

Otipemisiwak (oht-paym'-soo-wuk) – In Michif: The independent ones

Otipemisiwak

The Voice of The Métis Nation in Alberta

Issue 5, Volume 1
December 2004

In Search of Bannock

*Community
Consultations*

Métis Week 2004

**OFFICE
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Photo by: Patricia Russell

Season's Greetings

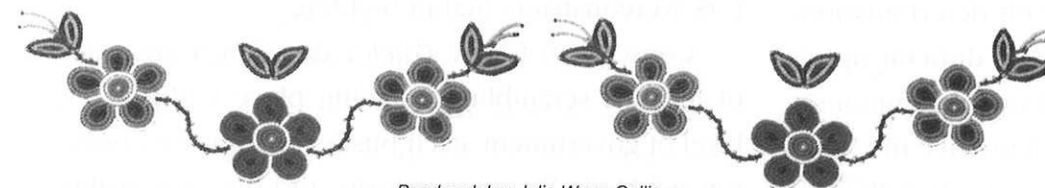
*From the President
and Provincial
Council of the Métis
Nation of Alberta*

About Our Covers:

Cover Photo by: Naomi Gordon
Firebag beadwork and Moosehide pants
created by Nathan Carlson
Back Cover Photo by: Patricia Russell

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Beadwork by: Julie Wasp-Collins

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Otipemisiwak

The Voice of the Métis Nation in Alberta

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Otipemisiwak

The Voice of the Métis Nation in Alberta

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

Deadline for submissions is February 7, 2005.

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Welcome Elders, friends, colleagues, and fellow Métis to another edition of our official magazine, Otipemisiwak-Voice of the Métis Nation in Alberta. It's surprising how quickly the year has passed, already we're flipping open the 2005 calendars and hanging them on the walls of our homes and offices across the Métis Nation Homeland. Before I hang up my new calendar, I'd like to take a few minutes to look back at some of the achievements in 2004, achievements resulting from years of hard work fuelled by dedication toward the betterment of our Nation of Métis people. I believe 2004 was a remarkable year and that we have good reason to celebrate with a thankful and humble heart.



Photo by: Patricia Russell

You know, our Nation came a long way since the inaugural meeting 76 years ago at Frog Lake. Since then, the road to self sufficiency, self determination, and recognition has been a long and difficult uphill struggle. But, when the Supreme Court unanimously agreed with our contention that Métis have the same rights as other Aboriginal peoples in Canada, the Métis Nation's agenda was propelled forward with the speed of an airplane putting us on the national radar. A notable improvement occurred in the relationships we have with all levels of government. Our 'little Métis Nation' is finally beginning to receive its overdue respect and acknowledgment as a genuine nation of productive and wholesome peoples,

acknowledgement that comes directly from the Prime Minister of this great country, which our ancestors were instrumental in building.

Consequent to the *Powley* decision, a great deal of internal scrambling is taking place within every level of government, each busily redefining its policy toward Métis. We are a priority and the 'new reality' became apparent early in 2004 starting with our inclusion in the Speech from the Throne, the Federal Budget, and the Canada Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable. The profile of the Métis Nation has certainly been raised to new heights.

When we signed the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement with Alberta on October 1, 2004, mem-

Presidents Message

bers of the Métis Nation of Alberta are no longer required to buy a hunting license, nor are we limited to harvesting within certain periods of time. Peel back the layers of the Agreement. On the surface, it's about hunting for subsistence purposes. Underneath, it's about our collective and individual rights, after more than one hundred years, finally being recognized and respected. Alberta Métis will never again have to skulk around in the bush to harvest for food out of season. We can hold our heads high with the pride our ancestors spoke of in the early days of the great buffalo hunts.

Other events in 2004 show how much potential there is for economic growth within our nation. We have established a solid foundation through unprecedented partnerships with government and industry in the spirit of cooperation, trust, and teamwork. Great strides have taken place at Métis Crossing toward the development of the location into a world class cultural interpretive centre at Victoria Landing; the first phase will be ready for Alberta's centennial celebrations. Our Drilling Rig is another example of success for the Métis Nation of Alberta. The rig turned a profit in 2004; most of its employees, including the Rig Manager, are skilled Métis working on a rig that's 100% ours. We have entered into a joint venture with three companies, each steeped in expe-

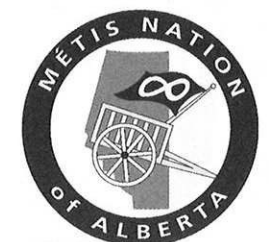
rience in the oil and gas industry, to form a new company called, Aboriginal Energy Services Group. Contracts secured through the new company will provide additional employment opportunities to our Métis people.

When we open our calendars for 2005, we can do so with confidence that the new year will be an equally successful year for the Métis Nation of Alberta. We have demonstrated time and again, that Métis are able to take a few resources and turn them into prospects that will benefit our whole community. We do the best we can with the limited resources we have. That's our Métis way.

I remain yours respectfully,

Audrey Poitras

Audrey Poitras, President
Métis Nation of Alberta



Seasons Greetings



I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your continued support to the Métis Nation of Alberta and our citizens throughout 2004. I also give thanks for being blessed with the humble opportunity to help our families, and our children's future.

As we embark on this New Year, I encourage you to travel this road from a cultural perspective. With the teachings of our Elders, and the lessons from our children, I believe that we can rediscover who we truly are, the Métis people, the Métis Nation.

We have faced many challenges throughout 2004, and with your continued support, we have met these challenges with success! This new year will be filled with new challenges, so I hope you had a well earned Christmas break, and together we will continue to build our Métis Nation in 2005!

I wish each and every one of you good health and happiness, and a Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Trevor W. Gladue, Provincial Vice President

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Canada Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable Life Long Learning



Greg King, MNA
Education Sector Advisor

By Greg King

The federal government held up its commitment to the Aboriginal People of Canada by holding one of six planned follow up Aboriginal Sectoral Roundtable discussions. This particular roundtable dealt with the issues of Aboriginal Life Long Learning in Canada. Policy experts brought forth by the federal government

and the national Aboriginal organizations across Canada were in Winnipeg (Nov. 12-14) and Ottawa (Nov. 17-19). Discussion documents that the Prime Minister and Aboriginal Leaders will use next spring to begin negotiations on Federal Policy regarding a variety of Aboriginal issues will have been based on the discussions at the round table.

Of most importance was the policy of the Roundtable discussions to occur in Nation Specific rooms. The recognition and accommodation of a unique Métis policy room shows that this federal government has acknowledged and is beginning to foster the unique and constitutionally recognized Métis place in Aboriginal policy.

Because the federal government has, in the past, consistently denied responsibility for providing Métis with Aboriginal recognition, the education of Métis citizens has been lumped in with the general population under the responsibility of the individual provincial governments. This is in contrast to First Nation Education, which has traditionally been a federally controlled and funded sector. These roundtable discussions represent an historic acknowledgement that the federal government recog-

nizes the potential responsibility it may have to Métis education, and the Métis people in general.

Issues of "Jurisdiction and Control" were premier agenda items at the roundtable and were the root of many report summaries. The main Issue under Jurisdiction was, "who has jurisdiction for Métis learners?" The answer from the policy experts was unanimous: the federal government. What action the government takes on this and other recommendations that came out of the session will be seen later in 2005.

Participants included representation from the Métis National Council (MNC), Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), the Assembly of First Nations, and other Aboriginal organizations. ♦

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Métis Week 2004 Remembering Riel

By Naomi Gordon

Eloquent speeches of praise and recognition for Métis hero Louis Riel and the Métis Nation were in abundance at the 2004 Louis Riel Commemoration Ceremony. The Ceremony, held on November 16, inside the foyer of the Alberta Legislature building, began with a grand procession led by the RCMP and Aboriginal Veterans Society of Alberta.

Those who spoke at the commemoration included: Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) President, Audrey Poitras; Region IV Vice-President, Cecil Bellrose; Former Economic Development Minister, Mark Norris; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Economic Initiatives Manager, James Norris; Métis Settlements General Council President, Aldon Armstrong, and Métis National Council of Women President, Sheila Genaille. Region IV Elder Marge Friedel gave an opening prayer and asked for a moment of silence in memory of Riel.

MNA President Audrey Poitras spoke of honouring Riel for his convictions and commitment to the Métis Nation and commended the late Harry W. Daniels for his instrumental involvement in adding 'Métis' to s.35 of the Canadian Constitution (1982). President Poitras also identified the recent achievement of the



MNA President Audrey Poitras, Region IV Elder Marg Friedel and former Minister of Economic Development, Mark Norris were among the speakers at a special ceremony held on November 16 to commemorate Louis Riel.

Métis Nation and all Métis people with the signing of the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement with the Alberta Government, "This agreement is a significant milestone for Métis people." Poitras offered hope and the continuance of Riel's vision, "By believing in ourselves as the Métis Nation."

The Honourable Mark Norris brought greetings from the Alberta government saying, "Be true to your convictions. To me that's what Louis Riel has done for Canada and that's what politicians should do as well."

James Norris extended greetings on behalf of the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern

Development, the Honourable Pearl Calahasen. He commented that although some people have vilified Louis Riel, many people continue to honour him. "As we face the opportunities of tomorrow these are the lessons we need to draw upon...share in the prosperity and move forward as a people."

A similar sentiment carried through Aldon Armstrong's speech who said, "[If we] look after the old people, we look after our past. If we look after our young people, we look after our future."

Métis National Council of Women President, Sheila Genaille, in addition to speaking about Riel, commented on the progressive movements within the Métis Nation and commended President Poitras as a strong female leader, ending her

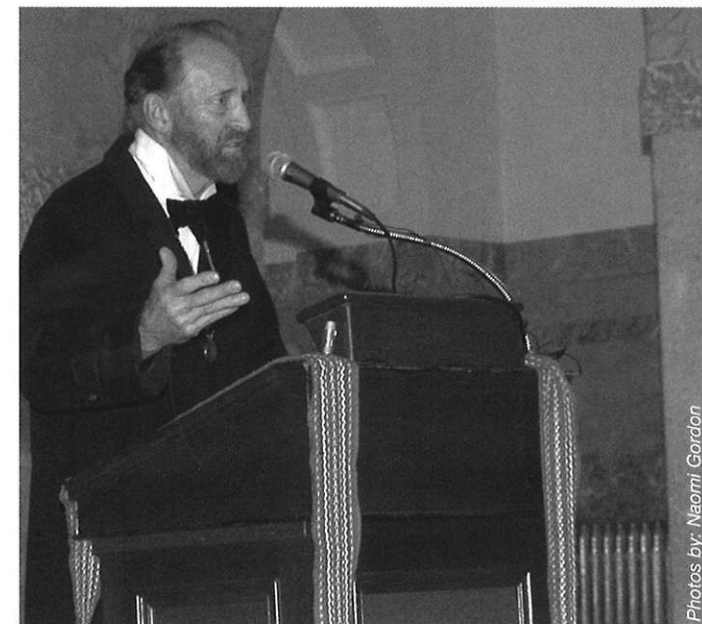
speech with a quote from Riel's prayer, "Through the grace of God we can be born anew."

This year's ceremony extended beyond greetings and speeches of praise by showcasing a moving performance by Dr. Bill Baergen who re-enacted "Louis Riel's Last Address to the Jury." His 10-minute delivery was powerful; the emotion in his voice infected the audience, bringing some people close to tears. ♦

RCMP Cpl Alex Courtorielle and Sgt. Don Ladouceur lead the parade of Aboriginal Veterans and dignitaries into the foyer of the Alberta Legislature to start the Louis Riel Commemorative Ceremony.



Veterans who served in the Canadian Armed Forces attend the Riel Commemorative Ceremony held inside the Alberta Legislature building.



Dr. Bill Baergen gave a moving performance of an excerpt of Louis Riel's Last Address to the Jury.

Louis Riel Day
November 16, 2004

STATEMENT BY ANDY SCOTT COMMEMORATING LOUIS RIEL DAY

OTTAWA, ONTARIO (November 16, 2004) - The Honourable Andy Scott, Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians today issued the following statement in recognition of Louis Riel Day.

"Today is an important day for all Canadians. It is a day that draws our attention to how Métis are an important part of Canada's heritage and its future. There can be no denying the strength of Louis Riel's convictions or the deep pride he generated among his people — the Métis. For them, those feelings endure to this day. Pride in what he stood for. Learning from history, the Government of Canada and the Métis people share a common resolve to build an ever-more inclusive future in which past grievances can be replaced with feelings of greater success and satisfaction.

"History is being commemorated with modern demonstrations of Métis pride and excellence. I know of celebrations throughout the Métis homeland today and on the weekend that honour his memory through ceremonies, gatherings, food, dancing and music, among other things. It is unfortunate that my parliamentary schedule does not allow me to participate in any of these.

"The Government of Canada continues to look for ways of affirming the contributions of Métis people in Canada and of reflecting Louis Riel's proper place in Canada's history. We sponsor events celebrating Métis history and culture and have funded a number of modest ventures, such as commemorative stamps and the publishing of Riel's writings. I believe that by engaging in a dialogue with the Métis people and other interested parties, we can find acceptable and appropriate ways to properly reflect Riel's place in Canada's history." ♦

For further information contact:
Diane Laursen
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
(819) 994-2044 ♦

Excerpts from Louis Riel's Jury Address



July 31, 1885 – Regina

When I came into the North West in July, the first of July 1884, I found the Indians suffering. I found the half-breeds eating the rotten pork of the Hudson Bay Company and getting sick and weak every day. Although a half-breed, and having no pretension to help the whites, I also paid attention to them. I saw they were deprived of responsible government, I saw that they were deprived of their public liberties. I remembered that half-breed meant white and Indian, and while I paid attention to the suffering Indians and the half-breeds I remembered that the greatest part of my heart and blood was white and I have directed my attention to help the Indians, to help the half-breeds and to help the whites to the best of my ability. We have made petitions, I have made petitions with others to the Canadian Government asking to relieve the condition of this country. We have taken time; we have tried to unite all classes, even if I may speak, all parties. Those who have been in close communication with me know I have suffered, that I have waited for months to bring some of the people of the Saskatchewan to an understanding of certain important points in our petition to the Canadian Government and I

have done my duty. I believe I have done my duty. It has been said in this box that I have been egotistic. Perhaps I am egotistic. A man cannot be individuality without paying attention to himself. He cannot generalize himself, though he may be general. I have done all I could to make good petitions with others, and we have sent them to the Canadian Government, and when the Canadian Government did answer, through the Under Secretary of State, to the secretary of the joint committee of the Saskatchewan, then I began to speak of myself, not before; so my particular interests passed after the public interests. A good deal has been said about the settlement and division of lands a good deal has been said about that....

...The only things I would like to call your attention

to before you retire to deliberate are: 1st That the House of Commons, Senate and Ministers of the Dominion, and who make laws for this land and govern it, are no representation whatever of the people of the North-West.

2nd That the North-West Council generated by the Federal Government has the great defect of its parent.

3rd The number of members elected for the Council by the people make it only a sham representative legislature and no representative government at all.

British civilization which rules today the world, and the British constitution has defined such government as this is which rules the North-West



Photo by: Naomi Gordon

Territories as irresponsible government, which plainly means that there is no responsibility, and by all the science which has been shown here yesterday you are compelled to admit if there is no responsibility, it is insane.

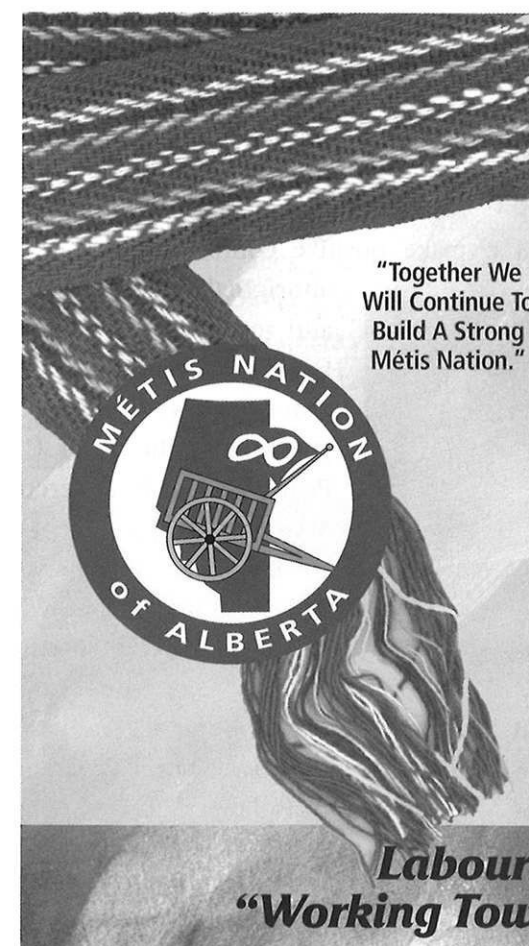
Good sense combined with scientific theories lead to the same conclusion. By the testimony laid before you during my trial witnesses on both sides made it certain that petition after petition had been sent to the Federal Government, and so irresponsible is that Government to the North-West that in the course of several years besides doing nothing to satisfy the people of this great land, it has even hardly been able to answer once or to give a single response. That fact would indicate an absolute lack of responsibility, and therefore insanity complicated with paralysis.

The Ministers of an insane and irresponsible Government and its little one – the North-West Council – made up their minds to answer my petitions by surrounding me slyly and by attempting to jump upon me suddenly and upon my people in the Saskatchewan.

Happily when they appeared and showed their teeth to devour, I was ready: that is what is called my crime of high treason, and to which they hold me to-day. Oh, my good jurors, in the name of Jesus Christ, the only one who can save and help me, they have tried to tear me to pieces.

If you take the plea of the defense that I am not responsible for my acts, acquit me completely since I have been quarrelling with an insane and irresponsible Government. If you pronounce in favor of the Crown, which contends that I am responsible, acquit me all the same. You are perfectly justified in declaring that having my reason and sound mind, I have acted reasonably and in self-defense, while the Government, my accuser, being irresponsible, and consequently insane, cannot but have acted wrong, and if high treason there is it must be on its side and not on my part. ♦

Source: University of Missouri Kansas School of Law website.



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Remembering our Métis Matriarch Delia Gray

By Naomi Gordon

Members of the Métis Nation of Alberta celebrated the memory and life achievements of the late Delia Gray at the 5th Annual Delia Gray Memorial Gala.

The gala, held on November 16 at the Italian Cultural Centre in Edmonton, also honoured Pearl Vandale and Roxanne McKenzie-McLean, 2004's Gray scholarship recipients. The evening also saw the unveiling of a new Métis Matriarch Award, which was given to Eva Annie Dahlseide. The award, inspired by the legacy of Mrs. Gray, recognizes other mothers and women within the Métis Nation.

In addition to honouring Métis women, the event included a moving performance of Louis Riel's Last Address to the Jury as depicted by Dr. Bill Baergen.

Approximately 276 people attended, including Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras and Vice-President Trevor Gladue. MNA Regional representatives: Vice-President Homer Poitras (RII), Vice-President Cecil Bellrose (RIV), Vice-President Peter Campion (RV) and President Bev New (RV). Other invited guests included Métis Settlements General Council Vice-President Gerald Cunningham and Treasurer Denise White, Elder Minnie Belcourt (RVI), Elder Lloyd Norris (RV), Elder Marge Friedel (RIV), Elder Rene Boucher (RI) and Elder Cora Fedyk,



MNA President Audrey Poitras with 2004 Delia Gray Scholarship winners Pearl Vandale and Roxanne McKenzie-McLean.

Deputy Minister of Aboriginal Affairs Patty Meade and Aboriginal Affairs Phillip Lamouche.

MNA President Audrey Poitras opened the formal section of the program by giving praise to Mrs. Deila Gray's contributions to the Métis Nation of Alberta and remarked on how important it is to remember her and what she stood for. Mrs. Gray used to say, "We need to help our youth...recognize our Elders...recognize our people before it's too late," said President Poitras.

The Gray family presented scholarships to Pearl Vandale and Roxanne McKenzie-McLean based on their achievements and guidelines of the awards.

Pearl Vandale, originally from northern Saskatchewan, is currently

in her second year of the Nursing program at the University of Calgary. She hopes to be accepted into the Accelerated Nursing Degree Program for September 2005. Pearl strives to make positive contributions to the aboriginal community and recognizes the need for aboriginal health care practitioners. Before studying at the U of C, Pearl was a Registered Massage Therapist.

Roxanne McKenzie-McLean, a member of the Fishing Lake Métis Settlement, wife and mother of two, is in her second year of the Rehabilitation Service Program at Red Deer College. She has contributed extensive time with the Head Start Program and the Youth and Family Development Center. She



Delia Gray



A group portrait of the extended Gray family, President Poitras and the recipients of the Delia Gray Scholarships.

said, "I enjoy seeing life in the eyes of those who most would not even give a second glance."

Region II Vice President Homer Poitras and Sue Dahlseide presented the Métis Matriarch Award to Eva Annie Dahlseide. Mrs. Dahlseide is the proud mother of five children, who in addition has fostered or provided room and board to over 50 children in the Cold Lake area. She continues to provide love and support for her family and is ready to share her wisdom and council to those who seek it. She is the Métis Elder to the Second Hand Smoke initiative that encourages youth to quit smoking and lead healthier lives, a crusade born out of her survival from tuberculosis and cancer. Many topics and issues discussed at her kitchen table have made it to numerous con-

ference tables, demonstrating that peoples concerns and solutions can be heard.

"She is an unsung hero," said Poitras while giving Mrs. Dahlseide her award, which was a handmade quilt.

The evening wrapped up with dance and music by the Muskeg River Band.

The Master of Ceremonies for the evening was Irene Collins, the MNA's Director of the Tripartite Action Centre.

Tracee McFeeters, the Executive Administrative Assistant, put a great deal of energy into organizing this years Gala, taking care of everything from the selection of the menu, to the door prizes, to the soliciting of sponsors. Well done, Tracee!! ♦



(l-r) Violet Pasula, Patricia Terrett, Marie Rawling, Sharon Pasula and Raymond Bellrose.



Region V Vice President Peter Campion and his wife were among the guests at the Delia Gray Gala 2004.



Tracee McFeeters is presented with roses for her hard work of organizing the gala.



2004 Métis Matriarch Award winner Eva Dahlseide with her daughter, Sue.

"The Little Wheelers" Métis Dance Troupe

By Naomi Gordon

Students from Prince Charles Elementary School in Edmonton were entertained by the Prince Charles Métis Dance Troupe, *The Little Wheelers*, as part of the celebrations during Métis Week 2004.

Tiny little bodies packed into the schools gymnasium to be entertained with a smorgasbord of Métis culture. They listened to a brief presentation about Métis history and learned about the Métis flag and what it represented and about the meaning of the colours within the sash, the Red River Carts, and Louis Riel. Next came a fashion show of traditional Métis attire, which brought cheers from the audience. Then, as the lights flickered and the music began, the Little Wheelers trotted onto the floor and performed a number of dances. Two in particular brought the audience of smiling faces to their feet: the Red River Jig and the Broom dance.

Mrs. Chapman, an instructor of Cree and Native Studies at

Prince Charles School says, this is the first time for such a big show [at the school] although Métis Week is regularly observed. "Over half of the children here are Métis...the culture needs to be recognized, we need to have a foundation and knowledge of the past."

In addition to the events held in the gymnasium, a display case with Métis artifacts was showcased all week as well as the viewing of historical videos.



The advanced division of the Little Wheelers perform for the audience.

The Little Wheelers consist of three divisions of dance skill: novice, intermediate and advanced. The latter group also performed at numerous events throughout Métis Week. Rita Norris, a Métis Elder who is no longer with us, started the group over 10 years ago. The current instructor is a former student of Prince Charles and Norris' classes, Marsha Buckle. The Little Wheelers perform at numerous Métis events and can be booked through the counselling and support office at Prince Charles School. ♦

Lena McInroy from Prince Charles School



Amanda L'Hirondelle and Rebecca Robinson model traditional Métis clothing as part of the fashion show.

Photos by: Naomi Gordon



Métis Week 2004: Region III Celebrations

By Marlene Lanz

Métis Week in Region III was very active with a full slate of events in Calgary and other communities in the region.

Calgary began the week with a Flag Raising Ceremony at City Hall on November 15. Flag raisers included Métis senior, Clarence Laplant and Tiffany Donnelly, a member of the Youth Mentoring Group. The flag was hoisted to the tune of the Métis National Anthem, led by Métis singer/songwriter Dorothy Walker. Other festivities included speeches by Mayor, Dave Bronconnier, and Region III President Ephram Bouvier. Entertainment was provided by Dean Malcolm, the Medicine Wheel Dancers and Calgary's Métis Youth Cultural Dancers.

Other Métis week events included an open house at the Region III office, which was catered by Lorelei Chernow. Other open houses were held at the Métis Employment Service Centre and at the Native Network. Apeetogosan Métis Development Inc. hosted a Métis Business and Professional mixer at the Coast Plaza Hotel on November 18, which was followed the next day by the Fifth Annual Seniors Supper held at the Executive Royal Inn. The guest speaker was MNC President Clement Chartier who spoke of the progress made since the historic *Powley* Supreme Court decision.

The final day of Métis Week kicked off on November 20th at the Crossroads Community Centre with Family Fun Day. Activities included laughing, jigging, story telling and moose calling contests for both adults and children. We were again honoured by MNC President Clement Chartier who attended the Fun Day. The evening was capped off with a Métis supper and dance featuring the music of Bearclaw.

www.albertametis.com

Outside of Calgary, Medicine Hat held its first ever Flag Raising Ceremony conducted by Mayor Garth Vallely, Region III President, Ephram Bouvier and Local 8 President Jeannette Hansen. Opening prayers were conducted by Elder Shirley MacDonald.

Lethbridge also held its third official Flag Raising Ceremony, which was conducted by Mayor, Bob Tarleck; myself (Region III Vice-President, Marlene Lanz); Local 2003 President, Alice Bisonnette; Elder, Sophie Hiebert and MNA Vice-President, Trevor Glaude. After the ceremony refreshments were held at the local office which was followed by lunch at the Lethbridge Community College to honour the students of the Métis Youth Pre-Trades Program. An open house was also held at the Métis Employment Services Centre.

Red Deer held an open house at the Aboriginal Employment Services Centre on November 19.

The number of Métis Week Celebrations in Region II has increased since the beginning; now we hold a range of events to celebrate Métis Culture and heritage. Ephram, myself and the entire Regional Council look forward to the continuing growth of Métis Week in Region III. ♦

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Métis Nation Represented at Prime Minister's Dinner for United States President

By Patricia Russell

Métis National Council Vice President Audrey Poitras attended a special dinner hosted by Prime Minister Paul Martin honouring the President of the United States, George W. Bush.

The invitation from the Prime Minister's Office to the Métis National Council was one of only 700 invitations extended to notable and influential Canadians. MNC Vice President Poitras attended the dinner as the official national representative of rights-bearing Métis from across the Homeland. Other guests included the provincial Premiers, federal Cabinet Ministers, MPs, former Liberal Prime Ministers John Turner and Jean Chrétien, and Canadian and US Ambassadors.

Vice President Poitras was one of the three national Aboriginal leaders at the state dinner. "Receiving an invitation from the Prime Minister's Office to attend a high-level function with visiting dignitaries sends the Métis Nation a very positive message about where we stand with the Prime Minister. And it certainly raises the profile of the Métis Nation," says Poitras.

The state dinner was held in the Grand Hall of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, across the Ottawa River from Gatineau, Quebec. During his toast to the President, Prime Minister Martin described the significance of the setting, "A look around will give you a glimpse into our earliest history. Right behind me, totem poles of the Aboriginal cultures of the Pacific Northwest. Upstairs, a journey through our social history from the first Viking settlements on the Newfoundland coast."

Poitras says, "We're very pleased that the Prime Ministers Office is including the Métis Nation in Canada's agenda at national and international levels. Since the Supreme Court ruled in *Powley* decision last year, Canada has been very supportive of the Métis people. We certainly see this as another opportunity to keep the profile of the Métis Nation in the national spotlight and it reinforces the message that the Métis National Council is the national organization that represents the Métis."

This was the first official visit to Canada by George W. Bush since his re-election as President of the United States. ♦



Photo by: Dave Chan - PMO.

November 30, 2004: Prime Minister Paul Martin and Mrs. Sheila Martin attend a state dinner with United States President George W. Bush and Mrs. Laura Bush at the Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, Quebec.

Métis National Council Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week

Métis Nation Calls on Federal Government to Take on the AIDS/HIV Crisis in Aboriginal Communities

(December 1, 2004) - Ottawa, ON - Today, the Métis National Council joined with Inuit and First Nations leaders to bring attention to the growing AIDS/HIV epidemic in Canada's Aboriginal population. As part of activities to launch Canadian Aboriginal Awareness Week, the Métis National Council participated in a press conference coordinated by the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network.

"The message that we are trying to get out is targeted to our own people on one level and to the federal government on another," said Métis Nation Vice President Audrey Poitras. "We know that information is the most valuable weapon in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS. Our people need to know that this disease is aggressively attacking our communities and we need to protect our selves and inform ourselves."

Statistics show that Aboriginal people face the greatest threat from HIV/AIDS. Aboriginal women make up 45% of Aboriginal HIV infections compared to 20% for non-Aboriginal HIV infections. It is estimated that more than one Aboriginal person is infected with the AIDS virus everyday. The Métis National Council is calling on the federal government to join in this fight and begin to provide the necessary Métis specific funding, programming and services.

"Within the Métis Nation, all our work in the health field has proven time and time again that Métis specific



Photo by: Miles Morrisseau, MNC

On December 1, 2004, Métis Nation Vice President Audrey Poitras attended World AIDS Day activities and the launch of Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week. (Left to Right) Métis Elder Lois McCallum; Kevin Barlow, Executive Director, Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network; MNC Health Coordinator, Duane Morrisseau; Métis Nation Vice-President Audrey Poitras; Pauktuutit Inuit Womens Association President Mary Palliser.

programs and services work best for Métis people. It works because our people have distinct needs that reflect our distinct cultural reality. It works because our governance structures are connected to our communities and our people look to us for support. It fails when we do not have the resources and capacity to meet the urgent needs of our people," said Vice-President Poitras.

One of the concerns within the Métis Nation is the lack of Métis specific research and information. "We know overall that HIV/AIDS is spreading quickly through the Aboriginal population. Based on the rates of other infectious diseases and health indicators it is clear that Métis people are facing similar rates of HIV infection; but we don't know if those numbers are even higher for our people. We don't know how the numbers break down in terms of gender, age, residency and other factors that needs to be known in order to combat this disease," said Vice President Poitras. ♦

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

Métis National Council Retreat with Federal Minister Andy Scott

By Patricia Russell

For one entire business day, the leadership of the Métis National Council held the full and undivided attention of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, the Honourable Andy Scott, who is also the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). The daylong Winnipeg retreat focussed specifically on Métis issues.

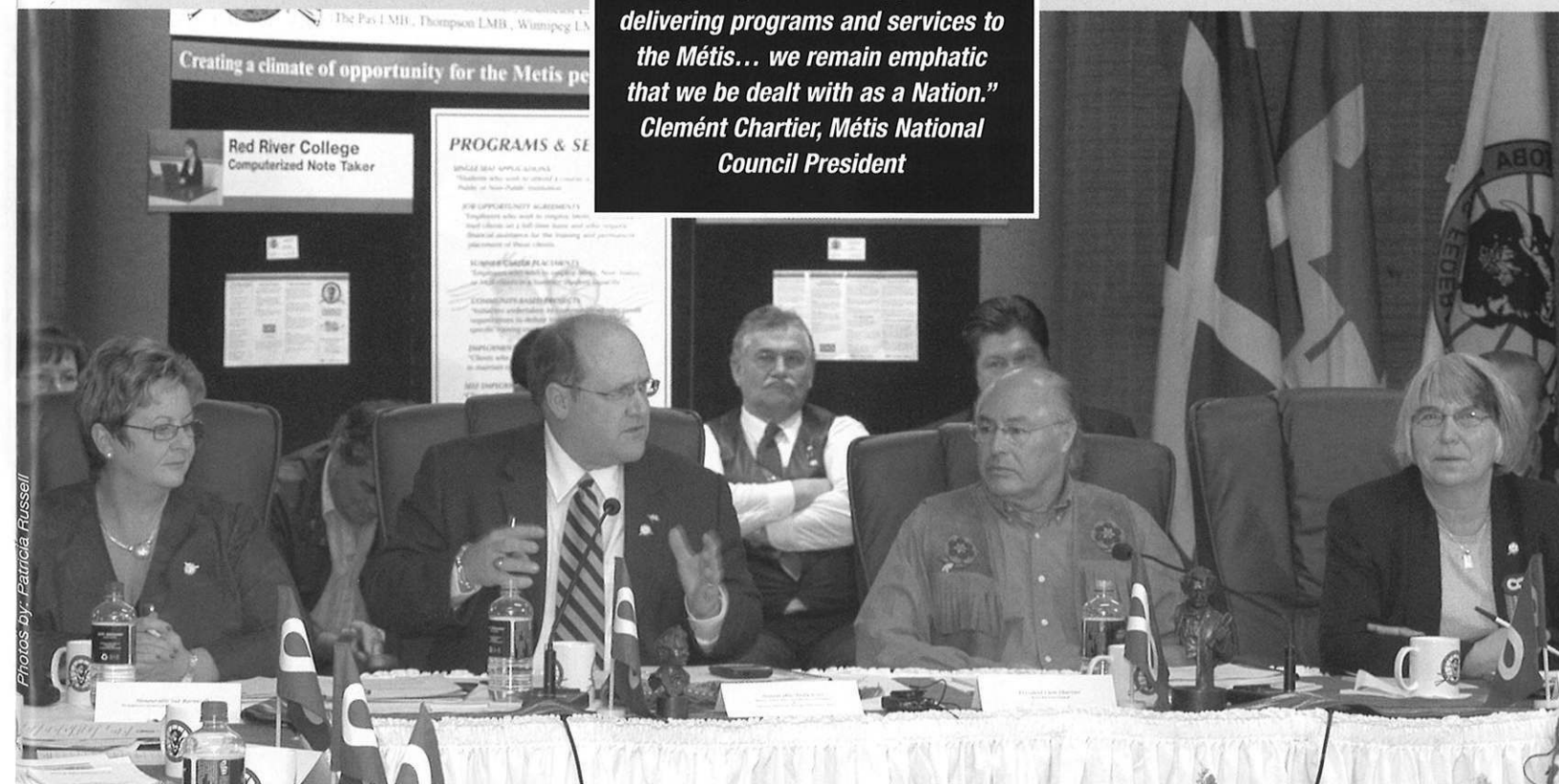
The Parliamentary Secretary to the Office of the Federal Interlocutor, Sue Barnes, INAC Deputy Minister Michael Horrigan, and several other upper-level players on the federal government's team of Aboriginal affairs specialists accompanied Minister Scott to the retreat. The Minister began by reaffirming a commitment made by the Prime Minister at the

Canada Aboriginal People's Roundtable in April saying, "This government is committed to closing the gap between Aboriginal Canadians and the mainstream population."

The tightly planned agenda covered issues ranging from the implications of the *Powley* decision on Métis harvesting rights, to the inefficiencies of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy.

Métis National Council President Clément Chartier began with an historical and political overview of the Métis in a statement that underlined the importance of recognizing the unique qualities of the Métis culture as being separate and distinct from other Aboriginal peoples. Chartier remarked ardently, "Never again are

"The Métis National Council is vehemently opposed to the pan-Aboriginal government approach to delivering programs and services to the Métis... we remain emphatic that we be dealt with as a Nation."
Clément Chartier, Métis National Council President



(l-r) The Honourable Sue Barnes, the Honourable Andy Scott, MNC President Clément Chartier, MNC Vice President Audrey Poitras



MNC General Counsel Jason Madden

we going to put ourselves in a position where we can get lost in the larger Aboriginal population. The Métis National Council is vehemently opposed to the pan-Aboriginal government approach to delivering programs and services to the Métis... we remain emphatic that we be dealt with as a Nation."

Jason Madden, General Counsel for MNC, presented the Minister with an overview of the Métis National Councils current litigation strategy, which included an historical review of events leading up to the *Powley* decision from the Supreme Court of Canada in September 2003. "14 levels of court agreed with the Métis... *Powley* means that the longstanding federal legal position vis a vis the Métis has been fundamentally wrong."

The MNC Board of Governors initiated a roundtable discussion with the Minister on Moving Forward with the Government of Canada, by talking about issues specific to each of the provinces. MNC Vice President Audrey Poitras offered the Minister some insight on the history of the Métis Nation of Alberta. "Ours is the oldest Métis organization in the country and when it was formed more than 76 years ago, the Founding Fathers came together to improve the lives of all Métis in the province. So, when the MNC puts forward a proposal to the federal government to build on the nation to nation relationship, we are certainly including all Métis in Alberta," said Poitras.

Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) President David Chartrand spoke in frank terms about the shortcomings of Canada's Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) that acknowledges organisations outside of the Métis Nation that claim to represent the socio-economic issues of rights bearing Métis. "When bureaucrats look at the how to deliver services to Métis people, they end up



The Honourable Andy Scott, Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-status Indians

knocking on other doors instead of ours. I encourage the Minister to send a strong message to your officials to acknowledge that we represent the Métis and it isn't up to the government bureaucrats to decide who represents the Métis."

MMF President Chartrand referred to the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Strategy as an excellent model of successful program delivery through the Métis



The Asham Stompers received a standing ovation for their high-energy display of Métis dance during the lunch break



Front row (l-r): Parliamentary Secretary to the Federal Interlocutors Office Sue Barnes; Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians Andy Scott; MMF Senator Ed Head; MNC President Clément Chartier; MNC Youth Council Chairperson Jennifer Brown. Back row (l-r) Interim President MPCBC Bruce Dumont; MMF President David Chartrand; MN-S President Duane Roth; MNC Vice President Audrey Poitras; Spokesperson Métis Womens Secretariat Rosemarie McPherson

Nation. "When you look at the capacities for service delivery that we have developed within the Métis Nation, I challenge anyone to try to duplicate the capacity we've built with the limited resources we've been given," said Chartrand.

Minister Scott agreed, saying, "I look around and am encouraged by how much you can get done with so little." In response to the inefficiencies of the "one-size-fits-all" approach to the resolution of Aboriginal issues, Scott said, "I'm not buying into this pan-Aboriginal thing at all. I understand the differences and

the different needs among the Aboriginal peoples as well as the need for Métis specific approaches."

"I'm not buying into this pan-Aboriginal thing at all. I understand the differences and the different needs among the Aboriginal peoples as well as the need for Métis specific approaches." Andy Scott, Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians and Minister of Indian Affairs

"Today was an excellent opportunity to gain insight, share ideas, and exchange thoughts. It will ensure strong links and a solid working relationship not only between political representatives, but also with officials throughout our organizations. After these discussions, it is clear that we share a common resolve and we are enter-

ing a "new era" of partnership," said Minister Scott. ♦



The Minister listened to briefings from MPCBC Interim President Bruce Dumont, Métis Women's Secretariat Spokesperson Rosemarie McPherson, and MNC Youth Council Chairperson Jennifer Brown, MMF President David Chartrand, MN-S President Dwayne Roth and MNO President Tony Belcourt



Métis Gatherings

History of Alberta's Hivernant Rendezvous

By Richard Lucier-Larson

In the summer of 1997, a First Nations event called "Gathering in the Valley" was held in Duncan, British Columbia. The Métis of Vancouver Island had been invited to attend and "Show the flag."

Over a breakfast campfire four traditional Métis decided to have a Métis Cultural Festival, the name Red River West was chosen. We proposed to promote Métis history, language, music, dance, food, and culture to educate the public and especially our own people who were losing touch with their Métis culture. This resulted in establishing the not for profit Red River West Cultural Society. We used unpaid volunteers to present positive pictures of the Métis culture.

In Alberta, we used a group of enthusiastic Métis, to form the Hivernant Cultural Society. Hivernant was the old French name given to the Métis hunters who stayed away from the Forts and civilizations during the winter. In our area, there were several large Hivernant Villages such as Tail Creek, Boss Hill, Pigeon Lake, Spotted Lake, and Riviere La Biche.

One of our best educational tools, used by both societies, is the re-creation of an 1860's buffalo hunt camp, which presents life as it was in the era of the Great Prairie buffalo hunts. For photographic opportunities and added visual effects: tent tipis; Red River carts; traders, and camp inhabitants in historic dress are all used. The public and the Métis community have been beneficiaries of this event and have supported it through attendance, purchase of raffle tickets and merchandise, draws, and donations.



Jigging lessons at the Hivernant Rendezvous 2003 in Big Valley, AB

Photo by: Richard Lucier-Larson

One of our first decisions, which worked to our advantage with no negative incidents, was to keep the event drug, alcohol and politics free. Our other decision was to keep this a low cost event available for families of modest means. Everyone of any culture is invited to attend. We have games, skills, contest dancing, music, and displays of Métis culture and history as well as camping at low cost. There is a modest fee for vendors and craftspeople but all crafts are juried, which means Métis or Native American crafts, please. Métis genealogy has always been important to our events and will continue in the future.

The last two Hivernant Rendezvous' have been successful in that we received more than expected. 2004's event was nearly rained out but we salvaged most of the event by moving to a local drop-in centre hall, kindly made available by the Village Seniors group.

2005 will be the seventh annual event for Red River West and the third annual Hivernant Rendezvous, which will be held on July 29, 30, and 31st. We will be busy in the New Year planning the event and welcome new volunteers and be assured I promise each of you double the wages I receive. ♦



Al Larson, Bruce Dumont, Earl Belcourt with Richard Lucier behind the camera, the founding four, who are all prairie-born Métis

Photo by: Richard Lucier-Larson

Progress Report

Métis Crossing

by Juanita Marois



Juanita Marois, Project Manager

There are only nine months left before our Centennial Opening! As I mentioned in the last update, Métis Crossing is being planned in phases. Our first phase, the Centennial Opening, is set to occur in September 2005 – just in time to celebrate the 100th birthday of Alberta. We will be ready to share our Métis story, especially the many contributions that we have made to the development of this great province.

This story will be shared through:

- Restored historic barn with cultural exhibits and visitor services
- Demonstration sites for cultural activities and programming
- Trails with natural and cultural interpretation
- Stage and performance area
- RV/campground
- River dock
- Meeting areas
- Day use areas

To date, we have completed the structural restoration of the barn, workshop and machine shed. The trails are under construction and the stage has been installed. In the spring, construction of the river dock, RV/campground, along with day-use areas and landscaping will continue. If you are interested in donating, volunteering, or working with us on these elements, please contact Juanita at the numbers listed below. Participation of our Métis people, businesses and communities is essential to make this a true Métis place!

Our next phase, the Grand Opening, is planned for 2008. This phase will comprise the core of our development including all programs and elements that are most necessary to make this project a success. Other developments will continue to be added until we complete the overall dream for this project.

Building on the visioning session held in June, our consultation process has taken us to a number of communities. We have attended the AGM's for Regions I and II. Our presentation has met with a great deal of enthusiasm, new ideas, and many offers for involvement. Your ideas and suggestions have been heard and continue to be woven into the planning process for Métis Crossing. Other discussions have included Alberta Learning, Family and Child Services of Alberta, Lakeland College, Métis Heritage Alliance ... and the list continues. If you are interested in having us attend or present in other regions, please call our office at the numbers listed below.

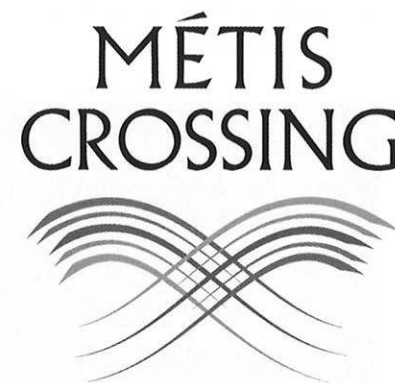
In addition we have developed two exciting new partnerships!

One partner is the Heritage Community Foundation. They are working with us to complete in-depth historical research on which we will build our exhibits and programs. Our second partner, Canadian Executive Services Organization, Aboriginal Division (CESO) is identifying volunteers to assist the project manager in a number of areas. Both organizations are committed to working with the Victoria Landing

Development Board to ensure that Métis Crossing is a success in all areas.

Another major area of activity for us has been fund development. We have met with a number of corporations and are in the process of developing long-term relationships with them. Continue to watch this column to learn more about our corporate partners. We are also in the process of developing exciting ways for Métis individuals, families, organizations and communities to become a part of Métis Crossing! Watch for this to be launched in the spring!

For more information, or to talk about Métis Crossing, please call me, Juanita Marois at (780) 453-0277, 1-800-252-7553, or e-mail me at jmarois@Métis.org. ♦



REGION V

Métis Celebration Schedule of Events

Friday February 11, 2005 beginning at 2:00 pm

Events are as follows:

- **Arts and craft fair**
All Day
- **Genealogy workshop**
2:00 - 4:00 pm
- **Jigging workshop**
2:00 - 4:00 pm
- **Supper (stew and bannock)**
5:00 - 6:00 pm
- **Opening Remarks**
6:15 - 6:30 pm
- **3 Métis Youth Dance Group performances**
6:30 - 7:00 pm
- **Talent show**
7:30 pm till completion

- If you would like to have a table at the craft fair the cost is \$25.00 per table for the day, and you can contact Kyle Brown at the Region V Office to reserve a table at (780) 849-4654.
- The workshops, supper, and entertainment are all free of charge.
- Total Prize PAYOUT of \$2,000.00 to be split among the winners
- For any further information, please contact the Region V Office at (780) 849-4654



Categories and Fees:

Adult (ages 18-55)	\$10.00
Junior (ages 12 & under)	\$5.00
Intermediate (ages 13-17)	\$5.00
Senior (ages 56 & over)	\$5.00

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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

Living Healthy with Diabetes

Apple Brown Betty Cake

1/3 cup melted margarine
2 cups bread crumbs (crust trimmed)
6 cups cooking apples (pared and sliced)
1/3 cup brown sugar twin
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1/2 cup water

Toss breadcrumbs with margarine. Arrange 1/3 of crumbs in a casserole. Cover with half of apple slice and half of combined sugar twin and spices. Cover with another 1/3 of crumbs, rest of apples and rest of sugar mixture. Spoon on combined lemon juice and water. Top with rest of crumbs.

Bake uncovered _ hour at 375. Uncover, bake _ hour longer. Serve with low-calorie dessert topping.

Recipe submitted by Greta Juneau,
Region 6, Fort Vermillion, Alberta

Métis Nation of Alberta Youth Diabetes Conference

FEBRUARY 3-5, 2005
Westwood Inn
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St Margaret's Church Métis Place of Worship

By Patricia Russell

St. Margaret Roman Catholic Church, a one-room place of worship, tucked away at the end of a quiet dirt road might be easily forgotten if not for the Métis families and volunteers who have brought it back to its former state of grace. It sits on the north shore of Hastings Lake, 40 kilometers east of Edmonton and has been a gathering place since 1912. A mass held there to start Métis Week 2004 proves the little church still holds the power to draw a crowd of faithful, 92 years later.

Volunteer renovators breathed new life into the once dilapidated church that sat on the edge of ruin for years like a forgotten friend in desperate need of companionship. Now, it is the sort of building that, if you listen closely, still whispers with echoes of past celebrations. Baptisms, weddings, and funeral masses have united Métis families under its roof.

Oblate priests offered Mass and communion at St. Margaret's until 1952 when the services were moved to St. Jude Church at Ministik. Father Jim Holland, from Edmonton's Sacred Heart Church, delivered the Métis Week Mass. "In the early days, the Oblate Priests would come here from Strathcona by horse and cart. They'd come for a week at a time to deliver services at this church. I think it's only fitting that the Oblates come back to offer service here."

Father Jim reflected on the enduring value of community saying, "This little church, once barely enough left for firewood, has been brought back by a gathering of people. You know, buildings can come and go. What's most important is that people work together. As long as we stick together as a people, we will endure and we will not perish."

Time, the elements, and vandals were not kind to St. Margaret's over the decades that passed after the church went silent back in the 1950's. Decay and wildlife took over the property; a variety of birds settled inside and up



Francis Wiskeyjack, from Saddle Lake, caught in a contemplative moment. Francis was one of the musicians taking part in the Métis Week Mass.

high, a colony of bats hung from the rafters. Outside, the cemetery grew over with weeds, willows, and neglect.

The Friends of Deville/ St. Margaret's Society, registered since 1997, is dedicated to "preserve, protect, and enhance the cultural, spiritual, and community values of this historic site". Volunteer labour and craftsmanship transformed the church, stick by stick, to its present impressive state.

A provincial grant from Alberta paid for new siding on the exterior, donations of services and artifacts have refurbished the interior. The walls shine with a new coat of

paint; all signs of neglect have been meticulously sanded off the original wood floor. Old-fashioned oil lamps swing from the ceiling above wooden pews that even time has not been able to soften into a comfortable seat, the kind that tempts you to steal a quick catnap when you think no one is looking. Even bats are re-located from the up in the rafters to special houses built high in the trees.

Outside in the cemetery, the crosses read like a map in a history book with each marker pointing to the final resting place of Métis settlers and farmers dating as far back as the late 1800's. Weathered and broken crosses have been replaced and positioned accurately using ground penetrating radar. Parking along the cemetery fence is discouraged since the task of identifying the used plots is still underway. This is still an active cemetery with new occupants being laid to rest near their loved ones.

Due to the wealth of Métis history in the Tofield area, the Libby Family donated the land the church sits on to the Métis Nation of Alberta. The area has recently been designated as a Provincial Historic Resource by the Alberta government. At the



Region IV Vice President Cecil Bellrose arrived at the church early to build the fire inside a woodstove that was donated by Gordon Poitras' mother.



Vivian Slugoski describes the careful process underway to identify the graves in the cemetery.



"We are all one people, created by one God and we are all connected." Father Jim Holland, Oblate Priest from Sacred Heart Church in Edmonton.

John Levesque, a nearby resident introduced himself and reached into his memories to share, "I used to come to church here as a young boy. I remember that Father Tom used to have a pet squirrel living in the church. He let the squirrel run around during Mass. I remember that it was more fun to watch the squirrel than to listen to the Mass. But I was just a boy, what did I know." ♦



St. Margaret's Roman Catholic Church



Grave markers have been replaced in the cemetery using a ground penetrating radar to mark the plots.

Birthday Corner

Region III Vice President, Marlene Lanz, was in festive spirit for her big birthday, which fell on the same day as the Region III annual homeless Christmas dinner. Marlene was given a surprise birthday cake which she dished out to all. Happy birthday Marlene!

Is there a special someone in your office, your community, or family celebrating a birthday soon? Send a photo for the next Birthday Corner to the editor of Otipemisiwak. Call 1 800 252 7553 or 780 455 2200.

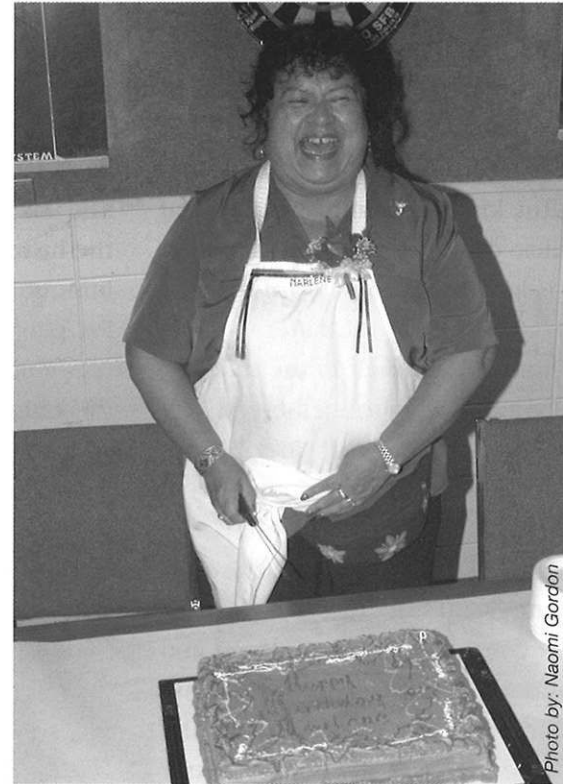
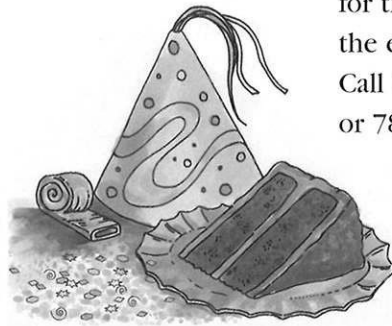
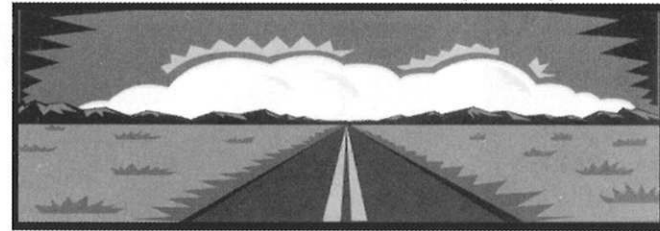


Photo by: Naomi Gordon

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In Search of Bannock

By Terrance Armstrong

It was my mother who brought the recipes into our home when I was a child. My mother is Métis; my father is Irish. She made bannock for us kids – seven of us – almost daily. Fried or baked, it was something we could count on.

I remember running home full speed after school, skidding into the kitchen to leap at the plate I knew would be there. "Hi mom!" came mumbled through a mouth stuffed so full that the words could have been little more than gesture.

It had been more than twenty years since my last bite of my mother's fry bread – long enough that I had begun to associate that memory with a time when I felt sheltered, when my biggest concern was having something warm in my belly. And in the midst of the hustle and bustle of city life, I began to long, and then to plan, for a return to those "good old days," a return to a place in life where the world was a lot less complicated.

The ad in the newspaper warned of no running water, no electricity, a woodstove and an outhouse. A cabin in the woods.

"Rustic," it promised. Perfect, I decided. It was situated up north, 20 kilometres from the small town where I was raised before moving to the city.

Call it an early midlife crisis. I packed up and left the city on a Greyhound with a suitcase of clothes and a box of books. Relaxing in my seat, I watched high-rises become houses, and houses become open landscape, as if I were travelling back in time.

If I'd ever really known what silence was, I'd forgotten. When I stood at the cabin door that first day, silence whispered hello. I heard the sound of the truck that had picked me up at the bus depot slipping away into the distance. My hands grasped the door as I tried not to turn and chase that truck down the road.

The woodstove stood in the centre of the room, a hollow chunk of metal with a pipe reaching out. A sofa and chair sat behind it, sparse and functional. Looking up, I could see the L-shaped loft, a bed, a square wooden table with folding chairs.

bannock

Photo by: Naomi Gordon

And then I felt the cold. Cold has a way of inspiring you, spurring you on. I searched for an axe and found one. I hadn't held an axe in 20 years, and a flush of joy took over as I swung down on the block. I'd like to report that the wood split on the first swing, but it didn't. When it did, though, it was a good feeling. I could do this.

Hours later, with the day's sun long gone, I chose brown beans as meal one. I warmed the opened can on the stove and, at the first sight of rising steam, grabbed it with a gloved hand. I ate the beans with a tablespoon, under the blankets. Sleep came moments after I clanked the empty can down on the floor beside me.

The next morning, I was eager to make my first batch of bannock. I mixed it from memory, the way I thought my mother did, and fried it in a cast iron pan. I watched it turn black and hard. I poked at it, dejected, but not completely discouraged. I was there for the winter, so I felt I had time to learn.

My cabin was in a ravine along a river's edge. I got my water there, chopping through gossamer ice in winter. The sound echoed up to the hills and back again. On a good day, I could see fish swimming inches below my feet through the hole in the ice. I'd breathe out and watch my breath form drifting clouds. Sometimes I would turn around in a circle, arms outspread.

I'd haul buckets of ice-cold water, daily, from the river to my cabin. I'd chop the wood I needed for the day and then build my fire. All of which I did dutifully, but after a month in the cabin, my bannock still didn't taste all that good.

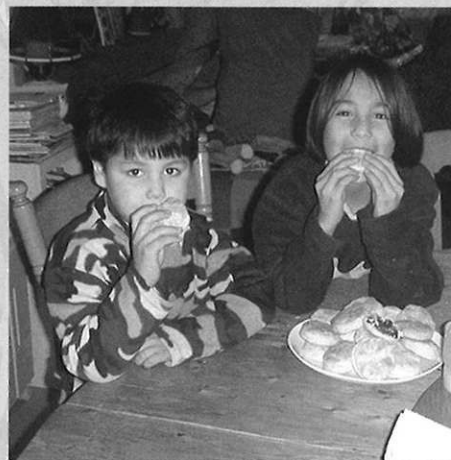


Photo submitted by: Terrance Armstrong

My nearest neighbour lived four kilometres away, an elderly Métis woman named Alice Gauthier. I decided to pay a visit, hoping to get some cooking tips. "You want bannock recipes?" Alice asked laughing, as I made my request at her doorstep.

The first good batch I made with Alice's help — the first warm bite — was like finding a childhood teddy bear, once squeezed tight at night, packed away in a box in the attic.

After that, she would come to visit me, to see how my bannock was coming along. About halfway through the winter, I began to think of myself as somewhat of an expert at the art of making fry bread.

I was starting to finally settle in to my new life when I shared my happy bannock memories with Alice. When she shared hers with me, the little piece of fry-bread I held in my hand began to take on new meaning.

"I think I was about six years old," she began in her strong northern Cree accent. "I have to make bannock, because I don't have nobody, just Dad, see. Just my dad and me. I was the one cooking," she

I thought I was seeking the security and simplicity of childhood. What I found was a more authentic snapshot of memories that had been edited by innocence — that, and the manna of my youth.



Photo submitted by: Terrance Armstrong

said. "I just barely remember. I got to make bannock. I got to do this."

In answer to my bannock questions, she spoke of poverty. Back as far as her grandmother's days, she remembers the need for bannock.

"We were always living in the bush," she told me, "that's all you eat: bannock. Always bannock. If you have no meat, you got to have straight bannock. You got to eat 'cause you have no choice," she said. "Because years ago, they working hard, the people, making surviving. When I was a kid, we have to eat squirrels. We were starvies, see, squirrel and bannock. You got to do everything when you run out something."

And finally, with her hand on my knee, she gave me this advice: "You got to really put together in

your mind what you want to remember things, long back."

My return to the area where I grew up, my return to bannock, was like digging through old boxes, looking for some artifact that might reconnect me with the world as I once perceived it to be. I had found a mind-eye picture of that world; an old black and white photograph of a child engrossed in the simple pleasure of buttered bannock. Everything behind this image is plunged into darkness by the camera's powerful flash. Bannock became the symbol — the talisman, so to speak — of what was missing in my life.

But after my visits with Alice, that picture of the blissful child eating his warm bannock came into clear focus. Suddenly I could see what lingered in the darkened background and I could see my mother there.

My mom had had all seven children by the time she was 24. We would share the adventures of our day while reaching for another slice of bannock from the overfilled plate at the centre of the table. I could see her face, smiling, wiping her hands on her apron, serenaded by the laughter that can only come from children with warmed bellies.

When you're a kid, you sometimes overhear your parents talking. Maybe they're whispering. You don't really connect the dots, but all these years later, I could see that young woman — my mother — pinching pennies. I could hear the long-forgotten, strained, whispered conversa-

tions with my father, with words like "making ends meet" and "I don't know how we're going to make it this month." The words reached me, as if translated. We were eating bannock to make ends meet.

I stomped around the cabin for a week, feeling foolish at my romanticizing of the past, at the hunger for bannock. After a few weeks of boycott, I started making bannock again; partly because it was so darned cheap to make, but mainly because I began to accept a basic truth: over the years, bannock has kept a lot of people alive. It might sound strange, but I began to feel pride in that little slab of dough. In its simple ingredients, I'd found the resilience of my family, of my past and of my ancestry; a true talisman, not only for my family, but of a tribe.

In the spring, I returned to the city, ready to move forward with my life again, instead of backward.

Recently I visited my sister. Her two boys — good boys, good taste buds — love when I make my bannock, especially the five-year-old, Dillon. When he came home from school he yelled, "Uncle Terrance, Uncle Terrance, you're here!" while his eyes scanned the countertops for the bannock stash. He likes his with a layer of peanut butter. My sister likes hers, as I do, with raspberry jam. Ten-year-old Craig takes his with both jam and peanut butter. I like the way they smile at me with their mouths stuffed full.

The boys asked me to teach them how to make it. And I did just that. I spent hours with them, allowing them to perfect the dough, using a combination of the

recipe Alice gave me, and the one I remembered from my childhood. I told them everything I knew about bannock.

"This isn't just fry-bread," I said. "We're making history." ♦

My Bannock:

2 cups flour
2 tablespoons baking powder
2 pinches of salt
2 tablespoons sugar
water
Mix with room-temperature water until mixture is dough. Form into hand-sized patties. Fry in oil, or bake in the oven. Note: Alice said, "If you are a rich Indian, you can also add raisins."

In answer to my bannock questions, she spoke of poverty. Back as far as her grandmother's days, she remembers the need for bannock.

The Unseen Ingredients of Bannock

By Naomi Gordon

Mix one part culinary magic with two parts of history and the outcome will be a delicious blend of cultural learning for students from the Asokan Project.

As part of Asokan's program, students are required to participate in cultural based courses, one being a bannock-making workshop. The instructor for this particular course is Region IV Elder, Marge Friedel.

Being no stranger to bannock or to Métis history, Mrs. Friedel, elbow deep in flour mixture, spins tales from her childhood and woven with the secrets to making flaky bannock to the students.

Her demeanour is playful, off setting the students concentrated faces. However, in minutes, with flour coating the air, the students settle comfortably to listen to memories and ways of the past.

She begins by pointing out that bannock is in fact not a traditional staple of the Métis diet because flour was not native to Canada, further adding that bannock is actually a Scottish word. On that note, she disappears and returns with a tray of golden, melt in your mouth bannock.

Like the mixture rolling in her hands, memories tumble out amidst the list of ingredients that students scribble feverishly on their notepads



Mrs. Friedel shows her bannock making techniques.

while listening to her recount life in her early days.

Born at Lac St. Anne and baptized when she was only two days old at the pilgrimage, Mrs. Friedel conjures up images of old, wood burning stoves, creaking floorboards, kerosene lamps, bitter cold nights, and always the smell of floury bannock. Like many families, hers too, was without money and at times short on food. "You have no idea what it was like," says Mrs. Friedel. Yet, a product of hardship she says is unlimited creativity, especially when food is involved. For instance bannock, "It is very versa-

tile, you can do so many things with it."

Although Mrs. Friedel has done her share of bannock making as a child, she says she was too intimidated by her grandmother's skill in the kitchen to make bannock herself. It wasn't until she was 13 that she started to make bannock. "She [grandmother] made the best, now I believe my grandmothers spirit goes into my bannock...cooking is a part of me."

The students who mill around the table smearing jam over the flaky rolls are enrolled in the Asokan Project, a nine-month program in



Elder, Marge Friedel and Asokan Project students show off their baking.

partnership with NAIT, which offers a Business Administration Accounting Certificate for Métis women. The end goal is to prepare the graduates to meet the challenges of the workload in an administrative

and accounting based environment. "Essentially, the Business Administration/Accounting Certificate Program comprises the majority of first year courses from NAIT's two year School of Business

diploma program. Added to this are various personal and cultural courses and seminars plus a six week work practicum."

Asokan Project Coordinator, Tracy Friedel says, along side the academic focus, part of the programs mandate is to assist individuals in developing their confidence and knowledge of who they are. "A number of students come to the program without knowledge of their history or their culture," says Friedel who adds that many students walk away with a deeper knowledge.

Other cultural components include a history course, cultural training, field trips, Aboriginal crafts and presentations to the students from numerous Métis organizations.

Zone IV Community Development manager, Melanie Omenihio says, "It is a great opportunity that has changed the life of many...The cultural component gives exposure and helps introduce various elements of Métis culture to them."

A recent graduate, Crystal Davidson believes the program helps build confidence both professionally and culturally. She also commends the program for continuing to evolve its cultural program, as she has already noted differences since her graduation last year. "I was already proud [to be Métis] and the course only made it stronger."

As the students pack their things and prepare to leave, it's clear they have learnt more than just measured ingredients. ♦

Community Discussions on the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement

By Patricia Russell

A team of Métis leaders and multilateral technicians are visiting regional communities holding open forum discussions about the contents and application of the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement. The discussions are a means of gathering information from Métis harvesters and may form the basis of ongoing negotiations toward a final harvesting agreement with Alberta. A questionnaire is being distributed to Métis members to better determine who is harvesting, where they're harvesting and what they're harvesting for. At the same time, the MNA is distributing the 2004 Fall Harvesters Guide, a pocket-sized publication describing the state of harvesting negotiations in other provincial jurisdictions. To date, the MNA is the only governing member of the Métis National Council to have a signed harvesting agreement with a provincial government.

So far, consultations have taken place in Fort McMurray, Bonnyville, Medicine Hat, Calgary, Edmonton, and Edson. More community visits are planned for January and February and will cover all six regions in the province. The meetings are popular among Métis interested in clarifying their understanding of how the harvesting agreement affects their practises.

The most apparent affect of the harvesting agreement is in the fact that Alberta Métis are no longer required to buy hunting licenses, nor are they limited to hunting within government specified seasons. The community discussions generate numerous questions pertaining to who can harvest, where, and for what.

The agreement applies only to members of the Métis Nation of Alberta or persons eligible to be members, not to Métis who, live in other provinces or territories. The

right to harvest is a collective right exercised by the individual and is not transferable to non-Métis spouses, relatives or friends. Métis can go hunting with non-Aboriginal people who may require a hunting license, depending on their intention.

The agreement applies to harvesting lands within the province of Alberta, which includes occupied provincial crown lands, unoccupied crown lands, private property (with the permission of the owner or occupant), and on leased land (with permission from the leaseholder.) Métis are

responsible to ensure the land they are harvesting on falls within these categories and that they are not harvesting in areas closed for conservation reasons.

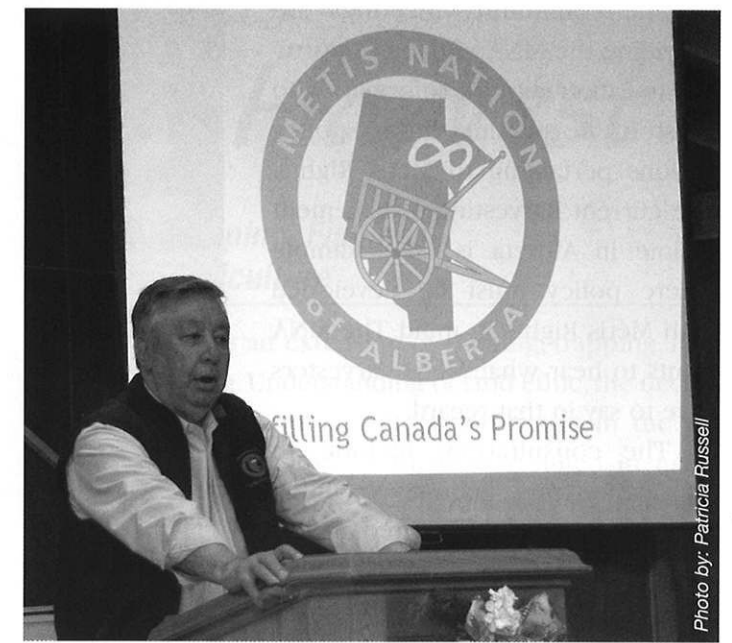


Regional SRD offices will have information about land specifications within each Wildlife Management Unit.

A key principle within the harvesting agreement is that Métis rights are on par with other Aboriginal peoples, no more and no less. Aboriginal harvesters receive a priority allocation of the harvesting resources. Therefore, applying that principle to the question, "what species can Métis hunt?" part of the answer is in this fact: if First Nations can hunt it, then so can Métis. Protected species are off limits to all Albertans, including Métis. Alberta Métis are not required to enter hunting draws or lotteries. If a species is available for harvest for a limited period to non-Aboriginal hunters, then that species is available year round to Métis harvesters.

Métis are responsible to find out from the Regional Offices of Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) if conservation related restrictions are in effect on certain species. For example, a reasonable restriction may apply to calving seasons. SRD's information centre is available weekdays by telephone at: 1 877 944 0313 (toll free)

A great deal of discussion is generated around the topic of whether or not the harvesting agreement applies to fishing using a rod and reel and whether or not Métis have to purchase a sport fishing license. Métis who are fishing for subsistence are not fishing for sport. If the



MNA Minister of Métis Rights Cecil Bellrose.

intention is to use a rod and reel to catch a fish and eat it, then Métis do not have to buy a sport-fishing license. However, if the intention is to enter a fishing derby, then Métis are required to buy a sport-fishing license and abide by the set guidelines. Métis who are fishing using a net must first get a Domestic Fishing License from SRD at no cost.



Members of Region IV discuss the agreement during a community consultation session at the Region IV office in Edmonton.

The community meetings are providing the MNA with an opportunity to gather valuable information to assist in developing future policy options pertaining to Métis Rights. The current harvesting management regime in Alberta is one example where policy must be developed with Métis Rights in mind. The MNA wants to hear what Métis harvesters have to say in that regard.

The consultations include an information presentation explaining changes that have occurred in the MNA membership registry, in particular the definition of Métis, which was accepted at the Annual General Assembly in 2003 and is in line with the national definition.

A consultation coordinator, has come on board with the MNA to oversee the coordination and facilitation of the process. Métis who are driving some distance to attend the nearest community consultation session will receive a small payment to help cover the cost of gas and lunch is on the Métis Nation of Alberta.

Please contact your Regional Office of the MNA for dates and locations of the meeting nearest you or call 1-800-252-7553. ♦

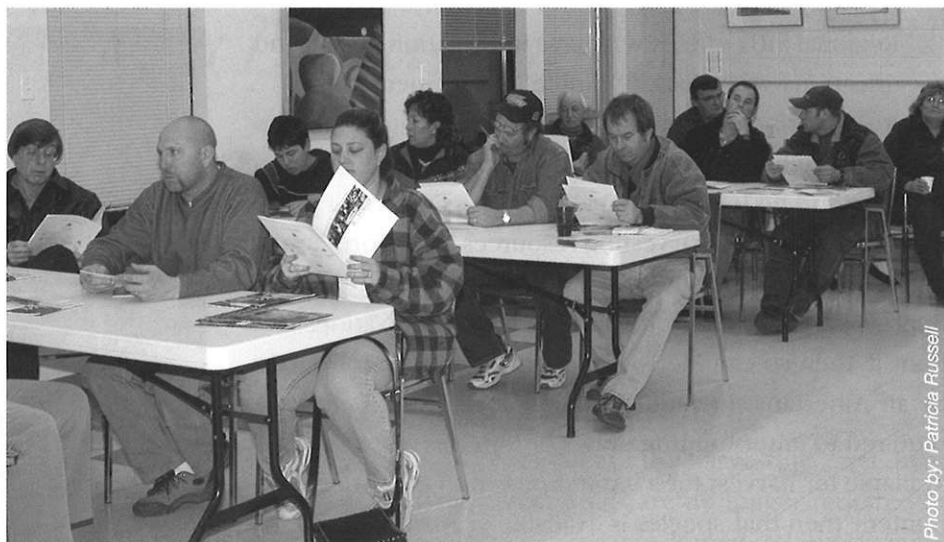


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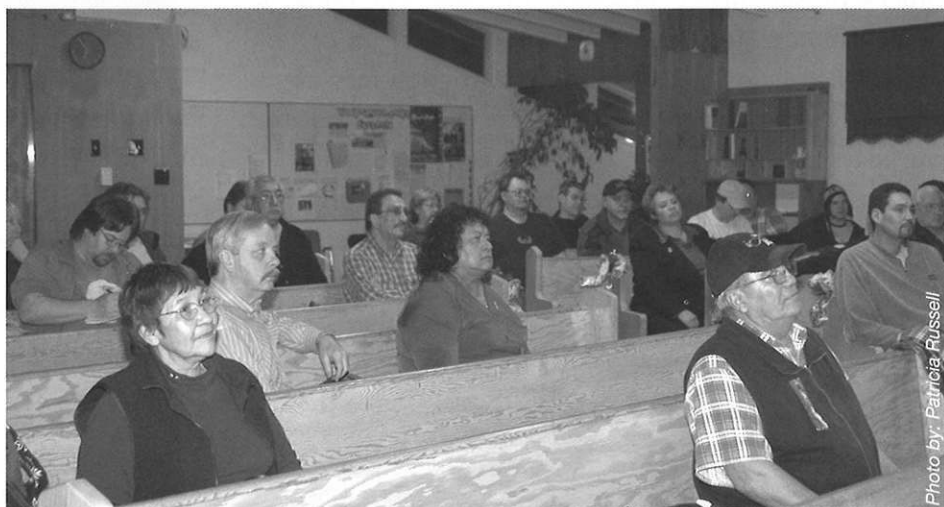
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Métis attending the community consultation session, such as this one in Medicine Hat, receive a selection of literature explaining the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement.

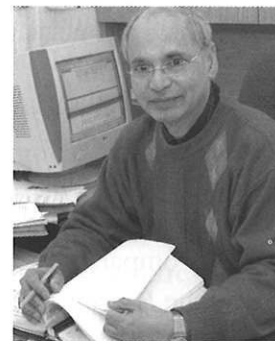


Métis in Region III gathered in Calgary to ask questions about the harvesting agreement.



MNA President Audrey Poitras leads the discussion about the Interim Agreement at a community consultation session in Fort McMurray.

Traditional Métis Agriculture and Harvest



Rafique Islam, Sector Advisor
Agriculture & the Environment

By Rafique M. Islam

According to historians, the Métis emerged in Eastern Canada soon after initial contact between Indians and Europeans. However, it was only on the plains of Canada from Ontario west and including Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, part of the Northwest Territories and British

Columbia that the Métis people evolved into a new and distinct Aboriginal people.

The animosity between the fur traders—the British Hudson Bay Company and Montreal-based North West Company, the rugged topography and harsh climate of Western Canada were hindrances to agricultural settlement and development by immigration to the western plains. The Métis played a pioneering role in the development of Western Canada as a go-between two civilizations in adapting European technology to the wild land and teaching Europeans the local life and trade skills for survival and success. Thus the story of the Métis is the story of today's Western Canada.

Red River Settlement and River Lot Farms

In 1821, the amalgamation of the trading companies closed many fur trade posts and forced their Métis employees and families to move to the Red River Settlement in Manitoba. A large number of Métis, however, moved out of Manitoba to Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. Most of them had settled on long narrow river lot farms without formal legal title. The Métis farmers and ranchers of today have evolved from a people that depended on hunting, trapping fishing and gathering for a self-reliant life style.

Hunting, Trapping, Fishing vis-à-vis Agriculture

Agriculture is an extension of hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering. Understanding of land ethic, the declining trapping and employment opportunities in the fur industry in the Red River Settlement resulted in many Métis pursuing agriculture as a natural way of making a living and becoming self-reliant. The Dispersal of the Red River Valley Métis farmers from the prime farmlands in Manitoba to Batoche, Meadow Lake, Wood Mountain, Cypress Hills, Lac La Biche, St. Albert, Edmonton, Red Deer

River valley, and Peace River regions of Alberta and British Columbia bear testimony to the historic events.



Ewing Commission and Métis Farm Settlements

In 1934, the Province of Alberta appointed the Ewing Commission concerning settlement and betterment of the extremely poor socio-economic conditions of the Métis Albertans. The Commission

concluded that developing some form of 'farm colonies/settlements is the most effective and cheapest method of dealing with the Métis socio-economic problem'. The Commission set five suitability criteria for selecting Métis settlement locations:

- The area should have reasonably good agricultural land for farming;
- The area should be adjacent to lake(s) from which a supply of fish as a staple could be obtained;
- The area should have access to forest for suitable and sufficient timber supply for erection of log buildings for families and livestock;
- The area should have the expansion capability, if required; and,
- The location should be free from interference by white settlers.



Métis Harvest – Ewing Commission Report vs Powley Test

Harvest generally means environmentally sustainable hunting and trapping of wildlife, fishing, gathering of plants, herbs, shrubs and their products for food, feed, fibre, shelter, clothing, medicinal, social or ceremonial purposes to provide sustenance to Métis household or community.

Seventy years ago, the Ewing Commission in their report to the government of Alberta made the following comment concerning the har-

vest of fish and wildlife by the Métis in those 12 historic Métis communities:

'The Commission is of the opinion that as the Métis were the original inhabitants of these great unsettled areas and are dependent on wildlife and fish for their livelihood, they should be given the preference over non-residents in respect of fur, game and fish'.

This comment is comparable to the recent findings in the Powley Test to further the unextinguished aspirations of some of those rescinded and other distinct Métis communities. ♦

Based on the farmland and renewable resources based criteria, the Commission investigated some twelve unincorporated, distinct Métis inhabited communities. These were:

- Marlboro, Touchwood/Siebert, Pigeon Lake, Cold Lake, Wolf Lake, Paddle Prairie/Keg River, Peavine/Big Prairie, Gift Lake/Utikama Lake, East Prairie, Buffalo Lake/Caslan, Kikino/Goodfish Lake/Beaver River, Elizabeth, and Fishing Lake.

Eight of them were finally approved and legislated by the government suitable for the present day Métis Settlements. These are:

- Paddle Prairie, Peavine, Gift Lake, East Prairie, Buffalo Lake, Kikino, Elizabeth, and Fishing Lake.

The rest were cancelled for Métis settlement status by the government of the day as the locations according to them and then did not fit into those criteria to be administratively efficient and economically viable.

Less than 10% of Alberta's Métis populations live in these 8 Settlements. The remaining over 60,000 Métis live off the Settlements.

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Métis Local 1935 – Fort McMurray

Attention Region V Métis Youth

Do you like to sing... watch movies?

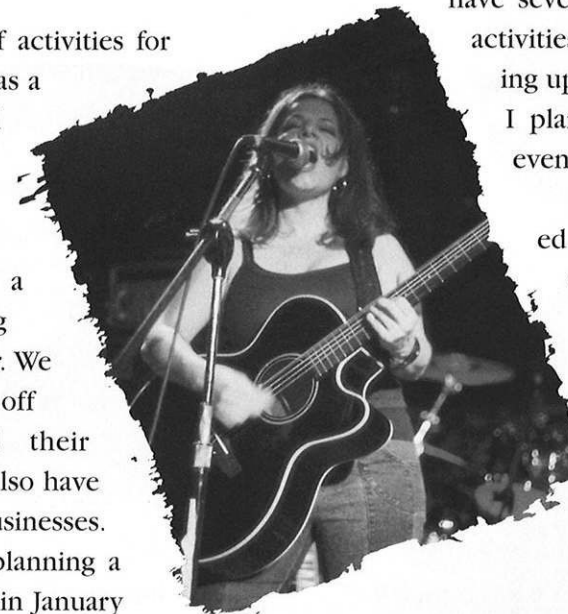
My name is Kyle Brown. I am the new Youth Coordinator for Region V in Slave Lake.

I am planning a number of activities for Métis youth in the region such as a movie night every second Tuesday, starting in December. The night will feature different titles and refreshments will be available. I am also planning a karaoke night on the alternating Tuesdays, starting in December. We hope to get youth out to show off their singing talents, build their courage, and have fun. We will also have door prizes provided by local businesses.

We are in the process of planning a Much Music Video Dance Party in January

for youth in Slave Lake and the surrounding area. We will have several updates on conferences and other activities. Don't forget that Métis Days are coming up on February 11 and 12 in Grouard, AB! I plan on taking a group of youth to the event.

If you have suggestions for youth related activities, give me a call at the Regional Office at (780) 849-4654 or through e-mail at ycoordinator@metis.org. ♦



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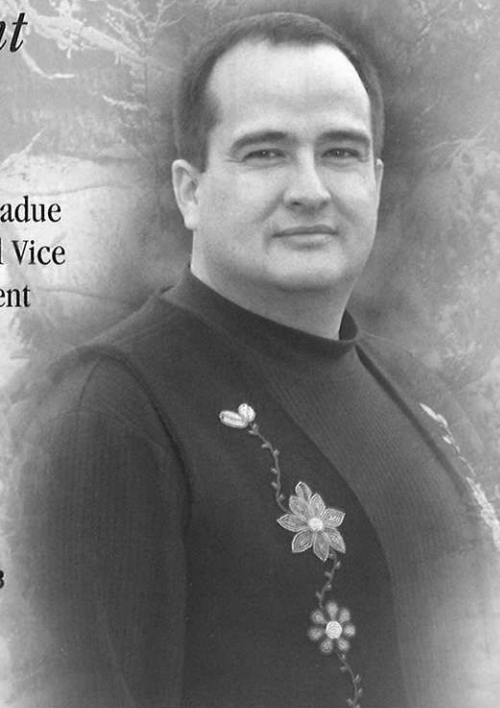
Season's Greetings

from the Provincial Council of the Métis Nation of Alberta



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Provincial
President

Trevor Gladue
Provincial Vice
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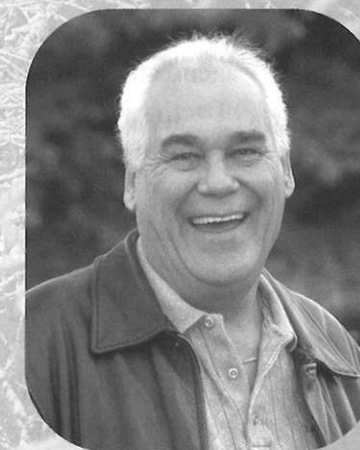
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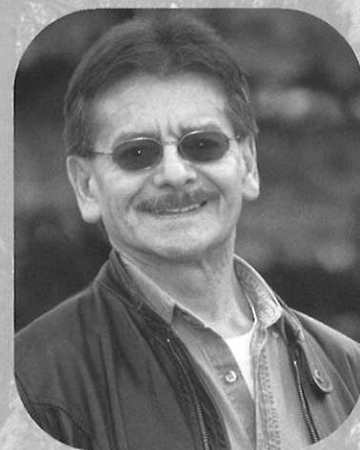
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MNA Region I Annual General Meeting

By Patricia Russell

The leadership of Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Region I chose Conklin, AB as the location to hold the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on November 6, 2004. The president and vice president of the MNA were among the approximately 40 Métis who traveled from Lac La Biche, Fort McMurray, and other regional communities. Five MNA Local presidents were at the meeting: Shirley Tremblay, Glen Tremblay, Jack Quintal, Calvin Kennedy, and Bill Loutit.

Joe Blyne was elected as the chairperson of the AGM following a prayer from Elder Scotty Boucher. No

stranger to the role, Joe kept the meeting moving along at a steady pace and started by introducing the agenda items, which included regional activity reports, and presentations of specific interest to Métis.

Region I President George Quintal reported on the various activities the regional leadership has undertaken in the past year in the areas of economic development, land and environment, and housing. "We've been busy this year dealing with a range of housing issues and concerns particularly from people who need repairs made to their houses which were built a couple of decades ago." Quintal continued, "Our region formed a joint venture in a catering business but we haven't

come into any contracts yet. We'll continue to look for other contract possibilities."

Regional Vice President Rick Boucher announced in his report, "This will be my last Vice President's report in Region I. I will be moving on to other opportunities and will not be running in the MNA election next year. I want to spend more time with my family." Boucher said, "George and I have been taking a different approach in working with Métis communities. We neglected our corporate direction given by our past leaders. We're going to start to work collectively with the Métis Nation's provincial office on a number of issues. For example, membership in



Photo by: Patricia Russell

MNA Minister of Citizenship Bev New explains the importance of genealogy and how it applies to the definition of Métis.

region one has increased by 66 percent. But funding has not increased accordingly. Our goal is to pursue a more equitable arrangement to allow our region the opportunity to hire technical staff in the regions to address the outstanding issues."

To begin to assist with the process, the Provincial Council of the Métis Nation of Alberta recently passed a motion that provides additional resources to the Regional Offices to assist with the increase in membership applications.

In her presentation to the AGM, President Poitras updated the membership on initiatives underway at the provincial and national level of the Métis Nation. Poitras drew attention to the fact that the federal government is demonstrating a previously unheard of level of commitment toward the Métis Nation. The Métis Nation was specifically mentioned in the Speech from the Throne and the Budget Address, two key government statements that excluded the Métis in the past. The President also pointed out that the Métis Nation played an active role in the Canada Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable held in April, a role which is continuing in the



Photo by: Patricia Russell

Genealogist Millie Lansing has an information database that holds more than 20-thousand names.

resulting five sectoral tables set up to examine specific areas that need improvement in the development of Canada's Aboriginal population.

Poitras says, "Issues relevant at the community level fit into these sectoral tables. Your issues are what drive the development of new policy or changes to policy to correct or improve upon the delivery of services. That's how change happens and it starts at the community level."

The Minister of Citizenship Bev New made the five-hour drive from her home in Faust to be available to talk about changes to the MNA Registry through a presentation

designed by the Director of the Tripartite Action Centre, Irene Collins. Both talked about the importance of Alberta Métis ensuring their membership files are up to date and contain all the necessary documentation required to prove an individual fits the nationally and provincially accepted definition of Métis.

The Minister of Métis Rights, Cecil Bellrose, one of the signatories of the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement, was also available to discuss the Agreement and to answer questions Alberta Métis have about the document. ♦



Photo by: Patricia Russell

Deborah Cook, President of Local 1935 Bill Loutit, and Jean Paul Coutu, drove from Fort McMurray to attend the Region I Annual General Meeting.

Region I Vice President Rick Boucher, President George Quintal, and AGM Chairman Joe Blyne

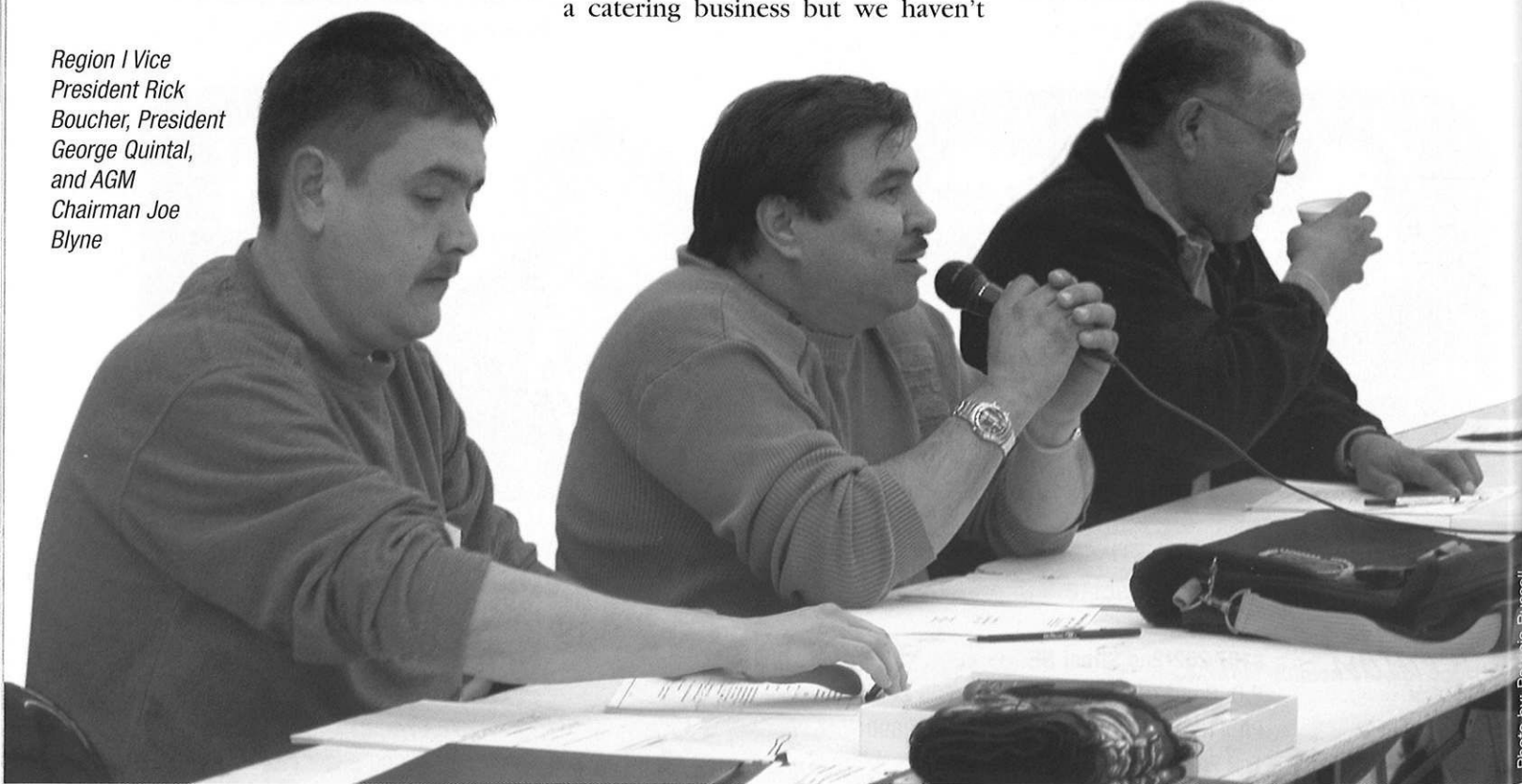


Photo by: Patricia Russell

Region II Annual General Meeting Rebuilding and Moving Forward

By Patricia Russell

Métis in Region II held their Annual General Meeting in Bonnyville on November 27 and, unlike past years, they had no problem reaching a quorum at this AGM. All the available seats were filled inside the meeting room of the Seniors Drop-In Centre where several dozen Métis from Region II gathered to take stock of the year's activities and business.

After welcoming the Elders, provincial leadership, and invited guests, Region II President Karen (KC) Collins, who chaired the meeting along with Regional Vice President Homer Poitras as vice-chair, remarked on the significant progress the regional staff has made in the managing of regional issues since the last reporting period. Referring to the management of financial and organizational issues, which had been outstanding under the former leadership, Regional President Collins reported, "We have made progress in many areas. Over the past while, since our last information meeting, we have cleaned up a few more debts, programs and reporting requirements. Incorporation documentation and reporting is up to date, bingo reports are up to date, the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency arrears are paid in full, the housing program has been cleaned up, the August Collins Building is holding its own, and we have Métis Local 100 in Bonnyville now participating in the Regional Council meetings."



Gloria Swan led the audience through a review of the financial status of the Region.

Métis people in the audience accepted the Regional Presidents report and acknowledged the importance of cleaning up past issues before being able to move forward successfully.

Regional Vice President Homer Poitras' report to the AGM was brief mainly due to his health-related absence from the position since mid-summer after a cancer diagnosis forced him into several rounds of aggressive treat-



A room full of Métis from Region II attended the Annual General Meeting in Bonnyville.



Métis Crossing Board Member Ed Mercier introduced Project Manager Juanita Marois who gave an enthusiastic presentation on the status of the development underway at Métis Crossing.

ments. Regional Vice President Poitras announced, "It's hard to knock a Métis down. I'll be back at work in December so look out for my return."

Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras remarked, "Homer always made a point of stopping by the Provincial Office building when he came to Edmonton for cancer treatment. Even though he was feeling ill from the treatments, he came by to check in and I believe that's a testament to his level of commitment to the Métis Nation."

President Poitras discussed briefly the current provincial initiatives underway, which affect Métis living in all parts of Alberta, such as the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement. A Métis constituent asked if there is a "time frame" associated with the Harvesting Agreement. Poitras answered, "Alberta and the Métis Nation both agreed that all the necessary points are covered in the Interim Agreement ensuring Métis can practice subsistence harvesting with the understanding that there is a need to work toward a final agreement."

Provincial Vice President Trevor Gladue advised Métis hunters who are uncertain about traditional hunting conservation practices to seek the advice of Elders. Collins emphasized the point by adding that Métis must be certain they fall within the laws of the province and the country with respect to weapons registration and licensing and other hunting laws before heading into the bush.

On a financial note, the region will receive funds from the Métis Nation of Alberta's Multilateral Agreement for post-Powley administrative activities and costs realized from the additional membership applications. Regional President Collins remarked on the significant spike in membership applications since the Harvesting Agreement was signed, "New members in the Métis Nation need to understand that membership in the Métis Nation is about more than just carrying a membership card in one hand and a gun in the other. It's important for our new members to come and find out what we're all about, come and take part and know that we're about more than hunting."

Region II President Karen Collins, Vice President Homer Poitras, and Local 100 President Gloria Desjarlais

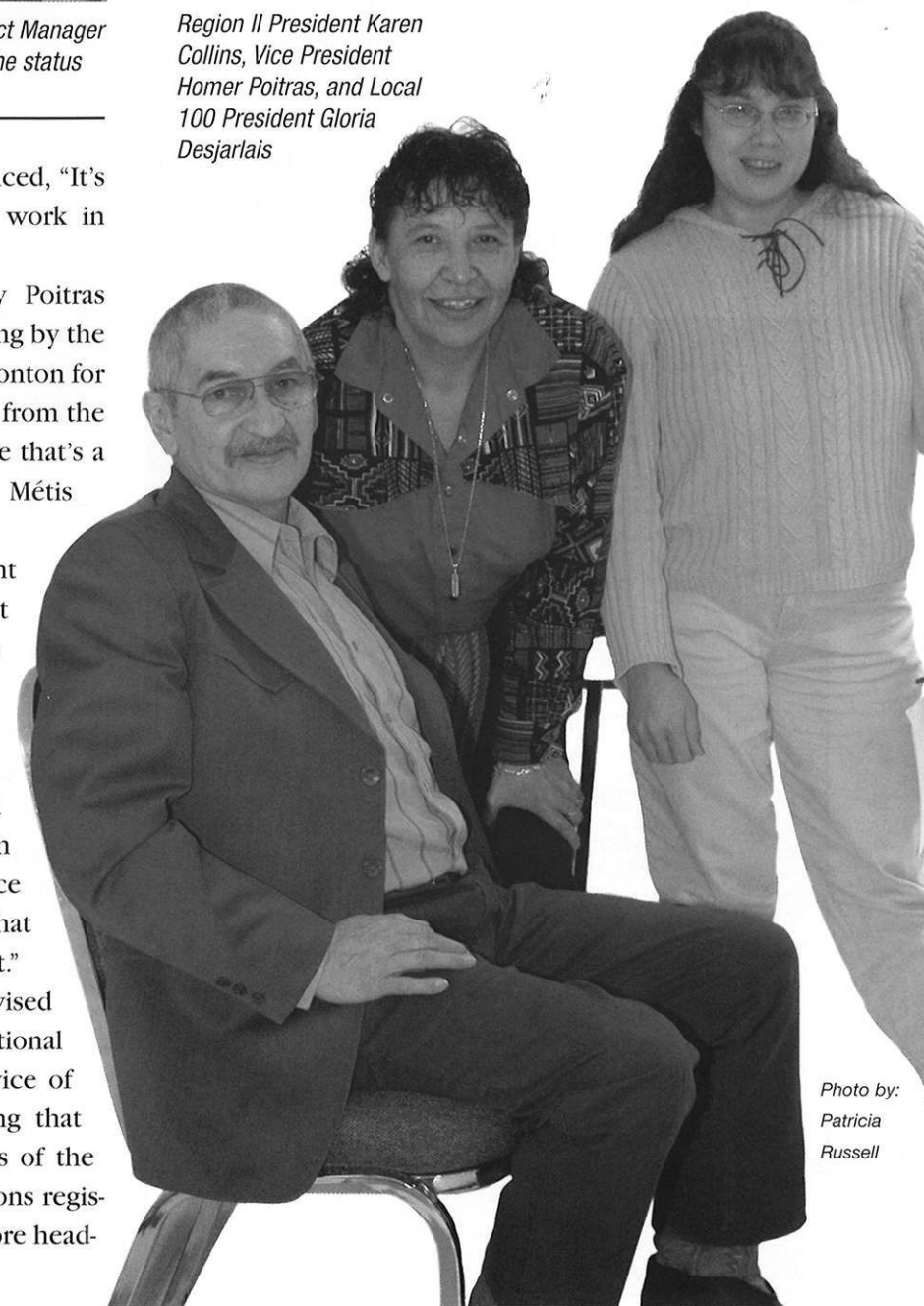


Photo by: Patricia Russell

Gaining that kind of insight into the additional benefits of membership in the Métis Nation of Alberta involves participation in community or Local based activities. The President of the Bonnyville Métis Local 100, Gloria Desjarlais is encouraging members to take an active role in the Local saying, "The Local 100 Council needs direction, vision, and knowledge from the members of Zone II. We need people who can help us get the Local moving and performing again." Desjarlais added, "The Local 100 board has some ideas for activities we'd like to start with such as jamborees, hockey tournaments, and dances just to list a few. For these ideas to be implemented, it's going to take input from the membership."

A number of reports were tabled detailing regional activity in areas such as the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, the Bonnyville Indian/Métis Rehabilitation Centre, the Beaver River Water Basin Report, the Zone II Regional Council Bingo Report, Métis Urban Housing, the Métis Wilderness Camp, the MNA Judiciary Council, and Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc. Copies of the



Cassandra Collins handles all the membership related activity at the Region II Office.

reports are available for public viewing from the Regional Office.

Other invited guests included the MLA for the Bonnyville/Cold Lake constituency, Dennis Ducharme, recently appointed as the Provincial Government Caucus Whip who pointed out, "I'm also on the Agenda and Priorities Committee, another of the governments most powerful committees and that means this constituency will have a strong voice in the provincial government."

The recently elected Reeve of the Bonnyville District #87, Ken Foley, says his personal philosophy when it comes to politics is, "We have to work together to identify our issues and work through them without personality conflicts."

Regional Elder Francis Dumais' opening prayer aptly described the gathering when he asked for a blessing upon all those who came to the AGM with good intentions and added his gratitude for the good weather. ♦

Laura McLaughlin

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FASD Training Video Revealed in the New Year

By Naomi Gordon

The Métis Nation of Alberta's FASD project will be releasing a new FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) training video early in the New Year.

The new video, which is currently untitled, aims at providing accurate and culturally sensitive information about the disorder in the Métis community as a means to increase current knowledge. It also focuses on promoting the prevention of FASD.

Volunteers for the project included staff from the Provincial Office, who had participated in a FASD semi-

nar, instructed by an educator from the Lakeland Centre for FASD.

Many of the 20 plus volunteers were enthusiastic about the seminar and commented on the success and the wealth of information they received. The volunteers also indicated their interest in continuing with FASD related events and seminars.

The FASD video will also be paired with the MNA's video, Faith Like a Child. For more information about the video, please contact Fran at 1-800-252-7553. ♦



MNA Tripartite Policy Advisor Fran Hyndman.



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Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement

COMING SOON!

The Métis Nation of Alberta is producing a documentary about the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement and the impact the Powley decision has had on Alberta Métis. The video will be available in 2005.

Look for updates on the production of the documentary in the next edition of Otipemisiwak and on our official Internet website at:

www.albertametis.com

Documentary
coming in 2005

News From MNA Region V

Tansi and best wishes for the holiday season!

We held our Regional Annual Louis Riel Day Celebration in Region V during Métis Week and it was a wonderful success. All those people who attend were treated to a wonderful meal and great camaraderie. We had Métis members of all ages in attendance and a few tried out their vocal cords singing while others played chords on guitars and fiddles. We would like to thank everyone for coming out to join us in our celebration and we hope you enjoyed yourselves, and will be back next year to join us again. We were even able to share our day with other members of our community by donating the extra food to our local King's Kitchen, which provides meals for the less fortunate in our community. After all, it is only by giving that we can receive life's greatest blessings.

We would like to invite everyone to our upcoming Métis Days Celebration in Grouard. The Celebration is scheduled for the weekend of February 11, 2005 and will be held at the Northern Lakes College. Last year, over 500 people attended celebration and we would love to see the same thing this year, so plan to keep this weekend open and come and join in the learning, sharing and fun.

We had a few staff changes in our Regional Office. Evelyn Drewniak is our new Labour Market Development Manager; Holdi Capelli is the new Employment Counsellor for the Métis Employment Service Centre in Slave Lake; Hilda Lambert is the new Client Services Assistant and Kyle Brown is the Youth Coordinator. We would like to congratulate all of you on your new positions and welcome the opportunity to continue working together for the betterment our Métis people. Please everyone take care and be safe over the holiday season.

From Regional President Bev New and all the Region V Council and Staff



MNA Region V President Bev New

Sunset at Wabasca, AB where the Annual General Assembly was held. Métis in Region V are already planning their spring celebration.



Photo by: Patricia Russell

Métis History in Family Names

Wilbur Shott's family lineage includes the notorious "Captain Shott" who, through legendary feats, actually changed the family name.

In his early days, Captain Shott was known as Louis Fosseneuve and proved himself as a fearless hunter, quickly earning him the nickname "Sure Shot."

He decided to trade hunting for mastering the Athabasca River, utilizing his skills to work as a guide and dog-sledder for the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1867, he was approached by Bishop Faraud to complete the task of transporting five Grey Nuns from Lac La Biche to Fort Provider. During this dangerous task he did the impossible. He shot the Grand Rapids in a partially loaded freight scow - a feat unimagined at that time.

So, from "Sure Shot" the hunter, he became "Captain Shot" the scowman and respected businessman. He proved that fully loaded scows could survive the rapids. ♦

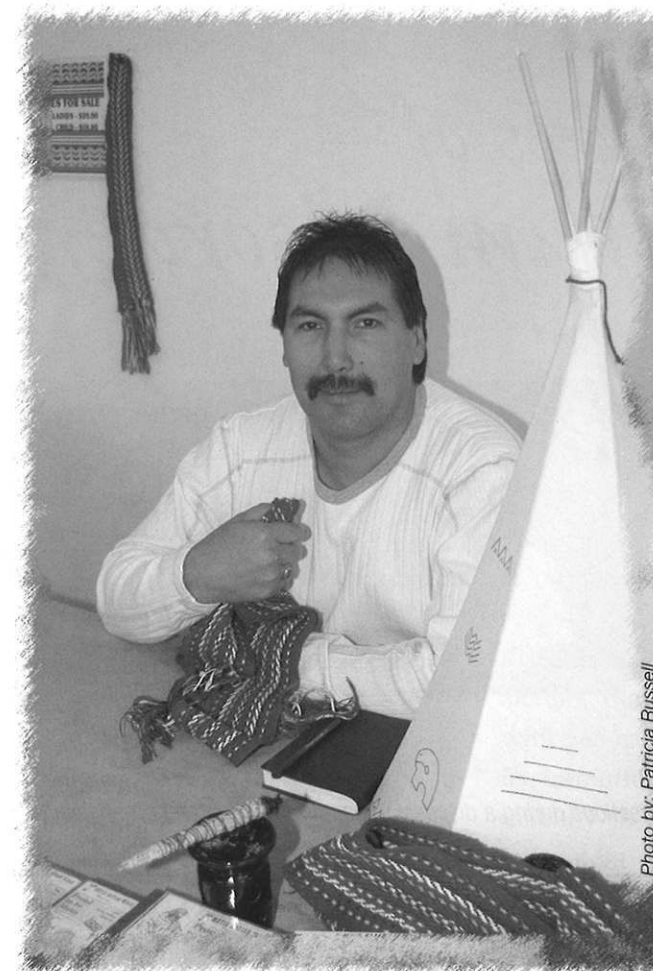


Photo by: Patricia Russell

Wilbur Shott, from Métis Local 1935 in Fort McMurray

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The Many Faces of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

By Naomi Gordon

FASD is a disorder that is plagued with many misconceptions and stigmas, mostly stemming from lack of knowledge about the disorder. Yet, one reality according to Region III Elder, Ed Borchert is that "FASD has no boundaries and travels throughout all colours, effecting not only the poor or impoverished but the rich and famous...it's not only an aboriginal problem...it is universal and 100% preventable."

Region III, Elder Borchert was the lead speaker at the "Sharing of Hope on FASD" conference, hosted by the Métis Nation of Alberta in Region III, Calgary, at the Coast Plaza Inn. The aim was to provide information about FASD from many different perspectives. The most common message by participants and parents of FASD children was that they didn't know that drinking while pregnant would harm the children.

In addition to speakers information sessions the conference also acted as the launch for the "Faith Like a Child," video. The video depicts the Beazley's family journey and how they cope with FASD as both their grandchildren, Shawn and Crystal, were diagnosed with the disorder. It will be used as a learning resource to help other families and individuals who are affected by FASD. "My son has done this video because he feels if one child can be saved it's worth



The Beazley family answer questions during a discussion panel at the launch of a special video on FASD.

the while," says Faye Beazley.

MNA President Audrey Poitras who addressed the conference says it is essential to have information available to make sure people are aware about FASD and that it took great courage for the Beazley family to allow us into their lives. "The future is bright and it begins with families

working together, celebrating success and overcoming challenges."

Speakers for the conference included: Kathleen Muir, social worker with the Calgary's Children's Hospital; Sandra Skare, education manager with Alberta Learning; Shelly Repka, Circle of Friends campaign; Kim Trotchie, coordinator for



MNA President Audrey Poitras presents a gift to the Beazley family on behalf of the entire Métis Nation of Alberta.



Mrs. Faye Beazley shares her emotional experiences with the audience.

Youth Mentoring Program; Iris Watson, Four Directions Foster Parent Association; Shirley Koochicum, Charlotte Cumber, Myles Himmelreich, and the Beazley family.

A common message that ran throughout all their discussions was that alongside creating and sharing educational resources, greater understanding and compassion by communities needs to be employed. Outside of resource tools they all re-emphasized the human factor of FASD, calling attention to the many faces, both the parents and the children, who cope with the disorder.

"My son said to me, when you're FASD it's a challenge...because children can be cruel to each other," said an emotional Mrs. Cumber. A sentiment made vocal by Shawn Beazley in the video who expressed his frustration, isolation and pain he has felt because of cruel words.

Region III President Ephram Bouvier expressed the importance of sharing experiences so that the community as a whole can learn because it is the path to understanding and acceptance. "It is no body's fault."

An issue that was raised by the panel of speakers was the heavy cost of diagnosing FASD. However, plans are in the works for finding funding to aid in subsidizing the costs of diagnostic testing says Trotchie.

According to Health Canada's website "Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) is a medical diagnosis that refers to a specific group of abnormalities associated with the use of alcohol during pregnancy. Children with FAS can suffer from: hyperactivity, attention or memory deficits, inability to manage anger, and poor judgement difficulties with problem solving.

The three essential traits of FAS are re-natal and/or postnatal growth restriction, characteristic facial features and central nervous system involvement (e.g. neurological abnormalities, developmental delays, behavioural dysfunction and learning disabilities).

There is also the category of Fetal alcohol effects (FAE) which is a term used to describe the presence of some, but not all, FAS characteristics when prenatal exposure to alcohol has been confirmed.

Alcohol-related birth defects (ARBD) is a more general term used to refer to physical, developmental and behavioural abnormalities attributed to prenatal exposure to alcohol.

To date medical researchers have not been able to determine a safe alcohol consumption rate for pregnant women and therefore advise women simply not to drink while pregnant."

Families Assisting Successful Development

By Debbie Houle

The Métis Nation of Alberta's Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) initiative staff held a contest at the Annual Assembly in Wabasca in August, to name our FASD initiative. The winners were John Parkins and Phoenix Contois. Because of their submission, the name "Families Assisting Successful Development" was chosen. This name was chosen for its positive spin on the acronym FASD.

Being diagnosed with FASD is not a losing battle. There are resources and supports available in the communities. We can all work together to support families who are affected by this disorder. We would like to thank everyone who submitted an entry to name our project and we encourage the members of our community to assist in the successful development of our children, families, and community. It takes very committed people from the Métis Nation of Alberta, our communities, and our families to spread awareness on how to prevent FASD and support the healthy development of our children so that we can build a strong Métis nation. ♦

If your agency or organization is interested in obtaining a copy of the video "Faith Like a Child" contact Eileen Mustus, Provincial FASD Coordinator, at the Métis Nation of Alberta at 1-800-252-7553. ♦

Métis Week 2004 Young Artist Unveils Artwork

By Naomi Gordon

Catrina Cox, a talented young artist, unveiled her artwork that was featured on a lapel pin for Métis Week 2004 at the MNA's Provincial Office Open House on November 16.

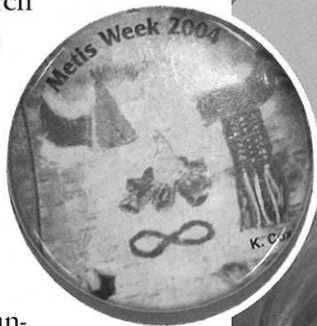
The artwork, originally crafted on birch bark paper, consists of numerous Métis symbols that Catrina says she chose after speaking with many people. "I love drawing animals and scenery...this was cool." She won first prize during last year's Métis Week festivities at the Children's Bowling Party.

Her mother, Terry Cox, said Catrina managed to create her prize-winning artwork within 15 minutes. "She loves art, especially drawing in pencil and charcoal."

Catrina, a grade five student, who has been enrolled in an enrichment program since grade two, has ambitions of "helping endangered and orphaned wild animals." Although shy, she said she is proud to Métis and was happy to present her pins to people who attended the open house. "Métis Culture plays a strong role in the family," said Mrs. Cox.

Numerous people attended the open house and unveiling, including MNA President Audrey Poitras who introduced Catrina and commented that her pins were gorgeous.

Last year's second prizewinner was Luke Kaup of Onoway, Alberta. ♦



Catrina Cox proudly shows off her artwork, which was featured on a lapel pin for Métis Week 2004.

Photo by: Patricia Russell





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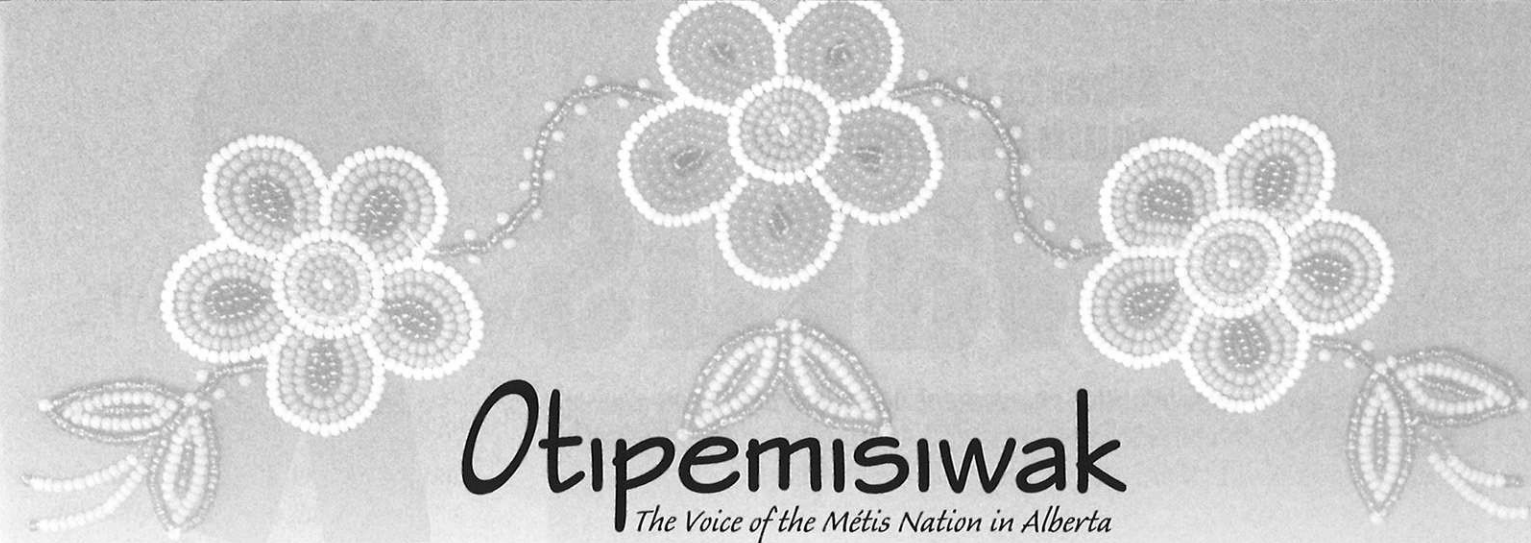
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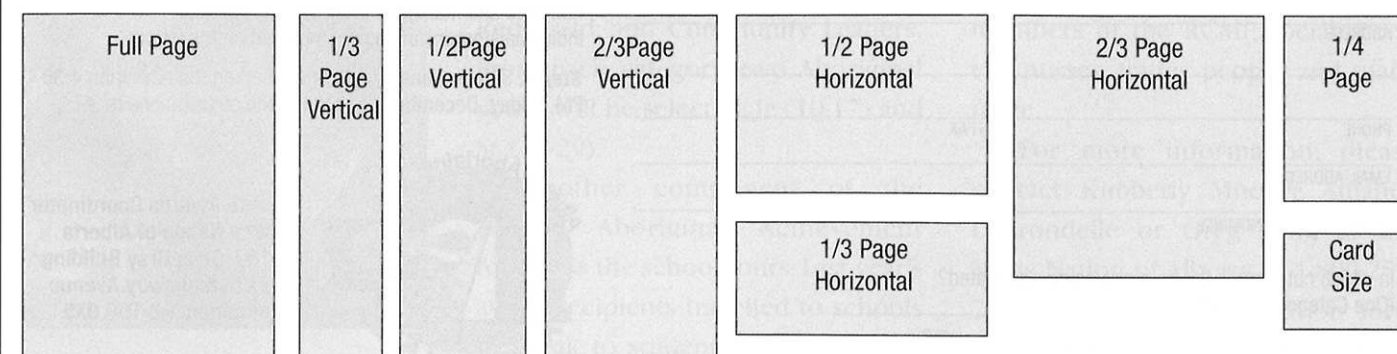
We encourage Métis to make submissions to our Nation's official magazine in the form of photos and articles telling stories about the events and people in our community.

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1/2 Page Vertical	3 5/8 inches	9 5/8 inches	\$513
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Alberta Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards



The Alberta Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards provides an opportunity to recognize Achievements of Aboriginal youth, and share their success with others across the Province of Alberta.

Category 1 • Culture & 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 fundraise, 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 innovations in their chosen pursuit.

Category 6 • Personal Achievement

This award recognizes youth who have overcome challenges during the pursuit of their personal growth 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 has 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 _____

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DATE OF BIRTH (mm/yyyy/dd) _____ AGE _____

NOMINATOR

FULL NAME _____

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PHONE _____ FAX _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

RELATIONSHIP TO NOMINEE _____

In which category is the nominee being nominated?
(One Category per form) _____

Which age group? ☐ Junior (10-17) ☐ Senior (18-29)

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? How were these overcome?
3. What has been the impact of this achievement on the nominee's family and community?
4. 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



Progress Report Alberta Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards

By Amanda L'Hirondelle

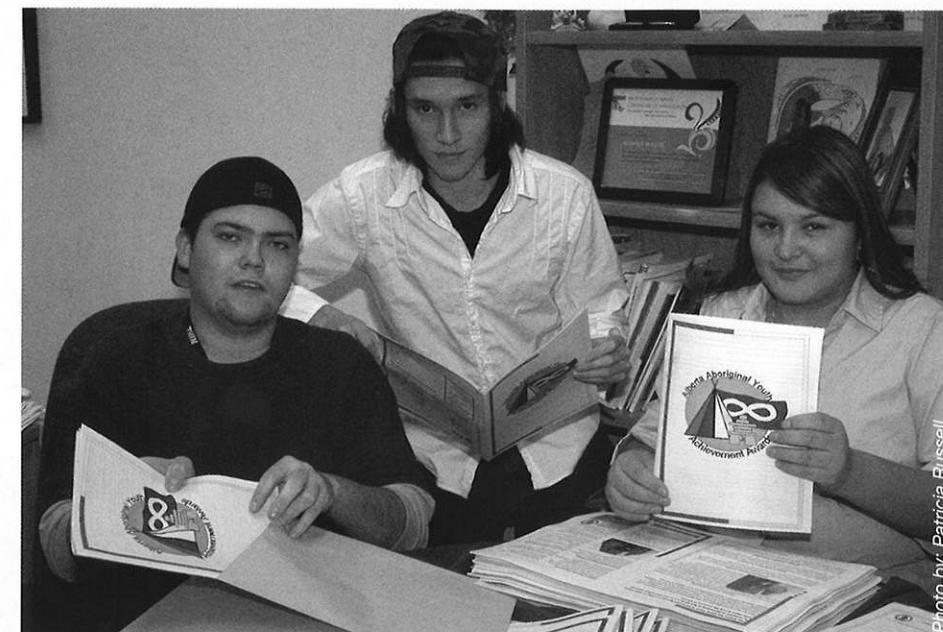
The Métis Nation of Alberta is working diligently to promote the Alberta Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards through the help of family, friends, staff and volunteers. We have chosen a venue for the event, which will take place on Friday, February 11, 2005 at the Victoria School of Performing Arts in Edmonton, Alberta.

We have mailed out approximately 3000 brochures to schools, businesses, youth programs and to our contacts within the Aboriginal community. As well, we have sent out sponsorship packages, which will hopefully cover some costs.

We will be screening the nominations and selecting the award recipients early in January. The Alberta Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards planning committee, which is made up of Métis, First Nations and Inuit youth (majority are youth) from Alberta, will help in the selection process.



LMD Youth Programs Coordinator
Kim Mueller



Cousins, Adam and Cody Erasmus spent part of an afternoon stuffing nomination forms into envelopes with Amanda L'Hirondelle, UMAC Project Officer.

The awards provide an opportunity to recognize the achievements of Aboriginal youth and in turn to share their success with other people from across Alberta. There are eight award categories: Culture and Heritage; Volunteer Services; Academic Achievement; Athletic Achievement; Career Advancement; Personal Achievement; Walking the Red Road; and Community Leaders. From each category, two Aboriginal youth will be selected, Jr. (10-17) and Sr. (18-29).

Another component of the Alberta Aboriginal Achievement Awards is the school tours. Last year's award recipients travelled to schools to speak to students about the program and to speak about positive

lifestyles choices and the importance of staying in school and getting an education.

This year, in conjunction with the awards, we will also be running a Labour Market Information Conference for Aboriginal youth between the ages of 15-29 on February 12-13, 2005. The conference will include guest speakers, such as members of the RCMP, social workers, nurses, trades people and many more.

For more information, please contact Kimberly Mueller, Amanda L'Hirondelle or Greg King at the Métis Nation of Alberta at 1-800-252-7553. The awards nomination form can be downloaded from the website at www.albertametis.ca ♦

Métis Recipients of Aboriginal Role Model Awards



(l-r) Region II President Karen Collins; MNA President Audrey Poitras; Apeetogosan General Manager George Vass; Apeetogosan and Pinnacle crew, Harold Gray; Ken Balcom; Cindy Castelletti; Joey Hamelin

By Patricia Russell

Métis Nation of Alberta Region II President Karen (KC) Collins is among the recipients of the 2004 Aboriginal Role Model Awards. Regional President Collins accepted the award for Community Development during a ceremony held at the Amiskwaciy Academy in Edmonton on November 6th. Two more awards went to Métis recipients: Denise Fayant received the Volunteer Award and Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc. received the Business Award.

Elected as Region II President in 2002, Karen (KC) Collins holds the Provincial Council portfolio for Economic Development and is from the Elizabeth Métis Settlement. Collins was instrumental in developing a joint venture recently between the MNA and three oil patch companies to form a new company called the Aboriginal Energy Services Group. She also sits on the Governance Committee and is a director with Apeetogosan (Métis) Dev. Inc.

In her early days, Collins spent four months in Indonesia with the Canada World Youth Program, which



Denise Fayant accepts the Volunteer Award from Martha Campiou.

she still credits for having learned valuable life lessons. She's no stranger to volunteerism either having spent nine years with the Aboriginal Friendship Centre movement, culminating with the position of National President. Her professional life includes working with the Métis Settlements Transition Commission, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Administrator of the Elizabeth Settlement and the MNA Region II Economic Development Officer. Karen describes her two young boys, Usuni and Owen, as her "most precious treasures" and credits them for keeping her feet on the ground and a focus on the future.

Volunteer Award winner Denise Fayant is a member of the Fishing Lake Métis Settlement who currently lives in Edmonton where she raised her two daughters. Ms Fayant spent time working as the receptionist at the MNA Region IV office before moving on to work with Métis Urban Housing where she's been since 1989. Ms Fayant is the Head Tenant Relations Officer. She's a very active volunteer who's given countless number of hours to the school bingos, casinos, and other community events.

The manager of Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc, George Vass and his team of professionals accepted the Aboriginal Role Model Business Award this year. Started by the Métis Nation of Alberta, Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc. is an economic development



Master of Ceremonies and Awards Coordinator Irene Morin.



MNA Region II President Karen Collins accepted the Aboriginal Role Model Award for Community Development.

tool through which Métis entrepreneurs can access financial support for business ventures. It was incorporated in 1984 and since 1988 has provided more than 32-million dollars in loans to Métis entrepreneurs, many of which are still in business today. The subsidiary to Apeetogosan, Pinnacle Business Services Ltd., provides clients with assistance in creating business and marketing plans, feasibility studies, and a variety of additional services. ♦

Metis Local 1990 is holding the 2nd Annual Talent Show with funds raised going towards the construction of two additional rooms to the Elder's Caring Shelter.

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Red River Jig (13-17 years)

Red River Jig (Adult)

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Métis Employment Services

contact info



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Calgary AB T1Y 5V7

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Fax (403) 250-2838

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Lethbridge AB T1J 0N9

(403) 317-1555

Fax (403) 317-1610

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105-4711-51 Ave

Red Deer AB T4N 6H8

(403) 338-7734

Fax (403) 358-7735

Medicine Hat

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Medicine Hat AB T1B 3R2

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Fax (403) 504-4224

REGION IV

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(780) 423-2237

Fax (780) 482-2834

Whitecourt

Box 454

205 Midtown Mall,

5115-49 St.

Whitecourt AB T7S 1N6

(780) 706-2339

1-866-706-2339

Fax (780) 706-2336

Hinton

568 Carmichael Lane

Hinton AB T7V 1X8

(780) 865-8229

Fax (780) 865-8269

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Slave Lake

105-6 Ave. Box 1259

Slave Lake AB T0G 2A0

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Fax (780) 849-4654

High Prairie

4932-15 St. Box 96

High Prairie AB T0G 1E0

(780) 523-2004

Fax (780) 523-2047

Wabasca

2691 Strawberry Lane

Box 148

Wabasca AB T0G 2K0

(780) 891-2363

Fax (780) 891-2362

REGION VI

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9615-100 Street

Peace River AB T8S 1J7

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Fax (780) 624-0693

Grande Prairie

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Grande Prairie AB T8V 2V5

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1-877-538-5477

Fax (780) 539-5261

High Level

9806-98 Street

Box 150,

High Level AB T0H 1Z0

(780) 841-0600

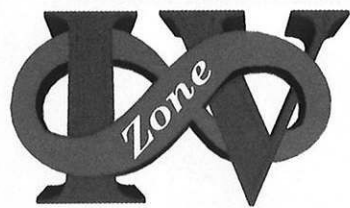
Fax (780) 841-0601



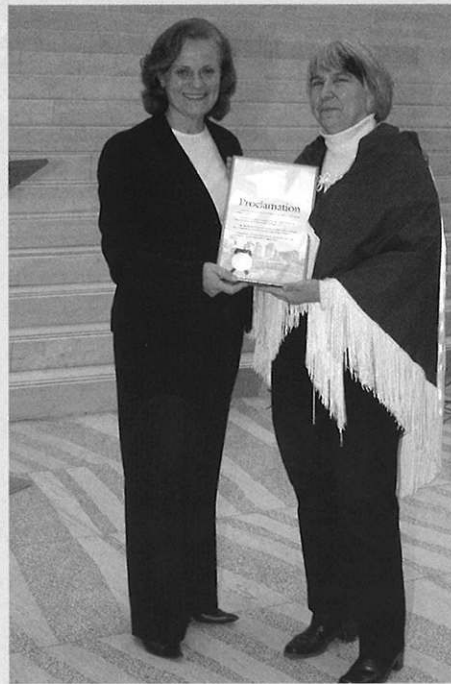
Building a Skilled Métis Labour Force



Métis Flag Raising ceremony at Edmonton City Hall.



In Region IV, Edmonton, Métis Week 2004 was initiated with the Métis flag raising ceremony held on November 15 at City Hall. Many were on hand to observe the raising of our flag and the presentation of Edmonton's Declaration of Métis Week 2004, given by Deputy Mayor, Jane Batty.



Deputy Mayor, Jane Batty presents the City of Edmonton's Métis Week Declaration to MNA President, Audrey Poitras.

Community Consultations in the New Year

Your questions and opinions count!

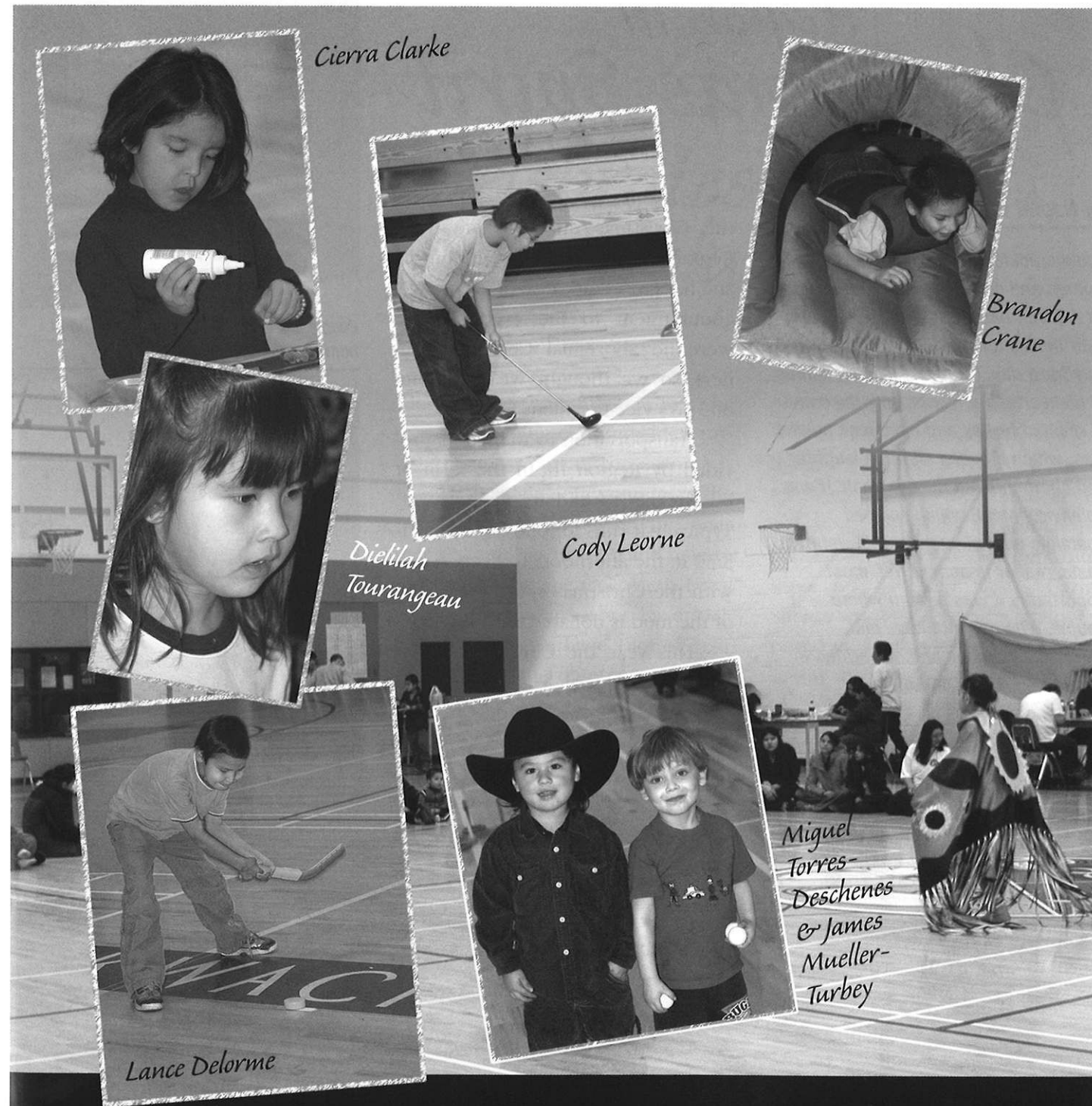
The Métis Nation of Alberta is holding community consultations in the six regions to inform Métis about the Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement. The questions you ask will help your leadership develop positions for negotiating the final agreement with Alberta. The consultations are also about developing policy options pertaining to Métis Rights.

The Métis Nation of Alberta needs your input.

Check with your regional office for the date and location of the meeting nearest you. Or call the community consultation coordinator at 1 800 252 7553.



www.albertametis.com



Métis Week 2004 Youth Carnival

Photos by: Naomi Gordon

In Region IV, , Métis Week 2004 was brought to a close with a Youth Day Carnival on November 20 at Amiskwichey Academy. The Carnival attracted many smiling children who were entertained with games, dance, crafts and hot dogs.

Region III Christmas Spirit

By Naomi Gordon

Snow crackled under the feet of men, women and children who came to feast on a Christmas meal that would warm their bellies and fill their spirits, even if only for a day. There were no icy glares or disheartening words, only the smell of roasted turkey and cinnamon spiced pies, which blended with the laughter and chatter, filling the cozy hall. It was an environment, which seemed nostalgic with memories of Christmas pasts, real or imagined. Yet, most importantly it was a room where people, who may not have met otherwise, mingled and celebrated in the true spirit of Christmas.

The annual homeless Christmas dinner, now in its fifth year, attracted upwards of 250 people to Albert Park Radisson Community Hall in Calgary. Every year the dinner is hosted by Region III, Calgary, for the simple reason of giving a small gift back to the community and to those who may not have been able to celebrate Christmas.

And a Christmas dinner it was. Not one fixing was missed. Turkey, mashed potatoes, cranberries, gravy, ham and a list of other holiday favourites, flowed over plates and into hungry mouths. All home cooked by an army of volunteers.

Region III, Vice-President, Marlene Lanz says the turnout has grown steadily. "We started out with 97 people the first year and now were over 200." She says the idea for

the Christmas dinner came from Region III President, Ephram Bouvier and has grown because of everyone's commitment to the event. "There were no aboriginal Christmas dinners, so we thought we'd put one on," says Vice-President Lanz.

Transportation to the hall is provided by Region III, in the form of bus tickets to and from the event. Typically, it runs for one day from 11:30 in the afternoon. To keep in line with the Christmas spirit, a majority of the food is donated, as is the hall.

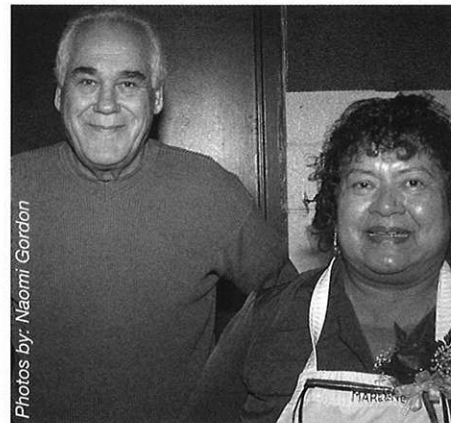
This year, the Christmas dinner was extra special as it fell on the same day as Marlene Lanz's birthday. Needless to say, in addition to Christmas deserts, a healthy serving of birthday cake was offered. ♦



Region III volunteers get ready for the next wave of hungry mouths.



People line up to get a healthy serving of home cooked food.



Region III President Bouvier and Vice-President Lanz are all smiles at the Christmas dinner.

Region VI Grande Prairie Local 1990 Celebrates Elders and Volunteers

By Patricia Russell

The President and council of Métis Local 1990 in Grande Prairie held a special dinner at the end of October celebrating the contributions made by a team of reliable volunteers and respected Elders.

The Master of Ceremonies, Melody Wilton, introduced Region VI President Sylvia Johnson who began the celebration saying, "I want to thank Angie Crerar for giving me this opportunity to ask for a blessing upon the Métis who have gathered here to honour our Elders and volunteers, the backbone of our great Nation. Without their help, we would not be going forward as we are." Regional President Johnson commended the Local saying, "This Local has been active for 17 years, and receives no funding at all from external sources. Our volunteers scrape together every cent through donations and fundraising."

Guests filled at least a dozen tables inside the banquet room of Grande Prairie's Sandman Inn; every one of them received special attention from Local President Angie Crerar who finally sat down to dinner when she was satisfied the guests were taken care of. Ms Crerar spent

some time at the podium where she praised the volunteers and Elders saying, "The best part of the evening is in acknowledging our volunteers, the people behind the scene, the ones that make things happen and help to make dreams come true. Métis Local 1990 is fortunate that we have such giving people. We have a lot of dedicated and loyal volunteers who are

our strength and our pride."

Ms Crerar continued by expressing her sincere appreciation for all the work done by the volunteers on behalf of the Local, "Through the efforts and hard work of our volunteers we have an Elders Caring Shelter that has become a reality. I'm proud of you, I respect each of you." Crerar continued, "I'm not afraid to



Volunteers Lisa Gliege, Pierre Gray, Doug Crerar, Yoko Gillett, Joe Redhead, Ursel Flett, Walter Salter, Bob Sellar, Doreen Sellar, Local President Angie Crerar



84-year old Richard Calliou has been playing the fiddle since he was 13 years old.

accept new challenges because I know that you will support me and our board in our efforts to make and maintain a safe and healthy life for all people in our community."

The special guest speaker for the evening was Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras who talked about the significance of volunteerism saying, "Volunteers are the people who are connected to the community issues, they are the front line people who act in the interest of the common good. Volunteers are an important part of our nation of Métis people and we value your effort. I value your effort."

Each of the volunteers received a \$40 gift certificate from Wal-Mart as a token of appreciation for all the work they have done over the past year in support of Local 1990. The volunteers included: Lisa Gliege, Pierre Gray, Doug Crerar, Yoko Gillett, Joe Redhead, Ursel Flett, Walter Salter, Bob Sellar and Doreen Sellar.


Special guests at the event included: Bill Descheneaux, President Métis Local 1929; Al Findlay, President Métis Local 1994; Diane Cornish, Grande Prairie Friendship Centre; Marge Mueller, Native Counseling Services; Gerry Melrose, Grande Prairie Bingo Association; Paul Leroux, Weyerhaeuser, and Jim Hanson, Landlord (for about 100 years!)♦



MNA Region VI President Sylvia Johnson, Local 1990 President Angie Crerar, MNA President Audrey Poitras.



Patricia and Clifford Flett along with their daughter, Ursel. Patricia's maiden name is Johnston and is the daughter of Samuel Johnston, one of the Founding Fathers of the Métis Nation of Alberta.




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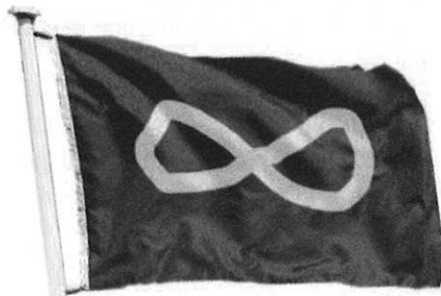
from the Labour Market Development Unit

Front Row (left to right): Program Coordinator, Joan Isaac; Director, Lorne Gladue; Region III Manager, Guido Contreras

Middle (left to right): Region IV Manager, Trenton Zazulak; Disabilities Coordinator, Gregory Humphrey; Region III Manager, Sharon Sawchuk; Youth Coordinator, Kim Mueller; Sr. Administration Officer, Debbie Munroe; Region II Manager, Belle Dy-Reyes; Region IV Manager, Lorna Lang; Region V Manager, Evelyn Drewniak; Sr. Administration Officer, Terra Haugen

Back Row (left to right): Region I Manager, Mark McCallum; Contract Officer, Dawn Darrington; Region VI Manager, Janet Gardner; Directors Assistant, Roxanne Ropchan






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Editors Insight

Patricia Russell

Here's an observation of mine. When Métis meet another Métis for the first time, we do a little dance of introduction, a moccasin shuffle of sorts. We circle around each other, moving to a tune of questions that string together like the identifiable notes of an old-time waltz played on the Métis fiddle. But in this dance, we're trying to figure out how we fit together, if we fit together. We pepper each other with polite enquiries, "Where's your family from? Who are your grandparents? What did you say your last name is?"

Internally, we are searching for missing pieces of the identity puzzle. When the connection happens and another piece of the jigsaw turns over and clicks into place, the picture becomes more focused.. "Aha!" We say with the satisfaction of a private investigator who has just found the piece of evidence that will clinch the case, "Aha!" And once we make the connection, we rustle the branches of our family tree, comparing notes and bits of information to figure out where the limbs cross or twine together like diamond willow.

I am always surprised when we find evidence of another family connection or relative. When I came into the communications office of the Métis Nation of Alberta last March, I felt like I came home after a lengthy absence. I remember that in one introductory conversation with a colleague, she and I began the instinctive motions of the 'who's your family dance'. I mentioned I was born and raised in the Northwest Territories, and that my mother is a Sanderson from Fort Chipewyan and Grandmother is of the Ladouceur clan from Lac La Biche. "I still have lots of family in the north in Hay River, Yellowknife, and Fort Smith," I said.

"Aha," she said, "I have an Auntie who lives up in Fort Smith! Maybe you know her?" We gave the family tree another shake and realized her mother's sister, Jean, is my sister-in law, who is married to my oldest brother, Bob. So, does that make my colleague a relative? No, but it demonstrates the intricate connections that exist in our Métis world and how shaking the family tree helps to define our community, and by extension, our identity and culture.

"Take care of our young people and we protect our future. Take care of our elders and we preserve our past." I heard that phrase during the Métis Week Mass at St. Margaret's Church, and its still ringing like a bell inside my head. It speaks to me of the importance of preserving our Métis families. And how the roots of our family tree support the growth of our culture and that growth ensures the protection of our identity.

What does my tree look like? My apple grows on a fruitful and sturdy tree with six brothers, six sisters, twenty-nine nieces and nephews, eight great nieces and nephews, dozens of aunties, uncles, great aunts, great uncles, a countless number of first cousins, second cousins, haven't-met-yet cousins, one daughter and my husband, who was my high school sweetheart.

This brings me to another observation. Ever notice how once the 'introductory Métis shuffle' has played out, we get lost in the task of trying to name all the members of our family?

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National Definition of Métis

As Adopted at the MNC's 18th Annual General Assembly
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.

"We must cherish our inheritance. We must preserve our nationality for the youth of our future. Let our stories be written down so they may be passed on."

Louis Riel

