

OTIPEMISIWAK



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I would like to open this Spring 2016 edition of Otipemisiwak on a high note by mentioning our victory in the Supreme Court Daniels Case, which was won on April 14, 2016. This monumental victory has provided the key to unlocking future opportunities for our Métis citizens including Métis harvesting and consultation policies. I extend my deepest thanks to everyone who attended our Daniels Case Celebration at Fort Edmonton Park on April 30th; it was deeply inspiring to witness the massive outpouring of public support for Métis rights. I am also pleased to announce the release of the report, *A Matter of National and Constitutional Import*, by Ministerial Special Representative, Thomas Isaac. I am confident that recommendations presented in this report will help pave the way toward reconciliation with the Federal Government.

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The spring quarter has also brought on a fair share of hardship for our Métis citizens living in Fort McMurray. I would like to express my deepest condolences to those impacted by the devastating Fort McMurray Wildfire and want evacuees to know that we are here to offer our most earnest support.

Over the past few months, we hosted community workshops to garner input into the MNA Governance Review and Métis Judiciary Council (MJC) Review. These workshops took place in each of the six regions. We additionally hosted a workshop in partnership with the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate to integrate a Métis perspective into the reformation of Alberta's Child Intervention System. I would like to extend my thanks to everyone who took part in these important events.

I look forward to seeing everyone at this year's Annual General Assembly that will take place from August 4-7 at our 100% owned and operated historic site, Métis Crossing. Métis Crossing is a historically significant site for Métis in the region and it is my hope that this will become a wonderful new tradition for our Annual General Assemblies moving forward.

Kind Regards,

Audrey Poitras
President, Métis Nation of Alberta





MNA COMMEMORATES DANIELS VICTORY WITH CELEBRATION

Edmonton, AB – Monday, May 1, 2016

The Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) hosted a community celebration to commemorate the Supreme Court of Canada's recent decision in the Harry Daniels v. Canada case at Fort Edmonton Park on Saturday, April 30. MNA President Audrey Poitras delivered an official address on the implications for Alberta Métis and the Métis Nation's rights agenda. President Poitras was joined by MNA Legal Counsel and Métis lawyer Jason Madden who provided a legal overview of the case.

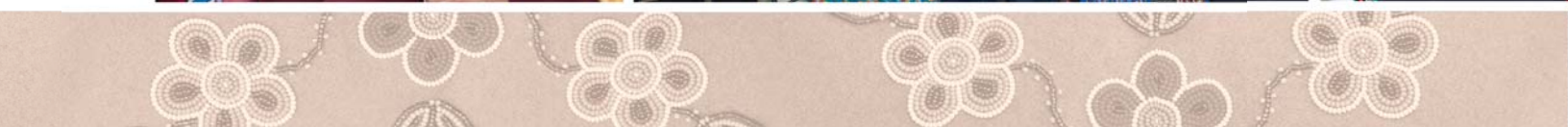
The Daniels case is a significant victory for the Métis Nation and will facilitate reconciliation between Parliament and Métis communities from Ontario westward. The Supreme Court's recognition of Métis people are included within the Constitution Act, 1982, and therefore, the federal government has the same responsibilities to them as First Nations and Inuit peoples. This will open the doors for future negotiations between the Métis Nation and Canada on a nation-to-nation basis.

President Poitras remarked that "this is the long awaited Métis victory we anticipated which is a significant advancement of the Métis rights agenda. I am confident that good things will follow for the Métis Nation."

Métis Lawyer Jason Madden added, "this decision is a game changer for the Métis Nation. The highest court of the land has said that Canada must advance reconciliation with all three constitutionally recognized Aboriginal peoples. Now that we have that answer, negotiations must begin with Alberta Métis."

The MNA thanks everyone involved in the event including our members, Elders, regional governing members, Métis veterans, MNA staff and entertainers including Métis singer, Sarah Wolfe, the Métis Child and Family Jiggers and the Nicely Put Together Band.

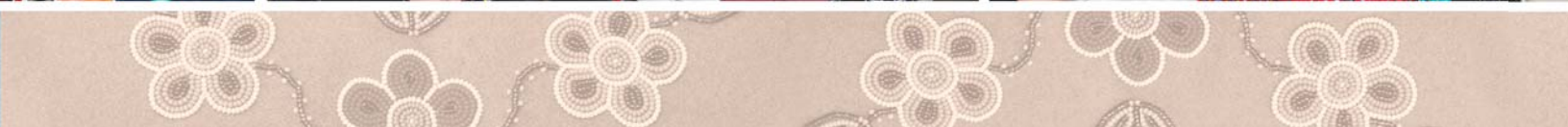
More information about the Daniels case outcome can be accessed on the Métis Rights section of the MNA website at www.albertametis.com/metis-rights/





Full House

Fort Edmonton Park's Blatchford Hangar was packed to capacity as more than 1000 community members gathered to hear MNA President Audrey Poitras and MNA Legal Counsel Jason Madden discuss the Daniels Case outcome.





THE IMPLICATIONS OF DANIELS FOR THE MÉTIS NATION



The following excerpt is from the document, *"Another Chapter in the Pursuit of Reconciliation and Redress...": A Summary of Daniels v. Canada at the Supreme Court of Canada* by MNA Legal Counsel, Jason Madden. The full PDF document can be downloaded from our website at www.albertametis.com.

"Nothing immediately changes for Métis based on the Daniels judgment. For example, Métis are not now registered as "status Indians" under the Indian Act or eligible to be registered as such. Various federal programs and services available to status Indians and Inuit are not now available to Métis (i.e., non-insured health benefits, postsecondary education funding, etc.). Métis are not now eligible for tax exemptions available to some status Indians.

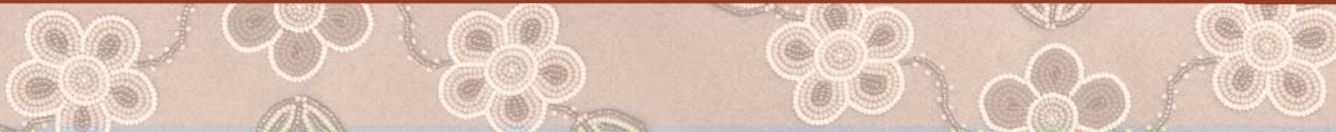
Going forward, however, it will be incumbent on Canada to move forward on several fronts with the authorized representatives of rights-bearing Métis communities. For example, based on the Crown's duty to negotiate—where there are established or credible Métis rights and claims that implicate federal jurisdiction (i.e., claims against the federal Crown, issues that go to the "core" of s. 91(24) such as Métis identification, self government, etc.)—the ongoing exclusion of Métis from all federal negotiation processes cannot be sustained. Clearly, some type of federal negotiation and/or claims process for Métis must be established in order to meet the constitutional duty the Court reaffirmed. If not, rights-bearing Métis communities will likely turn to the courts again—this time for orders in relation to some type of negotiations on their rights.

In addition, the policy rationales for Métis exclusion from a majority of federal programs and benefits (i.e., non-insured health benefits, education supports, etc.) that are made available to other s. 91(24) "Indians" (i.e., Inuit, status Indians, etc.) tttv likely need to be reviewed to assess if ongoing exclusion is justifiable. Notably, some of the arguments accepted by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal with respect to the discrimination faced by First Nation communities in relation to child and family services have parallels to the situation faced by Métis communities."

REPORT SETS STAGE FOR NATION-TO-NATION DISCUSSIONS WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT



Mr. Isaac's report, entitled, *"A Matter of National and Constitutional Import"* was publicly released on July 21st and comes after he was appointed in June 2015 to meet with the MNA, other Métis Nation governments, provinces, territories and other interested parties in order to assess the current state of affairs and provide independent advice and recommendations on a "way forward" on Métis Section 35 Rights. Mr. Isaac's report makes 17 recommendations and includes key findings that should guide future federal action on Métis Section 35 Rights issues. For more information, please visit our website at www.albertametis.com



MNA PRESIDENT SPEAKS AT POVERTY REDUCTION SUMMIT



Edmonton, AB – Thursday, April 7, 2016

Métis Nation of Alberta President, Audrey Poitras, delivered opening remarks at the milestone event, *Cities Reducing Poverty: When Mayors Lead* on Tuesday, April 5th. The summit has succeeded in bringing together community leaders, including mayors and government representatives, to tackle the pressing issue of poverty.

While Edmonton has experienced employment growth exceeding the national average, the city's wealth has not been distributed equally. According to the report *A Poverty Profile of Edmonton*, one in eight Edmontonians live below the poverty line and the city's Aboriginal residents are even more likely to experience poverty than non-Aboriginal residents. Edmonton Mayor Don Iveson has resolved to counter this problem and launched a major poverty reduction strategy in the Fall of 2015 titled *End Poverty Edmonton*.

The MNA represents over 96,865 Métis Albertans of which 31,780 reside in Edmonton. The City continues to be a supportive ally to Edmonton's Métis; Mayor Iveson stated that "with the Métis community's help in moving our strategy to action, Edmonton's inclusive approach will have greater reach and depth in ending poverty in a generation."

MNA President Audrey Poitras remarked that "I am proud to represent our Edmonton Métis families at this critical juncture and I look forward to working with His Worship Mayor Don Iveson to implement the city's poverty reduction strategy in our community."

The MNA continues to provide Métis Albertans with social services in the areas of housing, education, and economic development. The MNA housing arm, Métis Urban/Capital Housing Corporation, has provided homes to over 1000 Métis families throughout Alberta. The MNA education affiliate, the Rupertsland Institute (RLI), has delivered education and training to over 1000 Métis learners every year since 1995 and has developed partnerships and created over \$20 million in bursary and endowments for Métis learners in every major post-secondary institution in the Province. Since 2006, RLI's alumni list includes over 11,000 Métis who received funding to enable them to pursue their education and skills upgrading. The MNA business lending institution, Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc, has provided Métis entrepreneurs and businesses with business expertise and financial assistance. Since 1988, Apeetogosan has helped in the creation of over 1,000 Métis-owned businesses throughout Alberta while maintaining a capital base of eight million dollars.





UPCOMING EVENTS

NAME	DESCRIPTION	DETAILS
MNA 88th ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY	Join us for our 88th Annual General Assembly. This year's assembly will take place at our heritage site, Métis Crossing, just south of Smoky Lake, AB. Contact communications@metis.org for details!	August 4 - August 7, 2016 Métis Crossing Heritage Site 17339 Victoria Trail Smoky Lake, AB
MÉTIS WEEK	This year, Métis Week runs from Sunday, November 13 until Saturday, November 19. This celebration of Métis culture takes place in the days surrounding Louis Riel Day on November 16th. Cultural activities will take place across the region to celebrate the Métis legacy in Canada.	November 13 - November 19 Various Locations in Alberta Contact communications@metis.org for additional information!



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The 88th Annual General Assembly will be hosted at Métis Crossing for the first time in MNA history. The site is poised for development as Alberta's premiere Métis cultural interpretation centre.

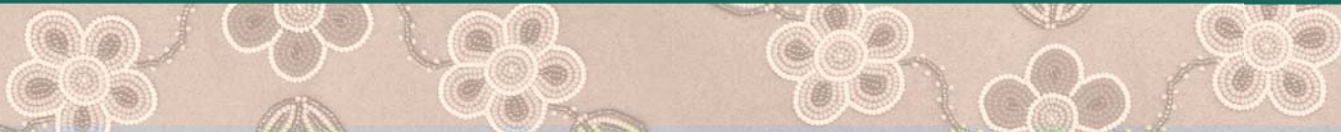


MÉTIS YOUTH RAISES CHARITABLE DONATIONS THROUGH ART

Edmonton, AB – Thursday, April 7, 2016



Berg Felsing is a ten-year-old Métis artist based out of Edson, Alberta who is using art to make a difference in his community. He recently hosted his third art exhibition from June 3 - June 24 at Edson's Red Brick Arts Centre & Gallery in order to collect cat and dog food donations for the displaced pets of the Fort McMurray fires. Berg has used his art to benefit various charitable efforts over the years and in 2015, Berg's art exhibition raised over \$500.00 for the Stollery Children's Hospital! The MNA commends Berg's charitable endeavours and looks forward to seeing future projects from this talented Métis youth!



MNA OFFERS HELP FOR FORT MCMURRAY

Edmonton, AB – Monday, May 20, 2016

The MNA opened our doors to support Métis citizens affected by the Fort McMurray wildfire on May 7th and May 16th. This MNA-driven initiative brought together a team of MNA Métis Resource Workers, medical professionals, insurance brokers and financial advisors to connect citizens with essential resources. The MNA additionally hosted a free BBQ for hungry evacuees and set up a donation centre of essentials including food, toiletries, clothing, and bedding. Donations were pooled by the MNA, Fort McKay Métis, and individual donors. The donation centre will continue to operate in order to provide supplies to evacuees in need. Evacuees requiring social supports are encouraged to connect with MNA Métis Resource Workers at 780-455-2200.



Top Row (Left to Right): 1) Head office staff whip up a BBQ feast for evacuees. 2) Clothing in the donation centre.
Bottom Row (Left to Right): 1) Medical professionals provided a spectrum of expert health services for evacuees. 2) Infant nutritional formula in the donation centre.



WORKSHOP GAUGES MÉTIS PERSPECTIVE ON ALBERTA CHILD INTERVENTION SYSTEM

Edmonton, AB – Thursday, May 5, 2016

The Métis Nation of Alberta and Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA) hosted a workshop to garner input from the Métis community regarding how to improve outcome for children in care under Alberta's Child Intervention System.



MNA youth, Jonathan Collins.

"The main thing is the voice of the youth. You need to hear what they have to say. Those youth, those lives, will never be the same."

life, you're there one minute and gone the next" said Jonathan. Jonathan also stated a need to increase focus on ensuring the emotional welfare of youth in the system. "The main thing is the voice of the youth. You need to hear what they have to say. Those youths, those lives, will never be the same. No one asked me if I was okay."

MNA President Audrey Poitras remarked that "this is not an easy topic to discuss, however, we must discuss it in order to improve outcomes for our Métis children in care. We must work to build a better future for Métis families."

MNA Co-Ministers of Health Children and Youth, Sylvia Johnson and Diane Scoville, were also actively involved in the workshop. Minister Johnson stated "Métis children have been disproportionately taken into care for too long. It is time that we work together to confront this unfortunate reality. Minister Scoville commented that "this is a topic that is very near and dear to my heart and we must prolong our efforts for the sake of our children."

Métis youth citizen, Jonathan Collins, was put into foster care at an early age and discussed his struggle with abandonment after being separated from his family of five. Jonathan commented on the turbulence of foster care in the way that children are routinely moved around. "In my



Region 5 Elder, Nora

"I do believe that the children in care should know their heritage. Without an identity, a child is lost."

In addition to improving emotional support for children in care, Jonathan suggested that more needs to be done to take care of the basic needs of youth. By age 13, Jonathan lived in his own basement suite and focused on purely survival. Left to his own devices, Jonathan was forced to ensure his basic needs such as food and clothing with minimal support from the foster system.

MNA Region 2 citizen and founder of *Protection for the Unprotected*, Trevor Letondre, discussed the urgent need for education for children and families. Trevor remarked that "education and support for families as a group. Not just the individual child, but the parents and children together getting educated as a family unit" is critical. He noted that "we need to take a holistic approach to family life" in order to build healthy families and communities.



MNA Region 5 Elder, Nora spoke to the importance of teaching children in care about their Métis heritage and remarked that “I do believe that the children in care should know their heritage. Without an identity, a child is lost. They have to know their culture and their identity.”

Discussions from the workshop will be integrated into an OCYA Special Report regarding Aboriginal Young People in Care. The report will be released in the spring of 2016.

“We need to take a holistic approach to family life.”



Top Row (Left to Right): OCYA workshop participants, MNA President, Audrey Poitras
Bottom Row (Left to Right): MNA Region 6 President/Co-Minister of Health, Children and Youth, Sylvia Johnson; MNA Region 1 President/Co-Minister of Health, Children and Youth, Diane Scoville, and Director of the Nighi Métis Seniors Lodge and Family Reunification Program, Lizette Gaudry.





TRIBUTE TO ALVENA STRABOURG

BY MURIEL STANLEY VENNE



Thank you to the family, especially to Wendy for giving me the opportunity to pay tribute to Alvena.

As Executive Director of Native Outreach Alvena worked for me as one of the best Native Job Counsellors in the early days of the hiring that was done at Syncrude. She was "my right arm" and we had a lot of fun at the same time as we were breaking down the barriers to hiring the Native people. We got an agreement with the Labourers Union Local 92 because of Business Manager Jack Dyck. He guaranteed that every native person that took the two-week Safety Course would be hired on this gigantic job run by Canadian Bechtel. The Labourers Union paid for the training but still got a lot of flak from the other Unions and their members. As an example of the resentment, at a meeting in Northern Saskatchewan one of the union reps stated "no God damn Indian is going to take my job."

Alvena Strabourg was my powerhouse in Fort McMurray! She was born in Fort McMurray and I believe that gave her more strength and a feistiness that she needed to get the job done! My job counsellors were my strong supporters in those early days and the feeling was mutual. When I asked the Manpower official who had sat in on our meeting, what his observation was he said, "I saw great respect for your counsellors". Alvena was one of the best and highly respected. And you might be wondering why I mention this. We were breaking new ground we were proving that we could do a really good job and we did!

Things were booming! Mike Woodward was determined to get work on site but when they found out he was a native from McMurray they wouldn't hire him. Being determined he went back and this time he said he was Mexican and was hired on the spot. (He looked like a "tall" Mexican) Another helpful service our Alvena performed was to explain what was going on. For example, in one incident, a woman couldn't understand something. She asked Alvena "What does "vacate the premises" mean?

When Syncrude offered Alvena a job, she came to tell me. I couldn't compete with the wages, so Alvena was hired by Syncrude. It was a big loss to Native Outreach. As she got older her funny remarks continued. As an example she said when I visited her, "When you live alone nothing moves".

Prior to coming to work for me she worked at Todd Cleaners for many years and she confided in me that she really liked the smell of the cleaning fluid and every time she walked by a dry cleaners she remembered her days of working there.

She tried her hand at politics and was elected to the Métis Nation of Alberta. Alvena, as a Métis Elder mentions in her own words how she was the first in many positions she held such as, the first Métis to be a Director of Keyano College, Board member of Child and Family Services, and Vice President and later President of Métis Child and Family Services.

I am especially pleased to quote from her article,

"Strong women like my Mom and Muriel Stanley Venne are my role models. Mom was a hard worker who taught us to be self-reliant. She couldn't read or write, but she could sure play the fiddle and the accordion. Muriel and I started out together in the working world. She became a politician and an Aboriginal women's activist."

Continued on next page...



I am proud to say that Alvena was chosen one of the first five Aboriginal women honoured in the first Esquao Awards held in 1996 for her hard work, indomitable spirit, her marvelous sense of humour and her courage.

On behalf of the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women and the many women who benefited from her work I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Alvena is an outstanding Métis woman in the province of Alberta.

by

Muriel Stanley Venne C.M.,B.A.(Hon.)
President & Founder
Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (I.A.A.W)



COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS TACKLE GOVERNANCE AND MÉTIS JUDICIARY COUNCIL REVIEWS

Edmonton, AB – Thursday, June 30, 2016

A series of workshops took place across the province from April to June to consult community members on the MNA Governance and Métis Judiciary Council (MJC) Reviews. Both of these reviews are being overseen by independent, third party contractors. Shalene Jobin and Kirsten Lindquist from the Faculty of Native Studies at the University of Alberta are conducting the MNA Governance Review and the MJC Review is being handled by Deloitte. The status of both reviews will be presented at this year's Annual General Assembly in August.





88TH ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

CELEBRATING 200 YEARS – THE BATTLE OF SEVEN OAKS 1816-2016

**AUGUST 4TH - AUGUST 7TH, MÉTIS CROSSING HERITAGE SITE
17339 VICTORIA TRAIL, SMOKY LAKE, AB, TOA 3C0**

THURSDAY, AUGUST 4TH

7 PM - 10 PM Meet & Greet
Location: AGA Main Tent

FRIDAY, AUGUST 5TH

7:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Breakfast Location: AGA Main Tent
7:30 AM - 4 PM	Elders Lounge Location: Elders Tent
8 AM - 12 PM	Region Registration Location: AGA Main Tent
9 AM - 4 PM	Ministerial Presentations Location: AGA Main Tent
9 AM - 4 PM	Genealogy Exhibit Location: Historic Barn (Basement)
9 AM - 4 PM	MNA Youth Workshop Location: TBD
9 AM - 4 PM	MNA Children's Gathering Location: TBD
12 PM - 1 PM	Lunch Location: AGA Main Tent
4 PM - 6 PM	Health & Wellness Workshop Location: TBD
6 PM - 7 PM	Fish Fry Location: AGA Main Tent
7 PM - 11 PM	Open Mic Night hosted by MNA Region 5 with entertainment by <i>Twin Fiddles</i> Location: AGA Main Tent

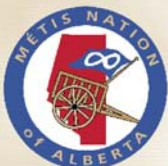
SATURDAY, AUGUST 6TH

7:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Breakfast Location: AGA Main Tent
7:30 AM - 4 PM	Elders Lounge Location: Elders Tent
7:30 AM - 12 PM	Voting Delegate Registration Location: AGA Main Tent
8:00 AM - 12 PM	Region Registration Location: AGA Main Tent
<i>9:00 AM Opening Ceremony Location: AGA Main Tent</i>	
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Business Meeting Location: AGA Main Tent
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Lunch Location: AGA Main Tent
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Business Meeting (Continued) Location: AGA Main Tent
8:00 PM - 12:00 AM	Banquet and Regional Recognitions hosted by MNA Region 5 with Entertainment by <i>Twin Fiddles</i> Location: AGA Main Tent

SUNDAY, AUGUST 7TH

7:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Breakfast Location: AGA Main Tent
7:30 AM - Close	Elders Lounge Location: Elders Tent
7:30 AM - 9 AM	Voting Delegate Registration Location: AGA Main Tent
8:00 AM - 12 PM	Region Registration Location: AGA Main Tent
9:00 AM - Close	Business Meeting Location: AGA Main Tent
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Lunch Location: AGA Main Tent

We will be posting updates regarding the 88th Annual General Assembly to our website and Facebook page. For more information, please call April Magee at 780-455-2200 or email amagee@metis.org.



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