a First Nations student from the Babine Lake

area in British Columbia, will receive a Local Award;

Ashley Reagan, a Gitskan student from Gitsanmaax First Nation in BC will receive a Local Award;

Bailie Mitchell, a Métis Beaverlodge Regional High School graduate from Beaverlodge, Alberta, will receive a Local Award;

Janique Richard, a Métis student attending the École Notre Dame Senior High School in Bonnyville, AB, will receive a Local Award;

Larissa Favel, a First Nations student from the Poundmaker Cree Nation in Saskatchewan, will

receive a Local Award;

Jordan Mihalicz, a Métis student attending Valley View School in Beauval, Saskatchewan, will receive a Local Award;

Eric Wasylenko, a Métis student attending Springfield Collegiate in Dugald, MB, will receive a Provincial-Territorial Award;

Mellissa Elliot, a First Nations student from the Six Nations of the Grand River attending Pauline Johnson Collegiate in Ohsweken, ON, will receive a Local Award.

There are three levels of excellence entrance awards: national (\$5,000, renewable to a maximum of \$20,000), provincial-territorial

(\$4,000, renewable to a maximum of \$16,000 and local (one-time awards of \$4,000). The awards will be used towards the cost of studies at any Canadian university or college this fall.

“An investment in the education of these outstanding citizens is an investment in the future of our society,” said Norman Riddell, executive director and CEO of the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. “These young, and sometimes not so young, individuals have already demonstrated their ability to change the world around them—they know how to make a difference.”



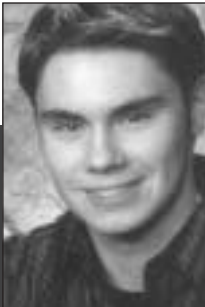
Bailie Mitchell
Local Laureate
ALBERTA



Jordan Mihalicz
Local Laureate
SASK



Janique Richard
Local Laureate
ALBERTA



Eric Wasylenko
Prov.l Laureate
MANITOBA

Bailie is an 18 year old Métis youth from Beaverlodge, Alberta where he graduated from Beaverlodge Regional High School in 2006. He will receive a cash award of \$4,000, towards the cost of studies at any Canadian university or college this fall.

Accomplishments: Bailie exudes passion, conviction, confidence, excitement, and compassion. Not only do these characteristics make him a positive member of his community, they also made him a great member of the Student Leadership Team at his high school. In this position, Bailie and two of his fellow leaders organised a school wide barbeque in support of the local food bank.

As an advocate of active living--drug and alcohol-free--Bailie received an Aboriginal Youth Role Model Award for Health and Wellness in 2005. Through prior involvement with Youth Strategies, a community that is part of Alberta Children's Services, he also volunteered at Alberta's Uniting for Children Forum and the World Conference on the Prevention of Family Violence that same year. Along with other youth volunteers, Bailie made a very moving presentation to the global audience at the World Conference.

Since graduating as the first runner-up for valedictorian in 2006 with a 94.5% average in core courses, Bailie decided to engage in a gap year, and has continued to achieve throughout this year.

Keenly interested in current events, social justice, and human rights advocacy, Bailie is now studying political science in Alberta, at the University of Lethbridge. He foresees a career as a political author/journalist, as well as an eventual career as a politician.

Jordan is a Métis student at the Valley View School in Beauval, Saskatchewan. He is one of 23 laureates in Saskatchewan to receive a Local Excellence Award from the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. He will receive a cash award of \$4,000, towards the cost of studies at any Canadian university or college this fall.

Accomplishments: Jordan is motivated to make healthy choices and encourage other youth in his community to resist the pressure to use drugs and alcohol.

As the coach of his school's weightlifting club, he's helped students reach their personal fitness goals. He tries to encourage as many students as possible to become involved with the club and to choose a healthy lifestyle.

An appreciation for the natural environment leads him to share his extensive knowledge of entomology and biology with others, helping them to become more proactive on environmental issues.

For the last four years, Jordan has explored many traditional ceremonies and practices associated with his Métis heritage, and he teaches others the arts of wood-burning, birch basket making and canoe building.

He is a level 2 Reiki therapist, a coach at the ski club and a lector in his church council.

Jordan received the Lieutenant Governor's Award of Excellence in 2006 in recognition of his awareness and pride in northern heritage and his leadership within the school and community.

Jordan is now studying engineering at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon.

Janique is a bilingual Métis student at the École Notre Dame Senior High School, in Bonnyville, Alberta. She is one of 70 laureates in Alberta to receive a Local Excellence Award from the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. She will receive a cash award of \$4,000, towards the cost of studies at any Canadian university or college this fall.

Accomplishments: Janique is a caring and compassionate individual who strives to make a difference globally and locally. After participating in a mission trip to Baja, Mexico, she continued the work she'd started in Mexico by launching a campaign within the school to collect shoes, blankets and other items.

On her own initiative, Janique went door to door to collect spare change for her school's Young Adopters' Group, an organisation that fosters children in developing countries. Her efforts helped the group reach its goal of raising enough money to continue supporting the children for another year.

Janique volunteers with the Special Olympics at the bowling alley, an activity that gives her great personal satisfaction. She also provides respite care for an autistic girl, which has sparked her interest in a career working with children with special needs. Janique works as a lifeguard and swimming instructor at the Bonnyville Swimming Pool.

Janique intends to pursue a career in education and speech language pathology. She is now studying English and linguistics at the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

Eric is a Métis student at Springfield Collegiate in Dugald, Manitoba. He is one of nine laureates in Manitoba to receive a Provincial Excellence Award from the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. He will receive a cash award of \$4,000, towards the cost of studies at any Canadian university or college this fall, renewable to a maximum of \$16,000.

Accomplishments: Eric and his fellow students at Springfield asked a simple question: why don't we have an athletic facility to support our many local sports teams? The group of 25 students developed a 17-page business plan outlining their vision for a multi-purpose soccer and rugby field surrounded by an eight-lane asphalt track.

They identified possible sources of revenue and conducted some basic research about potential costs to build the facility (estimated at anywhere between \$300,000 and \$500,000). Eric has given presentations to numerous groups, including parent councils, the rural municipality of Springfield and the school board. Media coverage has also helped spread enthusiasm for this ambitious project.

The first fundraising event associated with the "Field of Visions" project was a semi-formal dinner that raised \$6,500 in net profit. Eric is dedicated to seeing this project through, and he hopes that the facility will be built for the 2008-2009 school year.

He's also involved in the student leadership and athletic life of his school, serving as a peer tutor, peer support group member, and holding executive positions on student council and SCI's Aboriginal awareness group, Gakina Awiya Biindigeg, and playing on the cross-country, curling and rugby teams.

Carleton Students & staff celebrate tipi's arrival on campus

OTTAWA, Nov. 13/07—Staff and students at Carleton University gathered to celebrate the addition of a tipi to the campus.

The opening ceremony, hosted by the Carleton University Students' Association (CUSA) in collaboration with Equity Services, and the Centre for Aboriginal Culture and Education included performances by Aboriginal artists from the Inuit, Métis, and First Nations communities. CUSA President, Shelley Melanson, and representatives from Carleton University joined Aboriginal stu-

dents at the podium to reflect on the achievements of Carleton University's Aboriginal students.

"I am pleased to see Carleton University work with us to establish the permanent fixture of the CUSA tipi on our campus," said CUSA President, Shelley Melanson. "The tipi will benefit Carleton students by celebrating our diversity and showcasing the important part that Aboriginal and First

Nations students play in our community."

The significance of the event is twofold. The symbolic nature of the tipi is representative of the coming together of various administrative and student groups to recognize the importance of celebrating Aboriginal culture on campus as well as making a positive statement to the country that Carleton Univer-

sity is an inclusive and diverse campus.

"The tipi is not only a sound and beautiful structure that fits in so perfectly with the landscape, it's also a symbol of Carleton University's movement towards greater inclusivity of Aboriginal peoples," said Carleton University's Aboriginal Cultural Liaison Officer, Irvin Hill.

2007 CANADIAN ABORIGINAL FESTIVAL AND POW WOW



2007 CANADIAN ABORIGINAL MUSIC AWARDS WINNERS & NOMINEES

BEST FEMALE ARTIST

- ★ Tracy Bone (MB)
- Cheri Maracle (ON)
- Sandy Scofield (BC)

BEST FEMALE ROOTS ALBUM

- ★ Sandy Scofield - *Nikawiy Askiy* (BC)
- Jani Lauzon - *Mixed Blessings* (ON)
- Violet Naytowhow - *Wind of the North* (SK)

BEST ROCK ALBUM

- ★ Derek Miller - *The Dirty Looks* (ON)
- The Breeze Band - *The Breeze Band* (ON)
- Eye of Charm - *The Goddess Mira* (ON)

BEST SONG SINGLE

- ★ Donny Parenteau - *Father Time* (SK)
- Digging Roots - *Wake Up and Rise* (ON)
- Shane Yellowbird - *Pick Up Truck* (AB)

BEST FIDDLE ALBUM

- ★ Darren Lavallee - *Backroads Fiddlin* (MB)
- Ryan D'Aoust - *York Boats & Legends* (MB)
- Ramsey Rae - *Fiddlin' Buckaroo* (MB)

BEST FOLK ALBUM

- ★ Little Hawk - *Home And Native Land* (MB)
- Violet Naytowhow - *Wind of the North* (SK)
- Sandy Scofield - *Nikawiy Askiy* (BC)

BEST INSTRUMENTAL ALBUM

- ★ Arvel Bird - *Animal Totems* (ON)
- Arvel Bird w/ Ananeah - *Ananeah* (ON)
- Sakoieta Widrick - *Sacred Songs Sacred Words*

BEST INTERNATIONAL ALBUM

- ★ Robert Mirabal - *In The Blood* (NM)
- Stevie Salas - *The Sun and the Earth* (CA)
- Jimmy Lee Young - *Anduhyaun* (CA)

**BEST ABORIGINAL MUSIC
RADIO PROGRAM**

- ★ Wilson Okeymaw, The Morning Round Dance-Cree/English (AB)
- Diane Keye, Tania Henry & Josh Miller Sr. - CKRZ's New Music Showcase (ON)
- Cal White - The Aboriginal Hour (ON)

BEST ALBUM COVER DESIGN

- ★ Designer: CIMNetwork, Photography: Chronic Creative for Ryan D'Aoust, *York Boats & Legends* (MB)
- Designers: Troy Westwood & Darren Johnston, Artist/Photographer: Adriana Capozzi for Little Hawk, *Home And Native Land* (MB)
- Designers: Raven Kanatakta & Rob Norton for Digging Roots, *Seeds* (ON)

BEST HAND DRUM ALBUM

- ★ Northern Cree & Friends - *Long Winter Nights* (AB)
- Big River Cree - *You Make Me Proud* (SK)
- Red Bull - *Ami Nicimos* (SK)

**BEST POW WOW ALBUM
(TRADITIONAL)**

- ★ White Fish Jrs. - *Painted Warrior* (SK)
- Chi-Key-Wis Sons - *Gibimoka'an* (MB)
- Taabik Singers - *Forever Young* (ON)

**BEST POW WOW ALBUM
(CONTEMPORARY)**

- ★ Northern Cree - *Stay Red* (AB)
- High Noon - *Generations* (MB)
- Whitefish Jrs. - *Painted Warrior* (SK)

New faces
Shane Yellowbird
and Tracy Bone
were big winners
at the 2007
Canadian
Aboriginal
Music
Awards.



BIG DRUM ROLL PLEASE

Each year the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards celebrate the musical contributions and artistry of Aboriginal people by honouring the premier musicians, groups and industry members across Canada. The Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards (CAMA) are part of the Canadian Aboriginal Festival and Pow Wow which took place at the Rogers Centre in Toronto from November 30th to December 2nd, 2007.

The 9th annual Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards (CAMA) Gala show was a star-studded night of Canada's Aboriginal celebrities and top Native musicians, and an entertaining event for everyone interested in Aboriginal music and contemporary musical innovations being made by Native musicians.

Hosting this year's show were father and daughter Ray St. Germain, Manitoban TV host, politician, and classic rock 'n' roller, and Cathy St. Germain, successful Vancouver-based vocalist and TV host.

The performance line-up for the Gala show included:

Arvel Bird: instrumental violinist (nominated in three categories this year;

Cheri Maracle: actor, singer and songwriter known for her jazzy ballads, smokey blues, indie rock and traditional roots sounds (nominated in the Best Female Artist category);

Derek Miller: guitar-fuelled scorchin' blues rock (nominated for 2007 Best Rock Album);

Digging Roots: known for their old-school rebel music blending traditional Indigenous influences with blues, jazz, spoken word, reggae and roots music (nominated for three CAMAs this year;

Donny Parenteau: noted for his 100% original country music (nominated for five awards);

Leela Gilday: known for her soulful belting and beautifully melodic roots-music interwoven with native musical influences, (nominated for the 2007 Best Album of the Year and Best Song Writer awards);

Priscilla's Revenge: from Yellowknife, performing straight-up blues-rock (nominated for Best Blues Album and Best Group/Duo);

Sandy Scofield: established roots music artist and innovative collaborator (three nominations this year for Best Female Artist, Best Folk Album and Best Female Traditional Roots Album);

Shane Yellowbird: known for his country music with a positive



clockwise from top: **Legendary Métis rock n' roller Ray St. Germain hosted this year's star-studded Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards Gala with his daughter Cathy; Sandy Scofield (daughter of MNO's Senator Earl Scofield) won the Best Roots Album CAMA for her *Nikawiy Askiy*; the Rogers Centre in Toronto; Métis songstress Andrea Menard won a CAMA for her *Velvet Devil* television special.**

message (nominated for five CAMAs this year);

Taabik Singers: A northern-style singing group of Anishinabe men (nominated for Best Pow Wow Album Traditional).

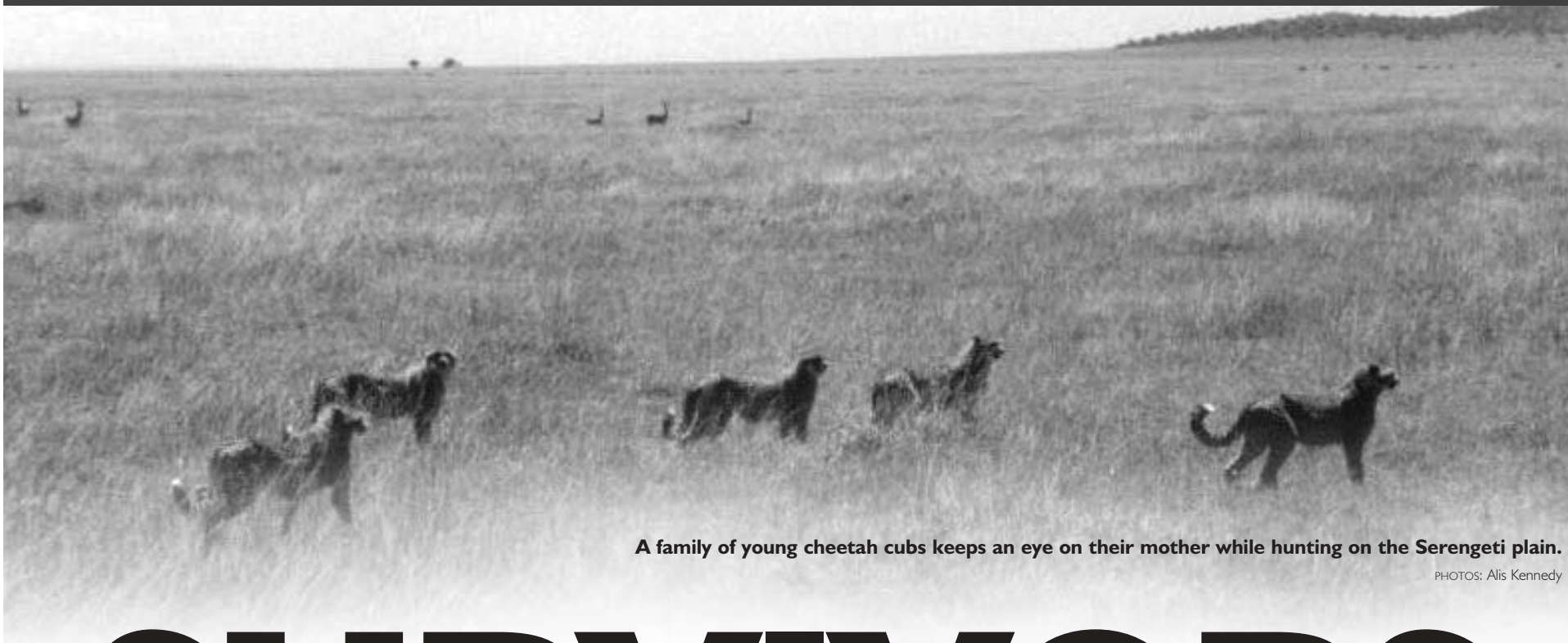
A special appearance was made by Stevie Salas, Apache funk/rock guitarist, producer, and music director for Mick Jagger, D'Arby and many others, currently co-writing and music directing three recent Idol winners, nominated for CAMAs Best International Album for his 2-CD retrospective. Stevie Salas appeared with his all-star band, including vocalist Bernard Fowler (Rolling Stones), bassist Ron Blair (Tom Petty and the Heartbreak-

ers, Stevie Nicks, Del Shannon), and drummer Steve Ferrone (Eric Clapton, Aretha Franklin, Duran Duran, Bette Midler, Michael Jackson, Steve Winwood, and many others).

CAMAs Musical Director, Donald Quan, assembled outstanding Canadian musicians to perform in the orchestra and provide the backbone of the awards show as the house band. This year the orchestra included Assistant Musical Director, Raven Kanatakta (from Digging Roots) on guitar, Rob Thompson on bass, David Maracle on flutes and percussion, Rick Lazar on keyboards, plus additional talented musicians on vocals and drums.

Our Stories

A LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE IN THE SERENGETI...



A family of young cheetah cubs keeps an eye on their mother while hunting on the Serengeti plain.

PHOTOS: Alis Kennedy

SURVIVORS

Senator Alis Kennedy recounts an African adventure that made her an advocate for keeping wild things wild

As a Métis, I truly enjoyed exploring new territory and discovering new adventure in Canada and around the world; beside my six month sojourn in the Amazon jungle this exploration was truly amazing. My adventure in the Serengeti deeply affected my life in ways that were not realised until several months after my return.

Our group of 19 persons participated in a photographic safari (journey in Swahili) that took us on a trek that travelled through six African countries. The members of the party came from Canada, Argentina, Australia, England, Germany and New Zealand; a nice mix that caused some friction on occasion. We were on our way to a three-day outing in the Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater National Park. Our Land Rover was one of three; of course, I was in the “no one wants to be with you” vehicle, as the others had already partnered up. So here we were, four misfits in the same means of transportation, and for three whole days!

We left our base camp of Arusha quite early in order to observe some animals and to be able to reach our first campsite by late afternoon. Our guide was very nice to recognise that we “misfits” were actually a group of people who had come to Africa to see animals; he made sure that our vehicle was, for most of the time, leading the mini caravan. Because of this, only the “misfits”



BY ALIS
(PLANTE)
KENNEDY

were able to see the last of the “Big Five”, the mighty leopard. We briefly admired that stunning big cat before she went for cover. The entire group had been trying to see that feline since the beginning of the safari!

We stopped for lunch at a very small outdoor shop that sold food and souvenirs on the side of the road. After my meal, I wandered around and found a tame chameleon. I picked him up--a very odd looking animal; he probably thought the same about me! We spent some time together, time truly enjoyed. I showed him to the rest of the group. Several were interested and took pictures, while others just continued socialising, completely ignoring my new friend. After a meagre, but healthy lunch, we were on the road again.

On our way to the Serengeti Plain, we stopped at the top of the Ngorongoro Crater--what a view! It took four pictures just to cover the whole panorama. With the help of binoculars or camera zooms, we were able to see animals moving around at the bottom of the crater. This was a very

good “sneak preview” of what we were going to see on our way back to base camp, as we had planned to spend a day inside the crater upon our return. After the “oohs” and “ahhs”, and for some of us, full or near full rolls of pictures, we moved on to our first destination; the vast plain of the Serengeti.

We had to drive up a lonely road to reach the Serengeti Plain. On that road were some white mini vans, with all the gadgets that one can dream of, stuck in the mud; many did not have four-wheel drive. For some, it was amusing to see groups of “millionaires”, faces purpling, while pushing their vehicles up the road! We were lucky enough to pass them and reach the Plain at a decent hour.

Imagine a vast area with nothing but tall grass and, in the distance, some rock formations. There was only one road cutting through the vegetation; it was surreal. This immense land seems to be a super self-managed zoo, but without zookeepers. The animals are responsible for their own survival.

Along the way we saw cheetahs, giraffes, hyenas, warthogs, lions and impalas--not bad for a first glance of the two days ahead. The idea was to give us the “movie trailer” view of the whole expedition.

On the way to our temporary home, we had a brief encounter with a spotted hyena. I’ll bet that he was as surprised to see us as we were to see him. After setting up the tents and having dinner, we admired the equatorial sky. Just visualise a clear sky, without clouds, not

even a moon, and no light pollution for at least one hundred kilometres! We fell asleep with the sound of lions roaring in the distance in search of mates, with some hyenas cackling close by.

The next morning, those of us who had actually slept, woke up well before sunrise. The rest had been either too excited or too afraid to sleep and had been up all night. We had a small but enjoyable breakfast. Next, we took the tents down and prepared ourselves for a full day exploring this great land.

Our guides cautioned us to remain in our vehicles at all times, unless they judged that it was safe to get out. Two weeks earlier, a lion attacked and killed a German tourist. He had gotten out of his vehicle without the guide’s permission, insisting that he wanted to take a close-up pho-



Imagine a vast area with nothing but tall grass and, in the distance, some rock formations. There was only one road cutting through the vegetation; it was surreal.”

tograph of the feline’s head.

You should have seen the beautiful African sunrise; it was breathtaking. The picture that was taken pales in comparison to the original splendour! As we

proceeded on the second leg of our journey, we saw two lionesses relaxing with their cubs. It was strange at first to see wild animals not paying much attention to us, with the exception of some cubs; but their attention span lasted a very short time, and soon they lay back again, soaking in the early morning sun, as if totally uninterested in seeing so many humans invading their privacy and territory on a daily basis, sunrise to sunset.

After that, we saw many zebras and a large number of wildebeests; they were starting to gather for the long and risky migration to the Masai Mara, the Kenyan continuation of the Serengeti in Tanzania. Again, they did not pay much attention to us; some even remained lying down while others continued grazing. Still, it was amazing to see so many animals gathered in such a large group. After a while, we noticed that there were several other species that we had not observed at first: several types of gazelles and other predators.

Then, our guide noticed a cheetah at a distance. As the three Land Rovers approached, it became apparent that she was not alone; five majestic cubs, almost as big as her, emerged from the tall grass. It was astonishing that she was able to raise so many cubs and that so many had survived. As some of you may know, 90% of cheetahs do not make it past the first year of life, due to disease, inbreeding, infections and predators (mainly lions and hyenas). Therefore, to see five of them, almost old enough to leave

MUSIC REVIEW

BY LINDA LORD

OMEIGWESSI REEL MÉTIS
A TRIBUTE TO WALTER FLETT
Alyssa Delbeare-Sawchuk



Ebb & Flow

Métis-style music kept alive by youth led ensemble

Did you hear that? Maybe while you were leafing through the *Voyageur* looking for pictures of people you know? I mean the fiddle and the clacking of spoons—that irresistible sound that sets Métis feet in motion.

I occasionally receive CDs for review. They range from indifferent to outstanding. This one is outstanding and I let it run on my CD player while I worked on this edition of the paper. I found myself typing to the rhythm. Later I trekked down the road to have supper with my neighbours and I took the CD along. It goes well with fish—a true testament to the flavour of the music.

Omeigwessi Reel Métis: A Tribute to Walter Flett, by Alyssa Delbeare-Sawchuk is available online at CDBaby <http://cdbaby.com/cd/adelsawchuk> for \$12.97 and would be a bargain at twice the price.

Alyssa began her musical career at the age of three and presently studies viola with David Zafer, professor Emeritus, University of Toronto. As a graduate of the Young Artists' Performance Academy at the Royal Conservatory of Music, she has won several scholarships from the Toronto Kiwanis Music Festival, the Manitoba Music Festival, and the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, among others.

In 2004 she was awarded the National Métis Youth Role Model Award for Arts and Culture and since then she has performed Métis music across the nation for various Aboriginal events.

Omeigwessi Ensemble is a traditional Métis music group comprised of Métis elders and youths from Winnipeg and Toronto. Manitoba old-time music artists Lawrence 'Teddy Boy' Houle and his stepbrother Jimmy Flett join emerging Toronto musicians, Alyssa Delbeare-Sawchuk, and her broth-

OUR STORIES:

Charlie & the Wolf

An old family photo reminds Jim Turner of a story of a boy and his wolf and the names of our ancestors

by Jim Turner

I found this picture in the old album the other day when Linda Lord was asking for articles for the *Voyageur* newspaper. It's strange what we remember when we study an old picture. It seems the photo brings all the associated memories rushing back. My Mother told me the story decades ago and when I look at the picture of Charlie, I remember the story she told about him and his wolf pup.

It's a short story about a boy and his pet in the early 1900's when Rossburn Manitoba was just a speck on the map. (Rossburn is located on the south west side of the province on Hwy.21.) Métis children then weren't much different than the children of today. Youngsters wanted a dog. Good dogs were few and far between, as most were just mutts and outside dogs used to give warnings to intruders.

Now, as far as kids and dogs go, there is, of course a special bond, and I'm sure this would apply to all animals and all generations of children. In Charlie's

case he and his wolf formed this bond, and this was before the movie *Dances with Wolves* with Kevin Kostner.

My Mother had three brothers and two sisters. I think Charlie was the oldest boy, and was the one in the family that craved the Métis life. My mother never said this in exactly those words as she would never speak of anything

like that, but once in a blue moon I could pry bits and pieces out of her memory bank. She said he was the one who preferred the old ways, and if he could, would step back in time to his ancestral roots. She recalled that Charlie was a very resourceful boy. Apparently one day he was out in the bush and found a young wolf pup and brought it home. He

worked with it and eventually it became very tame and loving.

I recall my Mother telling me that on occasion Charlie's pet would get the wild wolves out in the bush howling which annoyed her dad to no end.

When he did go into the town of Rossburn, Charlie would take the wolf along for the walk. Eventually the townsfolk accepted the fact that Charlie wouldn't let the wolf off the chain, so some folks felt they could humour Charlie and pet his "dog".

There wasn't much to the story after that, I don't know what happened to the wolf or if it was still around when Charlie died a couple years later of a ruptured appendix.

When I did hear stories, many never seemed to have an ending. My Mother would always pull herself quickly back to the present and change the subject. I always felt there was so much for her to tell us about her family, but there was very little offered.

I do remember her telling me about Uncle Charlie and his wolf pup so I can share it with you.

As I gazed at this picture, I pondered the idea of how we got our names. I wondered how I got my middle name, "Charles". There was Charlie with the wolf and another Charles in our family. His name was Charles Simpson and he was Sir George Simpson's grandson, that's another story for another time.

Jim Turner is the President of the Windsor/Essex/Kent Métis Community Council.



Uncle Charlie and his wolf pup.



Alyssa Delbeare-Sawchuk

ers Conlin, Nicholas, and Danton (The Métis Fiddler Quartet) along with Scott Kemp to form Omeigwessi Ensemble. "Omeigwessi" was the nickname of Manitoba fiddler Walter Flett, and it means 'Ukrainian' in Ojibwe. Walter Flett (born 1906) learned to play the fiddle from his father and older brothers. His fiddling style reflects the musical language of the Métis as far back as the early fur trade. Walter Flett passed on the fiddling traditions to his stepson, Lawrence Houle and his son James Flett. Omeigwessi Ensemble pays tribute to the late Walter Flett for his life long contributions to old-time Métis fiddling in Canada.

Shortly before Walter Flett passed away at the age of 80, Toronto based Canadian fiddler and musicologist Anne Lederman recorded him playing the fiddle in his 'old time' Ebb and Flow Métis style.

After years of studying old-time Métis fiddle tunes with Anne Lederman, Alyssa was awarded an Ontario Arts Council mentorship grant titled "Tracing My Métis Roots" to study Métis fiddling and jigging with Lawrence 'Teddy Boy' Houle. Alyssa was invited to present her mentorship project along with Lawrence

at the Métis Artists' Collective's Louis Riel Day Celebration of Métis Arts and Culture in a showcase of the Métis fiddle. This event received media attention and was broadcast on national aptn news on November 16, 2006.

Lawrence Houle and his stepbrother Jimmy Flett gave tribute to their father and musical mentor Walter Flett alongside a younger generation of Métis musicians from Toronto (Métis Fiddler Quartet and Scott Kemp) playing music in the old-time Métis style. With Alyssa's lead fiddle, the group recorded their first Métis fiddling CD titled *Omeigwessi: Reel Métis, a Tribute to Walter Flett*.

Omeigwessi Ensemble is a result of a continuous bond between Alyssa and 'Teddy Boy' to keep this historic old-style Métis music alive through public presentations and by recording this music for future generations. The concept of an Elder and Youth collaborative exchange continues to be of public interest, particularly in the Aboriginal community, and this Ojibwe Métis ensemble continues to receive requests to present—most recently on Riel Day, 2007.

Thanks to the Métis Nation of Ontario for their financial assistance and to Bernard Leroux for his photography, design and creative input.

For a free sample go to:

www.myspace.com/omeigwessi
If that doesn't get your toes tapping, lay down because you are dead!

Omeigwessi Reel Métis
A Tribute to
Un hommage à
Walter Flett

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ALYSSA DELBAERE-SAWCHUK

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OUR STORIES | SURVIVORS

FROM PAGE 16

their mother was simply amazing! As soon as we came close to the mother and her cubs, she stood up and stared off into the distance; they can see up to five kilometres straight. Then, she took off like a bat out of hell, leaving her youngsters behind; a cheetah can really sprint, up to 110 kilometres per hour in three seconds flat. What a majestic and athletic feline; it was a pure delight to see her going after the family dinner! Our guides were truly animal lovers. They let her go after her prey, and then we followed behind, at enough of a distance not to alert the herd of Thompson gazelles that a predator was after one of them. The cubs seemed confused and lost at first, their mother having left them behind with humans. But it seemed that she knew what she was doing, and as soon as we drove off to catch up to her, they followed us! None of us saw the actual killing, as we were still too far behind, but none of us in our vehicle objected to that. It was far more important for the mother to get the kill than for us to see a pursuit that could have ended up in a lost meal, as we would have interfered in the hunt by scaring off the prey. The skilled mother was able to single out a young gazelle, luring him away from the group, thus making the killing easier. The chase was a very short one; the young gazelle was no match for the fastest land animal on earth. Nevertheless, she had to pay a price to hold on to her catch. Two male cheetahs tried to fight her to steal the dinner, but she fought back and was able to push back the coalition. Quite often two males from the same litter will pair off for life, while females live a solitary life, with the exception of mating periods and the raising of cubs.

By this time, we almost reached the killing field with the cubs in tow. However, the battle scared off the cubs, as they hid behind the Land Rovers. The drivers were especially careful not to move their vehicles in order to avoid hurting or killing a young cheetah. Many deaths of young animals are caused by careless drivers too eager to satisfy their customers for a closer look at animals, consequently putting the animals' lives at risk. The mother called her youngsters to the feast; she sounded like a chirping bird. After some hesitation, the young adolescents came to her and gorged themselves. Here another unusual event happened. She and her cubs seemed to take their time eating. Usually they eat very fast and rarely have their fill, as vultures, hyenas and lions are well known to steal the cheetahs' catch. Vultures will fly in circles over the location of a kill, hence advertising that dinner is served to the hyenas and lions. The cheetahs, knowing this, will devour their meal as fast as they can before the uninvited guests make their appearance at the "table." Several other vehicles soon joined us, encircling the



A family of cheetah cubs and their mother on Africa’s Serengeti plain.

cheetahs whilst their occupants were taking tons of pictures. After having photographed the scene we left the cheetahs alone to enjoy their meal, though by this time not much was left of the gazelle.

This whole sequence of events with the cheetahs was the turning point of my attitude towards wild animals. Like many people, I did not give much consideration to their intelligence, as I thought that their thinking was mostly driven by instinct. It was only a few months later, after a great deal of research, that I realised this mother cheetah “used” us, at first as baby sitters. It is rare to see a predator leaving her cubs with other predators, especially from another species! Secondly, she utilised us as protectors. She knew that she and her cubs were safe to enjoy their dinner, as vultures, hyenas and lions will not come near humans. Her knowledge did not come from books, but only from life experience.

Because of her, I became a strong advocate for the survival of wild animals. The following year I volunteered in South Africa for two months, helping cheetahs with their right to share this planet with humanity. Subsequently, I wrote my doctoral dissertation on developing a model program to increase the retention of qualified volunteers in wildlife rehabilitation centres, while working as a volunteer wildlife rehabber myself in addition to being a member of the Board of Directors.

The rest of the day was not as eventful, but still interesting. After lunch, we saw a large column of elephants, with the old matriarch leading the herd to a new location. We stopped at a safe distance to admire them. An elephant flanking the column left the formation, marching toward us with her ears flapping and her trunk swinging threateningly.

Therefore, we backed off and let them alone. Who will argue with an elephant!

After that episode, we encountered ostriches, a black jackal and a rabbit. We also met some of our not so distant relatives, the baboons. It was quite surprising, to some of us, to see that the troop's social structure so closely resembled our own. There were some females gathered attending their young, mostly nursing or playing with them. Some of the males were parading in front of receptive females, behind the back of the alpha male who was sitting, relaxing on a rock with his arms resting on his knees, looking everywhere except behind him. I guess some people before us fed them, as they were looking for handouts. Our guide discouraged that practice and most of us agreed with him.

On our way to the lodge for our evening meal, we saw many herbivores settling in for the night. It was amazing to see giraffes drinking water. They have to spread their front legs apart a good distance in order for their mouths to reach the water, thus putting them in a very vulnerable position. Other animals were gathering in “secure” areas to spend the night, some bunking up with other species, thus combining their survival resources and skills.

As the day ended, we encountered some hippopotami getting out of a water hole where they had spent the day, searching for succulent vegetation to put between their teeth. In the water, they do not look so big, but outside a pond, wow what a massive animal!

We enjoyed our dinner while watching animals moving to their night “quarters”. Then we drove to our own lodgings. On our way in, we came across some hyenas and lions. It was astonishing to see their brilliant eyes scanning the land in search of food. As long as the food was not us, we enjoyed looking at them!

At camp, it was so dark that we needed the vehicles' headlights to assist us in putting up the tents and getting ready for our last night in the African wilderness. What a silent night with, of course, the exception of some nocturnal animals doing their thing!

Again, we awoke very early to take advantage of an early start. After breakfast and having packed our gear for the last time, we headed off to the majestic Ngorongoro Crater, leaving not a trace of our presence behind, except for our footprints.

On our way to the crater, we

saw some African buffalo; one of them had a partnership with a bird. The bird was eating small bugs from his ride's ear while the buffalo was getting rid of the pests, thus working together in a perfect symbiotic relationship.

Between the Serengeti and the Ngorongoro Crater, there is a small Masai village. Here we witnessed the Masai villagers jumping up and down, some very high above the ground. They also had some camels and other domestic animals. We saw even more wildebeests and zebras gathering for the long journey to the Masai Mara.

As we drove around the top of the Ngorongoro Crater to reach the only road leading in and out of the mini ecosystem, our Land Rover's passengers were the only ones to see the mighty leopard. We just had a glimpse of her, but what a sight. She looked at us, and then very elegantly went for cover. It was astounding to see so many animals living together in such a relatively small “enclosure”. The first group that we encountered was a cheetah and her cubs, relaxing and grooming each other, totally ignoring us invaders. Then we came across some more African buffalo and

springboks, as well as some Thomson gazelles.

We stopped by a lake to admire some hippopotami swimming and playing together. At that time, we were on foot, but remained vigilant, as these animals are the leading killers in Africa. Do not let their size fool you, they are very fast on their feet and can outrun any human!

We had to leave the crater sooner than planned, as threatening dark clouds were moving in. If you are unlucky enough to be caught in the crater during a heavy rainfall, it is not unusual to be stuck there for three to four days in order for the ground to dry out. It is impossible to drive off the site when the ground is still wet. Therefore, we left fairly quickly.

On our way back to base camp in Arusha, we did the usual tourist stops along the way to purchase souvenirs. Upon arrival at the base camp, we were surprised to hear that our main guide was stricken with a bout of malaria and was totally out of commission. Luckily, we had with us a guide-in-training and he conducted the rest of the safari.

We left Tanzania the following day and reached Nairobi, our final African destination in Kenya, and bid our adieu to Africa.

Alis (Plante) Kennedy is the Senator for the Credit River Métis Council.

MÉTIS FAMILIES LEARNING TOGETHER

has started a homework club in Hamilton.

It takes place every Thursday from 4:30 to 5:30 at the Métis Nation of Ontario office in Hamilton, located at 445 Concession Street. Children will receive one-on-one tutoring from volunteer mentors.

To register your child please contact
Literacy Co-ordinator, Heather Purdon:
1-888-466-6684
heatherp@metisnation.org

THE BUFFALO HUNT OF THE PLAINS CREE

As told by Plains Cree Elders of Echo Valley, Saskatchewan. (circa 1972) to Joy Asham

My role was not to come until later, for now, the young men of the community were doing their thing. The closest translation to what they were called is “Warrior” although making war was not their calling. The Warriors were men of special honour: their job was to ensure that the core values of the group were met in all aspects of daily life.. Today they were off to seek the Buffalo, it was time for the Hunt.

The most prestigious and dangerous position in the settlement was held by the Poundmaker. He was the head of the Hunt and was responsible for its success or failure. He was technician, teacher, leader and was full of Courage. Once a herd’s location was identified his work began in earnest. He observed the weather, the wind and determined how much and how fast the Buffalo needed to be turned to bring them to the Pound.

Everyone participated in the building of the Pound and the Drive Lines that would lead Brother Bison to it. The Pound was round, constructed of the heaviest materials found on the Plains: rocks, wood and rubble built to a height to contain the beasts. Two openings were left in the circle: one for the Buffalo to be led into the structure and a smaller one directly opposite. The latter would be closed with a loose wood frame, over which Buffalo flint hides were placed. A flint hide is one that has not been tanned, it makes a crinkly sound when brushed against, a sound that the short-sighted bison was attracted

About this story: *This story was sent to us by Region 2 Captain of the Hunt, Ken Simard, who also obtained permission for us to reprint it. The storyteller, Joy Asham, pointed out that this version of the hunt was passed on to her directly from Plains Cree Elders who lived at the time of the treaty signing in the west.*

“I am pleased to have you use this piece,” said Ms. Asham, “it is one of my favourites and it talks directly to the benefits we had historically living in a co-operative way, and how the Creator was acknowledged in everything we undertook.”

to but did not like, This opening was placed so that once the herd was captured, the Creator could enter and take His pick.

On the other side, the larger opening was actually the end of Drive Lines which often extended out up to 25 miles, wherever the herd lurked on the prairie. They were constructed out of various materials which formed a funnel shape between them, the largest opening being nearest the Buffalo, the small one leading into the Pound. Nearest the Pound the construction was strongest. The further out these funnel arms extended, the less heavily constructed they were as along the way they were personned with elders and the young, waiting on signal from the Poundmaker to set afire small piles of grasses.

This is why it was so important for the Poundmaker to accurately know the wind and weather. He calculated in which direction the smoke would range and how this would turn the Buffalo. His job was just beginning. He would prepare himself. He gave thanks to the Creator for the opportunity to help feed his village, he cleansed himself with smudging of Sacred Grasses, and he also donned a flint Buffalo hide.

Taking rattle and drum and song into the herd, the Poundmaker joined the Buffalo. He looked a but strange: he had two heads and rustling skin. Brother Buffalo would be drawn to him, yet keep their distance as he charmed them. He would dance

and rustle and lurch until all the herd would follow him, deep into the Drive Lines on the way to the Pound.

Every once in a while there might be a stray. To stop this Brother, the Poundmaker would signal to a drive line helper and grasses would begin to smudge the air and turn the Buffalo back in the right direction. Bit by bit the drive lines closed behind the animals as they entered into the pound.

The entry would then be closed and the Buffalo fell captive. They would not be killed as yet, as the Warriors had more work to do. They counted the animals and accounted for their size, figuring out their overall resources. Around the fire that night they would determine the distribution of the beasts: who was sick and old and needed the extra richness of organ meats? Who had to feed the most people? Who needed Buffalo robes for clothes or for their lodge? They determined all these things so that the Hunt would take care of all needs and that the meat distribution would be fair. There was only one person who was not considered in the division of the beasts. That was the Poundmaker. It was Honour enough for him to have led a successful hunt.

In the morning the herd would be counted again. The Old Ones tell me that the count was always missing one or two, as the Creator had entered through the Sacred Opening and taken His share.

Then the killing would begin. Even after the coming of the Winchester, buffalo in pounds were seldom killed with bullets. One didn’t particularly want a stampede of a zillion tons of meat running through the Pound. The lance and the arrow and sometimes the knife were used to put them down as speedily as possible, wishing them no harm or pain. Prayers of thanks would be given at this time: thanks to the Creator for the opportunity for the village to endure another year, and profound gratitude to the Great Buffalo herd. We Honour you for this great sacrifice.

The Poundmaker and the Warriors were almost done. It is my turn. Myself and the rest of the women take care of the butchering. We skin, butcher, cut up and haul the beasts to the distribution area. The families come and claim their share, again with much thanksgiving.

What of the Poundmaker? He has led an Honourable and successful hunt but how will he live? And then they come from their lodges, all of them. They bring him the steaks and roasts and the cuts of meat that they know he loves and needs. They express their Gratitude and Respect for him in this way, knowing that in the greatest Humility he would never ask.

I somehow think that this must have been a very good system: the workers determining the boss’s salary.

Joy Asham is a Cree storyteller and storyteller, cultural activist and regular columnist for the Thunder Bay Chronicle Journal. She can be reached through the Chronicle Journal or via email at joyasham@gmail.com.



Land, Water, People



Métis artist Christi Belcourt's solo exhibit:

Off The Map: Perspectives of Land, Water & Métis People

January 18th to March 1st, 2008,

Urban Shaman Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Maria Campbell and Joanne Arnott will be reading from their works at the opening.

This is Christi's first solo show outside of Ontario.

For more information please visit Christi's website:

www.christibelcourt.com

PORTRAIT OF STEVE POWLEY BY CHRISTI BELCOURT, 36" X 48"

Steve Powley (1948-2004) - Métis Hunter/Activist. Mr. Powley was a self-effacing individual who supported his family's needs by hunting. His decision to stand up against the MNR and the Government of Canada led to the first ever Supreme Court Decision recognizing the Métis right to hunt. Mr. Powley succumbed to health complications related to diabetes in February of 2004.