

# OTIPEMISIWAK

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The people who own ourselves

Issue 1 2018

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The Official Voice of the Métis Nation of Alberta



# Presidential Message



I would like to extend a warm welcome to all our readers and take this time to wish you all a happy and healthy 2018. I hope the holidays were a time for family, friends, and relaxation that brought you a renewed energy for the upcoming year.

We had an exciting end to 2017 with the signing of the Government of Canada Framework Agreement for Advancing Reconciliation with the Honourable Carolyn Bennett. This historic agreement focuses on the important topics of Métis self-government, lands, rights, and consultation protocol. With this as a priority in 2018, we will be consulting with you, the MNA Citizens, to get your direction on what self-government should look like.

I'd also like to thank all who attended our second annual Youth and Seniors Symposium: Uniting Generations in January. It was a time for gathering and learning from each other while engaging in rich cultural activities of jigging, beading, Michif instruction, and participating in shared story telling. We were honoured to have Edmonton's first Métis City Councillor, Aaron Paquette give an empowering speech. As we prepare for a busy year of progress, I'd like to leave you with some powerful words from Councillor Paquette. "When you speak you create. We remember our history, but we are growing and changing constantly. We are our own best advocates and supports."

**Audrey Poitras**  
President  
Métis Nation of Alberta

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Holden Atkinson competing at the Junior National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas



Uniting Generations: Youth & Seniors Symposium





Holden Atkinson

Reserve Champion in Junior Saddle Bronc



# Holden On

## Young Métis Boy Competes at Junior National Finals Rodeo

At three years old, Holden Atkinson was bucked off a pony for the first time. The older boy leading the pony pleaded, "don't tell your mom," but an excited Holden burst into the house and said, "Diamond bucked me off and it was so fun!"

Fast forward seven years to December 2017 to the Junior National Finals Rodeo (JNFR). Wrangler Rodeo Arena in Las Vegas is full of competitors and spectators from all over the world. Thousands of people cheer the contestants as they vie for championships in eight events.



Holden competing at the JNFR in Las Vegas

Holden, now 10, has travelled all the way from Black Diamond, Alberta to compete in the Mini Bareback, Mini Saddle Bronc, and Mini Bull events. The horses are much larger and stronger than what he trained with but he stays focused.

"It was tough but once I rode my first two in saddle Bronc and bareback, I got prepared for what's coming ahead," he remembers. Indeed, Holden went on to win Reserve Champion in Junior Saddle Bronc, placing him second in the world.

An impressive achievement for any accomplished rider, it is especially outstanding considering Holden has only been training for a year.

### "It's definitely in his genetics for sure"

Holden's mother, Risa, says riding is in his blood. "Our family was from Saskatchewan and they were known for being very good cowboys and herdsmen so Holden just loves it all. It's definitely in his genetics for sure," she explains.

Risa has also ensured her children have vast knowledge of their Métis heritage. After years of research, she completed her family tree and pieced together her ancestor's story.

Her eyes fill with tears as she recalls the stories of her family. "Our Great Great Grandfather got scrip land and once they had enough they built it up to a working ranch. The military moved them away. They moved them three times because they were great workers of the land. I want my kids to know about this," she declares proudly. "I just want to make sure it's not lost."

Risa's passion can be seen in Holden, who is clearly proud to represent the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA). Donning the MNA logo on his riding vest and shirt, "felt really good," he says. "I was happy and I was like 'wow, I actually got them on the back of my vest and shirt.'"



Holden's riding vest

From here, Holden plans to keep training and already has a packed 2018. Some more rodeos are scheduled for February, as well as Steer Riding School in April, and maybe a bronc clinic in June and July.

We wish Holden the best of luck in his training and future competitions.



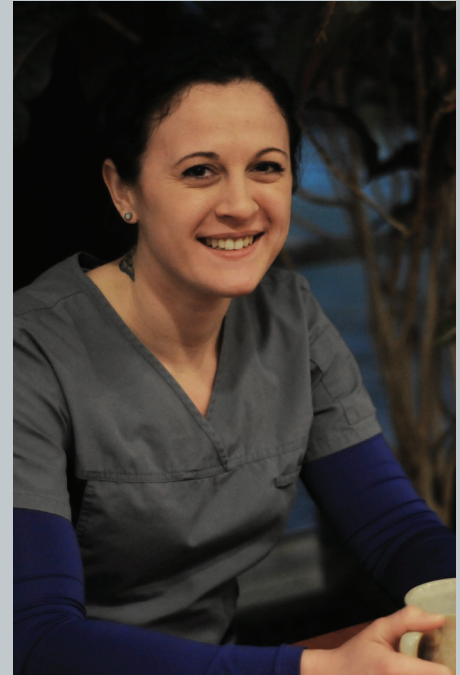
# A Helping Hand

## How Community Supports Help Students Get Ahead

"I come from humble beginnings and my parents aren't the richest people in the world. School's very expensive." Kayla Lavallee is a Métis dentistry student at the University of Alberta. She is on the cusp of becoming a Doctor of Dental Surgery and is one of the many Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) citizens receiving a helping hand from various study grants and bursaries through the MNA and Rupertsland Institute (RLI).

"Receiving a grant like that... makes you think, there are people out there that believe I can do it, so [I] keep going."

Kayla has always been very involved in her community and understands the importance of that connection. "I was immersed into the [Métis] culture more than most. My Dad's family is from Manitoba where there's a big



Kayla Lavallee Métis Dentistry Student at the U of A

### "There are people out there that believe I can do it"

Access to funding support made the leap to university much less stressful for Kayla.

"It was important to me to help my parents out... Those loans add up. Receiving grants was super helpful," she explains. As many students can attest, University can be stressful and it's often tough to stay on track. After eight years at the U of A, Kayla has felt this pressure many times but notes she always felt supported.

Métis population and it was always very important for his kids to know where they came from," she recalls. This upbringing primed Kayla for leadership roles later in life. In the early years of her studies, she coached girl's hockey in the Aboriginal Provincials league and visited various Indigenous schools to give talks on her accomplishments in sport and academia. "Part of [the study grant] criteria is seeing who is giving back to the community, especially the

Aboriginal community, and that was something that has always been very important to me."

So, what's next for Kayla? Thankfully, she says, graduation is coming this summer and she hopes to begin her career shortly after. But, not before taking some much-needed down time.

## Want to know more about study grants and bursaries available to you?

The MNA offers four different scholarships to students undertaking post-secondary studies. Learn more about them at [albertametis.com](http://albertametis.com) under the scholarship tab.

MNA affiliate, Rupertsland Institute also provides post-secondary financial aid to Métis students to reduce the overall cost of education and the financial burden it can have.

Learn more at [rupertsland.org](http://rupertsland.org) under the post-secondary-funding tab.



# Creating Cultural Connections

## Region 4 Hosts Cultural Enrichment Program for Citizens

To know where you're going, you must know where you come from. At recent regional consultations, we heard that the ability to connect with and understand the Métis culture provides the guidance citizens need when navigating family, education, and career. Having identified this need, the Region 4 office welcomed local Métis citizens to attend a cultural enrichment program where participants created a pair of moccasins. For two weeks

people there" says attendee Jessica Mayhew.

These cultural enrichment programs provide the opportunity for all citizens to connect with each other by giving them the space to talk, learn, and ask questions about their Métis heritage.

Tania Kruk, Youth Programs and Services Manager at the MNA, sees these programs as a place to create positive friendships and mentorships

"It is extremely important for me to attend cultural classes such as this one," says Bailey Oster, MNA Citizen. "I hope to attend future classes and have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of my culture."

Additional cultural enrichment programs will be held throughout the six regions in 2018. "We are hoping to have cultural enrichment programs in each of the regions with a variety of cultural activities like jigging, beading, storytelling, bannock making, and language learning," says Youth Programs and Services Manager Tania Kruk.

Be the first to know about cultural programs in your community. Follow the MNA and regional offices on social media and sign up for email updates at [albertametis.com/contact](http://albertametis.com/contact).

**"You can learn about your heritage and share with the other people there"**

in December 2017, Citizens came together to learn from each other on a cultural level. "You can learn about your heritage and share with the other

for citizens. Mayhew comments that "they open the door for citizens to start digging into their culture and continue to look into things on their own."



Métis Citizens at the Region 4 cultural enrichment program



# Uniting Generations

Youth & Seniors Symposium: January 19 – 21, 2018

In January 2018, the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) held its second annual Youth and Seniors Symposium: Uniting Generations at the Marriott at River Cree.

These gatherings help address the need for connection and belonging by providing opportunities to share cultural knowledge and personal experiences. Attendees built relationships along with a greater understanding of the unique challenges faced by today's Métis seniors and youth.

Festivities kicked off with a Stew and Bannock Meet and Greet on Friday evening, with musical

entertainment by Brianna and Brian Lizotte. The opening ceremony began early Saturday morning with a Grand Entry led by the Aboriginal Veterans, Canadian and Métis anthems sung by Sarah Wolfe, and greetings from MNA and City of Edmonton leaders.

A highlight of Saturday's programming was the inspiring keynote from Edmonton City Councillor, Aaron Paquette entitled "But What We Create." Paquette is a Métis writer, artist, and Edmonton's first Métis Councillor.

Concluding the morning was an engaging, two-part workshop on

the development of a Métis Nation of Alberta Constitution. The interactive presentation allowed guests to express their views on MNA self-government and see poll results in real-time.

An important component of the Youth & Seniors Symposiums is the sharing of culture. Youth and seniors have expressed the need for intergenerational sharing to ensure practices live on with our younger generations.

To facilitate this cultural learning, various sessions were held including, a storytelling workshop by Edmonton Public Library's



Day 1 registration for Uniting Generations: Youth & Seniors Symposium 2018



Aaron Paquette, Métis Councillor for the City of Edmonton





Jigging lessons with sisters Samantha and Jaqueline Gibbon

Voices of Amiskwaciy, beading instruction with Krista Leddy of Beaded Chickadee, jigging lessons with Samantha and Jaqueline Gibbon, and a Michif instruction facilitated by the Gabriel Dumont Institute and author/fluent Michif instructor, Norman Fleury. Following the cultural workshops, Dr. Adam Gaudry, Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Native Studies and Department of Political Science at the University of Alberta, discussed the modern relevance of the laws of the Buffalo Hunt in his presentation, "The Buffalo Hunt as the Foundation of Métis Law and Governance." The Saturday evening banquet was a wonderful time of food, fellowship, music, and dancing with Métis Child and Family Dancers and Rockin' Fiddle Band.

Closing out the weekend was an emotional presentation by John McDonald of the Aboriginal Veterans Society of Alberta, which included a viewing of "Cree Code Talker," an informative presentation by Theresa Majeran of the Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards, a word from Métis Advocate Muriel Stanley Venne, an Elder discussion led by Tania Kruk, and an inspiring presentation on connecting to culture and community by Métis youth, Brittany Johnson.

The event was funded by the Urban Partnerships for Indigenous People, and was part of a project intended to build intergenerational relationships among youth and seniors within the Métis Nation of Alberta. Thanks to this funding,

the MNA was able to remove common barriers to gathering youth and seniors by providing accommodations and a contribution towards mileage for MNA Citizens driving to the event from outside the greater Edmonton region.

Feedback on the event from MNA citizens was overwhelmingly positive. Citizens reported that they enjoyed meeting new people, sharing stories, and participating in the cultural workshops. As we look ahead to next year's Youth & Seniors gathering, we'd love to hear your thoughts! What do you think we should include for 2019? What is important to you?

Email us at [events@metis.org](mailto:events@metis.org)





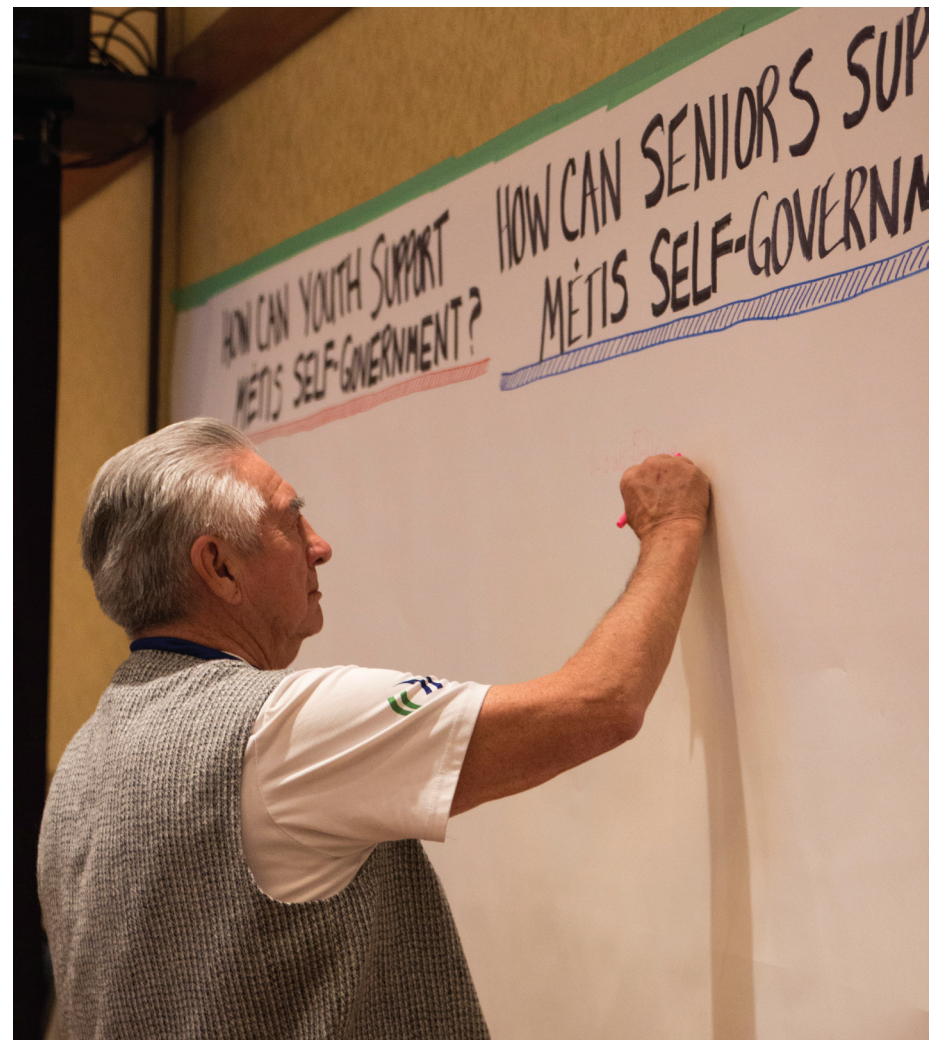
# Connection



# Culture







# Belonging





# Self-Government for the Métis Nation of Alberta

What This Means for our Future and Why it Matters



The First MAA Executive. Back row (left to right): Peter Tomkins (Vice-President), Felix Callihoo (Vice-President); Front row (left to right): Malcom Norris (Vice-President), Joseph Dion (President), James Brady (Secretary-Treasurer)

The Métis Nation of Alberta is at a monumental and opportune time for self-government.

Since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Métis people in Alberta have stood together and pressed governments to respect their rights. When the Métis Association of Alberta was first formed in 1928, its purpose was to lobby the federal government to ensure Métis land rights were respected. Through the decades, the MNA's singular focus has been building a strong Métis Nation embracing Métis rights.

This journey, has not been without its political ups and downs. Historically, Canada has denied the MNA the right to self-government, but important developments are now taking place. Canada has agreed to negotiate with the MNA to establish a nation-to-nation relationship and advance reconciliation. This significant agreement means the MNA will be able to deliver culturally-appropriate programs and services to meet the unique needs of Alberta Métis citizens.

## What is Self-Government?

Indigenous self-government is the formal structure through which Indigenous communities may support the management of their people, land, resources and related programs and policies, through agreements with federal and provincial governments.

The Métis people have an inherent right to self-government. Their homeland, the historic Northwest, is where they governed themselves and where their identity, culture and nationhood was born. For over 200 years, their ancestors fought to have the right to self-government recognized and respected.

"When the Government of Canada presented itself at our doors it found us at peace. It found that the Métis people of the North-West could not only live well without it ... but that it had a government of its own, free, peaceful, well-functioning ... It was a government with an organized Constitution whose jurisdiction was more legitimate and worthy of respect, because it was exercised over a country that belonged to it."

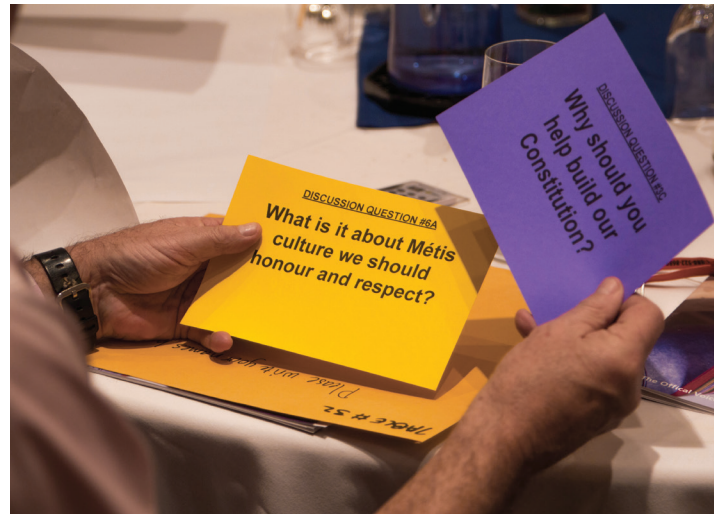
— *Louis Riel, 1885*



Louis Riel 1844 – 1885

The MNA is not fully recognized as a government under corporate bylaws and within the limitations of the Alberta Societies Act. To move from the association structure to a recognized government, the MNA needs a Constitution.

With a Constitution, a government can better position its citizens to pursue opportunities for sustained economic security and development.



Key questions asked at Uniting Generations: Youth & Seniors Symposium 2018

## What is a Constitution?

A Constitution is a document that sets out the basic principles and laws of a nation that determine the powers and duties of the government. It provides political stability, sets out a process for making major changes, and establishes ways to resolve disputes.

### Our Constitution will describe:

- Who our citizens are;
- The rights and freedoms of our citizens;
- How our government is structured, elected, and makes decisions; and
- How disputes are resolved

The Constitution will define how the MNA collectively decides to govern themselves as the Métis Nation of Alberta. It will form the foundation of a modern Métis government.

To ensure effective self-government for generations to come, the Constitution must be developed and supported by citizens. After the proposed Constitution is developed, it needs to be approved in a province-wide vote. Every MNA citizen will have an opportunity to vote on the nation's collective future.



## Where are we Today?

The MNA's citizens have been asking for a Constitution for decades. Now, with Canada's support, the goal of a MNA Constitution is closer than ever.

On November 16, 2017, MNA President Audrey Poitras and Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Carolyn Bennett, signed the historic MNA-Canada Framework Agreement for Advancing Reconciliation setting out a formal process for negotiations in three priority areas.

### These areas are:

1. Self-government for the MNA
2. The Métis Nation's Section 35 rights in Alberta
3. The Métis Nation's outstanding claims in Alberta, including claims relating to Métis scrip

The MNA is currently at step four in a six-step claims process, which means it is currently negotiating an Agreement-in-Principle and beginning to conduct province-wide consultations with citizens.

Recognition of Métis self-government in Alberta will allow the MNA to invest in important initiatives such as health, post secondary education and early childhood development. Métis self-government will also protect the rights and interests of citizens, including harvesting rights and interests in land. It will ensure Métis are consulted by governments and industry on projects impacting their rights.

The inherent right to self-government is a right that the nation shares together. It will only be achieved if the nation comes together. Everyone is encouraged to be a part of this historic initiative.



MNA President Audrey Poitras and Minister Carolyn Bennett signing the MNA-Canada Framework Agreement for Advancing Reconciliation



STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6
Filing a Statement of Claim	Establishing Exploratory Discussions	Exploratory Discussions & Negotiation of a Framework Agreement	Negotiating an Agreement-in-Principle	Negotiation of a Final Agreement & Ratification Process	Implementation of a Final Agreement

Six-Step Claims Process

# Citizen Engagement

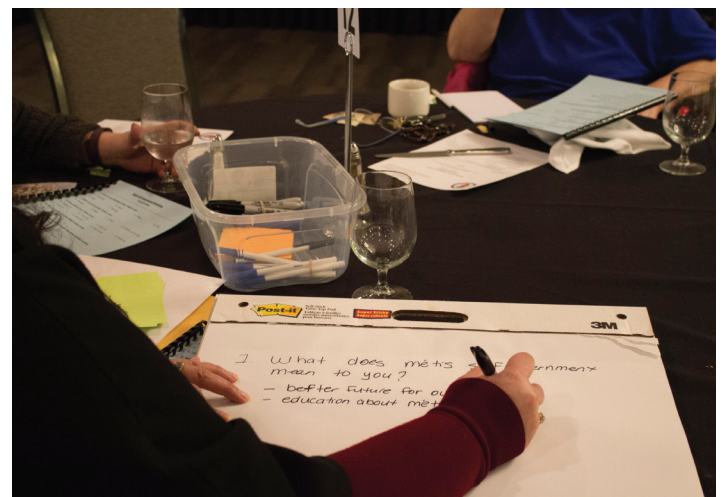
## Registering New Citizens & Increasing Communications

The new Citizen Engagement team at the MNA is here to focus on strengthening outreach and increasing communications with all registered citizens in Alberta. Citizen engagement emphasizes long-term relationship-building with citizens, communities, and leaders. The team is committed to hearing all voices and perspectives, and will work to ensure the questions and concerns of MNA citizens are addressed on an ongoing basis.

Starting in February 2018 the Citizen Engagement team, along with other MNA departments and affiliates, will be holding engagement sessions across the province.

For people looking for more information about the MNA and its affiliates' services, these sessions will offer opportunities to learn more and begin the process of registering as MNA citizens. For those who are already MNA citizens, we'll be sharing information on our ongoing journey toward Métis self-government. Citizens will also be asked to share their thoughts on the development of a future MNA Constitution.

Now is the time to get involved, learn more, become a citizen and help shape the future of the Métis Nation in Alberta. Visit [albertametis.com](http://albertametis.com) for more details.



Region 3: Calgary Engagement Session



# 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Provincial Business Mixer & Gala

Thursday, March 22, 2018

The Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) is proud to host the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Métis Nation of Alberta Provincial Business Mixer & Gala Thursday, March 22, 2018 at the Edmonton Inn & Conference Centre.

Previous mixers had representatives from Oil and Gas, Forestry, Electrical Energy, Aggregate, and green energy industries. In addition, the mixer also draws in MNA business partners, Métis Artisans, Métis Entrepreneurs, Métis Businesses, MNA Affiliates and Educational Institutions to network and share information.

This year's mixer, will begin with a presentation from Métis Crossing, Indigenous Tourism and a presentation on the Contractor Database.



Surveying on a job sight



Tradeshow booths

We encourage Métis companies to join us and register for the Contractor Database. Métis Crossing will also be accepting proposals for the development of the site.

The day will conclude with the Annual Dinner & Awards Banquet, where the MNA will honour and present six business-people from across the Province with awards in categories including: Eco-preneur of the Year; Métis Women Leader of the Year; and Métis Business of the Year. Nominations are due by Wednesday, February 28, 2018. We hope you can join us in celebrating Métis success.

If you would like to register to have a table in the Tradeshow the RSVP deadline is Friday, March 9, 2018. The Tradeshow will provide an opportunity to share information about your company's services and/or products.

We encourage our Citizens and Partners to attend the gala dinner that evening for additional networking opportunities. We hope to see you there!

## Event Schedule

Seminar	9:00am – 11:30am Please RSVP
Tradeshow	1:00pm – 5:00pm
Dinner & Gala	5:00pm – 9:00pm Please RSVP

## Event Location

Edmonton Inn & Conference Centre  
11834 Kingsway Ave, Edmonton AB

To enquire about this event, or to book your spot at the seminar or dinner & gala please contact [Katie Suvanto \(ksuvanto@metis.org\)](mailto:ksuvanto@metis.org), or (780) 455-2200 Ext. 235).



Dinner & gala 2017

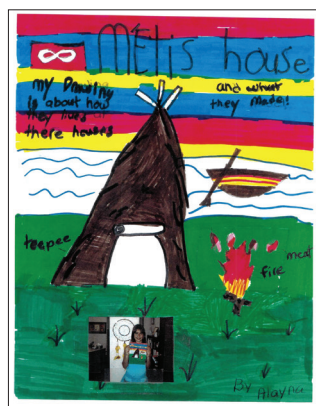
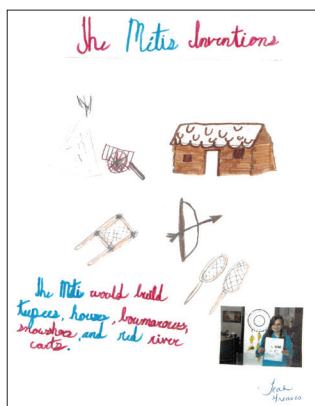
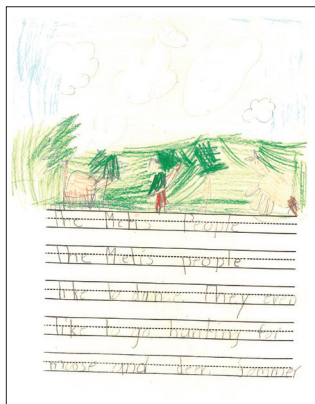
# Update from Region 6

Region 6 would like to extend a warm welcome to their new staff members; Administrative Assistant Kelinda MacRoberts, and Garrett Tomlinson Regional Consultation Coordinator.

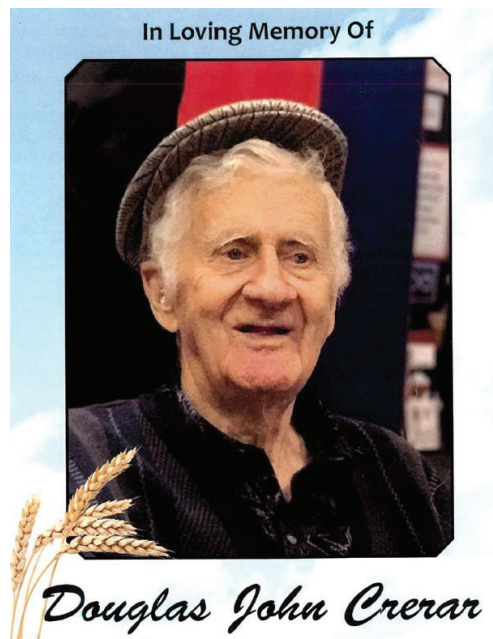


Theo Peters, Sylvia Johnson, Kelinda MacRoberts, Tyler Fetch, Carol Ridsdale, and Garrett Tomlinson at the Region VI office in Peace River.

If you're in Region 6, be sure to stop by the office located at 9621 90 Ave in Peace River, Alberta and say hello. The children of Region 6 have also been busy creating artwork representing unique aspects of Métis culture.



Artwork created by Region 6 children.



Métis Nation of Alberta was saddened to hear the news of Doug Crerar's passing on December 9, 2017.

Born the youngest of nine children, on August 28, 1929, Doug spent his life in Grande Prairie, Alberta with his beloved wife of 50 years Angie Crerar and their 11 children. Doug worked in farming, building, forestry, and road construction.

Being a lover of the outdoors, you could always count on Doug to have sweet-pea flowers growing and a hardy vegetable garden to match. Hunting, camping, and berry picking were other ways Doug enjoyed exploring the wilderness surrounding Grande Prairie.

Those who knew Doug, knew him to be a gentle man with a strong laugh. He was active in the community showing continued support for his wife, by volunteering at the Red Cross, Friendship Centres, Métis Local, or Elders Caring Shelter.

Doug was also committed to spending time with his grandchildren and great grandchildren driving them to practices, work, cadets and other activities. He also enjoyed getting together with friends, and spending time doing crossword puzzles, Sudoku, and playing bingo.

The MNA would like to extend our deepest condolences to Doug's family and friends.



# In Memoriam

## Remembering Lloyd Hamilton: 1931-2018

On January 30, 2018 the Métis Nation of Alberta was deeply saddened to learn of William Lloyd Hamilton's passing.

Born on December 7, 1931 in Calgary, Alberta, Lloyd was the eldest of five children. It was also in Calgary, where he raised three children with his loving wife Carolyn.

Lloyd's ideals led him to enlist with the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps and he departed for Korea, on April 30, 1953, aboard the US troopship General Patrick.

During his service in Korea, Lloyd practiced his beliefs of aiding those in need, a reward far beyond anything imagined. "It was an eye opener, I wasn't aware of many things till I got there. I learnt a lot about other people. I don't regret going there even though it meant

seeing a lot of unhappy things, because it made me a better person to see how life isn't always what its cut out to be." His empathy and strong sense of idealism saw him awarded with the Disciples World Peace Medal for his act of humanitarian effort. After his service in the Korean War, Lloyd taught in both England and Calgary until 1991.

Over many years, Mr. Hamilton donated many items to the Métis Nation of Alberta, which are proudly displayed in the Historical Museum at the Provincial Office. With each donation, he took the time to hand-write a description of each piece's origin and significance. The Métis Nation of Alberta would like to extend our deepest condolences to Lloyd's family and friends. We have lost a proud Métis Veteran and an admirable member of our community.



Lloyd Hamilton 1931 – 2018

# Mark Your Calendar

## St. Albert – Sturgeon County Métis Local

**Date:** Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month: April 19, & May 17, 2018

**Time:** 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

**Location:** St. Albert Community Information and Volunteer Centre  
10-215 Carnegie Drive, St. Albert, AB

### We are working on:

1. Culture
2. Business
3. Youth Engagement
4. Social Gatherings including St. Albert National Indigenous Day, Métis Week, and Children's Christmas Party

For more information, please contact Tom Ghostkeeper, President of St. Albert – Sturgeon County Métis Local by calling (587) 986 - 6426 or by emailing [tomghost@telus.net](mailto:tomghost@telus.net).

## Esquao Awards 2018

**Date:** Friday, April 27, 2018

**Time:** Doors 4:30 pm, Ceremony 5:30pm

**Location:** River Cree Resort & Casino  
300 East Lapotac Blvd, Enoch, Alberta

**Tickets:** \$109 + GST (individual), \$1,000 + GST (10 seat table)

The Esquao Awards are regarded as one of the most prestigious events in Alberta for recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of Aboriginal women.

## The Hills are Alive Music & Dance Cultural Festival

**Date:** June 6-10, 2018

**Location:** Eagles Nest Ranch, Elkwater AB

Become immersed in Métis culture in the beautiful Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park. Various cultural workshops available all weekend.

For more information, please call [Marina Greier](tel:4035260756) at (403) 526 - 0756





**STAY UP TO DATE**



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