

Otipemisiwak (oht-paym'-soo-wuk) - In Michif: The Independent Ones

# Otipemisiwak

*The Voice of the Métis Nation in Alberta*

**Métis Nation  
Pleased with  
First Ministers  
Meeting**

**Métis Veterans  
Revisit Belgium**

**2005  
Métis Week**



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If Undeliverable, Deliver to #100 Delia Gray Building,  
11738 Kingsway Avenue Edmonton, AB T5G 0X5  
Canadian Publication Agreement Number 40985503



Happy Holidays



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

Michif:  
"their own boss,  
the independent ones"



Canadian  
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#### On Our Cover:

Beadwork jacket created by Jennine Krauchi from Manitoba. The inscription on the Moosehide tag inside the jacket reads: "A gift on behalf of the Métis Nation, for your recognition of our nationhood and commitment to establishing a new relationship with us grounded on the Canada-Métis Nation Framework Agreement."

Cover photo and photo at left by Patricia Russell

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The Voice of the Métis Nation in Alberta

Otipemisiwak is the only Official Magazine of the Métis Nation of 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 10th

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# President's Message



Welcome Elders, friends, colleagues and fellow Métis to the year-end edition of our official magazine, *Otipemisiwak-Voice of the Métis Nation in Alberta*, and what an exciting year it's been.

The Métis Nation has seen many successes in 2005 and I'm confident the resulting positive momentum will continue moving our agenda forward next year and beyond. Our Nation has been climbing an uphill battle for more than a century and with each step forward, we plant our flag firmly into the soil of a great country our ancestors were instrumental in building. We can never go back. We will never go back. Our Métis Nation is the furthest up the mountain than we have ever been in our history. Louis Riel would be proud of our accomplishments.

In Riel's day, Conservative Prime Minister John A. MacDonald denied the very existence of Riel's Métis people. Indeed, MacDonald's government executed our hero. But in our day, Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin does not minimize our

existence by referring to us as an interest group or an organization. No. Prime Minister Martin refers to us as a Nation. The Métis Nation! And that is an achievement for which we are very proud.

Such recognition does not come easy nor does it come without hard work. Our Métis people do not ask for handouts, they work hard for our achievements because of our firm belief that nothing comes for free. Our technicians, staff, and the leadership has worked tirelessly for that recognition. I know many of our staff, provincially and nationally, who are available at any hour of the day or night to answer the call of duty to the Nation. And for that sense of dedication and belief in the rights of your people, the Nation is grateful.

I am very proud to say that a number of Métis specific announcements were made during the First Ministers Meeting that will improve the quality of life for our people across the Homeland. The announcement includes a Métis Housing Institute, greater access to post-secondary education through bursaries, early childhood centres, curriculum

development, and Métis-specific health dollars. Look inside the pages of the Métis Nation's official magazine to read more about the Métis presence at the First Ministers Meeting.

I am pleased to look back at 2005 and see the many successes we have had and I acknowledge the challenges that were placed before our Nation. Even in the challenges, there are reasons to be thankful and lessons to learn that will move us forward.

Here's an important point I'd like to bring to your attention. In the recent Métis Nation of Alberta General Election in September, approximately 10 per cent of eligible Métis voters went to the polls to cast their ballots. I sincerely hope that we turn out higher numbers in the Federal Election in January.

One of the challenges before the Métis Nation is to pull together to ensure the next federal government is formed by a party with a solid Aboriginal policy, a party that acknowledges the Métis Nation. Recent figures indicate Aboriginal people comprise 4 per cent of the electorate in Canada that's the highest in Canadian history. For the Alberta Métis electorate, we have significant numbers in several constituencies including: Edmonton Centre, Peace River, and Athabasca. Our Métis electorate can affect which party forms the next government and I encourage you to ask the candidates in your riding if their party is committed to upholding the agreements reached at the First Ministers Meeting on Aboriginal issues. Examine your options. When Métis go to the federal polls this year, our people are also voting for the good of the Métis Nation.

On a different note, a special retreat was held recently and attended by most members of our Provincial Council to further define the roles and obligations of the portfolios I assigned to each elected member during the *Swearing In Ceremony* held in September. We were successful in what we set out to accomplish. We came away with a greater awareness of the opportunities available for each

portfolio holder, and for each region, by working together using comprehensive 3-year business plans to better achieve the goal of improving the living circumstances for each member of our Métis Nation.

I spend a great deal of time driving our Alberta highways to visit our people in communities outside of Edmonton. Sure, flying is faster, but I'm more comfortable driving. So you can bet I know what it's like to be slowed down by blowing snow and icy road conditions. But with temperatures dropping and winter settling in, I encourage our drivers to pay extra attention to road safety everywhere, especially if you're driving at night when there's a greater risk of encountering animals on the highways. You're too special to your families to put your safety at risk.

At this time, I would like to extend my most sincere condolences to the family of the late Sam Sinclair who recently passed away in Edmonton. Sam was a remarkable man whose sense of commitment, dignity, and humour has helped to develop the Métis Nation as we know it today.

I would like to take a moment to welcome the new staff members joining us in the regional offices and in the provincial office. Also, I encourage everyone to remember the importance of showing generosity to those who are less fortunate. I hope you have a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Extending you the warmth of the Métis Nation,

*Audrey Poitras*

Audrey Poitras, President







PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

### *Otipemisiwak*

I am delighted to extend my heartfelt greetings to the *Otipemisiwak* readership, the official magazine for the Métis Nation of Alberta, as we celebrate the beginning of a new year.

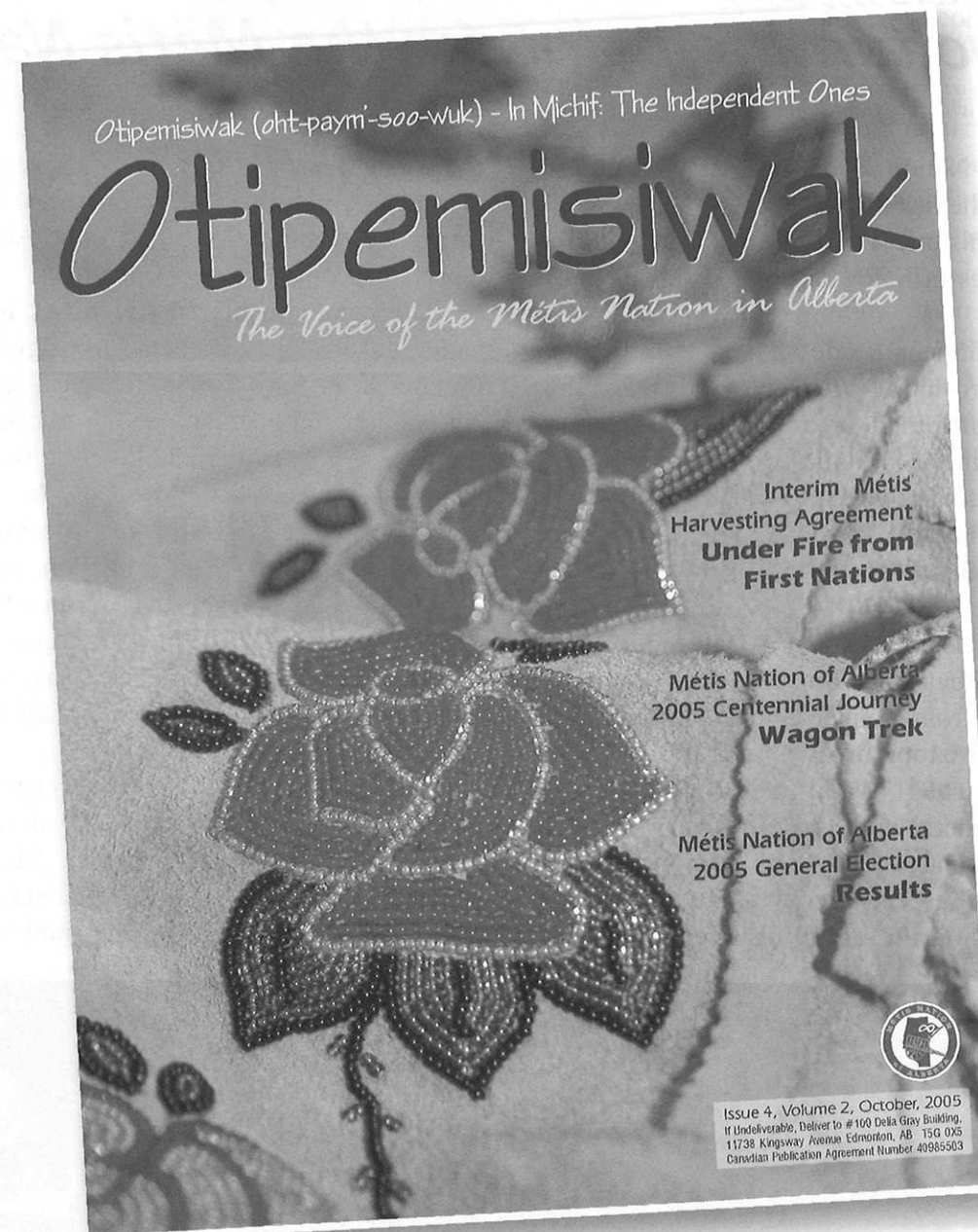
The prosperity we enjoy as a nation derives from the diversity of our communities, and this particular time of year is an excellent occasion to celebrate our rich cultural fabric, promote mutual respect and understanding, and share in the common values of heritage and culture. Indeed, the Métis community in Canada can take great pride in the many contributions it has made to the growth of our country. It is my hope that you will continue to foster such fellowship within your community, while contributing to a strong and harmonious Canada.

This joyous time is also an opportunity to partake in the season's festivities, while reflecting upon the events of the past year and giving thanks for our many blessings. As you gather with loved ones during this special time, I hope you experience a beautiful celebration filled with peace, joy and happiness.

Please accept my warmest regards and best wishes for good health and much prosperity in the New Year.

OTTAWA  
2005

## **Otipemisiwak - Nominated in 11 categories of the Western Magazine Awards**



*Otipemisiwak: The Voice of the Métis Nation in Alberta* is free to members of the Métis Nation of Alberta.

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# First Ministers Meeting Historic turning point for the Métis Nation

by Patricia Russell, with files from Robert McDonald, MNC

The Métis Nation is one giant step closer to realizing the vision Louis Riel had for his people following the historic First Ministers Meeting on Aboriginal issues in Kelowna on November 24 and 25, 2005.

The commitments made by national Aboriginal leaders, the provincial premiers, and the Prime Minister of Canada in areas such as education, housing, health, economic opportunities, and relationships are expected to provide the Métis Nation with the means to see marked improvements in living standards for Métis across the homeland over the next five to ten years.

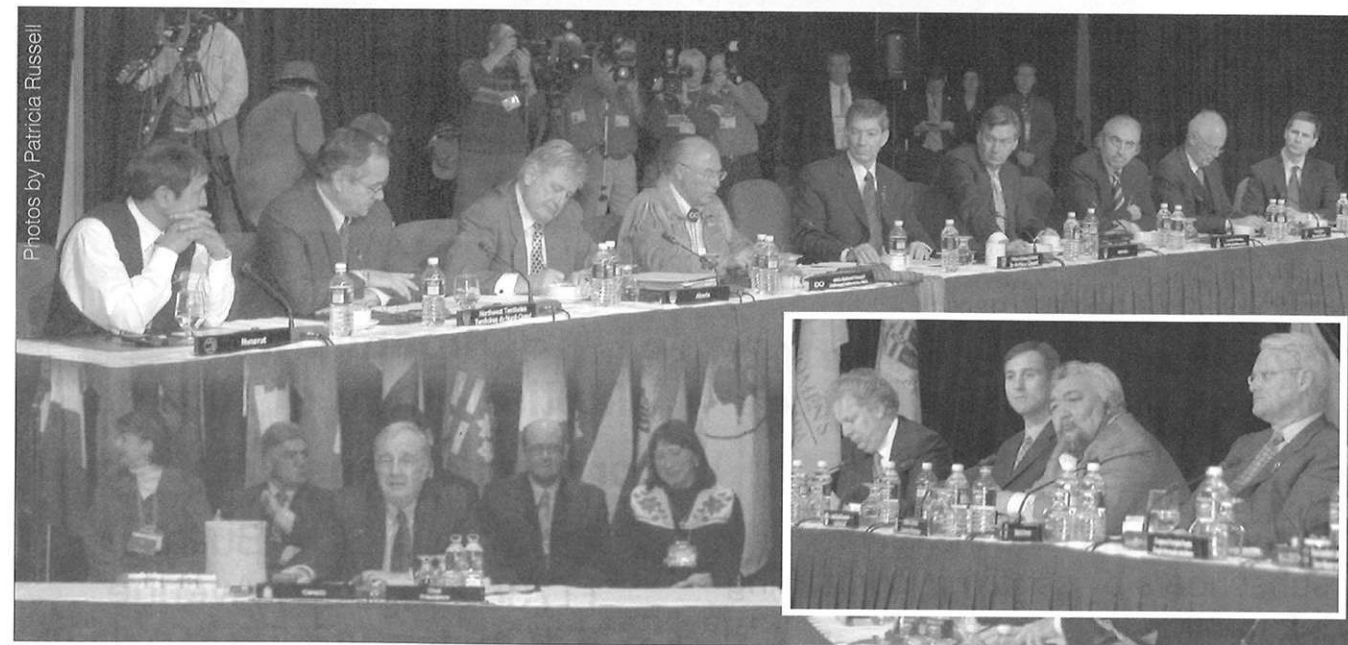
Nineteen delegates around the table took part in a discussion led by Prime Minister Paul Martin, who fielded remarks from premiers and aboriginal leaders on each of the five topic areas. Martin described the agreements reached as an 'unprecedented step forward' for federal and provincial relations with Canada's Aboriginal people. "Our plan is to build on a foundation of respect, accountability, and shared responsibility," Martin said in his opening address.

"With this plan, we have made an important step forward in honouring our commitment to close the gap in the quality of life that now exists between Aboriginal people and other Canadians."

The commitments Martin refers to are those made during the Canada Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable in April 2004. That led to months of consultation and negotiation with Aboriginal people toward agreements intended to close the gap in the five areas. Most of the text of the agreements announced at the First Ministers Meeting had been hammered out during that negotiations process.

"I would also suggest that we set interim targets as well, for five years from now, to ensure that we remain focussed and accountable," said Martin, "The challenges are urgent and we cannot afford to let this opportunity slip away."

At the end of the historic two-day summit, during which Aboriginal and provincial leaders gave their public reaction to the agreements, Métis National Council President Clément Chartier said, "For us, the door has been opened. I don't think we're in the



An historic meeting among the Prime Minister, provincial premiers, and national Aboriginal leaders in Kelowna, BC.



Top: Andy Scott, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians and Prime Minister Paul Martin  
Above: Alberta Premier Ralph Klein and MNC President Clément Chartier

has the primary fiduciary responsibility for the Métis Nation. For generations the Métis People have been victims of the jurisdictional denial by federal and provincial governments. Neither would accept any responsibility for the Métis. This has now changed." MMF President Chartrand said, "Our People have waited over a hundred years for a Prime Minister with the courage and strength of character to make that announcement. This acknowledgement of federal responsibility provides the foundation for a renewal of our Nation-to-Nation partnership and the recognition of our Government-to-Government relationship."

Specific resource allocations in each area made to the Métis Nation have yet to be calculated and will be worked out through negotiations with the provincial and federal governments.

porch. If nothing else, we're in the parlour and I believe that over the next ten years we're going to be able to enjoy every part of the house."

Métis National Council Vice President Audrey Poitras says, "These are remarkable times for Métis people. We are finally at a point where Canada and the provinces are ready to act responsibly and bring an end to the jurisdictional wrangling over issues such as education, housing, and health care. These are important issues that mean a great deal to our people and they all deserve to enjoy the same standard of living as other Canadians. No more, no less."

Manitoba Métis Federation President David Chartrand said, "The Prime Minister made the historic announcement that the federal government

However, commitments in the area of education include the creation of the *Métis Nation Centre of Excellence in Education and Innovation* to undertake Métis-specific research, develop educational materials and resources and to enhance existing programs and services such as the Louis Riel Institute in Manitoba.

In the area of housing, a new *Métis Nation Housing Institute* will be created to make strategic and immediate investments in new Métis social and subsidized housing and in the ongoing maintenance of existing Métis-delivered housing.

The "Blueprint on Aboriginal Health: A 10-Year Transformative Plan" contains a Métis Framework that can be used as a national guide for investment



and collaborative action with Métis partners. The implementation of federal commitments in the *Blueprint* will be undertaken in a manner that's consistent with the Canada Métis Nation Framework Agreement signed in May 2005.

A communiqué issued by the Prime Minister's office summarizes the commitments made in five key areas aimed at closing the socio-economic gap existing between Aboriginal people, Métis included, and other Canadians. The overall package is worth approximately \$5.1 billion and includes Métis-specific commitment in areas as:

#### Education:

- enhancing Métis educational outcomes within public education systems through K-12 innovative supports such as stay-in-school cultural programs, role model and mentoring programs, literacy initiatives and in-school cultural programs
- creating a Métis Nation Centre of Excellence in Education and Innovations focusing on developing education materials, resources and research
- enhancing Métis scholarship and bursary trusts
- establishing a Métis child care initiative

#### Housing:

- within the next 12 months, develop a Métis Nation Housing Institute aimed at supporting new Métis social/subsidized housing and increased Métis control over housing in rural, urban and northern regions
- investing in new Métis affordable housing while repairing and maintaining existing Métis housing
- supporting housing solutions

for Métis women in transition and single parents

#### Economic Opportunities:

- facilitating components of economic opportunities in areas such as economic infrastructure, training and skills development for Métis people
- building partnerships among all federal/provincial/territorial governments, Métis communities, institutions and the private sector



Top: MNA Regional Presidents Cecil Bellrose, Sylvia Johnson, and Ken Bourque and Regional Vice President Joe Chodzicki attended the First Ministers Meeting with MNA President/ MNC Vice President Audrey Poitras

Above: A light moment shared between MMF President David Chartrand, Prime Minister Paul Martin, MNC Vice President Audrey Poitras, and MNC President Clément Chartier.

#### Health:

- improving access to quality health services under a Métis-specific Framework within the *Blueprint on Aboriginal Health*
- the *Blueprint* will focus on population health strategies addressing areas such as access to clean water, food security, education, housing and violence against Aboriginal women, children and elders
- ten-year plan to bridge the gap in health outcomes between the general Canadian population and Aboriginal peoples

#### Relationships:

- building upon existing bilateral agreements such as the Canada-Métis Nation Framework Agreement, signed on May 31, 2005
- establishing a Métis Nation Multilateral Forum to facilitate discussions between the Métis Nation, the Government of Canada and the provinces from Ontario-westward.



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## First Ministers Meeting Métis Nation Special Presentation to Prime Minister

by Patricia Russell

The Métis Nation 'stole the show' at the First Ministers Meeting on Aboriginal issues in Kelowna in November by making a special presentation to Prime Minister Paul Martin.

During the opening ceremonies, MNA President Audrey Poitras, who is also the Vice President of Métis National Council, along with Manitoba Métis Federation President David Chartrand presented Prime Minister Martin with a traditional beaded moose hide jacket that Chartrand describes as 'a jacket fit for a true statesman'.

The jacket was made by Manitoba artisan, Jennine Krauchi, and features a delicate and intricate beadwork design style replicated on jackets worn only by Presidents Poitras and Chartrand. The beadwork is featured on the cover of this edition of *Otipemisiwak*.

Prime Minister Martin, apparently surprised and touched by the presentation, wore the well-fitting jacket for the duration of the first day of the historic meeting and well into the evening.

At the same time, MMF President Chartrand presented Prime Minister Martin with the highest honour, the Order of the Sash. The initial announcement of the presentation was made during the MMF Annual General Assembly. However, the Prime Minister was unable to attend the Assembly to receive the honour so the presentation was delayed to a different and equally significant time.

The Métis Nation received extensive media coverage of the jacket's presentation. Photographs appeared in newspapers across the country and in broadcast media featuring the Prime Minister of Canada wearing a traditional Métis jacket, fit especially for a statesman.



MMF President David Chartrand helps Prime Minister Paul Martin into his new buckskin jacket.

## Seasons Greetings

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## Métis RCMP Officers Receive Alberta Centennial Medals

by Rachel Hohn

Nineteen years ago, two men, one aged 19, the other aged 32, trained together when they joined the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Today, these two Métis men, Sgt. Dan Bradford and Sgt. Dennis Fraser, along with over 80 of their fellow officers received an Alberta Centennial Medal for their dedicated service to the people of Alberta.

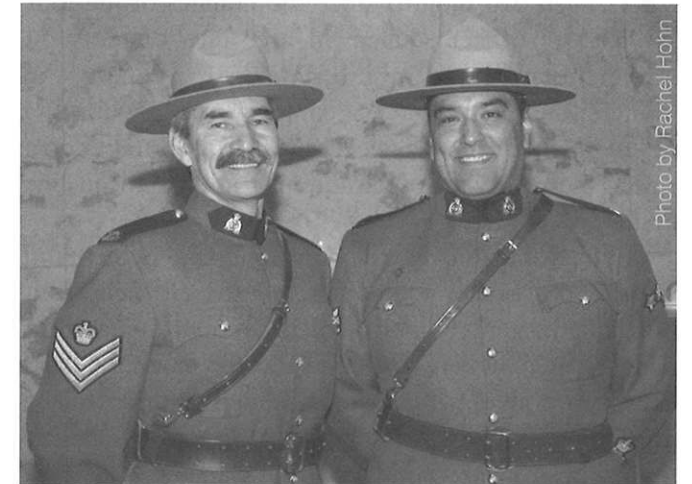
Both officers agree it is an honour to be recognized for their contributions to the province.

"I'm very honoured," says Sgt. Bradford. "It's my first medal. I want to dedicate my receiving the medal to the memory of our four fallen RCMP officers who were gunned down in Mayerthorpe—two who were Métis, Cst. Tony Gordon and Cst. Leo Johnson, and one of those a personal friend, Leo."

Bradford and Fraser were awarded the medal due in part to their work with the Aboriginal/RCMP relationship-building DVD titled, *Behind the Badge*. They both have previous experience working with Aboriginal communities and were very involved with community policing, from volunteering, coaching, being on service boards, to assisting Aboriginal Communities with suicide issues. Bradford consulted with Sgt. Fraser regarding the best practices in Aboriginal Policing before the chance to work together came up.

"We worked together on *Behind the Badge*," Bradford says. That DVD is now in the office of every Alberta RCMP detachment and will soon be in every RCMP detachment across Canada. Though Bradford spearheaded the project, he says he got a lot of guidance and direction from Fraser, who was pivotal to the project. "When there were issues I was not familiar with in Aboriginal Communities, I would call Dennis and consult with him, I always got good advice," he says. "I joined the police force to make a difference and I try to never forget why I joined the RCMP."

Sgt. Fraser grew up spending the first few years of his life on a First Nations reserve. Then he spent the next few in a nearby town following his dad's request that all the kids get an education. So, Fraser is no



RCMP Sgt. Dennis Fraser and Sgt. Dan Bradford received the Alberta Centennial Medal in a ceremony held on November 20.

stranger to being set apart from others—first in the town, then later when he returned to the reserve.

As an RCMP officer, he says it's no different. "Anytime you become a police officer, people look at you a different way. They view you with trepidation," he says. But he adds that that is only a small worry when one considers what else a RCMP officer is up against everyday.

Fraser says because he was 32 years old when he started at the force, people tried to persuade him from leaving his well-paying job at an oil company. They told him he would lose too much money and that he was too old to join. Fraser never gave up and continued to work on his dreams, and since then has participated in the RCMP Musical Ride and countless other RCMP-based community initiatives.

"You've got to follow your dreams," Fraser says. "If you don't now, you'll never do it."

RCMP K-Division Media Relations Officer Cpl. Al Fraser says the medals are a one-time commemorative award to show the significant contribution of the individuals to the force, community, and society. It is for those who make Alberta a better place to live and work, he adds. The medals will be worn over the hearts of the two Métis RCMP officers every time they don their Red Serge.



## Referendum of Light

by Patricia Russell with files from Grace Johnston

It's been two months since the families of the four RCMP officers killed in the line of duty in Mayerthorpe, AB in March 2005 began the "Referendum of Light", a campaign calling for the development of an effective national drug strategy and a review of the revision of the administration of the justice system.

The Johnston, Myrol, Gordon, and Schiemann families are asking Canadians to turn on their front porch light, garage light or, if in an apartment, front living room light between 8 and 10:00 p.m. on the third of every month until March 3 as a show of support. They are hoping to see a wave of light moving across Canada's time zones to show politicians that Canadians support the families as they seek to effect changes in our current system.

Grace Johnston spoke at a Crime Stoppers Fundraiser in Edmonton, AB on November 24, 2005 and shares her presentation with *Otipemisiwak* readers:

"Dignitaries, guests, organizers, volunteers, good evening.

I am the mother of fallen RCMP Constable Leo Johnston who was murdered with three of his co-officers at Rochfort Bridge, Mayerthorpe, AB on March 3, 2005.

I would like to start by saying my belief is that those of you who have been, are and hopefully will be involved with Crime Stoppers in any way however large or small, fully realize the importance and the probable risk of and in the work that you are doing for the public and the law enforcement community. You must all be immensely thanked and I do so now. Thank you.

You are the ones that are making it possible with anonymity for 'Joe and Jean Citizen' to be the additional eyes and ears and vices that are so desperately needed in bringing lawbreakers before the courts.

Surely we all must be and we should be aware of the increasing demands that are continually being made on our police services in all areas and all locales. We must also take into account the time that we expect them to and that do do, volunteering in our communities.

On Monday March 21, 05, television news reports stated that nine additional RCMP officers supplementing those already there would be provided to



The "Referendum of Light" campaign asks the public to show support for a national drug strategy by leaving their porch lights on, from 8pm to 10pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of every month to and including March 3, 2006.

Hobbema to assist in curbing and investigating gang violence and the same day it was also announced that eight members are going to form a missing women's task force in Manitoba. That's a total of 17 in one day out of sections, departments, communities that are no doubt already short-staffed.

As of Tuesday, November 22, 2005, Sheila Frazer, the Auditor General, in a report to Canadians, stated that in the coming years our national police force will be critically under-staffed with numbers in the hundreds and that they are not properly equipped and that number was confirmed on November 24, 05 at 2:30 a.m. as being 1059. And that doesn't take into account city and regional law enforcement shortages.

When we, some of the parents and family members of the Fallen Four, met with parliamentarians in Ottawa on October 25, 2005, each family focussed on a specific issue in their presentation.

Mine consisted of a request for implementation of mandatory minimum two-year sentencing for assault, attempted assault, and/or for deliberate injury to a peace officer while performing his/her duty to us.

That to increase funding for additional members and resources so that they can protect and serve us in the manner that we Canadians expect from them without their own safety being jeopardized.

To increase support staff numbers in order to free up members to do the job that they have been trained for and taken an oath to uphold instead of sitting at detachment and station desks shuffling paper and punching keyboards.

A provincial government member's public comment recently made was that government could not compete for applicants into the police force because of the salaries paid in the oil patch.

So, do we not seriously wonder what our governments of the day's priorities are have been will continue to be when the safety of law-abiding citizens is at stake as well as that of our peace officers? As yourself, "If they are not safe, are you?"

But then, ladies and gentlemen, we should, we must put the responsibility where I believe it should go because no matter how many officers, how sufficient the resources until such time as the administrators of

our justice system, the judges, the defense, and the prosecuting attorney's start taking responsibility for the decisions that they have made, are making or lack of in regards to the sentencing, pleas bargaining, bail setting, sentence appeals, parole and other issues relevant to the courts will our efforts, your efforts, to bring alleged criminals to justice really happen.

Our son, my son Leo's motto was "You do the crime—you do the time" But on March 3, 2005 he along with three other young sons, Anthony, Brock, and Peter, had their time and their opportunities to make a difference taken away from them.

So, we as parents and families along with your help, the help of Albertans, Canadians will continue the effort our involvement and hope that a horrendous, deliberated murder of this magnitude and/or of any magnitude will never, ever occur again to anyone.

Thank you to everyone present for taking the time to hear me and to Crime Stoppers for giving me the opportunity.

In closing, I would like to ask that you show your support of our efforts by turning on your porch lights from 8p.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturday, December 3 and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of every month to and including March 3, 2006. Thank you."

*As we cannot individually reach each and every one of you who have touched our lives with your messages of hope, joy, love, and peace during this holiday season, we have chosen this venue to possibly do so now.*

*Wishing all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.*

*- Grace and Ron Johnston and family*



## Our Métis Families CBC Broadcast Offends Johnston Family

by Patricia Russell

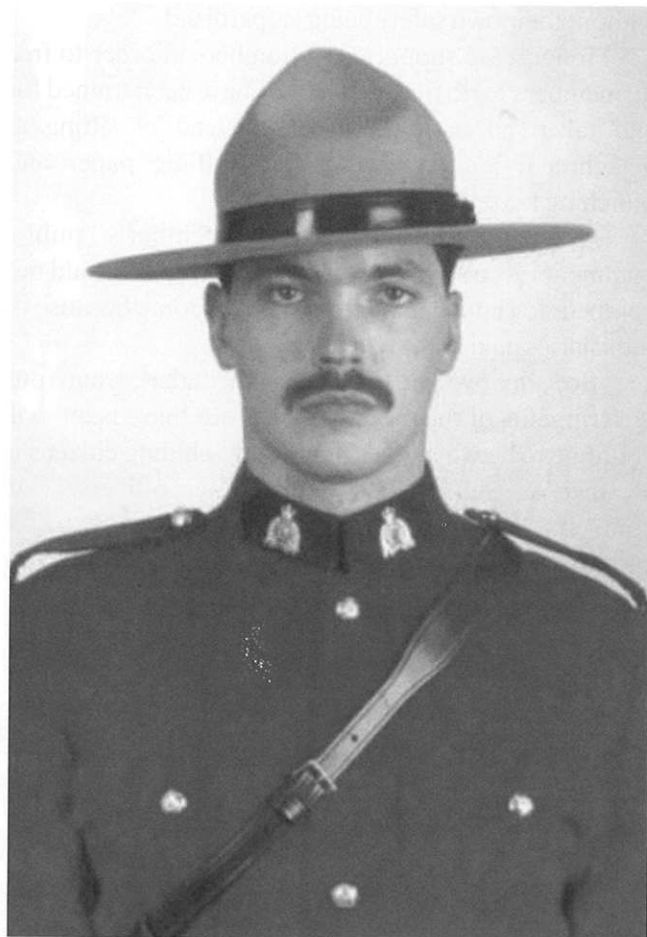
The family of the late RCMP Constable Leo Johnston, killed in the line of duty in Mayerthorpe, AB in March, are unhappy with a documentary, called "Hail of Bullets", broadcast recently on CBC Television's "The Fifth Estate".

In an exclusive statement issued to *Otipemisiwak*, Grace Johnston writes, "I have a problem with them using mostly archived information and photos that ends with verbalization and re-enactments of what their analysis suggests occurred."

Using aerial photographs and without any witness testimony to support their theory, producers of the documentary dispute the RCMP's version of how the horrible event ended on March 3, 2004 inside the Quonset hut on James Rosko's property. Producers use interviews and re-enactments to recreate the 24 hours leading up to the event.

Mrs. Johnston questions the value of producing and broadcasting the documentary before final reports are complete, "What respect they could have shown for the parents and families of 'The Fallen Four' and consideration for others directly involved by waiting for at the least the RCMP investigation to be completed. We, I believe, are prepared to wait for that to occur. So what's with everyone else?"

The Johnston family refused to take part even in light of harassment they received from one of the CBC producers. Mrs. Johnston says about three weeks before the broadcast date, one of the show producers attempted to coerce her into participating by saying, "I'm under the gun here Grace and I need you to agree to an interview." She says that after refusing again, the producer insulted her by saying, "You know Grace you're doing your son a disservice by not having him be a part of this endeavour."



Constable Lionide (Leo) Johnston

The RCMP did not take part in the filming of the documentary. Some members of the families of Constables Brock Myrol, Anthony Gordon, and Peter Schiemann did participate in the production.

About the public broadcaster, Mrs Johnston writes, "An organization that continues to be, in part, subsidized by your's and my tax dollars should have, could have, better served the public by promoting our initiatives for change to the administration of our justice system and our 'Referendum of Light' campaign showing the public support by leaving their porch lights on, from 8pm to 10pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of every month to and including March 3, 2006."

## Dress Regulation Changed: Canadian Forces Allow Métis Sash

by Rachel Hohn

The Canadian Forces have taken a step towards being more inclusive to all Canadians and their cultures with the new acceptance of the Métis sash to the military dress code during aboriginal community events.

Cpl. Lonnie Wright is part of the armoured unit division of the infantry, in Edmonton, AB. He is encouraged by the new dress code because he says being Métis means more to him now than it ever did.

"It hasn't been as big as it is now. Now, that I'm away from home," Wright says.

His family has never really celebrated their heritage, except for his grandmother who is a hunter and trapper.

The new ruling by the Canadian Forces allowing Métis members to wear their sash during ceremonial events means that Wright will be able to celebrate his heritage while he performs his duties in dress uniform.

Wright didn't have his own sash so Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras presented him with his first sash while he was standing guard in the Louis Riel Day Ceremonies at the Legislature during Métis Week 2005.

"It's exciting, I just don't know how to tie it now," he says with a laugh as he gently holds his new sash. "I think my grandmother would be excited to see this."



Top: Cpl Lonnie Wright accepts his first sash from MNA President Poitras after the Canadian Forces pass a new dress protocol allowing the use of the sash in community ceremonies.

Command Chief Warrant Officer Mike Nassif, with the Assistant Deputy Minister of Human Resources - Military (HR-MIL) says that it is a challenge to break through the military rules and regulations to make dress code changes like these take place. The request from two individuals to allow the wearing of sashes while in uniform grew into a change of dress protocol in less than two years. The request had to make its way through the military dress committees and will be put into print shortly.

Vice-Admiral Greg Jarvis, Assistant Deputy Minister with the HR-MIL, authorized the change to the military dress code for ceremonies in aboriginal communities. Chief Warrant Officer Nassif says Vice-Admiral Jarvis is the champion for the aboriginal peoples in the Forces.

"We wanted to let the people return to their communities and wear their sashes," he says. "It is



only for ceremonies within their communities and aboriginal specific events."

The sash was allowed, in part, to create a sentiment of belonging within the Canadian Forces, Nassif says.

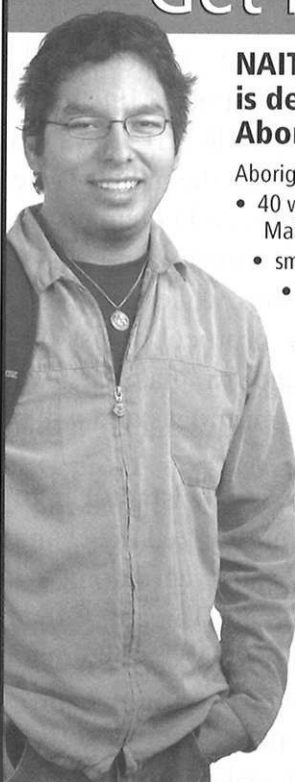
The Canadian Forces add changes to their dress code on a regular basis to be more inclusive and keep current with today's society, says Nassif. The Forces are more open to the wearing of cultural pieces of clothing for the Métis and other aboriginal peoples, but only restricts when the pieces may be worn. "We've changed quite a bit," he says. "Canadian society is changing considerably. We are a reflection of this society!"

Nassif says that in the two months since this dress code passed, he has received multiple requests for sashes from Métis officers, and requests to have the sashes paid for by the military. However, the military will not pay for buying a sash since it is not part of their uniform.

"We're not forcing people to (wear the sashes), we're just allowing them to wear it," he says.

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*Mackenzie Whitford graduated from Pre-Technology in 2005 and is currently studying Power Engineering Technology at NAIT*



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## Métis Week 2005 Zone IV Celebrates Métis Culture

by Melanie Omeniho



Métis Week 2005 was full of lots of fun for all. The Métis Regional Council Zone IV would like to thank all the contributors and volunteers who helped to make this week memorable.

In the mid 1980's, Butch (Stan) Plante led a group of people up to the steps of the Alberta Legislature Building for the first time on November 16 to honour the contributions of Louis Riel and to renew the commitment to continue pursuing the vision of the Métis people. Over the years on November 16, we stood on the steps of the Legislature, sometimes in frigid weather, to commemorate our hero and acknowledge the achievements of the Métis people in fulfilling his dreams.

Now, it has turned into seven days of activities to celebrate and share our culture, traditions and to build upon new visions for the future of the Métis Nation.

This year, Father Jim Holland kicked off Métis Week in Edmonton with a Métis mass at the Sacred Heart Church. We continued on Monday by raising the Métis flag at City Hall with Mayor Stephen Mandel.

Also on Monday, the St. Albert Michif Culture and Resource Centre and the Musée Heritage Museum kicked off Métis week in St Albert. The Regional Council Zone IV held the annual open house that same afternoon. On Monday evening the provincial office premiered a video documentary entitled "Riel's Honour" at NAIT's Shaw Theatre.

The other organizations that hosted Open Houses throughout the week were Métis Crossing, Métis Child and Family Services, Métis Nation of

Alberta provincial office, Métis Urban Housing, Métis Employment Services, Métis Judiciary Council and Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc.



Top: Métis veterans lead the procession of gatherers to the flag site for the raising of the Métis Nation flag over Edmonton.

Above: MNA R4 President, Cecil Bellrose, MNA VP Trevor Gladue, and Edmonton Mayor, Stephen Mandel hoist the Métis flag at city hall.

Photos by Rachel Hohn



# Klein Joins in Riel Day Ceremony

by Rachel Hohn

At the commemorative ceremony for Louis Riel Day at the Alberta Legislature Building, Premier Klein and MNA President Audrey Poitras agreed Riel needs to be recognized for his contribution to society.

"Each year on November 16, in cities and towns across the Homeland—from Ontario, through the prairie provinces, into British Columbia and the Northwest Territories—our people gather to commemorate the life of our hero Louis Riel, founder of the province of Manitoba, leader of the Métis people, and champion of Métis Rights," says MNA President Audrey Poitras.

President Poitras says that though previous federal governments had denied Métis the rights they deserved, the past frustrations are being replaced by a sense of justification, pride, and honour. She thanked Premier Klein for the support from his provincial government.

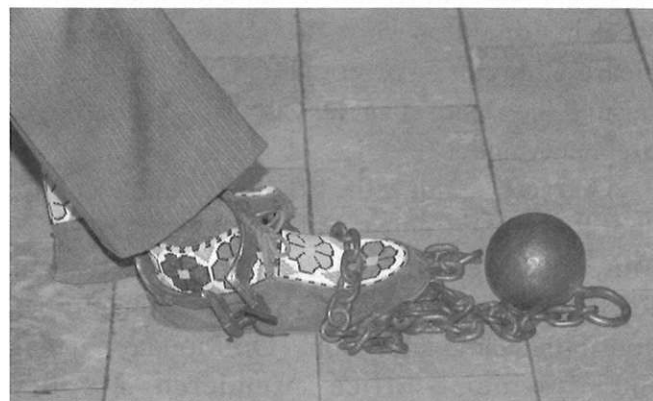
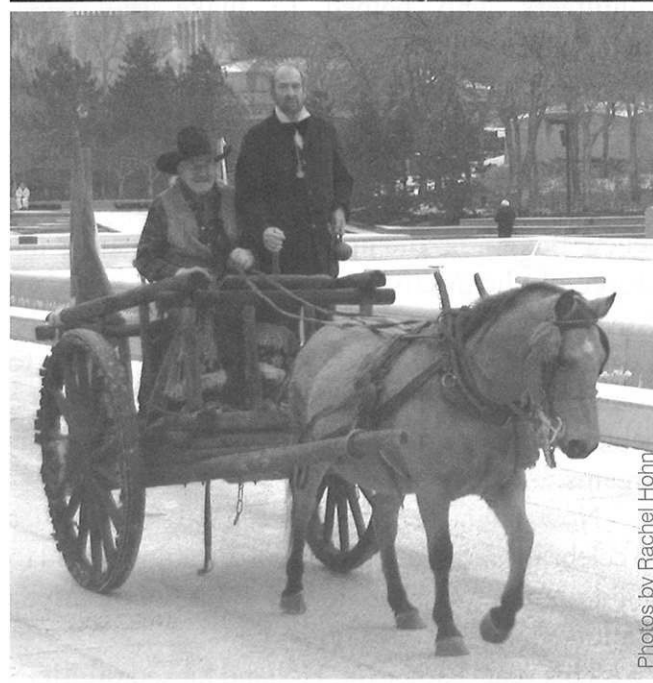
"Our Métis people acknowledge this government's respect for our right to harvest for subsistence purposed—to feed our families—and that makes celebrating Alberta's centennial Anniversary all the more poignant for us."

Premier Klein says that to recognize the contributions of the Métis people to Alberta's development, one must recognize the leadership and sacrifices of Louis Riel. His speech can be found on the following page.

A Red River cart, carrying Dr. Bill Baergen, the actor portraying Louis Riel in his *Last Address to The Jury*, and a fiddler pulled up to the Legislature to start the procession to the ceremony.

Aside from bearing a remarkable resemblance to the historical figure Baergen portrays, he also feels very passionate about Riel's cause. As a Commissioner of Human Rights and Freedoms, Baergen has developed a heart for the underdog. "Riel was hanged for political reasons," he says. "It was a miscarriage of justice. I get very emotional about it."

Leaders from across the province joined the gathered public at Edmonton's legislative grounds to honour Riel's memory. Premier Ralph Klein, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Pearl Calahasen, leader of the Alberta Liberal Party Kevin Taft, Edmonton City Councilor Ed Gibbons, MNA Region 4 vice president Tim Collins, Association Canadienne-Francais de l'Alberta president Jean Johnson, Métis Settlements General Council executive secretary Susan Cardinal, and MNA President Audrey Poitras all spoke at the ceremony.



Top: Dignitaries and leaders watch the Last Address to the Jury.

Middle: Actor Bill Baergen arrives at the ceremony in a Red River cart.

Bottom: A ball and chain encircles the ankle of Louis Riel, played by Bill Baergen.

## Métis Week 2005

# Premier Klein's Speech for Louis Riel Ceremony

This year, Albertans celebrated the first 100 years of their province's history.

Métis people have played a valuable role in that history, a role that actually began long before the creation of the province.

They helped build the communities Albertans thrive in today.

To recognize the contributions of the Métis people to Alberta's development, one must recognize the leadership and sacrifices of Louis Riel.

The Alberta government and the Métis Nation of Alberta have long honoured Louis Riel's vision of a strong, autonomous Métis Nation.

Fifteen years after the proclamation of Alberta Métis settlement legislation, Alberta is still the only province in Canada with a land-based form of Métis government.

That accord has been beneficial for all concerned, giving Métis settlements control over important areas like economic development, and giving Métis people greater independence to make decisions that are right for the health and well-being of their communities.

In 1997, my government renewed its commitment to working with the Métis Nation by making amendments to the original accord legislation to create even greater certainty of funding.

And government continues to work with the Métis Settlements General Council in a number of areas, including justice, labour, family services, economic development and health, to further improve the quality of life enjoyed by Alberta Métis.



Premier Klein speaks to gathered Métis, media, and political leaders at the Riel Day commemorative event.

I'm proud of the special relationship enjoyed by the Alberta government and the Métis Nation of Alberta. It's built on mutual respect and a desire to see all Albertans succeed and thrive.

I think it's a relationship that would make Louis Riel proud, one that reflects the very principles of fairness and self-determination he fought and died for.

Alberta will continue to be a leader in the creation and sustaining of strong Métis communities.

By doing that, Alberta will continue to honour and remember Louis Riel, a father of Confederation, a Canadian hero, and a true leader.

Thank you.

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Métis Week 2005

# Delia Gray Gala

by Rachel Hohn

The Sixth Annual Delia Gray Gala, on Wednesday, November 16, honoured the past and present as people again gathered to honour the memory of the past matriarch.

The two Delia Gray Scholarship recipients, Chantel Quintal and Gordon Bell, were acknowledged for their efforts by the Gray family. Chantel Quintal was in attendance for the event, and says she was very honoured by the award. Quintal is one of the first Métis women to be enrolled in Red Deer College's Performing Arts program.

Bell, as the first person in his whole family to attend university, is enrolled in the psychology

program at St. Mary's University in Halifax, NS. He is majoring in sports psychology. Bell was unable to attend the event.

Métis matriarchs were also honoured at the evening ceremony. Two women often not recognized for their work behind the scenes, Rose Findlay and Kathy Cunningham, were brought to the centre of attention in front of 275 guests. The two matriarchs were presented with hand-stitched Métis quilts made by Doreen Wabasca. They were wrapped in the blanket's warmth as the auditorium wrapped the two women in applause and praise.

Cunningham is the proud mother of 10 children, a very active

community volunteer, and was the secretary of the Valleyview local for over 25 years. Her local members say they see Cunningham fiddling, jigging, and helping out others at their Métis events.

Findlay, born on Christmas day, is a lover of art and tradition. She hunted, trapped, and fished all her life. She often cooked for and taught hunters and outfitters the traditional ways to perform tasks. Findlay is also traditional about her artwork, creating designs and scenes from nothing more than tanned hides and horsehair. In her community of Grand Cache, she is loved, honoured and welcomed as a grandmother and is known throughout the area as one to be



Left: Métis Matriarchs, Rose Findlay and Kathy Cunningham, sit snuggled in the new quilts given to them by the MNA for their hard work over the years.

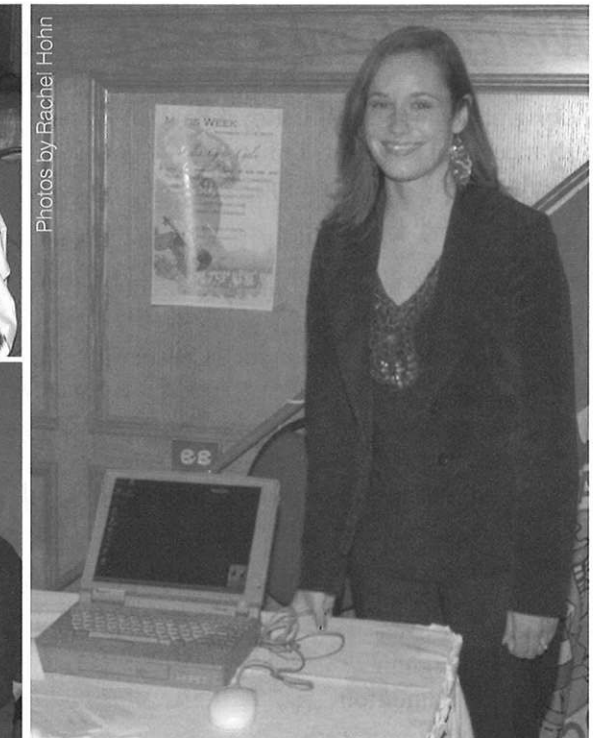
Right: Cynthia Dunnigan, granddaughter of Delia Gray, hands scholarship recipient Chantel Quintal her certificate.



Top Left (right to left): Les Noosekey, Bob Ghostkeeper and his wife Maddy Daniels, came from the Paddle Prairie Métis Settlement to attend the gala event.

Above Left: Youth voyageurs were awarded for their hard work by a presentation from MNA Youth Programs Coordinator, Kim Mueller

Right: Whitney Juszkievicz poses by the newly refurbished computer she won in one of the gala's raffles.



respected.

The Gray gala honoured the eight youth voyageurs that travelled down the North Saskatchewan River this past August on their way to Métis Crossing. MNA Youth Programs Coordinator, Kim Mueller, presented the youth, Brittany Cherweniuk, Wesley Quintal, Zoe Collins, Kari-Lyn Brett, Corbin Poitras, Fera Mitchell, Addlore Friedel, and Sean Soucie, with handmade satchels.

Youth voyageur, Wesley Quintal, thought the event was important for him because he and his family had not participated in many heritage events.

"My family taught me some pride coming here taught me more," Quintal says.

The gala concluded with a

performance by the Archie Collins Band, and throughout the night, Robert Lee, Cynthia Gray, RCMP Sgt. Dan Bradford, and President Poitras respectively

toasted in honour of Louis Riel, Delia Gray, the MNA President, and to the Métis Nation of Alberta.

Wishing our Métis friends and their families  
a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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It is important to also acknowledge all who participated in purchasing tables and volunteering for this event. Thank you all for your generous contributions, be it monetary, gift or time. Granddaughter of Delia Gray, Cynthia Dunnigan says, "The Gray family is honoured and touched by the wonderful tribute paid by the Métis Nation of Alberta to a true Métis Matriarch, Mrs. Delia Gray. The family extends their thanks to the sponsors of the event."

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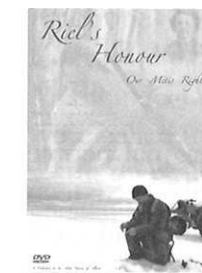
Métis parents attending this conference will gain knowledge so that they may strengthen their families and promote healthy lifestyles and harmonious living. Highlights of the workshops include information and workshops on: *Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Drugs and Your Child, School Bullying and Family Violence, Disabilities, Advocating for your child in the Education System, Parenting: Rights and Responsibilities.*

**If you would like more information about the conference please contact  
Amanda L'Hirondelle at 1-800-252-7553.**



## Métis Week 2005 *Harvesting Rights Documentary Unveiled*

by Rachel Hohn



Over 50 people gathered at NAIT's Shaw theatre to watch the premiere viewing for the documentary, *Riel's Honour, Our Métis Rights*.

"It's a story that every member of the Métis Nation of Alberta can relate to on some level since it is about the Supreme Court of Canada's unanimous ruling in *Powley*, affirming that Métis have the aboriginal right to harvest for food," MNA Audrey Poitras said. "This is a story about Métis taking pride in our culture and celebrating our heritage."

The communications office's goal in creating this documentary was to ensure the story of the *Powley* decision was told properly in the media, and was told from a Métis perspective.

"The Métis Nation of Alberta believes strongly in ensuring our Métis perspective is represented accurately and fairly in a story that spans the generations and begins in the days of Riel and Dumont, when Métis were the Lords of the Prairies and our heroes began the pursuit of recognition for our people," President Poitras said.

The *R. v. Powley* court case was a precedent-setting case for Métis across Canada. The Courts upheld s.35 of the 1982 Constitution Act, affirming Métis have the Aboriginal right to harvest for subsistence purposes.

The documentary takes that ruling and applies the law to a contemporary Métis family, the Lacombe family, who are harvesting to provide for their family. Greg Lacombe and his family attended the screening, and both he and his wife say they liked how the final edit was done. Greg adds that it was a bit odd having a camera crew constantly following him.

After the viewing, many gathered around to talk about what the premiere meant to them. Todd Sikkes and Sherrill Meropoulis work with Jasper's Parks Services, and are often involved in Métis events. They could only say good things about the documentary.

"It doesn't need any build-up or explanation at all," Sikkes says. Meropoulis agrees with Sikkes and says the DVD gave her a sense of what it is really like for the Métis people, and it gave her a sense of self.

Adrianna Davies, executive director of the Heritage Community Foundation says she thought *Riel's Honour* did a good job of making the story contemporary and meaningful to today's Métis.

"That made it come alive for me, seeing a real family go through their struggles," she says.

For more information on the documentary, or on how to obtain a DVD for yourself, please email [communications@metis.org](mailto:communications@metis.org).



Top: The audience rises to hear the Metis Nation Anthem, as the packed house waits for the documentary to begin. Above: The Lacombe family awaits the viewing of the documentary.



## Métis Week 2005 Métis Culture Alive in Medicine Hat

by Amy Connochi

**M**étis pride and spirit shone in Medicine Hat during the 2005 Métis Week Celebrations. Medicine Hat celebrated Métis Week with festivities, banquets, jigging, and entertainment.

Over a hundred people gathered to watch the Métis flag as it rose high over the city on November 16. Métis veterans Louis Goodine and James Prettie raised the flag as the Métis National Anthem played on a day of pride for the Métis community.

Following the flag raising ceremony, the Mayor of Medicine Hat, Garth Valley, honoured the Métis Nation, and the work they do in their communities. MNA Region 3 President Marlene Lanz addressed the crowd in a moving speech about the feelings Métis Week invokes. MNA Medicine Hat Local President Jeannette Hansen closed the ceremony by offering respect to Louis Riel and the ultimate sacrifice he gave to the Métis people his life.

During the day of November 16, the Miywasin Society of Aboriginal Services facilitated an Aboriginal Awareness training session. The purpose was to create awareness within the community about aboriginal issues, like racism, and

knowledge of the history of the aboriginal people who resided in the Medicine Hat are. Sixteen people took part in the training session and each received a certificate.

Louis Riel's words rang out strong in the evening of Nov. 16 at the Miywasin Centre. Wally Garrioch, a Métis actor, captivated the audience with his performance of Louis Riel's *Last Address to the Jury*. Nelson Hogg, Ed Swaggert, Jeannette Hansen, Emilie Landrie, Roxanne McKenzie and Wally Garrioch performed live music. Old Métis tunes made the event feel like a home coming for many elders. The Miywasin Métis Jiggers, who danced a number of jigs including: Lady Round Lady, Heel Toe Polka and the Red River Jig, demonstrated their fancy footwork. It was a fun and energetic evening that embodied the Métis culture and spirit.

On Nov. 17, the Miywasin Centre hosted an Open House. The centre was filled with people, laughter, and music as refreshments and goodies were served. The Open House was a chance for the community of Medicine Hat to visit the centre, meet

the staff, and learn more about the programs and services they offered.

The week ended with the Elder's Banquet and Veterans Commemoration on Nov. 19. It was an emotional and special night, which honoured the elders and paid respect to the Métis Veterans in the Medicine Hat community. Six Métis Veterans were called up and individually introduced. They were then honoured with a presentation of a special Métis sash.

It was an emotional ceremony, as many of the Veterans had never received the recognition, or the acknowledgment they deserved. Victor Scarlett from Veterans Affairs Canada concluded the presentations by presenting some special gifts to the Veterans.

Métis culture, history, music, and dance were celebrated during Métis Week Festivities in Medicine Hat. People gathered, shared stories, laughed, smiled, and discussed the old days. This week the Métis culture came alive and was shared with all in the community of Medicine Hat.

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Left: Young dancers display their fancy footwork during the Métis Week celebrations in Medicine Hat.  
Right: Performer Jeannette Hansen, MNA VP Trevor Gladue, Veterans Affairs' Victor Scarlett, Mayor Garth Vallely, and Cultural Coordinator Amy Connochie enjoy the festivities at the elders banquet on November 19.



## Métis Battalion Graduates from fire etc.

by Patricia Russell

The first-ever battalion of Métis students has finished a Métis-specific training program at Lakeland College for structural firefighters with emergency medical technician designations. The battalion held their final parade and recognition ceremony on November 5, 2005, after spending 46 weeks living and training together at the *fire etc.* facility in Vermilion, AB.

The graduates are trained in all aspects of fire fighting and received internationally recognized certification that will allow participants to apply to all fire stations in North America. The training also provides graduates with an Emergency Services Medical Technician (EMT) designation allowing them to work in ambulances.

The recognition ceremony included a slide presentation combined with music, depicting the various stages and types of training the students received. Images of flames engulfing the practice fire structures, students dressed in protective gear, wearing facemasks made it difficult for visitors to recognize who was who on the screen. Video images of students practising on each other their skills with

hypodermic needles, faces grimacing, drew laughter from the tight group of classmates, now lifelong friends.

"We pulled closer together as a group to keep us going successfully," said Michael Andruik, who spoke on behalf of the battalion, expressing thanks to their instructors, their families, and to program supporters.

Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras congratulated the graduates for their "endurance and commitment to meeting the challenges of learning a trade that touches the most precious part of our lives, our sense of security and sense of safety in our homes and in our day to day lives." President Poitras offered her gratitude to the students saying, "Who knows, one day one of you might be called into action to save my home, my life, or the lives of my husband, my son, my grandchildren."

The Métis Nation of Alberta's Labour Market Development Unit developed the partnership with *fire etc.* and Lakeland College. The final procession wrapped up the first successful project of its kind to be attempted in Alberta and across the country: to train and graduate a full battalion of Métis men and women



Photos by Patricia Russell



Photo by Patricia Russell

Above: (back row, l-r) Cameron Johnson, Sean Currah, Michael Andruik, MNA President Audrey Poitras, Neil MacLeod, Chris Trotter, Wade Fiddler, and Jesse Poulin  
(front row, l-r) Matt Harrison, "Wes" Ronald Ivey, Mark Fieger, Kyle Luc, and Freddy Bickell  
Previous Page: Métis artist Geo Leask from Medicine Hat painted the artwork on the battalion 6 helmet and on the fire axe. The axe was presented as a gift to President Poitras.

who may one day provide emergency services in their home communities. The twelve students are now in work placement settings across the province.

MNA Region 2 President Karen Collins describes the program as particularly special for the Métis Nation of Alberta, "It draws together resources and people from every part of the province including the staff of the Labour Market Development Unit in Region 2."

President Poitras and Region 2 Elder Francis Dumais presented each graduate with a Métis sash to recognize their achievements and value to the Métis community.

Additionally, recognition was given to MNA Labour Market Development managers Guido Contreras from Calgary and Joan Isaac from Edmonton, both involved in negotiating the partnership.



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## Métis Residential School Students Federal Compensation Worth \$2 Billion



by Rachel Hohn

**M**étis, along with other Aboriginal peoples, are one step closer to putting the past behind them with the announcement of a government compensation agreement worth \$2 billion for those who attended government-funded Indian Residential Schools. The agreement was negotiated between the government, church, and school organizations with the Merchant Law Group acting on behalf of the students.

More than 80,000 surviving Métis, Inuit and First Nations students will be able to apply for the lump sum funding of \$10,000 per student—plus \$3,000 for every year he or she was in residential school. The average payment per student is expected to be around \$26,500, according to Tony Merchant, the head of Merchant Law Group.

Complainants over the age of 65 are offered a lump sum payment of \$8,000 to fast-track the payment process. They will receive that amount in three to four months, and the rest of the money in six to eight months, says Merchant. Any former student alive on the date of May 30, 2005 is eligible for the payments that will be paid out by Services Canada.

"It's a favourable settlement," says Merchant. "Our agreement with the government is that our firm is paid a set fee no matter how many people we act for. The Métis need to know we will act for them without any charge...they get a lawyer for free."

He says anyone who is eligible for the compensation should contact his office through its website at [www.merchantlaw.com](http://www.merchantlaw.com), by toll-free line at 1-888-567-7777, or for a local contact, call Matthew Merchant in Calgary at (403) 225-7777.

"There's a lot of money that people can obtain," he says. "People need to get registered." And, there are a lot of eligible Métis. According to the Canadian

Government website there were 24 recorded Indian Residential Schools in Alberta alone.

However, Métis students who attended residential schools that were funded privately by religious organizations will not be eligible for compensation under the current agreement. And, because of that, Merchant launched on Friday, December 9, a class-action suit against the government's partially funded Ile de La Crosse Residential School in Saskatchewan.

Merchant says all Métis should be compensated no matter what residential school they went to.

"We advocate that everyone who attended an Indian Residential Schools ought to receive compensation whether First Nations, Métis, or anybody else," he says.

President Clément Chartier of the Métis National Council says the MNC is advocating all Métis who attended residential schools be awarded compensation regardless of who primarily funded the school.

"It is truly unfortunate that the federal government takes no responsibility for the residential schools established by the religious orders for Métis, although the Métis students suffered the same kinds of physical, mental, cultural and psychological abuse and indignities suffered by students who attended Indian Residential Schools, particularly since Canada allowed these institutions to operate," says President Chartier.

Along with the \$2 billion in funding to individual students, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation will also receive \$125 million to heal those hurt or abused by residential schools.

AHF spokesperson Wayne Spear says the \$125 million will work out to cover just three years of operating costs. "Our view is that this is another good step and we have made the case that the work we are doing is worthwhile," Spear says.

Indian Residential schools—federally funded, but mostly run by Catholic, United, Anglican, and Presbyterian churches—allegedly performed many verbal, physical, and sexual abuses against students aged 4 to 16. There were an estimated 130 Residential Schools in Canada and they spanned the country everywhere except Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

## National Issues Métis Nation Signs Métis Human Resources Development Accord

by Robert McDonald, MNC

**O**ttawa (November 15, 2005) - The Métis Nation Accord on Human Resources Development was signed in Ottawa by Belinda Stronach, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development. Joining her was Métis National Council President Clément Chartier and David Chartrand, the Métis Nation's Minister responsible for Social Development.

The Accord follows on from and enables the continuation of nearly ten years of successful devolution to the Métis Nation of the administration and management of human resources and skills development labour market programs and services designed for Métis people. It provides a framework for the negotiation and implementation of Métis-specific employment training under the Government of Canada's Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS), renewed this year. The AHRDS is a strategy with a purpose to enhance employment prospects and opportunities for unemployed Aboriginal people, including youth and persons with disabilities.

President Chartier says, "This Accord continues the underlying framework which provides important program support and delivery which helps ensure Métis people have culturally relevant and competitive training and employment opportunities. The benefits are multiple: to individuals, their families and communities, as well as the Métis Nation and Canada at large."

Minister Chartrand adds, "Because of its proven track record in assisting our people with training and employment opportunities, we cite this as a highly successful partnership model. And we are very pleased this Accord has been completed to allow us to continue to increase the skills and workforce participation of Métis."

Approximately \$45 million in labour market programs and services for Métis people are delivered at the regional and local levels through Métis-specific AHRDS partnership agreements. The Accord provides the framework for the work to continue.



MMF President David Chartrand, Minister Belinda Stronach, and MNC President Clément Chartier.

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# Interim Métis Harvesting Agreement Restoring the Lac La Biche Fishery

by Patricia Russell

Officials with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (ASRD) Fisheries and Wildlife want to hold a community meeting with Métis in Lac La Biche to discuss the poor state of the lake's aquatic ecosystem, particularly the depleted fish stock and to explore measures for restoring the fishery. The meeting will be held in January in Lac La Biche with the date, time, and place to be announced later.

Region 1 President Ken Bourque says, "A Métis-specific meeting will allow this important information to be heard by Métis fishers without the risk of a clash between Métis and non-Métis fishers."

Paul MacMahon, the Regional Head of Fisheries Management (NE Region), and Fisheries Biologist Chris Davis recently met with Audrey Poitras, President of the Métis Nation of Alberta, Cecil Bellrose, Minister of Métis Rights, and Ken Bourque, President Region 1 to discuss Alberta's proposed restoration program for Lac La Biche.

According to MacMahon, the goal of the proposal is to recover the top-level predator fish species, the walleye and the northern pike and to improve the population of perch and whitefish. "The health of the Lac La Biche ecosystem and quality of the fishery can be substantially increased by

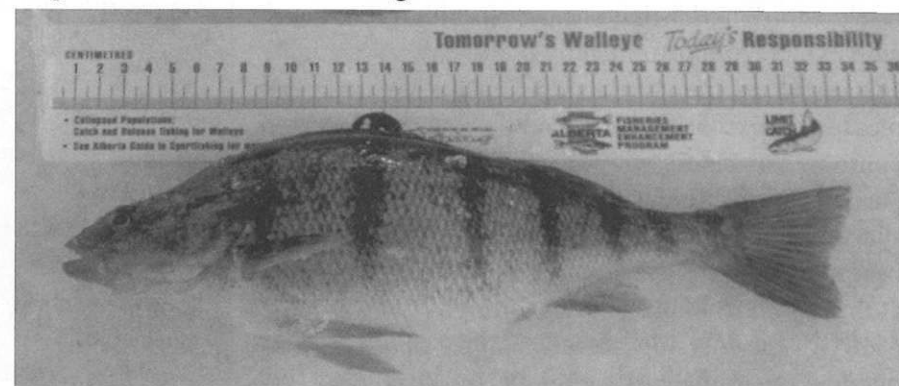
increasing the number of predator fish in the lake," says MacMahon. But achieving the goal may require the fishery on Lac La Biche to be closed altogether for a period of at least five years.

MacMahon says a study conducted by ASRD, Lakeland County, and the University of Alberta concludes the lake's ecosystem is in poor shape due to a long history of over-fishing and a resultant large increase in cormorants, a type of fish-eating bird, as having the greatest current negative impact.

In their presentation, MacMahon and Davis outlined the historical records of the Lac La Biche fishery noting that the over-fishing of whitefish and walleye in the 1960's and earlier, combined with continued fishing pressures since then have resulted in the fish populations inability to recover. The more recent predation pressure from the many cormorants in the area upon small fish, such as perch, means they do not have enough time to grow to larger sizes and are maturing at

smaller sizes than normal, resulting in the production of even more small fish.

A consequence of an increase in small fish is an increase in the food supply for fish eating birds such as double-crested cormorants, pelicans and western grebes, all natural to the area. the number of cormorants is increasing at a dramatic rate. MacMahon says



"80 to 90 per cent of fish consumption right now is attributed to cormorants. Extraordinary measures, such as a vigorous cull of the cormorant population, must be taken to begin returning balance to the ecosystem."

But Davis says the cormorant cull must be done in a manner that protects other birds nesting in the area. "The cull has to be done at a certain time of day under optimal weather conditions and for limited periods of time to ensure other birds will not be kept away from warming eggs in their nests," says Davis.

The proposal to close the fishery on Lac La Biche and to cull the cormorant population has been under discussion since May 2005. ASRD has held at least two public consultations in the community to explain the science behind the proposal and to describe to lake users how the fishery came to this point in history. MacMahon says, "Educating and helping people to understand what's happening in the fish world is very important."

MNA President Audrey

Poitras endorses the idea of ASRD meeting with Métis in Lac La Biche saying, "The presentation of the facts about the fishery on Lac La Biche will be good for our people to hear."

Region 1 President Bourque agrees saying, "The situation on Lac La Biche has to be fixed. Something has to be done and our people need to see this presentation about the problem that exists on the lake and not see this as a flash point between users."

According to ASRD, approximately 65 Domestic Fishing Licenses have been issued to Métis fishers on Lac La Biche. Davis estimates that many of the licenses have not been used. At present, six to eight commercial fishing licenses have been issued for the lake with two Métis as active career fisherman who carry similar licenses for other nearby lakes. Davis says ASRD continues to buy back commercial fishing licenses issued for Lac La Biche.



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## Metis Harvesting Issues

### Migratory Birds

*Editor's note: Numerous Métis harvesters are seeking answers to whether or not they may harvest migratory birds. The following guidelines, issued by Canada, describe the federal approach to identifying Métis harvesters for the purpose of exercising Aboriginal harvesting rights under areas of federal responsibility, such as migratory birds.*

While the provincial and territorial governments are primarily responsible for the management and regulation of most natural resources within their boundaries, the Government of Canada is responsible for the management and regulation of those natural resources under its control. These areas include the use and access of federal Crown lands (e.g., National Parks and other federal protected areas, military bases and ranges), as well as migratory birds and coastal fish species.

As such, the federal government has many Acts, regulations and policies that apply at a national level, in order to ensure consistent and responsible management of these resources across the country. These Acts, regulations and policies are enforced by the appropriate federal department, with the support of other federal departments and agencies, as well as by provincial governments.

Key federal departments and agencies that manage or regulate federal Crown lands and resources include: Fisheries and Oceans, Environment Canada - Canadian Wildlife Service; Parks Canada Agency; National Defense; Natural Resources Canada; and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Many of these departments have policies in place to accommodate Aboriginal harvesting, where harvesting is permitted. This is because

Aboriginal peoples of Canada have a special relationship to the land and its resources. Many live a traditional lifestyle, and continue to rely upon harvesting as a way of life with wild game as primary or supplementary source for their diet.

- The Department of Fisheries and Oceans policy for coastal fisheries allows Aboriginal groups who meet the criteria of the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy to access food, social, ceremonial and commercial fisheries by way of providing them a communal fishing licence.
- The Canadian Wildlife Services policy allows an Aboriginal person to harvest migratory birds without a permit, in or out of season, for food, social and ceremonial purpose.
- There is no hunting allowed within Department of National Defence properties, migratory bird sanctuaries, or in most National Parks.

Harvesters who claim they are an Aboriginal person for the purposes of these policies, must identify and prove themselves as such to the federal resource and enforcement officers on-the-ground.

#### Purpose:

The purpose of these interim guidelines is to:

Provide immediate guidance to federal departments and their resource and enforcement officers on how to identify an individual harvester as Métis, in a consistent manner across the country, on a principled basis, for the purposes of existing federal Aboriginal harvesting policies.

- Contribute towards a consistent federal approach in respect of Métis harvesting, which takes into account provincial arrangements for identification of Métis harvesters and current forms of Métis self-organization.
- Ensure stable management of land, water and other natural resources under federal jurisdiction (federal resources) while accommodating Métis access to these resources for the purpose of harvesting.

#### Background:

Supreme Court of Canada decisions over the past thirty years have affirmed that First Nations and Inuit people have a special relationship to the land and its resources, and that they

can and do hold Aboriginal rights to harvest for food. Until recently, the Supreme Court of Canada has not addressed the existence of Métis Aboriginal rights to harvest.

On September 19, 2003, for the first time, the Supreme Court of Canada recognized and affirmed that Métis hold a constitutionally protected Aboriginal right to harvest for food (*R. v. Powley*). More importantly, the Supreme Court set out a test for establishing Métis Aboriginal rights that has application across the country. Aboriginal harvesting rights, including Métis rights, are contextual and site-specific. Aboriginal rights are communal rights, they must be grounded in the existence of a historic and present day community, and they may only be exercised by virtue of an individual's ancestrally based membership in the present community.

It is up to the Aboriginal collective to provide the proof of an Aboriginal right, if they so assert one. However, at the same time, governments must continue to manage lands and natural resources in a responsible manner, balancing the interests of all Canadians against the practices of Aboriginal groups who may hold these rights. This means that all federal Acts, regulations and policies take steps to accommodate the possible existence of Aboriginal rights to harvest, to ensure that such a right is not unjustifiably infringed upon.

While these Acts, regulations and policies were found to be broadly written to accommodate Aboriginal harvesting practices, it was determined that there were little to no tools to identify a Métis individual on-the-ground for the purposes of implementing these regulatory mechanisms.

As a result, it was determined that there needed to be a set of principled criteria established for the determination of who could

claim to be a Métis harvester for the purposes of implementing existing federal Aboriginal harvesting policies. These guidelines do not override the other elements of the existing federal harvesting policies; their criteria must still be met (e.g., the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy requires that there is an accepted Aboriginal community and sets out the criteria for that determination). Rather, they are intended to complement the existing policies, allowing a consistent application across the country when accommodating Métis access to federal lands and resources for the purpose of harvesting, where such harvesting is permitted.

#### Scope:

These guidelines for the identification of Métis apply to all federal departments that manage or regulate federal Crown lands and natural resources, where they have Aboriginal harvesting policies in place, or where they permit access by Aboriginal people to federal lands and natural resources for the purposes of harvesting.

In all cases, if the action of the harvester raises a conservation or public safety issue, or is in an area where harvesting is not permitted, the federal resource and enforcement officer will lay relevant charges, and may seize equipment and goods.

#### Principles:

- This approach is based on the premise that harvesting may occur, where permitted, for the purpose of food, social and ceremonial requirements but not for commercial purposes.
- This approach seeks to ensure the continuance of culturally appropriate harvesting practices within the boundaries of public health and safety.

conservation.

- This approach is founded on the goal of ensuring conservation and good management of the species being harvested and allows for monitoring of the use of the resource(s).
- This approach parallels the federal policy approaches for identification and harvesting access that are made for First Nations and Inuit.
- This approach seeks appropriate harmonization with provincial operational and regulation guidelines (e.g., regarding residency).

#### Interim Identification Criteria to determine who is a Métis for purposes of Harvesting:

The following are inclusive and must be demonstrated by the individual:

- Person declares themselves to be: Métis, or a member of a Métis community.
- Ancestral connection to a historic Métis community as evidenced by:
- Family scrip records, census, archival, church or other historical records (with genealogical connection demonstrated) to demonstrate ancestry; or,
- Certain Métis membership cards where:
  - the organization has a genealogy requirement;
  - the organization is undertaking work to ensure their membership or harvester identification system is objectively verifiable; and,
  - the government may audit the membership or harvester system to ensure that it is objectively verifiable and have confidence that it may be relied upon for its purposes of applying its harvesting policies.
- Residency within the





province or territory in question.

Federal resource and enforcement officers also will request that the person claiming a Métis Aboriginal right to harvest to provide, within a set period of time, documentation or other relevant information to demonstrate her/his Métis identification of affiliation, and where relevant any authorization under any relevant programs, such as the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy.

If possible, the individuals involved should be advised that they are conducting harvesting activities which may be illegal and warned of the potential implications, including the possibility that charges may be laid if the unauthorized activity continues.

An assessment will be made by the federal resource and enforcement officers in consultation with appropriate authorities based on departmental procedures (e.g., Crown prosecutors, supervisors, resource departments) regarding the possible need for further enforcement actions, up to and including the laying of charges. Each situation will have to be evaluated based on the specific circumstances involved.

Factors to be considered include the quantity harvested, the potential for violence and the likelihood that a lack of enforcement action will lead to an increased level of unauthorized harvesting activity. If, based on the best available information, there is a significant risk of an escalation of unauthorized harvesting activity or of conflicts/confrontations involving other groups (e.g., commercial harvesters, or members of First Nations) more direct enforcement action, such as gear seizures, may be required.

#### Practical Application:

In certain provinces, work by the Métis leadership is ongoing to identify Métis harvesters and to develop more objectively verifiable membership systems. This work may lead to the development of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Government of Canada and the Métis organization. As a result of such an MOU, the federal resource and enforcement officers may rely upon the membership or harvester cards of the organization to identify the individual as Métis for the purposes of applying the federal

Aboriginal harvesting policies.

Use of these cards is an aid for the federal resource and enforcement officers to apply the appropriate federal Aboriginal harvesting policies, and their use does not constitute a recognition of Aboriginal rights.

Federal resource and enforcement officers will continue record information to assist with the management and conservation of the resources, unless there is a reporting back element in the MOU (where the Métis organization will report to government on the harvest by their harvesters



## 2005 Federal Election Métis Nation Seeks Federal Parties' Stand on Métis Issues

by Robert McDonald



OTTAWA (November 30, 2005) - Métis National Council President, Clément Chartier, wrote to the leadership of all the federal parties requesting their party's policy positions on Métis issues.

"The Métis National Council is in the process of undertaking an analysis of the federal parties' policy platforms vis-à-vis Métis with a view to fully informing our citizens in the upcoming election. Our analysis will be posted on the Métis National Council's website and widely circulated to Métis people and communities from Ontario westward," wrote President Chartier. Further, in the letters, President Chartier posed a series of specific questions with respect to Métis rights, self-government and improving the quality of life of Métis Nation citizens. The Métis National Council has asked for responses to these inquiries by December 15, 2005.

President Chartier added, "In this election, I am encouraging all Métis citizens to exercise one of the rights our people hold dear; namely, the right to vote. Our people deserve to know where the federal parties stand on Métis issues in order for them to make an informed decision on January 23rd."

There are approximately 250,000 voting age Métis Nation citizens living from Ontario west in this federal election. In specific ridings from Ontario to British Columbia, these Métis voters could have significant impacts on election result. In over 50 ridings, the Aboriginal vote can be a deciding factor in an election. For example, in 45 ridings, the Aboriginal voting age populations exceed 5 per cent of the total electorate. Of these 45, eight ridings have voting age populations of 10,000 or more and an additional 21 have Aboriginal voting populations of 5,000 or more.

The MNC represents the Métis Nation in Canada at the national and international level. The Métis Nation's homeland includes the three Prairie provinces and extends into Ontario, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, and the northern United States. There are approximately 350,000 - 400,000 Métis Nation citizens in Canada. Métis represent approximately 30 per cent of the total Aboriginal population in Canada, according to Statistics Canada.

From a letter sent by MNC President Clément Chartier to the leaders of the four federal parties:

"I am requesting a copy of your party's Aboriginal policy. In addition, I am requesting answers to the following questions:

1. Does your party acknowledge the existence of the Métis Nation, as an Aboriginal people within Canada?
2. Does your party recognize that the Métis have existing Aboriginal and Treaty rights that must be recognized and accommodated by the federal government?
3. Does your party support and commit to implement the \$5.1 billion transformative change package agreed to between First Ministers and national Aboriginal leaders on November 25, 2005?
4. Does your party support and agree to the *Canada-Métis Nation Framework Agreement* that was signed between the Government of Canada and the Métis National Council on May 31, 2005?
5. Does your party have specific commitments to the Métis people within its election platform?
6. Does your party recognize and support Métis self-government?
  - a. How would your party work with Métis governments in order to fully implement Métis rights and self-government?
  - b. Does your party support the establishment of a Métis Comprehensive Claims process?
  - c. Would your government commit financial resources to undertake this work with Métis governments?
7. Would your party continue and/or enhance the current federal resources provided to Métis governments for the implementation of the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in *R.v.Powley*?
8. Does your party support a distinctions-based approach between the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples? Would your party abandon pan-Aboriginal approaches (e.g. Urban Aboriginal Strategy) which have resulted in poor results and access for Métis?
9. Does your party commit to addressing the issue of compensation for Métis veterans?"



# Canada Votes 2006

## Métis Vote Can Influence Federal Election

by Patricia Russell

Board members at a recent meeting of the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Provincial Council agreed to encourage Métis to vote strategically to avoid electing a government that does not support the Métis agenda. The Provincial Council agreed unanimously on the importance of ensuring the Métis agenda continues to move forward.

Region 6 President Sylvia Johnson says it's important for the Métis people to be involved in the election and to "remind our people of the good things that are happening in the Nation right now because of this Liberal government's readiness to recognize our Métis rights. We have to knock on doors and remind our people that a Conservative government under Stephen Harper will put the Métis Nation right back

to square one. We'll end up begging for recognition again and we can't go back to that."

*Flanagan's writings also include strategies to "minimize the damage caused by the thoughtless elevation of the Métis to the status of a distinct 'aboriginal' people".*

Regional President Johnson was among the Métis delegation of observers at the recent First Ministers Meeting (FMM) on Aboriginal Issues in Kelowna, BC. Referring to the \$5.1 billion transformative change agreements reached at the meeting, Johnson says, "The agreements will be at stake under any other

government. Our people are looking forward to improvements in their living standards through housing, health, and education; all of that is at stake under a government led by Stephen Harper."

Métis National Council President Clément Chartier recently sent a letter to the leaders of the federal parties asking for answers to specific

questions about policies as they relate to the Métis Nation. President Chartier asks for the party's response to whether or not they will continue to honour the agreements reached at the FMM, whether or not they will honour the Canada-Métis Nation Framework Agreement signed on May 31, 2005, and whether or not their parties acknowledge the Métis Nation, period.

As of press time, the only response to those questions has come from the Liberal Party, which is also the federal party that created the Aboriginal People's Commission (APC) in 1990, which recognizes the place of Aboriginal people within Canada.

The same questions were offered to Conservative candidates in three Alberta ridings; only one responded. Brian Jean, running for the Conservatives in Fort McMurray-Athabasca says, "I'm not knowledgeable in those areas of policy. My area of expertise is environmental issues and softwood lumber. I don't know the official party answer to those questions; you'd have to talk to Jim

Prentice, the Conservative Critic for Aboriginal Affairs."

Jean said the Conservative policy on Aboriginal issues will be released in January along with a number of other 'big ticket' policies.

In the 2004 Election, the Conservative policy on Aboriginal issues was written or influenced by Tom Flanagan, an American-born Academic described as Stephen Harpers political mentor and 'soul mate'.

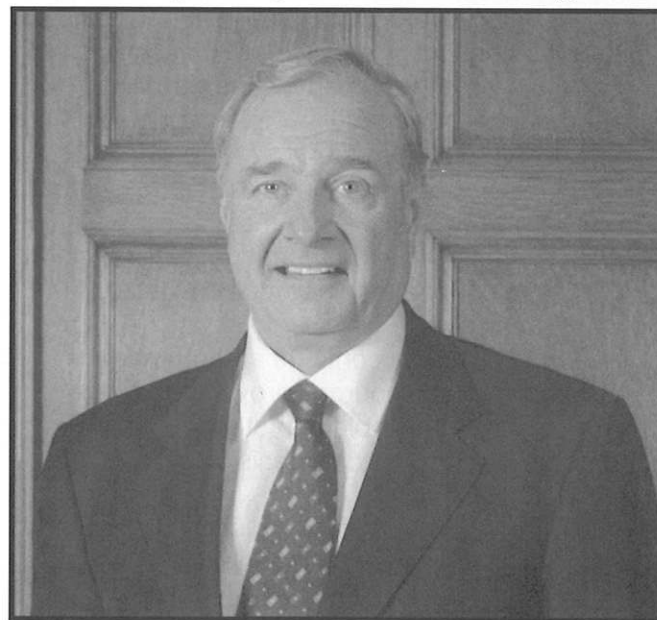
Flanagan was Harper's Chief of Staff for a period of time and remains an extremely close friend to the Conservative leader.

Flanagan's ideas inflamed the Aboriginal community, including the Métis, with his writings in a book titled, "First Nations Second Thoughts" in which he describes the Métis people as an "economically marginal, incohesive assortment of heterogeneous groups". Flanagan's writings also include strategies to "minimize the damage caused by the thoughtless elevation of the Métis to the status of a distinct 'aboriginal' people".

While Flanagan is kept out of the public eye in

*"When Métis go the polls this year, our people are also voting for the good of the Métis Nation."*

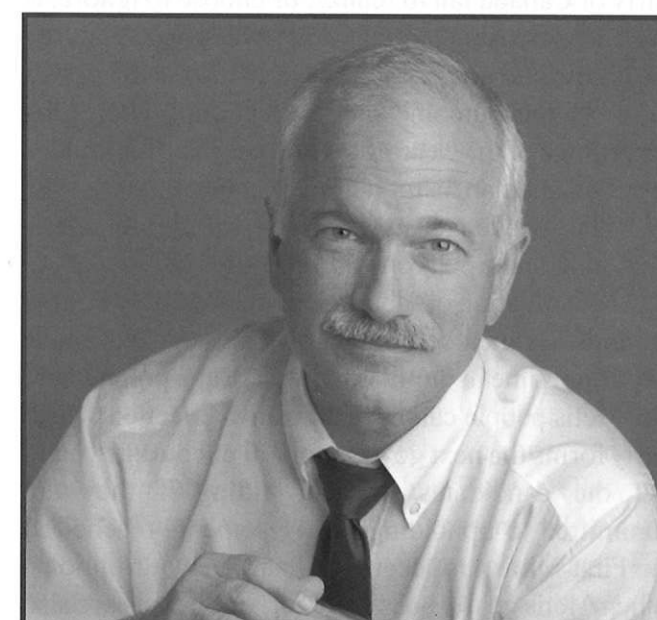
-President Poitras



Paul Martin - Liberal



Stephen Harper - Conservative



Jack Layton - NDP



Gilles Duceppe - Bloc Québécois





this election, his presence in the Conservative Party remains dominant. He continues to whisper his ideas of 'assimilation' for Aboriginal people into the ambitious ears of Stephen Harper, who, within hours of the election call, announced his intentions to ignore the Charter of Rights and Freedoms by invoking the notwithstanding clause to repeal gay marriage if his party is elected. Flanagan, too, speaks against the Charter and the Constitution as they relate to Aboriginal rights saying the best approach for Aboriginal policy is full and outright assimilation.

Before the last election, MNC President Clément Chartier asked Stephen Harper if he agreed with the 'antiquated, ill-informed, regressive and offensive writings of Flanagan'.

"The fact that Mr. Flanagan is in a position of power to influence the Conservative Party is of real concern to our people and should be to all

***"A Conservative government under Stephen Harper will put the Metis Nation back into the Dark Ages."***

-MNA R6 President Johnson

Canadians," said Chartier. "Flanagan's position on Aboriginal peoples is one of denial, assimilation and non-recognition of our Constitutional rights. His positions are counter to many Supreme Court of Canada decisions, including the landmark *Powley* decision, which affirmed Métis have existing Aboriginal rights protected by section 35 of the Constitution Act, (1982). We are calling on Mr. Harper to denounce Mr. Flanagan's insulting and outdated positions."

Harper ignored the Métis Nation altogether and to this day has made no attempt to answer the question.

In a letter to the Presidents of the Métis National Council Board of Governors, the Aboriginal Peoples Commission writes, "It has been demonstrated time and time again that Stephen Harper is not open to working with Aboriginal peoples, in fact, a number of his members have made offensive remarks regarding Aboriginals. They have no policy platform to address Aboriginal issues."

What Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party of Canada fail to realize, or choose to ignore, is that the increasing population of Métis people across the Homeland means Métis have an increasing power to affect the outcome of the election. The Métis percentage of the electorate sits at 4%, the highest it's been in Canadian history.

The challenge now, is to bring the Métis electorate to the polls on voting day.

Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras reminds her membership that, "This is an extremely important time in our history; we are at a point where our Métis people can have a positive effect on which party forms the next government. I encourage you to ask the candidates in your riding if they are committed to upholding the agreements reached at the First Ministers Meeting. Examine your options. When Métis go the polls this year, our people are also voting for the good of the Métis Nation."

In rural Alberta, using figures from Statistics Canada and results from the last election, Aboriginal electors account for 27.3% of the possible ballots in Fort McMurray-Athabasca; almost three-quarters of

the Aboriginal electorate in that riding is Métis. In Peace River, one-third of the Aboriginal electorate is Métis. In Westlock-St. Paul, Métis make up one-quarter of the Aboriginal electorate. Urban ridings in Edmonton have a strong Métis component, such as in Edmonton Centre and Edmonton-Beaumont where more than half of the Aboriginal electorate is Métis.

Not one of the candidates running on the Conservative ticket are members of the Métis Nation of Alberta, which makes it questionable that any of them have at least a compassionate understanding by association of Métis issues specifically or Aboriginal issues generally. Interestingly, Aboriginal candidates, Métis and First Nations alike, are running for the Liberal Party.

MNA Region 2 President Karen Collins says Métis must be encouraged to vote strategically. "Our people must get as much information as possible before going to the polls to understand how important it is to cast their ballots in the best interest of our nation, in the interest of the Métis Nation. We have to be sure they know even the most basic information, like having two pieces of identification in your pocket before going to the polls. We need to be sure our people know they can make a difference and they must know how to make a difference"

MNA President Audrey Poitras reminds Métis voters that the federal Conservatives must not be confused with or mistakenly put into the same category as the provincial Conservatives. The federal Conservative Party of Canada is the brew that was created after the Alliance Party fermented with the former Conservative Party, the one Canadians voted nearly into extinction.

There is absolutely no conclusive evidence that the 'new' Conservative Party supports or recognizes Aboriginal rights. Instead, the writings of Tom Flanagan, combined with recent policy announcements made by Stephen Harper, show the party to be an incubator where extreme right-wing ideas are combined with more right-wing ideas. The resulting concoction does not so much as acknowledge the existence of the Métis Nation.

Indeed, as MNA Regional President Sylvia Johnson puts it, "A Conservative government under Stephen Harper will put the Métis Nation back into the Dark Ages."

## Excerpts from Tom Flanagan's Book *First Nations? Second Thoughts* (June 2000)

European Civilization was several thousand years more advanced than the aboriginal cultures of North America, both in technology and social organization.

Sovereignty is an attribute of statehood, and aboriginal peoples in Canada had not arrived at the state level of political organization prior to contact with Europeans.

Current public policy... is flooding reserves with money, enticing people back, enticing people to stay and weakening their resolve to participate in Canadian society.

Aboriginal government is fraught with difficulties stemming from small size, an overly ambitious agenda, and dependence on transfer payments.

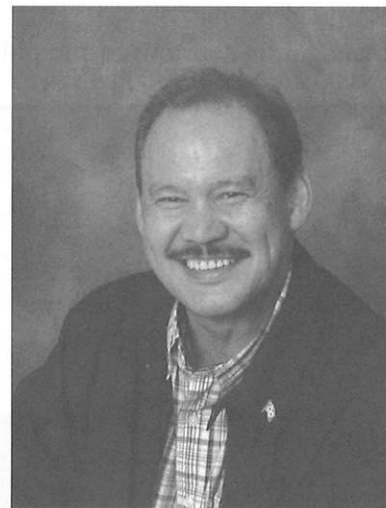
In practice, aboriginal government produces wasteful, destructive, familistic factionalism.

Perhaps the damage to Canada would be tolerable if it meant that aboriginal peoples would escape from the social pathologies in which they are mired to become prosperous, self-supporting citizens.

Prosperity and self-sufficiency in the modern economy require a willingness to integrate into the economy, which means, among other things, a willingness to move to where jobs and investment opportunities exist.

Contemporary judicial attempts to redefine aboriginal rights are producing little but uncertainty. Recent Supreme Court of Canada decisions define aboriginal title in a way that will make its use impossible in a modern economy.

The treaties mean what they say. Their reinterpretation... has the potential to be both expensive and mischievous for the economies of all provinces in which treaties have been signed.



President Bruce Dumont,  
Métis Nation British Columbia

***On behalf of the Métis Nation of Alberta, President Audrey Poitras congratulates Bruce Dumont on his recent election as President of the Métis Nation British Columbia!***

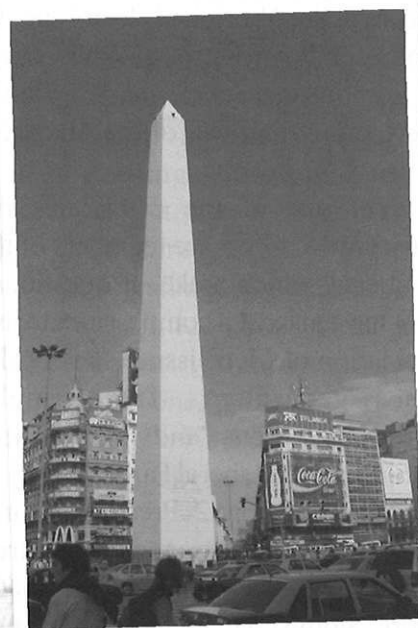


# Métis National Council Indigenous Summit of the Americas, Buenos Aires

by Patricia Russell

An international forum of indigenous people gathered in Buenos Aires, Argentina on October 27-29 for the second Indigenous Summit of the Americas. More than one hundred delegates from South, Central, and North America attended the summit to add their advice on how issues of relevance to the indigenous peoples were expressed in a declaration in preparation for the Fourth Summit of the Americas held the following month in Mar del Plata, Argentina.

Input based on the summit's theme, *Determining our Future: Guided by our Traditional Teachings and Mother Earth*, was combined in the context of the inherent right of indigenous peoples to access resources and to strengthen democratic governance. The summit is a follow-up to the 2001 summit held in Canada which resulted in a declaration for international representatives to continue meeting to further the right of



Photos by Patricia Russell



Top Right: The Obelisk, a popular landmark in the heart of Buenos Aires, was built in 1936 marking the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the city.

Above: MNC Vice President Audrey Poitras with Bolivian artisans and musicians whose talents were displayed at a trade show running concurrent to the indigenous summit.

Facing Page: Women of the Métis Nation Spokesperson Rosemarie McPherson, MNC Vice President Audrey Poitras, and Métis Youth Secretariat Spokesperson Jennifer Brown.

self-determination, and to establish a collaborative plan of action to ensure the ability of indigenous peoples to exercise their inherent right of self-determination.

The summit also offered a unique opportunity to share and celebrate the diverse qualities our nations have in common in areas such as art, music, dress, and food. A cultural exposition and trade show featured the arts and crafts of many South American and Central American countries. Interestingly, the clothing used by a number of the indigenous peoples of South America have a woven 'sash', that's worn similar to the Métis sash in Canada.

The summit, organized by the Assembly of First Nations and the Organizacion de Naciones Y Pueblos Indigenas en Argentina (ONPIA), and included a Métis delegation led by Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras in her national role as Vice President of the Métis National Council, Métis Nation of Ontario President Tony Belcourt, Women of the Métis Nation Spokesperson Rosemarie MacPherson, and Métis Youth Secretariat Spokesperson Jennifer Brown and technical staff.

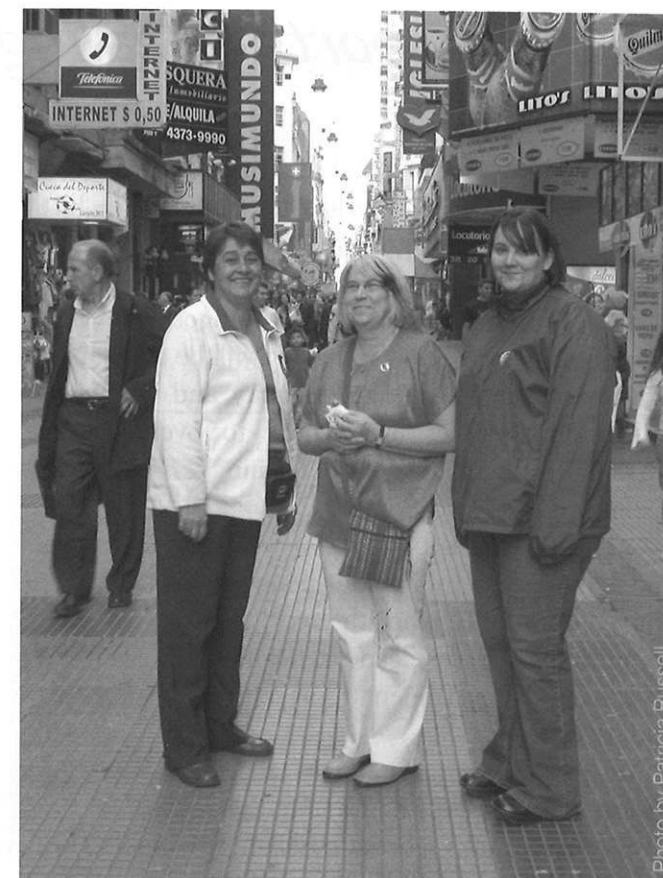
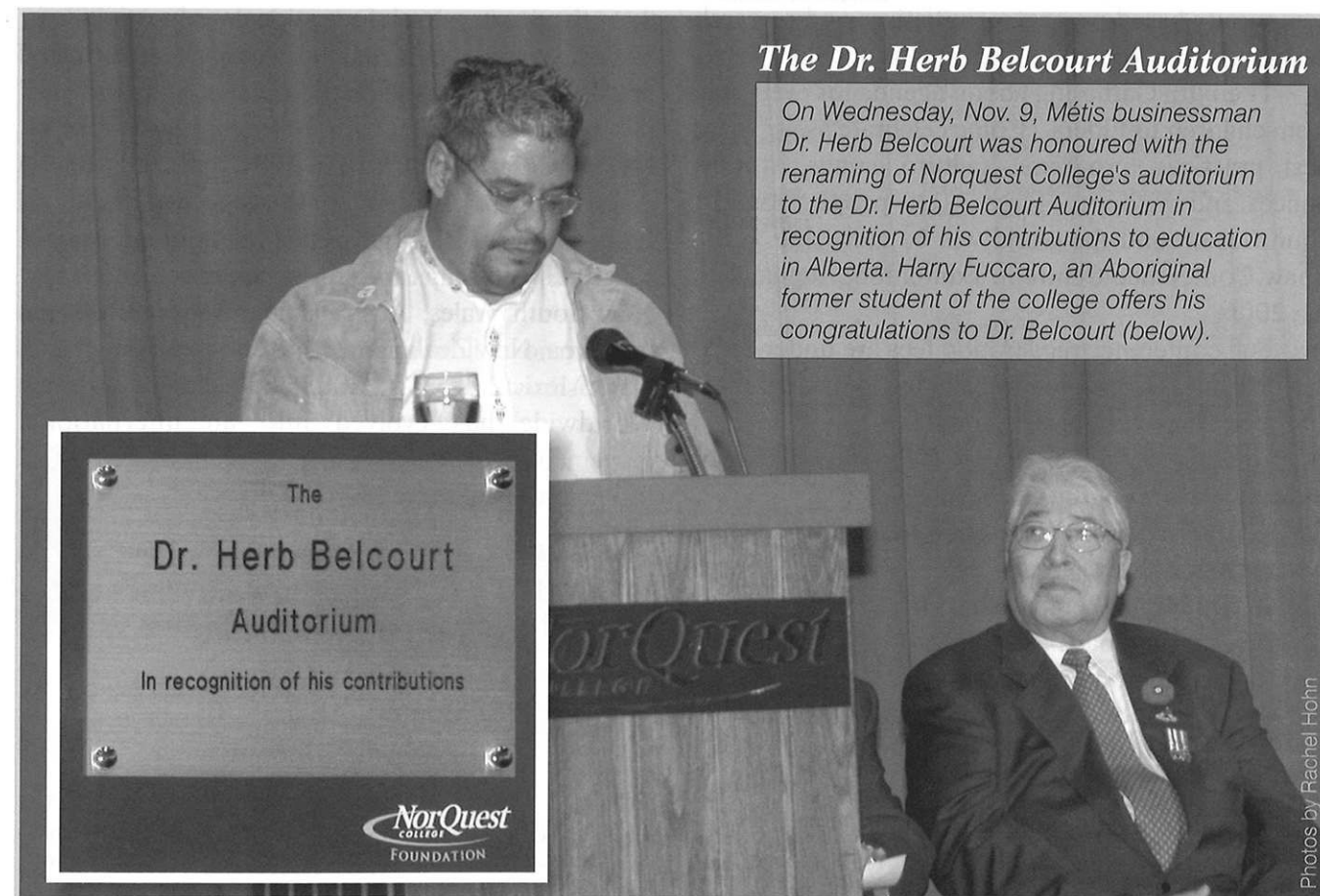


Photo by Patricia Russell

## The Dr. Herb Belcourt Auditorium

On Wednesday, Nov. 9, Métis businessman Dr. Herb Belcourt was honoured with the renaming of Norquest College's auditorium to the Dr. Herb Belcourt Auditorium in recognition of his contributions to education in Alberta. Harry Fuccaro, an Aboriginal former student of the college offers his congratulations to Dr. Belcourt (below).



Photos by Rachel Hohn



# MNA Supports "Healing Our Spirit Worldwide"

by Robin Scott



The Healing Our Spirit Worldwide (HOSW) Fifth Gathering is planned as a celebration of the health, healing and self-determination of Indigenous Peoples around the world. The Gathering will be a testament of the resiliency, courage, tenacity and the will of Indigenous Peoples everywhere to overcome the barriers to achieving self-determination in health, healing and addiction.

The program for HOSW will include sessions and activities for Indigenous peoples of all ages from your community, health workers and healers, community workers, leaders, health and community researchers, government representatives, therapists and psychologists.

Strengthening the family, the community, the nation and the world are the themes of HOSW. Twenty-two tracks related to health, healing and self-determination will feature presentations on community based programs, initiatives and research developed with, by and for Indigenous people.

The Fifth Gathering has an agenda for everyone, from children to Elders. Come celebrate as we share best practices, programs, culture, songs, stories, dances and wisdom. Over 3,000 people from 17 countries around the world will be gathering at the Shaw Conference Centre in Edmonton, August 6 to 11, 2006.

Full conference registration fees are under \$500 per delegate. Check the website for individual rates and group and early-bird discounts.

## Special Features of the Gathering

- International opening ceremonies
- A traditional feast
- Traditional ceremonies
- International marketplace
- A celebration banquet
- International cultural entertainment
- Elder workshops and activities
- Youth and children's workshops and activities
- Indigenous video presentations
- Pre- and post-conference tours of Indigenous communities

## Indigenous Marketplace

The Fifth Gathering will host a spectacular Indigenous Marketplace featuring program exhibitors and artisans. Designed to draw participants and enthusiastic shoppers for repeated visits, the Marketplace is a great location to network, learn more about healing programs, find excellent resources for your work, and purchase unique cultural crafts seldom seen at conferences! Interested in becoming a Marketplace exhibitor? Our website has all the details.

## Poster Presentations

For those who would like to present their programs or research visually, HOSW will display posters throughout the gathering area. The poster presentation is designed to increase access to information and to provide exposure for programs and research projects. Any individual, group or organization is welcome to submit a poster provided that the poster is informational, educational or research-based. Check our website for complete details.

## HOSW Comes Full Circle in 2006

The first HOSW gathering was held in Edmonton in 1992. The celebration of our successes, programs and stories continued in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia in 1994, in Rotorua, Aotearoa, New Zealand in 1998 and in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA in 2002. Healing Our Spirit Worldwide has evolved into an international movement dedicated to the health and healing of all Indigenous peoples.

### Healing Our Spirit Worldwide

#### The Fifth Gathering

10975 125 Street

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www.hosw.com

info@hosw.com

1 866 999 4679 or 1 780 447 4675

# Training Courses for Aboriginal Business Owners

by John Parkins, Manager, Economic Development

The Métis Nation of Alberta has long recognized the need for small business training for its members who are starting their own businesses. During the 2001-2003 period, Infiniti Business Training Services Inc., an affiliate of the Métis Business Development Corporation, offered entrepreneurship training at its Edmonton headquarters and in other locations around the province. Since this program concluded, Métis business people have had to look elsewhere for training.

A new source of small business training focused specifically on the needs of Aboriginal people who are currently in business has just begun as a pilot project. The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) has been contracted by Alberta Economic Development to deliver a series of courses in Calgary, Edmonton, and Slave Lake to help Aboriginal business owners and operators to improve their business knowledge.

These courses are timed so that busy businesspersons can fit them into their schedules. The six courses run on a Friday, Saturday, and Sunday once a month until March 2006 when two courses are offered in the same month. The subjects include Finance 1 and 2, Human Resources, Project Management, Joint Venturing & Contracting, and Marketing. Although the courses have begun, there are still seats available.

Métis businesspersons can enroll in or more of these courses by contacting Michelle Steinhauer of

NAIT at (780) 471-8815, or by e-mail at [msteinha@nait.ca](mailto:msteinha@nait.ca). The cost of these courses is only \$50 a course or \$150 for all five courses, is heavily subsidized, and includes lunch and course materials. As well, taking these courses can lead to credits towards a NAIT Business Management Certificate.

## NAIT

### Aboriginal Business Owners — Improve your business savvy

#### Key Business Management Skills for Success

NAIT, in partnership with Alberta Economic Development, will be presenting a series of weekend Business Management workshops that address many of the difficulties Aboriginal Entrepreneurs face in today's competitive economy.

Each month now through March, 2006, one module will be presented addressing key areas of:

- Marketing
- Financial Management
- Joint Venturing and Contracting
- Human Resource Management
- Project Management

Customized with an Aboriginal focus, these workshops will provide you with credit towards a NAIT Business Management Certificate.

**Fee:** \$50 per person for each workshop, or all five workshops for \$150.

**Note:** These modules are exclusively available to Aboriginal people currently operating a business.

All workshops will be delivered once a month on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in Edmonton, Calgary and Slave Lake.

For details and to register, please contact

Michelle Steinhauer  
780. 471.8815 or  
[msteinha@nait.ca](mailto:msteinha@nait.ca)

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# Métis Crossing Update



by Juanita Marois

As an Aboriginal tourism experience in Alberta, Métis Crossing has important roles to play within our Métis community and within the broader tourism community. This article will go outside the property lines of Métis Crossing to

talk a little bit about some of the projects with which Métis Crossing is involved as a participant and a leader.

Alberta is beginning to develop as an Aboriginal tourism destination. Traditionally, many visitors travelled through this province to see the West Edmonton Mall, to visit the Rocky Mountains, and to experience the great outdoors. Now, visitors are saying they want more. The government of Alberta is responding to these demands and beginning to expand the image of Alberta as a place to come and learn about exciting Aboriginal cultures. What a great opportunity for us! Aboriginal tourism development—if done correctly—can have a lot of benefits in a community:

- Better cultural understanding and appreciation among different groups
- Increased pride in culture from younger generations
- More interest in learning and preserving traditional arts and crafts
- Increased economic development for individuals and communities

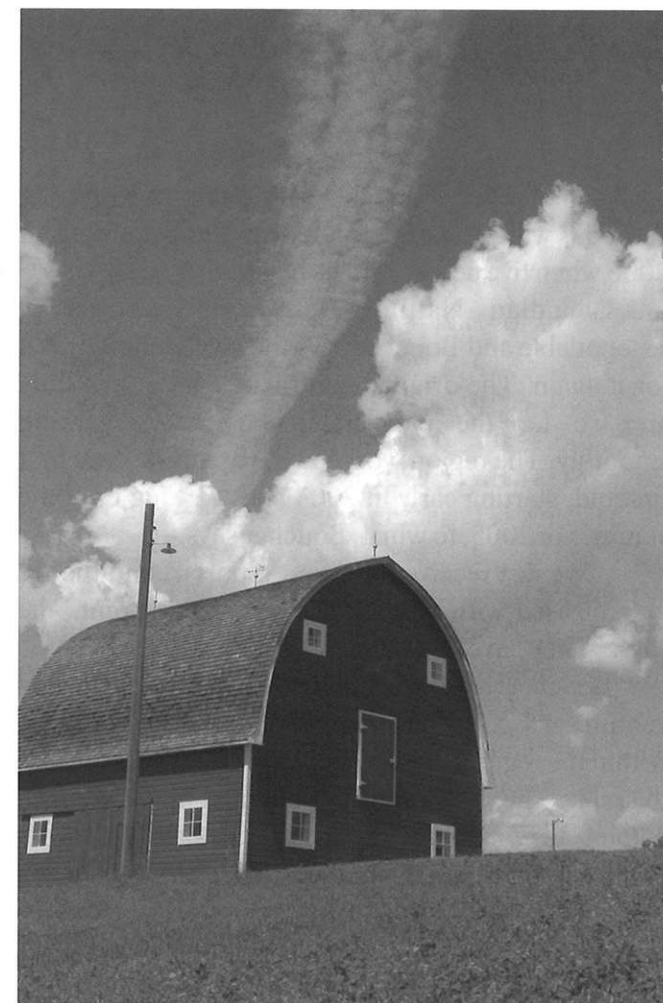
For Alberta to become an Aboriginal tourism destination, it needs to have quality Aboriginal

tourism experiences to share with visitors. Métis Crossing will be one of these attractions. It will be a signature attraction that people come to Alberta to see, but alone, Métis Crossing is not nearly enough. Many more Aboriginal attractions are needed from traditional camp experiences, to canoe trips, to museums, to trail rides, to restaurants and bus trips. We need to develop a whole industry of activities and services to fulfill the needs of visitors. Some other Métis tourism operations that I know of include:

- Michif Cultural and Resource Institute
- Kikino Silver Birch Resort and Campground
- Lac La Biche Mission
- Buffalo Lake Provincial Recreation Area
- Musée Heritage Museum
- Riel Beach Campground
- Ewan Moberly Homestead, Jasper National Park

Are there more? Where are you? As Métis tourism operations, we have opportunities to work together and develop experiences and marketing packages to bring people to enjoy our warm Métis welcome. According to *Travelling with Wisdom*, published by Aboriginal Tourism Canada, successful Aboriginal businesses should have the following characteristics:

- Unique
- Authentic
- Respectful and inclusive of elders' knowledge
- Incorporate interactions with Aboriginal people
- Offer value to customers
- Safety as an important component
- Respond to market demands



- Well managed continual human resource development

Métis Crossing is working with other organizations to build an industry based on these successful tourism operations. One organization is the Métis Heritage Alliance—a group of attractions that have elements of Métis interpretation in their storyline. Some non-aboriginal members include Fort Edmonton Park and Jasper National Park. We have much to learn from their years of experience and they have become excellent partners. This organization meets about 4 times a year and always welcomes new members. Please call Juanita Marois at Métis Crossing (1-800-252-7553) for more information.

One of the initiatives of the Métis Heritage Alliance has been to lobby for the development of an Aboriginal Interpreter Program and Aboriginal Tourism Management Program. A qualified Aboriginal tourism workforce is a key component in

developing this Aboriginal tourism industry. We have worked hard, and with participation from Alberta Economic Development and Lakeland College, progress has been made. The one-year Aboriginal Interpreter Program is ready to start, and we need students! The program includes a work term—so just imagine working at one of the partner attractions this summer. Please call Kathy Champigny at Lakeland College for more information (780) 416-8869.

There is still more! With the new government focus on Aboriginal tourism development, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, Alberta Economic Development and Travel Alberta are also working on initiatives. Alberta Economic Development has appointed an Aboriginal Tourism Advisory Council to bring their wisdom to the table in guiding future growth. They have also hired an Aboriginal Tourism Development Coordinator, Darina Falsnes, to work on product development. She is a wealth of information and guidance and can be contacted at (780) 422-0666.

Travel Alberta is also working on a number of packaging and marketing projects. This work is being done with "market ready" Aboriginal products that visitors need to know about! To be included in these projects call Don Wilson at Travel Alberta (780) 425-8914 (ext 127).

Well, as you can read, this is a very exciting time for Aboriginal tourism development in the province of Alberta. Métis Crossing is excited and fortunate to be growing along with the overall industry. The success of both will take a lot of hard work from our communities, our many government and non-profit partners, as well as us the operators big and small. Good luck to us all!

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# Métis Janitorial Contracts Sweeping Region 1

by Rachel Hohn

The largest work-contract ever signed in MNA Region 1, between three companies: Canadian Natural Resources Ltd., leading Quebec-owned janitorial company Sodexo and the Region, is creating more job offers and quicker growth according to Region 1 Vice President Rick Boucher. The contract signed between the three companies involves the maintenance work at the CNRL Horizon Site north of Fort McMurray, Alberta.

"At this point Sodexo is the main contractor but they would not have received the contract without partnering with the Métis Nation here," Boucher says. The \$3.8 million contract will see Region 1's company, Metco Ventures Inc., receive 50 per cent of the net profit—which Boucher estimates will bring in about \$500,000.

There are currently 11 Métis employed at \$19.73/hr for the full contract of three and a half years. "We are looking at employing 50 Métis during

peak construction," Boucher says. Peak construction, he adds, will probably occur near the beginning of 2006 when five new contracts begin.

Canadian Natural Resources' contract is renegotiable and Boucher says they will definitely bid for it again. The original contract began in mid-July and so far the partnership has been working smoothly. The region worked very hard to secure that first bid, starting early in 2004 and working until the summer of 2005, to win it, Boucher says.

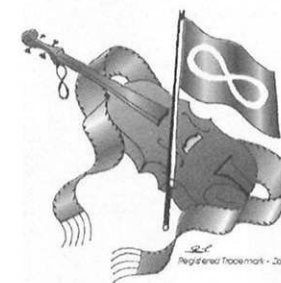
"We just received our first reports...and they're very pleased with our services up to this point," he says. "They have no complaints."

Boucher says the money brought in by this venture will go towards furthering multiple projects within the region. "It provides us with a few resources to create other economic development initiatives, like helping fund housing, education, health, and other Métis entrepreneurial initiatives."

## MNA Region 3

# Aboriginal Seniors Gathering

by Marlene Lanz



As part of the 2005 Métis Week festivities, MNA Region 3 sponsored an Aboriginal Seniors Gathering on November 17 and 18 in Calgary, AB. More than 125 seniors attended the event highlighting topics such as federal and provincial seniors benefit programs, health programs, and other seniors' issues.

Region 3 President Marlene Lanz and Vice President Joe Chodzicki opened the workshop on Friday along with speakers MNA President Audrey Poitras, Senator Thelma Chalifoux, and Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc. Manager George Vass. Traditional First Nations dancers put on a display of hoop, grass, chicken, and men's traditional dancing. Region 3 Youth Coordinator David showed off his jigging skills set to music played by Garry Lee and Ray St. Germaine from Edmonton.


The afternoon workshops included: a presentation from Calgary City Police focusing on seniors fraud and safety issues; health issues covered by Leonard McCallum a holistic healer, and Aboriginal veterans benefits covered by Major Ed Borchert (retired) who doubled as the master of ceremonies running the event with military timing.


Eleven members of the Youth Mentorship Group from Region 3 came to assist the elders and seniors, by serving them coffee, tea, and lunch. Region 3 President Marlene Lanz and event coordinators Faye and Bob Beazley closed the gathering in the afternoon. Overall, it was a successful day with interesting speakers, attractive display booths and provided a chance for old friends from across the province to come together again.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Seniors' Dinner held on Friday

evening drew 188 visitors and featured a 5-year-old Elvis Presley impersonator. In attendance was Region 3 President Lanz, Region 3 Vice President Joe Chodzicki, MNA President Audrey Poitras, MNA Vice President Trevor Gladue, Region 2 Vice President Homer Poitras, members of the Elders Council, and various event supporters.

Garry Lee and Ray St. Germaine, with Homer Poitras joining in for some traditional Métis dance music, provided the music. The Medicine Wheel Dancers and the Region 3 Youth Dancers demonstrated their dancing expertise and musician Dorothy Walker sang for the crowd. Ike Sanoffsky, from Region 3, was a good-humoured master of ceremonies who kept things running smoothly.





# Genealogy Workshops

**UPCOMING WORKSHOPS:**

**Wednesday, January 11, 2005**

Genealogy workshops are 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM in the Provincial Office Building in Edmonton. Take the time to research your family tree! The workshops are free and our staff genealogist will be on hand to assist you in your search.

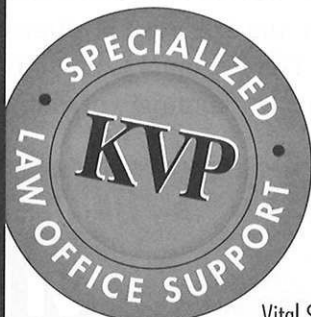
For more information, call Beatrice (780) 455-2200 or 1-800-252-7553

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## Métis Regional Council Zone IV Update

by Melanie Omeniho



The staff and elected officials with Zone IV would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The Métis Regional Council - Zone IV has been very busy over the past months through many of the activities and events that continue to take center stage in our region. Vice President Tim Collins has been actively working on the issues related to his Provincial Council Housing Portfolio by expanding upon existing opportunities and developing new ones.

Regional President Cecil Bellrose has been very busy working with the portfolio of Métis Rights and Citizenship. There has been Provincial Council workshops and movement towards the development of the new membership cards. Cecil encourages all of the Métis members to ensure their membership files are up to date. He says new cards will be released sometime early in the New Year for all of the files that are up to date.

The Regional Council held a meeting on October 29, 2005. Congratulations to Darold Dahl and Carol Letendre who were elected to the executive positions of treasurer and secretary. The Regional Council is moving forward with a strategic planning workshop



MNA Region 4 Vice President Tim Collins and President Cecil Bellrose

planned for early in the New Year. It will focus on policy development, human resource strategies, and economic development strategies. Métis interested in taking part should contact the regional office. We also introduced a new Métis local from Hinton, AB, at this meeting.

Cecil and Tim are encouraging the creation of opportunities for our Métis people to become involved and are always willing to sit and develop new ideas for the benefit of the Métis people. The coffee is always on, so stop by and visit them sometime soon. Cecil and Tim extend their very best wishes to each of you over this Christmas season.

Photo by Naomi Gordon

Update Your Métis Nation of Alberta

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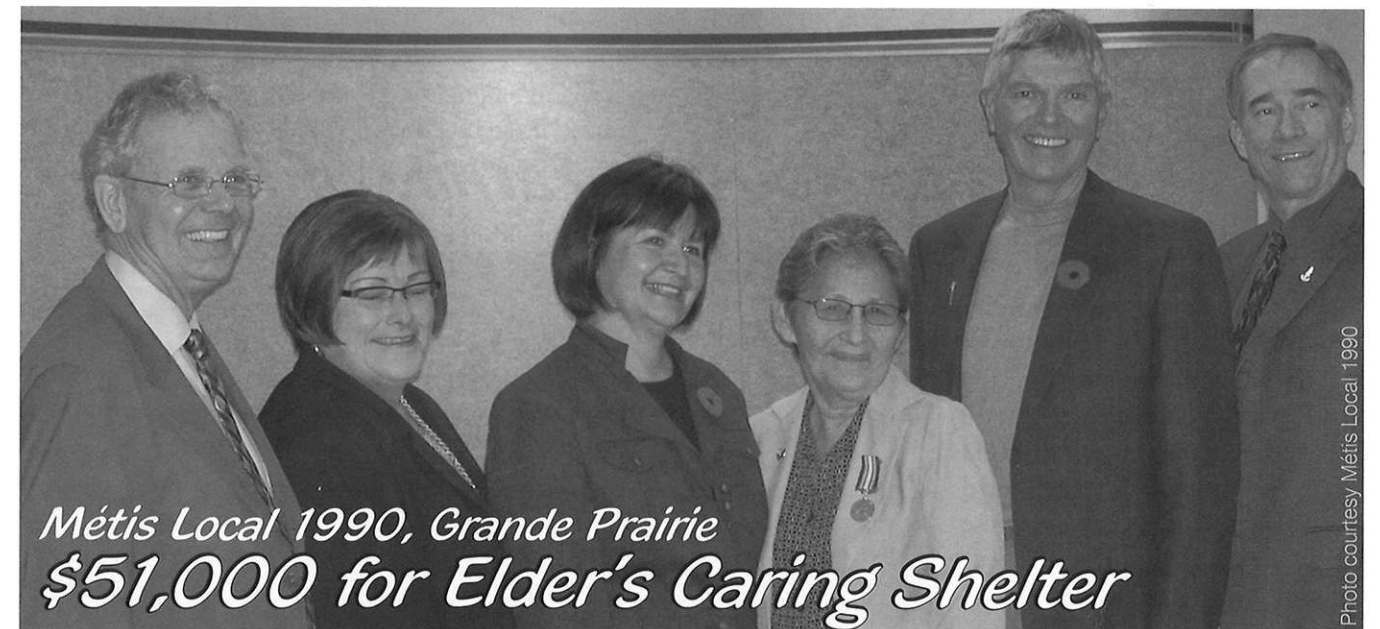


Photo courtesy Métis Local 1990

by Melodie Wilton

On Tuesday, November 1, 2005, the Elder's Caring Shelter in Grande Prairie became the recipient of a \$51,000 cheque from Alberta Seniors and Community Support Minister Yvonne Fritz. The \$51,000 was the retroactive portion of a yearly shelter allowance of \$76,650, announced on September 29, 2005. "Providing funding to these facilities is an important part of our ongoing commitment to help meet emergency and transitional housing needs in communities such as Grande Prairie" said Minister Fritz.

"We are so excited" said Angie Crerar, Métis Local 1990 president, one of the sponsors of the Elder's Caring Shelter. "This grant is the reward for many hours of hard work by many dedicated people, staff and volunteers. It gives us so many possibilities now that we don't have to worry as much about meeting our monthly expenses" she said.

The Elder's Caring Shelter is an integral part of the Grande Prairie Global Housing Initiative. In operation for just over 2 years, the shelter provides safe, secure and affordable room and board for homeless and at risk men and women over the age of 55.

With no core funding assistance, the shelter has managed to maintain a bare bones operation by collecting a small rent from the occupants and through fundraising activities.

The shelter currently holds 19 single and double rooms, a laundry, 24-hour safety monitoring, life skills

assistance, a barrier-free main floor, a clothing bank, social and community interaction, and health and wellness information. The shelter is filled to capacity and renovations are currently underway adding two more rooms.

### Elders Caring Shelter Of Grande Prairie

**Our Vision:**  
*That all homeless and at risk elders  
have access to safe, affordable and  
accessible shelter.*



Ph: (780) 882-7909 (residence)  
(780) 882-7242 (office)  
Fax: (780) 882-7247  
email: [eldersshelter@cablerocket.com](mailto:eldersshelter@cablerocket.com)

#### Services:

- 19-bed facility, single and double rooms
- laundry
- 24-hour monitoring for safety
- assistance with basic life skills
- referrals
- barrier free main floor and wheelchair ramp
- clothing bank
- community and social interaction
- health and wellness information
- centrally located
- rates are based on monthly income

**Sponsored by Métis Local 1990**  
**A Member of the Grande Prairie Global Housing Initiative**



## Our Métis Families Building Bee to House a Family of Five

by Rachel Hohn

The sound of hammers striking nails echoes through the crisp autumn air, the smoke and heat from a bonfire fill the senses, children chase a Red River cart around the yard laughing and playing, and a home for a Métis family is being framed-out in an old-fashioned house-raising bee.

A dozen members of the St. Paul Métis community gathered around the Marcoux homestead on November 12-13, and either picked up a hammer and started pounding away on nails, or picked up a ladle and drew from a pot of homemade deer stew to feed the hungry and chilled volunteers.

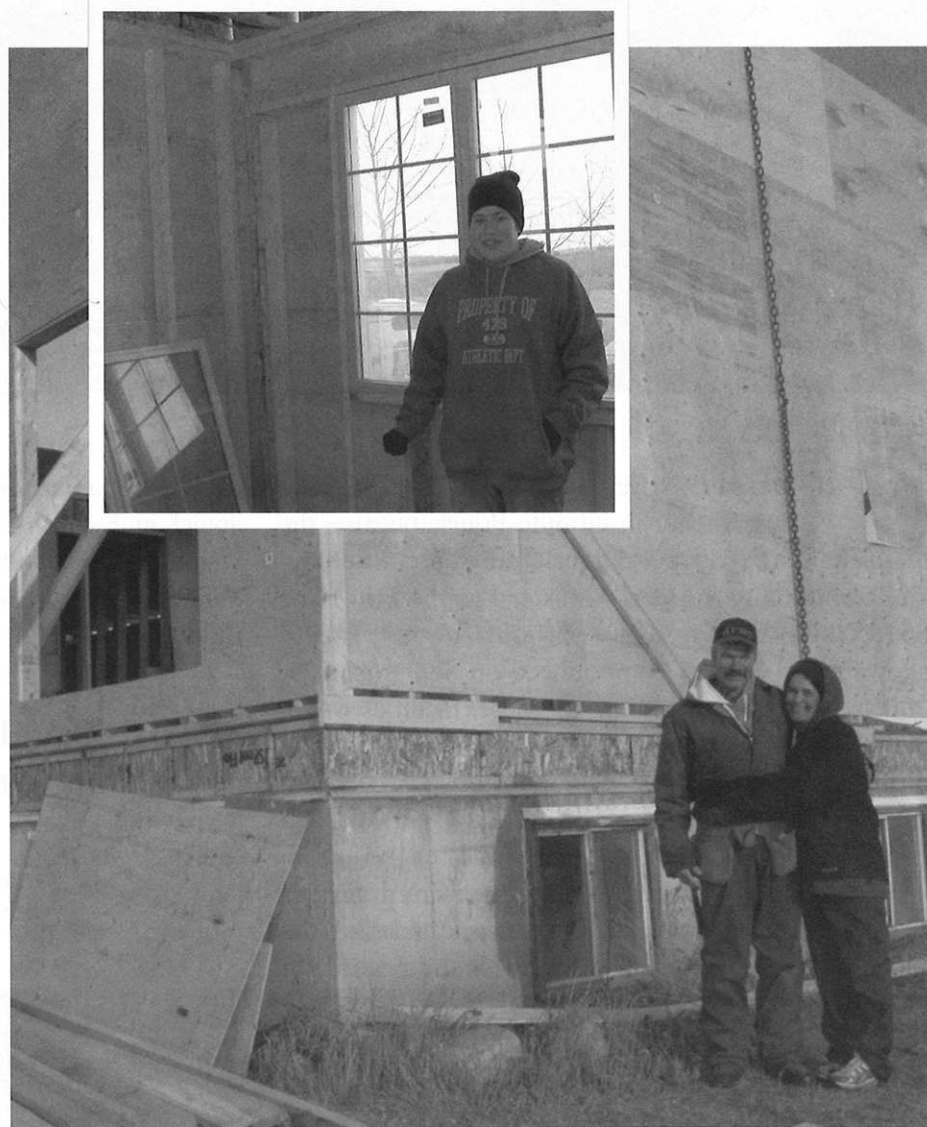
Richard and Sandra Marcoux say they are overwhelmed by the community support. "It was awesome having the community come together, that's what I liked about it," Sandra says.

The Marcoux family, five people in all, is crammed into the living space of a 12-foot camper trailer while their new home is built. The family has been living in the camper since September, when it became apparent the repairs required on the old doublewide trailer were more of a hassle than starting fresh. Richard Marcoux rolled the old trailer off its foundations with just the help of a John Deer tractor and proceeded to purchase all the materials he needed to build his family's new home.

But affordable labour was hard to find, so the family was forced to continue living in their "temporary" quarters while they each helped Richard hammer the two-by-fours and plywood to rough in the structure

during his days and nights off his regular job.

Bob Nolin, president of the St. Paul des Métis Local 1896, learned of the Marcoux's plight when he was over to help babysit the children. A week or two later, over coffee with some friends, he decided to do something to help. Nolin rounded up members of the Métis community and held an old-fashioned house-raising bee with gathered neighbours, family, and friends to help



Richard and Sandra Marcoux stand outside their future home at the end of day one of the building bee.

Inset: Elise Marcoux explains what her new room will look like in her newly framed house.

frame and build the rest of the house with the goal of moving the family in by Christmas.

"I look at it as a success," says Nolin. "Society over the past 50 years has changed a lot, and has focussed on self. I want to awaken society and get them to look at each other as family."

Sandra says it was easy to live in the small camping trailer at first, since they had most of what they needed already packed from their vacation. It's not so easy four months later, she says. In the mean time until her new home is finished, Sandra finds herself climbing through the old trailer, still parked nearby, where cooking utensils, extra clothes, and other goods remain stored. The contents of a seven-room house can't fit into a camper.

Elise, 12, Alain, 10, and Adrianna, 5, are already planning how their new bedrooms will be decorated Richard says. Currently, all the children sleep in one fold-out bed, and Sandra and Richard in the other.

For the first time in her life, Elise is getting her own room. Her pet ferret will move into her new bedroom as her only roommate. Elise says she has shared a room with her younger brother and sister for as long as she can remember, but in the fifth-wheel it's a little harder to bear. "I can't wait," Elise says. "I'm already planning what to do with it. I'm going to make it a Japanese theme and put a hammock up."

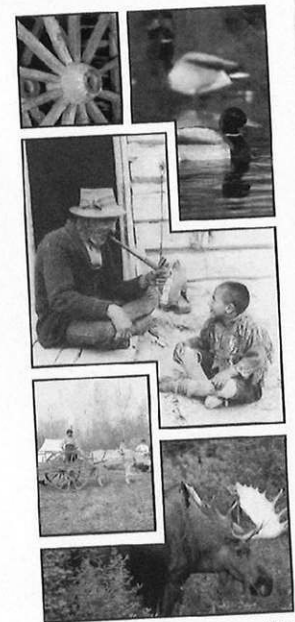
The house construction is moving steadily along, and now that Richard has finished the blue steel roof, he's installing heat. The planned completion date is set for a few days before Christmas. "We're hoping to have it done enough to have people over for Christmas," he says. "Everyone is excited to have it done."

"And even if it's not finished, I'll be putting up Christmas decorations," Sandra adds with a laugh. "Even if I have to decorate along plastic (vapour barriers)."



Volunteer builders Ken Tripp, Bob Nolin, Kevin Prather, and Henry Rice finish one of three 4.8 metre (or 16 foot) walls during the building bee.

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## Grande Cache Annual Talent Show

by Patricia Russell

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Talent Show hosted by Métis Local 1994 in Grande Cache was another roaring success. It was standing room only inside the Local's recently renovated gathering hall where several hundred people crowded in to cheer on a very talented group of singers, dancers, and musicians.

Local President Al Findlay expressed his apologies to community members who were turned away at the door because the hall had reached its capacity and pledged that next year's show will be held inside the community arena to accommodate its growing popularity.

Every year, the talent show draws participants from communities such as St Paul, Valleyview and Grande Prairie, as well as local talent from Grande Cache. This year, participants also came from Dawson Creek, BC, and as far north as Fort Smith, NT.

The Ed Poitras family from St Paul walked away with most of the prizes in the categories of youth singing, jigging, and fiddling. Cory and Kelsey Poitras are gifted musicians, who can both play the fiddle and jig with such energy that there's no question the talent is in their blood. Kelsey Poitras, whose singing voice is very well developed, can belt out "Diggy Diggy Li" like a pro, hitting every note with clarity. In addition to playing the fiddle, singing, and dancing, Cory Poitras' range of talent includes the drums and guitar.

But it was a young girl from Grande Cache, 9-year-old Katlyn McKenna, who stepped onstage and wowed the crowd with a wonderful and heart-warming rendition of "Beauty and the Beast". Her performance drew spontaneous applause mid-song when the crowd recognized the Walt Disney children's classic. Katlyn finished her first public performance with a polite bow as she received the loudest round of applause all evening.

Katlyn says she memorized the words to "Beauty and the Beast" using a karaoke machine, a gift from her grandfather, and followed the advice of her piano teacher to overcome the nervousness. "Stare at the wall above everyone's head and they'll think you're looking at them," Katlyn said.

Another talented Grande Cache resident, Margie Ossinger, gave so powerful a performance of a song recorded by country music star Martina McBride that one wondered if the song belonged to Margie first.

The popular *Muskeg River Band* provided backup music during the talent show and played for the dance afterwards.



## Métis Local 1994 Annual Talent Show Results

### Youth Vocals

- 1 Katlyn McKenna Grande Cache, AB
- 2 Cory Poitras St Paul, AB
- 3 Stacey Brady Grande Cache, AB

### Youth Jigging (13-17)

- 1 Cory Poitras St Paul, AB
- 2 Theoren Poitras Elk Point, AB
- 3 Logan Leonard Grande Cache, AB

### Youth Jigging (12 & under)

- 1 Lisa Marcotte Valleyview, AB
- 2 Kelsey Poitras St Paul, AB
- 3 Cylena Gladue Valleyview, AB

### Adult Jigging

- 1 Herb Goodswimmer Valleyview, AB
- 2 Ed Poitras St Paul, AB
- 3 Jack Flett Fort Smith, NT

### Adult Vocals

- 1 Margie Ossinger Grande Cache, AB
- 2 Bruce Mitchell Valleyview, AB
- 3 Rose Aostveit Dawson Creek, BC

### Fiddle

- 1 Cory Poitras St Paul, AB
- 2 Richard Calihoo Grande Prairie, AB
- 3 Ed Poitras St Paul, AB

### Volunteers

Loretta Belcourt  
Patricia Brody  
Ron Delorme  
Marie Delorme  
Gordon Delorme  
Landon Delorme  
Claude Delorme  
Shirley Delorme  
Karen Delorme  
Linda Delorme  
Ursell Flett  
Trevor Gladue  
Leroy Hamelin  
Sharon Jackson  
Blanche Joachim  
Dorothy Larson  
Leah Belcourt McLane  
Josephine Mercereau  
Joel Oulette  
Dorene Oulette  
Cecil Ross

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# Thank You!

## The "Region 3 Calgary Métis Youth Dancers and Fiddlers"

is an ongoing program that's been operating since August 2001 to preserve the traditional dance element of Métis culture. The traditional dance program provides an opportunity for Aboriginal youth to learn of their heritage and proudly share the dance component of the Métis culture with spectators from both Aboriginal and mainstream society.

In our class we teach all of our traditional Métis dances, which include the Basic Stepping, Red River Jig, Reel of Eight, Orange Blossom Special, First Changes, Breakdowns, etc.

The youth have been gaining the confidence to display their newly developed traditional skills and have performed in many different communities in Southern Alberta.

Support for the "Calgary Métis Youth Dancers and Fiddlers" has been expressed by such organizations such as the *Aboriginal Unit of The City of Calgary Community Vitality Department, Calgary Boys and Girls Club, Calgary Public Services, Four Directions Foster Parents of Calgary and Métis Nation of Alberta Employment Assistance Service Centre in Calgary.*



Dance classes are held every Monday from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm.  
For more information contact:  
David Garson  
(Dance Coordinator)  
Métis Nation Region III  
Phone: (403) 569-8800  
Fax: (403) 569-8959  
cmydancers@hotmail.com

The "Calgary Métis Youth Dancers and Fiddlers" acts as a support group for Aboriginal participants who may feel isolated and unable to fit in with mainstream youth in other aspects of their lives.

## MNA Region 3

## Aboriginal Youth Mentoring Program



The Aboriginal Youth Mentoring Program (AYMP) uses positive role models to address the needs of Aboriginal youth living in Calgary. The program is aimed at youth ages 10-24 and is offered year-round.

The program strives to improve the mental, emotional, spiritual and physical aspects among urban Aboriginal youth by providing information and training in the areas of: life skills, addictions, cultural heritage, job and career choices, job preparation skills, overall self improvement and much more. Aboriginal Elders are invited to take part by sharing their wisdom, knowledge, and ability to instil pride in our youth.

The Aboriginal Youth Mentoring Program is proud to announce funding from Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Alberta, Community Initiatives Program, Trans Alta, AADAC, and from the some of proceeds from the Five Star Bingo Hall.

We are also recruiting mentors for the AYMP and will provide mentor training to those people interested in taking part. Some benefits of becoming a mentor are:

- Become a known leader
- Enhances your professional life
- Enhances the lives of those people you mentor
- Gives you the gift to help others.

Youth group is held every Wednesday night from 5pm to 8pm. Workshop hosts of past youth group nights include Elders, Calgary Police, AADAC, Watercourse School of Meditation, Aboriginal Historical Story Tellers, Healer (Badger Seneca), Native Addictions (Sunrise Residence), Metis Employment Centre, etc.

Some of the other youth group activities are YMCA, outdoor activities (baseball, walks, swimming, bowling, movies etc.), camping at Batoche, camping at Camp Carmanguay, sledding, volunteering at Mustard Seed, and more.

We look forward to hearing from those who would like to get involved in this worthwhile program. If you would like information on the Aboriginal Youth Mentoring Program or would like to become involved in the program, please call the office at (403) 569-8800 or email us at

[aboriginalyouth@hotmail.com](mailto:aboriginalyouth@hotmail.com).

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## Métis Veterans Calling Home Spiritual Journey

by Rachel Hohn

The Calling Home Spiritual Journey is an emotional event for all involved, as youth and aboriginal veterans gather at war sites in France and Belgium to call home the spirits of the fallen soldiers. The trip was created so that family members who were distraught that their beloved soldiers were never coming home could have peace.

Federal Minister of Veterans Affairs Albina Guarnieri says, "It is difficult to imagine what the Canadians faced during the spring of 1917 when we find ourselves, here today, in a place so sacred and peaceful." Guarnieri journeyed with the travellers to the war sites as a celebration of 2005's Year of the Veteran.

The group of travellers also consisted of youth, dignitaries, veterans, and their caretakers from each province and territory. They travelled to many historic memorial sites, like Dieppe, Vimy Ridge and Juno Beach. Alberta Métis youth Jasmine Poitras-John travelled with the Alberta Métis veterans Bertha Clark-Jones, Lloyd Poitras, and Leo Goulet.

They started their ten-day journey on October 25, at a welcoming reception in Ottawa at Rideau Hall with Prime Minister Paul Martin, Veterans Affairs Minister Guarnieri, and Governor General Michelle Jean before heading to France.

Métis veteran Lloyd Poitras revisited the same sites he traveled to when he was a soldier in the war over 50 years ago. Lloyd says he tried to remember pieces of his memory while he was in France, but it was difficult for

him, considering Lloyd spent most of his life trying to forget those events.

Though it was a hard journey, as he doesn't like to talk about the war, Lloyd says he enjoyed the trip. "I would go again tomorrow," Lloyd says. "I was happy to go with my son and granddaughter."

Lloyd's granddaughter, Jasmine Poitras-John got to see the lands of her grandfather's stories, as they travelled through France and Belgium. Lloyd's caretaker and son, Roland Poitras says they all learned something on the trip.

"There was one relaxing day for the veterans I'll never forget," Roland says. "They were all talking on the beach. They were just watching the beach, and then they would talk about the water, the rocks, and what it was like then getting the tanks over those same rocks."

Memories did reoccur during the trip, but Roland says they weren't always the kind Lloyd would like to have brought back.

During the war, Lloyd had been pinned down to one spot by a sniper for over three days. He wasn't able to move to eat or sleep for fear of being shot. As a result of the memory of this event while abroad, Lloyd slept poorly in areas that reminded him of it, Roland says.

Bertha Clark-Jones returned to Ottawa for the welcoming reception—it was the same city she first ventured to for her Royal Canadian Air Force six-week recruitment training.



Left: Veterans travelled to France and Belgium in order to call home the spirits of the fallen soldiers.



Right: Bertha Clark-Jones says she was the first female veteran to travel on the Calling Home Journey.



Left: Caretaker Roland Poitras, grand-daughter Jasmine Poitras-John, stand with their father and grandfather, veteran Lloyd Poitras, in France on the Calling Home Journey.



Right: The tombstone of a fallen soldier from Calgary, AB is wrapped in a coat from a Métis wishing to honour the young man.

"I felt it very important to join the Force, we are true Canadians and strong Métis, it is only fair to do our share," she says.

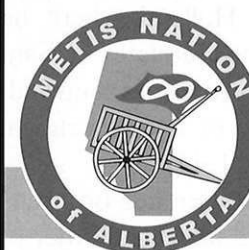
Bertha was impressed by the gratitude the French expressed to Canadian soldiers for liberating their country during WWII. She says they are more respectful of the Canadian veteran ceremonies than Canadians are back home.

She says she was asked on many occasions to offer prayers for the fallen men at the ceremonial sites and says she was very honoured to do so. In fact, it was a very

emotional time for Bertha, who felt very close to those lost soldiers as she stood among the many unmarked graves. "Words just came out to thank the boys that fought and the ones that are out keeping peace," she says.

Bertha says at the last ceremony in France, she saw her reason for coming on the journey. As the bugles played, hundreds of poppies floated down onto the crowd that had gathered to pray. "That's our boys' spirits coming down for us to take them home," she says.

### ZONE II REGIONAL COUNCIL MÉTIS NATION OF ALBERTA



## 20th Annual Boxing Day Talent Show

Bonnyville Agriplex, December 26th, 2005

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*Vocals, Red River Jig, Fiddling*

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## Métis Nation of Alberta Mourns Sam Sinclair (1926-2005)

On behalf of the Métis Nation of Alberta, President Audrey Poitras extends the Nation's deepest condolences to the family of Sam Sinclair, former President, who passed away recently in Edmonton, Alberta.

"The Métis Nation of Alberta is saddened to learn of the death of Sam Sinclair, a proud and passionate leader who helped to shape the Métis Nation as we know it. Sam's perseverance and dedication to his wife and family and to securing the rights of the Métis people have earned him respect and admiration from Métis citizens across the homeland," says President Poitras.

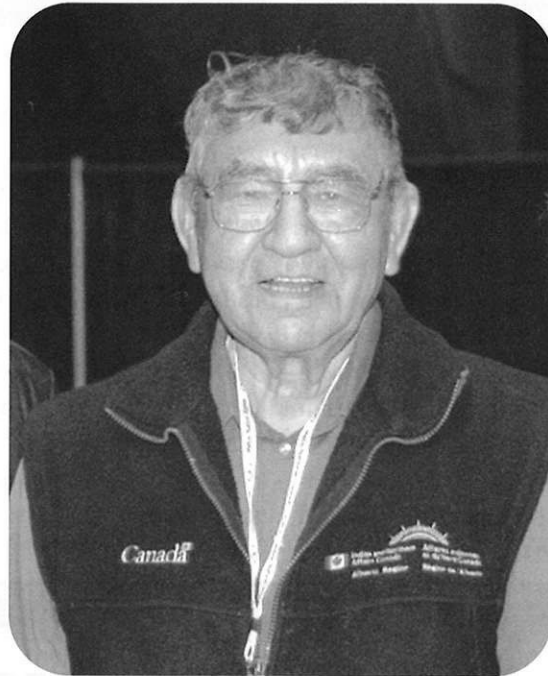
"We offer our sincere condolences to his wife Edna, with whom he shared 59 wonderful years, and to his six children, 17 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, and other family members."

Elected in 1979, Sam Sinclair spent eight years in office as President of the Métis Association of Alberta during which time he undertook the reorganization of the administration and sat on the board of the Native Council of Canada.

Sam pursued many issues on behalf of the Métis people in such areas as education, funding, land claim continuity, housing, and public relations. His innovative approach led to new institutions that, to this day, continue to assist Métis people pursue entrepreneurial goals. Sam was instrumental in the development of Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc, a Métis-run financial institution offering start-up loans, bridge financing, and advice.

"Sam devoted a large part of this life in striving to make this country a better place for the Métis. Sam was instrumental in the formation of the Métis National Council in 1983 and not only pressed for Métis rights within Canada, he also did so at international forums such as in Panama and Geneva,

Switzerland. Sam was a leading force in convincing then-Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed, to re-include s. 35 Aboriginal and Treaty rights protections back into the Constitution, along with the inclusion of the Métis as one of the Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Sam did more than his fair share for Métis rights," stated Clément Chartier, President of the Métis National Council.



Born in 1926 in Slave Lake, Alberta, Sam went on to join the Canadian Forces and served his country for 38 months including time overseas in active duty in England, Belgium, and Holland. Many years later, Sam served as President of the National Aboriginal Veterans Association for eight years and, until recently, remained as a member of the board of directors.

A gifted athlete, Sam was the Track and Field Champion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, an honour he earned during his overseas service in Holland where he

competed against Olympic-trained athletes. Sam earned the Middleweight Champion title in boxing and, along with his son, remains one of two Aboriginal people inducted into the Boxing Hall of Fame.

In 2004, during a national conference on Métis Rights, Sam Sinclair was inducted into the "Order of the Métis Nation" an honour bestowed upon Métis people for their instrumental roles in building the Métis Nation.

He leaves to mourn his passing, his loving wife Edna; his children Gordon (Val), Linda (Fred), Jeannette, Rod, Rocky (Jane); 17 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; siblings Mary Jane (George), Evelyn (Harold), Henry (Edith-deceased) and Clifford; as well as many other relatives and friends.

Sam is predeceased by his daughter Lorraine; three sons Kevin, Dennis and Baby Boy; father Alfred and mother Agathe; siblings August, Clara, Danny, Walter, Frances, May and Joe.

## Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Alberta Youth Send Clear Messages

by Eileen Mustas

In a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) prevention promotion coordinated in the regions' schools, students were invited to produce a design of a FASD prevention message. It was quite a challenge to pick only four designs from the many wonderful messages submitted by the students.

Thank you to all the schools and students for participating and helping to spread the message about FASD Prevention and social responsibility. The four winning entries will be published in the next issue of *Otipemisiwak*. The custom designed coasters with the FASD prevention message will be distributed to alcohol service establishments throughout the province in the new year.

**Join us in the support role of "Friends and Community"**

As active participants of the national network of FASD prevention campaigns, our project joins other service providers to engage peer groups and the community to become involved, with positive,

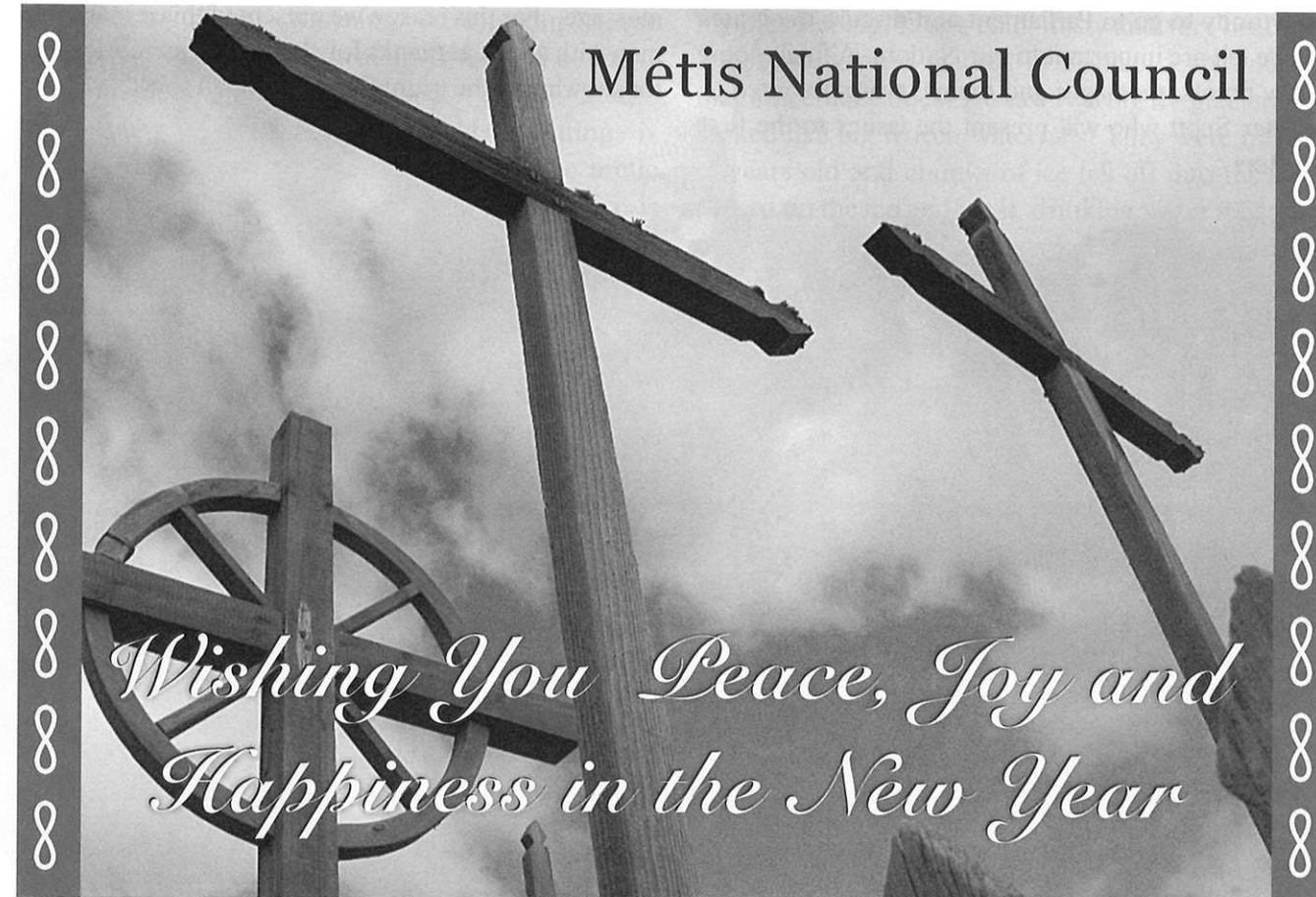
supportive, and healthy messages to pregnant women. It is important to offer a supportive and caring approach and to communicate the message, "No Alcohol is Best!"

**Sessions For More FASD Information and Prevention**

To foster understanding and promote prevention of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, our FASD Project will provide information sessions with a focus on better understanding about the disorder by sharing current research and resources.

Our FASD presentations continue to improve. The success of the workshops is possible through the involvement of elders and other community members committed to sustainable healthy growth and success of all children within the Metis communities. We hope to receive more requests for the FASD presentations and workshops from the schools and community centers.

**Contact the nearest Métis Nation of Alberta regional office to speak with an FASD coordinator to organize a session.**





## Métis Youth National Youth Summit 2005



by Christie Ladouceur

Aboriginal youth from across the country gathered in Ottawa in November for a National Youth Summit in advance of the First Ministers Meeting (FMM) on Aboriginal issues. Andy Scott, the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status

Indians invited four youth from each province to share their views on issues up for discussion at the FMM. The youth summit was the first opportunity for federal ministers to hear directly from Aboriginal youth on their views relating to education, health, housing, economic opportunities and relationships.

The four Alberta Métis youth, Andrea Kastendieck, Chase McMurren, Sean Soucie, and myself, Christie Ladouceur, had the privilege of attending the summit and representing the Métis National Council. At the end of the summit, we had the opportunity to go to Parliament and discuss the issues that we felt are important to our Nation. A final report on key points, messages and themes was submitted to Minister Scott who will present the issues to the first ministers.

After all our hard work, we then were sent to Washington, DC, by the Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Programs. Over the span of two and a half days, we took in all the attractions that D.C. has to offer its visitors. We visited the U.S. Holocaust Museum, the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, the Jefferson Memorial, the U.S. Capitol Building, the Vietnam Veteran Memorial, the Korean War Memorial, the FDR Memorial, the National Museum of the American Indian, and of course, the White House. We also got to take in an interactive murder mystery play at the Kennedy Centre. And, as if that wasn't enough we also got to meet the Canadian Ambassador and get a tour of the Canadian Embassy.

We wore our sashes proudly during our travels as young ambassadors of the Métis Nation. While visiting the holocaust museum, a holocaust survivor spoke about his survival in the concentration camps. Since the Jewish people and Métis have shared a similar history of discrimination, we truly understood his message. For this reason we presented this remarkable man with a sash as thanks for sharing his memories and for showing us the triumph of the human spirit.



(back row l-r): Andrea Kastendieck, Brandy Bulycz, Christie Ladouceur, Conor Lloyd, Josh Mazurat, Amanda Fitzsimmons, Kim Roberts, and Jennifer Brown.  
(front l-r): Ryan McBride, Tresley Tourond, and Kymber Palydor.

## Métis Student Hosts Own Nature Documentary

by Chehala Leonard

Hi! My name is Chehala Leonard and I am a 16-year-old Grade 11 student, and I live in the Canadian Rockies in Grande Cache, AB. This past summer I was one of six lucky teenagers who were chosen in a 'Casting Call for Aboriginal Television Hosts' for Aboriginal Peoples Television Network's (APTN) *Road Scholar* show.

My job was to capture the history and beauty of various locales on this great planet. As a result, I was sent to Iceland, Greenland and Nunavut to cover an Arctic youth environmental leadership voyage, called "Students on Ice." I truly was going to the top of the world.

The 16-day trip really affected my life and I learned about the different cultures of the North. It was fascinating to see the way the northern people lived off the land. I had many opportunities to eat traditional foods like whale and fish. I also learned about how global warming is affecting these people—it was very disturbing to learn that many governments are ignoring this issue.

I saw firsthand how global warming is dramatically changing the way of life of the arctic people. I listened to elders who said that the ice is melting and the North is getting polluted. The women in the northern communities are being warned that there is a risk to breast feed their children, because the world's toxins are being deposited in their homeland. The toxins are stored in fat and blubber, so people in some communities are being told not to eat their traditional diets of whale and seal. In some of the more impacted areas, the people are being told to eat blubber only the size of an ice cube once a week.

A culture is being lost in one generation because the people cannot eat their traditional foods.

On July 21, 2005, I started my journey and made my way from Grande Cache to Reykjavik Iceland. From there we learned from 20 scholars and world leaders on global warming as we traveled to many places in Hemaey Island, Greenland, Iceland, Baffin Island, and Nunavut.

One of my many adventures occurred when we



Chehala Leonard hikes northern Canada to learn about global warming and how to share that information with the world.

spent two days sailing and whale-watching on the way to Greenland. When we arrived in Greenland I saw my first iceberg. It was cold, misty and very beautiful. We ventured into the sea in Zodiac boats and saw magnificent ice floes. We saw two big ice glaciers that looked like big frozen waterfalls. They were millions of years old and chunks of ice fell off into the sea. I picked up the ice and ate it, drinking water that was a million years old. It blew my mind to think that I drank from the same water that a cave man could have drunk from.

After dancing with a Baffin community, exploring historical Viking ruins, visiting hot springs, and exploring fishing villages, I started to make my way back home to Grande Cache on August 6, 2005.

I would like to thank many people for the experience; my sister Jaeda Feddema, my school's Native Cultural Liaison, for her encouragement and support to apply for the *Road Scholar* host position; APTN's *Road Scholars*; Amberlight Productions; the independent freelance film crew; my own film crew; my film director Brenton Bentz, a Métis from Stony Plain, AB; and Jane Hawtin, President of Amberlight Productions.

A documentary will be aired on APTN, Global TV and YTV about my expedition in early 2006.



## Métis Youth Artists Wanted for Breakthrough CD

by Rachel Hohn

Métis songwriter and composer Ryan Bresser and design company Animikii Inc. founder, Jeff Ward, want Métis youth to *Stand Up and Be Heard*. The two friends, youth themselves, are excited to create a CD dedicated to youth issues and culture and they are asking youth across the homeland to participate in the venture.

Bresser and Ward are still waiting for submissions, more than a month after they announced their intentions. He's not worried about it, Bresser says, because their goal is just to get the word out and test the waters for the CD.

"I wonder what's going on out there," Bresser says. "It's almost an experiment to see what the youth are doing it's all a play by ear."

He says they are open to the direction of the CD, and are seeking contemporary Métis artists who play, write, or sing contemporary or traditional music. They are looking for at least two artists from each province of the homeland.

"If we get someone really talented in Alberta, and they aren't recorded, we'll fly them here (to Vancouver) or us there to do it," he says.

And Bresser is serious in his intentions, even to the

point of paying out of his own pocket, to help artists be heard. They are still working on official funding, and are pursuing grants from various sources to fund the whole venture.

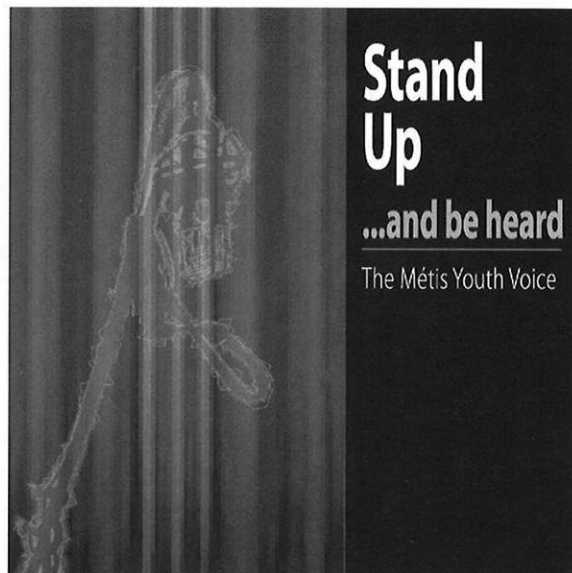
"Songs are really important to society, they reflect culture," Bresser says.

He wants funding so he can spread the CD across the country, Bresser says. "I want Métis youth to somehow come across the CD," he says. "My goal is to give them something that relates to them on a contemporary level and that makes them proud to feel and be Métis."

Ward will be working on the design elements for the CD and says he wants to put a deserving spotlight on contemporary Métis music.

"I hope that people will recognize that there is, in fact, new music being created by talented Métis individuals," Ward says. "I also hope that other Métis artists will look to this initiative and be inspired to continue to create music."

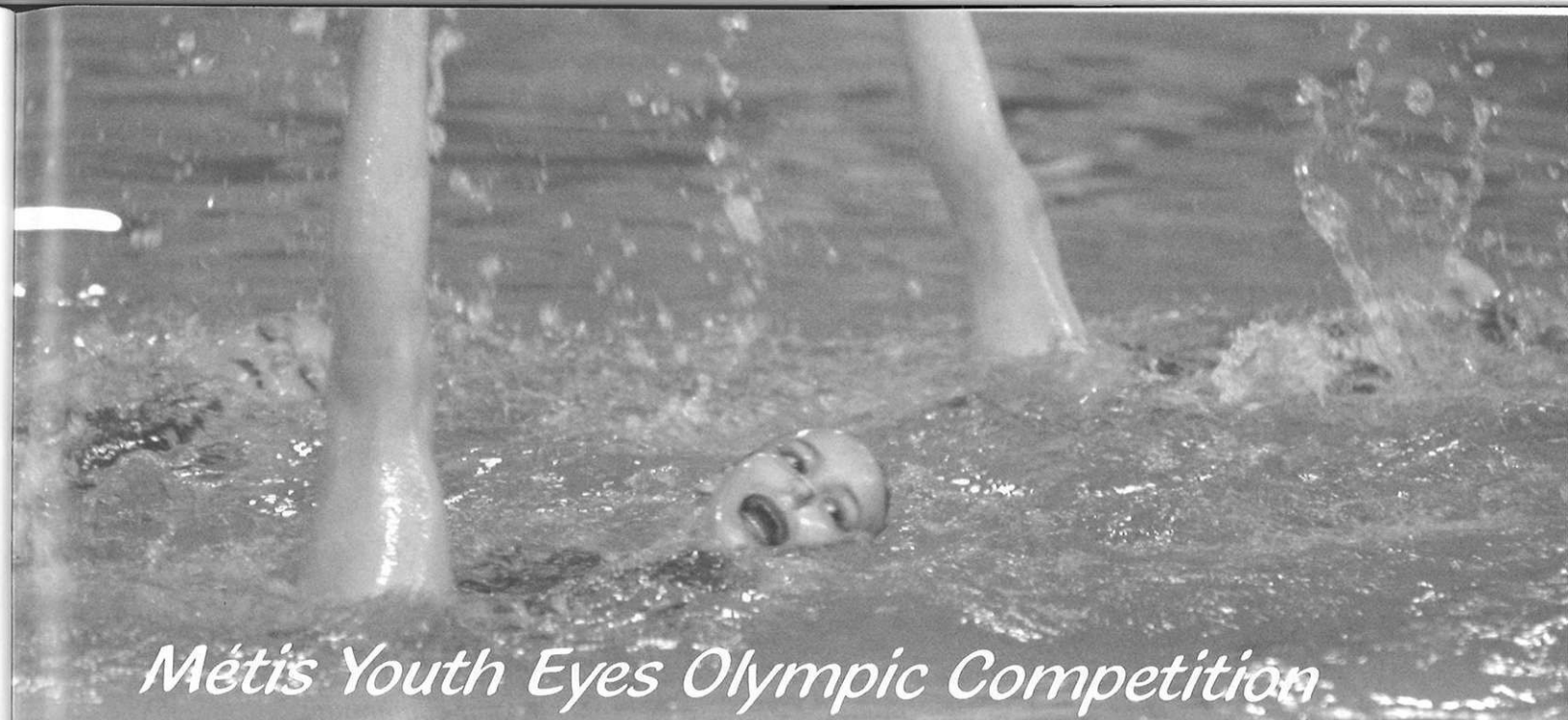
If you are a Métis youth interested in participating with this venture, Bresser invites you to contact him at [blue@thebluearbutus.com](mailto:blue@thebluearbutus.com).



**Stand  
Up**  
...and be heard  
The Métis Youth Voice

## Thank You and Good Luck!

Christie Ladouceur was employed by the Alberta Métis Historical Society and worked on numerous youth-related projects for the Society, Métis Crossing and the MNA itself. In the five months she worked with the MNA, she assisted with the coordination of the Centennial Celebrations at Métis Crossing, the Wagon Trek, National Aboriginal Day, the Annual Assembly, Cultural Activities, K-Days Parade, and Blue Lake Youth Camp.



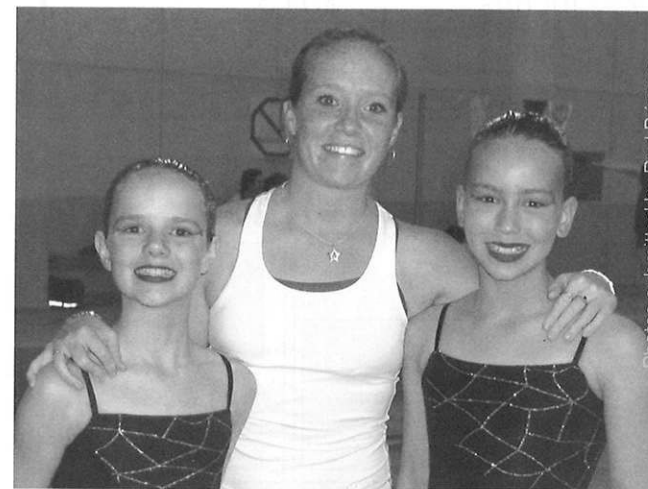
## Métis Youth Eyes Olympic Competition

by Rachel Hohn

Gabrielle Brisson, or Gabe as she's known affectionately, started swimming when she was just seven years old. Now four years later, she is on the national A-team for synchronized swimming and her sights are set on the Olympics.

"She went (swimming) once and once wasn't enough," Ron Brisson, Gabe's father, says on how Gabe started in her sport. "We had to take her back again right away."

In her first year of swimming, Gabe advanced quickly. She was asked to skip the first two tiers of swimming lessons, and started swimming in a duet with another girl in her team. Gabe and her swimming partner made sixth place at the Manitoba Alberta Saskatchewan Yukon (MASY) competition.



Top: Brisson and her team, Aquabelles, in competition. Above: Gabrielle Brisson (right) poses with her coach, Beth Dabny, and duet partner, Krissy Irwin.

Her second year swimming, they won first place.

Her swim team, the *Aquabelles*, nominated Gabe for the Alberta Athlete of the Year award. Her father says the family was honoured by the nomination.

Gabe's swim sessions include a workout with swimming lengths across the pool, practice time with her routine, and then she concludes with technical work on the figures she must create. She practices alongside her duet partner and her other *Aquabelles* teammates.

"I swim six days a week, 21 and a half hours a week," she says. This grueling schedule of swim practice before and after school is relieved by having Sundays off. Gabe doesn't think she spends too much time at the pool. "I like it," Gabe says nonchalantly. "It's fun."

There is one thing Gabe would tell people who want to know about synchronized swimming. "It may look kind of easy, but it's really hard," she says.

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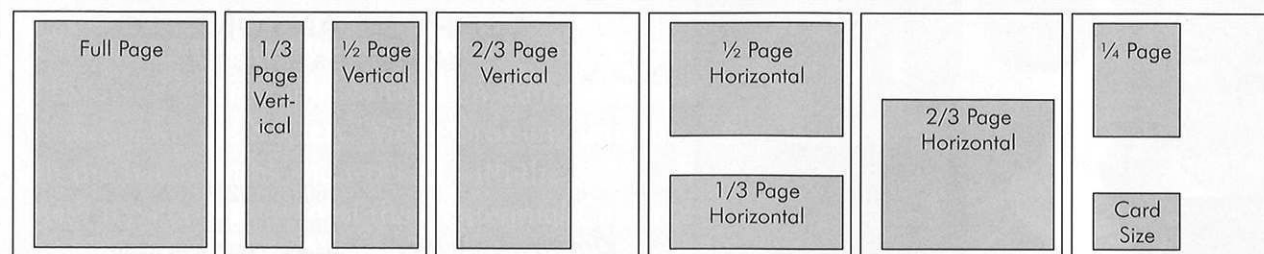
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Card Size	3½ inches	2½ inches	\$133



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Email: [communications@metis.org](mailto:communications@metis.org)

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

## National Métis Youth Role Model Awards

*Métis Youth Secretariat*

Since 2001, the Métis National Youth Role Model Awards have encouraged hundreds of nominations for the prestigious Métis National Youth Role Model Award. To date, special recognition has been offered to 24 very special Métis youth who have overcome many challenges to reach their goals and to benefit their community.

The Awards Selection Committee believes role models achieve their personal goals while benefiting others.

The committee looks for Métis youth who help disadvantaged people and non-profit organizations.

The committee looks for youth leaders who demonstrate healthy living while promoting the Metis heritage.

These are some of the factors taken into consideration in the different role model categories:

- Academic Achievement
- Athletic Excellence
- Career Advancement
- Gabriel Dumont Award for Valour
- Métis Culture & Heritage
- Personal Achievement
- Volunteer
- Group Achievement
- Mamakwasesuk (children age 10-14)
- Pierre Falcon Award for Artistic Achievement

Role Model Award recipients are recognized at the annual awards banquet, to be held on one of the nights during the National Métis Youth Conference. The

youth role models can be engaged as guest speakers, facilitators, etc., at community events and conferences.

The Awards Selection Committee would like to thank everyone who has submitted nominations in the past, and encourages every one of these youth to continue working toward his or her goals. Through this recognition program, we are helping to create a legacy for other youth to follow.

To receive a nomination package, please call:

**Métis National Youth Advisory Council**

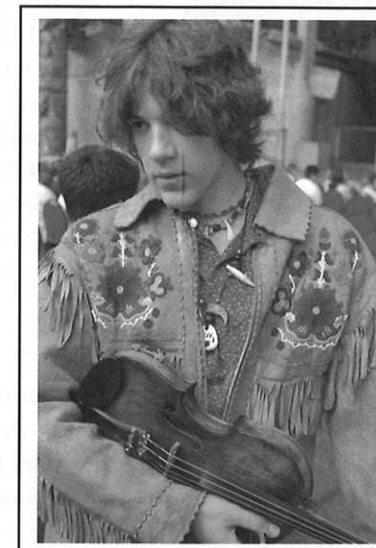
1-800-928-6330

or email: [info@metisyouth.com](mailto:info@metisyouth.com)

c/o Métis National Council

350 Sparks Street, Suite 201

Ottawa, ON K1R 7S8



**Mario Dupont**

2005 Role Model for  
Métis Youth, Culture, and Heritage

**Laura McLaughlin**  
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Traditional & Contemporary Native Clothing  
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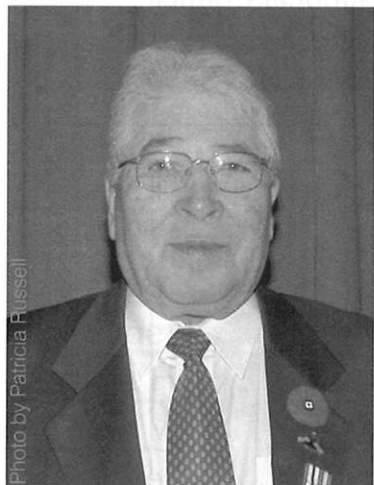
## 2005 National Aboriginal Achievement Awards Congratulations to Our Winners



### Jim Sinclair- NAAA Lifetime Achievement

For over 40 years, Jim Sinclair has championed the rights of Indigenous peoples and left an indelible mark on the international stage that will be felt for generations to come. As a founding member of both the Native Council of Canada and the Métis National Council and as past president of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples of Saskatchewan, Jim's passion and commitment to his people still persists and inspires.

Early in his career, he launched the first-ever lawsuit against a sitting Prime Minister to get the Métis into the First Conference on Aboriginal Constitutional Affairs. Then Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau settled out of court and the two became close friends. Leaders of other nations also took notice of his drive and determination. In 1990, he was invited by the Prime Minister of Australia to speak on Indigenous rights, has appeared twice before the European Parliament, and held a private audience with Pope John Paul II on four occasions to discuss Aboriginal issues.

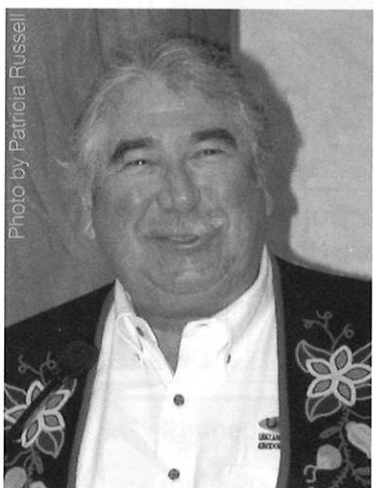


### Dr. Herb Belcourt - NAAA for Housing

Dr. Herb Belcourt not only builds homes, he has helped build lives. Combining entrepreneurial expertise and generosity, Herb has worked steadfastly to ensure Aboriginal Albertans have access to suitable housing and education.

In 1970, Herb, initiated a housing project, which led to the incorporation of Canative Housing Corporation designed to provide decent, affordable housing for Aboriginal families moving into Edmonton and Calgary. The success of this housing initiative was enhanced by its Urban Skills Program teaching parenting, home-making, health, and budgeting skills and provided day care.

In 2002, through Canative Housing, Herb and his colleagues established the Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards, donating \$13,000,000 for further education for Métis people, the interest used for bursaries and scholarships, and donated a residents' house for Métis post-graduate students at the University of Alberta.

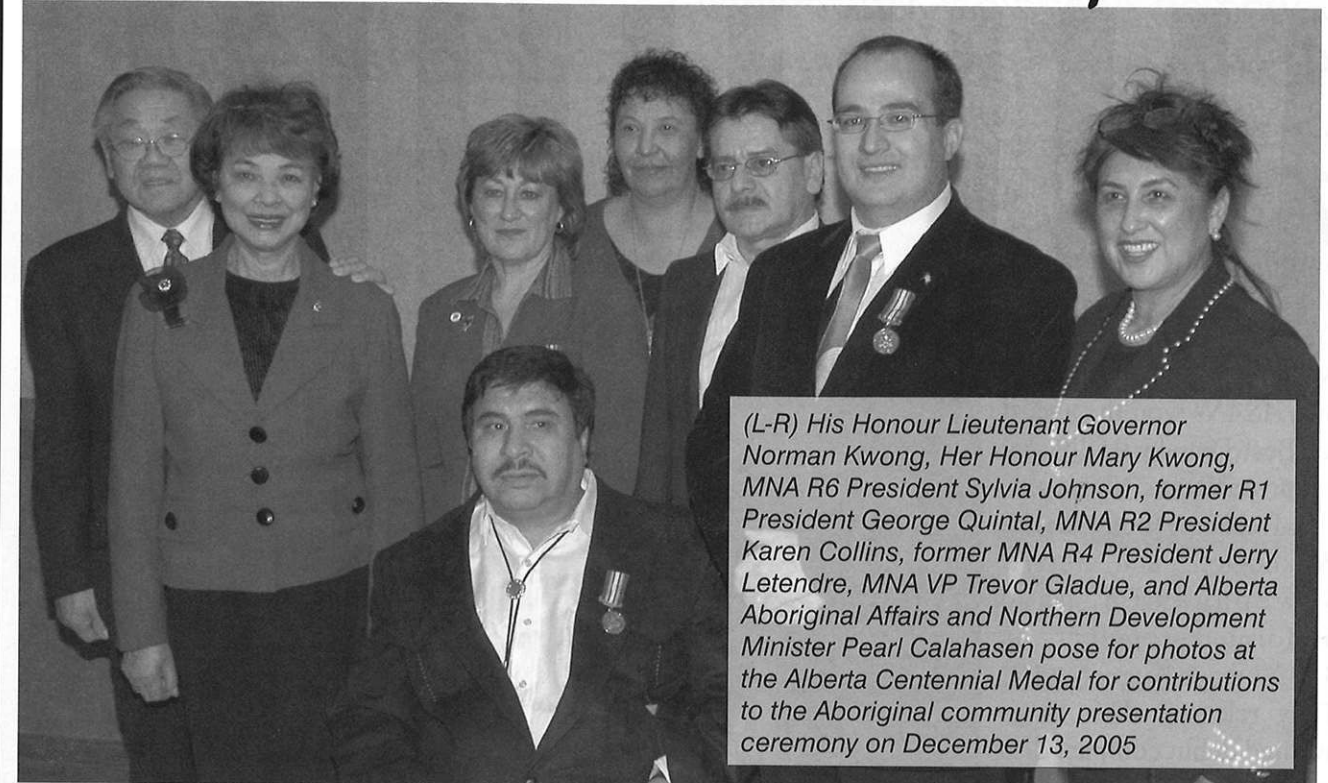


### Tony Belcourt - NAAA for Public Service

Métis Nation of Ontario President Tony Belcourt has been an active political figure within the Métis community since he was elected Vice-President of the Métis Association of Alberta in 1969. He helped form the Native Council of Canada (now the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples) and was elected its first President in 1971. Tony was instrumental in establishing the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) in 1993 and since then has been elected President for four consecutive terms, a position he continues to hold. A significant achievement of the MNO during this period was the recent landmark ruling in September 2003 by the Supreme Court of Canada in *R. v. Powley* that recognized and affirmed the existence of Métis Constitutional rights in Canadian law.

Source: the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation

## Alberta Centennial Medal Recipients



(L-R) His Honour Lieutenant Governor Norman Kwong, Her Honour Mary Kwong, MNA R6 President Sylvia Johnson, former R1 President George Quintal, MNA R2 President Karen Collins, former MNA R4 President Jerry Letendre, MNA VP Trevor Gladue, and Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Minister Pearl Calahasen pose for photos at the Alberta Centennial Medal for contributions to the Aboriginal community presentation ceremony on December 13, 2005



### 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

### Cinnamon Coffee Bread

2 cups flour  
3 teaspoons baking powder  
¼ teaspoon salt  
3 tablespoons soft margarine  
¾ cup sugar twin  
1 egg

Put into mixer bowl: flour, baking powder, sugar twin and salt. Cut in margarine on low speed for three minutes (mixture will look like fine mean). Add ½ cup skim milk, beat ½ minute on medium speed, add remaining milk and beat one minute. Add egg and beat 1 minute. Pour into greased 8" pan. Sprinkle with topping.

#### Topping:

1 tablespoon melted margarine  
4 teaspoons sugar twin  
½ teaspoon cinnamon  
¼ cup breadcrumbs

Mix together and sprinkle over top. Bake 20 minutes at 375.

Submitted by Angela Lambert, High River



*ASANI - Best Female Traditional Album*

by Debbie Houle

The Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards took place at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre on Friday, November 25. Alberta's own *ASANI* won the award for Best Female Traditional / Cultural Roots Album.

Debbie Houle, Sarah Pocklington, and Sherryl Sewepagaham have performed together as *ASANI* since August 2001. They released their long-awaited debut compact disc called "Rattle and Drum" in January 2005. Since its release, they've received two nominations by the Indian Summer Music Awards, one nomination by the Western Canadian Music Awards and three nominations by the Canada Music Awards. Their hard work paid off on November 25 when "Rattle and Drum" won Best Female Traditional/Cultural Album.

The Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards celebrates the achievements of Aboriginal musicians across Canada. The award show, directed by Donald Quan, opened and closed with *ASANI*'s performance of "Celebrate," a song they were asked to compose as the theme song for the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards and festival. The contribution of female artists was commemorated in the women's medley featuring Donna Kay, ElizaBeth Hill, *ASANI* and Tagaq.

The audience was also treated to performances by nominees J.C. Campbell, Nadjiwan, War Party, Perfect Storm, Forever, Joanne Shenendoah and a



*Debbie Houle, Sarah Pocklington, and Sherryl Sewepagaham, the members of Asani, received the Canadian Aboriginal Music Award for Best Female Traditional/Cultural Roots Album.*

medley by Métis fiddlers Ryan D'aoust, John Arcand and Donny Parenteau.

To find out what's in store for this Aboriginal women's trio from Edmonton, Alberta, visit them online at [www.asani.org](http://www.asani.org).

**NO LIMITS**

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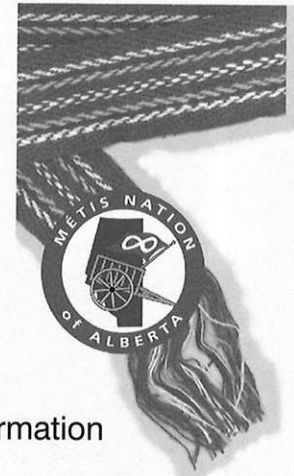
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**Aboriginal Heritage Interpreter Certificate Program  
 starting February, 2006.**

**Call 780 416 8844 or 780 416 8869 for information.**

# Métis Employment Services Contact Information



Seventeen Métis Employment Service Centres across the province offering a variety of services including:

- ◆ Pre-employment services
  - ◆ Job referral
  - ◆ Employment assessments
  - ◆ The provision of labour market information
  - ◆ Career counselling
  - ◆ Job finders clubs
- “Build*

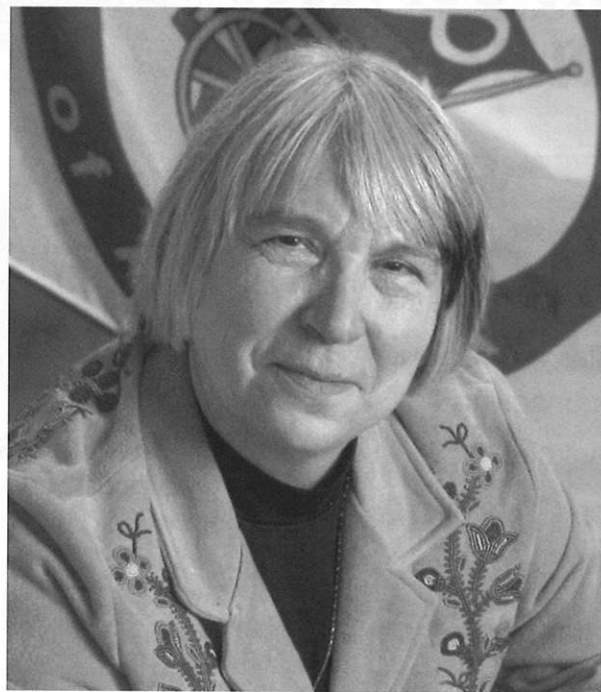
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<b>Lac La Biche</b> Suite 106, 10107-102 Ave. Lac La Biche AB T0A 2C0 (780) 623-2524 1-877-623-2524 Fax (780) 623-8343	<b>Fort McMurray</b> Bay 301 Tamarack Village 9612 Franklin Ave. Fort McMurray AB T9H 2J9 (780) 714-3029 Fax (780) 714-3697	<b>Conklin</b> General Delivery Conklin AB T0P 1H0 (780) 559-8995 Fax (780) 559-8997
<b>Bonnyville</b> Box 7669, 5102-51 St. Bonnyville AB T9N 2H9 (780) 826-7368 1-877-523-7203 Fax (780) 826-7603		
<b>Calgary</b> #5-2611 37th Ave NE Calgary AB T1Y 5V7 (403) 250-8902 1-877-250-4295 Fax (403) 250-2838	<b>Lethbridge</b> #400, 740-4th Ave South Lethbridge AB T1J 0N9 (403) 317-1555 Fax (403) 317-1610	<b>Red Deer</b> 105-4711-51st Ave Red Deer AB T4N 6H8 (403) 358-7734 Fax (403) 358-7735
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<b>Peace River</b> 9615 100th Street Peace River AB T8S 1J7 (780) 624-0703 1-866-624-0703 Fax (780) 624-0693	<b>Grande Prairie</b> 10011-102nd Street Grande Prairie AB T8V 2V5 (780) 539-5477 1-877-538-5477 Fax (780) 539-5261	<b>High Level</b> Box 150, 9806 - 98 Street High Level AB T0H 1Z0 (780) 841-0600 1-866-806-0600 Fax (780) 841-0601

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(780) 455-2200 1-800-252-7553 Fax (780) 451-2530

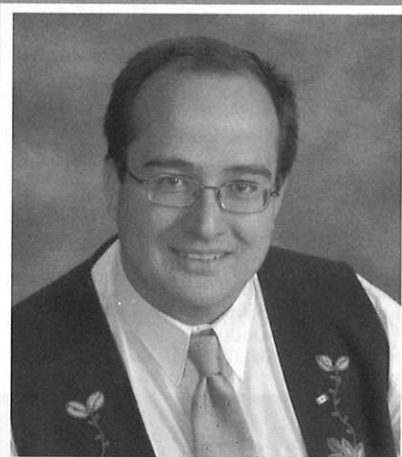
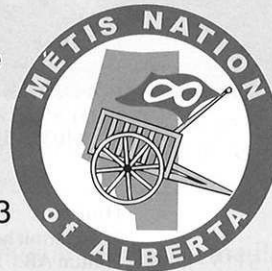


## PROVINCIAL LEADERSHIP



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# Season's Greetings

*from the Métis Nation of Alberta Leadership*

### Region IV



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**Fax** 780-624-3477  
**Toll-Free** 1-800-668-5319

### Region VI



*Vice-President*  
**Louis Bellrose**





## Editor's Insight

Patricia Russell

I was talking with my muse the other day about gratitude and how seasonally appropriate it would be to write about the feeling. "What are you grateful for?" he asked.

"Sunsets and fresh air," I replied.

"Russell, you're blowing smoke. You enjoy a colourful sunset and a breath of fresh air, when you take the time to notice them. But your sense of gratitude comes from something else, from a different place," says my muse, who has a habit of producing a mirror for me to stare into when I struggle to articulate a simmering idea. "Look inside," he says.

"Hmmm, you have a point," I said. And he's right. My husband is more likely than I am to put on a pair of snowshoes and tromp around in the snow just to savour an afternoon in the fresh air, work up a sweat, and develop a runny nose.

Indeed, genuine gratitude comes from within. It's a feeling that comes to me when I take stock of how different life might be if I had overlooked bits of advice or taken a left turn instead of a right turn when I came to certain 'forks in the road'

For example, I'm grateful for a nugget of wisdom given by my eighth grade language arts teacher Jim Burke, who advised me to choose my friends carefully, stay in school, and continue writing. I'm grateful to have worked with and

learned from Marie Wilson, the former Director of CBC North Radio and Television, who promoted the use of Aboriginal voices to tell stories of relevance to an Aboriginal audience. Her wisdom led to a brand of radio found nowhere else in Canada but in the north.

Who knew that, years later, I'd be writing stories about Metis people in a magazine for Metis people?

Author Melodie Beattie writes, "Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow." In thinking about gratitude this Christmas, I realize and how thankful I am for the choices I've made or didn't make. I'm thankful for my daughter and husband, for my sisters and brothers, my family, friends, associates, and all the other people who round out my life. Even the unhappy people I know. My wish is for each of you to know the feelings of peace, contentment, and heartfelt gratitude.

Merry Christmas.

# National Definition of Métis

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

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

## *Defined Terms in National Definition of Métis*

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

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

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

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





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