

Otipemisiwak

VOICE OF THE MÉTIS NATION IN ALBERTA



Exploring Identity Through Art



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

Michif:
"their own boss,
the independent ones"

Feature Photo (left):

Donald Jeffery Harris with the Canadian Forces Military Police received his Métis card from MNA President Audrey Poitras days before being deployed to Afghanistan to help train the police forces there.

Photo by Monique Devlin

On Our Cover:

These beaded moccasins belonged to former president of the Métis Association of Alberta, Adrian Hope. The Métis Association of Alberta was the predecessor of the Métis Nation of Alberta. Hope was president from 1960 to 1967.

Photo by Charity Borg

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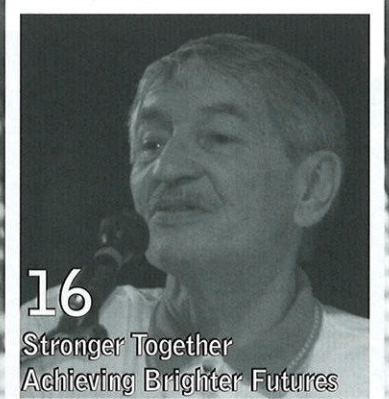
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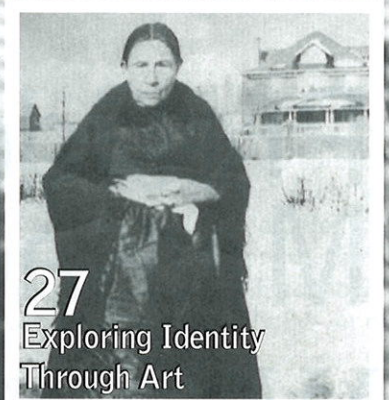
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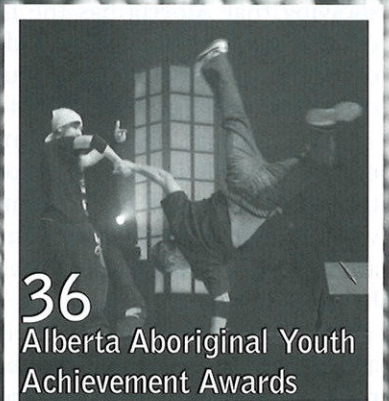
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Otipemisiwak

The Voice of the Métis Nation in Alberta

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

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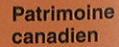
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Otipemisiwak

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.

Deadline for submissions is June 6, 2008

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President's Message

Welcome to the spring 2008 edition of *Otipemisiwak*. In light of the new Statistic Canada census numbers being released showing that Alberta has the highest number of Metis citizens of all the provinces, we decided to focus this issue on Metis identity through cultural activities, artistic expression or the achievement of our youth.

We look at harvester Ron Jones, who learned to embrace his Metis heritage through his connection with the outdoors; Marilyn Dumont, whose poetry defines what it means to be Metis and through some of our artisans who celebrate their identity through traditional hand crafts and artwork.

The census numbers also identified that our youth are one of the fastest growing demographics in the province, so what better time to celebrate them, for they truly are the greatest asset of our Nation.

This year we celebrated 16 outstanding youth during the Metis Nation of Alberta sponsored Alberta Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards. We have included the profile of each of the recipients, and I am sure you will agree that if these young people truly represent the future, than it is a bright future we have in store.

This year we had nearly 100 youth nominated for the 16 possible awards, and I wish we had an award for every single youth that was nominated, and for that matter, every other young Aboriginal Albertan who through hard work, perseverance and dedication to their community and culture help make this province a better place for not only themselves, but for every other Albertan out there.

All are fantastic role models for the other young people in their communities, and I am already looking



forward to seeing next year's list of nominees and recipients.

Then, the day after the youth awards, we had another exciting event, a Special Meeting to discuss and vote on a resolution initiated at the 79th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in St. Paul this past summer.

More than 400 people gathered together in Edmonton to examine the potential boundary changes and the development of a draft constitution the resolution had called for. While we received clear direction from the AGM to move forward with this motion, it was also clear from the response at the special meeting that many are not ready for these changes and the draft constitution and boundary changes did not garner the 75 per cent support needed to pass, but the enthusiasm of the crowd demonstrated that the issues at hand were of great importance to the members of the MNA and that our members continue to be very active in the political processes of the MNA.

And while I know that many of our members are disappointed as a result of this meeting, change is not something that happens overnight, and I want to encourage the members who brought this motion forward to continue working towards the betterment of the MNA. Judging by the turnout and the lively discussion at the special meeting, there are a lot of people concerned about the future of our Nation and I want to thank each and every attendee for taking the time to come out and voice their concerns.

Our next regularly scheduled AGM will take place this August 8-10, 2008 in Red Deer and as always all members of the MNA are invited to attend and make their voices heard.

I would also like to take this time to extend a thank you to all of the MNA staff

throughout the province. We have people working for the betterment of our citizens in our Metis Employment Services offices spread across the province, in the offices of each of our six regions and here in our head office in Edmonton. Often times these staff are the face of the MNA and it is through their hard work and determination that helps build our Nation.

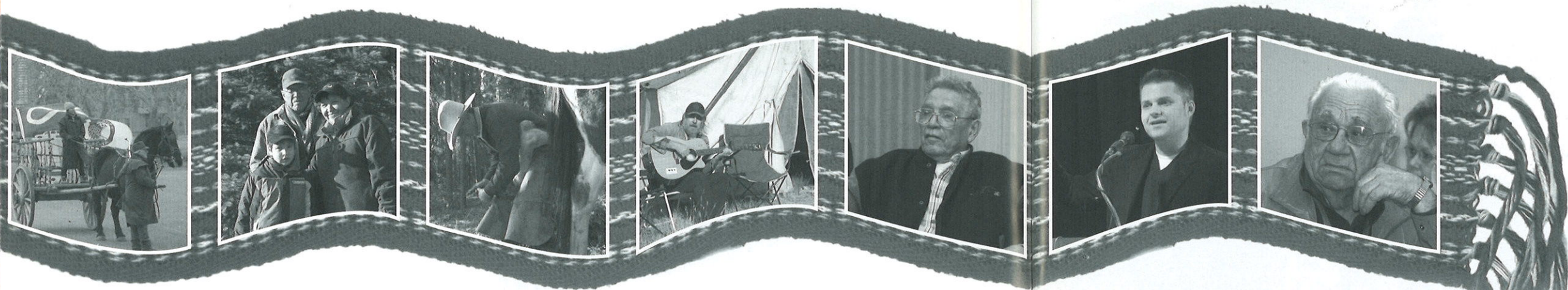
This spring, at least three of these individuals have taken the concept of "building the Metis Nation of Alberta" quite literally and are doing their part to keep our census numbers growing strong by taking some time off work to add some new members to their families. While it is sad to see them go, I look forward to their return, and to getting to know the newest members of our extended family. So to Leah Powder, our Education Manager, Debbie Tweedle our Registry file maintenance officer and Monique Devlin, the editor of *Otipemisiwak*, I am sure I speak for everyone when I say that we will miss seeing your smiling faces around the office, and I wish you all the best in the new (or returning) roles as mothers.

I hope each and everyone of you enjoy the summer ahead and make time to spend with family and friends.

Respectfully,

Audrey Poitras, President
Métis Nation of Alberta

Strengthening Our Métis Rights



MNA Announces Workshops on Crown's Duty to Consult & Accommodate Métis Rights

'Alberta Métis Continue To Push Forward On Rights-Based Agenda'

Audrey Poitras, President of the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) has announced a series of workshops to be held across the province in order to provide Métis citizens the opportunity to discuss the Crown's duty to consult and accommodate Métis rights as it relates to resource development and exploitation, and to develop a consultation strategy for creating and implementing an Alberta Métis Consultation Policy.

"Increasingly, our traditional lands, health and way of life are being affected by natural resources developments throughout the province. Our Elders and traditional resources users continue to raise concerns about the impacts of government decisions and industry activities on future generations. We need to take collective action on these important issues before it is too late," President Poitras said. "As a rights-bearing Aboriginal people under Section 35, the Crown has a constitutional obligation to consult with us and accommodate our rights. Similar to the Métis Harvesting Policy, we must now move forward and develop a Métis Consultation Policy that ensures Métis rights, interests and way of life is being respected by government and industry."

"The honour of the Crown and the duty of fairness are always at stake in all of its dealing with Aboriginal peoples," Cecil Bellrose, MNA Minister for Métis Rights said. "Therefore, we must build Métis capacity by bringing these issues to all Métis citizens living in villages, towns and cities across Alberta. A

Métis Consultation Policy must be developed and supported by the Métis people. It cannot be developed by the government and imposed upon us."

Workshops will be held in Calgary and Edmonton. At these workshops, MNA citizens will be provided the opportunity to learn

Consult & Accommodate Métis Rights

more about the duty to consult and accommodate as well as provide their input on how the MNA should move forward on developing a Métis Consultation Policy. The workshops will also provide an update on Métis harvesting and Métis rights legal issues by Jason Madden and Jean Teillet.

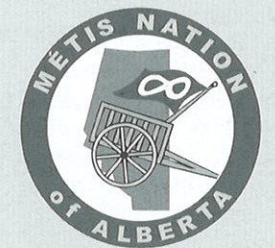
The workshops are open to all MNA members and details on the workshop are provided below. MNA members who are interested in attending are encouraged to pre-register in order to ensure adequate seating and refreshments are available.



Proud Métis harvester Breanne Kristen LaPratt-Savage poses with the deer she shot on her 12th birthday.

Photo by Leona and Joe LaPratt

Photo by Rich Phalin



Calgary Workshop

Saturday
April 19th, 2008
Coast Plaza Hotel
1316 - 33 Street NE
10:30 am

Edmonton Workshop

Saturday
April 26th, 2008
Wingate Inn
18220 100 Avenue NW
10:30 am

For further information or to register contact:

Marilyn Underschultz
(780) 455-2200
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Members of the MNA go over some ground rules as they prepare for a hunt last month, organized in defiance of the province's decision to ban out of season hunting. The battle, begun on the open plains as hunters forced wildlife officers to charge them is expected to shift to the courtroom.

Métis Hunters Draw a Bead on Rights Showdown

Alberta Metis are staging illegal hunts aimed at provoking a court battle with the provincial government. For them, it's a matter of principle and cultural pride.

Reprinted with permission from the February 17, 2008 edition of the Edmonton Journal

CESSFORD - Heading out across the Southern Alberta prairie to set up a Métis hunting camp, Ron Jones stops at a fork in the road.

It's apparent that he isn't sure whether to turn right or left.

A former hunting guide with a large black stetson and the Métis penchant for brightly coloured clothing, he steps out of his truck to consult with travellers following in another vehicle. After they consult maps and a GPS, they suggest he turn right.

Jones, 58, who resides on the Kootenay Plains on the edge of Alberta's mountain parks, isn't

familiar with the flat, treeless terrain north of Brooks, some 160 kilometres east of Calgary. He's never hunted here.

"The Indian in me wanted to turn right," he explains with an embarrassed grin. "But the white man in me said: 'Turn left.'"

Many of the Métis on this antelope hunt are also of two minds. They are Métis who grew up as non-natives. Some never knew their ancestry until recently because their parents were too ashamed to tell them that they were "halfbreeds."

Some knew, but never told anyone because they fear some people have "strong opinions"

against aboriginal rights and revealing their ancestry could cost them opportunities or business.

But on this day they are making a very public stand. They have embarked on an out-of-season hunt to assert what they claim is their inherent right to hunt for food anywhere in the province.

Some of them say they may never use the right, but they are determined to claim it just the same.

"It's not about hunting; it's about aboriginal rights," says Jones, who was born in Edmonton, but moved into the mountains to trap and guide when he reached his teens. "If we don't exercise our

rights, we don't have any rights."

The Métis say a Supreme Court of Canada decision upholds this constitutional right, but the Alberta government continues to deny it.

Under Alberta's rules, which came into effect last summer when the province cancelled a negotiated interim harvesting agreement, Métis cannot hunt on this prairie between Calgary and the Alberta-Saskatchewan boundary. It has removed their legal right to hunt for food in all of central or southern Alberta.

The Conservative government killed the interim deal following complaints from hunters and conservation groups.

Ted Morton, the minister responsible for hunting, called the original harvesting agreement "a dog that cannot hunt."

The new law allows sustenance hunting only in a 160-kilometre radius of eight Métis settlements and 17 "approved" communities, providing hunters prove ancestral links to Métis who reside there.

Jones is the designated shooter and the captain of this hunt, the last of six held around the province.

The Métis want to get Alberta into court where they are confident their constitutional right to hunt unimpeded will be upheld.

Before staging this hunt, the Métis advertised it in local newspapers. Jones said he received several calls from area residents concerned about the plan.

"Once they understood we were coming down with a small group to harvest one animal they were fine with it," he says. "But there is probably the odd person who isn't."

One Cessford-area rancher says she was alarmed when she saw the advertisement, but was reassured by

Jones there wouldn't be any hunting on her property without permission.

"I wanted to make sure there weren't going to be bullets flying around in the vicinity of where I lived," said the rancher, who didn't want to be identified. "It had nothing to do with the Métis issue."

She said she didn't know whether the illegal hunts are the appropriate way to resolve the matter.

"I am not sure if that's a good way to do it or if it will stir things up for them."

Jones said he received a good reception from ranchers he called to seek permission to hunt on their land.

**It is more than just about hunting.
It is about the recognition of the
rights of a people.**

"I never had one negative word at all from the leaseholders."

Mick Nieman, who runs 150 head of cattle on 10 sections of land, said he didn't have a problem with the request.

"They have a God-given right to do what they're doing any time," said the 59-year-old rancher. "I don't ever discourage anyone from hunting, whether they are Métis or anything else."

Most of the hunters arrive before dusk. Some have come from as far away as Fox Creek, Hinton and Valleyview.

They pitch tents in -18 C temperatures around a teepee constructed by Jim Lambert, 65, who dragged his 10-metre poles 650 kilometres from Robb, near Jasper Park.

The Fort Vermilion-born outfitter, guide, trapper and jack of all trades has picked a low spot for camp near a frozen marsh that

provides a few willows for protection against the unrelenting wind.

Lambert, clad in a plaid shirt, jeans and fur hat, curses the treeless prairie, where he has to mount a lengthy search just to find a stick, but with the eye of an experienced chef, which he is, he has been hungrily eyeing the pheasants running thick in the tall grass.

After camp has been set up and the blue Métis "infinity" flag raised, a council is held in Lambert's teepee to discuss the next day's hunt.

Participants stand around a campfire, smoking cigarettes and shuffling their feet to keep warm, while Jones, seated near the teepee entrance, explains the reason and rules for the hunt.

"Our goal will be to harvest an antelope for food and to be subsequently charged by the

Alberta government," he says, reading his notes by lantern-light. "Law enforcement officers have been invited to attend. It is important to keep in mind that the officers are just doing their job, as we are just doing ours."

He sets out the rules -- no alcohol, no drugs, no unregistered firearms and no trespassing.

Jones praises the others who are supporting him on the hunt, but who are not expecting to participate in the actual shooting of an animal.

"You're proud and making history," he tells them. "You will be remembered for fighting for our cause."

Earlier in the day he and the other "deputy captains" briefed two Fish and Wildlife officers about the hunt, providing them written copies of the rules at a Brooks coffee shop.

The two officers, Doug Etherington of Medicine Hat and Bob Machum of Hanna, arrived

wearing flak jackets over their forest green uniform tops, the head of a bighorn ram displayed on their shoulder badges.

Jones explains the hunters plan to shoot one antelope, likely in the Medicine Hat District, but failing that they would settle for a deer.

"Call us when you get one on the ground," says Machum.

He also advises the hunters to follow hunter safety regulations, not to shoot from secondary roads or within 50 yards of their vehicle.

There won't be any other antelope hunters in the field.

In order to hunt antelope legally in Alberta, a hunter has to be selected in a random draw for hunts held in October.

The next morning, the Métis hunters are up before dawn, breakfasting on bacon and eggs cooked over a fire in Lambert's teepee.

Just before they break camp, Bobby Brusco, a 79-year-old Brooks minister, pulls up in a van to wish Jones and his hunting party good luck.

He marvels at the teepees gleaming in the dawn's early rays.

"I haven't been to one of these in 40 years," he chortles. "We use to call it a powwow."

"Now it's a political rally," retorts Dale "Smoky" Mohan of Fox Creek.

The amiable Mohan, 48, is a welder who got his nickname when his early efforts with a welding torch fried a \$600,000 bulldozer.

A big-game hunter who has hunted around the world, Mohan says he killed his first moose when he was 11 and was hunting ducks with a slingshot before he went to kindergarten.

He's only now embracing his roots and he's not worried about the fallout.

"I'm getting to the point that I don't care any more because my true friends respect me for me," he says.

"I can't sit on the fence. I have never

been good at doing that."

A hunting camp on the first morning of the hunt is alive with excitement, but the mood is pensive as Jones and his spotter, Josh Slager, head out with Mohan and Lambert following in his truck.

Jones is anxious about doing this right. He wants to shoot an antelope cleanly, obeying all the other regulations, to ensure that it will be a clear issue for the court to decide.

studying the deer with his binoculars.

Slager, the only Métis hunter who has ever shot an antelope, says his colour blindness is an asset for spotting game.

Jones turns off a gravel road into a pasture just north of the Trans-Canada Highway and follows a meandering trail that winds around a gravel pit and a number of gas wells. He drives only a few minutes before Slager spots a pair of



Métis hunter Ron Jones shows off the lone antelope shot during a hunt held in defiance of the Alberta Government in January.

But he also knows that if he is successful, he will be charged with a hunting violation for the first time in his life? and that saddens him.

The Métis hunters stop one last time to check an area map, picking out a section of pasture south of Canadian Forces Base Suffield they want to try first.

"We're hunting now," announces Jones. It's 11:30 a.m.

Within a couple of minutes, Slager, 31, who professes to being colour blind, spots a four-point mule deer buck bedded in a pasture.

"There's a little buck there but we'll let him go," he says, after

antelope bucks bedded down in the tall grass about 180 metres away, but Jones keeps driving on past them.

He wants to make sure he is a legal distance from the highway and any occupied buildings before he starts to stalk the animals. Once Slager has examined the hunting regulations and zone maps and double-checked to ensure they aren't in any prohibited hunting area, the pair begin stalking the animals from the north. It takes them about 20 minutes to get into position for a shot.

The temperature is above zero, but a biting 25- to 30-km/h wind

brings it down close to -10 C and makes it difficult to hold a rifle steady. Jones fires three shots from his custom-made .257 Weatherby from about 75 metres, but misses and the antelope bound out of sight over a low rise to the south.

The disappointed hunters return to the truck to resume scouting.

"We're just a bunch of poor starving Indians," Lambert calls out to the invisible quarry. "Give up the ghost for us."

The hunters spot two more antelope a few minutes later, but by the time they disembark behind a low rise, the prey have taken off to the south to join up with a herd of about 40 antelope.

Jones eyes light up. He outlines his intention to crawl toward the crest of a hill to get a shot at the closest antelope which is, according to Mohan, just under 300 metres away.

"I'll be right back," he says confidently. It's just after 1 p.m.

As he moves toward the grazing herd, it suddenly bolts.

Two shots ring out. One antelope stops. It's hit.

A third shot rings out, a fourth, a fifth. Jones shoulders his rifle. The antelope is down. It's 1:07 p.m.

"I was watching the whole herd in the binoculars and all of a sudden one stopped dead," Slager says later. "The first shot hit it in the low shoulder."

The buck, which Slager estimates to be three years old, is still alive when the hunters approach. Jones finishes it off.

It's not the clean kill he wanted, but his mission is accomplished.

Though he knows the antelope carcass will be seized as evidence for any subsequent court proceeding, he prepares it for butchering, field-dressing it and dumping the entrails into the snow.

If he wins his court case, he can apply to have the meat returned to

him. But that could take five years or more.

Back at his truck, which has been driven forward to the site of the kill, he calls the Fish and Wildlife office in Medicine Hat to report that he has an animal on the ground. He would have preferred to take the antelope to camp for a feast, but he gave the officers his word he would call them from the scene of the killing.

He slumps dejectedly in the seat of the truck awaiting their arrival.

"I feel very sad," he explains. "I killed that animal and it won't be eaten because it will be confiscated. It will go to waste and I feel bad about that."

"We don't want any special favours."

Jones says he feels neither nervous nor guilty of a crime. It's the province of Alberta that is breaking the law, he says.

"The Supreme Court of Canada directed the provinces to accommodate Métis harvesting," he says. "Alberta hasn't done that. Alberta is the lawbreaker."

The Fish and Wildlife officers -- Etherington and Len Lupyczuk -- arrive in separate trucks about an hour later.

Etherington asks Jones to accompany him to his truck to provide a statement. Lupyczuk investigates the scene, taking photographs and measurements.

As the investigators go to work, a cellphone rings in Mohan's truck. It's a customer needing a welding truck.

"I'm in the middle of being arrested and I can't stay on the phone too long," Mohan drawls.

Later, as the two officers accompany Jones to his truck to

seize his rifle, the antelope emerge from behind a ridge and cross in single file behind them, silhouetted against the setting sun.

Jones hands over his scope-mounted .257 Weatherby magnum rifle -- a firearm he estimates is worth more than \$3,000. He was hoping it would not be seized, but he doesn't complain.

"It doesn't matter," he says. "They can take the truck, too."

Jones is charged with hunting wildlife during a closed season and unlawful possession of wildlife. He is issued a summons to appear in court May 9, but Métis officials say their lawyers hope to "bundle" the six cases and deal with them all at once at one trial.

Jones is confident that informed Albertans will support the Métis cause.

"The more we educate people the more understanding they will have to make an informed decision, rather than a knee-jerk reaction."

University of Alberta native studies professor Nathalie Kermaoal says Métis in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and B.C. are also struggling with provincial interpretations of the court ruling.

Métis continue to be charged, cases tried and decisions appealed.

Robert Lee, the Métis Nation of Alberta's manager of justice issues, says his people just want to continue to hunt for food the way they always have.

"We don't want any special favours."

Jones says he takes pride in standing up for Métis rights for his nine-month-old granddaughter, who is a descendent of mountain man Ewan Moberly, a Métis leader evicted from Jasper in 1907 when the national park was created.

"I want her to be very proud. I am doing this for future generations," he says. "I want them to be proud of their culture."

Ron Jones - The Modern Métis Warrior

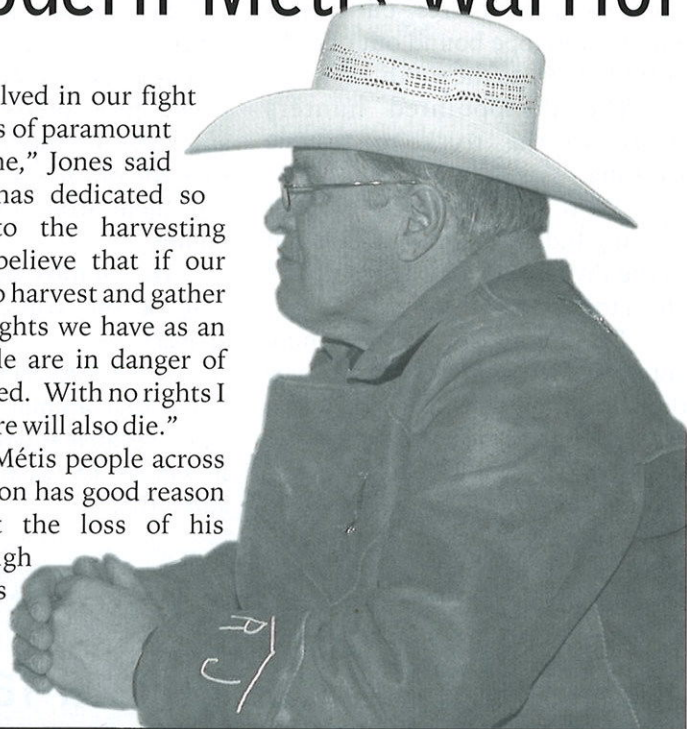
By Monique Devlin

Most people notice when Ron Jones enters a room. While not a tall man, his easy smile and usual attire of black cowboy hat and buckskin jacket tend to command attention.

Ron, along with a team of like-minded harvesters, has volunteered much of his time and own resources over the last year organizing community hunts from the South Eastern prairies, up through the edge of the Rocky Mountains and into the muskeg filled north in a bid to challenge the unilateral and legally unenforceable policy recently adopted by Ted Morton, the current Minister for Sustainable Resource Development (SRD).

“Being involved in our fight against Alberta is of paramount importance to me,” Jones said about why he has dedicated so much energy to the harvesting cause. “I fully believe that if our inherent rights to harvest and gather are denied, all rights we have as an Aboriginal people are in danger of being extinguished. With no rights I believe our culture will also die.”

Like many Métis people across the homeland, Ron has good reason to worry about the loss of his culture. Although his father was Métis, he passed away when Ron was only two,



Ron Jones (right) sits with MNA Justice Manager, Robert Lee (left) and fellow captain of the hunt Wayne Roberts (middle).

and never had a chance to share his culture, history or background with his young son. His mother, who later remarried, never talked about Ron's father's heritage and while he had his suspicions he never really knew he was Métis until much later in life.

“Being Métis was just not discussed in our family,” he said, “It was considered to be shameful if you were a half breed in those days.”

“When I was 12-years-old I met what was to become a life long friend who was Métis,” Ron said. “As was typical of the Métis culture, I was welcomed into the family. My friend's father was a harvester and gatherer and I was invited on many harvests.”

As Ron describes it, this involvement in harvesting flamed the smoldering embers burning within him, igniting a lifelong love of the outdoors.

“When I was old enough to strike out on my own I moved to the eastern slopes of the Rockies to pursue a life of trapping, guiding, horse training, and hunting,” he said about this period of his life.

“My connection to being able to live off the land completes me. It gives me a sense of security as no matter what happens I will always be able to survive in the mountains with the skills I have. I belong to the land, it provides for me and my loved ones.”

It was not until he began researching his genealogy later in life that he understood how thorough this connection was, as living off the land was something his family had done for generations. Once he began to better understand his heritage, Ron decided to involve himself in the Métis Nation of Alberta.

“It was a very emotional time for me the day that I proved firstly to myself that I was Métis and secondly to the rest of the world,” he said. “I



Photo by Monique Devlin

Guy L'Heureux, Ron Jones and Wayne Roberts, representing the south, central, and northern parts of Alberta respectively, have put countless time and resources into organizing the various group hunts throughout the province.

was so overwhelmed with the desire to interact with other Métis.”

At first Ron attended some community meetings, just to meet people and learn about what was happening in the MNA. Those first interactions soon grew, and because of extensive harvesting experience, he was asked to sit on some of the Harvesters Council meetings taking place at the time to develop a Métis specific harvesting policy.

“I was so pleased to be recognized by other Métis as someone who could help out our Nation,” he said. “This achievement was more than I had ever even dreamed – the fact that I was so readily and openly accepted by my people still brings tears to my eyes.”

While Ron would have been content leaving his involvement at that level, everything changed this July when Ted Morton, the current Minister for SRD cancelled the Interim Métis Harvesting

Agreement (IMHA) and instead, adopted a unilateral and regressive policy on Métis harvesting.

This policy excluded Métis living in central and southern Alberta, ignored the Alberta Government's own research on Métis claims and drew arbitrary lines that limit traditional Métis harvesting practices. In August, the MNA Assembly adopted both the Métis specific harvesting policy that Ron had already been involved in and an Action Plan on Métis Harvesting that focused on four areas: exercising Métis rights, defending Métis rights, political action on Métis rights and public education on Métis rights.

“I am now very much involved with part four of our action plan which is to educate the non Aboriginal public about the conservation practices the Métis have in Alberta,” Ron said. “I really believe that mainstream society will

understand and support the Métis if they are better informed about our culture, our rights, and our long standing practice of conservation."

To that extent, Ron has involved himself in a number of boards and conservation groups, such as the Willmore Wilderness Foundation and the Alberta Caribou Committee both to help these organizations in their conservation efforts and in an attempt to reach out to these groups as a Métis person.

"Many of these groups are just as interested in conserving Alberta's wildlife as we are," he said. "But sometimes they need to be reminded of that."

But for Ron, one of the most important things he has been able to do in order to help the MNA has

been by acting as the de facto Captain of the Hunt on the group hunts across Alberta.

"I was chosen to help lead our people with communal hunts so that we could exercise and defend our rights," Ron said about his experience. "I was also fortunate to be able to sit in the Legislature and represent our Nation along with my fellow harvesters."

Ron is quick to point out that the harvests he was involved with would not have happened if it were not for the enthusiasm and dedication of his brothers (and sisters) in arms, that none of the hunts would have even been possible.

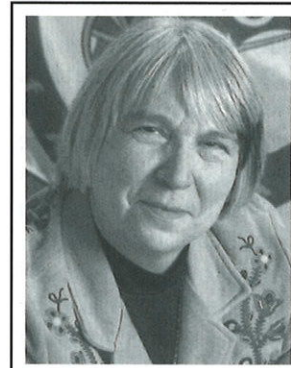
"We have had men and women take time off of work, travel great distances, all at their own expense,

in order to participate in these hunts," Ron said. "They are the true heroes in this struggle. Many of our people do not have the resources to participate in this manner and it is those very people who are the most vulnerable to arbitrary limits set out by the Alberta Government."

But Ron recognizes that this struggle has had a positive impact in many ways. It has brought people together, and has renewed an interest in many young people to really explore their heritage and their connection to the Métis Nation.

"I see the Métis Nation as a stronger united people; I hope that will lead us to being able to teach even more of our young people traditional harvesting customs. They are the future."

Alberta Métis React to Stelmach Cabinet 'Métis Nation's Door is Open for Partnership'



By Audrey Poitras

The week's newly minted Cabinet provides a mix of challenges as well as opportunities for Alberta Métis. We will have to wait and see whether the challenges continue to stifle us from moving forward in partnership or whether the Throne Speech's commitment to working with "First Nations and Métis Albertans to strengthen their important roles in Alberta" will actually be achieved in Premier Stelmach's mandate.

Clearly, keeping Ted Morton as Minister for Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) is a challenge for the Métis. Minister Morton's biases against constitutionally protected Aboriginal rights generally and the Métis people specifically are well documented and known. On the Métis file, Morton's activities include: cancelling a negotiated Métis harvesting agreement that worked well for over two and a half years, implementing a flawed and arbitrary Métis harvesting policy where his department attempts to determine who is Métis, and, harassing and charging Alberta Métis harvesters. Instead of having an arrangement where Métis harvesters would be clearly identified and the results of the annual Métis harvest would be shared with SRD to improve planning and resource protection, we have no relationship and Métis have had to turn to the courts to seek fairness and justice. Of course, Mr. Morton's unilateral approach to issues have not only failed on the Métis file. His authorized seismic testing under Marie Lake and his paid hunting initiative called 'Open Spaces' demonstrate that unilateral action almost always equates to failure, while collaboration equates to

results. Métis can only hope that Morton will want to see results in his new term as Minister.

However, it is equally important to note that the Métis also see significant opportunities in the Premier's choices. The creation of the stand-alone Aboriginal Relations Ministry and the appointment of Gene Zwozdesky as Minister are exciting developments. Gene is an experienced and skilled Minister and an honourable man. He is a perfect choice to build partnerships and seize opportunities on the Aboriginal file. Ministers Doug Horner and Dave Hancock are also excellent choices and they will work well with partners like the MNA in order to address Alberta's labour market needs and build a knowledge-based economy for the 21st century. In addition, Alison Redford is an excellent choice for Attorney General. Her extensive work related to human rights in Canada and abroad ensures we have a Minister who understands the importance of respecting and protecting constitutional rights. From the Métis perspective, a collaborative approach on rights issues will save Alberta taxpayer's millions of dollars in litigation, avoid legal uncertainty in relation to resource development in Alberta and strengthen the rule of law. And finally, the more equitable gender balance in this new Cabinet is both refreshing and empowering.

Time will tell whether these opportunities equate to real results for Alberta Métis. I am optimistic that they will. The MNA and this newly elected Progressive Conservative government share many things in common: we both have long legacies in the province, we are both committed to building and strengthening Alberta, and, we are both not going anywhere anytime soon. With these commonalities, it makes sense that we return to the longstanding partnership approach that has served us well in this province for decades. The Métis Nation's door is always open and we hope to soon see our friend and partner back soon.

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Number of Métis in Alberta Continues to Grow

By Charity Borg

MNA Registry comparable to latest Statistics Canada Results

The Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) continues to grow strong and according to the 2006 Aboriginal Census results released earlier this year there is room to continue growing.

Since the MNA began a central registration process in the early 1990s over 40,000 individuals have applied to become a registered member of the MNA. According to statistics Canada there are 85,495 Métis people living in Alberta with nearly half of those people living in either Edmonton or Calgary. The biggest spike in people applying to registry was in 2004.

"The Census data that was just released is closely related to trends we have noticed in registry. Of course our numbers do not match, however the statistical information does reflect our records," said Irene Collins, Métis Identification Registry Director at the MNA. "If you take a look at the MNA Registry and Stats Can numbers they are often proportional to one another.

"In most areas of the province there is steady growth amongst Métis populations according to Statistics Canada."

The Métis population is the fastest growing aboriginal population in Canada according to the Jan. 15, 2008 Statistics Canada release. Over a 10 year span the Métis population nationwide has grown 90.9 per cent from 1996 to 2006.

"I believe part of the reason why growth has occurred over the last 10 years is a lot more people are coming out proud of who they are and where they came from," said Collins. "There was a time when people were unaware of their

Statistics Canada 2006 Census	
Total Aboriginal Population	Canada – 1,172,785
Alberta – 188,365	
Total First Nations	Canada – 698,025
Alberta – 97,275	
Total Métis	Canada – 389,780
Alberta – 85,495	
Total Inuit	Canada – 50,480
Alberta – 1,610	

ancestry. Many families looked at being Métis as having a choice to whom they wanted to identify with. Some people adopted their First Nations ancestry, while others adopted their European history. People had the opportunity to identify with two different cultures. The *Powley* decision confirmed the existence of Métis people.

"We see a lot of people who always suspected they were of aboriginal ancestry and a lot of those people are bringing in old photographs looking to trace their roots.

Alberta has the highest Métis population in Canada with 22 per cent of all Métis people living in the province. Also for every 10 Métis, seven of those live in major urban centres.

Detailed statistical data is collected with the long form census form. Twenty per cent of the population receives the long form census and this sampling is used to calculate the totals such as aboriginal identity. The process used

for calculating the estimated population of ethnicity is called weighting with every one response being the equivalent to five responses.

The Registry Process

The Métis Identification Registry application process is a lot longer than many people would like however the length of time it takes to complete the process is based on the volume of applications.

"We have to process all applications whether they qualify or not," said Collins. "Due to high numbers of individuals who have gone through the genealogical process we now have more access to genealogical records which makes it easier to validate a connection to the Homeland."

The application process to become included in the registry is getting a lot shorter thanks to being able to process entire families in family clusters rather than as individuals.

There is a set criterion for a person to be considered for a Métis card. All people applying for inclusion in the Métis Nation of Alberta must prove historical evidence their ancestry originates to the historic Métis Nation homeland meaning the area of land in west central North America used and occupied as the traditional territory of Métis or Half-breeds (as they were known.) To do this a person must provide a genealogy tree that dates to the mid 1800s, copy of long form birth certificate, one piece of photo identification (such as a driver's license) and proof of permanent residence within Alberta.

For people uncertain of where to start tracing their roots the MNA has resources to help. The genealogy department has many resources to

trace family roots. The MNA registry has helpful staff who can guide you through the process. The new MNA cards are more secure and more difficult to duplicate. The reason for tightening up the process for getting a card was for reasons of accountability.

"We thank people for being patient throughout the process," said Collins. "We apologize for taking longer than what people would like, however the process exists to ensure that individuals are included in the registry are Métis. There are a lot of different kinds of benefits to help assure funding for school and business loans go to the right people. We have many rights as Métis people and part of that right is being able to say we are proud to be Métis."



MNA Metis Identification Registry staff from across the Province.

Photo by Charity Borg

Update your Membership Files

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

- Historical proof of Métis heritage (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 numbers to confirm the status of your membership file.

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Building the Métis Nation of Alberta



Stronger Together — Achieving Brighter Futures

By Monique Devlin

“There are a few things I want to ask the older people here today,” Homer Poitras, Vice President of Region 2 said on the opening night of the Stronger Together, Achieving Brighter Futures for Métis Communities Conference. “Do you remember when you were a young fellow and they talked about diabetes, and they talked about cancer, did you ever hear that in your household? No.”

Poitras, who has already tackled and overcome battles with alcoholism and cancer, is now struggling with diabetes and encouraged those in the audience to consider why these issues are so prevalent in the Métis community today, and what they could do to help themselves and their community during the Feb. 13-15 conference.

Poitras' question made for a good start to the now annual conference that takes place in mid-February and centres on the issues facing the Métis community and the strategies being implemented to tackle them.

The Stronger Together, Achieving Brighter Futures for Métis Communities Conference was a follow up to last year's hugely successful “Time For Action” Conference, itself a follow up to the

parenting conference held the year before.

“This conference is about combining our strengths to overcome our weaknesses,” MNA

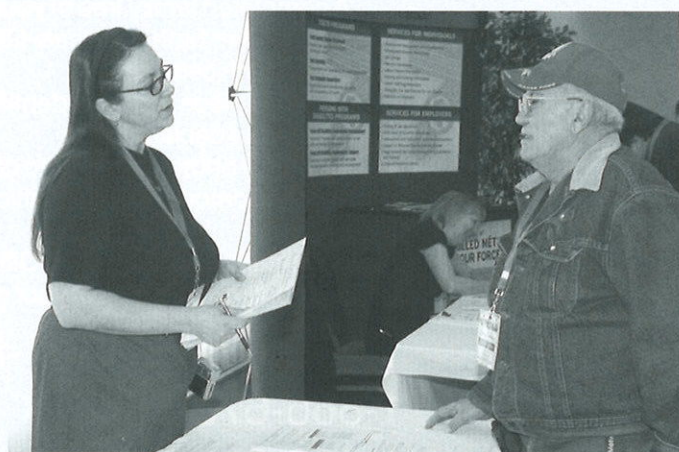
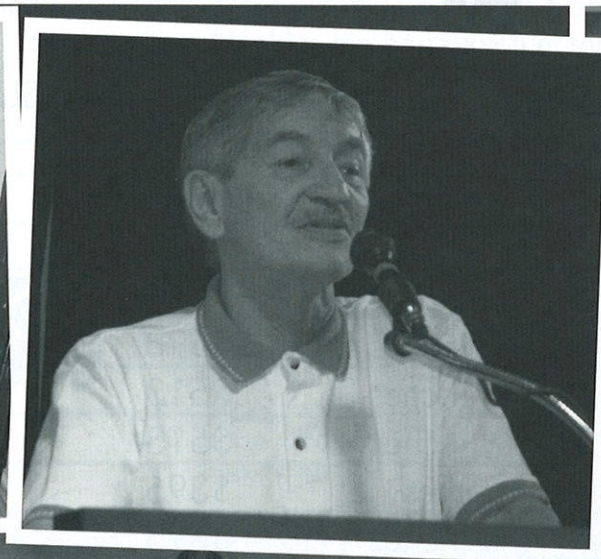
President Audrey Poitras said during the opening. “Because, as we strengthen our Nation, we strengthen our families and the community they live in.”

“While we have come a long way since the Métis Nation of Alberta first came into existence almost 80 years ago, we have only just begun to fulfill our mission to

ensure the advancement of the socio-economic and cultural well being of our people. It takes time, and it takes a lot of hard work from both the staff we employ and the

communities themselves, and it takes gatherings like this one to ensure that we are headed on the right path.”

This year, the Stronger



Top Left: MNA staff were on hand to welcome guests to the Stronger Together Conference (pictured from left to right Leah Powder, Shauna Letendre and Jeannie Tourangeau).
Bottom Left: Yvonne Lepage, MNA Housing Manager, talks to Clarence Laplante during the Stronger Together Trade Show.

Left Insert: Norman L. Kwong, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, looks over a display on Métis Genealogy with Irene Collins, MNA director of Métis Identification and Registry.
Right Insert: Region 2 Vice President Homer Poitras speaks about why the Stronger Together Conference is so important.
Top Right: Theresa Majeran talks with Her Honour Mary Kwong while her Aide-de-Camp looks on.
Bottom Right: While many issues were tackled during the conference, there was also plenty of entertainment and chances for guests to visit.

Otipemisiwak

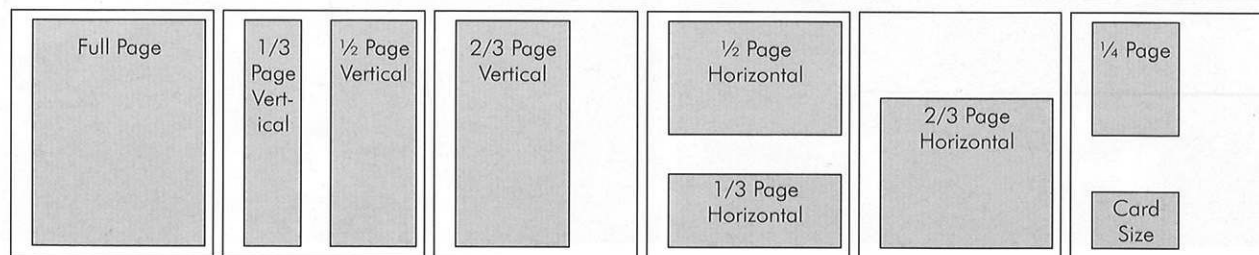
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Grand Ballroom of the Château Louis Hotel and Conference Centre as hundreds of people from across Alberta gathered to discuss what can be done to further strengthen the Métis community now and in the future.

One of the predominate themes surrounded issues of health and wellness, including a session on the ramifications of a potential Pandemic Influenza and a session concerning all things relating to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

"The Métis community in particular has made some significant advancements in this area," Niki Woosnack, the Assistant Deputy Minister for Alberta Children's Services said. "Addressing FASD in Alberta continues to be important work for Children's Services and for the government of Alberta and I am pleased to see that this topic is highlighted at this year's conference."

Other topics included the role and function of the Métis Judiciary Council, economic development, housing, harvesting, labour market development, and education. The latter two receiving specific attention from keynote speaker, Senator Claudette Tardif.

"And I am really pleased to see that in this province 16 employment centres across the province deliver Aboriginal Human Resources development training," she said. "You should be proud of that, and I know that is something that the MNA has worked very hard to achieve."

"I understand that Métis students do not qualify for

targeted funding available from the post secondary student support program of Indian and Northern Affairs," she continued. "I think we have to look at a program that would target Métis students specifically for funding to move on."

Each topic addressed during the conference involved a panel of experts including MNA and industry representatives. Participants were invited to ask questions at the end of each presentation and many community issues were addressed.

The conference was an initiative of the MNA Strategic Policy and Planning team, which deals with most of the Government (both federal and provincial) funded initiatives run through the MNA.

Tardif was just one of several high profile guests who participated in the Conference; others included former MLA for Edmonton Beverly-Clareview Ray Martin, Alberta Liberal leader Kevin Taft and the Honourable Norman L. Kwong, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta.

"I have a great deal of respect for the work you'll be doing together over the next two days," his Honour said during the opening of the conference. "Métis people have been making important contributions to the area since the days of the earliest European settlers, long before the Province of Alberta."



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Métis Nation - Saskatchewan is seeking candidates for the following positions:

REGISTRY DIRECTOR

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- Minimum 3 years experience in public administration, policy development, strategic planning, and executive-level decision-making
- Knowledge of Métis Governance regarding the definition of Métis, citizenship criteria, applicant eligibility and application documentation requirements
- Commitment to delivering a quality public service to Métis people of Saskatchewan

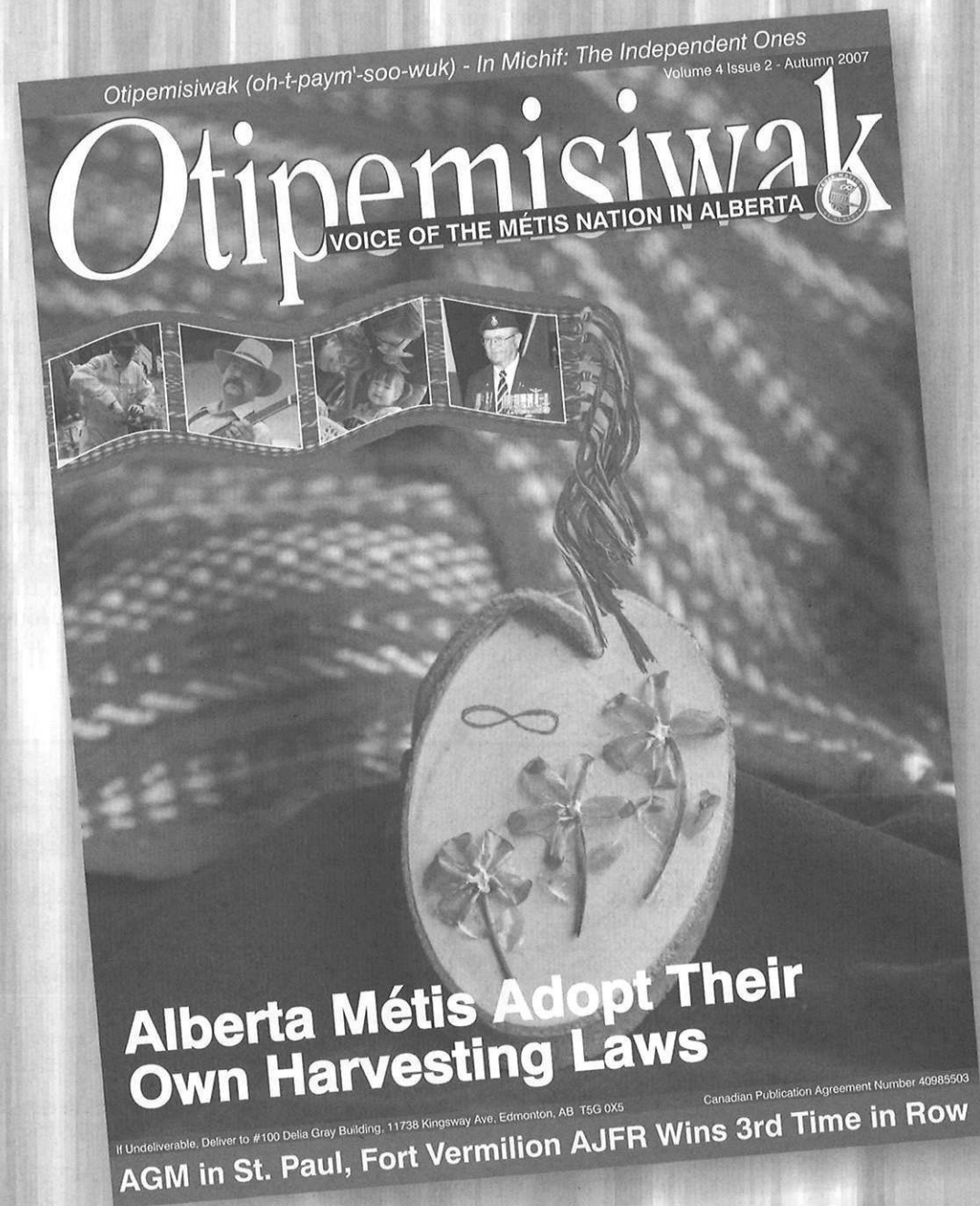
GENEALOGIST

General Qualifications

- Minimum 3 years experience in research and techniques applicable to genealogical research
- Knowledge of Métis Governance regarding genealogical documentation requirements for citizenship
- Commitment to delivering a quality public service to Métis people of Saskatchewan

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Conflict of Interest Case in Hands of Provincial Judge

Press Release

Audrey Poitras, President of the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA), confirmed that the court decision respecting the conflict of interest charges against Rick Boucher has yet to be rendered, contrary to some claims being circulated in the community.

"The matter is now before a Provincial Court Judge and it would be premature for anyone to predict how the judge will rule," she said.

On December 18, 2007, the MNA Judiciary Council, the judicial arm of the MNA, found Boucher in conflict of interest for using a company he owned to sign an agreement with the Métis National Council regarding certain Health Canada funding, when, as a member of MNA Provincial Council, he had earlier voted in favour of a motion for the MNA to pursue a direct bilateral agreement with Health Canada for the same funding.

Boucher contested the Judiciary Council decision in Provincial Court and Justice Binder heard the case on March 14, 2008. The judge will issue his decision within the next three months.

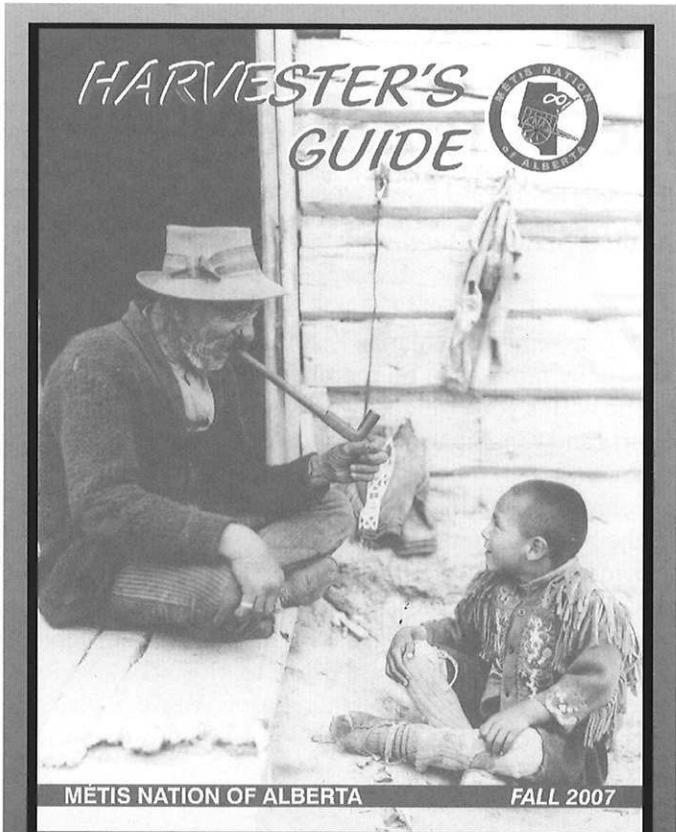
"There are many issues at stake in this court action," President Poitras said. "Not least of which is the jurisdiction of the Judiciary Council."

"Throughout this process, Mr. Boucher and his lawyers used every technicality argument they could possibly think of to undermine the powers and authority of the Judiciary Council and to escape prosecution."

"During the course of the hearing on March 13th, they raised certain technical issues around the wording of the Conflict of Interest provisions of the MNA By-Laws, and Mr. Boucher now claims that our lawyer conceded that he was not in conflict of interest. This is a gross misrepresentation of the facts. We continue to maintain Mr. Boucher's conduct amounts to a conflict of interest and was gravely detrimental to the interests of the MNA and this was made clear at the hearing."

President Poitras hopes ultimately justice will be served and the authority of the MNA Judiciary Council will be upheld.

"The MNA must and will abide by the law," she said. "And now we must all wait on how the judge will rule in this important case before any side can claim victory."



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Region 2 News

By Melody Gosselin and Karen Collins

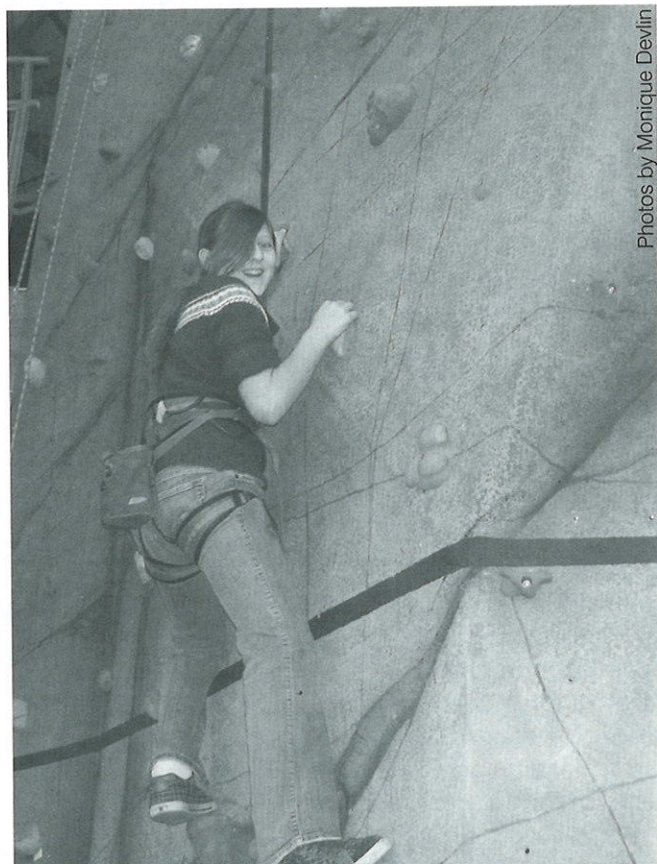
Annual General Meeting

Zone II Regional Council held the annual general assembly on March 1, 2008 which was attended by more than 60 members. The day was pretty hectic with a youth/elders workshop on the Indigenous Sports and Kinship to start, followed by a light lunch for them, and then moving on to the business agenda. Our evening ended with our annual membership dinner. All of the business items were received with updates being provided by the elected officials and winter reports from the Region 2 representatives to all the boards, committees, etc.. The biggest highlight was the signed off audited statement, as, prior to this, the Region received Review Engagements reports. We were all very happy to accept the financial report of the Region 2 operations. Now, we can only move forward.



Top Left: More than 60 members of Region 2 participated in their Annual General Meeting this March.

Bottom Left: Whisper Collins holds Xzavier Collins as he tries on the hat he won during the Region 2 Annual General Meeting. Right: Ryan Myers (not pictured) came to Bonnyville for a UMAC monitor, and he and the youth went rock wall climbing at the Bonnyville Centennial Centre; the youth had a great time!



Photos by Monique Devlin



Aboriginal Youth Award Recipient

The "Hidden Talents" youth program would like to congratulate our very own Celine Ozirny for being nominated and chosen for the Jr. Community Leader in the Alberta Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards (you can read more about Celine and the other award winners on Page 36) Way to go Celine! Celine has also been an active participant in the "Hidden Talents" youth program since it first started and continues to be a great volunteer in her own community.

Region 3 AGM

By Monique Devlin

Members of Region 3 came together in Calgary this January for their Annual General Meeting (AGM). They gathered from all over Southern Alberta – From Medicine Hat to Pincher Creek, from Rocky Mountain House to Red Deer and all points in between. As in years past, the AGM gave Region 3 members a chance to gather together and learn more about what was happening in their region and in the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) as a whole.

Elder Paul Fortney opened with a prayer, and the meeting began with Regional reports and was interspersed throughout the day with information from the different sectors including membership, health, housing, education, youth, social services, FASD, economic development, harvesting and Labour Market Development. There were also reports from affiliates such as Métis Urban Housing and Apeetogosan, and a community consultation about the upcoming special meeting and possible constitution adoption and boundary change.

"It is always a pleasure to come out to the Region 3 AGM, and today was no different," MNA President Audrey Poitras said about the event. "It was awesome to sit here and listen to all of the things that your locals are doing and the amount of volunteerism happening across our Nation."

Region 3 President Marlene Lanz shared the report from the 2006-2007 year, focusing on some of the Regions huge successes, including the naming of Métis Trail in Calgary.

"This is an honour for Métis people, not only in Calgary, but in Alberta and everywhere," she said. "We also have a Métis trail, but we haven't had the ceremony yet in Medicine Hat."

Lanz also shared another triumph (that she admitted did fall outside the realm of the report, but was too important not to address), that of the county of Stettler turning the site of the Content Bridge campground over to the MNA.

As is customary for Region 3, the meeting was followed by the Annual Toonie Dance and Jamboree in honour of the Region's Seniors and Elders. Guests were invited to jam with the band Bear Claw and several of the Region's outstanding volunteers were recognized for their hard work and community spirit.



Middle: Francis Riviere poses with the award she won for her volunteer efforts. Dorothy and Joe Hourie also received an award for their volunteer contributions to Region 3.

Top: MNA Region 3 President Marlene Lanz presents Lori Ann Houle with a book to thank her for speaking at the AGM.

Bottom: Region 3 Members attend the AGM in Calgary this January.

Photos by Monique Devlin

Celebrating Métis Culture

Sewn with Love

By Charity Borg

Medicine Hat Local 8 Creates Capotes

The cold nights on the prairies can be difficult without the modern conveniences many people take for granted. Early Métis travelling across the plains often found the trek from Red River to Alberta to be chilly (and at other times, downright frigid) so rather than suffer, they got inventive.

The Métis took their white wool blankets with the black, yellow, red, and green stripes of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and improved on the design. They created the capote.

Capotes are a traditional Métis style of dress, most often made out of the HBC point trade blankets.

Jeannette Hansen, president of the Local 8 in Medicine Hat, along with the other members, is always on the lookout to learn about the many traditions of their Métis ancestry.

"Back in the 90s before we had the Miywasin Centre, the Local would host a culture and sports night for our members. We had a school gym booked and the youth would be in the gym playing sports, such as basketball or floor hockey," said Hansen. "The adults would be

in the classroom learning various crafts. Because of this, we felt we needed to learn more traditional skills so that we could pass those traditions on to others in our

community."

The capote became something the Medicine Hat Local adapted as a way to teach others about their heritage and culture. The skill came

about as four members of the Medicine Hat Local attended a wilderness camp in the mid-90s. Many skills were learned at this camp including drum making, finger

weaving, birch bark basket weaving and how to make hunting tools.

To create a capote, the first step is to find a blanket large enough for the project (such as the traditional

HBC point blanket). The project requires a double or larger blanket for an adult.

"We use a pattern that we purchased from Halford Hide," Hansen said. "The blanket is cut into five pieces, one for the hood, one piece for the back and front of the capote, one piece for the shawl of the capote, and two for the arms. To keep the capote together, a Métis Sash is worn around the waist."

The pieces are assembled using a large needle and waxed nylon (sinew) thread and sewn together by hand. Piping is used on the hood and arms for decoration. The hood is lined with fleece for softness and to make it more aesthetically pleasing.

"The best blankets to use are wool blankets, as they repel moisture and are very warm," said Hansen. "We are always on the lookout for the HBC point blanket as that was the traditional trade blanket of the Northwest Territory."

The Medicine Hat Local is willing to teach anyone interested in learning how to make a capote.

"As the Local had sponsored us to attend the wilderness camp it was our responsibility to take what we had learned and teach others in



Photos by Charity Borg

Shirley Hirsekorn works on her HBC point blanket capote out in the Cypress Hills near Medicine Hat.

our community those skills," said Hansen. "Donna Kennedy taught our first capote making class. This was done at no charge to our members. All it cost was for them to bring in their own blankets; other than that the Local provided all of the other materials."

Since the first capote making class in 1996, and after History in the Hills 2003, the Medicine Hat Local has had a constant interest in the skill of making the capote.

"This was due to people admiring my capote which was worn in our Métis Historic venue and people requesting a class to learn how to make the capote for themselves," said Hansen, who made her first capote during the first class offered. "I have only made one; Donna has made a couple of capotes, as have others. I will be making a new capote when our class starts in April 2008. It is a fun and social activity when we gather to make capotes. The cost is relatively cheap, particularly if you have any wool blankets lying around the house not being used. You can pick them up at garage sales, Value Village, thrift stores, etc. at a relatively cheap cost."

If anyone is interested in making capotes, they can call Roxanne at the Miywasin Centre at 403-526-0756 to register for the class or for more information.

Laura McLaughlin Recalls Learning to Sew

It was a Sunday on a chilly winter afternoon in northern Alberta in Prairie Echo. A fire was going in the fireplace and a hearty soup was enjoyed as the family gathered around the table for lunch. The chores were done and it is too cold for the little ones to explore the boreal forest at their doorstep. What better time for grandparents to teach their grandchildren something they can take with them forever?

Laura McLaughlin's



Laura McLaughlin sells her clothing and accessories at a table at the Stronger Together Conference on Feb. 14-15.

Photo by Charity Borg

grandmother did just this. The loving matriarch of the family took the small hands of her four-year-old granddaughter and taught her a skill that would follow her the rest of her life. Holding the little metal needle in her tiny hands with a string flowing through a small hole she could not even thread, was the beginning of lifetime creating wearable works of art.

"I can remember sitting on the floor with my head against my grandma's lap and sewing by hand, she was teaching me how to sew," said McLaughlin.

This fond memory has led McLaughlin on the journey to where she is now. The thought of creating clothing for others to wear had not entered her mind until the early 1990s. While people-watching one day, it dawned on her there were no fashions in western Canada specifically made for people who were proud Métis.

"When I look at people I don't look at their faces, I look at their clothing, and I was looking at all the Métis people in the west and they didn't have any designs of their own so I had to go home and create a design specific to the Métis people,"

said McLaughlin. "That is when I decided to put the infinity sign on clothing. Then I started to cut apart the sash and adding that to clothing and I thought this is fun."

With the introduction of the sash to McLaughlin's clothing, came the need to learn how to weave the sash. A bulky loom fills her living room and she is able to make sashes to the exact specifications of her clothing.

"I've added the sash to shirts, jackets, skirts and vests. My latest is purses and everyone knows when they look at them that they are Métis," said McLaughlin.

McLaughlin's eye is always on the lookout for new ideas.

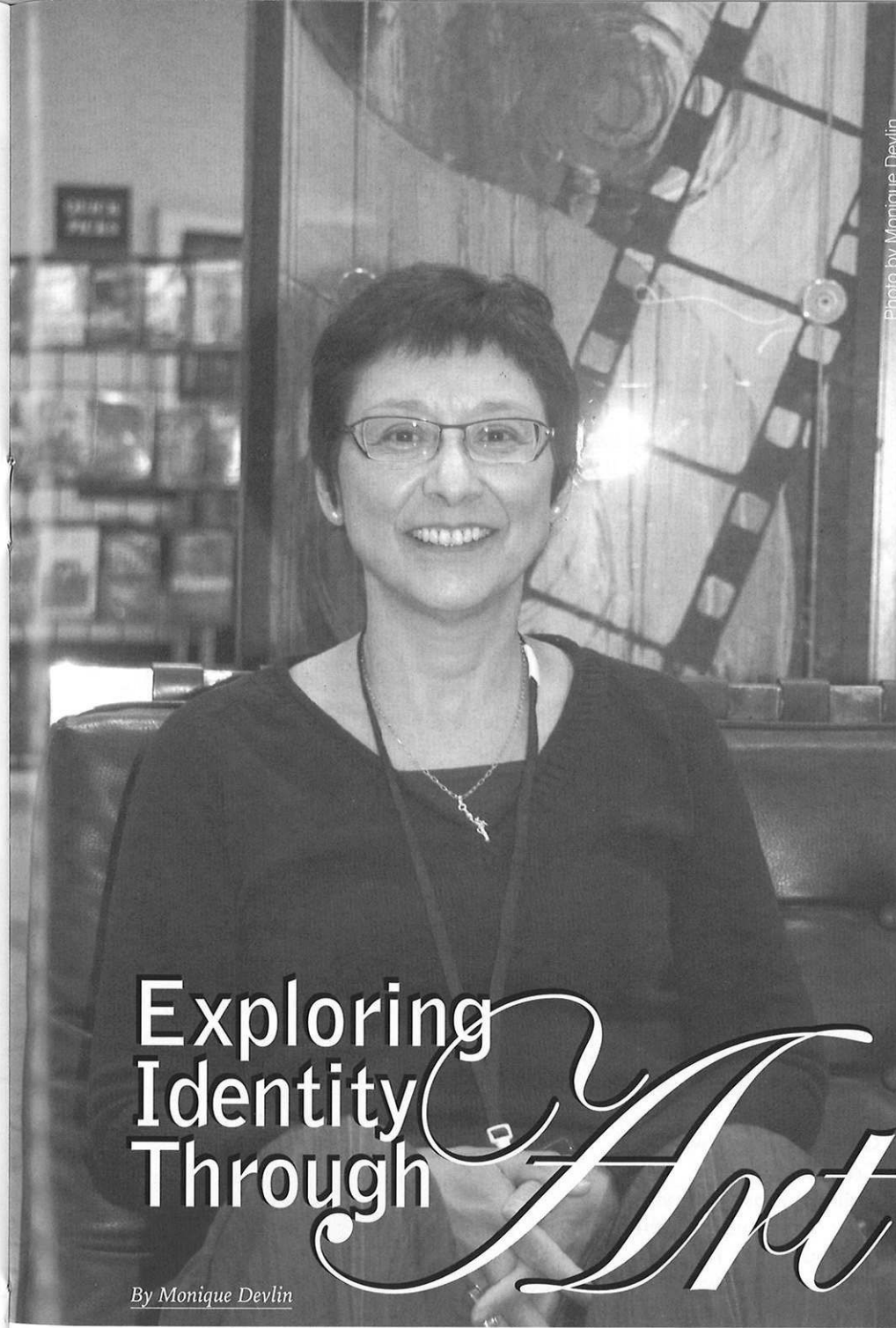
"I went to a golf tournament and I noticed how many Métis were golfing and thought okay the Métis need a golf towel," she said. "I went home and ordered golf towels and I just appliquéd the infinity sign onto them."

In 2006 McLaughlin got the opportunity of the lifetime thanks to her entrepreneurial endeavours.

"The biggest thing that ever happened in my lifetime is being recognized by the Smithsonian museum in Washington," she said.

"When I started this I wasn't thinking about going anywhere with it. All I was trying to do was make something so people could say 'yes, that is a Métis person, look at how they are dressed,' no where in the back of my mind was the thought, 'oh, I may end up in Washington D.C.'"

McLaughlin also makes a variety of clothing specifically for First Nations people as there were not many designs for that niche market either. Often at First Nations conferences she sells out of her clothing because of the high demand. Her clients are many and include former premier Ralph Klein and his wife Colleen.



By Monique Devlin

Artistic expression can take on many forms, and while Marilyn Dumont always knew that she was an artistic person, she did not always know what form her creativity would take.

"I knew that I was going to be an artist as a kid," she said. "I grew up with parents who always made things with their hands. My mom was doing bead work or she would make something out of hide; moccasins, gifts — that kind of

thing... my dad made stuff out of leather or out of wood, so I always knew that that was going to be part of my life somehow. It just seemed as natural as breathing that you created things."

For many years Dumont thought she would be a visual artist, even going so far as to enroll in the Alberta College of the Arts in the 70s, but it wasn't until a friend read to her from a journal nearly 10 years later that she became inspired by the

Photo by Monique Devlin

written word.

"But in the early 80s, when I was in University, a friend of mine read me some of her journal and I was just transfixed," she said. "I thought 'Oh my god that's amazing,' she was writing about her life, but I thought, 'That's a story.'"

Dumont soon began writing in her own journal. By that time she was pursuing a Bachelor of Arts focusing on English and Anthropology and it was not long before she was taking some of the written work from her journal and developing it into poetry.

She began sending her poems out to different publications and before long two of them were published. She continued to send out her poetry, and as more and more publications began accepting her work, she decided to put a collection together, which eventually turned into her first book — *A Really Good Brown Girl*.

"My first book really was a work of survival," she said. "It really was me delving into all of the issues of growing up Métis in a white community...and coming to terms with internalized racisms."

"Both of my parents spoke Cree, but they didn't teach us Cree because they wanted us to fit into the white community...so some of the grief around not learning that language. Issues around identity, being Métis and feeling like I wasn't good enough, like somehow I wasn't really Indian and I wasn't really white and thinking that in order to be Indian I had to be a certain way, that I had to have grown up on a reserve, that I had to have gone to a sweat and had to have been a powwow dancer or whatever and just trying to figure out where I fit and where my identity to fit in terms of all that."

While she was going through the process of having the first book published, she was simultaneously pursuing her masters in creative writing at the University of British

Columbia, her way of ensuring paid work as a teacher of writing.

"It is a tough road because you never know where your money is going to come from," she said. "It is not as if I have always said to myself – 'gee I am glad I am a writer,' because it is not an easy thing to do."

While it may not be easy, she has been keeping herself afloat by doing some teaching, her work as a writer in residence at different institutions and through her writing. After *A Really Good Brown Girl*, she had two more collections published – *green girl dreams Mountains*, which delves more into family relationships, and just recently, *that tongued belonging*.

"In my third I think what I really wanted to focus on was the strength of Aboriginal women – their contribution, their colourful character, their humour, their sarcasm, their incredible strength and ferocity and all of that," she said. "I wouldn't be here today if it were not for the strong women in my background."

In keeping with that theme, Dumont embarked on a special project with five other women this past fall honouring Aboriginal women they admired in and around the city of Edmonton. Each woman wrote a piece of poetry and together they performed the pieces through spoken word, songs and chanting and also created a piece of art revolving around the poems and shawls the women created themselves to reflect the personalities of the women they honoured.

Unfortunately, Dumont can not see the performance being repeated any time soon because of each of the artists' own hectic schedules, but the poetry and the shawls live on. Dumont's portion of the piece was based on Elizabeth Brass Donald, a Métis woman who captured Dumont's imagination when she found an 1885 picture of her deliberately posed in front of Frank Oliver's house (Oliver was a newspaper owner and politician who was very outspoken about Aboriginal issues at the time).

The land she came from

- Marilyn Dumont

"If men had wings and bore black feathers, few of them would be clever enough to be crows."

Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, mid-1800s

Candace Savage, *Bird Brains*. Vancouver: Greystone Books/Douglas & McIntyre, 1995

Cree woman crow

Cree woman caw

Black shiny bird-woman

Crow and caw those who

Command you, "Go back to the land you came from"

So, shiny black bird woman plants herself in front of Frank Oliver's house
Has her photograph snapped in 1885
Her image singed into his pupils
Into the inky black and white pages
Of his *Bulletin*

The official but negative space

In Edmonton's story

Not the *other* story

Of the Métis river lots

Severed into city blocks

A quarter for a Métis lot

Crow knows what was what

When it all went wrong

Cree woman crow

Cree woman caw

Call out those names

Caw caw caw: Rutherford

Call out those names

Names that now, mysteriously bear title

To land once granted your husband

His reward for 30 years HBC service

As carpenter and blacksmith

A quarter for a halfbreed lot

Crow knows what was what

When it all went wrong

Cree woman crow

Cree woman caw

Crow and caw names

Of those known as "better men"

When Indians couldn't own land

Call out their names



Edmonton Public Library: Writer in Residence

By Monique Devlin

Public libraries often hold a wealth of information beyond books and magazines, but this year the Edmonton Public Library (EPL) is playing host to a very unique resource – Métis author Marilyn Dumont.

Dumont, who has published three books of poetry, will be spending 2008 as the writer in residence at EPL. She will be available as a resource to aspiring authors, hosting an Aboriginal Woman's writing Circle and working on her own writing as an ambassador to the EPL.

"What the writer in residence does, is you are kind of like a guest artist," she explained "And every year they are going to have a different writer from the city of Edmonton be the writer in residence."

This is only the second year for the Writer in Residence program at EPL, but for Dumont this is not a new experience, she has already provided similar services to the University of Alberta, University of Windsor, Massey College-University of Toronto, and MacEwan College. Although she says that this posting is similar to the others she has held, what really excites

Caw caw call out: Oliver
Stand iron-fisted before
His two-storey-red-brick-house
Rising civil in the background

A quarter for a Métis river lot
Crow knows what was what
When it all went wrong

Cree woman crow
Cree woman caw
Crow woman dig down
Scrape away the layers
Of sleeping memory
Down to the stake line of river lots
In Rosedale and beyond
Far down the Métis family names
Still breathing there: Donald, Bird, Ward
Push away the top soil, sand and silt
To names: Daignault, Charland and Gladue
Uncover their stories of migration
To build and supply Beaver Hills House
Before it all went wrong

Uncover the names of the profiteers
Lord Strathcona, for one
Snapping up script and reserve land
For the price of a sack of groceries
When Pahpaschee's people
Were starving and deprived of rations
Recite his name: Pahpaschees, Pahpaschees, Pahpaschees
So it won't wash away in the flood of "progress"



Marilyn Dumont at the first Aboriginal Women's Writing Circle

her about the EPL posting is the programming she is able to participate in, such as the Aboriginal Women's Writer's Circle.

"I want to stay away from instruction and really have the focus be more on people giving one another feedback about their work," she said. "I want it to be a place for those who are really new writers ... where they do not have to feel really intimidated. They can come here and read their work to us and we just listen and accept it as a gift."

For those who are unable to be a part of the Circles (there is only a limited amount of space for the writing circles, and at the time of this interview the evening session was already full and the afternoon session was filling up fast). Dumont is also available to help aspiring authors polish their work. She warns that she is "not a line editor" but instead will work with would be authors by giving feedback, looking for strengths within the piece and suggesting methods (such as classes or workshops) for improving skills.

"As writers, there are other writers we can share things with, but often they are busy too," she explains. "We may show our work to our family and they say 'Oh, that is good, I really like that, it's great,' but it is not the kind of feedback you need to polish your work."

"Those kinds of things are really great to see how people with a little bit of support they just thrive. I get as much pleasure out of that – seeing somebody blossom in terms of their own work – it is really gratifying to see that."

For more information on the Writer in Residence program at EPL, the Aboriginal Woman's Writing Circle, or any of the other programs they offer, visit their website at www.epl.ca or call (780) 496-7000.

Spring Ahead with the Big Valley Spring Fling

By Charity Borg

It's time to shine up your boots and travel to the community of Big Valley for the Spring Fling and a down home good time.

This year will mark the fourth year for the successful Spring Fling Dinner and Dance which will be held April 12.

"Music will again be supplied by the Rocky Mountain Five. This is a dance for all cultures, everyone is welcome and we would love to see you there," said Al Therrien president of the Hivernant Métis Cultural Society. "Good food, good music and entertainment. We will all enjoy this break from the cold of winter."

The Spring Fling Dinner and Dance is a fundraiser for the annual Hivernant Rendezvous which will be held Aug. 1-4 this year (the Heritage Day long-weekend). The Hivernant Rendezvous is a celebration of Métis culture for youth to learn about traditional Hivernant. Hivernants are traditional wintering camps of Métis people and Big Valley had

large gatherings of people in the thousands.

Planning for the Hivernant Rendezvous is well underway.

"The Hivernant Métis Cultural Society in partnership with Region 3 of the Métis Nation of Alberta are in the midst of planning a Red River Cart and wagon trek to take place in the last week of July," said Therrien. "This trek will start at the Content Bridge after a ceremony dedicating the receiving of title to the 31 acres there from the County of Stettler."

"The trek will then move on to Tail Creek Cemetery where we will place a cross. It will then proceed to Big Valley, arriving on time for the beginning of the sixth annual Hivernant Rendezvous. We anticipate the trek will take three or four days."

Everyone is invited to participate in the trek across the prairie soil, or just attend the Rendezvous afterwards.

"We will be needing participation from people who are

experienced in wagon rides, either with a team and wagon, horse and cart, saddle horse and those just willing to lend us their experience in this kind of event," said Therrien.

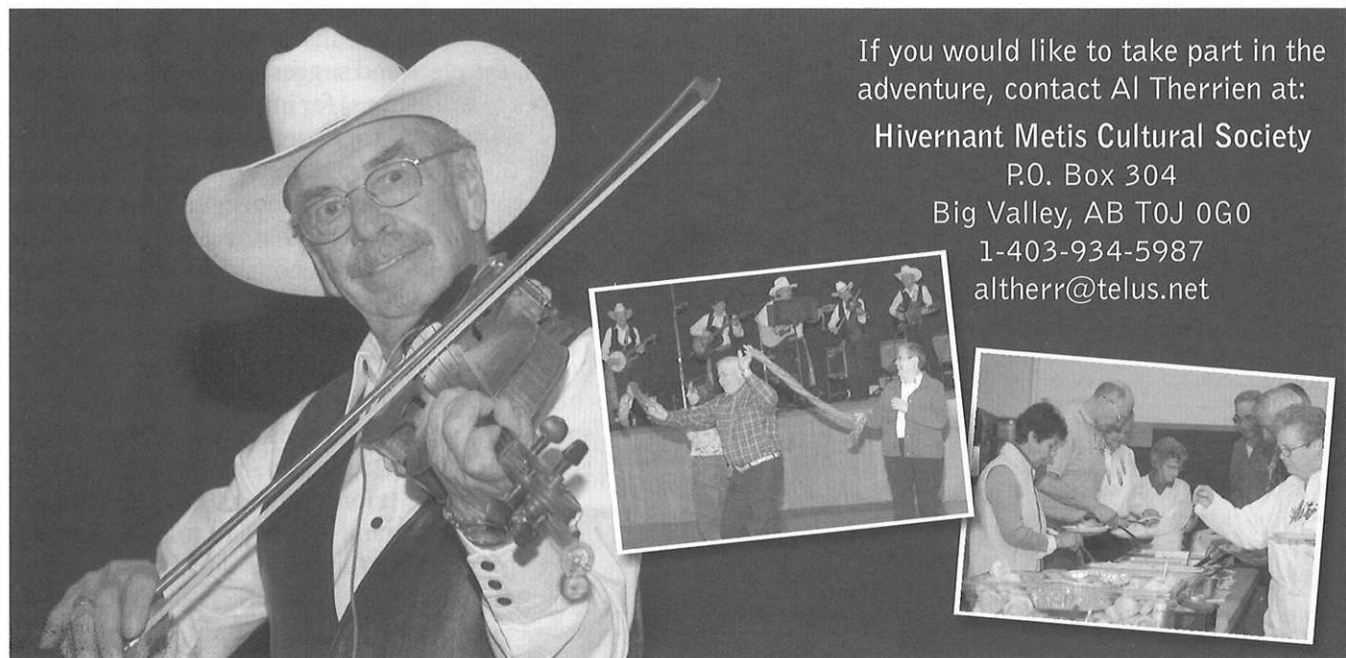
"People without horses are invited to come along, a ride on one of the wagons is usually offered by one of the teamsters. Come on out and help us make this a memorable experience.

"We hope to have lots of music and entertainment for the evenings that we will be camping out on the trail, bring your guitar or fiddle and have some fun!"

A big thank you to all who bought tickets to the Raffle at the Hivernant Rendezvous held in Calgary with proceeds going to the August event. First prize, a beautiful Métis doll, went to Josh Mundorf of Stettler. Second prize, a poem print, went to Ellen Desjarlais of Drayton Valley, and third prize, some handmade Métis jewellery, went to Wayne Scheer of Calgary.

If you would like to take part in the adventure, contact Al Therrien at:

Hivernant Metis Cultural Society
P.O. Box 304
Big Valley, AB T0J 0G0
1-403-934-5987
altherr@telus.net



An Update on Métis Crossing



By Juanita Marois

Hello everyone; it seems like such a long time since I have updated Alberta's Métis people on the goings-on at Métis Crossing. As you know, I left on a one year maternity leave in October of 2006. John Ritchie, from Kikino Settlement, took on the role of interim Executive Director during my leave. I would like to extend a huge "Thank you" to John for his work at Métis Crossing.

I returned to Métis Crossing in October of 2007, in a part-time capacity. I had decided that my family must be my priority in the coming years; and Métis Crossing needs and deserves a full-time person. I am happy to introduce Corrine Card from Fort Vermillion as the new Executive Director. She started on March 25, 2008. Corrine brings many years of experience running businesses. Her strengths in staff development and business operations are important as Métis Crossing enters its third year of operations. I will continue in a part-time capacity as the Development Manager responsible for developing site plans and the funds to achieve the identified goals!

We are also very excited to be starting the construction of our Canopy Walk / Adventure site sponsored by Alberta Pacific Forest Industries (ALPac). The design will be completed in May, and a launch of the facility will occur at our National Aboriginal Day celebration on June 21, 2008 - Don't miss it! Métis Crossing will be the first of its kind in the Province of Alberta.

Also watch for the launch of our new website at www.metiscrossing.com this June. It will be a great source of information on upcoming events, site hours, history and many other things!

Métis Crossing will open its gates on the Victoria Day long weekend. This year our facilities include a 21 site RV campground with 30 Amp service and a shower trailer. Call to reserve your sites now! The historic village, nature trail and interpretive centre will be open from 11 am to 6 pm daily. The gift store will also be ready for a visit.

The Métis Crossing Voyage-08 is scheduled for August 23-24 this year. You can anticipate an even bigger and better celebration. Mark your calendars today.

Métis Crossing needs you! We need business partners to operate horse trail rides and canoe trips. We need arts and crafts from our artisans and crafters to consign in our gift shop, and also to offer demonstrations at our site and events. We need entertainers, concessionaires and trade show organizations to participate too.

We look forward to seeing you this year. Make sure you stop by and visit our new team. I would like to sincerely thank the Métis people of Alberta, former staff and volunteers, and all of our government, corporate and organizational partners for all the work you had done with me as Executive Director on this amazing project. Métis Crossing will be the greatest Aboriginal project in Canada with your continued participation.

MÉTIS
CROSSING



E-mail: metiscrossing@metis.org
Phone: 780-656-2229
Fax: 780-656-3077

www.Metiscrossing.com



*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.

Our children are our future. Foster and Adoptive families touch lives daily.

Contact:

Jo-Ann Woloshynuk
(780) 455-2200
toll free 1-800-252-7553

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

www.albertametis.com

Honouring Our Métis People

Métis Matriarch Honoured with Order of Canada

By Charity Borg

To meet Bertha Clark Jones, it could be assumed she is a kokum with a freshly baked pie sitting on the counter waiting to cool. Bertha's heart is big and she is humble about her accomplishments. Even upon hearing she would be receiving the Order of Canada she took it in stride.

But the community of Athabasca could not have been more proud than when they learned that this pioneer of Aboriginal women's rights was receiving the Officer of the Order of Canada and honoured her with a special day on March 1. Leaders from across Canada and Alberta came to thank her for making the world a better place to live in.

"This is a very special day I wanted to do this since I heard Bertha was going to receive the Order of Canada," said Colleen Powell, mayor of Athabasca. "I wanted to have a special day for Bertha for a lot of reasons but primarily because she is such a special lady and such a special person in this community. Bertha reminds us of the importance of indigenous culture here and it is something we tend not to think about. I am a white mayor of a primarily white town and we do primarily white town things,

however we have to go beyond dealing with and understanding indigenous culture to talking and communicating as two equal groups

and Bertha leads the way.

"From her we learn so much. So thank you Bertha and thank you Canada for recognizing this

wonderful lady."

The Order of Canada came as a complete surprise to Bertha. In June 2007 she was contacted by Rideau

Hall and told she would be receiving the highest honour a Canadian civilian could receive. On February 22 Governor General Michaëlle Jean

placed the Order of Canada around Bertha's neck during a special ceremony in Ottawa honouring Canadians who have improved the lives of people.

"It's like I say, you don't do these things by yourself," said Bertha about receiving the honour. "There's so many of our women especially with the Voice of Alberta Native Women Society and Aboriginal Women's Association of Canada, there's women all over there who helped me get there that we worked with and that's the way I look at it."

To reach people in remote communities there was only one way that would work according to Bertha - get out into the community and actually talk to women.

"[I was] very firm on getting our women involved because they have a right and many did. Especially in the isolated communities. I think that's where a lot of these organizations live out. A lot of people in the remote areas. But we went there and it was good.

"Even today you hear just look on the internet. Not all of us have the internet, not even a computer."

Bertha's observations of challenges and desire to do right are

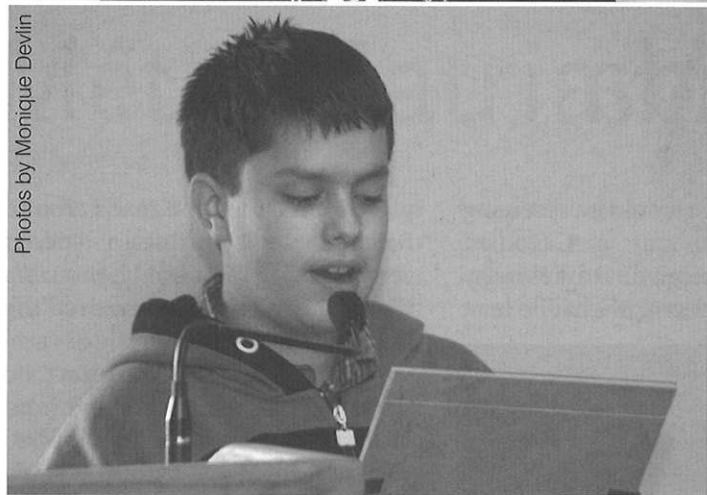


Top: Maria Campbell, Bertha Clark Jones, Muriel Stanley Venne, and Audrey Poitras
Bottom: Hundreds of people filled the Athabasca Regional Multiplex to honour Bertha Clark Jones for her Order of Canada



Above: Bertha Clark Jones accepts a portrait of her receiving the Order of Canada from Governor General Michaëlle Jean and a letter of congratulations from the Métis Nation of Alberta.

Photos by Monique Devlin



Top: Bertha Clark Jones, recipient of the Officer of the Order of Canada.

Bottom: Nathan Ritchie reads a Tribute to Grandmother for his grandma, Bertha Clark Jones.

the reason she is one of the most celebrated woman in Alberta.

"To say that she is a woman who is ahead of the times, would be to downplay the role she had in actually advancing the times," said Audrey Poitras, president of the Métis Nation of Alberta. "She began by helping give a voice to Métis and First Nations women back when there was barely a whisper. She was already advocating that the government keep Aboriginal children in foster care with their own extended families and their own communities back in the 60's. She was encouraging Aboriginal woman to enter the trades long before it was socially acceptable, let alone the norm.

"But Bertha didn't, and doesn't work alone. There are many others out there who she encouraged directly, or just by her own example, who have built upon the foundations she helped set. And I think that is one of Bertha's strongest legacies – the countless women out there who found their own strength through her example.

"The Order of Canada is our country's highest civilian honour, and I would be hard pressed to come up with a more deserving candidate."

Tribute to Grandmother

By Nathan Ritchie

My mentor is my grandma Bertha Jones Clark she used to serve in the air forces and now she stays home and makes quilts, curtains and dreamcatchers.

I knew her my whole life and she has taught me how to make many things.

Once in Grade 3 I watched my grandma make a pocket so in art class I made a pocket just like hers.

My mentor is kind, helpful, caring, peaceful, wise and polite.

If I hadn't met my mentor I wouldn't know anything about making crafts, my culture or heritage.

I would also have one less person to love.

If I could only tell my mentor one thing I would thank her for everything she has shown me and all she has taught me.

My mentor is a big inspiration to me.

She has gotten many awards through the air force.

I saw my grandma on the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards 2007 she really inspired me on that show.

She's grateful for what she does and never takes things for granted.

She always has a smile on her face.

She would never say anything mean or inappropriate about anybody.

She is still active and involved in her community.

She has six sons, three daughters, two granddaughters, two great grandsons and one great granddaughter.

My grandma has always been there for me and I have been there for her. She has seen many famous people, I consider her one of them.

My mentor lives in Athabasca.

She has provided our family with many special things.

She is a very nice and generous woman.

That is all I have to say about my mentor Bertha Jones Clark.

You'll never know the difference you make.

Planning a Future in Policing

By Charity Borg

Faith Lennie has aspirations of becoming a police officer when she grows up. Before that happens she has several obstacles to overcome including passing physical challenges and security background checks, not to mention getting through junior and senior high school. Faith is 11 years old and part of her desire to go into policing is her passion to help people.

"I like just caring and making the world a better place," said Faith.

Faith's inspiration for becoming a police officer is her aunt who is a member of the Edmonton Police Service (EPS). Her aunt is a constable with many roles in the force, including diversity recruiting.

"She helps other people if they are in trouble, she is always there and she does not give up," said Faith.

Her aunt had the goal of becoming a police officer at a young age as well.

"She was always training," said Faith. "There's a lot of training and working out to do. The more you train you are able to run faster and catch [the criminals]."

Getting through the application process for becoming a member of the police force is a long process. Joining the EPS includes an 18 page application form detailing every aspect of one's life to make sure an applicant has a clean slate; and there are physical examinations to test an applicant's strength, endurance and overall health. The Calgary Police Services application form is close to 60 pages. Like

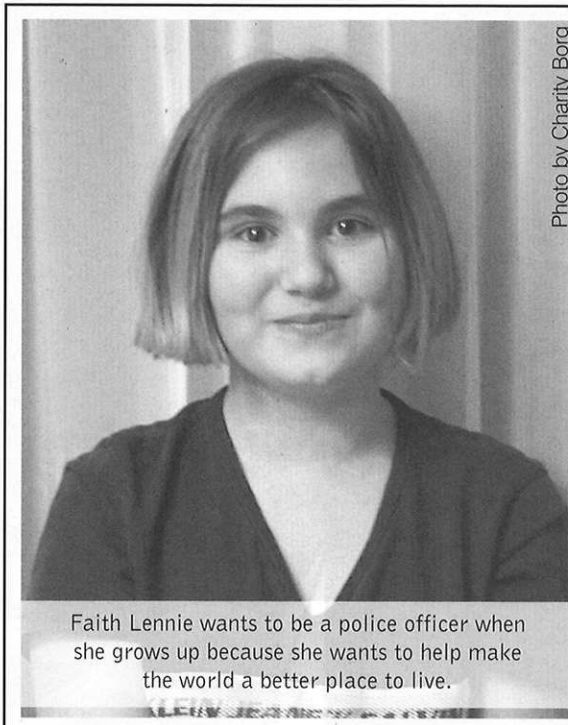


Photo by Charity Borg

Faith Lennie wants to be a police officer when she grows up because she wants to help make the world a better place to live.

anywhere in Alberta, police forces are looking for recruits to join the force. EPS, Calgary Police Service and the RCMP are actively recruiting members.

A part of active recruitment is diversifying and trying to recruit people who have traditionally not pursued the field of policing. Both RCMP and Edmonton police service are actively trying to recruit Aboriginal men and women. To do this both organizations have attended recruiting fairs, conferences and have advertised on billboards.

Faith wants to pursue the life of a city police officer. Being a busy

police officer is something that she wants.

"I kind of think you get to do more in the city police than the RCMP," said Faith. "I think aboriginal people would help a lot in the police force. They can help other people and calm them down and just help."

The value of policing is it maintains order in a place that could otherwise be chaotic. A police officer in Canada is a respected person that is not to be feared unlike in some places in the world – something that appeals to Faith.

"I think the world would be a disaster and everything would be bad and there would be wars in Canada, everything would be all over the place," said Faith.

Policing is a way to create a positive influence on those around her, according to Faith.

"The world would notice what is happening and how people hurt when you shoot them, stab them and stuff," she said.

The path to becoming an officer will not be an easy one, but Faith has learned from her aunt that there's more than what meets the eye in the media.

"Real police work would be way more real than TV. Sometimes TV isn't as real as you think it is. Sometimes they act it out and sometimes it's real like the news."

For Information on Policing in Alberta:

RCMP: www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca

Edmonton Police Service: www.joineps.ca

or call 1-866-777-0815 or 780-421-2233

Calgary Police Service: www.calgarypolice.ca

Extraordinary Youth Honoured at AAYAA

By Charity Borg and Christie-Dawn Ladouceur

Caring for their communities and building a better world are the goals of 16 Aboriginal youth who were recently honoured in Edmonton.

Outstanding youth took centre stage at the Winspear Centre on Mar. 28, 2008 to be recognized at a gala event for their contributions for improving the lives of all Albertans.

The Alberta Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards (AAYAA) is an annual gala celebrating the achievements of Aboriginal youth

from across Alberta. The award banquet takes place every March.

"The future is in good hands with these leaders," said Audrey Poitras, President of the Métis Nation of Alberta. "Their compassion and perseverance make them a force to be reckoned with as they have improved our aboriginal community."

The Métis Nation of Alberta Youth Programs Department originally developed this initiative in the fall of 2003. The concept of

celebrating the many accomplishments of Aboriginal youth drew interest and support from a wide variety of organizations resulting in these Alberta-wide awards.

The awards are intended to encourage our young people to reach for their dreams and strive for excellence. Each year, family, friends, teachers and co-workers are eligible to nominate outstanding youth in eight different categories.

Here are this year's recipients...



Adam Mildenerger, 17

**Junior
Volunteer Services**
Beaverlodge, AB

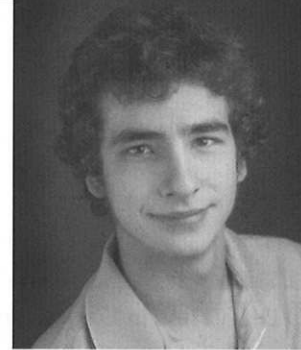
This 17 year old scholar is a truly devoted volunteer. Despite many personal obstacles, Adam spends countless hours helping others while still achieving outstanding grades at school.

He is a mentor for a local youth group, coaches a basketball team at Hythe Regional Junior High School, volunteers at the local hospital, canvasses hard for a variety of important charities, and is an active member of his school's student leadership team.

Adam's hard work has earned him many honours including the Foundation for the Advancement of Aboriginal Youth Bursary Award (two consecutive years), the Community Service Award from Hythe Regional Junior High School, and a Leaders of Tomorrow Award.

Adam helped launch "Tuesday Night Teens," a local youth group providing young people with productive evening activities. He teaches healthy life-skills, plays board games with lonely hospital patients, and mentors a local basketball team.

Adam is what every community group and service club dreams about. His home town is safer, healthier and happier thanks to Adam's outstanding community service.



Tim Fox, 25

**Senior
Volunteer Services**
Calgary, AB

At just twenty-five years of age, Tim Fox is dedicated to helping young Aboriginals growing up in the city. It's a job that demands political savvy, a strong voice, and a

deep appreciation of evolving issues.

Among his many affiliations, Tim is a member of the Calgary Aboriginal Youth Restorative Justice Committee, the Youth Media Advisory Group, and the Youth Advisory Committee of the Urban Multipurpose Aboriginal Youth Centers (UMAYC) program.

He is board president of the Urban Society of Aboriginal Youth, and was recently instrumental in helping the Sunrise Native Addictions Services Society raise over \$94,000 to battle addiction.

Tim is tireless in his work with young Aboriginals, demonstrating the value of being productively proactive, and how best to use media resources within the community. A contributing writer for New Tribe magazine, Tim encourages urban youth, including young offenders, to learn the many life-enriching lessons of their ancestral heritage.



Alexandria Caesar, 15

**First Nations
Culture & Heritage**
Grande Cache, AB



Fifteen year old Alexandria proudly demonstrates the spirit and wisdom of her First Nations heritage. A deep respect for ancestral tradition is evident in her personal beliefs and relations with the land. Alex, as she is known by friends and family, has travelled the trails of her ancestors, slept under lean-tos and cooked over opened fires. She combines pride of heritage with a contemporary flair for dance, modelling, athletics, and community service.

Alex proudly models traditional clothing at numerous events throughout Alberta, having recently placed in the top four of the Rocky Mountain "Top Model" competition. She sets an excellent example by arriving early, staying late and helping younger models prepare for these events.

Alex energetically showcases her culture performing a variety of traditional dances at both school and community events. She has earned a bronze medal in Archery representing Team Alberta at the 2007 North American Indigenous games in Denver, Colorado; and excels in softball helping her team take home the Youth Ball Tournament trophy in 2006.

Whether Alex is modelling traditional outfits, caring for family members, representing her community as an athlete, riding horseback in the bush, or selling raffle tickets at a round dance, she is undeniably proud of her First Nations heritage.

Skylor Belcourt, 15

**Métis
Culture & Heritage**
Grande Cache, AB



A smiling, energetic young woman, fifteen year old Skylor combines an infectious enthusiasm for her Métis heritage with the hard work of a dedicated community volunteer.

Skylor was the first to step up to teach the fine art of the "Red River Jig" to local youth when their dance

instructor recently resigned. In fact, Skylor devotes much of her personal time to performing and teaching traditional dance.

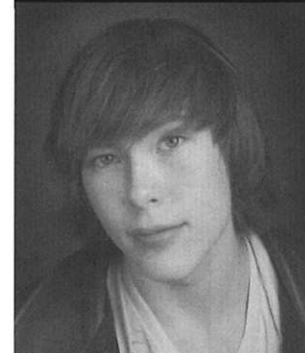
Every year Skylor can be found assisting with the local talent show and fish fry - selling tickets, setting up, or performing. She is a regular at a variety of local events helping with children, teaching crafts, dishing out pizza.

She proudly brings a reflection of her culture to the Grande Cache Kids Church Program, drug and alcohol prevention workshop, wilderness survival training, team building exercises, and sharing circles.

Skylor is developing excellent leadership skills, motivating the youth of Grande Cache to actively share and celebrate their Métis heritage. She is an inspiration to her peers and elders alike.

Stop by the Métis Hall in Grande Cache to meet this true cultural ambassador.

Christopher Murray, 17



**Junior
Academic Achievement**
Edmonton, AB

It is no surprise to those who know him, to see Christopher - who was reading and writing before his first day in school - now at the top of his grade twelve class at Archbishop

O'Leary High in Edmonton.

In the classroom, he is known for the strength of his written compositions, perfect scores on in-class assignments, and a caring, respectful attitude towards others.

A perennial honours student, Christopher recently posted the highest combined marks in social studies, receiving the school's Social Studies 30 Award, and was among a select few privileged to begin a university course in psychology.

He is also a member of his school's basketball and football teams, leaving a lasting and positive impression on his coaches, teachers and fellow students.

Growing up in Edmonton, Christopher spent several summers as a junior zoo keeper at the popular Edmonton Valley Zoo. After graduation, he plans to explore a career in the creative arts attending Grant MacEwan College to study graphic design.

Rheanna Sand, 28

**Senior
Academic Achievement**
Edmonton, AB



Born and raised in Edmonton, Rheanna is highly regarded for both her academic acumen and selfless spirit. In high school, she achieved the second highest average in her class, was named co-valedictorian, and received the Evelyn Beveridge Award for academic achievement.

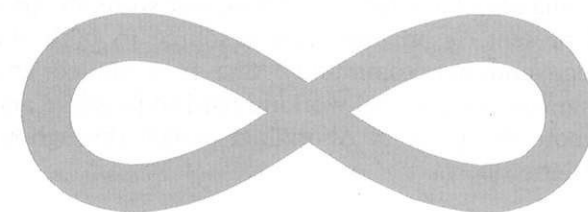
Attending the University of Alberta, Rheanna graduated from a rigorous Bachelor of Science program with "First Class" honours in animal biology and was subsequently inducted into the prestigious Golden Key International Honours Society.

As a postgraduate student, she earned a rare 4.0 grade point average and was admitted into the "fast track" Ph.D. program allowing her to proceed directly to doctoral studies.

Rheanna has won numerous awards including the Alberta Learning Graduate Student Scholarship, Graduate Internship Tuition Supplement, Graduate Teaching Assistantship - Biological Sciences, the Persons Case Scholarship, NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Award, the Stan Daniels Award, CanNative Housing Bursary, Shell Canada Limited Aboriginal Science Award, and the University of Alberta Entrance Scholarship.

Rheanna is also involved in a wide assortment of student and community initiatives as a teaching assistant in zoology, a member of the Council of the Graduate Student Association (GSA), volunteer for the GSA Elections Committee, and board director of the Edmonton YWCA.

Rheanna is currently involved in research related to the potential development of new drugs and pesticides with a narrow range and reduced levels of environmental contamination.



Samantha Atkinson, 14

**Junior
Athletic Achievement**
Edmonton, AB



Samantha is an athlete motivated to perform, able to compete, and destined to succeed. This outgoing, responsible grade 10 student is a favourite among her classmates, coaches and teachers at Edmonton's St. Joseph Catholic High School.

Despite being among the youngest on the court, Samantha excels in both girls volleyball and basketball - not only because of an inherent natural skill but also because of her upbeat attitude and devotion to self-improvement.

It is a devotion that motivates this fourteen year old to brave Edmonton's bone-chilling winters and the vagaries of public transit to attend endless practices, games and tournaments.

Samantha proactively seeks the guidance of her coaches and the many benefits of personal training in the fitness centre. She is uniquely committed to an active and healthy lifestyle.

Exhibiting precocious wisdom, Samantha recognizes the many positives associated with organized athletics: shared goals and good friends, a healthy lifestyle, and the strength to deflect less desirable influences.

On weekends, Samantha proudly supports her hockey playing brothers and cousins or indulges in sports oriented recreation with family and friends.

Chesare Cardinal, 18

**Senior
Athletic Achievement**
Edmonton, AB



Athlete of the year, player of the year, most valuable player. These are the accolades most of us simply read about in the sports pages. For eighteen year old

Chesare Cardinal, they are memorable milestones in a young life devoted to athletics.

Class valedictorian and recent graduate of the Amiskwacy Academy in Edmonton, Chesare embodies

the often multi-faceted nature of award winning achievement. A natural athlete since childhood, she has earned the reputation of a committed performer and community leader.

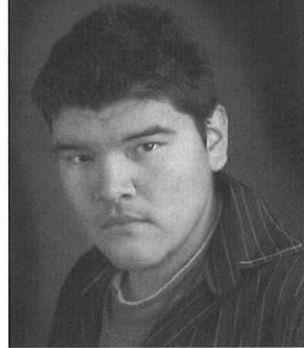
With a record of excellence in a variety of sports, Chesare recently volunteered as an assistant coach for the Amiskwaciy Academy junior high boys and girls basketball teams, participated in the Aboriginal Aquatic Leadership program and, in 2007, received special recognition from the Physical Education department of the University of Alberta.

Known for her kindness and compassion, she has worked with the Edmonton Native Basketball Association as assistant administrator and coach, and regularly volunteers in assisting with a variety of community sports oriented activities.

Chesare's objective is an independent, healthy lifestyle. Her goals include bachelor degrees in both science and education from the University of Alberta, and the continued provision of a positive role model in her community.

Peter Arcand, 17

**Junior
Career Advancement**
Edmonton, AB



The future stability of an often agitated world may well rest on the shoulders of disciplined, dedicated youth like Peter Arcand. Struggling with personal challenges, this Archbishop O'Leary High School student made a discovery that would change his life when he enlisted with the Army Cadets three and a half years ago.

With steady guidance and direction, Peter realized the broad scope of his own abilities and a new sense of fulfillment.

The completion of three training proficiency levels (currently challenging a fourth) led Peter to a series of promotions. He has participated in a battery of optional training activities including the Army Cadet Wilderness Challenge; a 4-day land navigation and field-craft exercise; and gold level adventure training at the Expedition Training Centre in Nordegg.

Peter also successfully completed a challenging senior level Cadet Leader Instructor Drill and Ceremonial Course (CLIDC) despite starting a full week behind his fellow course mates. This accomplishment earned him the rank of Cadet Master

Corporal.

Liked and respected by his peers, Peter responds readily to requests for assistance, makes himself available for a variety of routine tasks, and enjoys the camaraderie of his fellow cadets.

Eager to enlist with the Canadian Armed Forces, Peter is motivated to graduate at an accelerated rate. His ability to plan ahead and a goal-focussed perseverance make Peter an outstanding role model.



Shanda Venier, 24

**Senior
Career Advancement**
Blairmore, AB

Originally from Crowsnest Pass now living in Lethbridge, twenty-four year old Shanda is both a scholar and facilitator of Aboriginal development.

Attending the University of Lethbridge, Shanda majored in anthropology with a minor in Native American studies, completed a thesis devoted to Aboriginal peoples, received her Bachelor of Arts degree, and graduated with highest honours in 2005.

Along the way, she successfully applied for research funding from both the Chinook Summer Research Grant and Lethbridge Pubic Research Interest Group Grant.

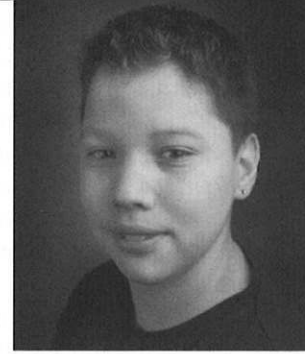
Her many community contributions include volunteer and work related service at the Native Women's Transition Home, the Lethbridge Shelter, and Aboriginal Housing in Action Society. She also worked as a Special Events Coordinator at the Medicine Tree Centre arranging a wide variety of successful events in the Lethbridge area.

In 2006 Shanda accepted the position of Aboriginal Liaison Officer, recruiting and assisting new Aboriginal students, at Lethbridge College. With a deep respect for her culture and the high regard of her colleagues, Shanda was soon promoted to the position of Aboriginal Academic Advisor.

Shanda's knowledge of Aboriginal societies, past and present, is an important resource to both the college and her community. She is a skilled and passionate professional working hard to preserve and promote the pride of Aboriginal people throughout southern Alberta.

Archie Boily, 11

**Junior
Personal Achievement**
Edmonton, AB



In a world seemingly filled with strife and stress, we could all learn a lesson from Archie Boily.

Growing up in a challenging home environment Archie struggled with acute emotional and behavioural issues. Three years of youthful introspection and devoted hard work has allowed him to overcome the anger that threatened his relations with others and belief in himself.

Today this determined eleven year old demonstrates maturity and wisdom beyond his years.

A grade 6 student at St. Francis of Assisi School in Edmonton, Archie has learned to manage his emotions by understanding and sharing the feelings, positive and negative, which drive them. He has grown into a compassionate, personable, and patient young man.

A positive influence among his peers, Archie is often called upon to speak with younger children coping with similar life experiences and pent up hostilities.

Challenged with a learning disability, Archie maintains his academics by staying after school to work individually with his teacher. He is an enthusiastic volunteer at school events and assemblies, and is always willing to lend a helping hand.

Archie's personal growth has touched many teachers, friends and family. He is supportive of his young cousins, works to the best of his abilities, and maintains a positive attitude.

Archie's strength of resolve in the face of youthful misgivings and great personal challenge is deserving of both our sincere recognition and collective respect.

Crystal Desjarlais, 26

**Senior
Personal Achievement**
Whitecourt, AB



Domestic and substance abuse at home are often the cause of many failed young lives. Personal conviction and an amazing spirit prevented Crystal from

becoming simply another tragic statistic.

At the age of just eight years, Crystal was suddenly called upon to help care and provide for eight brothers and sisters. Her mother returned to school, eventually graduating university with a degree in education. Crystal became an invaluable source of strength in the home.

Despite struggling with her own demons as a teenager, Crystal realized the secret to a healthy, productive future was hard work.

After completing high school, she enrolled in a Special Care Aide program, graduated with distinction, and was awarded the Health and Sciences Achievement Scholarship. She would later return to school again to become a Registered Nurse.

Today, Crystal continues the inspirational work she began as a child: caring for others. She is an accomplished Registered Nurse highly praised by both her patients and peers. The promises she made to herself growing up, were never forgotten.

**Métis Nation - Saskatchewan
JOB OPPORTUNITIES**



Métis Nation - Saskatchewan is seeking candidates for the following positions:

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

General Qualifications

- Degree in journalism, public relations, communications and/or a minimum of 3 years experience working on strategic communications including community and media relations, government affairs, and event management
- Proven ability to manage and implement community relations strategies
- Knowledge of Métis history, culture and politics

RESEARCH DIRECTOR

General Qualifications

- Graduate or Postgraduate degree in History, Native Studies, or Human Geography
- Ability to prepare research reports detailing research objectives, methods, and sources, with clear presentation of research findings and conclusions
- Must be able to design questions, conduct interviews and analyze data relating to oral history research projects

NATURAL RESOURCES DIRECTOR

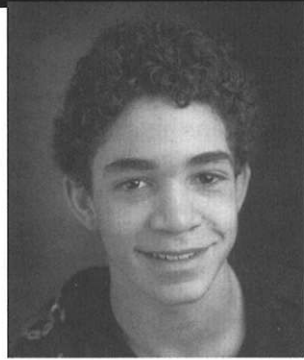
General Qualifications

- Degree in business administration or law with a background in natural resources and environmental studies and a minimum of 2-3 years experience in a management position in a related field
- Experience drafting policies and procedures, interpreting law, and implementing large projects to ensure compliance with rights and responsibilities
- Knowledge of Métis history, culture and politics

Interviews will be conducted in June 2008. To submit a resume, request a detailed job description, or make other enquiries, contact MN - S Head Office at bkembel@mnsask.ca

Reno Nash, 13

Junior
Walking the Red Road
Calgary, AB



Often the most difficult thing in life is simply remaining positive in the face of adversity. For children, whose peers are frequently less than compassionate, coping with personal loss can be a lonely road.

Reno demonstrates a care-giver's respect for the world around him. He is known by his teachers for his precocious sense of responsibility, an infectious sense of humour, and his willingness to help others.

Despite the pains of great personal loss, Reno walks a positive path. He finds fulfillment in a variety of sports including soccer, a favourite at which he excels, and in his ability to respond with dignity when confronting social challenges.

At just thirteen years of age, one of Reno's greatest assets is his capacity to consistently make wise choices – the product of critical problem solving skills and the maturity to learn from the mistakes of others.

Self-reliance, dignity, and an optimistic approach to life make this young man an inspirational example of human spirit and resilience.

Amanda Gould, 28

Senior
Walking the Red Road
Edmonton, AB



Originally from the Ft. McMurray area, Amanda is a single mother and full-time student working towards a degree in Native Studies at the University of Alberta. Amanda has worked diligently to overcome substance abuse issues and be a positive influence in her community.

In addition to her university studies and the responsibilities of motherhood, Amanda is very involved in a variety of campus activities, serving as Internal Vice-President for the university's Aboriginal Student Council, participating in kickboxing classes, and encouraging other Aboriginal students to lead active lives. She also studies dance and facilitates a

young women's group learning to dance and bead.

Amanda is committed to the spirit and traditions of her Aboriginal heritage. She regularly seeks the advice and support of her Elders, maintains an excellent rapport with campus Elders, and is often engaged in cultural activities attending sweats and community ceremonies throughout the year.

Amanda understands the importance of balancing the mental, physical and spiritual dimensions of a healthy, productive lifestyle. Her positive attitude and ever present smile make her a favourite among her peers. She is a bold role model demonstrating strong leadership skills and a willingness to offer guidance and advocacy to others.

Celine Oxirny, 12

Junior
Community Leader
Bonnyville, AB



It is a wonder of human nature that those who face tremendous obstacles in life often surpass those who do not. Twelve year old Celine was born with a hearing disability and, despite learning to lip read, struggled in school.

Two years ago, Celine underwent surgery to correct the impairment. While this allowed her to hear for the first time, actually learning to process complete sounds and language is a long and difficult task.

Celine was kept at home to recover, but insisted on keeping up with her class mates. Never missing an assignment, she made the honour roll at school.

Today Celine is determined to discover the full range of her abilities. To say she enjoys being "actively engaged" is simply an understatement.

When not doing her homework or helping around the house, Celine spends her time working with abandoned animals at the local SPCA, fundraising for the Heart and Stroke Foundation, and taking part in Dance Club, Girl Guides, and the Christmas Shoe Box program at school.

She is also a member of her school's track and field team, volunteers at numerous community events, and sits on the youth boards of the Boys and Girls Club, Hidden Talents Youth Group, BAYC at the Friendship Centre, and school council.

Her teachers will tell you Celine not only volunteers but actively seeks out ways to be helpful. She is a young lady with a huge heart, challenging challenges, and fearless in the face of adversity.

Daniel McKennitt, 25

Senior
Walking the Red Road
Edmonton, AB



Originally from Sandy Bay First Nations in Manitoba, Daniel left home at the age of seventeen to pursue a post secondary education at Bishop's University in Lennoxville, Quebec.

Though his plans were interrupted when his mother became ill in the fall of 2001, Daniel eventually returned to the classroom, receiving his Bachelor of Science degree with majors in both mathematics and physical sciences from the University of Alberta in the spring of 2006.

That fall he returned to the U-of-A, enrolling in medical school and tutoring at the university's Wapahithew Program.

Daniel devotes his energy to an impressive array of community, volunteer, and academic activities.

He recently conducted a review of current literature discussing Aboriginal people and HIV/AIDS, completed a project for the Aboriginal Diabetes Wellness Program at Edmonton's Royal Alexandra Hospital, supervised an evaluation of the "Train-the-Trainer Program", sat on the Youth Advisory Committee for the Department of Canadian Heritage, visited numerous communities encouraging Aboriginal youth to acquire a post-secondary education, is developing an Aboriginal health research course, and was involved in a cultural competency project with the Alberta Cancer Board.

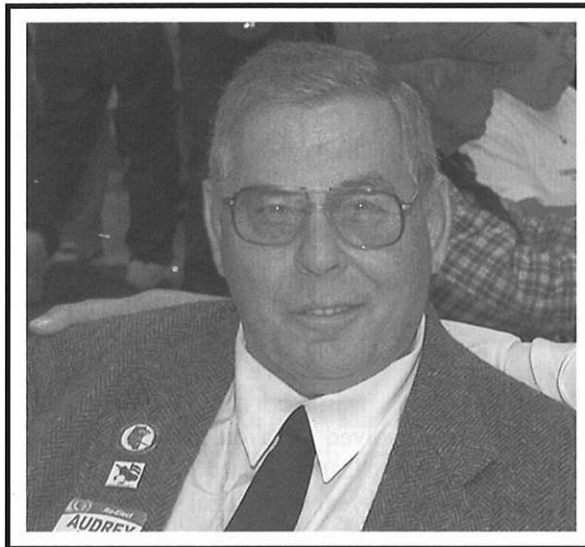
Now in his second year of medical school, Daniel's goal is to help Aboriginal people lead healthy, productive lives. He is referred to by his colleagues as exemplary, innovative and a leader.

Dedicated to his culture and destined to achieve, Daniel McKennitt is an outstanding role model any community would be proud to claim as their own.



Photo by Monique Devlin

MNA President Audrey Poitras stands with students from Amiskwacyi Academy during a monthly speaker's series hosted by the Canadian Club of Edmonton. The Club gathers once a month to hear from people who help make Canada the country it is today and often invites students from local schools to join in on the discussions. Poitras talked about Métis history, culture and some contemporary issues such as the work of the MNA at Métis Crossing, our education initiatives and harvesting rights.

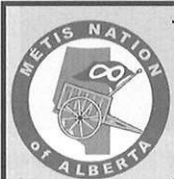


In Memoriam Rene Stang

In Memory of Rene Stang, who passed away December 8, 2007. Rene was a proud soldier who served with the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada for over 23 years. Rene served with the Anit-Tank Platoon including a tour of duty in Cyprus.



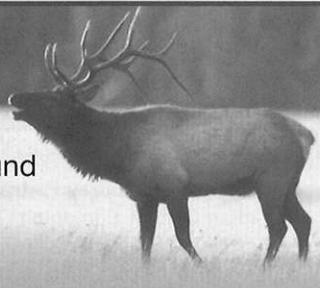
Judge Richard Fowler, former mayor of St. Albert receives the "key to the city" from current mayor Nolan Crouse. Fowler, who talked with pride about his Métis Heritage, was recognized by the St Albert Victim Services Association. He has dedicated his life to public service, not only by serving twice as mayor of St Albert, but also as an MLA for St Albert, a Cabinet Minister (as Municipal Affairs and Native Affairs and later as Minister of Justice), Solicitor General and Attorney General.



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.

MNA HARVESTERS LEGAL DEFENCE FUND

Send your donation to:
MNA Harvesters Legal Defence Fund
c/o MNA Communications
11738 Kingsway
Edmonton, AB T5G 0X5



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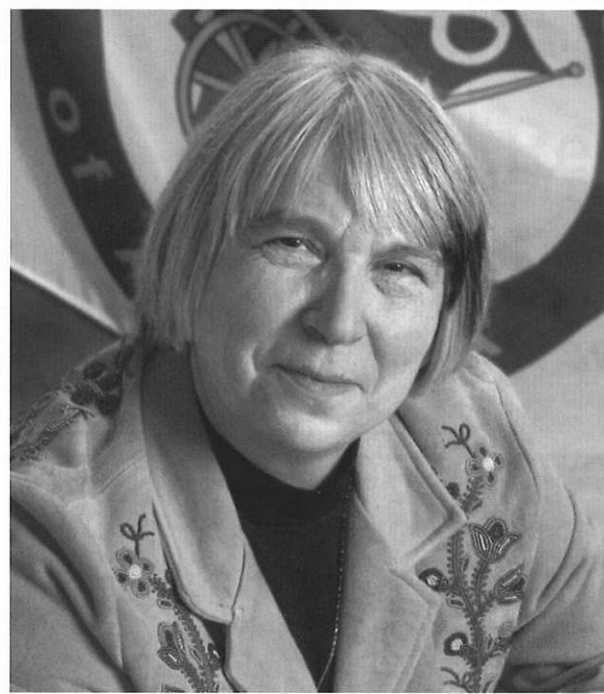
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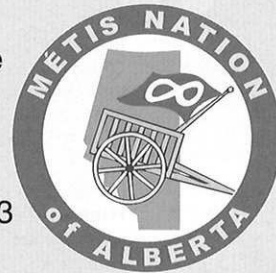
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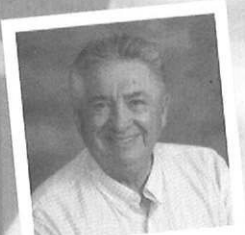
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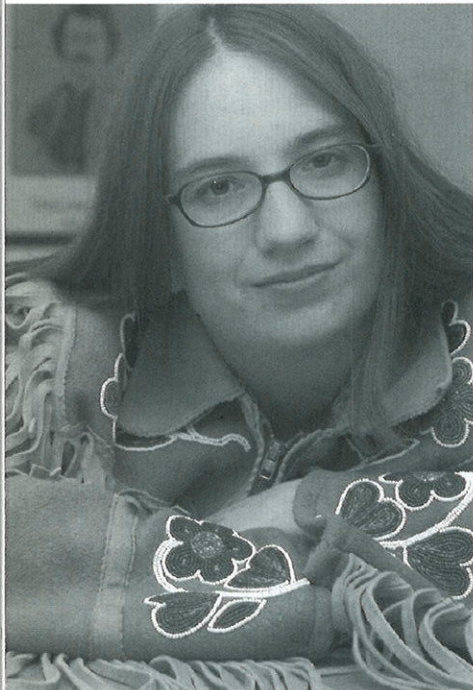


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Vice-President
Louis Bellrose



The Devlin Side

Monique Devlin

Since I started working for the MNA, I have had the opportunity to discover many things about myself, and about a part of my heritage.

I have learned that I am a lot stronger than I have ever given myself credit for, and while a lot of that strength comes from within, it has been amplified by the support of coworkers, friends and family. Career-wise, the last year and a half has been the most challenging (and thus most rewarding) time of my life. I would like to thank everybody at the MNA including my readers and the many people who have given me advice and encouragement as I took on the role of editor of *Otipemisiwak* and communications manager of the MNA.

Now, for those of you reading this and thinking that this sounds suspiciously like a good-bye column, you are right. Many of you may have noticed in my travels around the province that I have been rapidly expanding for the last eight and a half months, and the rumours are true - I will soon be embarking on a whole new challenging and rewarding stage of life - motherhood.

From what I understand, even though physically I am well equipped for my new job, there is no way to properly prepare myself mentally and emotionally for being a mother. The best I can do is continue to take care of myself and use all of the resources I have at my disposal to help me and my new family.

While I am an avid reader and internet surfer, facts on a page and the computer screen will only get me so far, and it is the people, many of the same ones that I gave kudos to above that are going to be my greatest resource. First, of course is my ever patient, ever supportive husband, who will also be embarking on this journey with me. I have never been as certain of anything in my life as I am in his

ability to be a good father and it is this certainty that gives me the greatest peace of mind.

I am also lucky to come from an incredibly well blended family. Between my husband and me we have four mothers, four fathers and assortment of brothers and sisters (of the natural, step and in-law varieties), and more grandparents than I have titles for (what do you call your step-grandma-in-law or your great-step-grandpa?) As far as family support goes, I am well blessed.

I am also lucky to be one of the first in my immediate circle of friends in the area to be having a child - this means that I already have more baby-sitting offers than I know what to do with, and by default get all of the cute (and weird) baby accessories that they have just been waiting for an excuse to buy.

And last but, not least the people I work for and with. I have always had a bit of a stubborn streak, and this has not changed since I found out I was pregnant. But, as I have found out, many of my coworkers are just (if not more) as stubborn. I have three different people who remind me to take my prenatal vitamins, no one will let me move anything heavier than my camera bag and I often get scolded if I come to work early, leave late or dare work on a weekend.

I have also had the opportunity to work very closely with some of the strongest women I have ever met, mothers and grandmothers who have not only "been there, done that" but "been there, done that" and pursued their education, worked full time or owned businesses, and in the case of "my boss" went on to become president of the Metis Nation of Alberta. Some pretty strong role models if I do say so myself.

-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.

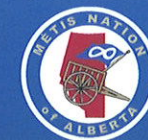
Defined Terms in National Definition of Métis

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.



10th Annual

Metis Entrepreneurial Leadership Awards

Friday, April 18, 2008

Please join us for an evening of honouring our Metis Business Leaders

Key Note Speakers: Jean Teillet, partner of Pape, Salter and Teillet. - Vancouver
Legal Counsel in the groundbreaking Powley case

Singer: Dorothy Walker
Entertainment: DeRic Starlight

Awards: Entrepreneurial Leadership; Men, Women, and Youth; Business Recognition;
Career Development; Industry; Community Development

Coast Plaza Hotel
1316 - 33 ST NE Calgary, AB

Reception: 5:30pm
Dinner: 6:30pm

Tickets: \$800.00 Table of 8
or \$100.00 per person

MC: Andy Popko, Vice President, Aboriginal Relations, EnCana Corp.

For Tickets and Event Sponsorship Information
Please Contact Region 3 Office
Ph: **(403)569-8800** Fax: **(403)569-8959** Email: mlanz@metis.org

This is a semi-formal/business event (dress code strictly enforced). Beaded jackets or vest
with shirt, tie and dress pants, or ribbon shirts acceptable. No jeans.

