



Le Métis

President's Message



This has been an incredible summer for connection. I'm still feeling the great joy of attending the Ste. Madeleine Métis Days last month, and spending time with the people there. I believe I will carry the spirit of that event with me for a very long time. Because it was much, much more than a great summer party.

It wasn't just the huge turnout, the immense talent of the performers, the fresh pickerel fry, the taste of that bannock(!), the games, dancing, or the laughter of youth and Elders combined. It wasn't even the jewel on the crown of the weekend, the very special open-air service on the site of the Ste. Madeleine church which 80 years before had been deliberately burned down by the government.

What made Ste. Madeleine Days unforgettable was the truly amazing presence of the Elders who had once been the little children of Ste. Madeleine. They were the ones who stood beside their parents, watching in terror as their homes and all their possessions were burned, and their dogs shot. How could they, or their parents, or any rational human being, understand what was happening that day? How could anyone explain why the

government thought it was more important to feed cattle than protect Métis families.

The government has immense power to affect our families, doesn't it?

The burning of Ste. Madeleine was 80 years ago. Now it is 2019. Let us ask ourselves: Is our government today any more enlightened? Here is some very recent news:

Federally, we see that \$5.1 million in funding has been invested from Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada toward the creation of a Métis National Heritage Centre (MNHC). Here we see reconciliation in action, and a true recognition of the Métis as Partners in Confederation. Yes, the federal government is clearly showing their enlightenment.

So –is there enlightenment on the provincial level?

Ask the simple question: Have you seen the Métis consulted by the provincial government for their perspectives, concerns, and expertise in regards to matters that directly affect our land, our health care, housing, waters and harvesting rights? Time and again, the answer, sadly, is "No". Despite their Duty to Consult, there is no accountability. Perhaps if the province showed some respect by attending the federal announcement about the MNHC, more could have been learned about the Métis and our place in confederation. But little to no interest in learning, or even acknowledging our presence is being exhibited by the current provincial government. And when a government will not acknowledge you, you are at dire risk. And once again, the Métis are on the front lines.

So will we be forced to stand by and watch everything we've built get burned to the ground?

No, my friends. We will never let that happen again.

As well we know, the Pallister government has called for an election one year ahead of schedule. I imagine the premier believes that he is playing a clever strategy by doing this, making the other parties struggle to catch up in election preparedness. But I don't happen to believe that politics are games to be played. Government is about the day to day success of our families. That is not a game.

On September 10, 2019, let us show all Manitobans what happens when our voices are united. "Métis Vote" is a grassroots movement among our Citizens.

As you enjoy the rest of your summer, talk to your friends, and tell your neighbours. "Métis Vote" is up to us. Make your plans to give our Elders a ride to the polling station, and make sure you get to that ballot box.

I will see you there.

I send my thoughts and prayers to those who are shut in, sick or caused to grieve. There is hope and comfort to be found in our strong Métis community. Remember our many blessings. Take good care and enjoy the rest of the beautiful summer months.

Meeqwetch,

∞ President David Chartrand, LL.D. hon. O.M.

Métis Pavilion Returns to Folklorama

Métis culture will be represented at Folklorama again this summer at the Métis pavilion, sponsored by the Asham Stompers.

“We’re the hometown people,” said Terry Gibb, a coordinator for the Métis pavilion. “When we have a cultural display, it shows people how the Métis were really prairie people and how they lived in this region. You don’t have to go very far to experience the culture when it’s right here.”

Last year was the first time in eight years a Métis pavilion was hosted at Folklorama. The Stompers, a dance group dedicated to preserving and sharing Métis culture by performing the Red River Jig, picked up the torch and organized the pavilion, sponsored by the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF).

“There was, I guess, a void or an absence of the Métis pavilion, so last year we decided to take it and reinstate it, bring it back to life,” said Gibb. “It really got a lot of notice.”

It was a smashing success. Attendees showed up in flocks to appreciate the showcase of Métis culture, complete with traditional Métis food, fiddle music, cultural artifacts – and, of course, a jig and square-dancing performance by the Stompers.

“Last year, we put on three shows a night for one week, and we got a standing ovation at every show from the audience,” said Gibb. “The Asham Stompers put on a dynamic show.”

The 11-member dance troupe includes members of both Métis and First Nations heritage. Several members danced with Sagkeeng’s Finest, a dance group that won the first and only season of Canada’s Got Talent in 2012.

The Stompers regularly perform across Manitoba and Canada for a variety of events, including the Festival du Voyageur, Canada Day celebrations and Indigenous Day events. It was founded by lead dancer Arnold Asham.

“[Arnold Asham is] really big in promoting Métis culture, so he not only gives a dance performance with a live band, but he also displays the dance and how the Métis people danced that way throughout history,” said Gibb. “It really ties into the Métis culture.”

For Gibb and the Stompers, bringing the Métis pavilion to Folklorama is vital in reminding Winnipeggers of their land’s heritage, and the culture that existed before the city’s establishment. To Gibb, it belongs in our city’s main festival celebrating cultures both new and old to Canada.

“This is who we are,” said Gibb. “You go to all the other pavilions at Folklorama and you’re going back to the Ukraine, or to the Caribbean, or to England or Scotland or Ireland or whatever the pavilion is, but the neat thing about the Métis pavilion is that you’re coming back to Winnipeg. It’s really beautiful.”

Shortly after Folklorama, the Asham Stompers will be gearing up for their annual Stomperfest. Scheduled for the September long weekend (Aug. 30 – Sept. 1), Stomperfest is a celebration – as well as a competition – of Métis dance, with camping and entertainment mixed in. This year’s headliner is country singer and Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame inductee Michelle Wright.

“Arnold’s always told me we have the world’s best jiggers and square dancers that participate in this and that’s what people come out to see,” said Gibb.

The Métis pavilion will be open every evening from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. from Sunday, Aug. 11 to Saturday, Aug. 17. The Asham Stompers’ show runs three times a night: 6:45, 8:15 and 9:45. General admission tickets and festival passes can be purchased at www.folklorama.ca or at the door.



Michif Class Available at U of M

This school year, students at the University of Manitoba can take courses to speak, understand and rediscover the Métis Nation's distinct language.

Michif 1 will be offered in Fall 2019, while its second installation, Michif 2, will follow in Winter 2020. Both classes are offered on Mondays from 6 p.m. to 8:45 p.m., and taught by Heather Souter. Spots are limited to 25 students per class, and as of July 31, only 15 spots remain.

"We are looking to create a speech community made up of Michif speakers in hopes of ensuring our language lives on to the next generation," said Laura Forsythe, Métis Inclusion Coordinator at the U of M.

For Forsythe, the importance of teaching Michif at the U of M is two-pronged; for one, the language isn't taught outside of Forsythe's own Little Métis Sing with Me training workshop.

"The university has an opportunity to assist in the reclaiming of language stolen from our people," Forsythe states.

Moreover, as the U of M is an institution built on the homeland of the Métis Nation, a course teaching Michif shows a step towards reconciliation and makes the U of M a friendlier space towards its Métis students.

"Hosting Michif sends a message to the over-1,400 Métis students that there is a real commitment to the Métis here at the University of Manitoba," says Forsythe.

When Forsythe became Métis Inclusion Coordinator, it was her duty to make sure the Métis Nation was represented in all aspects at the U of M.

"It has taken the dedication of many students, support staff, faculty, and administration to see Michif run," says Forsythe.

Professor Souter ran a Michif Workshop at the University of Manitoba on March 24. Last year, she coordinated a two-day program for the Master-Apprentice Language Learning Program at the Dauphin Friendship Centre, held by the Prairies to Woodlands Indigenous Language Revitalization Circle.

In an article about the program in Dauphin, Souter told the Brandon Sun: "If we don't transmit the knowledge of the language and culture now to a younger person... we'll lose it. It won't be there for us to transmit."

The course's first iteration ran earlier this year in June. As a summer course, it was condensed into a single month, taking place on Mondays and Wednesdays, and two Saturdays.

This new course will run throughout the regular term with one class a week.



Laura Forsythe

Métis Inclusion Coordinator - University of Manitoba



Métis Votes

The Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) has initiated a grassroots movement called “Métis Votes” designed to reach Métis Citizens in advance of the upcoming provincial election.

“Métis Votes’ is our chance to tell the candidates and in particular the party leaders what is important to us,” said MMF President David Chartrand. “We are struggling with issues that are critical to our lives and livelihoods.”

Recently, Manitoba Métis citizens have been negatively impacted by numerous decisions made by the Province. The Lake Winnipeg quota buy-backs and changes to fishing mesh size regulations have created an unease among Indigenous groups about the future of the fishing industry, which is integral to traditional Métis harvesting rights. Compounding the issue, there are pressing environmental concerns for a sustainable future for fishing in

Manitoba. The alarming influx of zebra mussels and other invasive species to Manitoba lakes, and inadequate consultation by the Province with the MMF and Aboriginal groups about the Lake St. Martin Outlet Project, are of major concern.

“An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must be prepared in regards to this project which would reflect our perspectives, concerns and expertise,” said Chartrand. “What I can tell you is there was significant harm to fish through the interim operation of the emergency outlet channel for this project... but no effort has been made to include the MMF in the preparation of an EIS.”

Frustrated by the lack of consultation and regard for the Métis by the Province, the MMF is directly polling its Citizens through a survey to learn the issues that matter most to its Citizens. The answers accumulated will be

analyzed and will form the basis of questions which will be submitted to all parties before the provincial election. These answers will be made available to Métis Citizens to help inform their votes in September.

“I will vote,” said President Chartrand. “I care deeply about health care, housing, healthy Manitoba ecosystems, sustainable fishing, and the Rights of the Manitoba Métis Community.”

In addition to the survey, Métis Citizens are being encouraged to share information, discuss, and even drive their Elders to the polls.

“On September 10, 2019, let us show all Manitobans what happens when our voices are united,” said President Chartrand.

SHARE YOUR CONCERNS – YOUR VOTE COUNTS



MÉTIS VOTE



YOUR Manitoba Métis Government – IS HERE FOR YOU

Your Métis Government will keep you posted on all the federal and provincial political party agendas, announcements and commitments.

For more information, contact:
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