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

Michif:
“their own boss, the independent ones”

Métis Musicians Ray St. Germaine on guitar and Garry Lee on fiddle.

If Undeliverable, Deliver to
#100 Delta Gray Building
11738 Kingsway Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5G 0X5

Cover Photos by Patricia Russell
Beadwork by: Julie Wasp-Collin from Assumption, AB

Deadline for Submissions is December 3rd

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. The next edition of Otipemisiwak will focus on Métis identity and what it means to be Métis.

www.albertametis.com
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to another edition of our official magazine, Otipemisikw-Voice of the Metis Nation in Alberta, a printing that celebrates recent achievements we have made on behalf of Alberta Metis, particularly with the signing of the Interim Metis Harvesting Agreement. Signing the Agreement means Metis harvesters will no longer have to resort to the age-old practise of hiding their moose under a tarp and sneaking it home in the dead of night. We can hold our heads high and hunt with pride, knowing that law enforcement agencies will now respect our right to harvest. We are reclaiming our dignity.

The Metis Nation of Alberta signed the Agreement in the company of Elders, the Provincial Council, Minister Pearl Calahasen, friends of the Metis Nation and the staff at the Provincial Office in Edmonton. I would like to share with you the remarks I made on that most historic occasion:

"October 1, 2004 is an extraordinary and exciting day for the Metis Nation of Alberta and for the Government of Alberta. Today, our respective governments are signing an agreement of historic significance, an Agreement that delivers to Alberta Metis the right to harvest with dignity.

As President of the Metis Nation of Alberta, I am honoured and privileged to sign this agreement on behalf of our Metis people. But first, I'd like to acknowledge the people who have poured an enormous amount of work into negotiating and writing this Metis Harvesting Agreement.

The Metis Nation of Alberta extends its collective appreciation to our legal team, Cynthia Bertolin and Bob Butler for their enthusiasm, their commitment, and their expertise in negotiating the Metis Harvesting Agreement with the Government of Alberta.

Our Nation is extremely appreciative and thankful to our Minister of Metis Rights, Cecil Bellrose for his insight, his experience, and his optimism. Right from the start, Cecil believed it was possible to ensure that our Metis right to harvest could be implemented across the province through an Agreement such as this. I am pleased to congratulate the Honourable Minister, Pearl Calahasen and Alberta for becoming the first provincial government not only to negotiate, but to sign a Harvesting Agreement with a governing member of the Metis National Council. Less than a year ago, we pledged that our governments would come to an arrangement to accommodate the Metis right to harvest, and I'm proud to say that we have come through on that commitment. I believe that Alberta has set a new benchmark for building positive relationships within the Metis Nation.

I also acknowledge the level of professionalism and efficiency demonstrated by the negotiating team acting on behalf of Alberta: Neil Redikopp and Wendy Fayant from Aboriginal Affairs; Deryl Empson and Bruce Mayer from Sustainable Resource Development; and Kurt Sandstrom and Angela Brown from Alberta Justice.

Together, the Metis Nation and Alberta have successfully charted our way through a new area of law using an approach that's innovative, efficient, and respectful. We recognise that by signing this Harvesting Agreement we are giving life to a document that will continue to grow through our ongoing discussions and further negotiations towards reaching a final agreement. I also thank our Provincial Council members for your continued support and respect for the successful negotiating process that brings us together today.

I look forward to building on the level of diplomacy, willingness, and mutual respect we have enjoyed with Alberta following the Supreme Courts decision in Powley last year.

The Metis Nation of Alberta is committed to building on the Interim Harvesting Agreement by continuing the dialogue and setting new standards for other provinces and governing members of the Metis National Council to refer to.

It warms my heart to know that today our Metis harvesters will be able to hold their heads high when they say, "I am a Metis" and know that our constitutionally protected right to hunt is respected in Alberta. And today, we are proud to be signing the start of another remarkable chapter in the history of the Metis Nation of Alberta."

Respectfully yours,

Audrey Poitras
President
Metis Nation of Alberta

Métis Nation of Alberta
"Together We Will Continue To Build A Strong Métis Nation."
Congratulations to the Vice President

On behalf of the Métis Nation of Alberta, Provincial President Audrey Poitras extends congratulations to Vice President Trevor Gladue on his recent appointment as Chairman of the Northern Lakes College Board of Governors.

Dr. Lyle Oberg, Minister of Learning, appointed the MNA’s Vice President to his new role on the board on August 24 replacing Frank Chalifoux who served two terms as the college’s board.

“Mr. Gladue has a long and proud history serving his community and has shown strong leadership skills,” said Dr. Oberg. “He will bring in-depth knowledge and a wealth of experience to his role as board chair, which will benefit the students and staff of the college for years to come.”

In addition to his current position on the MNA Provincial Council, Trevor has been actively involved in various community, First Nations and Métis projects. He has served on the board of directors of the Slave Lake Business Development Corporation, as chairperson for the planning committee for the MNA General Assembly, and on the steering committee for the Faculty of Education’s Institute for Olympic Education, Circle of Champions at the U of A.

Métis Nation of Alberta Firefighting Training Program Breaks New Ground

Role models come in all shapes and sizes. They all have one thing in common: they are our unsung heroes. You see them because they show how things “could be”. You emulate them because they inspire pride in our culture, communities, and the Nation.

So, the Labour Market Development Unit is seeking to contribute to creating these role models by setting up a 46-week training project to train Structural Firefighters with an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) designation. This is the first project of its kind to be attempted in the province; a full course of Métis men and women who will one day be role models for others in their community.

The project, still under negotiation, will bring together 16 people ages 18 to 29 from across the province to Vermilion and is scheduled to begin in February of 2005. These 16 individuals will be trained in all aspects of fire fighting and will receive a 1001 Structural Firefighting Designation. This internationally recognized certification will allow participants to apply to all fire stations in North America. In addition, the project will also provide participants with an EMT designation, allowing them to work on ambulances. This follows the integration of fire halls with ambulance response in the same building.

In order to qualify for this training you will need a minimum of Grade 12, a Class 5 driver’s license and to be in excellent physical shape. All candidates will need to pass a demanding physical test, provided by colleges and fire departments across the province. In addition, successful candidates will have to pass a security-screening test.

Genealogy Workshops

Organized by the Métis Nation of Alberta

Historical documents and scripts can be made available to help you search the roots of your family tree.

Genealogy workshops will be held on Wednesday, November 10, 2004 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the Provincial Office building in Edmonton. The workshop is free and our staff genealogist will be on hand to assist in the search of your family tree.

For more information, call Beatrice
(780) 476-2715 or 1-800-252-7553

Métis Nation of Alberta #100 Delta Grey Building 11738 Kingway Avenue Edmonton, AB T5G 0X5

Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement Unveils Monument to Veterans

by Patricia Russell

The Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement (BLMS) Council held a special ceremony on September 24 to unveil the War Veterans Memorial Monument. The granite and bronze monument, created by artist Herman Paulin of Hub Design Gallery, occupies a place of honour in a park setting near the Settlement Administration Office. Two rectangular granite pillars gently support a bronze bust of a helmeted soldier; the back of the monument features the Métis Nation's unity symbol also cast in bronze. A footpath made from recycled materials passes between the pillars.

More than a hundred people attended the special ceremony, including Métis Veterans, Métis Settlements General Council Interim President Gerald Cunningham.

Council Chairman Glen Auger, Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras, Vice President Trevor Gladue, the Honourable Pearl Calahasen, MLA Ray Danylik, members of the Canadian Armed Forces, the RCMP, and Buffalo Lake residents.

The afternoon began with a parade of veterans, military personnel, Royal Canadian Legion members, Royal Canadian Army Cadets and special guests marching onto the Administrative Office grounds in three ranks led by RCMP Raphael Jaworsky wearing ceremonial Red Serge. The Honourable Pearl Calahasen inspected the ranks along with Parade Commander Don Turcotte, first Vice President of the Royal Canadian Legion McGrane Branch #28 and MLA Ray Danylik.

Following the dismissal of the parade, guests listened to remarks from dignitaries inside a special tent set up by volunteers earlier in the day. The Interim President of MSGC, Gerald Cunningham, paid tribute to the Veterans for their service overseas. "This monument represents our gratitude to the Métis Veterans, so I say thank you to them. And I say thank you to the mothers of the veterans who held their young son or daughter close and hugged them in their time of need."

Top: A special presentation by MNA President Audrey Poitras to Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement Chairman Glen Auger.

www.albertametis.com

The Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement pays special acknowledgement to:

The Fishing Lake Métis Settlement Royal Canadian Legion McGrane Branch #28 for their Gold Level sponsorship of the War Veterans Memorial.

Silver
Canadian Natural Resources Ltd
B&R Eckel's Transport Ltd
Trans Canada Pipeline

Bronze
Alta Gas
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Ackryd, Piasta, Roth & Day LLP
Buffalo Lake Cats Construction Ltd
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Elks Legion-Lac La Biche
JLG Ball Enterprises
Gift Lake Métis Settlement
Doyle and Company
Usher Canada Limited
Boyle Co-op
A&T Construction-Lac La Biche
Bruce Gordon
Manderly Sod-Fort
Saskatchewan
Calnash Trucking-Lac La Biche

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Otispimisik: The Voice of the Métis Nation in Alberta
Volume 1, 4th Edition - October, 2004
On This Day

By Miss Rene Ladouceur

On this day we remember those who fought and died for our country.

On this day we remember our peace and freedom.

On this day we remember the promise of glory.

On this day we remember those who fought on the front lines.

On this day we remember those who lay in the bloody trenches.

On this day we remember those who fought knowing danger lay ahead.

On this day we remember those who did not come home.

On this day we remember the orphans and widows.

On this day we remember Flanders Field where the blood red poppy grows.

On this day I remember the soldiers who fought for my freedom as I listen to the trumpets and prayers.

On this day I will always remember.

before going away to war.”

Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras remarked on the contributions Métis Veterans made at great personal cost to themselves, their families, and their communities. “Even though our Métis soldiers fought in every war that Canada has participated in, their contributions continue to be forgotten by the Government of Canada. The Métis Nation of Alberta and the MNC’s Board of Governors are committed to working to ensure all our Métis Veterans receive the recognitions they rightly deserve. Recognition should come not only from our Métis communities but most especially from Canada.”

The Métis National Council continues to advocate on behalf of Métis Veterans who have not yet been compensated or officially recognized by Canada after serving in international conflicts where Canadian troops have been present. During the Aboriginal People’s Roundtable held in Ottawa in April, discussed with Prime Minister Paul Martin and the (former) Minister of Veterans Affairs John McCallum.

The Métis Nation of Alberta pays respect to all our Métis veterans who have served in the Canadian Armed Forces during peacetime and crisis such as the Boer War, World War I, World War II, the Korean Conflict, the Persian Gulf Crisis and in the United Nations peacekeeping contingents. Our veterans include the current members of the Aboriginal Veterans Society of Alberta who are:

Hugh Belcourt
Robert Berrard
Glen Botineau
Henry Cunningham
Miles Daigreault
Norbert Jebeaux
Chester Knutson
Oscar Lacombe
Stanley Laliberte
Donald Langford
Conrad Letendre
Victor Letendre
Irwin L’Hirondelle
David Parks
Eddy Picher
Richard Joseph Poitras
Stan Shank
Sam Sinclair
Chester Whelan
John White
Wesley Whittford

Many other Alberta Métis served in the Canadian Forces during times of crisis and we would like to add their names to our list of honoured veterans. Please call the editor of Orpemisiwak/Voice of the Métis Nation of Alberta if you would like to share that information for the next edition of our Nation’s official magazine. Remembrance Day Services will take place throughout the country on November 11.

Top: Members of the Royal Canadian Army Cadets formed the Colour Party beside the War Veterans Monument. Cadets Guy Delorme, Jordan Larocque, Justin Larocque and Taylor Ladouceur

Bottom: The Honourable Pearl Calahasen and Parade Commander Don Turcotte inspect the ranks.

Artist Herman Poulin created the memorial using granite, bronze and barbed wire describing the project as, “Tense. The measurements between the two granite pillars had to be precise otherwise the bust would not fit.”
Harry W. Daniels
1940 - 2004, In Memoriam
by Patricia Russell

On behalf of the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA), President Audrey Poitras extends condolences to the family of Harry W. Daniels, who passed away on September 6, 2004. President Poitras says, "We offer our prayers and ask for strength for the Daniels family as they deal with the pain of mourning. It's certainly a loss that's felt by Métis people all across the Homeland. Harry Daniels was a hero and a genuine champion of our rights, a remarkable man to whom we give credit for adding "Métis" to the Constitution which led to the end of our days as the forgotten people."

The inclusion in s.35 of the Constitution is the basis of last year's unanimous Supreme Court decision in Powley, upholding the Métis right to harvest, which led to the groundbreaking Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement between the MNA and the Government of Alberta.

"Section 35 has implications that will be felt for generations," said Métis National Council (MNC) President Célestin Chartrand. It will continue to be a significant building block in strengthening the Métis Nation and will be Mr. Daniels' legacy to the future generations."

Mr. Daniels spent his political career advocating on behalf of the rights of Métis and non-status Indians. He held executive positions with the Council of Young Canadians from 1975 to 1981 and served as President of the Native Council of Canada from 1997 to 2000. As a noted author, Mr. Daniels published several written works on Métis rights, including "A Declaration of Métis and Indian Rights" (1979). "We Are the New Nation" (1979), and "Native People and the Constitution of Canada" (1981). He led two national commissions, one on justice and another on Aboriginal, Treaty, and Constitutional Rights.

The Métis National Council honoured Mr. Daniels for his lifelong contributions to the Métis Nation in an inaugural presentation of the Order of the Métis Nation. "The Métis National Council instituted the Order of the Métis Nation this year to recognize the significant and historical contributions of our Métis citizens. There was no doubt that Harry Daniels would be one of its first recipients," said President Chartrand.

A memorial service and celebration of the life of Harry W. Daniels was held at Regina Beach on September 16; the date would have been his 64th birthday. His partner Cheryl, sons Michael, Conway, Gabriel and daughters Chantelle and Chigal, survive him.

COMING SOON
The Métis Nation of Alberta is producing an informational video about the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement and the impact the Powley decision has had on Alberta Métis. The video will be available for distribution in March 2005.

Look for updates on the production of the video in the next edition of Otipemisiwak and on our official Internet website at www.albertametis.com.
Louis Riel Day and Métis Week 2004

by Patricia Russell

The flag of the Métis Nation will rise once again over Alberta communities during Métis Week, commemorating the anniversary of Louis Riel's death. A special ceremony will be held inside the Alberta Legislature building in Edmonton on November 16th and will include a performance of Louis Riel's Last Address to the Jury by actor Bill Beorgen. The ceremonies will begin at 11:00, which coincides with the time of Riel's execution in 1885.

Métis from across the Homeland gather on November 16th to pay respect to the memory of Louis Riel and his legacy to the Métis Nation: his vision of a rights-bearing people distinct from other Canadians; a dignified Nation of Métis.

This year's Riel Day and Métis Week celebrations are poignant in light of the recent signing of the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement between the Métis Nation of Alberta and the province. The Agreement acknowledges that Métis are a rights-bearing people, recognized in the Constitution (1982) and provides a mechanism through which Alberta Métis can exercise the right to harvest the traditional food supply - echoes of the cause championed by Riel more than a hundred years ago.

A non-aboriginal jury tried Riel on a charge of high treason in a Regina courtroom in July of 1885. The jury found him guilty and recommended mercy; a recommendation the judge overlooked sentencing Riel to hang instead. Despite an outcry for clemency from across the country and internationally, the Canadian Government, led by Prime Minister MacDonald, carried out the grisly sentence on November 16 outside the RCMP barracks in Regina.

119 years later, the Métis Nation flag will be hoisted during commemorative ceremonies held in Riel's honour across Canada and throughout the province of Alberta, in Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Slave Lake and other communities.

Check with Regional and Local Offices of the Métis Nation of Alberta for information on Métis Week events planned in your area.

Delia Gray Memorial Gala

Each year on November 16th, the Métis Nation of Alberta pays tribute to Mrs. Delia Gray by hosting the Delia Gray Memorial Gala. Mrs. Gray was the first Provincial Elder and Advisor to the Provincial President and Vice President. She had just begun her second term as Provincial Elder when she humbly passed away on November 12, 1999. Mrs. Gray was very passionate about the Métis people and she touched many lives during her lifetime.

In November of 2000, the Métis Nation of Alberta honoured the memory of this great lady by renaming our Provincial Head Office Building the "Delia Gray Building." At the same time, the Delia Gray Memorial Scholarship was established to continue with Mrs. Gray's vision of educating our Métis Youth.

Members of the Gray Family select two recipients for this prestigious scholarship based on the educational goals of each candidate. The two recipients are each awarded a $1000.00 scholarship at the Delia Gray Memorial Gala.

This year marks the 5th Anniversary of the Delia Gray Memorial Gala. Please join us on November 16, 2004 as we honour and celebrate the life of this great woman. This year's event will take place at the Italian Cultural Centre, 14250 133 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta. The Gala will start at 6:00 p.m. with dinner; scholarship presentations and entertainment will follow. Tickets for the event can be purchased from the Provincial Head Office.

Staff Appreciation

Staff at the Métis Nation of Alberta's Provincial Office held a special get-together for two members of the team who are moving on to other opportunities: Bob Butler, who worked for three and a half years as a Senior Tripartite Policy Advisor; and as a negotiator working on the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement and Sydney MacDougall, who worked with Apotheosan (Métis) Development Inc. for 13 years. MNA President Audrey Poitras thanked Bob and Sydney for their years of service to the Nation and wished them well in their new endeavours.

Left: MNA President Audrey Poitras describes Sydney MacDougall as a "wealth of knowledge and information who saw a lot of history in the development of the Métis Nation during his 13 years with Apotheosan (Métis) Development Ltd."

Right: Director of the Tripartite Action Centre, Irene Collins, knew how much Senior Tripartite Policy Advisor Bob Butler would appreciate an extra huge block of his favorite chocolate as a "going away gift."
Métis Week 2004 Schedule of Events
November 14-20, 2004

Sunday, Nov. 14
Métis Week Mass (R4)  
St. Margaret's Church, Edmonton, 11:00 AM  
- Historic Site Dedication  
- Presentation to Friends of St. Marguerite Désilez
Directions:  
- Take Sherwood Park Freeway East (Wye Road - Secondary Highway 630) for 35 km, take Wye Road exit just before railway crossing to range road 205, 1.2 km to church.  
- Park lunch to follow
For more information, contact 944-9288

Monday, Nov. 15
Flag Raising Ceremony and Proclamation (R4)  
City Hall, 1 St. Winston Churchill Square, Edmonton, 11:50 AM - 2:30 PM  
- Entertainment  
- Honouring Métis Contribution to 100 years of Edmonton
For more information, contact (780) 544-0280

Flag Raising Ceremony (R3)  
City Hall, Calgary, 12:00 Noon  
- Open House to follow at the Region III Regional Office at 18, 5110 14 Avenue NE, Calgary
For more information, contact (403) 569-8800

Flag Raising Ceremony (R3)  
City Hall, Lethbridge, 10:00 AM  
For more information, contact (403) 328-7828

Genealogy Workshop (R4)  
11724-95 Street, Edmonton  
- Learn to complete your own family tree  
- Historical documents on site available for viewing
For more information, contact (780) 544-9288

Wednesday, Nov. 17
Métis Urban Housing Open House (R4)  
11922 - 121 A Avenue, Edmonton, 10:00 AM - noon
For more information, contact (780) 452-6440

Inglewood Building Open House (R4)  
Apotogosan and Métis Employment Services Centre, 12308 - 111 Avenue, Edmonton, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
For more information, contact George at (780) 452-7951 or Treat at (780) 423-2237

Métis Child & Family Services (MCFS) Calgary  
345 - 95 Avenue NE, Calgary, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
For more information, contact (780) 458-0100

Thursday, Nov. 18
Sun & Moon Visionary  
Christmas Arts and Craft Show Kick Off (R4)  
Polish Hall downstairs, 10924 - 104 Street, Edmonton, 10:00 AM - noon
For more information, contact (780) 452-4640

Métis Child & Family Services (MCFS) Calgary  
Open House (R4)  
10437 - 123 Street, Edmonton, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
For more information, contact (780) 458-0100

Friday Nov. 19
Harvesting Rights Workshop (R4)  
11724 - 95 Street, Edmonton, 10:00 AM - noon
For more information, contact (780) 458-0100

Bannock & Jammer (R4)  
11724 - 95 Street, Edmonton, Noon - 4:00 PM
For more information, contact (780) 458-0100

Métis Annual Fund Day for Children (R3)  
Crossroads Community Hall, 1803 - 14th Avenue NE, Calgary, starting at 10:00 AM
- To be followed by a traditional supper and dance for the whole family

Métis Nation of Alberta  
"Together We Will Continue To Build A Strong Métis Nation."
1 800 252-7553

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Métis Nation of Alberta Region 1  
Annual General Meeting
Conklin, Alberta
Saturday, November 6  
10:00 AM  
Conklin Community Centre
For more information, call Rick or Christine at (780) 623-3039 or 1 800 638-5704

MÉTIS WOMEN  
39-WEEK BUSINESS PROGRAM

MÉTIS WOMEN 39-WEEK BUSINESS PROGRAM

at NAT includes training in administration, microcomputers and accounting.
Funding is available for eligible clients from the Métis Nation of Alberta for living costs, childcare, tuition and textbooks.
Phone (780) 963-7333 or (403) 343-6262 for more information or check out: www.nlm.ca/askan

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Ortipensiehok: The Voice of the Métis Nation in Alberta  
Volume 1, 4th Edition - October, 2004
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Métis Nation of Alberta Forms Energy Services Joint Venture
by Patricia Russell

Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras announced the formation of a joint venture agreement between the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) and three oil and gas service companies: Peace Mountain Projects Ltd. of St. Albert, BFL Energy Services Ltd. of Bonnyville and Debolt Contracting Ltd. of Debolt, near Grande Prairie. The agreement was signed on October 20, 2004 and results in a joint venture called the “Aboriginal Energy Services Group (AESG).” Poitras says, “The Métis Nation of Alberta is committed to maximizing the Aboriginal presence in one of Alberta’s economic cornerstones, the oil and gas industry. And we’re determined to continue promoting the independence and self-reliance among Aboriginal Albertans through joint ventures such as the AESG.” AESG will make it a priority to ensure at least one-quarter of the employees are drawn from the local Métis workforce. The 25% Aboriginal content in AESG is attractive to Canada’s major oil and gas producers interested in increasing the Aboriginal presence in the industry. Métis Nation of Alberta Minister of Economic Development, Karen (KC) Collins says the companies in the joint venture will provide a full range of services and expertise. “Peace Mountain is skilled in pipeline construction; BFL specializes in metal fabrication and trades; Debolt is known for heavy construction and earthmoving, and the MNA has the capacity to provide a skilled Métis labour force,” says Collins. “This joint venture is a good example of how we can work together in the interest of the collective good and at the end of the day it’s all about Métis people taking care of themselves by ensuring we have jobs in the regions for our skilled Métis workforce.” Collins predicts the joint venture will enable the partners to earn up to $5-million dollars in contracts in the oil and gas industry.

During the signing ceremony, Alberta’s Minister of Economic Development, Mark Norris, added his support to the joint venture saying, “There are no shortages of work coming your way. Alberta’s economy is absolutely on fire and we don’t see it slowing down. This is not smoke and mirrors, these are solid jobs. And from a business perspective, this joint venture is going to work.” Norris says, “Premier Klein is aware of this joint venture and you certainly have his support. This joint venture is all about the things we speak of-free enterprise, entrepreneurship, and jobs.” Members of the Métis Nation of Alberta’s Provincial Council, Alberta Cabinet Ministers, MLA’s, and representatives of Canada’s major oil and gas producing companies also attended the signing ceremony.

One of the stated goals of the MNA is to pursue the advancement of the socio-economic and cultural well being of the Métis people of Alberta. To that end, the MNA developed a Strategic Economic Development Plan in a partnership with Alberta’s Ministry of Economic Development a few years ago. The plan identifies twelve sectors in Alberta’s economy where opportunities exist for greater Métis involvement, opportunities that should lead to sustained self-sufficiency for the Métis people of this province.

The MNA is already involved in two of those identified sectors, tourism and the oil and gas sector, with our Métis Crossing Cultural and Historic Interpretive Centre, and the Drilling Rig, Métis Crossing, near Smoky Lake, is one of the most historic and serene sites in the province, and when the development is complete, it will be THE place for people to come and experience the spirit and culture of the Métis people.

Also, the Métis Nation of Alberta has been successful in acquiring a double telescoping Drilling Rig in the spring of 2002. Our rig is under contract to EnCana Corporation and managed by Western Lakota Energy Services Ltd. The Métis Rig is 100% owned by the MNA and is primarily staffed by Métis people including the Rig Manager and Driller. This rig is acknowledged to be amongst the highest performing of any of EnCana’s rigs worldwide. It’s a concrete example of how successful our Nation can be when using the right combination of ingenuity, opportunity, reasonable risk, and foresight.

For more information about the Aboriginal Energy Services Group, please contact: Larry Doupe at (403) 608 8560 or James Buchanan at (780) 826 7304.
Bourque Blows into Windy City
Former Lac La Biche Resident on Cusp of NHL Dream

As Canada marched to the World Cup of Hockey title earlier this month, millions of Canadians were glued to their television sets, anxiously hanging on every odd-man rush, every shot, every save, every bodycheck. Rene Bourque was no different.

The 23-year-old former Lac La Biche resident sat on his couch at his Chicago home, watching ESPN2 and cheering on his home country. He was also rooting for his friend Dani Hurley, the embattled Atlanta Thrashers star who is facing vehicular homicide charges in the United States after the car he was driving crashed, killing teammate Dan Snyder.

On this particular night, as Hurley and his Team Canada colleagues battle the Czech Republic in a gut-wrenching semi-final game, Bourque is really hoping his former University of Wisconsin teammate can put one in the back of the net.

"He's coming close," says Bourque, talking with the game still on in the background. "He's a sneakerbit tonight." Bourque remembers Hurley, who would go on to play for Canada's world junior team, taking him under his wing when he arrived at Madison, Wisconsin in 2000 for his first season with the Badgers.

"It was an honour to get to play with him," says Bourque. "He was unbelievable with the puck. He's one of the most gifted kids I've seen and he's a great kid. It's unfortunate what happened to him."

Bourque may soon have the opportunity to convey his sentiments face to face, as he lines up opposite his ex-teammate. The former Lac La Biche minor hockey and University of Wisconsin star is on the cusp of realizing his NHL dream, after signing with the Chicago Blackhawks as a free agent last July.

"I had a chance to sign with several other teams but Chicago was the best fit," says Bourque. "They have a young team."

After putting his name on the dotted line, the 23-year-old spent the rest of the summer getting in shape, attending a prospects camp and working out with some of the veterans on the Hawks.

When contacted by the Lac La Biche Post, Bourque was scrumming with longtime NHLers Curtis Brown and Eric Duz, who offered words of encouragement to their young linemate.

"They just told me to play my own game and to have fun," says Bourque. "It's been good."

Heady stuff for a man from small-town Alberta, who first started playing hockey at age four. Playing in the NHL was not at the forefront of his mind as he rose through the ranks, even though he notes he was always one of the better players on his team. It wasn't until he started playing Bantam AA in Fort McMurray at age 14 that he started to dream about facing up the skates in the most famous league in hockey.

"I realized to make a move, I had to put a lot of effort into it and try and get as far as I can," he says.

At the same time, he was not about to jeopardize his academic education. Instead of playing junior hockey, he attended Notre Dame - a private Catholic School in Regina famous for churning out good hockey players.

"My parents always stressed the educational element when I was younger," remembers Bourque. He even turned down several overtures to play for the Western Hockey League's Saskatoon Blades, realizing if he signed on he would jeopardize his chances of receiving a National College Athletics Association scholarship to play in the United States.

The move paid off in spades. The determined man received offers from 20 American colleges, finally accepting a full scholarship from the University of Wisconsin. Four years later, he graduated with a business degree and a hockey experience he will never forget.

"I'm glad I went the college route," he says. With the NHL in full lock-down mode at the moment, it is unlikely Bourque will be playing for the Blackhawks in the next little while. He is much more likely to suit up for Chicago's farm team in Norfolk, Virginia this fall instead.

In the grand scheme of things, this is a minor setback for the determined player who never admits defeat. After all, he has overcome broken bones, the death of a close friend, and the challenges of balancing his hockey career with his education to make it to the big show.

His rise to the top may have been far from meteoric but his careful, calculated approach has brought him further than most players ever dream. The 6'3", 217 pound Bourque developed into the quintessential power forward during his time with the Badgers, improving his point production and increasing his penalty minutes every year. He led the team in goals, assists and points in both 2002-2003 and 2003-2004, scoring 36 points in 42 games during his senior year.

"Rene is one of those players that comes around every once in a while," former St. Albert Saints general manager Marcel Viveiros told journalist Marc Ciampa in a 1999 interview. "He has good size and great skating ability and is good with the puck."

High praise indeed, praise that Bourque realizes he has a lot of work to live up to. He knows playing in the NHL and even the American Hockey League is a big step up from university hockey.

"Guys are a lot bigger and stronger up here - and they're definitely smarter with the puck," he says. If he makes it to the NHL, Bourque promises he will not forget where he came from. He appreciates all the support he receives from family and friends back home in the Lac La Biche area and is pleased to see other players such as Buffalo Lake's Darren Reid, signed by the Tampa Bay Lightning last spring, also realize their NHL dreams.

"I pretty much grew up on hockey, playing on the outdoor rinks," he says. "Everybody loves hockey up there. There's lots of support and that's just great."

Editor's Note: Since this article appeared in the Lac La Biche Post, Rene Bourque continues to build on his 'hot rookie' reputation while playing wing for the Norfolk Admirals in Virginia during the labour dispute between the NHL and the players association. In Norfolk's October 20 game against Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, Bourque assisted with the first goal and then scored the last two goals in the 4-3 overtime win.
Métis Nation Included in Proposed Federal Aboriginal Health Blueprint
by Patricia Russell

Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) President Audrey Poitras welcomed the Prime Minister’s proposal of an inclusive Aboriginal health package announced in Ottawa on September 14, 2004. The Prime Minister met with the leaders of the three national Aboriginal organisations prior to the start of the First Ministers Meeting on Health in Ottawa. Poitras says the Prime Minister’s inclusion of the Mètis Nation as equal partners in federal Aboriginal health programming is an historic “First Step” towards altering Canada’s policy on Métis health issues.

“Governments must understand the Mètis Nation and courts will no longer accept federal and provincial policies that ignore the Mètis,” said MNA President Audrey Poitras. “We take the announcement as a reflection of this new reality and look forward to working in partnership with Canada and the province to deal with the Mètis health care crisis.”

In his address to the Ministers, Métis National Council President Clément Chartier described the poor health conditions that exist in Métis communities. “I see elders accepting the pain of arthritis because they cannot afford to travel to see a doctor,” he said. “I see entire families plagued by diabetes, including the loss of limbs... I see communities torn apart by suicides of their best and brightest.”

Prime Minister Paul Martin announced a proposal to add $700-million dollars over the next five years to improve Aboriginal health care in Canada. The new funding will be distributed in three areas:

- An Aboriginal Health transition fund worth $200-million dollars
- $400-million dollars for programs of health promotion and disease prevention focusing on suicide prevention, diabetes, maternal and child health, and early childhood development.
- $100-million to an Aboriginal Health Human Resource Initiative to increase the number of health professionals in Aboriginal communities.

“We are looking forward to an equitable distribution of the Aboriginal Health Care Fund and to an implementation plan that respects our existing governance structure and focuses on a “Nation to Nation” approach,” says Poitras.

Committing resources to dealing with Mètis health care issues is part of the solution; ensuring the design and delivery of the blueprint meets the unique needs of the Métis Nation will be key to its success. It includes initiatives for improving the health standards and services for Canada’s Aboriginal peoples, in particular:

- Improved delivery of and access to health services to meet the needs of all Aboriginal peoples through better integration and adaptation of all health systems;
- Measures that will ensure that Aboriginal peoples benefit fully from improvements to Canadian health systems; and
- A forward-looking agenda of prevention, health promotion, and other upstream investments for Aboriginal peoples.

The blueprint will recognize that programs and activities to be undertaken must recognize and respect the unique, specific, and different needs of all Aboriginal peoples, regardless of age and gender. Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers responsible for Health and Aboriginal Affairs will be working in a partnership with Aboriginal leaders towards the common goal of creating a blueprint, which recognizes and respects the unique needs of Aboriginal communities. A report on the process is expected in a year.

Métis Nation of Alberta Disability Services

Are you finding it difficult to obtain or maintain employment due to a physical, learning or mental health disability?

Would you like to know...

∞ The occupations best suited to your abilities?
∞ If you are able to return to work or to school?
∞ How to adapt your worksite or school to enhance your abilities?

For more information, please contact the Métis Employment Services nearest you, or call toll-free 1 800 252-7553

Labour Market Development Program - “Working Towards a Skilled Métis Work Force”

www.albertametis.com
Métis Crossing
Update

by Joanne Marotz, Project Manager

What an exciting summer this has been! Métis Crossing has experienced some wonderful growth and important steps forward. Site restoration began on the historic barn and farm buildings. A new foundation was added to the barn and the infrastructure was improved to allow for maximum capacity on both levels. Keep watching for an upcoming barn dance or two!

Our machine sheds are also being restored and adapted to allow for programming and demonstration areas. In addition, the trails have been started and we plan to have a number of walking trails ready for spring.

We are phasing our construction over the next four to five years as priorities are identified and fund development allows. We have also begun to build a resource list of Métis Contractors who can be contacted for future work. Thank you to those contractors who have contacted the Métis Nation with their information; other Métis contractors are encouraged to call to have your names and skills added to our resource list.

In September of this year the Victoria Landing Development Board hosted a visioning session at Métis Crossing. A member of the Canadian Conservation Institute facilitated the session, and over 30 people attended from across the province. All were gracious in sharing their ideas and commitment for Métis Crossing. One of the participants followed up with a letter, which read:

"As a curator, I was particularly excited about your process and recognized the incredible opportunity you have to truly make Métis Crossing something unique to exhibit today. You are right that a dialogue of passion and spirituality needs to continue along side of the dialogue about specifics, directions and actions. I recognize this double dialogue will be more difficult as deadlines get closer and deliverables need to be provided. Nevertheless, if both dialogues are continued, and the passion and spirituality of the participants is maintained, I am confident that the site will develop into something that is unique among any public space that I have ever visited."

The gate at Métis Crossing welcomes visitors who come to learn about the vibrant Métis culture that's being revitalized and celebrated through the development of the Cultural Interpretive Centre near Smoky Lake, AB.

Update your Métis Nation of Alberta Membership

Métis Nation of Alberta
"Together We Will Continue To Build A Strong Métis Nation."

Membership Department
100 Delia Gray Building
11738 Kingsway Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5G 0X5
Phone: (780) 455-2200
Toll Free: 1-800-252-7553
Facsimile: (780) 452-8946

www.albertametis.com
Grande Cache Métis Local #1994
5th Annual Talent Show

Congratulations to the Winners

Youth Vocals 17 & under
1st Cory Poitras (St Paul)
2nd Kelsey Poitras (St Paul)
3rd Chelaha Leonard (Grande Cache)

Fiddling
1st Cory Poitras (St Paul)
2nd Ed Poitras (St Paul)
3rd Richard Calihoo (Grande Prairie)

Red River Jig 12 & under
1st Leo Marcotte (St Paul)
2nd Kelsey Poitras (St Paul)
3rd Brittaney Stone (Valmorn, BC)

A very special thank you to the talent show judges:
Urset Flett, Angie Cerrar, and Gordon Poitras

Prizes for each category:
1st $200.00
2nd $200.00
3rd $100.00

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Milo's Restaurant

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Merle Delorme
Landon Delorme

Annette Bennet
Claude Delorme
Michelle Delorme

Angie Moody
Basil Leonard
Lea McLane

Mary Hansen
Mitchell Delorme
Summer Delorme

Doreen Oueltte
Lyn Thorhaug
Eric Hansen

The President of Métis Local #1994, Al Findlay, extends a very special "Thank you" to all the talented musicians and dancers who helped to make this event successful.

Métis Youth Achiever
Katrina Cox
by Laura McLaughlin

A
rtwork by ten-year-old Katrina Cox of Spruce Grove, Alberta will be featured on a special lapel pin designed for Métis Week 2004. During last year's Métis Week celebrations at the Children's Bowling Party, Katrina won first prize in a birch bark-painting contest. The new pins will be unveiled during the MNA Provincial Office Open House on November 16, 2004. Last year's second prizewinner was six-year-old Luke Kaup, of Onoway, AB who received a cash prize.

The Scholarship and Bursary Handbook
for Métis Students

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

- Tips for Accessing Financial Resources for Education and Training Purposes
- Awards for Aboriginal Students
- Public and Private Sector Awards
- Post-Secondary Institution Awards
- Delia Gray Memorial Scholarship
- Belcourt Brossard Métis Awards
- Student Finance Information - Grants and Student Loans
- The Métis Nation of Alberta Labour Market Development Program
- Employment Assistance Service

Produced & Compiled by The Métis Nation of Alberta

For more information contact us at:
(780) 455-2200 or Toll free (Alberta Only) 1-800-252-7553

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Otompisowak: The Voice of the Métis Nation in Alberta
Volume 1, 4th Edition - October, 2004
Region III
Back To Buffalo Jamboree

by Lorne and Barb Todd

The "Back to the Buffalo Jamboree" is an annual Métis celebration held on the Sunday of the September long weekend at the Buffalo Lake Recreation Area near Stettler. The event brings Métis and non-Métis together to share music, dancing and cultural activities at a Recreation Area that's operated by Métis Local 492.

Special guests at the event included Métis Nation President Audrey Poitras and Actor Bob Willis of Stettler, AB. Willis, costumed as Gabriel Dumont, captured everyone's interest with his historic tales of Buffalo Lake and its connection with the Métis.

The Jamboree began early Sunday morning with a pancake breakfast. The rest of the day was filled with activities such as scavenger hunts, hay rides, beading lessons and jiggling lessons. The fun continued when local musicians started a jam session held in the big tent.

The Calgary Métis Youth Dancers preformed a series of traditional Métis jigs and reels prior to a steak supper, which was enjoyed by approximately 150 people and prepared by Métis Local # 492 of Stettler. Dorothy Walker provided some entertainment after supper. Her performance was followed by a dance with music from a band called "Bear Claw".

Caption Top: Popular musician Dorothy Walker was one of the performers at the annual jamboree at the Buffalo Lake Recreation Area operated by the MNA Local in Stettler.
Middle: Local musicians started a jam session in the big tent at the "Back to Buffalo Jamboree"
Bottom: MNA Local 492 served a delicious steak dinner enjoyed by approximately 150 people at the "Back to Buffalo Jamboree"
Harvesting Agreement Comes Through for Alberta Métis

by Patricia Russell

The Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) President Audrey Poitras is proud to announce Alberta Métis can now exercise their constitutionally protected right to harvest year-round without having to buy a hunting license. The mutually negotiated Agreement went into effect on October 1, 2004 and recognizes the Métis right to hunt, trap, and fish on harvesting lands within the province of Alberta. The MNA signed the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement (IMHA) with the Government of Alberta’s Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Pearl Calahasen, in a quiet ceremony at the Provincial Office in Edmonton. President Poitras says, “A year ago, with the Supreme Court ruling in Powley, we asked our Métis people for patience and at that time we made a commitment to have a mechanism in place by the next harvesting season so our people could go hunting with dignity and pride. I’m very pleased to say, ‘Here it is.’”

Bilateral negotiations between the MNA and the Alberta Government began soon after the unanimous ruling from the Supreme Court of Canada in R.v. Powley last September. The groundbreaking decision affirmed Métis have harvesting rights protected by Section 35 of the Constitution Act (1982). Like all Albertans, Métis harvesters will continue to abide by safe hunting practices and conservation laws. “Métis are conservationists,” says Poitras. “We believe in the wise use of our natural resources by ensuring that fish and wildlife stocks remain healthy for the benefit of our children and grandchildren.

That’s how our ancestral and communal hunting practices work. Our traditional harvesting practices are good examples for hunters across the country to follow.”

MNA Minister of Métis Rights, Cecil Bellrose, who also negotiated and signed the document, echoes Poitras’ remarks saying, “As responsible Métis, we have to be mindful of the importance of protecting our traditional food supply. Take only what you need to feed your Métis family. Our right to harvest comes with certain responsibilities and we can’t take advantage of them or abuse them.”

The IMHA applies to all members of the Métis Nation of Alberta. Instead of buying a hunting license, Métis will identify themselves by showing Wildlife or other law enforcement officers their current MNA membership card.

Laws concerning gun registration and licensing remain in effect. Gun licensing fees will be waived if applicants identify themselves as Métis harvesters when applying for a license from the Canada Firearms Centre. Information on Canada’s Firearms Law is available at 1 800 731 4000.

The Métis Nation of Alberta and the provincial government committed to negotiating a final harvesting agreement. Some uncertainty in the application

A statue of Métis hero, Louis Riel, was the centerpiece on the table where MNA Minister of Métis Rights Cecil Bellrose signed the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement.
Frequently Asked Questions

Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement

What does this Agreement mean for me?

The Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement means members of the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) can exercise their right to harvest without having to buy a hunting license.

What kind of harvesting is recognized in the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement?

The Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement (IMHA) recognizes that Métis have the right to harvest through hunting, trapping, and fishing and applies to animals, fish, and fowl.

When?

Alberta Métis can harvest year-round, unless there is a closure for conservation reasons in a particular hunting zone as prescribed by the Regional Offices of Alberta’s Department of Sustainable Resources Development (SRD), which would apply to all Albertans, including Métis. Alberta Métis are not limited to harvesting seasons, nor are they limited to or prevented from hunting on certain days of the week.

Conservation closures may restrict the right to harvest and may take the form of restrictions on a type of animal, its size, or its age. Conservation based restrictions may also be in the form of harvesting quotas, an area of land, or for a period of time. For example, if a particular hunting zone is closed for a period of time, all Albertans, including Métis, must abide by that closure.

Where?

The Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement applies to "Hunting Lands" within the provincial borders of Alberta. The IMHA recognizes that Alberta Métis can harvest on all UNOCCUPIED provincial Crown lands, but NOT if there is activity or development on the lands that would make harvesting unsafe. Alberta Métis can harvest on all OCCUPIED provincial Crown lands, such as wild land parks, natural zones and some types of provincial parks and other protected provincial areas that have areas designated as harvesting zones. Alberta Métis must register with Provincial Park offices before harvesting may commence on those lands. Alberta Métis can harvest on PRIVATE LANDS or leased land with the permission of the owner/occupants/leaseholder.

The IMHA does not apply to land within National Parks at this time.

For what purpose can Métis harvest?

The Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement recognizes that Métis can harvest for subsistence. ‘Subsistence’ includes food, clothing, shelter, ceremonial, religious, and cultural pursuits. The IMHA recognizes that Alberta Métis can share their harvest between members of the Métis Nation of Alberta.

Conservation and safety:

Provincial laws and rules regarding conservation and safety apply to all Albertans, including Métis. Harvesting must conform to existing laws/rules pertaining to safety, such as not hunting at night or shooting across a road. All Albertans, including Métis must abide by conservation-based guidelines/restrictions that are determined regionally by SRD and may be in the form of restrictions on a type of animal, its size, or its age. For example, conservation guidelines pertaining to deer hunting in a particular region may indicate a harvesting limit to animals bearing three or more points on its antler. All Albertans, including Métis harvesters, must abide by such guidelines. Please check with the regional offices of the Department of Sustainable Resources Development or Fish and Wildlife for updates on conservation issues.
Can Métis transport harvested fish, fur, or fowl out of the province?

Harvested game, fish, and fowl must remain within the provincial borders of Alberta.

What other licenses are required?

All applicable licenses, registrations, and qualifications are required when purchasing/using firearms, ammunition, and other weapons such as crossbows for harvesting. Alberta Métis will not have to pay the firearms license or gun registration fees if they self-identify as subsistence harvesters when applying for licenses. Métis harvesters fishing with a net must have a Domestic Fishing License, which is available from Fish and Wildlife Offices. No fee will be charged for this license.

Other applicable licenses are required when engaged in any commercial harvesting activity, or when using a motorized vehicle or boat, or in other situations where licenses are necessary.

Do quota restrictions apply to Métis harvesters?

Alberta Métis are exempt from entering draws; however, during the period of time specified in a draw, Métis receive priority allocation of that particular species. Otherwise, with the exception of conservation restrictions, Alberta Métis are not limited to a quota of harvested animals, fish, or fowl. Please check with the regional SRO offices for more information.

Who can harvest under the MHA?

The IMHA applies to all members of the Métis Nation of Alberta and to people who are eligible to be members of the Métis Nation of Alberta. Detailed information about the MNA membership application process, including the application forms, is available through our website at www.albertametis.com or www.albertametis.ca. Métis from other provinces or territories do not qualify under the IMHA.

How will Métis harvesters be identified?

Fish and Wildlife and law enforcement officers will recognize the current Métis Nation of Alberta membership card as valid proof that a person qualifies as a Métis harvester. Alberta Métis without a valid membership card will have to prove their Métis status to enforcement personnel through other means.

Do I have to get a new MNA card?

The MNA is encouraging members to contact the Membership Registry to ensure all the necessary documentation we require to prove you are Métis, such as a birth certificate and a valid family tree is in your file. Law enforcement personnel will not recognize MNA cards issued prior to 1995. A card issued prior to that year may not be a visual match the current membership card. Please contact the MNA Registry at 1-800-252-7553 or 780-455-2200.

What actions should I take if charged with a harvesting-related offence?

Fish and Wildlife and other law enforcement officers will provide Métis harvesters with a consent form, which allows for the exchange of information between the MNA and law enforcement officials. Métis harvesters MUST SIGN AND IMMEDIATELY SEND the consent form to the MNA Provincial Office in Edmonton.

How do I apply for membership with the MNA?

Membership information is available on our Internet website at: www.albertametis.com or www.albertametis.ca. Information is also available through the regional offices and provincial office of the Métis Nation of Alberta.

Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement

Members of the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) can harvest (hunt, trap, fish) year-round on harvesting lands within the province of Alberta:

- All occupied Crown Lands
- Some Provincial Parks
- Park must have a designation or area that allows harvesting
- Métis harvesters must register with Park staff before hunting
- All unoccupied provincial Crown lands
- NOT if there is activity or development that would make harvesting unsafe
- Private Lands
- With permission from owner, occupant, or lessee/holder
- Applies to land within the province of Alberta
- Does not apply to land within National Park boundaries

For more information contact:

Métis Nation of Alberta
#100 Delta Gray Building
11738 Kingsway
Edmonton, AB T5G 0X5
Phone: (780) 455-2200
Toll Free: (800) 252-7553
Fax: (780) 452-8946

Sustainable Resource Development - Regional Office Contacts

Northwest Region

Fairview 780 855 2737
Barrhead 780 674 8236
Birchy 403 362 1232
Blairmore 780 562 3289
Cambine 403 678 2373
Canmore 403 678 2373
Chesilholl 403 625 1450
Cardston 403 633 4331
Cochrane 403 933 2388
Canmore 403 679 1225
Cochrane 403 933 2388
Calgary 403 297 6423
Cochrane 403 933 2388
Camrose 403 679 1225
Cochrane 403 933 2388
Calgary 403 297 6423

Southwest Region

High Level 780 926 2238
High Prairie 780 525 6520
Manning 780 836 3069
Peace River 780 624 6405
Red Earth 780 649 3853
Uniform 780 849 7123
Spiral River 780 864 4101
Valleyview 780 524 3605

Sustainable Resource Development - Regional Office Contacts

Northeast Region

Athabasca 780 675 2419
Bonnyville 780 826 3142
Cold Lake 780 639 3377
Edmonton 780 427 3856
Fort McMurray 780 745 7200
Lac La Biche 780 625 5247
St. Paul 780 643 6313
Smoky Lake 780 656 3556

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Volume 1, 4th Edition - October, 2004

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Métis Nation of Alberta
Registry and Membership

by Patricia Rumell

The phones have been ringing off the hook since the President of the Métis Nation of Alberta and the Minister of Métis Rights signed the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement with the Government of Alberta. Phone records are clear indicators of the increase; on one particularly busy day, early in October, the membership staff received more than 200 calls. Furniture in the reception area had to be moved out of the room to accommodate the number of applicants coming into the building.

The Director of Tripartite Action Centre, Irene Collins, anticipated the increase saying, "We've hired more staff at the Provincial Office and provided resources to the six Regions to accommodate the increased traffic in our Registry." Membership personnel from the MNA Regions were in Edmonton recently for training on the new database and information storage system and for certification as Commissionaires of Oaths. The additional staff and training means applications for membership can be processed more efficiently at the Regional Offices in Lac La Biche, Bonnyville, Peace River, Slave Lake, Calgary, and Edmonton.

The application process begins with initial contact made through any of the Regional Offices, either in person or by telephone. Application packages are available at these locations or on the Métis Nation of Alberta's Internet website at www.albertametis.com.

Some Métis who have membership cards are asking why it's necessary for them to go back into the Registry to check the accuracy of their membership files. It's important to note that the Registry requires specific documents in each members file to prove the MNA card-holder is a rights-bearing Métis, in other words the Métis Nation must be able to prove the members fit the definition of Métis. The definition is in line with the nationally accepted definition of Métis and was passed at the Annual General Assembly held in Edmonton in August 2003. (See back cover)

Family genealogy is key to the membership process, all cardholders are required to submit a completed family tree listing ancestral birth dates and places. Showing proof of eligibility for membership in the Métis Nation is an unavoidable and necessary requirement for all members. The Membership policy statement reads:

"A Métis must provide historical proof of his or her status as Métis by providing evidence of an ancestor who received a land grant or a scrip grant under the Manitoba Act or the Dominion Lands Act, or who was recognized as a Métis in other government, church, community, or any other historical records. Historical proof must be in the form of a verified family tree detailing the genealogical ancestry of the person applying for Métis status. People applying for Métis status must provide proof of who their parents are by a long form birth certificate or a baptismal certificate or other acceptable records."

Under the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement, the MNA membership card will identify rights-bearing Métis. The centralized registry system used by the Métis Nation of Alberta is among the most advanced and secure systems used by a non-profit agency in Canada. The stringent application process will prevent fraudulent abuse of our hunting rights by non-Métis hunters.

The MNA has access to live birth records and can help Métis offset the cost of getting a birth certificate. To waive the fee, applicants must give the MNA permission to access this personal information on their behalf; otherwise, applicants will have to absorb the fee, which can be prohibitive in some cases.

A certified Genealogist is on staff at the MNA Provincial Office and can offer some assistance to applicants as they research their family trees. Also, the MNA holds monthly genealogy workshops and has access to an abundant source of historical documents.

If you have any questions about membership please feel free to contact our head office at 455-2200 or toll free at 1-800-252-7553 or call any of the

"Together We Will Build A Nation"

Audrey Poltas
President - Métis Nation of Alberta

11738 Kingsway Avenue
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McGill University
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Montreal, Quebec
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Tel: (514) 398-6211
Fax: (514) 398-6941

www.albertametis.com
Métis Gather at Wabasca for 76th Annual General Assembly

by Patricia Russell

Members of the oldest Métis Nation in the Homeland gathered for the 76th Annual General Assembly this year in the Region V community of Wabasca, Alberta. The well-attended assembly brought hundreds of people from all across the province and filled the hotels, motels, and restaurants. The long drive into the region was not a deterrent for Alberta Métis who came from as far away as Lethbridge and points further south for the weekend event of politics, socializing, food, dance, and music.

The Assemblies are the summer rallies where we gather to take stock of the year’s accomplishments, to celebrate our achievements, and to make decisions about the future of our Nation. It’s a significant occasion considering it gives every member of the Métis Nation an opportunity to take part in the decision making process.

The social calendar flipped open on Thursday evening when the early birds, Métis who arrived first, got together at a business mixer that was catered by Carol Letendre and held inside the community hall, the primary location for the Assembly business. A selection of workshops held on Friday ranged in topics from an update on the Métis Crossing Cultural Interpretive Centre to genealogy and membership, to education, housing, and harvesting rights. At the same time, a Trade Show featuring Métis artists, businesses, and information booths was underway inside the community arena.

The gathering kicked into high gear late Friday afternoon with a hearty parade lead by a Colour Party and marchers of Veterans, Elders, RCMP, and Métis. Decorated floats and vehicles followed behind carrying representatives of the Métis Nation, the First Nation, the municipality, community groups, and companies from the Wabasca area. Handfuls of candy were tossed liberally to children watching from the side of the road. Elders and parents were delighted to see “Bigstone Elvis” in the parade, or at least his waving hand and the glint of sunshine reflecting off the oversized, gold sunglasses. The music blaring from an amplifier strapped to the back of the car was a dead give-away. Elvis was spotted in Wabasca.

The parade route ended outside the community hall where a ceremony to welcome visitors took place at the base of the community Cenotaph. Métis Elder Eva Ladouceur sang the Canadian National Anthem as the
flags of the Métis Nation and Canada were raised to fly in the wind. Welcoming remarks were offered by the Honourable Pearl Calahasen, Reeve Paul Sinclair, MNA Vice President Trevor Gladue, Region V President Rev New, and Aboriginal Veterans Association President Vic Letendre. The evening began with an Elders Banquet, prepared by volunteers with the Kathleen Métis Local, which drew a crowd of more than 700 hungry people.

Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras called the Assembly to Order following a brief opening ceremony on Saturday morning. Joe Blayon (Region II) and Bruce Gladue (Region IV) were elected as chairman and co-chairman respectively to conduct the business sessions, which included detailed reports from the President, Vice President, treasurer, secretary and other Ministers of the Provincial Council.

President Poitras' report detailed a year of extensive work completed by her office, provincially and during her time as interim President of the Métis National Council. The Annual Report detailed a year of extensive work completed by the President's Office, provincially and during her time as interim President of the Métis National Council. The report also includes reports from each of the Ministerial Portfolios and Activity Reports from the six regions.

Highlights of the Presidents Report included an update on the success of the MNA's Drilling Rig, which is making considerable inroads in the oil and gas industry with its reputation as being one of the highest producing rigs in the entire EnCana fleet. Poitras described the economic venture as, "The first profit-making venture in the 76-year history of the Métis Nation of Alberta. It will be paid off in two years and will have 11 million dollars in combined assets and retained earnings. Currently, 12 of the 15 employees are Métis, including the senior positions of Rig Manager and Driller."

Métis National Council President Clement Chartier was among the visiting dignitaries at the Assembly and led a panel discussion on the state of harvesting rights across the Homeland. The panel included MNA President Audrey Poitras, Minister of Métis Rights Cecil Belrose, and lawyers Cynthia Bertolin and Judy Daniels.

President Chartier remarked on the amount of positive change that's happened in the Métis Nation in the past year, "A great deal has happened since the Powley ruling. And even though the Supreme Court advised governments to get on with the business of recognizing Métis and our rights, we still have a struggle.
Finding Business Opportunities

S o you have decided to become a budding entrepreneur and start your own business. But you ask yourself “what business should I start?” One of the most challenging aspects of entrepreneurship is trying to identify the right business ‘opportunity’ for you. Obviously you want to make sure that the business you chose has every chance for success. Where do these ideas come from?

Interestingly, very often the ‘ideas’ that become business realities are right under our nose. The following is a brief description of some of the sources most entrepreneurs use to search for business opportunities:

• Ideas from previous employment. One recent study indicates that 60 percent of entrepreneurs have started a business that was directly related to their last job.
• Ideas from hobbies. While hobbies are things that you are willing to do at your own expense, many people have been able to create their own small businesses from their hobbies.
• Ideas from travel. Many products and services you see being offered in other places may not have been offered in your local market.
• Ideas from personal observation. Occasionally the idea for a new product or service results from keen observation of daily living situations. The idea for “Q-Tips” hit Leo Gerstenzang when he noticed his wife’s efforts to wrap cotton on toothpicks to clean her baby’s ears.
• Ideas from business publications & other sources. You can never do too much research. Read publications, trade journals in your field of interest. In today’s fast paced environment, the business strategy of copying what has been successful may not necessarily pay off. When looking for opportunities it is important that you be open to new ideas; find new ways of looking at things. The fundamental cornerstone for any business idea is to identify ‘needs and wants’ in the marketplace and come up with innovative ways to satisfy those desires. One way to find ‘opportunities’ is challenge old ways of doing things. Here are some suggestions:
  • Recognize patterns as they are forming. Try to notice trends before others have noticed them.
  • Combine two or more things/thoughts together. Chapters Inc. came up with the idea of combining a coffee shop and a bookstore.
  • Look for new uses for old products. Can you think of uses for scrap tires, end pieces of lumber, LP records?
  • Look at “why” people buy something rather than “what” they buy. For example, people eat at McDonalds because it is cheap and fast.
  • Look for unhappy, dissatisfied people...maybe you are one. It is a quick way to identify needs and wants that still have to be satisfied.
  • Look for happy, contented people. This may give you insight into what has worked and what might work better.

Once you have identified an idea for a business,
you must evaluate it to determine if it really is an opportunity. How large is the potential market for my product or service? Will this market grow in the future? What can be done to expand my market?

One thing to avoid is 'falling in love' with your idea. You may have found a need for a used clothing store for children because you are looking for cheaper alternatives to clothe your own kids. An honest evaluation of this opportunity involves trying to determine how many others in the marketplace share the same need. The preparation of a business plan will serve to assist you in evaluating your idea. The process of preparing a business plan should force you to challenge your own preconceived assumptions to determine whether your 'idea' is truly a business 'opportunity'.

Ken Balcom is a Certified Management Consultant and the Senior Business Consultant for Pinnacle Business Services Ltd., a subsidiary of Apexstogasan (Métis) Development Inc. Feel free to phone Ken or any of Pinnacle's consultants to discuss a business idea you may be considering. They may be reached toll-free at 1-800-252-7963.

Update your Métis Nation of Alberta Membership

Membership Department
#100 Delta Gray Building
11738 Kingsway Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5G 0X5
Phone: (780) 455-2200
Toll Free: 1-800-252-7553
Facsimile: (780) 452-8946
Stay in touch with the Métis Nation of Alberta by updating your mailing information
The hall was packed.

And what happens when you pack a hall with spirited Métis, add some food, and stir the air with music? True to form, it was a typical Métis gathering: the energy was high and lively; the air filled with laughter, chatter, and good will. There was a silent auction, a lively auction, and 50/50 draws with the unexpected turn of winners giving back their prize money. Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras offered special remarks to a crowd of friends and family. A presentation took place where Homer received gifts and cards, including a poster-sized show of support signed by the Provincial Office staff.

The items up for auction ranged in size and value from a weekend getaway to a cabin in the woods, to beaded slippers, to an ornamental Red River Cart, to children's toys. Homer's family and friends set up a table where they offered their personal toys for sale to contribute to their Museum's cause. A dollar value was never the issue; the willingness of the children was priceless.

And when the band began to play that evening, Homer picked up his fiddle.

The Métis Nation of Alberta is producing an informational video about the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement and the impact of the Pawley decision has had on Alberta Métis. The video will be available for distribution in March 2005.

Look for updates on the production of the video in the next edition of Otipemisiwak and on our official Internet website at www.albertametis.com.
Métsis Locals
Métsis Culture Celebrated in Pincher Creek Parade

by Francis Riviere

A big effort was made by a number of the members of our Local to pull together a parade entry for the Fair and Rodeo in August held in Pincher Creek, Alberta. The construction of a banner proved to be a good time for socializing. So, we gathered in our meeting place where Gail Akiti, the president of Chinook Local 1880, produced a white shower curtain. We all brought out our felt pens and artistic talents and, after some time, a stencilled banner emerged and easily met with our approval.

Always happy for a reason to come together, our next meeting was at Sophie and Jake Hiebert's home in Pincher Creek, where we decorated Gail's car. On the car, we organized flowers, moccasins, a colourful blanket, a Métsis flag, and signs that read "Métsis Elder Sophie Hiebert." Sophie rode proudly in the car, sporting a set of earplugs necessary to protect against the very loud and lively music being played on the car stereo. Donna Bruder and Gail Akiti, with Dawn Lynn Hochstein, managed the banner. Several of our children, dressed in Métsis garb, rode decorated bicycles. Two horseback riders completed our entry. The riders were Frances Riviere (carrying the Méts flag) and Haley Strandquist, colourfully attired in buckskin, eagle feathers, and Métsis sashes, and riding an Appaloosa horse.

Before we had even managed to get our various entry sections together, Sophie was awarded a first prize for her part as our Métsis Elder. She graciously donated the prize money to help pay for candy, which we threw out to spectators.

The Chinook Métsis Local is very recently formed and is still going through our growing pains. Community events such as this parade bring us together to celebrate our Méts culture and give us a visible presence in Pincher Creek. This makes all our efforts worthwhile.

Right: First Parade Entry of Métsis Local 1880
Pincher Creek, Alberta

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MNA Region III
Tail Creek Cemetery Cleanup

by Richard Lucier

On Saturday Sept. 18th, Loren and I hopped into my beat up Métsis pickup truck which was loaded with a chain saw, a ride-on lawn mower, and a push mower and headed for the Tail Creek Cemetery. We made a Tim Horton's stop and then dug my hunting partner out of bed and arrived at the cemetery to find a fair-sized crew already on site.

Several Métsis from Stettler and communities north of Stettler and a group all the way from Calgary were already at work. Two more from Red Deer arrived soon afterwards. Seventeen people in total showed up to help clean up the cemetery; trees were cut, grass was mowed, and dry brush and sticks were piled up, producing a fair bit of firewood. By 11 AM, a new flagpole was hoisted and the Blue Infinity flag of the Homeland was flying over Métsis territory.

The crew was tired and proud of their labours; what was an overgrown, weed-infested cemetery now looks like a park. We wish to thank everyone who helped or made a loan of machinery and tools. Region III President Ephraim Bouvier, Vice President Marlene Lanz, and John Parkins from Calgary; Tina and Dean Franklin, Lorne and Barb Todd, Sharon and Don Todd from the Stettler Métsis Local; Loren Borth, Barry Stanyer, Richard Lucier, Vera Larson, Jeanette Larson, and Shirley Vols from Big Valley, and Joe Choketchi and friend from Red Deer.

We're proud to invite anyone with an interest in historic cemeteries to please drive by and have a look, or come out for our next work party. While in the cemetery, look for the headstone of Jean Batiste Vannasse who was a very famous Captain of the great Métsis buffalo hunts in what is now Alberta. The Alberta hunts once rivalled the better-known Manitoba and Saskatchewan hunts.

When driving to the Tail Creek Cemetery from Red Deer, take Highway 11 east past the intersection with Highway 21. Turn right, or south, at the gravel road with the sign marked "Tail Creek Cemetery Road". The Tail Creek Cemetery is on your right and clearly marked with an overhead steel trellis.

Caption Top: Volunteers from MNA Region III hoisted the Métsis Nation Flag over the Tail Creek Cemetery.
Bottom: The historic Tail Creek Cemetery now has the appearance of a peaceful park thanks to volunteers in MNA Region III.
Region IV Annual General Meeting

Region IV held its Annual General Meeting on September 18th in Edmonton, AB. Annual reports were tabled updating the members of the various economic, social and cultural activities the Regional leadership and staff have undertaken over the past year. A special resolution was passed calling for the MNA Region IV Council to prioritize community consultation, development and community planning necessary to bring forward a new model of governance for the Region to encourage greater community involvement.

Above Left: AGM Chairperson Gary Gairdner
Above Right: MNA Region IV Vice President Cecil Bellrose
Below: About 40 Métis attended the Region IV Annual General Meeting held in Edmonton in mid-September.

It’s All About Opportunities

For the second year in a row, Region III Vice President Marlene Lanz acted as the MC at a gathering of aboriginal entrepreneurs called, It’s All About Opportunities. The two-day conference, held at the Edmonton Coast Plaza Hotel, was organized by The Business Link Business Service Centre and geared towards offering Alberta’s Aboriginal small business community practical information and advice on business development and management practices. Apetogosan (Métis) Business Development Inc. sponsored a delicious lunch on the second day of the conference.

Aboriginal Business Network Coordinator Shannon Armitage, MNA Region III Vice President Marlene Lanz, General Manager of The Business Link Rodger Cole, Conference Coordinator Stephanie Sarja

Diabetes Healthy Eating & Active Living

A Handy Method for Measuring Portion Size:

- Fist = 1 cup e.g. oatmeal or pasta
- Thumb = 1 oz e.g. cheese
- Handful = 2 oz e.g. nuts or pretzels
- Palm = 3 oz e.g. meat/protein dishes
- Thumb Tip = 1 tsp e.g. butter, margarine, mayonnaise

Juvenile Diabetes Walk for the Cure at Hawrelak Park this summer in Edmonton.
Left to right: Sharon Longmore, Kathy Karakonti, Fran Hyndman, Michelle Ingham, Tiffany Ingham

Living Healthy with Diabetes

Building Healthy Communities is a collection of recipes for delicious meal options prepared by diabetics and shared with a nation. Copies of the cookbook are available from the Métis Nation of Alberta.

Call 1-800-252-7553 or (780) 455-2200

Beef Casserole

- 1 ½ lbs round steak
- 2 tbsp oil
- 2 medium onions
- 2 cups hot water
- 1 bay leaf
- ¼ cups diced carrots
- ¼ cups raw green beans (cut up)
- salt and pepper to taste

Dry meat with paper towel and cut up into 1-inch cubes. Heat oil in casserole dish over medium heat; add meat and brown on both sides. While meat is browning, add 1 onion which has been thinly sliced. Gradually add hot water and bay leaf. Cover casserole and simmer for 1 ½ hours. Add some water if necessary as meat cooks. Add second onion - quartered, carrots, and beans. Cover casserole and bake at 350°F for one hour. Remove bay leaf before serving.

Recipe submitted by Amber Flett, Region 6, Fort Vermilion, Alberta
Alberta Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards

The Alberta Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards recognize the outstanding achievements of Aboriginal youth and share their success with others across the Province of Alberta.

Category 1 - Culture and Heritage
This award recognizes youth who preserve and promote their First Nations, Métis or Inuit culture and heritage by developing or enhancing traditional activities such as dancing, artwork and music.

Category 2 - Volunteer Services
This award recognizes youth who are involved in volunteer services in the community. They provide services or fundraiser, which in turn contributes to enhancing the quality of community life.

Category 3 - Academic Achievement
This award recognizes youth who have made a special effort to improve or enhance their academic standing. They have completed a certified academic program or have been recognized for their academic efforts.

Category 4 - Athletic Achievement
This award recognizes youth who excel in their chosen sport. They demonstrate a healthy lifestyle and promote and raise awareness about the benefits of participating in sport.

Category 5 - Career Advancement
This award recognizes youth who have developed and implemented a course of action to help realize career goals. They have succeeded in business development or have identified or developed innovative ideas in their chosen pursuit.

Category 6 - Personal Achievement
This award recognizes youth who have overcome challenges during the pursuit of their personal goals and betterment. They demonstrate excellent problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Category 7 - Walking the Red Road
This award recognizes youth who have overcome addictions and/ or have promoted sobriety to other youth in the community.

Category 8 - Community Leaders
This award recognizes youth who demonstrate leadership in all award categories. Their leadership has had a positive impact on the community.

Alberta Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards Nomination Form

Nominee

Full Name
Address
Phone
Email address
Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) Age

Nominator

Full Name
Address
Phone
Email address
Relationship to nominee
In which category is the nominee being nominated? (One category per form)
Circle age group: Junior (10-17) or Senior (18-28)

Submission Requirements
Step 1: Fill in nomination form. Separate application packages must be submitted for each category that an individual is nominated in.
Step 2: Write a two-page description outlining why the nominee deserves this award. Respond to the following questions:
1) How is the achievement significant and why does it deserve special recognition?
2) What were the challenges and obstacles that were encountered?
3) How were these overcome?
4) What has been the impact of this achievement on the nominee’s family and community?
5) How will the community benefit from the nominee receiving this award?
Step 3: Obtain three letters of support. Ensure that contact numbers and mailing addresses of supporting individuals/organizations are included on the letters.
Step 4: Submissions must be postmarked no later than 4:30 PM, Friday, December 24, 2004. Send submissions to:
Youth Awards Coordinator
Métis Nation of Alberta
#100, Delia Gray Building
11738 Kingsway Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5G 0X5

Nominations must be postmarked no later than 4:30 PM, Friday, December 24, 2004

Journey to Independence
Métis Youth Program
Métis Nation of Alberta and Métis Counselling Services of Alberta

I sat in the Sharing Circle on the first day of the Journey to Independence Métis Youth Program. We held a Pipe Ceremony and a Sharing Circle. I watched the youth as they spoke and could see how difficult it was for the young people to be comfortable talking because they were so shy. For the next 7 weeks, the youth in the program received instruction and nurturing in four areas: their physical, mental, spiritual and emotional selves. Their physical instruction involved field trips to gain a greater understanding of how different organizations fit and work together in a community. Their mental development involved classroom work and computer instruction. They were taught about the importance of culture and practiced this in a Sharing Circle every day. For their emotional development, we helped the youth look at their own coping skills and helped them to establish long-term future goals. I saw such a remarkable difference on Graduation Night. They were able to articulate their thanks and appreciation to the Elders, the facilitators, and to each other. Seeing the change was so rewarding for me.”

Marg Mueller, Northwest Regional Manager
Native Counselling Services of Alberta

Back (left to right): Kim Mueller (UMAVC Coordinator), Candace Mineault (student), Amanda Letendre (Co-facilitator), students Bonita Auger, Sherry Cardinal, Rilee Goulet, Crystal Cardinal, Farrah Mitchell, Brittany Mineault, Jenna Belcourt, and Clinton Soto (Courtworker)

Front (left to right): Michael David (Elder), Darlene Cardinal (facilitator), students Lyle Beaulieu, Ciji Mineault, and MNA Region VI President Sylvia Johnson

Be part of
A SKILLED MÉTIS LABOUR FORCE

Employment & Training Assistance

Métis Nation of Alberta
1-800-252-7553
Métis Youth
Roughin' It Peace Island Style

In partnership with the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Métis Nation of Alberta was able to fund numerous youth projects throughout the province of Alberta. One such project, hosted by the North Peace Youth Support Association (North Peace LINKS, located in Fairview, Alberta), was the Reward A Teen (RAT) program. The youth in the RAT program went on a three-day road trip this past summer. During the three days they were out boating and camping with Peace Island Tours. The participants learned about the mighty Peace River and its proud history. The youth also went hiking and rock hunting. During one night the youth slipped out of the camp and went midnight mud slogging along the banks of the mighty Peace. They were covered in mud from head to toe and sure had a mess to clean in the morning.

One of the most exciting events was a 3-hour treasure hunt on the 42-acre Peace Island. They were divided into teams, and hunted for hats and playing cards. The treasure hunt also included poem writing, and pictures drawn that had to include one member from each group. At first, the groups were very independent treasure hunters, but after they couldn't find some items they traded secrets with other groups for the grand prize of a large bag of chips and pop, which was special because junk food wasn't allowed at the camp. The winning team was called "The Seekers" and their time was 2 hours 46 minutes.

Youth on the trip said one of the best things about the trip was the home cooked meals, and snacks. This included hamburgers, baked beans, bannock, hot chocolate, soup and sandwiches, pancakes, eggs, and sausages. Meals were prepared by Peace Island Tours. Whether the youth were walking along the shores looking for fossils or rocks, treasure hunting, or "chillin" (chilling and relaxing) in the teepee telling stories, the folks over at Peace Island Tours sure showed our youth a great time.

North Peace LINKS hosts various other programming throughout the year. For example:

- **General Drop In** - for youth between 13 - 18 interested in social activities.
- **Informational/Educational drop in** - for youth interested in gaining skills and knowledge related to social issues facing youth.
- **Aboriginal Mentorship** - open to Fairview and area Aboriginal Youth.
- **Invitational WOW!! Program** - separate programming for males and females, dealing with issues such as obesity.
- **Community Involvement & Volunteering** - open to all.
- **Selective & Invitational Reward a Great Youth** - for youth who have contributed in a positive way to the LINK Youth Center Project and/or community as a whole.
- **Target Youth Risk Factors** - open to all who choose to become better informed of factors contributing to youth being at risk and developing strategies for prevention and intervention.
- **Individual Referral** - for youths or their families requesting or being persuaded to seek counselling services of any kind.

For more information on the North Peace LINKS center and other Métis Nation of Alberta youth programs please contact 1-800-252-7553
Aboriginal Junior Forest Rangers Program
by Janet Gardner, LMDM, Region VI
T he summer of 2004 was an exciting year for 10 youth from Fort Vermilion. The youth participated in a 2-month Junior Forest Ranger Program that educates youth about the forestry industry. The project was funded by Métis Nation of Alberta Labour Market Development Region Six, and coordinated by Alberta Sustainable Resources in conjunction with LMD.

Students had an activity packed summer that included learning about wildfire operations, forest management, forest measurement, outdoor skills, recreational use of forests, timber harvesting, compass and mapping systems, and the various careers within the forestry industry.

The program also included one week of cultural learning that taught the students about medicine harvesting, traditional land use, and the importance of forests to Aboriginal communities. The students traveled to Driftvale, Alberta where an Elder taught them about medicine harvesting, and they also attended the MNA Annual General Assembly at Wabasca.

The program weaves fun into learning by having competitions such as the annual Bull of the Woods; Junior Rangers from across the province gather at Hinton to compare notes and compete against each other. This was the first trip out of the Northern Alberta area for many of the students, and they were pleasantly surprised at the beauty of Jasper Park.

The program ended with a luncheon provided by the Fort Vermilion community. Region Six LMDM presented all the participants with a framed Certificate of Participation, and special awards were also given to the youth.

On behalf of the Métis Nation of Alberta I would like to thank all those that contributed toward making this project a success. A special thanks to Wanita Mitchell and Glenda Auger from the Fort Vermilion Family Centre for organizing the luncheon, for their generous hospitality, and for providing a meeting place for the students.

Photograph by Janet Gardner
Participants in the Aboriginal Junior Forest Ranger Program held in Region VI include: Samson Hamelin, Shaun Hamelin, Keith Fidler, Mary Jo Fidler, Jared Lambert, Adam Mitchell, Anthony Mitchell, Ashley Quewezance, David Quewezance and Riley Flett. Leaders, Sheldon Clarke and Mark Kelland. Coordinators from Alberta Sustainable Resource Development are Michael Mercored and James Atkinson and Region Six Labour Market Development Manager, Janet Gardner. Missing is project leader Tyson Lizotte.

Aboriginal Icon Competition in the Works
Community tryouts will be beginning shortly for Aboriginal Icon, a musical competition designed for all interested Métis, First Nation, and Inuit individuals. Contestants will have an opportunity to let their musical talents shine in four age categories: 6 to 12, 13 to 20, 21 to 35, and 35 and over. It is an opportunity designed to build up young people in a very positive way. The competition is to highlight kindness and compassion, and build self-esteem.

Regional tryout competitions are scheduled between January 24th and 31st, 2005, with semi-finals currently slated between February 1st and 28th in the same cities as the regional tryouts. The cities that are marked for regional and semi-final competitions are Vancouver, Edmonton, Whitehorse, Yellowknife, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax. The finals will be held in Winnipeg at the Burton Cummings Theatre on March 30, 2005, to coincide with the Junos.

All local community winners are to receive all expense paid trips to attend the regional tryouts, paid for by the local community co-hosts, in addition to an Aboriginal Icon baseball cap, t-shirt and CD case. Semi-finalists will receive all expense paid trips to the semi-final competitions in their regions, paid for by the regional co-hosts. Semi-finalists will also receive free vocal and performance coaching and Aboriginal Icon tracksuits and backpacks. The finalists will have their trip to the finals paid for by their respective regions, and receive more free voice and performance coaching as well as two tickets to the finals show.

The final four winners will receive recording and management contracts valued at $45,000 each. The contracts will include the creation of a ten-track CD, continued vocal and performance coaching, and an all expense paid trip to Winnipeg for a recording session. Marketing support is to be provided by Aboriginal Icon Inc. The final four will also receive two tickets each to attend the 2005 Juno Awards.

Contestants may compete in the following musical genres: country & western, r & b, hip hop, and soft/hard rock. For more information go to www.aboriginalsldol.com.
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.

Otipemisiwak: The Voice of the Métis Nation in Alberta
Phone: (780) 455-2200 or 1 (800) 252-7553 (Alberta Only)
Fax: (780) 452-8946
Email: communications@metis.org

#100 Delia Gray Building
11738 Kingsway Avenue
Edmonton, AB
T5G 0X5

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

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“Together We Will Continue To Build A Strong Métis Nation.”
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.