

# Otipemisiwak

VOICE OF THE MÉTIS NATION IN ALBERTA



## Hunting on Private Land



Otipemisiwak:  
oh-t-paym'-soo-wuk

Michif:  
"their own boss,  
the independent ones"

**Feature Photo (left):**

Alison Boudreau of the Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement Dancers is captured in mid air while dancing during the Métis Settlement's Farewell Dinner for Ralph Klein.  
Photo by Monique Devlin

**On Our Cover:**

Artist unknown, Photo by Monique Devlin

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# Otipemisiwak

*The Voice of the Métis Nation in Alberta*

Otipemisiwak is the only Official Magazine of the Métis Nation of Alberta

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Edmonton, AB T5G 0X5  
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Website: [www.albertametis.com](http://www.albertametis.com)

Otipemisiwak is published bi-monthly.

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Advertising rates are posted on page 34 of the magazine, or can be obtained by contacting Otipemisiwak.

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Otipemisiwak welcomes written and photographic submissions. The editor retains the right to edit or reject all copy and photographs.

If Undeliverable, Deliver to #100 Delia Gray Building, 11738 Kingsway Avenue Edmonton, AB T5G 0X5  
CANADIAN PUBLICATION AGREEMENT NUMBER 40985503


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KiwiLynx Consulting

Printing: Douglas Printing

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 Canadian Heritage Patrimoine canadien



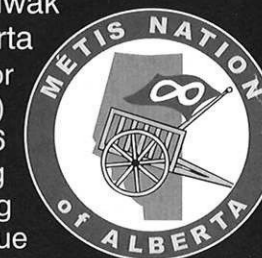
# Otipemisiwak

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We encourage Métis to make submissions to our Nation's official magazine in the form of photos and articles telling stories about the events and people in your community.

Deadline for submissions is February 9th, 2007

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# President's Message

Welcome friends, colleagues and fellow Métis to the year-end 2006 edition of Otipemisiwak – Voice of the Métis Nation of Alberta.

As 2006 ends, I have been thinking about all of the things that have happened during the last 12 months. This last year has been a particularly interesting one on a political level. We watched the changeover of the ruling party in Ottawa shift from a Liberal to a Conservative Government. As with any change, there have been some uncertainties and rough patches, but we have been working together with the new Government and have been receiving some very positive feedback.

There has also been a major shift in the Alberta political landscape as Ralph Klein left the Premier's office after 14 years to make way for our new Premier, Ed Stelmach. I look forward to working with Premier Stelmach in 2007 and I am optimistic that we will continue the excellent working relationship with Premier Stelmach that we had with former Premier Klein.

We have also seen an amazing

addition to an already incredible story. This year, both Kim Mueller and her husband, Shane Turvey, became RCMP officers. While it is incredible that husband and wife have both committed to serving their communities, the amazing part comes from the fact that Kim's two sisters, Holly and Jennifer, are already members. As far as anyone knows, this is the first time three sisters have all been members of the force (there have been other male sibling groups). The fact that they are all proud Métis women makes it even more special. I would like to congratulate the Mueller family and wish them all the best in their chosen careers.

Unfortunately, with the passing of time often comes the passing on of people. I want to offer my deepest sympathies to all of our readers who have lost a friend or loved one this past year. Four people spring to mind with particular impact, but I am sure there are many more. Our respected Elder and Veteran Vic Letendre, the beloved Gerald White who worked so long and hard with our youth, Ray McKenzie, a prolific musician and the President of the Region IV Blue

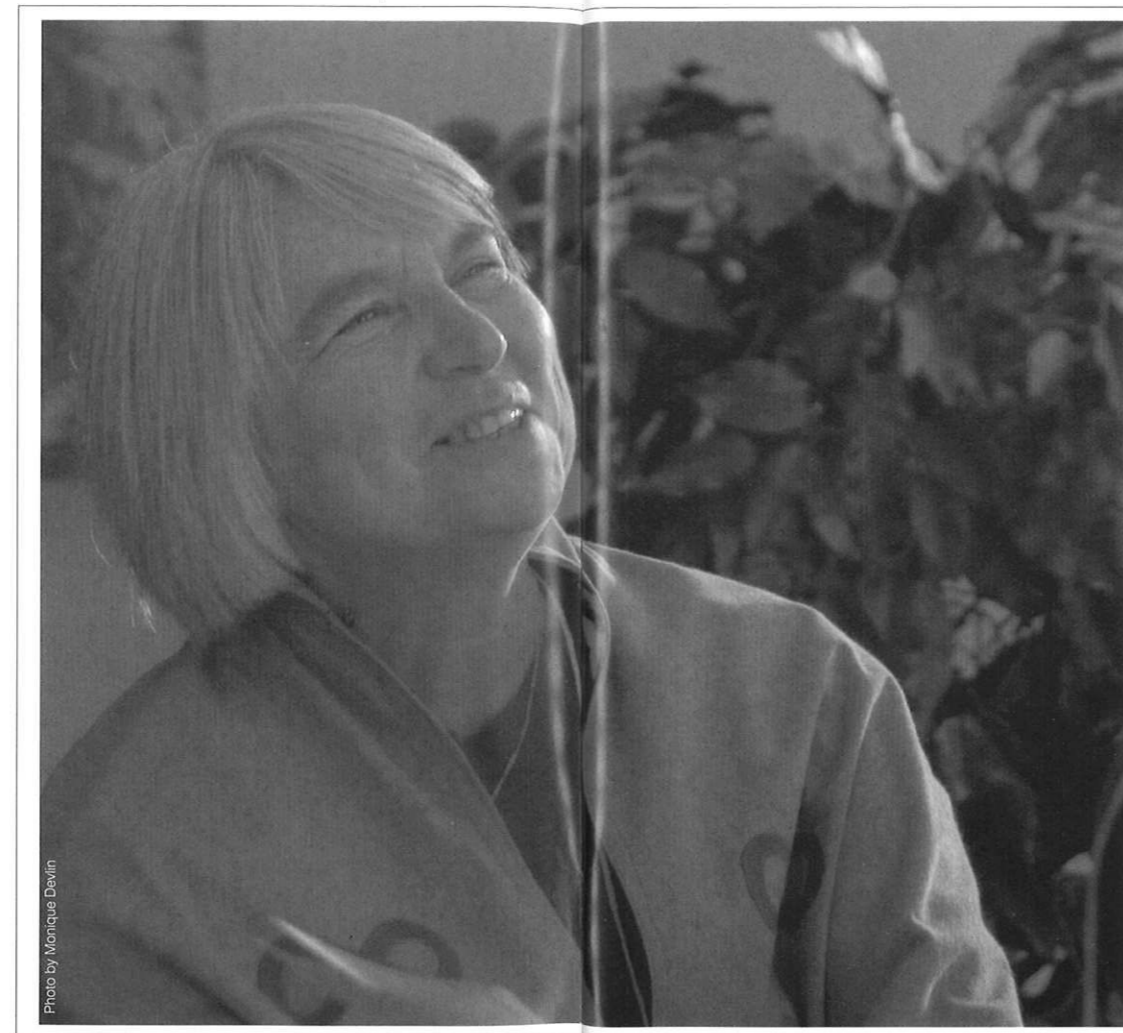


Photo by Monique Devlin

Ridge Local, and very recently, the renowned fiddle player Caroline Von Grad (Auntie Caroline). All three were known across this province and their presence will be missed.

Some wonderful celebrations of Métis culture happened in 2006. Just recently, we celebrated Métis week,

everything we have accomplished since then. It is important for us to not only remember our great leader, but to speak of him to our families, our children and our grandchildren and celebrate his life and the life of all Métis people across the homeland.

We also saw the opening of "Métis Trail" in Calgary. This is a major road within the city and the naming represents a new level of acceptance in the minds of Calgarians.

The year ahead looks even more exciting. We hope to wrap up the negotiations with the Province of Alberta in relation to our Harvesting Agreement sometime in the New Year. Stay tuned for further information as we will be conducting another round of Harvester consultations in the months to come.

I would like to take this time to invite our readers to the "Strengthening Métis Communities" conference on February 7-9 in Edmonton. The conference is an excellent opportunity for all Métis citizens to connect with various supports available within their community. I hope to see many of our readers there. Also this spring, we will be officially renaming the Inglewood Building the Métis Veterans Memorial Building. While the date is not yet set, it should be happening in either March or April.

It would also be a good idea to block off August 16-19 on your calendars, as that is when we will be holding our Annual General

Assembly in St. Paul.

Christmas is one of my favourite times of year. While the cold weather and snow can be quite a challenge, this is also the time of year to spend with friends and family. I hope you all have the chance to visit with friends and relatives over the holiday season, but please stay safe this year.

To the MNA staff - I hope you enjoy this break, you have certainly earned it and I hope to see everybody well rested and refreshed in the New Year.

To our Elders - thank you for your wisdom and guidance thought the year; you truly are our Nation's most valuable resource

To you, the Métis Citizens - you are the Métis Nation of Alberta. It is your hard work and continued support throughout the year that makes everything we do possible.

On behalf of myself, and the Provincial Council, thank you and have a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Respectfully,

*Audrey Poitras*  
Audrey Poitras, President  
Métis Nation of Alberta

# Greetings from the Provincial Vice-President

Tansi N'totamak.

May Peace be your gift at Christmas and your blessing all year through! Today, if you are reading my Christmas message, I hope you will take the time to reflect on the blessings that you, your family and your community have been given. I have always thought of Christmas time as a time when people everywhere seem to think of other people in a kind, forgiving and charitable way. I trust that this is true for you and your loved ones.

As this 2006 draws to a close, I have taken the time to reflect and give thanks for the support I have received from my family, friends and colleagues. It has been a busy year for me - a year full of learning and determination to fulfill my role as your Provincial Vice President to the fullest.

As I visited with you in your communities, thank you for the way you have welcomed me into your homes. I feel especially privileged when you take the time to give me your feedback and input regarding my role in the Métis Nation government.

I wish to thank my colleagues on the Provincial Council for your continued support and continuing to mentor me. To our Métis Elders, our Métis youth and children, thank you for continuing to believe and participating in our Nation.

I want to especially take this time to acknowledge and honor our Métis veterans and extend my heartfelt appreciation for your unstinting sacrifice, a sacrifice that today ensures that we live in a free country. On November 11, I had the privilege of participating in the Remembrance Day ceremonies at the University of Alberta Butterdome. It truly was a celebration of remembrance. It saddens me to experience the noticeable absence of yet more of our Métis Veterans.

To the families of these Métis vets, I extend my condolences and best wishes. I know you will miss having your loved ones share your Christmas meal this year. Know this, that they will be fondly remembered by all of us.

2006 has been another successful year for the Métis Nation of Alberta. Work continues on our Métis Cultural Site at Métis Crossing. Once again this past summer we hosted our guests and visitors in a showcase of Métis traditional celebrations. If you have not visited Métis Crossing, let 2007 be the year that you will visit this wonderful site.

The 78<sup>th</sup> Annual Assembly was hosted by the Métis people of Region 1. As we gathered together to deliberate the business of our Nation, we had the opportunity to meet with old friends and colleagues for some good old fashioned cultural and traditional celebrations. Hats off to the folks of Region 1 for a job well done - remember that next year it will be Region 2's turn.

I look forward to the New Year with hopeful anticipation. There is a lot of work yet to be done, new relationships to establish, new challenges to take on. I am comforted to know that I can continue to count on your support. In turn, I pledge to continue working just as hard for you.

I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I hope you will too.

Merry Christmas and the very best in the New Year.

Trevor Gladue, Provincial Vice President



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feel like a pink day.*

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# Strengthening Our Métis Rights

## Harvesters: Plan Ahead

By Monique Devlin



While this harvesting season has proved to be a relatively smooth one under the current Interim Harvesting Agreement, Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) minister of Citizenship and Rights Cecil Bellrose is concerned Métis harvesters are still being charged with hunting while on private

property. "It is unfortunate, but my office has seen several charges filed against harvesters who either didn't know they needed permission to hunt on the land they were on, or mistakenly thought they were on crown land," Bellrose said. Under the current interim agreement, harvesters are allowed

to hunt on private property, if they have the permission of the landholder to do so. "It is not enough to think you have permission. It is up to each harvester to contact the land owner, and while it is not necessary, it would be even better to receive that permission in writing if at all possible," Bellrose said.

Bellrose is also concerned that harvesters are getting permission from the wrong landowner and either confusing one property for another, or following game between property lines. While he admits it is impossible for a harvester to predict the movements of an injured animal, it is still considered trespassing to follow an animal from one property

to another. Harvesters are encouraged to look at all the possibilities when planning to hunt on or near private property and get all of the necessary permissions. Harvesters who are found hunting on private property without permission risk having not only their food confiscated, but their guns and vehicle as well.

Ron Jones, a Métis trapper and hunter presents Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) President, Audrey Poitras with a donation to the Harvesters Legal Defence Fund. The Fund was started by the MNA to offset the legal fees in harvesting relating court costs.



### MNA HARVESTERS LEGAL DEFENCE FUND




**Send your donation to:**  
**MNA Harvesters Legal Defence Fund**  
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The Métis Nation of Alberta needs your help! Métis harvesters are being forced into Alberta's courts to defend their constitutional right to harvest for food. The MNA Harvesters Legal Defence Fund has been established in order to help offset the costs associated with this defence.

# Métis History and Identity

By Sonja McGee

At the end of September, the Genealogy and Lands Research Unit attended the first annual Gabriel Dumont Conference: Métis History and Identity, held in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Organized and managed by a team of head professors and local sponsors, the event was a three day affair that honoured the life of Gabriel Dumont through literary works, historical presentations and stimulating conversation. The images of history, legacy and tribute were cast within a landscape of contemporary values and visions, culminating an experience that provoked thought while instilling pride.

Arriving early on the morning of Wednesday September 20<sup>th</sup>, the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Genealogy Research department had the opportunity to spend a full day extracting material and resources from the Manitoba Hudson's Bay Company Archives. Amazed and intrigued at the incredibly vast array of historical documentation, the Research Team put on the white gloves and got to work digging through old

biographies, diaries and pictures.

Using the biographies of HBC company workers, we were able to find specific historical data that we later documented and digitized for our Resource Centre. Adding to our ever-growing collections, we were also able to take away numerous copies of photographs documenting Métis people, places and historical events.

On Thursday morning, with a little time to spare before registration, the research team headed to the St. Boniface Historical Centre. Browsing the databases, community books and photograph collection, the team was able to collect even more resources to add to

the Genealogy and Lands Research Centre.

Although it would have been nice to spend all of our time researching old archives, we were anxious to be among the fifty other conference attendants taking part in the activities and lectures. Opening the conference from the University of Laval and Canada Research Chair on Heritage, was Laurier Turgeon, who gave an overview of the theories of cultural transformations surrounding Métis people. Discussing the ideas surrounding multiculturalism, hybridization and the politics of *Métissage*, Professor Turgeon's introduction and keynote address touched on many concepts that would be presented and discussed in the coming days.

The second day of the conference centred more on the emblems and historical figures of Métis culture and tradition, especially in the vestiges of the life and historical significance of Gabriel Dumont.

In a relevant and controversial context, Nathalie Kermoal from the University of Alberta discussed the historical significance of the bison

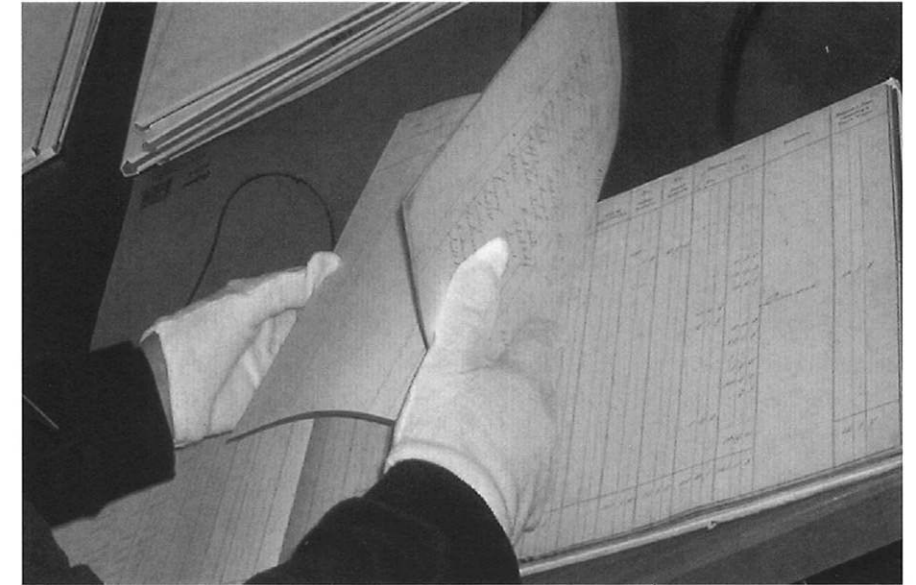
hunt and its meaning within the contemporary context of the *Powley* decision. She noted that there were three important stages in the historical bison hunt which today speak to the immediacy and significance of the *Powley* decision. Although centuries of historical legislation failed to recognize the Métis as a distinct group, the *Powley* decision has altered history and will continue to forge new legislation for Métis people in the future.

In another session, students and professors examined the identity of Métis literature through poetic and academic discourses.

As a highlight of the conference, it was an honour and privilege to hear special guest and keynote speaker Marilyn Dumont read several excerpts from her personal and published collection of poems. Captivating audiences around the country, her poems are a significant and prominent voice in Canadian literature; one that she hopes will continue to be preserved and supported in and through the works of young Métis writers.

In the final session and keynote conclusion to the conference, Frank Tough and his team of researchers from the University of Alberta presented their work on the Métis Archival Project.

Forming his team in 1999, Dr. Frank Tough began conducting research in support of Métis land

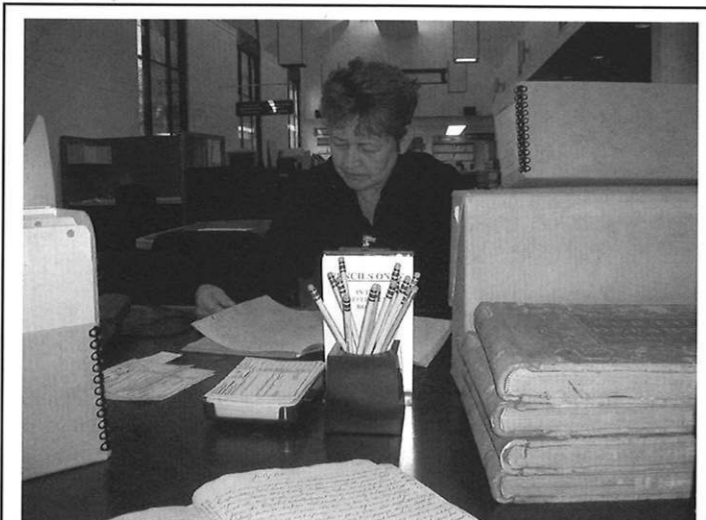


claims. For the last several years, the research group, which is based at the School of Native Studies, has been meticulously archiving documents in an effort to help Métis people and academics to understand Métis history. While making genealogical records accessible to not only Métis people researching their ancestors, his team is also developing the Métis National Council Historic Database that will be accessible and available over the Internet.

On Saturday evening, with a stack of notes and lingering ideas, the Research team headed home. With what felt like a re-introduction to Métis history, identity and contemporary tradition, the conference succeeded in providing

delegates with not only a variety of speakers, but a collection of ideas, research and knowledge. Among the books, photographs and historical data brought back to the Resource Centre, the research team will fondly preserve and remember the experience the Gabriel Dumont Conference gave them.

*Editor's Note: Sonja McGee was the assistant to Beatrice Demetrius, the Manager of Genealogy and Land Resources for the Métis Nation of Alberta. Since writing this article, she has left to pursue other interests. We would like to extend a warm welcome to her replacement, Stacey Jackman.*



Beatrice Demetrius, the manager of Genealogy and Land Resources, examines documents during the conference.

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# Independent Oversight Committee

By Monique Devlin

Marilyn Poitras, a member of the Independent Oversight Committee assisting in facilitation of the next leadership election for the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) and David Hamilton, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), toured the Métis Nation of Alberta Membership Identification and Registry (MIR) unit in October. The Oversight Committee will oversee the implementation and management of all aspects of the next MN-S election and the pair hoped to learn more about the steps the MNA MIR Unit has taken to ensure the proper identification of its members.



From left to right: Rhonda Franson (MIR Operations Manager), Irene Collins (MIR Director), Beatrice Demetrius (Genealogy and Lands Research Manager), MNA President Audrey Poitras, Marilyn Poitras, David Hamilton and Margaret-Anne McCulloch (MIR Information Management Manager)

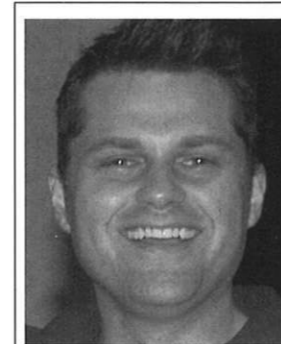
## The MNA Extends Welcome to Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach

The Métis Nation of Alberta would like to welcome and congratulate our new Premier, Ed Stelmach, who has taken over the leadership of the Alberta Provincial Government from Ralph Klein. We have had an excellent relationship with Mr Klein, and expect that to continue during Premier Stelmach's reign in office. We look forward to working with the new Premier in the new year.



Photo courtesy the Government of Alberta

# Harvesting Agreement Update



by Jason Madden

Negotiations between the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) and the province are on-going with respect to a longer-term Métis Harvesting Agreement. Since the last update in *Otipemisiwak*, the MNA's negotiations team has met with Alberta's negotiators as well as the Provincial Council in order to update them on progress. It is expected that beginning in the New Year, consultations will take place in order to discuss the status of the negotiations and developments with community members across the province.

On December 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>, the Kipp Kelley appeal will be heard by the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench in Edmonton. This appeal will be important to all Alberta Métis because the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement (IMHA) is at issue. At trial, Judge Norheim found that the IMHA did not provide Mr. Kelley a legal defence, even though he found that Mr. Kelley is Métis and was trapping within the terms of the IMHA. We will be arguing that the IMHA, as an interim accommodation agreement entered into between the MNA and Alberta, does provide a legal defence for eligible Métis harvesters. Further, we will be arguing that the honour of the Crown is at stake in ensuring Alberta fulfills the terms and promise of the IMHA to Métis harvesters. Additional information on the Kelley appeal can be obtained by contacting the MNA.

Finally, litigation on Métis harvesting rights continues to move forward across the Homeland. The *R. v. Goodon* case in Manitoba is set to go back to court in March 2007. We are optimistic that we will obtain a decision on that case in the summer in advance of the next fall harvest. As well, in January 2007, the Métis Nation of Ontario, in the *R. v. Laurin and Lemieux* case, will be back in court to defend its Harvesting Agreement with the Government of Ontario. Similar to the Kelley case, the Métis Nation of Ontario's case will create new law with respect to agreements between Métis and governments that accommodate Métis harvesting practices. In future articles, I will provide updates on the outcomes of these cases as well.

## Métis Harvesting Rights in Alberta

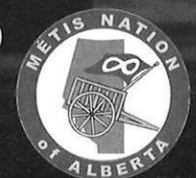


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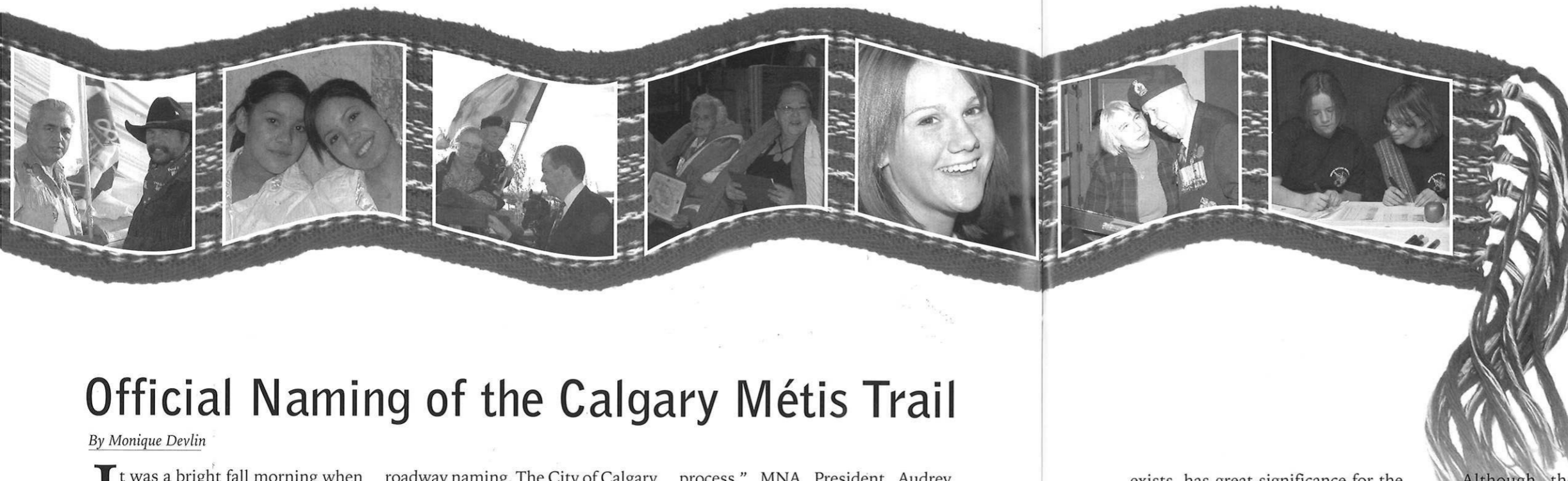
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# Building the Métis Nation of Alberta



## Official Naming of the Calgary Métis Trail

By Monique Devlin

It was a bright fall morning when a procession of Red River carts and traditionally dressed Métis trekked through a Northeast Calgary park in celebration of the newly named Métis trail.

The roadway (much of which is still being built) encompasses 36th and 44th streets as they stretch north of McKnight Boulevard and is expected to become a main artery for much of the new development in the city's northeast.

After the procession a number of dignitaries spoke, including Calgary Mayor Dave Bronconnier, Director of Roads Mac Logan, Alderman Helen Larocque (whose riding contains most of the new roadway), Métis National Council President Clément Chartier, Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) President Audrey Poitras and MNA Region III President, Marlene Lanz.

"I feel very excited, I feel very honoured," Lanz said. "Not for myself but for the Métis people. The Métis people deserve this, they helped build this city and it is just the most wonderful thing that could happen to us at this time."

Lanz, MNA Region III Vice President Joe Chodzicki and past MNA Region III President, Ephram Bouvier are all credited with working with the city to bring about the

roadway naming. The City of Calgary has a strong history of naming major roadways after Aboriginal people who used to populate Southern Alberta, and by naming this stretch of road Métis Trail the city is offering a form of recognition to the Métis people.

"I have always been impressed by the foresight shown by the city of Calgary in their road naming

process," MNA President Audrey Poitras said. "By giving high profile roads names that reflect the city's Aboriginal heritage, Calgary is keeping its history alive."

The Métis have a rich history in Calgary, which has one of the top ten concentrations of Métis people outside of the Red River area. The geographical positioning of 36 St. N.E. and 44 St. N.E. as it currently

exists, has great significance for the Métis as an historic north-south corridor, part of an historic network of supply routes.

"It is Calgary City Council's pleasure to formally announce this roadway and to formally recognize the contribution of the Métis people in the development of Calgary." Calgary Mayor Dave Bronconnier said during the ceremony.

Although the Calgary City Council originally agreed to name the roadway Métis Trail on June 19th, the next day the council voted to reconsider the decision because of complaints put forward by concerned community members.

Almost immediately there was a backlash to the council's flip-flop. Columns appeared in both city newspapers slamming the revised

decision and letters and editorial cartoons sprung up defending the Métis and their history in the city. When city council voted again on the issue July 17, it was unanimous - the name Métis Trail was going to stay.

"Controversy is not always a bad thing," Poitras said about the uproar. "It got people talking about the Métis, about our history, how vital the Calgary area was to our trade routes, and how vital we were to the opening and settling of the prairies, including this great city."

To conclude the ceremony, Lanz presented sashes to John Parkins who helped advise Region III on the process of getting the trail named after the Métis, Alderman Larocque and to Mayor Bronconnier.

"Our president here in Calgary presented him (Mayor Bronconnier) with a sash a few years ago when they opened their new building, but he keeps it at home, so I am going to give him a sash to keep in his office, so whenever he has a Métis function he is not going to be seen not wearing a sash."

To conclude the ceremony, a small version of the Métis Trail sign was unveiled and given to Lanz, and everyone moved inside to celebrate with a small lunch, dancing and fiddle music.



Inset above: Marlene Lanz presents Mayor Bronconnier with a sash, one that she expects him to wear to any Métis event he attends in the future.

Inset above: MNA President Audrey Poitras, MNA Region III Vice President Joe Chodzicki and MNA Region III President Marlene Lanz pose with the small Métis Trail sign in front of the road itself.



# Working with Aboriginal Communities

By Monique Devlin

The Metis Nation of Alberta (MNA) is the second time the MNA has hosted one of these sessions, which are offered throughout the Province on an on-going basis. hosted a two-day Working With Aboriginal Communities delegate training session for Alberta Children Services (ACS). All front line workers (those who make first contact with children using the services) working with ACS must complete these modules which range in topic from Legislative process to suicide prevention. This

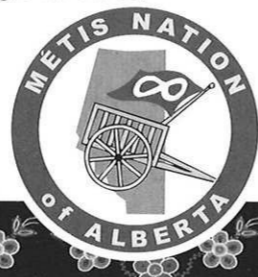


## The Scholarship and Bursary Handbook

The "Scholarship and Bursary Handbook for Metis Students" is for information purposes in regards to accessing funding sources for employment training and continuing education.

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- Awards for Aboriginal Students
- Public and Private Sector Awards
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for Métis Students

# Métis Veterans Memorial Building

By Monique Devlin



On Remembrance Day, the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) announced a project that will help keep Métis veterans in the hearts and minds of the people of Edmonton everyday of the year.

During the third Annual Tribute Jamboree to Aboriginal Veterans, Homer Poitras, Minister of Veterans and Seniors, revealed plans to rename the MNA-owned Inglewood Building the Métis Veterans Memorial Building.

"At the Métis Nation of Alberta, we feel that our Veterans should be remembered and honoured not just on one day, but on all days," Poitras said. "What is the best way to remember someone or something? By having a reminder, a reminder that you see everyday."

The announcement came as a surprise to Veterans who had gathered to enjoy the Jamboree which was hosted by Metis Matters, Métis Child and Family Services, Apeetogosan and the Aboriginal Veterans Society of Alberta.

"It is a great honour that the MNA would have a building named for our Métis Veterans," Jack White, president of the Aboriginal Veterans Society said. "This will long live for many many years, and on behalf of the Aboriginal Veterans Society of Alberta, I would like to humbly thank the MNA for all they have



Top: A stylized photo of the Inglewood Building, presented to the Aboriginal Veterans Association.

Middle: Jack White (left) and Bob Berard look at a rendition of the Inglewood Building, which will soon be named the Métis Veterans Memorial Building

Above: The third annual Aboriginal Veterans Jamboree was a huge hit. A packed house listened to live music and ate fresh stew and bannock.

done for us and in particular for naming this building after the Métis Veterans."

The formal celebration of the naming will take place this spring, but in the meantime, a picture of the Inglewood Building was presented to the Aboriginal Veterans Society.

Purchased by the MNA in 1999, the Inglewood building is located near downtown Edmonton at 12308

- 111 Avenue. It houses a wide range of tenants including; Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc., Pinnacle Business Services, Métis Employment Services (Region IV), Alberta Child and Family Services (Region IV), Edmonton City Police Economic Crime Section and Auto theft unit, MNA Judiciary Council and Clean Scene.

# Mobile MES Unveiling

By Monique Devlin

During the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) open house on November 16<sup>th</sup>, officials from Human Resources Development Canada and the Alberta Government attended the ribbon cutting ceremony for the latest innovation from the MNA Labour Market Development (LMD) Unit.

The ceremony officially unveiled the Mobile Metis Employment Services (MES) 36' wheel chair accessible unit, dubbed the *Coureur De Bois* (runner of the woods) that has been custom-designed to replicate a Métis Employment Service (MES) office. It comes complete with client workstations, computers, wireless internet access, a display of labour

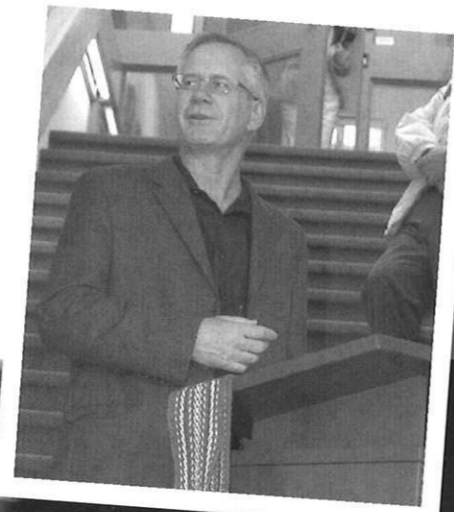
market information, and a counselling office complete with a MES Employment Counsellor.

"I would like to congratulate the MNA," said Neil Irvine, Assistant Deputy Minister, Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE). "Things like this set the standard that all the other people in this area [employment services] will have to try and meet."

While there are already 16 MES offices spread throughout the province, distances in Alberta are vast and it is often difficult for clients located in remote locations to access the MES office within their region. The Mobile MES will travel throughout the province, stopping in different communities and connecting with people who are

looking to further develop their career skills.

"It extends our service delivery network to remote locations across the province where some of our clients typically do not have access to our services," MNA President Audrey Poitras said about the exciting new project.



Photos by Monique Devlin



Above: MNA President Audrey Poitras and Ralph Bellstedt, the Alberta Regional Coordinator for Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy cut the Ribbon to officially unveil the Mobile MES to the public  
Inset: Neil Irvine, from Alberta Human Resources and Employment, speaks about the benefits of the Mobile MES during the unveiling ceremony.



# Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards

By Monique Devlin

It is not easy being a post secondary student. Papers, exams and teachers rule your life and for many students, part time jobs and penny pinching are par for course.

That is why the Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards are such an important institution for Métis students pursuing an education after high school. Established through the Edmonton Community Foundation in 2001, the Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards have assisted more than 300 Métis students realize their education and career goals. To date, this endowment fund has disbursed more than \$1.2 million in bursaries and awards.

Much of the money for the awards comes from the assets of the Canative Housing Corporation. The Scholarships are awarded to Métis youth and mature students in financial need who are resident in Alberta and wanting to pursue post-secondary education and/or training in Alberta (including trade related courses).

### Photo Captions

Top: The recipients of the Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards pose with the award founders, Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Region IV Elder Marge Friedel and members of the RCMP

Upper Left: (left to right) Edmonton Mayor Stephen Mandel and award Founder Herb Belcourt look on as MNA President Audrey Poitras congratulates Nursing student Shannon Bentley

Left: Award Founders (from left to right) Dr. Herb Belcourt, Orval Belcourt and Georges Brosseau stand behind the newly-revealed new logo for the Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards

Bottom Left: Melanie Parsons, a Public Relations student, receives a sash from MNA Region IV Elder Marge Friedel



Photos by Monique Devlin

# 2nd Annual R3 Seniors Gathering



Photo by Monique Devlin



Photo by Monique Devlin



Photo by Wallace Vandale

By Monique Devlin

As a follow up to their Youth and Elders Conference in the spring, the Métis Nation of Alberta Region III held a day-long Seniors Gathering to cap off Métis Week.

Elders from across the province were invited to attend the free conference. Participants attended various workshops aimed at giving Elders the chance to keep up with changes in government programs, safety and fraud issues, and information on what kinds of employment options are available for those over 55.

"We had people from the provincial and federal governments come in and talk to our Elders about what kinds of benefits are available" Marlene Lanz, MNA Region III president said. "A lot of people think the only thing available to them is their old age benefits, but there are all sorts of other benefits that they don't apply for because they don't know about them."

The Seniors Gathering is a response to the Youth and Elders conference held in Calgary in the spring, where Elders pass on some of their life experiences and wisdom to help young people deal with many of the challenges they face growing up. The gathering is a way to thank the Elders, and possibly pass some new knowledge their way.

"The Youth and Elders conference was more focussed towards the youth, While this one is more focussed towards the Elders" Lanz said. " We have the youth here helping take care of the Elders by helping pour coffee or getting their lunches. I think it is always important to take care of our Elders, they are the ones who are guiding us. They have the experience, but they can also be very vulnerable. I think it

Top: (From left to right) Sharon Braglin, Alyce Parisen and Magee Shaw enjoy one of the workshops.

Middle: They didn't have Métis rhythm or coordination but the crowd loved the enthusiastic dancing of the Medicine Wheel Jiggers (none of whom were more than four years old)

Above: youth volunteers kept things running smoothly during the gathering helping serve the Elders food and refreshments. (From left to right) Kaitlin Read, Destiny Mesceseau, Jordan Sloane, Kenny Read, Matthew McDougall, Roderick Wottunee-Eberlein.

is very important to take care of our seniors and also to bring them together so they can mingle."

The day was topped off with a Senior's banquet (free to those 55 and over) complete with tiny jiggers from the Medicine Wheel Jiggers and the Region III Youth Dancers, a much more seasoned troupe. After dinner, guests were treated to story teller, Robert Willis. Acting as Gabriel Dumont, he led the room through some of the events leading up to the resistance of 1885. To finish off the night, Bill Baergen, acting as Louis Riel, gave the crowd a taste of Riel's closing arguments before his sentencing on August 1, 1885.



Photo by Monique Devlin

Robert Willis talks about the role rifles played in the days leading up to the resistance of 1885.

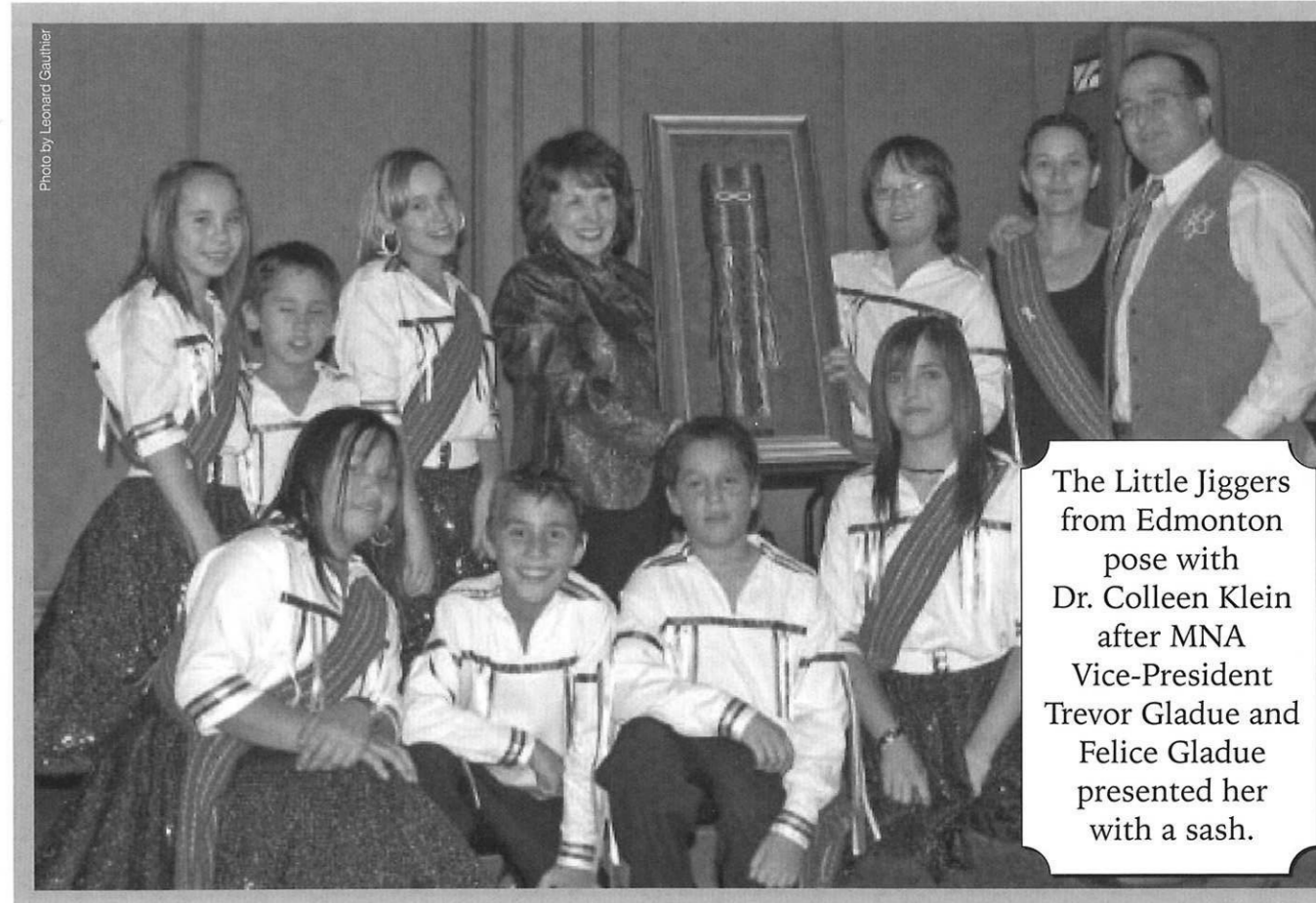


Photo by Leonard Gauthier

The Little Jiggers from Edmonton pose with Dr. Colleen Klein after MNA Vice-President Trevor Gladue and Felice Gladue presented her with a sash.

# Métis Week in Edmonton

By Monique Devlin

**M**étis week took the Capital City by storm this year. For eight days (there was just too much going on for only seven), people in Edmonton celebrated their Métis culture, opened their doors to the community and reflected on the struggles and triumphs of the Métis people.

The focus of the week was Riel Day (November 16<sup>th</sup>) where a special commemorative ceremony was held at the Alberta Legislature Building. The ceremony marked the anniversary of Riel's execution in 1885, and is a yearly testament to the commitment shared by the Métis people to promote the legacy of Riel.

"It is important as time passes on, to remember Louis Riel was a real person with hopes, dreams and aspirations like the rest of us," Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) President Audrey Poitras said during the event. "Louis himself knew best of all the sacrifices he was making. To ensure that we would be here today, proudly asserting our Métis identity, our Métis history, and our Métis culture."

Following the March of Colours, dance and fiddle demonstrations, the highlight of the ceremony was the inaugural viewing

of a special multimedia presentation of "Riel's Métis Soldiers," which looked at the men behind the great leader. After the ceremony, everyone was invited to an open house at the MNA head Office to meet the staff and attend a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Mobile Métis

Employment Services.

The Delia Gray Gala completed the day, where the late matriarch was celebrated with the recognition of other matriarchs and the presentation of scholarships in her name.

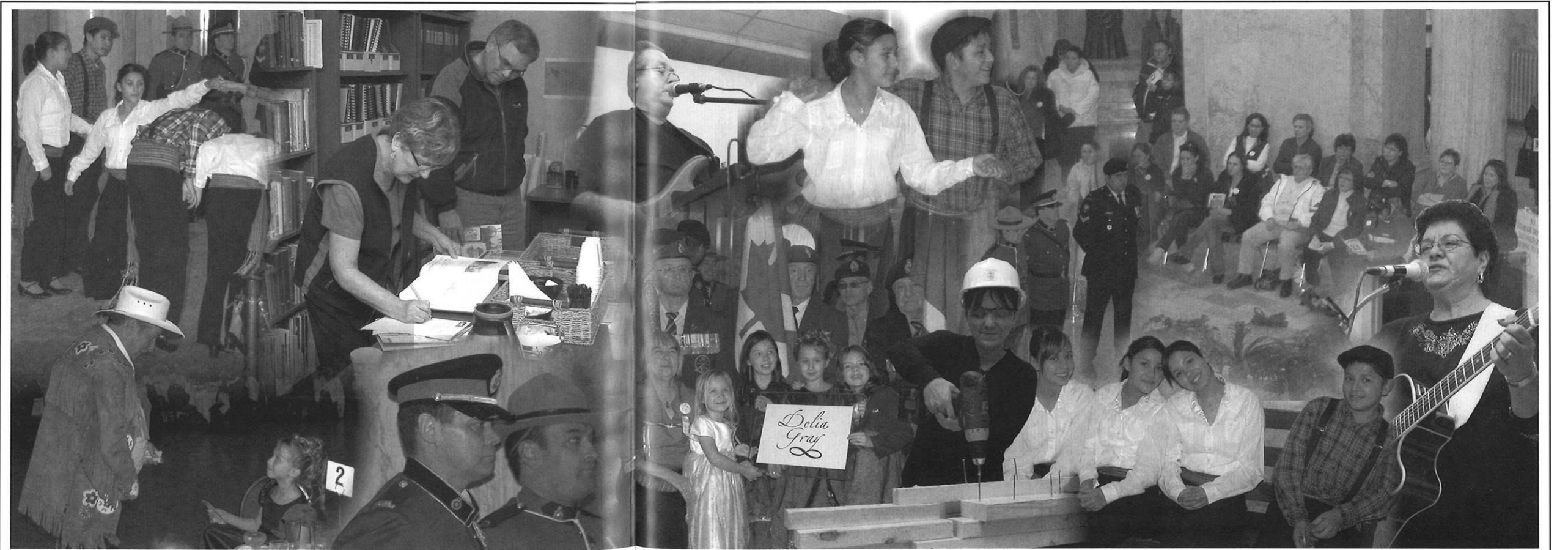
Other events of the week

included a special mass that was held at Sacred Heart Parish, where one of our youth, Luke Kaup revealed the official 2006 Métis Week pin he designed last year as part of a poster-making contest. An official raising of the Métis flag was held at Edmonton City Hall, and

Region IV, Trade Winds to Success Training Society, Apeetogosan, The Edmonton Métis Employment Centre, Métis Judiciary Council, and Métis Urban Housing all held open houses.

The new Genealogy and Land Resource Centre held its grand

opening and there was a career fair held in conjunction with Human Resources and Employment, Service Canada and Oteenow Employment and Training Society. Region IV held its annual meeting and a strategic planning session to finish the week off.



# Celebrating Our History and Future

By Charity Borg

The leaders for multiculturalism and understanding in Canada are the Métis people, according to those who spoke at the Métis Week proclamation at Edmonton City Hall.

The raising of the Metis flag on November 14, 2006 at Edmonton

City Hall, to commemorate Métis week, attracted Métis political and community leaders.

"The Métis are working hard to build a better life for their neighbours... their Nation," said provincial official opposition leader Kevin Taft. "It's an exciting time to recognize the Métis people of

Alberta. The Métis experience has shown us how different cultures and experiences can work for the greater good."

The heroism of Louis Riel was a reference point for many speakers who talked about how by not settling for the status-quo, he furthered the progress of Canada's respect for cultural diversity.

"Louis Riel is revered for his leadership," said Ron Hayter, Edmonton city councillor. Hayter was attending on behalf of Mayor Stephen Mandel who was in China.

Riel's values from over 100 years ago are still as important today as when he fought for Métis rights in the 1800s. Métis week partially reflects on Riel's heroism.

"We pay special attention to our hero Louis Riel for the contributions and the sacrifices he made for Métis People," said Audrey Poitras, President of the Métis Nation of Alberta.

Métis week is also a time to celebrate the achievements of the youth, elders, and everyone between. Over 100 people attended the flag raising at city hall and entertainment was provided by the Little Wheelers dance group from Prince Charles School.

"The flying of the flag at city hall has become an important part of Métis week," said Poitras.

The infinity symbol used on the Metis flag has many meanings. Not only does it represent the entwining of two cultures into one, it is also a symbol of how far the Métis people have come and where they are going in the future.

"History has shown the Métis have made a lot of contributions," said Gerald Cunningham, Vice President of the Métis Settlements

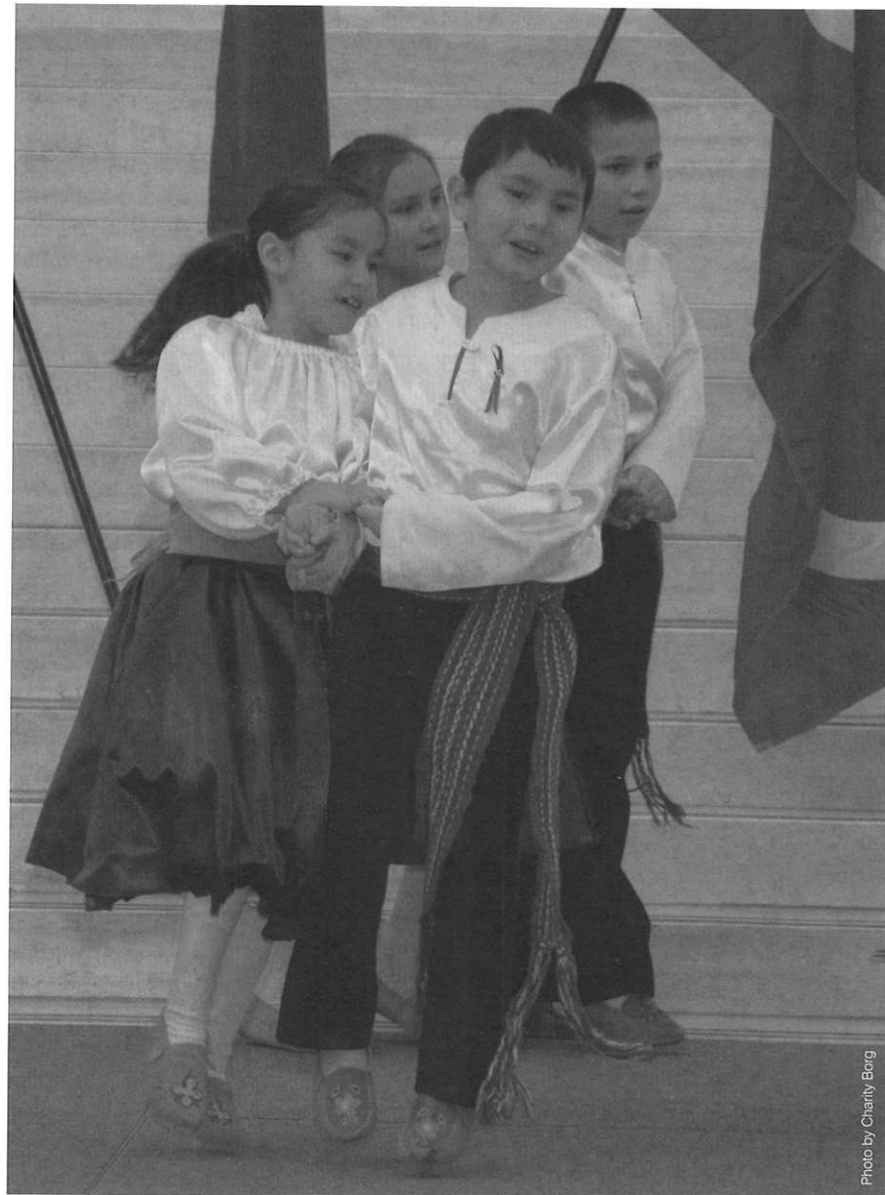


Photo by Charity Borg

Entertainment was provided by the Little Wheelers Dance Troupe from Prince Charles School.

General Council. "It is all the contributions in the future that I look forward to."

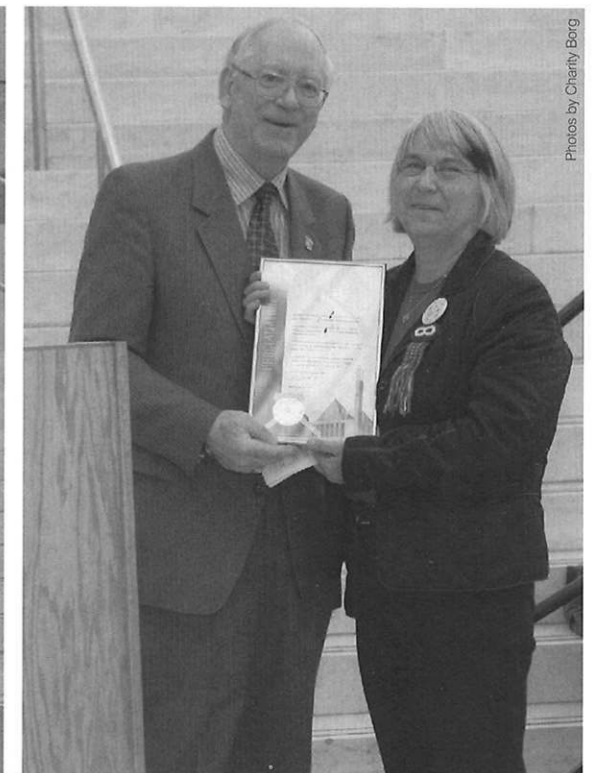
A week to celebrate Canada's rich Métis heritage may not be enough according to Pearl Calahasen, minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

While Metis week is an important institution, more must be done to celebrate Canada's Aboriginal population as a whole than Aboriginal day in June.

"It's time to start developing something like an aboriginal month," she said. "We are very

proud people."

After her suggestion for an Aboriginal month, Calahasen looked across the podium to her fellow legislators, opposition leader Kevin Taft and NDP leader Brian Mason, where she met nods and applause from the pair.



Photos by Charity Borg

Left: John McDonald, Jack White and Tim Collins (who was standing in for an absent veteran) stand during the flag raising ceremony. Right: Edmonton City Councillor Ron Hayter presents MNA President Audrey Poitras with the Métis Week Proclamation.

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## Métis Urban Housing Corporation

We need you to UPDATE your Housing Application with the following information:

- Current Phone Number (very important)
- Change of Household members
- Change of Income
- Other changes that could affect your application

This information is crucial to Métis Urban Housing Corporation as it works to meet your Housing needs.

Please update your file by calling 452-6440 or by faxing your information to 452-1076.

# Delia Gray Gala 2006



By Monique Devlin

**W**hen Avi Scheibner was called up to accept her Delia Gray Scholarship at this year's Delia Gray Gala, she had a hard time containing her tears.

"First of all I would like to thank the Delia Gray family; you don't know how much I needed this."

She admitted to being shocked to have won the scholarship, telling a story involving an odyssey of lawyer's offices, convenience stores and the local office supply store in her quest to fax her application.

"I tried one from my friend's office, which is a lawyer's office... but only half of it went through," she recalled. "So then I took my application to a local convenience store in Lethbridge, and there was a young guy there who didn't really know what he was doing, and it wouldn't go through. He finally figured out his machine and got it to spit out my stuff, so then I tried one last time from Staples in Lethbridge. I made sure they forwarded it to my email. When I saw it, the heading, it showed up as something unrecognizable - I thought was junk mail."

Despite all the mishaps along the way, she was chosen as one of the two Delia Gray Scholarship winners for 2006. The scholarship is one of the highlights of the annual Delia Gray Gala hosted by the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) on Riel Day.

Gray had just begun her second term as the Provincial Elder and Adviser to the President and Vice President of the MNA when she passed away on November 12, 1999. To honour the memory of Gray, in

2000, the MNA renamed the Provincial Office building The Delia Gray Building and established the "Delia Gray Memorial Scholarship Award which is given out every year on Riel Day.

"Delia's special day was November 16," MNA President Audrey Poitras said. "She used to go to the Legislative Building and then come back to our office, sit, and visit with people who came through for the open house, sit and talk with our staff. She didn't only do this on November 16, but she used to always say 'this is my special day to be at the Métis Nation.'"

Every year, the MNA submits the names of students applying for the scholarship to a board comprised of Gray's family members. They then choose two winners who are presented with the award during the Gala. This year, the

\$1000 awards went to Scheibner who is in her second year of studies working towards a Bachelor of Social Work and to Teneya Gwin Cunningham who is working towards a Biological Science Diploma.

"I didn't really know much about Delia Gray before this, and then after reading all about her, it sounds like she did everything that I want to do," Scheibner said.

Scheibner's eventual goal is to work in community development. She thinks that she may work towards her master's degree one day, but already has a lot on the go. Not only is she a single mother of two, she also volunteers for several not for profit boards, including the Aboriginal Housing Action Society and the City of Lethbridge "Heart of the Matter" Planning Committee.

"I don't want to be a social

worker per say," she said about her eventual goal. "After working in different fields I found that I really enjoyed planning things, but I found that being in the position I was in, I didn't have a lot of power to make changes." Cunningham, the second scholarship winner, wants to focus on the environment, particularly in the much-needed field of soil remediation.

"I want to work in places like oil field sites that need soil remediation." She said. "To clean up the site after the work has been completed."

While the Scholarships were the highlight of the evening, there were several dance performances by the Kikino Northern Light Dancers, musical entertainment by Gilbert Anderson and Darla Daniels, and singing by Stephanie Harp.

## Update your Membership Files

What is needed for a file to be considered up to date?

- Historical proof of Métis status (this can be in the form of a land scrip or grant, or some other government, church, community or historical record recognizing an ancestor as Métis)
- A completed family tree of your Métis ancestors to the mid-1800s
- A long form birth certificate OR a baptismal certificate and a wallet sized birth certificate
- One (1) piece of photo identification for the purpose of swearing a statutory declaration
- A digital photo—this photo can be taken at any Regional Office or in the Edmonton Central office

Please contact your Regional Office or any of the following toll-free number to confirm the status of your membership file.

**1-866-88METIS (1-866-886-3847)**

**1-866-678-7888**

**1-800-252-7553**

#100 Delia Gray Building - 11738 Kingsway Avenue - Edmonton, AB T5G 0X5  
www.albertametis.com



# 2006 Métis Matriarchs

By Monique Devlin

The Métis Matriarchs are the unsung heroes of the community, the woman who hold their families together, sometimes with only love and determination. These are the woman who knit together the fabric of the Métis Nation.

## Mary Dumais

Métis Matriarch for Region II

Our first Métis Matriarch was born on December 7, 1915, and can attest to the many expectations of a true matriarch. She was married to Frank Dumais for 64 years until his passing on November 10, 1995. Together they had 16 children and adopted three more. Their family branch, thus far, has resulted in 81 Grand Children, 138 Chapans and 40 Great Great Grand Children. Mary has always been there for her family, extended family and countless other people. Over the

years, her knowledge and wisdom has guided many personally, politically, emotionally and spiritually.

## Cora Fedyck

Métis Matriarch for Region III

Cora was born on March 28, 1930; she has nine children, 19 grandchildren, 12 great grandchildren and 11 great great grandchildren.

Cora is a strong and determined woman, wife and mother. She has always said that when challenges arise, personal or otherwise, there is always something you can do to help yourself. That can be translated to mean that you always have a choice, and you can always make a choice for the better path. Cora has been and continues to be a role model for facing up to diversity.

Cora is seen as a pillar of

strength and a true matriarch in her community. It is with great respect and reverence that Region III nominated this great woman as their Métis Matriarch.

## Vera Atkinson

Métis Matriarch for Region IV

Our Matriarch from region four can be summed up in one word – “Mom.” While she has seven children of her own, 16 grandchildren and three great grand children, there are people all over the province with no blood relationship who still insist on calling her mom. The deep sense of family she has instilled in her family and extended family is a testament to her love and dedication.

She runs her own catering business which, though small, is influential. She has served everyone from the Liberal party of Canada to the mayor of Edmonton, and has

catered many Métis Nation of Alberta events. It has been said that it is not a true catered event without Vera's bannock.

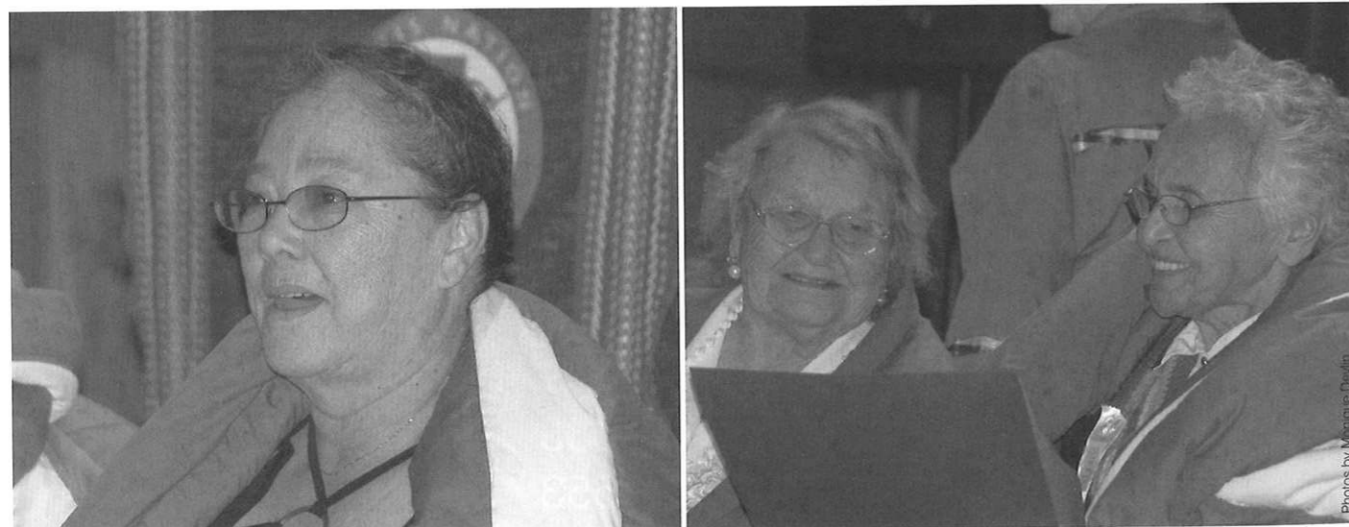
## Mabel Goulet

Métis Matriarch for Region V

What is a matriarch? One definition states: “The term is usually applied to the oldest female in an extended family, who by virtue

of her position has a degree of granted authority because others have trust in her.” With this in mind, Mabel Goulet personifies what it means to be a Métis matriarch. She is a staid and true force within her own family and a role model for her fellow community members. Always quick to offer a helping hand, she is there when ever there is someone in need. She has been a long-term supporter of the MNA, and throughout the years has racked up

countless volunteer hours working to strengthen the Métis nation. Hailing from the Slave Lake area, Mabel did not always lead an easy life, but her strength and determination have always brought her through the bad times, and have helped others see that there is always hope, and even when things seem darkest, there is always light. Mabel was unable to receive her award in person.



Left: Vera Atkinson, after being wrapped in a blanket and named Métis Matriarch for region IV.

Right: Mary Dumais, Metis Matriarch for Region II looks at the certificate Cora Fedyck, Metis matriarch for Region III was awarded as part of the ceremony.

# IN CELEBRATION of Aboriginal Alumni

NAIT is launching a new chapter of the Alumni Association especially for our Aboriginal graduates.

The chapter will support Aboriginal alumni and students, and promote higher education in our communities. Working together, we will become involved in mentoring, role modeling, professional development, and many other activities aimed at enriching the lives of NAIT's Aboriginal community.

### You are invited!

Aboriginal graduates of NAIT apprenticeship, certificate, diploma and applied degree programs are invited to meet for an evening of friendship and celebration to launch our new Aboriginal Alumni Chapter.  
*Please plan to join us!*

**Celebration of Aboriginal Alumni**  
**Thursday, January 18, 2007**  
**5:00 - 9:00 p.m.**  
**Ernest's Dining Room**  
**NAIT Main Campus**

For more information:  
Claudette Rain  
Phone: (780) 491-3930  
E-mail: claudetr@nait.ca  
NAIT Alumni Relations  
Phone: (780) 471-7514  
E-mail: events@alumnait.ca



# St. Paul Winter Carnival

By Robert Nolin

Once again, it is time to come out of winter hibernation and celebrate the snow during the annual St. Paul Winter Carnival held over the February Family Day long weekend.

"This year's carnival promises to be bigger than last year's - as that one was our first but not last," St. Paul des Métis Local 1896 President, Robert Nolin, one of the organizers said via e-mail. "At this year's event, we are trying to invite local dog mushers which would be an added bonus."

According to Nolin, there have already been a few committee meetings and the response has been "fabulous."

Events will begin on Saturday, February 17 with the Manawanis Friendship Centre's annual Talent Show where everyone is welcome to come, watch, and listen to all of the local and regional talent featuring dancers, fiddlers and singers.

"As part of this year's carnival we have added 'A TASTE OF ST. PAUL,'" Nolin said. "This will be an opportunity for folks to appreciate the various ethnic cuisines which make up part of this wonderful community."

Karen Collins, Region II president, looks forward to the event, particularly the multicultural aspects.

"It's a wonderful activity that brings the entire community together and lets all of the cultures celebrate," she said. "It is family oriented and culturally diversified."

On Sunday the 18th, there will be a "Cabane a Sucre," a francophone event which will give individuals an opportunity to appreciate the French culture through its dances and foods.

There will be wagon rides for

participants of the carnival and possibly snow or ice sculptures.

Monday the 19th, there will be a repeat of last year's dance showcase where a collage of different Ethnic dancers from various areas will be performing.

"As a Métis from the Red River Settlement, I feel proud of what we as a community have accomplished here in St. Paul des Métis," Nolan said. "I am looking forward to seeing all of my relatives from all over Alberta and surrounding provinces."



Photos by Rachel Hohn



Top: This year's Winter Carnival in St. Paul will once again feature wagon rides  
Above: Henry Rice performs backup fiddle during the St. Paul Winter Carnival in 2006

# Region II Fall Round-Up

By Trish Burghardt

Region II has had a very busy autumn. The third Annual Andy Collins Memorial Golf Tournament was a success with 82 golfers playing in the rain. For those who do not know, the money raised from the tournament goes towards the Andy Collins Memorial Scholarship fund. This year, five scholarships totalling \$3000 were given to the following recipients: Corbin Poitras of Moose Mountain, Maureen Myshaniuk of Elk Point, Kristy Myshaniuk of Elk Point, Jereme Parenteau of St. Paul, and Michele Joly of St. Paul. The scholarships are awarded annually to Region II members who are already or soon to be attending a post-secondary institution. Applications are accepted throughout the year with a June 15 deadline. Please contact our office for more details. The fourth Annual Andy Collins Memorial Golf Tournament will be held on July 27, 2007 at the Bonnyville Golf and Country Club.

Our annual general meeting was held on November 4, 2006. The membership passed a resolution for the Métis Nation of Alberta's Annual General Assembly to be held in St. Paul on August 16, 17, 18 and 19, 2007. Preliminary planning has already begun with the Town of St. Paul. Region II looks forward to being your host for this event.

We would like to take the opportunity to introduce a new face around our office. Melody Gosselin is our new youth program coordinator. She has been busy getting programs ready for youth aged 13 to 30 and these will run from November 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007. The grand opening was November 16, 2006 during Métis Week. Some of the programs she is organizing include a homework club, Café Internet, crafts, local field trips, workshops, and feasts. Volunteers are needed and welcomed. Please feel free to call Melody if you are interested in this program.

Some upcoming events include our 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Boxing Day Talent Show on December 26<sup>th</sup> at the Bonnyville Agriplex starting at 1:00pm. Please come out and showcase your talent. We have categories that include jigging, singing, and fiddling. For more information, call our office at 780-826-7483.

Another event that is coming up is our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Hockey Tournament. It will take place in Glendon on February 23, 24, and 25, 2007. Contact Roy Dumais at the Region II office if you would like more information.

"We are excited about all our upcoming events and hope to see many of you out participating," Karen Collins, Region II president said. "Have a wonderful holiday and may the Creator bless you and your families during the holiday season."



The Métis Nation of Alberta  
invites you to

*Open Your Heart  
and Home to a  
Métis Child in Need*

If you are Métis, and would like to learn about becoming a foster or adoptive parent, please contact the Métis Nation of Alberta to hear about some of the wonderful opportunities available. Enjoy the many rewards of sharing and caring for our Métis children, while providing guidance and celebrating our rich cultural traditions.

There will always be a need for Métis families who are willing to open their homes and their hearts to our children in foster care.

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**Métis Nation of Alberta**  
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**11738 Kingsway Edmonton, AB**

*If you can be that special family,  
PLEASE CALL TODAY.*



## Honouring Our Métis People

# In Memory of Leo Johnston

By Monique Devlin

The citizens of Owl River, a community just outside of Lac La Biche, came together recently to create a monument to honour the memory of fallen Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Officer, Leo Johnston.

Johnston was one of the four officers killed during the Rochfort Bridge Massacre which took place near Mayerthorpe, Alberta almost two years ago. Though the murders sent shock waves across the country, the members of this tiny community were particularly hard hit.

"It really rocked us," Rita Riegert, President of the Owl River Recreation Board said. "Leo came from our area. He was born and raised here; we know the family... so I just felt that we should have something here."

Riegert worked together with the recreation board and the Owl River Volunteer Fire Department to design and built the monument on donated land in hopes that it would help give the community something to focus its grief on, and to serve as testament to fallen RCMP, firefighters, and other first responders.

"They wanted to give a reminder to everybody who drives by it, the sacrifices our police officers make for us." Grace Johnston, Leo's

mother said. "In this little community of ours, there were people that wanted to do whatever they could think of doing."

While there are other places across the Canada where Leo and his fellow Officers are remembered,

most notably a Memorial Park being built in Mayerthorpe, this is a place for the community of Owl River to mourn.

Grace and her family have lived in the area for more than 30 years, and have always played an active role

in the community. While she recognises that the loss of her son extends beyond the limits of her family, she is amazed by just how hard hit the community was by the loss.

"You hear how people impact other people," she said. "I cannot

believe that my son, Leo, as a person and because of the job he chose to do, made an impact on people like he did."

Located next to busy Highway 63, the monument is a simple wall built of stone. On the wall is a basic plaque with Leo's name, the names

of his close family and the names of the other three Officers who died with him. The plaque ends with the words:

"Always remembered in the hearts of family and residents of Owl River Community and Lakeland County."



left: Lee Johnston, Leo's brother and a fellow RCMP Officer speaks during the dedication of the memorial wall. The official dedication heard community leaders, members of the Owl River Community, Leo Johnston's family and members of the Lac La Biche RCMP detachment speak on the memory and impact of Leo Johnston.



right: Grace Johnston (center) stands with her son Lee (left) and husband Ron (right) and members of the Lac La Biche RCMP detachment

*Merry Christmas and the  
Best of the Coming Year  
to Everybody*

*For all of your  
continued expressions  
of kindness,  
consideration, support  
and for all the special  
things that you have  
done and are doing  
that go above and  
beyond.*

*Thank you*

*Ron, Grace, Lee, and  
Nancy Johnston*

# A Volunteer Heart

By Monique Devlin



Angie Crerar is trying to pay off a debt to her community. A debt that many people may not understand, one that will never go into collections and one that only she feel she owes.

For the last 28 years Crerar has been helping others in her community by working with the local Friendship Shelter. She has

also been the President of the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) local 1990 for the last ten years and she spearheaded the building of the Caring Centre for Elders, which opened its doors three years ago.

"Volunteering is very important to me because when I was down and out, when I was newly divorced with my eight children and moved to Grand Prairie, the people in that area helped me." She said. "They helped me get back on my feet... supported me, gave me courage, they respected my efforts and they helped me."

"The only way to repay it is by passing on the same gifts they shared with me and make a better life for everybody. It has been 28 years and I will go to my grave helping those people because they helped me find a happiness I live today."

Crerar moved to Grande Prairie from Yellowknife looking for a fresh start. Although she knew nobody there, she wasn't in town more than 12 hours before she was working as a taxi dispatcher (she had worked as one in Yellowknife as well). She quickly began making friends, but it took her a little longer to fit into the community

"It was scary - I will tell you, the scariest time in my life. I was taking a chance and I knew nobody - I didn't even know the language. They all talk Cree here in Grande Prairie. But you know over time, and with friends I made it. Within a year I was being included in everything and people who knew I didn't understand would start talking English to me. It took me a year to gain their respect. I worked hard at it because I wanted to be respected."

She remembers that it was mainly the people from the Grande Prairie Friendship Centre who helped her feel so welcome and got her in a variety of programs,



Angie Crerar proudly displays the lapel pin she received as part of the Caring Canadian award.

and that is why she spent so many years helping that organization.

"I have not had a smooth road in my life, but you know what, I am a happy woman because I have wonderful children. All my life dreams have happened, and it has been very rewarding when I look back and see what people can accomplish when they work together."

## The Award

This fall Angie Crerar was recognized for her years of volunteer work, particularly with the Caring Shelter for Elders, with a Caring Canadian award.

The award, an initiative of the Governor General, is awarded to "people who, for years, have voluntarily and quietly provided extraordinary help or care to others, behind the scenes, without remuneration or major recognition."

The award was initiated in 1996 by the then Governor General Roméo LeBlanc, as a way to recognize the unsung heroes who spend much of their lives helping others and asking nothing in return. The award consists of a lapel pin and a certificate given by the Governor General or by a delegate such as a Lieutenant-Governor or a Territorial Commissioner.

On October 24th, Crerar and four other Grande Prairie residents were given the award by the Alberta Lieutenant Governor, Norman Kwong, during a short ceremony in the Grande Prairie Museum.

Crerar was shocked when she found out she would receive the award

"I didn't think I deserved it because no person stands alone," she said. "People have to be recognized - like the committee, and the people who put their heart into the community."

Crerar went on to say that there was a lot of volunteer support and help from industries and businesses in the community that went into the creation of the shelter.

"There are a lot of people who help us because we are not funded at all, but we do a lot of good work here, we have a wonderful, wonderful staff, and also the volunteers (we have a lot of volunteers - our office would not be open without our volunteers) and for that I am really grateful." She said. "They are a tremendous, wonderful lot of people and I want to share this honour with them because it belongs to them more than it belongs to me."

Seven of Crerar's ten children, were able to join their mother for the celebration which made the day that much more special.

"That is my bloodline, that is my support, that's my anchor, my rock of Gibraltar - my kids. I have ten wonderful kids, eight girls and two boys."



Alberta Lieutenant Governor Norman Kwong presents Angie Crerar with her Caring Canadian award.

## The Shelter

It started with a survey done by the Grande Prairie Friendship Centre that indicated there were a large number of elderly in the city who were in need.

The reaction of the MNA Local 1990 was to build a place where Elders without a home could find shelter and solace.

"It took a lot of hard work, but between the three government levels, municipal, provincial and federal, eventually we did have it built," Crerar said. "There are a lot of people who help us because we are not funded at all"

There is also quit a bit of support from Grande Prairie businesses, she named off Weyehaeuser, Talisman, and the Army and Navy as just some of the companies who have lent a hand.

The shelter is an unassuming two storey building sitting on a corner lot that could easily be mistaken for an apartment block on the outside. On the inside there are 21 rooms, two laundry areas and two recreation rooms. The residents' medical needs are taken care of and they are provided three meals a day. There are three permanent staff, and the rest of the work is done by volunteers, including board

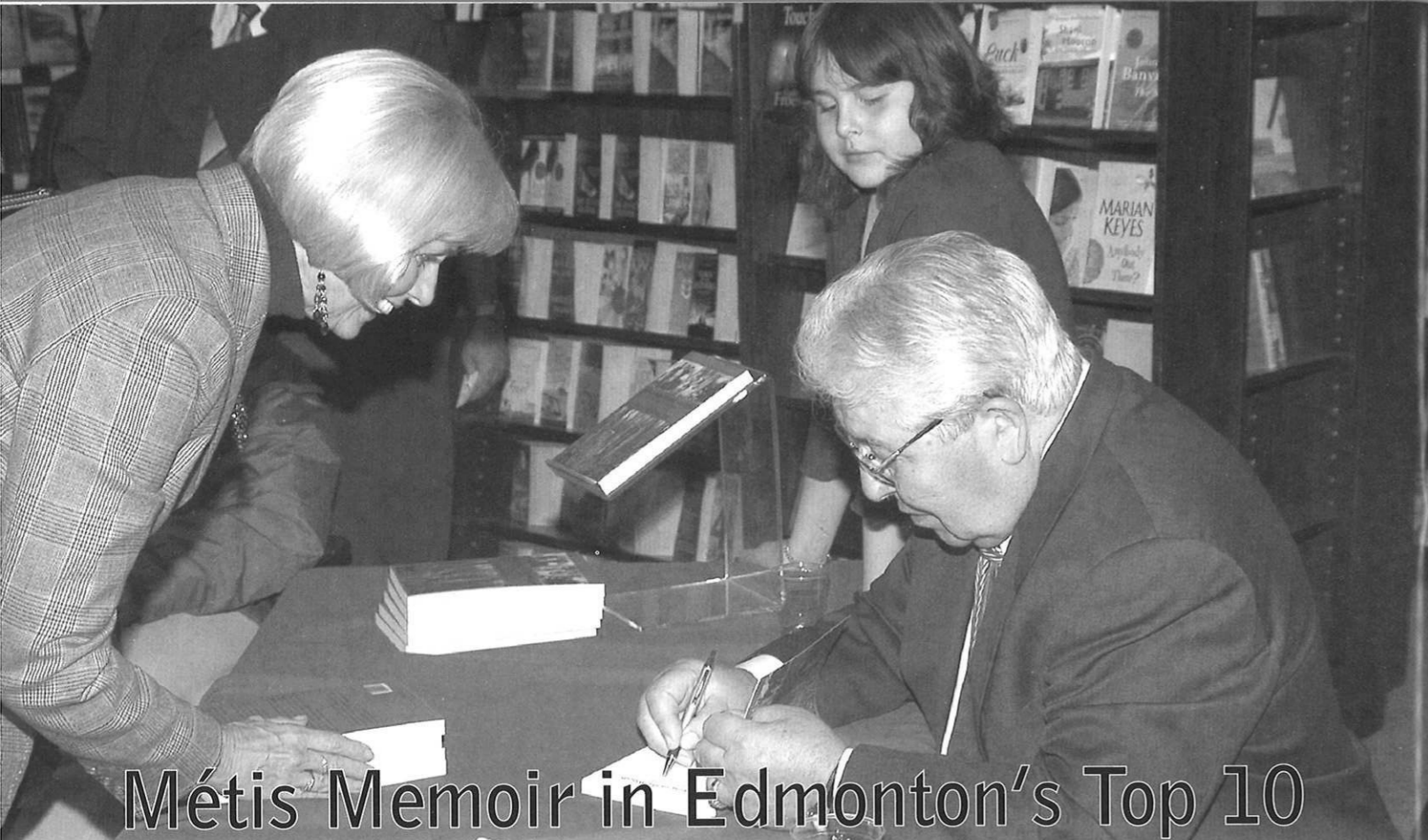
members of Local 1990, who take turns working at the Shelter.

"Some of them are there until they get back on their feet, are able to work and get their own apartments and so on," Crerar said. "They are where they want to be, and they can certainly stay there as long as they like - we don't kick anybody out because all of a sudden they wake up one day and find a job."

Like many places in Alberta, Grande Prairie has a lack of affordable housing, or any housing for that matter. There are not a lot of other places for these Elders to go, so they are welcome to stay at the shelter as long as they need.

The downside of this is that the shelter is running at full capacity, and there is a waiting list in case any of the rooms do open up. Crerar hopes, that if the Board directs it, maybe one day they can build a second shelter.

"Our goal is to get another one a little different, where they have self-sufficiency apartments of their own," she said. "Some of them can do it, and it gives them great pride. We can never ever take the pride away from our elders, so we help them to maintain their lifestyle, but we have to do it at their own pace."



## Métis Memoir in Edmonton's Top 10

By Monique Devlin

Herb Belcourt's recently released autobiography, *Walking in the Woods: a Métis Journey*, entered the Edmonton Journal's top 10 non fiction books list in early December.

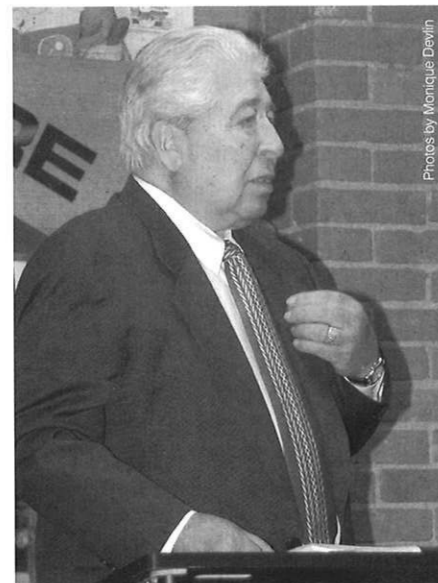
The book, which uses Belcourt's search for a trail leading to the house he grew up in as a catalyst to review his journey through life, is an entertaining read that weaves through both his family's life and Métis history in Central Alberta.

"You will be enraptured with how beautifully told the stories in this book are," Gene Zwozdesky, Alberta Minister of Education, said while introducing the book at its launch on October 22.

At the launching, Belcourt explained that when he became severely ill a year and a half ago, he decided to put his life down on paper, and with the help of family and friends, he did just that.

"The one thing about the Métis people is, they are great at telling stories," He explained. "I remember as a child every Friday night or

Saturday night, the neighbours would come over to our place...and they would tell stories, and they would tell us kids to sit along the wall and listen. When I look back at my life, I did a lot of listening, but not talking, but I appreciated all the



Top: Herb Belcourt signs a book for Edda Hunter while his granddaughter, Amethyst Belcourt, looks on.  
Above: Belcourt reads from his book during its official launch.

stories I was told... it was amazing the laughter we had in our home."

In a forward provided by Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) President Audrey Poitras, some of the issues Belcourt discusses are put into context, by giving background information on the Métis people and their place in Alberta - both in the past and in more modern times.

"I have known Herb Belcourt - at first by reputation and later as a colleague and friend - for most of my life," she writes in the opening lines of the book. "I hope this moving story will open a window on the independence, energy, and generosity of the Métis people of Western Canada."

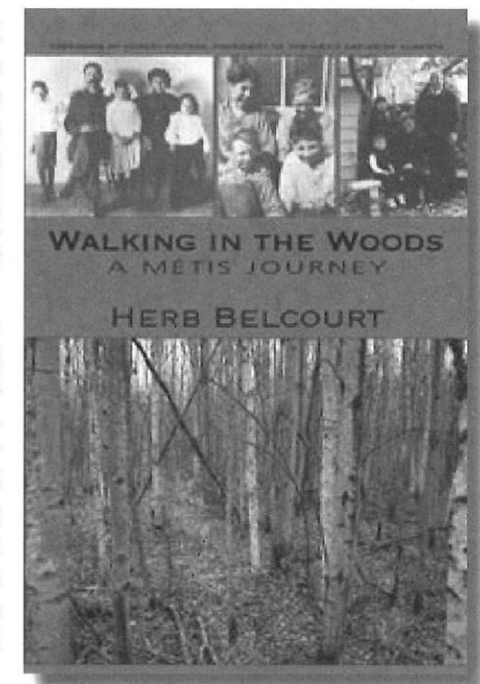
And he truly does. Reading the book, you witness Belcourt grow from a young man who "never wanted to be as poor as my mum and dad," to a business man who, after starting and excelling in many different business ventures, now invests both his money and time bettering the lives of his fellow Métis through housing and education initiatives.

While the book is both informative and educational, there are some laugh-out-loud funny bits, like this tale he recounted during the book launch about how when he was 14 he decided it was time "take a round" out of his dad.

"Well my friends, as I walked closer and closer to my dad, the bigger he looked - he looked like a mountain when I got ten feet away from him - and I started to run. I ran down a path and down towards the railway tracks. There was a wire fence there and I thought I would dive through it, but as I got closer I said, 'now I can't make it that way,' so I will put one leg through and then my head - and then I got stuck. By this time I knew my dad had picked up a switch and had pulled all the

leaves off the branch. And when I think about it, me being stuck there with my backside sticking out, he had to give it to me.... But he then helped me up and said "if you are ever going to try and take a round out of me, stand up like a man," and we have been very good friends ever since."

Always the philanthropist, Belcourt has committed to donating the books royalties to *The Robin Hood Association* in Sherwood Park, Alberta and *The Centre of Excellence for Service, Training and Research in Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (fasd)* at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital in Edmonton, Alberta (with funds facilitated through the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation).



# Time for Action!

## Strengthening Métis Communities

**Who should attend?**

Métis Citizens  
Service Providers  
Partners

Those interested in strengthening the Métis Community

**Why?**

It is an opportunity for all Métis Citizens to connect with various supports available within their community, service providers and partners.

**Date:** February 7-9, 2007 (Please register early!)

**Location:** Chateau Louis Hotel & Conference Centre at 11727 Kingsway, Edmonton, AB T5G 3A1

**Registration:** Phone: Norma (780) 455-2200; TF 1-800-252-7553; Email: [nspicer@metis.org](mailto:nspicer@metis.org); Web: [www.albertametis.com](http://www.albertametis.com)

**Fee:** \$50.00 For financial assistance or more conference information please contact Norma. Limited space is available.

# It Runs in the Family

By Monique Devlin

Many young girls dream of the day when they will march down the aisle in a white gown with family and friends watching in rapt attention. The Mueller sisters held to a variation of that dream, but with a red colour theme, and with the term "marching" being a lot more literal.

Ever since they watched their cousin Patricia Gantley graduate from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) training program more than 20 years ago, Kim, Holly and Jennifer Mueller all dreamed about the day when they too would

don the red serge and become a part of one of the most recognized and respected policing organizations in the world.

"It was the coolest thing we ever saw," Kim Mueller said about watching her cousin so many years ago.

The image was reinforced when their cousin was posted to Grande Prairie, where the sisters are from, after her graduation. The young girls were able to see her in action in the community, and gain a deep respect for their RCMP cousin.

Since then, Kim has had the

opportunity to watch both her younger sisters graduate before she herself joined the ranks of the RCMP earlier this year. Then in late November she had the unique honour of passing her husband his badge as he too graduated from the training depot in Regina Saskatchewan. As far as the women know, they are the first three sisters to all become RCMP officers, with Jennifer and Holly being the first sisters to finish the program together.

"My dad travels a lot as a pilot, and he will somehow make an excuse to somehow go to whatever attachment is in that town, and somehow work into the conversation that all of his three daughters, plus his son in law are all members of the RCMP," Kim said.

Although they had become smitten with the organization in their early years, the route each took to the RCMP was not a straight one. Kim had a full career and was working as the Provincial Youth Coordinator at the Métis Nation of Alberta before she decided to start her training, while Holly and Jennifer were both working at a popular restaurant chain—not quite sure what to do with their lives.

The thought of joining the RCMP had always been at the back of Holly's mind, but she was unsure if she could uproot herself from her

family and possibly move across the country, a risk that any aspiring RCMP officer would have to take. Once a candidate passes the various entrance requirements, and commits to joining the force, they must complete six months of training at the Regina facility. From there, they can potentially be placed anywhere from the western-most part of Vancouver Island to the eastern shores of Newfoundland, as far north as Iqaluit or into the heart of Toronto. They just don't know.

"We are from a really close family," Holly said. "The thought of leaving for six months and then moving across Canada was too scary to even comprehend."

That all changed when Holly dropped in on a youth conference being held by Kim.

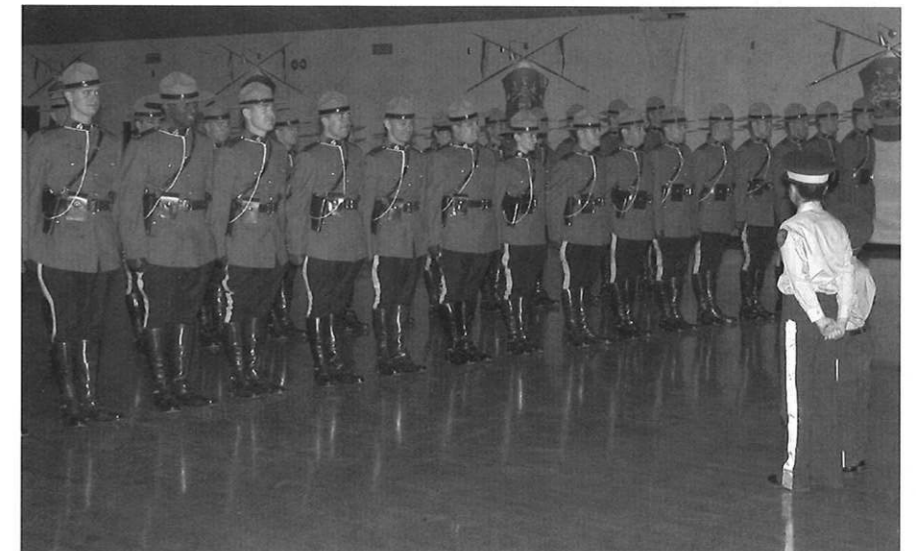
"It just kind of worked out," Holly said. "Kim was doing a Métis youth conference by Hinton, and I ended up going. Don Ladouceur was there doing a presentation on the Aboriginal peace-keeping program... and I just had to do it"

The certificate program was set up to prepare Aboriginal students to take the RCMP entrance exam or the Alberta Police Cognitive Abilities Test for entrance into municipal or First Nations Police services. Additionally, this one time, the Alberta branch of the RCMP (the "K Division") would be sending a full troupe of students to train in Regina and each graduate would be guaranteed a chance to return to Alberta when they were finished.

Because she knew that when she was finished her training she would be able to return to her home province, Holly felt confident enough to take the plunge. It didn't take her very long to convince Jennifer to come with her.

"I wanted to do something else, because working the way I was, I didn't feel like I was accomplishing anything," Jennifer said. "So I figured what better way? At least I would have my sister there to help me."

The two women began applying



Top: Kim Mueller hands her husband, Shane Turvey, his badge during his graduation ceremony.

Above: Tayler Mueller-Turvey and her brother, James Mueller-Turvey, give their dad's troop one last command.

to join the RCMP part way through the college course, and were taking part in an RCMP summer student program when they found out they both had been accepted to take the training.

For Holly and Jennifer, the training was like nothing they had ever experienced. They would be up at 5:00 am and the entire day would be crammed full of drills and lessons. They would still be up at 11:45 pm making sure their boots were polished and their uniforms were

ready for the next day. They considered it a treat if they made it to bed by 11:00pm.

They both figure that being there together is what made the entire ordeal possible. Holly, who considers herself a bit of a bookworm, helped Jennifer with a lot of the book-based learning, while Jennifer, who is more athletic, encouraged Holly with the physical aspects of the training.

While Kim had always thought about joining, she also had a strong



left to right: Shane Turvey, Kim Mueller, Jennifer Mueller and Holly Mueller



*Métis*  
Nation Of  
Alberta

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December 5, 2006

Muriel Stanley Venne, President  
Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women  
Suite 300, 10256 - 112th Street  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T5K 1M4

Dear Muriel: *Muriel*

On behalf of the Métis Nation of Alberta, I would like to congratulate you on being named by Alberta Venture Magazine as one of the 50 most influential people in the province.

Your tireless work advocating on behalf of Aboriginal women and your dedication to human rights reform and advancement are both a shining example to others and a testament to your strength and vision. It is wonderful to see you being recognised for your achievements in this manner.

By founding and continuing your groundbreaking work with the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women, you do more than empower our community through your actions, you also serve as a living example of what we are all capable of.

I want to thank you for everything you have done for the Métis Nation, for the province of Alberta and for Aboriginal women everywhere.

Sincerely,  
Metis Nation of Alberta

*Audrey Poitras*  
Audrey Poitras  
President

*Together We Will Continue To Build A Strong Métis Nation*

desire to work with youth and decided to pursue that route instead. By the time she had started working with the MNA she was confident she was where she belonged. She had a loving husband, two children and a fulfilling career doing something she loved, surrounded by people she considered a second family. Then, she went to her sisters' graduation.

"I just watched them work [doing the drills] and I started thinking, 'Wow, I want to at least try that. I don't want to spend the rest of my life thinking, what if... what if I had done that,'" Kim said.

Leaving the MNA was one of the hardest decisions she ever made, but the dream she once had as a child had been rekindled. With the support of their families, both she and her husband, Shane Turvey, started the application process to join the RCMP. They were both accepted, but they decided to take the training separately to lessen the financial and emotional strain it can cause (Recruits are provided with room and board, but not pay).

"It is a scary process to go through," Kim said. "And it was nice to have the girls to call and ask 'what happens after this, what happens next,' they are sort of sworn to secrecy for a lot of things, but it is nice to have someone walk me through that process."

While Kim was taking her training, her mom stepped in to help take care of her two children.

"It was mentally, physically and emotionally the hardest thing I have ever done in my life, and to have my family step up and look after my kids - I could not have been there if it were not for them."

Now that she is part of the force, Kim has been stationed at the Enoch Reserve, just outside of Edmonton. To her, the posting is a



Photo by Monique Dube

dream come true. Not only is she working once again specifically with Aboriginal people, but she has been appointed as the school liaison, and as a representative on the Elders council.

"I have already been appointed to two things that I love," she said. "I can't believe as a junior member I have been given this opportunity."

Kim's focus is to be a positive role model to the young people on the Reserve. She says that the uniform can often intimidate, but she hopes that by spending time with the youth, she can break down that barrier, and possibly inspire others to follow her example.

"I want to use this job as an opportunity to show them a different side of us and to help them pursue their dreams," she said. "I didn't join to arrest people."

Jennifer echoes the same sentiment. She didn't become an RCMP officer to throw handcuffs on criminals, but is more interested in resolving situations.

"It is not what you would expect," she said. "We are a social

worker, the other day we were fighting fires, then we were chasing cows - our job is a little bit of everything."

The job is also a lifestyle. All three women echoed sentiment about having to lead a lifestyle worthy of the uniform.

"You live in a fish-bowl all the time," Kim said. "In a small town especially, they will know what groceries you bought that day, what grade your kids are in (and the names of your kids) the car your drive, maybe even when your birthday is."

However, while this type of familiarity can prove difficult at times, the Muelers liken it to being part of larger families.

"They will know everything about you because you are the cop," Kim said. "But it is not just you are the cop, you are their cop."

The subject of family comes up many times as the three discuss their jobs. It is family who inspired them, family who supported them, and family who have made them the women they are today. All three talk about how their mother was forever helping others in whatever way she could, an example the three were hard-pressed to ignore.

"Over the years I don't even know how many kids our mom brought into our home and that was just normal to us," Kim said. "We saw that everyday, and we were so lucky."

However, it is their mother Marge who thinks she is the lucky one, with three daughters and a son-in-law in the force.

"I am very proud of my daughters," she said. "I think they do our community proud, and they definitely do me proud."

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# LMD Success Stories



Region 3 – Jason Booth  
Management Degree

**M**y name is Jason Booth and I graduated from the University of Lethbridge with a Bachelor of Management in April 2006. I received financial aid from the Métis Nation of Alberta for my last year of University and it was instrumental in terms of allowing me to finish my Degree this year.

I want to personally thank The Métis Nation of Alberta and everyone involved for all their help and support. I believe the financial aid given out to deserving students is a great program and is instrumental in allowing Métis students to receive the education needed to succeed in the working world. I have benefited from my final year scholarship and am now working in my desired field using my Management Degree.



Region 5 – Lynn Courtoreille  
Office Administration

**M**y name is Lynn Courtoreille and I was funded through Métis Nation of Alberta Association Region V in 2003/2004 for my Office Administration course. I decided to take the Office Administration course because I knew it would give me an opportunity to meet people, something I really enjoy doing. I love helping people and wanted to do something I knew would be beneficial to the Métis people. I started working as the Client Services Assistant for Métis Employment Services – High Prairie in 2005. This job allows me to give other Métis clients the same opportunities that I had. I am very grateful to the Métis Nation of Alberta for allowing not only me but other's to reach their goals too.



Region 4 – Gordon Belcourt  
Class One Driver Training

**W**ith gratitude and appreciation I thank the MNA for giving me the opportunity to fulfill my dream of a career as a truck driver. I found the staff at the Edmonton MES to be very pleasant and helpful, especially my Employment Counsellor, Laura Waniandy. She made everything run smoothly, both in the office and in class. I would also like to thank the instructors at Capilano Truck Driving Institute for their patience and for keeping me on task.

I gained employment with Re-Em Transportation only two weeks after graduation. I feel that the MNA and Capilano have given me the career of my choice. I hope to be self-employed in two years.



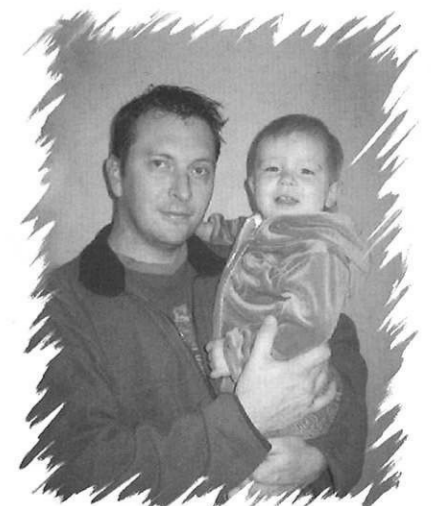
Region 4 – Jennifer Ferguson  
Dental Assistant

I recently completed the Dental Assisting Program at NAIT, and found the program challenging, but overall of excellent quality. Without the help of the Métis Employment Services staff, I am not sure I would have completed it. I did complete in June 2006 with Honours and the NAIT Student Achievement Award. Upon graduating I became employed with two dental offices doing the job I love, for the wage I want. Thanks for everything!



Region 4 – Austin Saultier  
Trades 2000

I wish to thank the Métis Nation of Alberta for funding my pre-apprenticeship welding program with Trades 2000. I had wanted a career in the trades, but was unsure how to go about it. With the help and guidance of Métis Employment Services - Edmonton and the Trades 2000 program, I am now working as a 1st year Welder's Apprentice making a very good wage and on my way to becoming a Journeyman Welder. I thank you for all your help; it has made a difference.



Region 3 – Ryan Murphy  
Power Engineering

I couldn't have completed the Power Engineering program at SAIT without the Assistance from the Calgary MES and the Labour Market Development Program. I was granted the money I needed to support my family while I was in school. Before I was finished school I had a job with Nexen up here in Fort McMurray. The job is great, the pay is excellent, and my family is very happy. I can't say enough how grateful I am to the Métis Nation and Caroline Wood for her excellent work in getting me the money I needed to finish my program. I hope that others choose to carry on in school and seek assistance through the Métis Nation of Alberta.



Region 6 – Angela Tourand  
Bachelor Degree in Kinesiology

**A**fter high school I decided to pursue a degree in Business Administration. However, after receiving my BA Certificate, I decided this was not my passion. I set a new goal of earning my Bachelor's Degree in Kinesiology. With the help of the Métis Nation of Alberta, I was able to follow this dream!

In December 2005, I graduated from the University of Calgary, having earned a Bachelor's Degree in Kinesiology, with distinction. I went straight from the education world into the workforce, beginning employment with Columbia Health Center, Grande Prairie. I began as a Kinesiologist and soon moved into the position of Rehabilitation Coordinator. My employment has been an excellent opportunity to follow my passion and put my knowledge and skills from my degree to good use! Thank you Region 6 for assisting me on the path to my career.



Get Ahead of The Future

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- Employment assessments ♦
- The provision of labour market information ♦
- Career counselling ♦
- Job finders clubs ♦

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9612 Franklin Ave.  
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# Remembering Rene Boucher (Chip)

The Boucher family kindly provided Otipemisiwak with the eulogy used to remember the man who touched so many lives. It has been shortened from its original length.

On December 3, 1935, in Lac La Biche Alberta, Victor and Clara Boucher's oldest son, James Rene Boucher (or as most of us knew him, Rene Boucher, Chippy, Chip or Chipchin) was born at Moccasin Flats under a spruce tree. He was the firstborn to a family of 13 children. He had seven brothers and five sisters (today there are only eight still living). He also had a nephew, Jake, who was raised with the family as a brother.

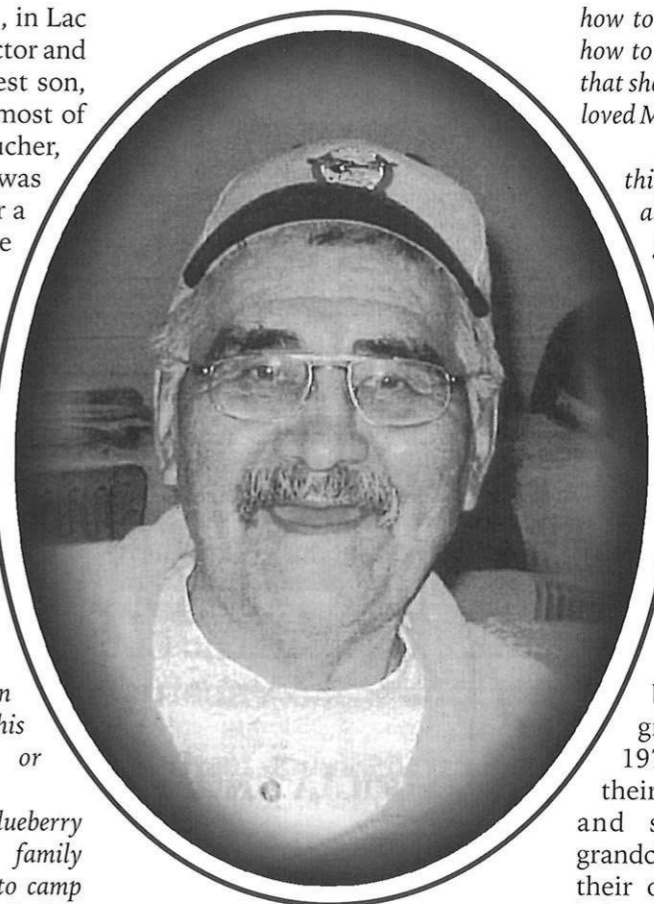
### Chip's Siblings Remember Their Brother:

Jack said that one thing that he will remember is that Chip always took his stepchildren as his own. He always showed his children, whether biological or stepchildren, a lot of love.

Priscilla remembers going blueberry picking with him and other family members and they would have to camp out. She said that Chip would be the first in bed because he was scared of ghosts and did not want to be up alone.

Sidney said Chip was the most perfect big brother anyone could have; he always made family members feel happy when he was around. Chip was a very kindhearted person who always had the time for anyone he met.

When Chip grew up and started dating, he had a few relationships but none that lasted long. He did meet a woman with whom he had a son, Wayne, but they separated soon after he was born. He also had a daughter, Peggy, from another relationship, but she died at an early age.



how to turn stories into jokes. He knew how to make people laugh. Marlene says that she will remember how much her dad loved Mom.

Jo says that one of the biggest things about her dad is that he would always take her to all the ball games when she was young. She says that he inspired her to be the competitive ball player she is. She says that even to this day, he was always at all the ball games. When it was a high-pressure ball game, he would pace and even when he was in the wheel chair, he could not be still.

Chip and Florence were not only dedicated parents, but went above and beyond the call of duty as grandparents. On May 24, 1974, Roxanne Joanne (Tanis), their first grandchild, was born and she would be the first grandchild that they would raise as their own child. Tanis was Chip's baby (he really spoiled her). Her mom and dad would have three more children who Chip and Florence also raised after their mom passed away from cancer. All together, they raised six of their grandchildren.

### The Grandchildren had Many Things to Share.

Talis is going to miss her Mosom because he was funny.

Jonathan says that Mosom was their number one fan when it came to ball games.

Jessica remembers that when her Mosom would phone, he would always talk to her in Cree. When he asked her if

### Chip's Children Remember Their Father

Marlene says that he made a good positive impact with his life. He knew

she understood, Jess would say no. She remembers always joking around with her Mosom. She said that he was always happy when she saw him.

Randi said when she had her learner's permit her Mosom let her drive to town - but only 20km per hour.

Dawn remembers whenever she came to visit her Mosom he would have a big smile on his face and would wait for a kiss.

In 1976, Chip and Florence decided to leave town life and move near Eleanor Lake. As they got older, the chores involved in country living took their toll (both were diabetic) and they moved back to town. By the time they did this, Chip's health had become worse and eventually he lost his left leg from the knee down. He had to use a wheel chair and was given a prosthetic leg. He was doing well until the day he fell down and hurt himself again. He was nervous and stayed in his wheel chair for quite some time after that until he became brave enough to try his leg again. He was back using his leg at various times just before he died.

Chip worked hard to support his family and had many jobs throughout the years. He worked on the railroad as a labourer and on a mink farm where apparently, he was an expert on vaccinating. He also worked for the town for a short time before he went on to work for Petapun, known as Alberta Vocational Center and now called Portage College. He worked there from 1967 until he retired in 1992. However, he was not quite ready to sit and relax so he started working at the Eleanor Lake Landfill site until his health problems forced him to quit. The landfill would become a popular visiting site for family if they wanted to see him on the weekend. Wayne, his eldest son, inherited this job. Chip eventually lost his left leg from the knee down because of his diabetes and spent a lot of his last years in and out of hospitals and doctor's offices. He was always a very independent man so it must have been hard on him to have to start relying on his family for so much.

Chip had a way with the women

in the community and would always expect a hug and a kiss from many of them. He would sit there all puckered up waiting. He also loved to dance and before he lost his leg, he could cut a pretty mean rug. He would always go up to the women and would not really ask them - he would just hold out his hand and start dancing in front of them. No one ever refused him a dance and most jumped up right away to go a round or two with him.

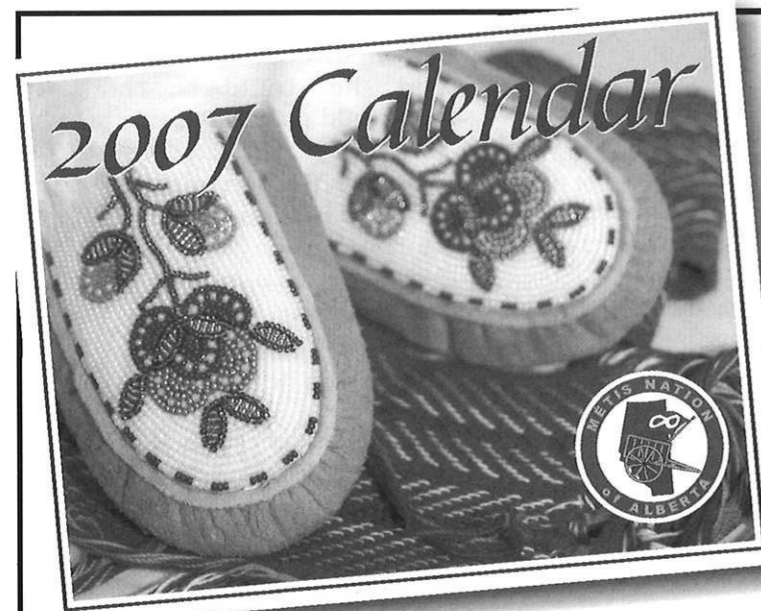
I know I speak for everyone when I say we are all going to miss this man, because we all loved him so much.

#### Florence Remembers her Husband

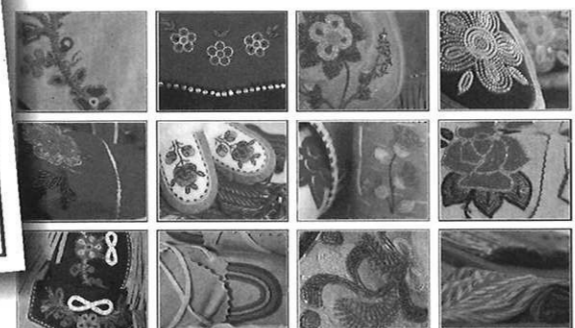
Last but not least, Florence told us that Chip's housework chores were to put the clean dishes away and he would say, "how come there are so many dishes when I just put them away?"

Then she would say, "Chip, if you don't want to help me, there is the auxiliary where you don't have to do a thing."

Then he would put the dishes away again.



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Métis Nation of Alberta  
Calendar!



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# Otipemisiwak

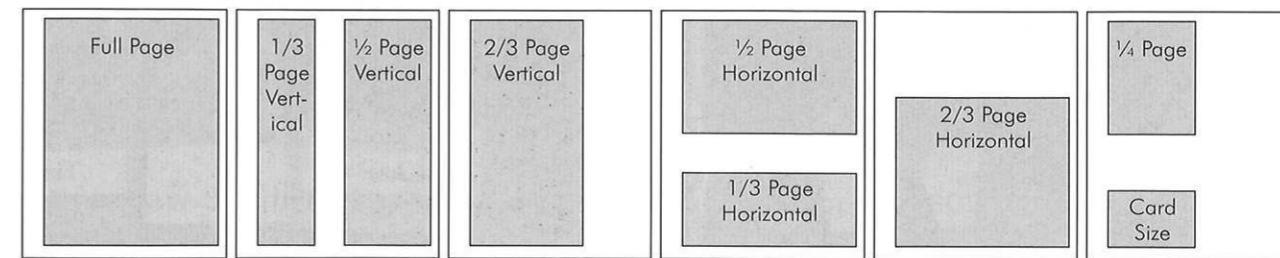
The Voice of the Métis Nation in Alberta

We encourage Métis to make submissions to our Nation's official magazine in the form of photos and articles telling stories about the events and people in your community.

## ADVERTISING DIMENSIONS & RATES

For more information on these rates, please contact Otipemisiwak at the Métis Nation of Alberta. Note that ads appearing on the back cover are in colour and are subject to a surcharge.

	AD DIMENSIONS		RATE PER ISSUE
	width	depth	
Centrefold	15½ inches	9½ inches	\$1,470
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½ Page Horizontal	7 inches	4¾ inches	\$513
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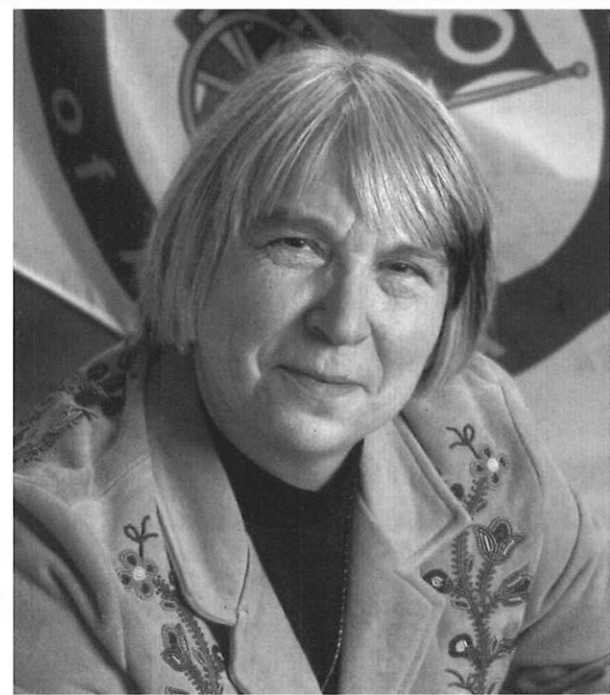
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*Season's Greetings*



## The Devlin Side

Monique Devlin

I would like to take this time to thank you for picking up and reading this edition of Otipemisiwak. This is the first time I have put together a magazine of this calibre, and I hope you had as much fun reading it as I did creating it.

You may have met me at an event, my face hiding behind a camera, my hands full of pens, papers (and usually food), or you may have seen my name on some of the stories in the last two editions. For those people I have not had a chance to meet in my six months at the Metis Nation of Alberta, let me introduce myself.

My name is Monique Devlin, I was hired to assist the then editor, Patricia Russell, in the production of the magazine and some of the other numerous tasks she was working on as Communications Manager. As you may already know, she left us in August to move closer to her family. Since that time I have been trying to fit in her shoes as best I can.

Let me tell you it is a difficult job (the woman's feet were huge – just kidding), but I honestly would not trade it for any other in the world. Not only do I have the opportunity to be a part of all the incredible things the MNA is doing at this time, but I also have had the chance to meet and work with some of the most amazing people I have ever encountered. I

know that one day, 20 years down the road, I will say to my children, "I was there when it happened."

This year, President Audrey Poitras is celebrating ten years in office and I would like to take this time to thank her for everything she has done for the Métis people. From building relationships with the Federal and Provincial Governments, to the steps she has taken to help ensure our rights are recognised, she has transformed the Métis Nation of Alberta Association into a Nation.

Growing up, I didn't know much about what it meant to be Métis. I knew that it was a part of who I was and I knew it was something to be proud of, but beyond that, I was stumped. Working here has given me an incredible opportunity to learn more about my family's history and my heritage, while doing a job that I love. It doesn't get much better than that. It seems like I learn something everyday about what it means to be Métis, and I hope to share that knowledge with as many people as I can. With Otipemisiwak, I have the perfect venue with which to do it.

I hope you have a beautiful Christmas and a Happy New Year, and I will see you all in 2007.

-30-

# National Definition of Métis

*As Adopted at the MNC's 18th AGA in Edmonton, AB  
September 27th - 28th, 2002*

1.1 "Métis" means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of Historic Métis Nation ancestry, and is accepted by the Métis Nation.

### *Defined Terms in National Definition of Métis*

1.2 "Historic Métis Nation" means the Aboriginal people then known as Métis or Half-breeds who resided in the Historic Métis Nation Homeland.

1.3 "Historic Métis Nation Homeland" means the area of land in west central North America used and occupied as the traditional territory of the Métis or Half-breeds as they were then known.

1.4 "Métis Nation" means the Aboriginal people descended from the Historic Métis Nation which is now comprised of all Métis Nation citizens and is one of the "aboriginal peoples of Canada" within the meaning of s.35 of the Constitution Act 1982.

1.5 "Distinct from other Aboriginal peoples" means distinct for cultural and nationhood purposes.



# Season's Greetings

