

MÉTIS VOYAGEUR

THE PUBLICATION OF THE MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO SINCE 1997

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



SEATED L TO R: MNO President, Tony Belcourt; MNO Chair, Gary Lipinski; Treaty 3 Grand Council Chief, Arnold Gardner; Chief Joseph Gilbert, Walpole Island.
STANDING L TO R: Grand Council Chief Denise Stonefish, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians; Ontario Regional Chief Angus Toulouse; MNR/OSAA Minister, David Ramsay; Premier Dalton McGuinty; Chief David General, Six Nations of Grand River; Nishenawbe Aski Nation Grand Council Chief, Stan Beardy.

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) pressed the need for a *Métis Consultation Policy*, a new approach to Aboriginal issues that would restore economic development programs and respect for the *MNO/MNR Harvesting Agreement* and an end to the era of charges by MNR against Métis citizens who are harvesting within the *4 point Agreement*. The MNO also pressed Ontario to enter into tripartite negotiations with the MNO and the federal government. ...



RED RIVER ROOTS

A TEACHER'S GENEALOGICAL DIGGING REVEALS A HIDDEN MÉTIS PAST

... PAGE 11

MÉTIS VETERANS

MÉTIS FOUGHT WITH LEGENDARY "VANDOOS" IN SOME OF THE LARGEST BATTLES OF WWII

... PAGE 9

MÉTIS IN ONTARIO

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

Thunder Bay Métis Council gearing up for 2007 AGA



BY CAMERON BURGESS

It's been three years already, and the new council and Region 2 look forward to hosting this year's Annual General Assembly (AGA).

Not only are we excited, but so too is the City of Thunder Bay; the mayor, councillors and staff have advised us that they will help us in any way they can.

The venue is Chippewa Park, same location as 2004. If you have any suggestions to help make this a successful event please contact me. Watch for more on the AGA in the next issue of *Métis Voyageur*. MORE T-BAY COUNCIL ON PAGE 3...



The Thunder Bay Métis Council raises the blue infinity flag on Louis Riel Day last November at Thunder Bay City Hall.

MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO HEALTH CAREERS SUPPORT PROGRAM

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



Heartbreak and Joy

BY DARLENE MCISAAC

OBITUARY:

It was with deep sorrow that we lost one of our dear precious family members. My heart was stretched beyond my wildest dreams. Before we had a chance to announce her birth, one of my granddaughters was taken from us.

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

Elisha was a precious gift to our family even though her presence with us was short. She taught us all how intensely we could love in a very short time. We are grateful to the Creator for sharing this tiny, but powerful, spirit with us. Her presence and lessons will never be forgotten.

Miigwetch for all the strength and support that was and still is being given to each one of us during this heartbreaking time.

NEW ARRIVAL:

I would like to announce to the world the birth of another new granddaughter. The Creator always balances our lives. We only need to be patient until the joy-filled gifts come.

Abigail Ann Wright, aka Blue Flower Petal, was born to my son Darrin Bruneau and his partner Julie Wright, on the beautiful morning of December 19th, 2006.

This precious girl weighted in at 7 pounds 11 ounces and was born at 11:07 am. Can you imagine how lucky she will be with numbers like that?

Abby is a much loved and welcome addition to our family. She has a large extended family eagerly waiting to meet her.

Chii Miigwetch.

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

THE MÉTIS VOYAGEUR

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VOYAGEUR DEADLINES

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

MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO
TRAINING INITIATIVES BRANCH

Seeking Métis interested candidates for Committees across Ontario

REGIONAL APPROVAL COMMITTEES (RAC)

are responsible for reviewing and recommending training and employment funding requests.

TIME COMMITMENT: Although requests are made throughout the year, reviews can be completed via fax and /or email. The number of requests varies depending on client case load and budget availability.

EXPENSE: Costs associated with review and recommendation of requests are covered by MNO. Applicant must be Métis. An understanding of labour market issues and employment and training services is an asset.

MÉTIS AWARDS COMMITTEE (MAC)

are responsible for reviewing and recommending Métis bursary applications.

TIME COMMITMENT: Reviews are typically done once each year and can be completed via fax and/or face-to-face review sessions.

EXPENSE: Costs associated with review and recommendation of requests are covered by MNO. Applicant must be Métis. An understanding of post-secondary programs is an asset.

These committees play a crucial role in the delivery of programs and services to Métis people across Ontario. If interested please forward your resume to jen-nifers@metisnation.org or via fax at 613-722-4225



Baby!

Congratulations go out to the MNO's own Katelin Peltier and her husband Alex. They welcomed 8lbs. 6oz. **Sladen Peltier** to the world on December 26th, 2006.

Bonne Fête

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

— From Your Family

Anniversary

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

KENORA: New health resouces

Recently, Kenora Métis Health Services was the recipient of a nearly new blood pressure monitor. The machine had been used in a province-wide cardiovascular health awareness program. As the program began to wind down, the monitors, valued at about \$1500, were donated to various community organizations. Brenda Poliués (Healthy Babies, Healthy Children) and Martin Camire (IRC) were pleased to receive the first machine given out.

VOYAGEUR READER POETRY:

Oh Creator

We pray for comfort on weary days,
Smiles to keep sadness at bay,
Laughter to brighten our paths,
Love to kiss worries away,

Gentle hugs to warm our hearts,
Life long friendships to cherish & share,
Confidence courage and faith.
May we always know you are there?

The sunshine of Father Sun,
Abundance from Mother Earth,
Confidence, courage and faith
To help us know what we're worth.

Sunsets in shades of wonder,
A harvest moon so bright and clear,
The rainbows to splatter our pallet
That follow the storms far and near.

For these we are truly grateful,
Creator, for all that you give.
Please forgive us all of our short comings
And watch over us as long as we live.

Megwetch, Oh Creator.

by Senator Doris Lanigan
Read more about Doris on page 11



BURSARY AWARDS

for Métis Students

Financial assistance is available to post-secondary Métis students through the Métis Nation of Ontario Bursary Program

1-800-263-4889 or www.metisnation.org

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THUNDER BAY MÉTIS COUNCIL:



Brenda Powley, Tim Pile and Kim Powley at the Thunder Bay Métis Council Christmas party.

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

BY CAMERON BURGESS

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

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

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

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



T-Bay staff: (front, left to right) Nancy Thompson, Ashley Moreau, Diane Kowalski, Barb Hartman, Paul Kytayko. (back, left to right) John Falvo, Cam Burgess, Terry DeSaulniers and Tim Pile.

Kim and Rod Powley. A good time was had by all.

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

cil and our nation.

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

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

AGA HISTORY:

MNO's musical gift keeps on giving

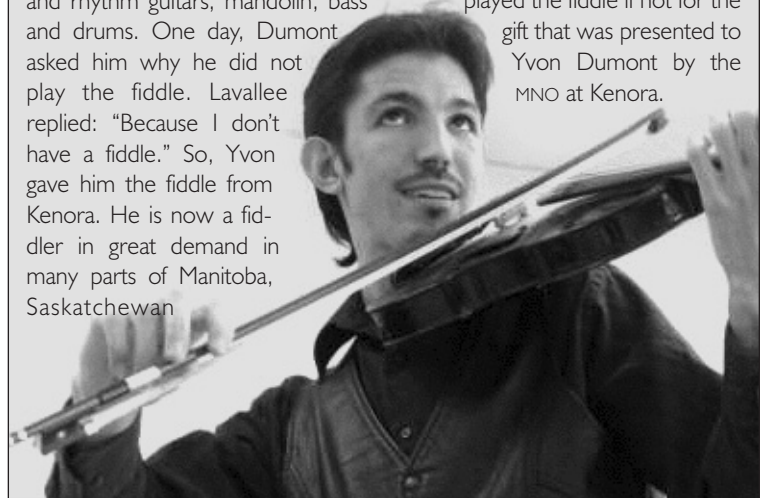
In 2002, at the AGA held in Kenora, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) gave Yvon Dumont a fiddle. As President Tony Belcourt said, "It's fun to see how some little thing that is done along the way becomes legendary." Who could have guessed where that fiddle would lead?

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

and north western Ontario.

In 2006, Lavallee and his Free-bird Band produced an album: *Jimmy's Breakdown*, featuring 11 tracks produced by Tom Dutiaume. The album was recorded at the Métis Club of Winnipeg Recording Studio, engineered by Yvon Dumont and mixed by Tom Dutiaume and Wally Ranville. Lavallee composed two of the tracks.

J.J. Lavallee might never have played the fiddle if not for the gift that was presented to Yvon Dumont by the MNO at Kenora.



CHIPPEWA PARK - THUNDER BAY - JULY 9th TO JULY 13th, 2007

THE MNO'S 14th ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

For more news on the AGA watch upcoming issues of the *Métis Voyageur* and the MNO website: www.metisnation.org

Two brothers keep a promise made 23 years ago



Constable James Ramsay receives a Certificate of Achievement Award from Alison Fisher, Executive Director Wabano Centre Ottawa; his proud mother Louise Logue, Coordinator Youth Intervention and Diversion, Ottawa Police Service, and Deputy Chief Sue O'Sullivan of the Ottawa Police Service.

A Promise Kept

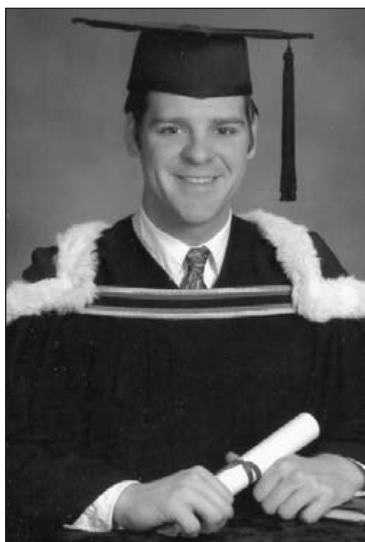
BY LOUISE LOGUE

John Charles Logue Ramsay and his younger brother James made a promise to their single mother 23 years ago. They both promised to be strong, to work as a team, to be there for each other and to do something positive with their lives.

Despite the hardships and challenges of surviving life in a single-parent family, they toiled and sacrificed to reach their goals. As young as they were back then, they showed that they understood the value of keeping a promise.

As they made their way through elementary school, they were often reminded by irresponsible adults that they were from a "broken family", and that their hopes for a productive future were bleak and certainly not as promising as for those who had two parents.

Fuelled by their commitment to their family, John and James



John Ramsay graduated from McGill University in 2006

applied themselves at school. They engaged in sports, and they volunteered. They made many friends as they went on to high school. They developed a positive name for themselves in their community, as two brothers who cared. They rejected negative comments made about their

potential, and opted to stay focussed on 'making it'.

Eventually, James left Ottawa to play hockey with the Plymouth Whalers of the Ontario Hockey League, but he returned to Ottawa and was sworn in as a Constable with the Ottawa Police Service in 2005.

John left Ottawa to attend University. In 2006 he graduated with two degrees in law from the Law Faculty of McGill University. He had already obtained a history degree (Honours) from Guelph University.

THANKS MNO!

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

MÉTIS NEWS

ONTARIO TOWN ELECTS MÉTIS MAYOR

BY BERNARD LEROUX

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

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

In our recent municipal elections, Larry O'Connor ran against several other worthy candidates for the mayor's seat in Cannington (Brock Township, Durham Region) and won by a solid margin! I met Larry



Larry O'Connor is the new Mayor of Cannington, ON.

many years ago when I moved to this community from Toronto. The first time I encountered any problems with local municipal services, someone told me to call Larry. When I did, I got a quick response and fast action followed to address my concerns. Larry O'Connor gained my trust and respect very early on—long before I discovered he was a Métis citizen—so you can imagine how thrilled I was to see Larry walk into one of our first Oshawa Métis Council meetings over a year ago.

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

Congratulations to Larry and to all Métis folks who step up to public life in their communities!

Bernard Leroux is a Métis living in Cannington, ON.

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

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Author bursts on to Abo-lit scene with *Red Rooms*

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

—Linda Lord

BOOK REVIEW:

RED ROOMS
by Cherie Dimaline
2007, Theytus Books

When I return home from a trip to the big city, the first thing I do is take a bath. *Red Rooms* gave me the same feeling. The grime and grit of the nameless city in which this first novel is set flakes off the pages. Named or not, it is Toronto—the big

smoke—and it is a major character.

Ostensibly set in an anonymous beige hotel, the book is comprised of a series of loosely linked stories held together by a frayed red thread of Aboriginal blood. The significant characters are either Métis or First Nations' people who, for various reasons have washed into the big city on a tide of anonymity.

Each chapter could be a stand alone story set in a different room of the hotel and is, to some



CHERIE DIMALINE

Lost in the "beigeness" of the hotel where she works, she observes the other brown skinned people who occasionally

degree, seen through the eyes of 'the maid'. She is just another Indian who earns her way by cleaning toilets, changing beds and pushing a vacuum cleaner.

stay there.

Every character is in some way looking for, or looking at, what makes him or her Native. Every voice is different, and the same. Every one of them could be you or me. This is neither a "feel good" book nor is it a book without hope.

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

MÉTIS COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS:



Some scenes from the Oshawa Métis Council's Holiday Celebration on December 30th, 2006. (top left) Oshawa Métis Council President Rob Pilon surprised by birthday cake. (top middle) Oshawa Métis Council Women's Representative Claire Kearns. (top right) Cecile Wagar dancing with a tiny friend.

MERRY MÉTIS CELEBRATION

BY ART HENRY

The Oshawa Métis Council held their 2nd Annual Holiday Gathering on December 30th, 2006, in Oshawa. The annual event included a potluck dinner and dance, which

was attended by 60 people. The food was exceptionally good, with all different types of dishes made from secret home recipes. After the meal, an announcement was made, and a cake was brought out to celebrate President Rob Pilon's 50th birthday. Boy was he surprised!

We then warmed up our dancing legs with a little bit of traditional Métis dancing, with Rob showing us the proper moves to these dances. To help us cool down a little, our new Women's Representative, Claire Kearns, took the stage and told us some old native legends,

which really caught the attention of the young ones in attendance—especially when Claire and her sister, Councilor Cecile Wagar, started playing with their wooden dancing men. The dance continued on into the evening. Thanks to all who attended

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

Art Henry is Vice-President of the Oshawa Métis Council.



Métis Holiday Celebration brings Spirit of Christmas to Brampton

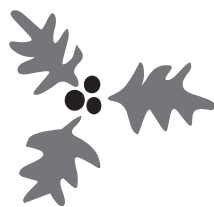
BY SIOBHAN MINTY

On Sunday December 3rd, 2006, citizens from around the Brampton Peel Region, as well as other parts of the Greater Toronto Area, gathered to celebrate their Métis cultural heritage and share some holiday cheer. The event took place in a large community room, *Upstairs at Fortinos*, and was decorated with Christmas goodies. Sharon McBride, the MNO Pro-

visional Councillor (PCMNO) for Region 8, taught participants how to make traditional crafts and brought in a display to educate individuals on Métis culture. According to the PCMNO, "it was the most successful event that

Region 8 has had," with MNO staff from the Toronto and Brampton offices showcasing their native drumming along with other entertainment. The Métis Holiday Celebration was hosted by Brampton AHWS. Due to the event's great success, similar gatherings will be considered for future holiday seasons.

Siobhan Minty is the MNO's AHWS Coordinator in Brampton. She can be reached by phone at 905-454-8951 or via email at siobhanm@metisnation.org.



Métis Martial artist on APTN

BY GEORGE LEPINE

Tanshi everyone! I just wanted to let you know that the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto's Martial Arts Program was recently featured on APTN National Prime-time News. This news program is available on APTN's website (streaming section). To get to the Martial Arts Feature on their website, move the "seek" key (in the video clip box) to 28:23 minutes into the program, the show will re-buffer, and this is where the TaeKwonDo special is: www.aptn.ca/streaming/index.php?wmv=thursday/six

George J. Lèpine is a 6th Dan Black Belt in Taekwondo. He is the President of the Board of the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto (16 Spadina Rd.). He can be reached by email at lepineg@tc.gc.ca.

Region 8 (Toronto):

Christmas Hamper Success!

The Toronto Regional office would like to thank the following people for their generous donation towards Christmas hampers this year. Because of you we were able to help many families through the holidays.

- Sharon & Art Stevens
- Ken & Marg Doughty
- June & Steve Johnson
- Joseph Kendalo
- Robert Pilon
- Long Term Care-Toronto
- Chris Ferris
- Métis Women's Gathering of Oshawa & Durham
- Dianna Therrian
- Rita & George Faulkner
- Michelle Willis
- Zaid Al-Bargash
- Shelley Gonneville
- Theresa Hendricks
- Jo MacQuarrie
- Bobby Burns
- Fred Foley
- Kelly Schonberger
- Ron Johnson

Aboriginal News you may have missed...



Aboriginal peoples, 10 years after the royal commission

TORONTO, ON - Ten years ago the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples released its mammoth five-volume report on the health, education and political status of Canada's Indians, Inuit and Métis. After five years of study—the inquiry was created in the aftermath of the Oka Crisis of 1990—the royal commission concluded that a sweeping change had to be made in the relationship between Aboriginal and Canadian governments. It also set out a detailed plan “to close the economic gap between Aboriginal peoples and non-aboriginal peoples by 50 per cent and improve social conditions in the next 20 years.” Halfway through that 20-year goal, the government has been assigned a failing grade by Canada's Assembly of First Nations.

Many Aboriginal people do well in Canada's cities

WINNIPEG, MB - Almost half of Canada's First Nations and Métis people now live in cities. For a number of reasons, some right, some wrong, most of the dialogue on their urban experience has focussed on the negatives. Two points in particular seem to surface frequently. First, is the notion that aboriginals are now living in isolated, poor neighbourhoods that are devoid of other ethnic groups. Second, is the idea that First Nations and Métis peoples' culture may not be adaptable to life in modern cities. Both of these arguments are based on spurious evidence. In a study done for the Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP), the aboriginal populations of Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg were examined to see if they lived in isolated, poor neighbourhoods and whether they lost touch with their cultures when they moved to cities.



The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business is pleased to offer its members and supporters this digest of news, events and opportunities in and about the Aboriginal community.

A BLUE-EYED MÉTIS WOMAN'S GENEALOGICAL JOURNEY:

Journey into the Past in search of Métis Roots

BY ALIS (PLANTE) KENNEDY

MY JOURNEY STARTED about 10 years ago, when I was first attracted and intrigued with “Indian” matters. I remember that I was told, “you are one of us”; I was quite surprised and asked how that could possibly be.

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

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

Once I knew my test results, I then considered myself Métis but wanted the further connection of



Alis Kennedy proudly receives her MNO Citizenship Card from President Tony Belcourt last November.

belonging to a Métis community. Since the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is a member of the Métis National Council of Canada (MNC), which is recognized nationally by the federal government and internationally by the United Nations as representing the Métis Nation in Canada, I thought that the MNO was the nation that I wanted to belong to. Thinking that my genealogy search included enough information, I submitted my “dossier” to the MNO.

Coincidentally, I mailed it on November 16, 2004, Louis Riel Day. However, I was disappointed when I was not accepted with my first submission. My lineage to my Métis ancestry was incomplete. Therefore, more intensive research was required, but this time I consulted a genealogist who specialises in Métis ancestry.

It took another 18 months to complete this deeper research. Because my “White” family originated in La Belle Province or France, one of the first and best approaches in starting this search, was to peruse different dictionaries, such as the “Dictionnaire National des Canadiens-Français” by l'institut généalogique Drouin, amongst many others.

During her investigation Lyse—the genealogist—discovered that I am related through my mother to Pierre Esprit Radisson (his father and sister are my

direct ascendants). Apparently he did not sire any children. Pierre and his father share the same name and many people believe that the famous coureur des bois is their direct ascendant, which, according to the search, is not the case and often creates some confusion.

My great great grandfather, Jean Plante, married Marin Boucher's eldest daughter, Françoise. Lyse also discovered that my mother is a direct descendant of Gaspard (Marin's brother) and Pierre Boucher, making us cousins of Louis Riel (12 times over!). What a great honour and surprise to be related to this man, but still no connection to my Métis ancestry was rooted out. I was discouraged.

I was losing hope of receiving my citizenship card from the MNO, when, last summer, I met a wonderful lady named Reta Gordon. She encouraged me to continue my quest. Following her advice, I called Lyse; she was willing to invest more time in my search. This resulted in an exciting telephone call a few weeks later when Lyse called to inform me that she had found my direct Métis link and, as a bonus, she had also discovered that at least two of my ascendants were voyageurs—on my father's side. However, at this point, we hit a snag: I was not able to officially connect my father to his father, which was very frustrating




My lineage to my Métis ancestry was incomplete. More intensive research was required, but this time I consulted a genealogist who specialises in Métis ancestry. It took another 18 months to complete this deeper research.



because, with this exception, all my ancestors were legitimately linked to my Métis roots. After more investigation and perseverance, I was finally able to formally link my father to my grandfather. These exciting documents were then submitted to the MNO.

Precisely two years after my first application, I proudly received my citizenship card from President Tony Belcourt on November 16, 2006! This picture was taken by MNOCC Development Officer, Bonny Cann, at the Ontario Legislature after a wonderful traditional feast. What an honour and pleasure it was to receive my MNO card on November 16th—the day we honour one of my relatives!

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




Anishnabe Education and Training Circle

For additional information on Aboriginal Programming and Student Services contact:

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Tel: (705) 728-1968 Fax: (705) 722-1527
Native Community Liaison, Ext 1317
e-mail: bcharles@georgianc.on.ca
www.georgianc.on.ca/aboriginal

- Aboriginal Student Advisor
- Visiting Elder Program
- Niwijiagen Peer Mentor Program
- AETC Resource Centres at Barrie, Orillia and Owen Sound campuses
- Native Community Liaison
- Shki-Miikan Foundation Year (New Road)
- Native Education: Community & Social Development Co-op Diploma Program



MÉTIS HERITAGE:



PHOTO COURTESY: Wm. Holmes

SEARCHING FOR THE SILVER FOX

A Fur Trade Family History

BY VIRGINIA (PARKER) BARTER

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

The family photograph was taken in 1899 in Fort George, when my great-grandfather, Miles Spencer, retired from the HBC. He brought his family down to Southampton, a small town on the shore of Lake Huron in southern Ontario and that’s where I got to know all those wonderful great aunts and uncles. Unbeknownst to

me, or to my Cree relatives, Miles did not come from Scotland as we thought, nor England. He was in fact born in Fort George and was part Cree.

The native connections didn’t stop in James Bay. My journey continued to Manitoba, revealing a vast interconnection of mixed blood Aboriginal/European families, English and French-speaking that spread across the continent from Labrador to Oregon and beyond. It’s a story of a lost and rediscovered native heritage spanning three centuries of fur trade history. Like a silver fox, the knowledge of history and family are often just as rare and elusive. My story is a glimpse into that process of illumination and how each discovery spawned yet another, taking me in directions that I never would have dreamt.

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

source of rich and colourful tales of the family, which soon directed my interest to a new source of Métis heritage—the Labrador Inuit.

My family’s fur trade connections go back even further in Manitoba with Miles Spencer’s father, John Spencer, an Englishman, and his Métis wife, Ann Sinclair. Ann came from another famous fur trade family, that of William Sinclair and “Nahoway”, or Margaret Norton. Much is written in the history books about John Spencer’s early years with the HBC, particularly his role as first sheriff of the Red River Settlement and his involvement in the pemmican conflicts of 1814-1818. However, little is written about his HBC service later on in Ungava. Ann and John’s relationship proved to be a long and enduring one, but not without hardship and prejudice, and out and out punishment on the part of Governor George Simpson. The pressure on HBC officers to take European wives was great indeed and regardless of any pre-existing “country marriage”, refusal to comply with the governor’s edict brought severe consequences of demotion and often banishment to far flung regions of the fur trade empire.

What began to emerge for me was a story of a man and a woman determined to stay together in their “marriage of the country”. They had 11 children, all of whom I have been able to document with some very unexpected and surprising sources. There were, in fact, five Spencer sons employed with

(above):

The Spencer Family in 1899 in Fort George, James Bay (northern Quebec) when Miles Spencer retired from a lifetime of service with the Hudson’s Bay Company. Back row: **Walter John Spencer; Edna Spencer; Stella Spencer; Rev. Wm. G. Walton; Winnie Spencer.** Front row: **Chrissie Spencer; Lillian Spencer; Miles Spencer, (holding Grace Walton); Cameron “Ronie” Spencer; Edith (McLaren) Spencer; Daisy Alice (Spencer) Walton, (holding John Ruskin Walton).**

Note: Missing from this picture is Emily (Spencer) Johnstone, the eldest Spencer daughter, who continued to live in Fort George. The Waltons also remained in Fort George until 1924.

the HBC, thus offering an interesting, though somewhat scattered paper trail to follow. Together with their Sinclair and McLaren cousins, their prodigious travels took them to all corners of the HBC domain.

Today there is a great deal of controversy as to who qualifies as a Métis, but as my family history demonstrates, these children of the fur trade did not know the national and provincial boundaries that exist today. They spread far beyond the original bounds of Rupert’s Land—the lands drained by the rivers running into Hudson Bay. They spread beyond the Red River Settlement into the northern states, west of the Rocky Mountains to the Columbia, south to Hawaii, and east to Quebec and Labrador, and Upper Canada as well.

Most important though, my search has shown me how these early fur trade Aboriginal/European alliances became the very foundation of Canadian society, and forged a social conscience and experience distinct from our American cousins. It is that spirit of co-operation and commitment to family that made us a great nation. No matter how we choose to define ourselves—Native, non-native, mixed blood, or Métis—regardless of where or how we live, it is my hope that all Canadians will celebrate this wonderful heritage.

Searching for the Silver Fox: A Fur Trade Family History is due to be published February, 2007, as part of an anthology, *The Long Journey of a Forgotten People: Métis Identities and Family Histories*, Wilfrid Laurier University Press.



Fourteen outstanding achievers received 2007 Aboriginal Achievement Awards this year. They included the CEO of Canada's winning 2010 Olympic bid, the producer of one of Canada's longest-running TV series, a world-class diver and 11 other First Nations, Métis, and Inuit role models who converted their potential into success.

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

"We invite all Canadians to join us in recognizing these outstanding persons who have con-

tributed so much to Canada and the world." The awards were presented at a gala event in Edmonton in March and televised on both Global and APTN. Adam Beach, most recently seen in *Flags of Our Fathers*, hosted the awards, while Jennifer Podemski, prominent producer, actor and writer was the creative producer. Juno award winners, Gemini-nominated actors, and a slate of talent that reads like the who's who of Aboriginal Canadian entertainers honoured the recipients with performances at the Awards on March 16, 2007, in Edmonton at the Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium.

14 INSPIRING ACHIEVERS

2007 NATIONAL ABORIGINAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS:



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



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



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



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



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



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT
Bertha Clark Jones
Clark Jones always spoke out for the underdog and moved women's rights forward by strides when she founded the "Alberta Native Women's Voices" in the late 1960s. That organization blossomed to become the Native Women's Association of Canada, a powerful voice for Native women.



CULTURE & SPIRITUALITY
Alestine Andre
A heritage researcher for her community, she successfully combines her gift of Gwich'in traditional knowledge with that of western science.



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



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



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



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



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



LAW & JUSTICE
Hugh Braker
Braker is the first Nu Cha Nulth lawyer in the country. He has been the Director of Self Government for the Assembly of First Nations, and is renowned for his work on Aboriginal child welfare law and protecting Aboriginal children.



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

MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO HEALTH CAREERS SUPPORT PROGRAM

Building a Métis Healthcare Workforce in Ontario

MÉTIS HEALTH CAREERS

TRAINING SUPPORT

The training and support program assists and encourages Métis students to gain the necessary prerequisites to enter into health careers.

MÉTIS HEALTH CAREERS

SCHOLARSHIPS & BURSARIES

The bursary program helps Métis students who have demonstrated need for assistance to complete their program. Bursary amounts are based on financial need and availability of program funds.

MÉTIS HEALTH CAREERS

CONTINUING EDUCATION

The continuing education award helps Métis health professionals who provide services to Métis people in Ontario to enhance their education.



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the Métis Nation of Ontario



Santé Canada Health Canada

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

NOTES FROM THE MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO REGISTRY:

Métis by the Numbers

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

BY KAROLE DUMONT-BECKETT

It is with great pleasure that I report to our citizens and their families that the Registry team met the goals set out at the beginning of 2006.

Most of the harvesters' certificates expiring on August 31st have been renewed. The application intake was higher than expected but all applications received before December 2006 were assessed. A little less than half were approved while the remainder is expected to be completed this year. Fortunately, new employees joined the registry to meet this challenge! During the last twelve months we:

- Processed 1,212 new applications for citizenship
- Assessed another 800 pre-2006 pending applications
- Made and sent 1,067 new citizenship cards
- Made a little over 500 replacement citizenship cards
- Assessed and processed 986 applications for harvest (new and renewals)
- Made and sent 943 new harvesters' certificates
- Answered almost 9,000 telephone calls
- Placed over 5,000 telephone calls to applicants

MNO HARVESTERS

by Region of residence

Harvesters in Region 1	191
Harvesters in Region 2	39
Harvesters in Region 3	121
Harvesters in Region 4	89
Harvesters in Region 5	297
Harvesters in Region 6	17
Harvesters in Region 7	151
Harvesters in Region 8	16
Harvesters in Region 9	22

TOTAL 943

- Sent well over 4,000 letters
- Verified hundreds of applicants for Training Initiatives
- Responded to thousands of emails

The MNO Registry was fortunate to have four summer students to help prepare files for digitization. During their few months with us they:

- Cleaned up well over 1,500 harvest files
- Cleaned up citizens' files from letter A to E
- Revised the database entries for all these files
- Assisted with putting well over 4,000 files in order

New File Assessment Process

A new, streamlined file assessment process was introduced last

year, which allowed us to surpass the projected 900 new approvals. This new process consists of three phases.

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

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

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

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

Karole Dumont-Beckett is the MNO Director of Registry.

2006 MNO CITIZENSHIP STATISTICS

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

MNO CITIZENSHIP APPLICATIONS by Region

	RECEIVED	PENDING	APPROVED	WOMEN	MEN
Applications Reg 1	1,869	411	1,458	662	796
Applications Reg 2	1,065	297	768	350	418
Applications Reg 3	1,293	367	926	412	514
Applications Reg 4	1,036	283	753	353	400
Applications Reg 5	2,581	757	1,824	775	1,049
Applications Reg 6	1,545	553	992	459	533
Applications Reg 7	3,588	611	2,977	1,427	1,550
Applications Reg 8	1,578	454	1,124	557	567
Applications Reg 9	2,056	772	1,284	657	627
Misc (incl. dormant files)	573	340	233	72	161
TOTAL Apps 1994-2006:	17,184	4,845	12,339	5,724	6,615

MÉTIS VETERANS | REMEMBERING THEIR SERVICE AND THEIR SACRIFICE

Métis infantryman fought in some of largest battles of WWII

BY LINDA LORD

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

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

Oscar's son fought in Vietnam as a marine, and then joined the medical corps. Sick of the slaughter, his son decided to patch holes rather than make them, Oscar says.

There were "terrible battles" Oscar recalls, mentioning the Monte Cassino campaign as one. The First Canadian Division (of which the Vandoos were a part), the English 8th Army (General

Montgomery's Desert Rats), and the First Polish Division fought for months (4 January - 19 May, 1944) against a heavily entrenched German army. Day in and day out, back and forth, thousands and thousands died for that monastery on top of a hill. "It was a lot of loneliness, a lot of heartbreak," says Oscar. "Believe you me, there's no glory in it. I was bloody scared most of the time."

The Battle of Monte Cassino (also known as the Battle for Rome and the Battle for Cassino) was a costly series of four battles in World War II, fought by the Allies with the intention of breaking through the Winter Line and seizing Rome. The Gustav Line was anchored by Germans holding the Rapido, Liri and Garigliano valleys and certain surrounding peaks and ridges, but not the historic abbey of Monte Cassino, founded in 524 AD by St. Benedict, although they manned defensive positions set into the steep slopes below the abbey walls. On February 15 the monastery, high on a peak overlooking the town of Cassino, was destroyed by American B-17 and

“It was a lot of loneliness, a lot of heartbreak ... Believe you me, there's no glory in it. I was bloody scared most of the time.”

B-26 bombers. Two days after the bombing, crack German paratroopers poured into the ruins to defend it. From January 12 to May 18, it was assaulted four times by Allied troops, for a loss of over 54,000 Allied and 20,000 German soldiers. (Wikipedia)

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

"You get a cold feeling, and you get scared. Any man who says he wasn't scared is either a fool or a liar. The funniest feeling is when you take a life yourself," Oscar says, "and you know you



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

killed him, and that he was alive a few minutes before. You felt sorry for him, but then you'd meet the arrogant ones, the officers who spat on our uniforms when they were taken prisoner—and we proud as hell of our uniforms."

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

there, but I wondered why so many died. I had to take the dog tags off a lot of bodies. I didn't even look at the names; you just do it, fast and furious."

Oscar used to write letters to his mother telling of sitting under a palm tree and sipping lemonade—just so she wouldn't worry. But the mothers still worried and the soldiers still died.

•••

OUR STORIES: Senator recalls her Catholic School days:

“Proud to say I am one”

BY SENATOR DORIS LANIGAN



Senator Doris Lanigan
at the 2006 MNO AGA
in Sault Ste Marie.

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

I am the third born of eight siblings. My father, John, was a jack-of-all-trades and worked at seasonal jobs such as commercial fishing, logging and trapping. My mother, Loretta, looked after the children and sometimes went out to the bush and worked with him cooking in the camps or cleaning the fish when he was doing commercial fishing. My father was of Irish descent and a renowned storyteller; my mother was the kindest woman I have ever known. She was also religious and had a gift with people and animals. She could literally charm the birds out of the trees and bring the deer out of the wilderness to spend the harsh cold winters in our barn.

I was born at my grandparents' farm in Bodmin, Saskatchewan—

delivered by my father and the Ambassador to China, Dr Heftness. I was the first baby born to our family after my father's return from World War II. I believe this was a key factor in my popularity with my family.

My grandmother, Mary Gagnon, was a Métis and my grandfather, Edmond Gagnon, was a French farmer, trapper and musician. My grandmother was the wisest woman I have ever known, creative, caring and proud. She took me on her knee before I went to school and told me how much she loved me. She told me that things were different in the white man's school and that they would not love me the way my family loved me at home.

“They will call you ‘half-breed’ and other bad names,” she said. She told me: “Do not to listen to them. Do not let them poison your heart and your mind. You are smart and brave; you have courage to rise above all these things.”

I have always remembered my grandmother's wise words and I have always loved her. At school, I

Where I Come From

On the banks of the Red River
Indians by the score
Hearts beating out a song
To the drums of a distant shore.

With hopes and dreams of a better life
Sickness and hunger cease,
A place to hunt with bow and knife
A place to live in peace.

They were given numbers and new names,
A few blankets and some food.
They journeyed proud, there was no shame,
To Batoche, the place was good.

Indian maid and trader mixed
Beneath the land of sky.
The children came to fill the need
Black hair dark eyed and shy.

They joined the fight for human rights
They supported Riel's cause,
Fought with courage day and night
Sometimes without a pause.

And even though Riel was hanged,
His victories go on.
These are the people I come from,
I'm proud to say I'm one.

—Doris Lanigan

excelled in my school work. I was the top athlete of our school and the records in track and field that I achieved have not been broken to this day.

In grade 8, I won a writing competition. The topic was “vocations” and I wrote on becoming a priest. There was an award for the best girl's composition and an award for the best boy's composition. When it came time to receive my award the judges of the competition were very surprised that I was not a boy, as I had written on how to become a priest. They said I had deliberately tried to deceive them, which was the farthest thing from my mind. The Mother Superior was very angry with them and came to my rescue like Michael the Archangel. She informed them that women could write on any topic and write well—just as well as any man. So I received my award and there was great celebration at the convent.

Secretly, I still think that a woman could make a very fine priest.

Doris Lanigan is an MNO Senator living in Region 9.

New MNO Diabetes Prevention Coordinator in Thunder Bay office:

Healthy habits can beat diabetes



BY ARLENE LEHTO

Booshoo! My name is Arlene Lehto and I have recently been hired as the Diabetes Prevention Coordinator at the Thunder Bay Métis Council.

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

Bottomline: Diabetes is running rampant in our communities and affecting our children, youth, adults and elders. Many other diseases—including but not limited to, kidney, liver, heart,

eye, foot ulcers and diabetic neuropathy—are a result of diabetes. As the disease progresses the pain and complications worsen. Sadly, some of our citizens who were once active in the community have become stuck at home feeling isolated, lonely, scared, helpless and depressed.

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

I am in the process of developing links and partnerships with local schools, Aboriginal organizations, clinics and health professionals. I have also contacted some of our community Elders afflicted with diabetes who are interested in sharing their struggles, tribulations and the lessons

they have learned. Their stories are sure to empower our younger generations to stay healthy—physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally.

My colleague, Ashley Moreau, Community Sport Leader, and I have teamed up and in the near future we will be offering jigging lessons at one of our local elementary schools with a high Aboriginal population. We will also be



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

offering skating lessons and after school physical activities, including basketball and floor hockey.

It is my intention to offer workshops, support groups, diabetes community kitchens, circles, one on one sessions and walking groups. Requests have been made regarding a diabetes prevention program for employ-

ees from various organizations and workplaces in the community. As a result of these requests, I am in the process of developing an interactive program for our front line workers, “Preventing Diabetes at Work.” This program will focus on healthy nutrition, education and exercise.

On a personal note: I have been happily married for 17 years and have four healthy and happy

This afforded me the chance to meet many gifted people, workers, community members and Senators who shared their wisdom, skills and valuable life teachings along the way. I am an active volunteer for the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and I enjoy volunteering at the grassroots level, hosting healing circles, drum circles, empowerment workshops, pallia-

tive and elder care.

If you are interested in guest speaking, sharing resources and information or joining our Diabetes Prevention Program please contact me and I will be sure to get back to you.

Arlene can be contacted via email: arlenel@metisnation.org.

Programs offered to youth-at-risk for substance abuse

BY ERNIE MATTON

The *Catch a Fish Not a Buzz* program for youths is currently accepting referrals. Finally, after all the years of work the youth centre doors are open. Councillor, Ernie Matton thanks everyone who has supported the project over the years.

The *Catch a Fish* mandate is to facilitate rehabilitation; create a safe and confidential environment in which to explore issues; provide and develop coping and

problem solving skills, moving towards a new healthier lifestyle.

A variety of culturally sensitive programs have been created by blending mainstream information with Aboriginal teachings to help the process of reintegration into the family, community and education system.

Substance use/misuse/abuse; misplaced anger; conflicts, and other unresolved issues are present in today's society. If left unresolved or mismanaged such



behaviour can result in negative consequences. Most young people have experimented with alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, over the counter and prescription medications, risk-taking negative behaviour, gambling, sex, as well as anorexia and bulimia.

The lack of effective education, prevention, intervention, rehabilitation and wellness programs has been a major concern for youth, parents, educators, public health agencies, police, churches, and the community.

To meet the needs of young people and their families from diverse backgrounds including, but not restricted to Aboriginal, Métis and Francophone, the *Catch a Fish* program for youths is currently offering the following

educational programs:

1. Anger Release
2. Building Healthy Relationships
3. Understanding Co-dependency
4. The Process of Grieving
5. Setting Healthy Boundaries
6. Aftercare & Relapse Prevention
7. E.F.T.

For more information concerning cost and available dates please call. 705-526-4600. Seating is limited. Or check our website: www.catchafishnotabuzz.com.

OUR STORIES:

Red River Roots

BY KRISTY CAMERON

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



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

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

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

John married Christiana (Christy) McBeath (born Oct 12, 1836, daughter of Hon. Robert McBeath and Mary McLean) on April 10, 1862, in Kildonan, RRS. That same year, Rev. James Nisbet arrived in the settlement to assist the Presbyterian minister, Rev. John Black. Two years later, James Nisbet married Christy McBeath's sister, Mary. James Nisbet accepted the opportunity to found a 'mission to the Indians' in the Northwest.

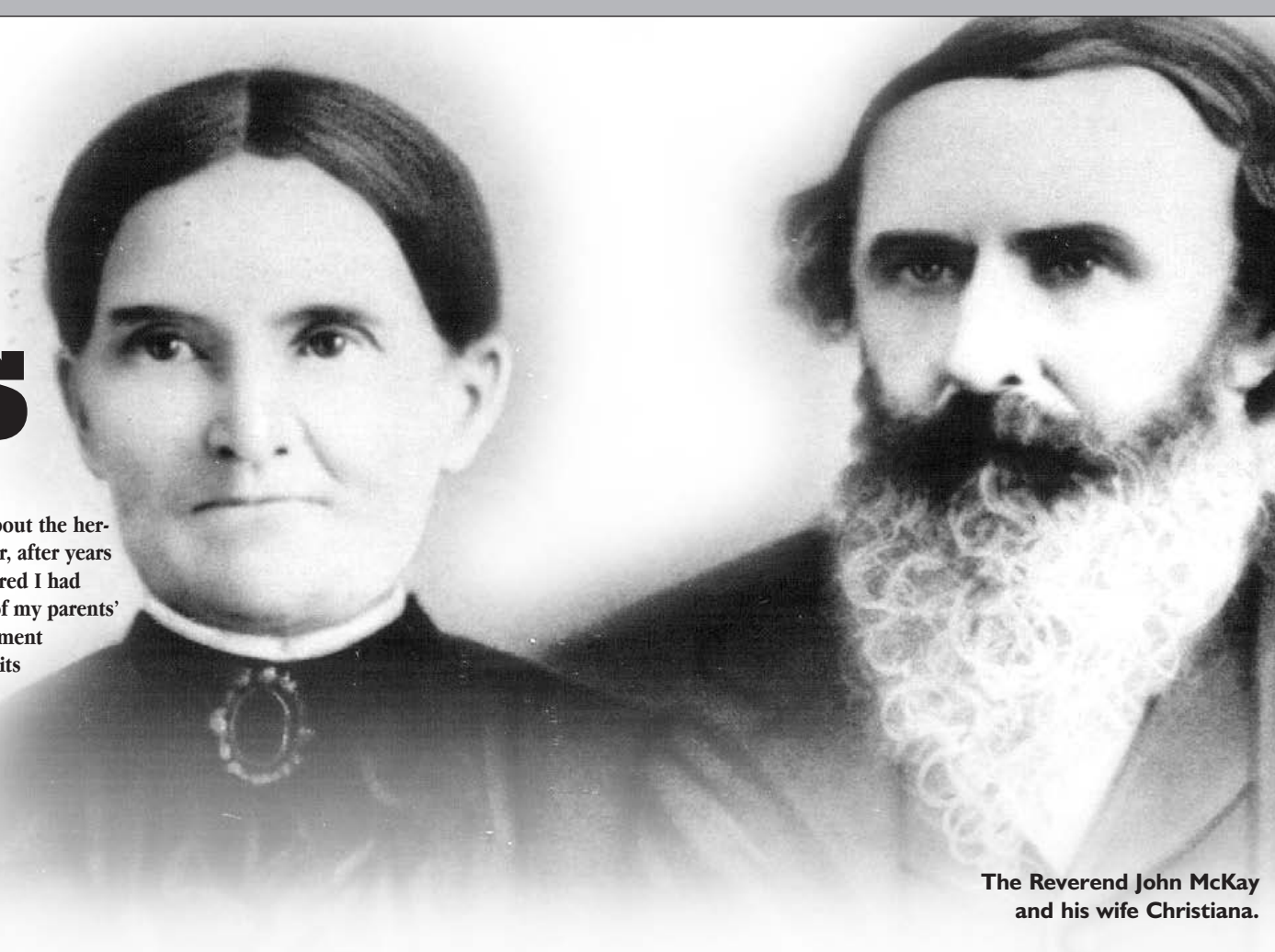
John McKay was large and powerful, with great prowess for buffalo hunting. He spoke Cree and had a good rapport with the plains

people. Thus, he would be a great asset to the missionary party and volunteered to join. The party (the founders of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan) consisted of Rev. James and Mary Nisbet with daughter Mary Jane; John and Christy McKay with daughters Mary and Christianna; William McBeath (a cousin); Alexander Polson (hired for a year); and James Green (hired for the trip).

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

John Flett was engaged at Carlton House as another interpreter and had scouted out possible sites for the mission settlement. The party went ahead on the river, landing on the shores of present-day Prince Albert on July 26, where they immediately began to erect buildings; establish farming and communicate with the Cree. It is hard to fathom such a journey—travelling with small children for two months in a creaky red river cart. These images always make me think twice about complaining while travelling in a car.

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



The Reverend John McKay and his wife Christiana.

"He was a well-known fur trader, buffalo hunter and guide. In 1858 he guided for the Hind Expedition, which travelled from the Red River Settlement to the Saskatchewan River..."

though much of his effort went into manual labour. At the end of the year, Mary and Christy were suffering from over exertion. In the fall of 1869 there was word of the smallpox epidemic and great numbers of plains people dying from it, so James Nisbet had all the people in the area of the mission vaccinated. That year, Christy returned to Kildonan, Red River Settlement, to receive treatment for her illness. It recurred in 1870 when Mary also became ill, so John McKay took his family, and Mary, back to Red River, returning in 1871. Rev. James Nisbet and Mary were worn out from the hard work and returned to Kildonan in 1874, dying shortly after arriving.

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

John McKay was ordained by the Presbytery of Winnipeg and then proceeded to carry on the missionary work, removing his family and the Cree 70 miles west to Mistawasis in 1881. Mistawasis was the name of their chief and John's sworn friend. This mission was successful. John "was a natural-born orator, and had all the dramatic eloquence of the Indian

with the fire and the intensity of the Celt" (Selkirk Settlers in Real Life, 117). Christy proved to have a positive and cheerful disposition, rich Christian virtues and great qualities which were dutifully used towards their mission work. Her obituary read: "Nothing but sunshine could abide in her presence," (*The Morning Leader*, March, 1907). She had taught Sunday School to a class of girls in Kildonan for many years. Through John's energetic determination, there were built: farm houses, stacks, a school house and a manse and church, which had a fence and graveyard in front of it. In 1887 John's father, James McKay was buried there.

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

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

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

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

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



ABOVE: This photograph, taken by Humphrey Lloyd Hime in 1858, was labelled, "a Plains Cree halfbreed Mr. Hind's guide".

— ARCHIVES OF MANITOBA

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Climate change in more ways than one



BY **TONY BELCOURT**
MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO PRESIDENT

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

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

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

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

between national Aboriginal leaders and the Prime Minister is, well, unthinkable.

As with the climate change that is unequivocally upon us, we need to try to understand what has brought about the political change in our fortunes and to develop plans to mitigate, accommodate and adjust to those changes. With no relationship of any kind with the government in power, we start from a position of great disadvantage. There is no doubt in my mind that Aboriginal peoples are seen by key political leaders in Ottawa as “the enemy”. Past political statements by members of the Conservative Party leave no doubt that they came to power with a deep-seeded negative bias towards Aboriginal peoples, their representative organizations and their leaders.

We are faced with a long uphill struggle to educate the current government about its duties and responsibilities. We also need to educate the government about what is being lost by not embracing the opportunity and potential

that Aboriginal peoples bring to the more effective administration and delivery of programs and services. We need to educate them about the contributions our people have made and continue to make to the betterment of their communities. Our recent publication of the number of volunteers (383), the total volunteer hours (50,492) and the value of that volunteer activity (\$1.157 million) in one year is stark evidence of how our people are giving back.

As well, we need to make those in power aware that great opportunities in business and economic development are being overlooked, opportunities that we, through joint ventures with our partners in industry as well as with the Anishnabek Nation are developing. The MNO has invested in new technology that will see new value-added lumber products brought to markets, including softwoods. We are well advanced in plans to develop a virtual call centre and for development of a pre-fab housing plant that will bring affordable housing to the market at 20% below current market levels. All of these activities, and others, mean jobs and much needed economic development where our people live in mid and northern Ontario.

Despite the “deep chill” in overall relations between the

Métis Nation and the new government, all is not discouraging. We have made substantial gains this year, particularly in the area of health. Through funding by Fednor and the Government of Ontario the MNO has now installed “Telemental Health” facilities at our offices in the northern part of the province. These facilities are gradually being added to our offices in the southern regions. Recently, the Federal Minister of Health, the

help that our people in need of care have come to depend upon. At the community level, our councils and MNO citizens are dramatically expanding their cultural and social activities with ever greater pride and participation by our people in community events.

Just as dealing with global warming needs the attention and efforts of all Canadians and not just governments, educating and bringing about a change in the political climate needs the atten-

tion and efforts of all Métis citizens. The MNO will do its part in parliament and with the government, but Métis people at the community level need to engage their local Members of Parliament to spread the word. Tell the story about the Métis; let them know we exist, that we are active in our communities, and that in the spirit of our ancestors we are continuing to contribute to nation building within Canada.

If you have any ideas or suggestions that would contribute to our efforts I invite you to get in touch with me, other members of the executive, or the PCMNO. We need to change the political climate—the more ways we find to do so, the better.

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“THE MNO WILL DO ITS PART IN PARLIAMENT AND WITH THE GOVERNMENT, BUT MÉTIS PEOPLE AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL NEED TO ENGAGE THEIR LOCAL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT TO SPREAD THE WORD.”

Hon. Tony Clement, announced \$10 million in new funding for bursaries and scholarships for Métis in health careers.

Funding by Human Resources Development Canada and our Endowment Funds continue to assist scores of Métis people in training and education. Funding for our Long Term Care Program has gradually increased to enable the MNO to co-ordinate the critical

MNO SPORT INITIATIVE: Updates from Community Sport Leaders

REGION 2 Great upcoming Thunder Bay events

I hope everyone had a safe and healthy holiday, and I’m sure everyone made similar new year resolutions regarding health. Thunder Bay region is starting the new year with lots of fun and exciting events. If you are interested, please join us by contacting the Thunder Bay office for more information.

- Jigging
- Tai-Chi
- Aquafit
- Canoeing
- Skating lessons
- Hiking
- Boot/pick-up hockey
- Basketball
- Walking
- Soccer
- Baseball
- more

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

BY **ASHLEY MOREAU**
Community Sport Leader

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ASHLEYM@METISNATION.ORG

REGION 4 Sault Ste Marie takes the challenge

Métis Nation Health Services is up to the challenge that has been set forth by the Ontario Health Department. The Community Sport Leader, Patti Moreau; the Community Wellness Worker, Donna St. Jules; the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Coordinator, Michele Dale; the Aboriginal Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Coordinator, Jamie Panco-Fox; the Urban Aboriginal Homelessness Outreach Coordinator, Ken McLean and the MNO Culture Coordinator, Anne Trudel, are working in various combinations of partnerships to help bring free information and physical activities to the community at large to help individuals develop a healthy active life style.

Events that we are offering in the Sault Ste. Marie area are as follows: cultural dancing; walking

groups; exercise programs; yoga; snowshoeing; hiking; basketball; floor hockey and soccer. These events will be ongoing as requested.

Future events include: nutrition workshops; foot-care workshop/clinics; cultural activities; family fun day; healthy eating workshop; presentations on diabetes; addiction awareness; container gardening; family violence awareness and prevention; monthly circles on mental health issues; men’s talking circles and stress-relief information.

As you can see we are working together as teams to help the residents of Sault Ste. Marie live a longer happier and much healthier life style.

Anyone who is interested in any of these programs can call the MNO Sault Ste. Marie office for more information. We look forward to helping make your family a healthy family.

BY **PATTI MOREAU**
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REGION 5 Hey Sudbury! Find Your Sport, Try Them All

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

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

In the near future, we will host a “Find your Sport, Try them All” event in Sudbury. Use the contact information below to determine the time and place. So come out and enjoy winter, with or without snow, just be active.

BY **CARRIE SMITH**
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REGION 8 Free Yoga Lessons being offered in Toronto

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

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

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

Childcare services are available during these classes.

This activity is sponsored by the Métis Nation of Ontario, the Ontario Early Years Centre, and the Ontario Ministry of Health.

BY **HEATHER PURDON**
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