



# Le Métis



Not being away from my home province when I can help it, the province I love and have been devoted to and worked for my entire life, I have been able to attend some pretty important events in the last few weeks.

I was honoured to be part of the Northwest Metis Council meeting in Dauphin at the beginning of August. There's nothing I like better than connecting with members of the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) on a grassroots level, and hearing reports from the Locals. These folk demonstrate a dedication and commitment to the people of Manitoba that fills me with admiration, and in all honesty, the current Premier of Manitoba could take a page from their book. The meeting was a mingling of all walks of Métis people, from toddlers to the vibrant Youth Advisory Committee, all the way up to our wise and generous Elders. Each and every person there was invested in the future of our Métis Nation. I talked to so many people in Dauphin, I listened carefully, and these are the things they want to talk about: Health, Seniors, Youth, Harvesting, the Economy, and our precious lakes that are in so much trouble. Invasive species such as zebra mussels, harmful algae blooms that are increasing in size and

## President's Message

frequency, and the vital need to protect the sustainability of fishing, are on everyone's minds. And within all that talking, reporting and visiting, there were two words everyone kept coming back to: Métis Vote.

The concept of Métis Vote has been moving like wildfire. Why is that? It's because Métis people know how we pay taxes and get nothing back for it. It's because Métis people know how the Premier never met one single commitment he made to us in his election promises back in 2016. It's because Métis people know how Pallister threw away the Turning the Page agreement and blamed the Métis when his Hydro board handed him a mass resignation – and that takes a high level of denial to blame the Métis and not take a look inward when a board of citizens that accomplished want nothing to do with you. It amounts to, Pallister doesn't recognize the Métis Nation as constitutionally-enshrined, rights-bearing people – or at least he doesn't since he got elected. But guess what? We're here. And if he knew his Métis history, he'd know -- we aren't going away.

The Métis people are talking about Métis Vote because we know that votes will talk.

If you know me, you know I like to talk to share our Métis opinions. Just a few days after the Council meeting, I was back in Winnipeg and on the radio with Global News talking about Decision 2019. Lots of comments were coming in on Twitter during my interview. I am heartened to know how many people from all over Manitoba are as concerned about the future of Manitoba as I am. I said on the radio that soon, fighting for our water is going to be the biggest, most important fight in the world.

Did you try to get to Grand Beach this summer but were yet again met with algae? We all know our lakes are suffering now. The very future of fishing is at risk, and these are issues that are life and death. These are the precise issues that the Métis people must be consulted about and can assist with. No one knows the waters better than the people who work on the waters, the Métis Harvesters. The Manitoba government has a legal duty to consult with the Métis in a meaningful way with decisions that may infringe upon or adversely affect our Constitutional rights. The Province is breaching the constitution by ignoring us, they are damaging our lakes, they are risking our entire province.

If water is our big fight, we have another big fight happening too.

That fight is at the polls.

I offer my prayers for our friends, family members, and veterans who have passed on and my condolences to those who have lost a loved one. My hopes are with those who are sick or shut in and I offer my best wishes to all.

Meeqwetch,

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

# Northwest Regional Meeting Illustrates the Power of Grassroots Governance

On August 10, 2019, the Northwest Metis Council's (NWMC) regional meeting in Dauphin featured an assembly of over 250 Métis Citizens all actively contributing toward their demonstrated dynamic governance. "Métis Votes" was discussed widely, and the power of going to the polls.

Elder Doug Sanderson began the proceedings with a prayer, and the Northwest Council's Vice-President Frances Chartrand offered greetings to the strong representation of locals, youth, Elders, and a full slate of Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) dignitaries. Mayor Allen Dowhan rounded out the preliminary proceedings by recognizing the many contributions of the MMF to the City of Dauphin. He added that Métis homes are places where, when a visitor drops by, the kettle is always put on. In that spirit of welcoming and sharing, a full day of interaction between a wide range of Citizens began.

President David Chartrand described himself as a "workaholic" who prefers negotiation to summer relaxation, and his report backed up his drive to obtain the best possible outcomes for

Métis Citizens. Housing, daycare, jobs, Elders, and furthering Métis rights through ongoing negotiations with the federal government were major elements of his wide-ranging narrative of recent accomplishments and plans. Reconciliation in Action with the federal government was celebrated.

A report from Minister Anita Campbell and the Infinity Women's Secretariat, the NWMC financial and regional reports, and then the NWMC Youth Advisory report filled up the morning. The Youth Advisory presented an embroidered vest to Minister Richard Genaille in thanks for his ongoing investment in and mentorship of youth. Minister Genaille, both surprised and moved, said, "Mentoring youth has always been my passion and no doubt I'll be doing it until I die."

Volunteers had been hustling all morning behind the scenes to prepare lunch for the large crowd, and at noon the room filled with lively chat. The food was enjoyed by all, accompanied by a live performance of music by The Campbell Brothers.

In the afternoon, the Northwest Region Locals updated the crowd about their activities and accomplishments. A profound grassroots engagement by the Métis Locals was clear. Following the election of Jeanette Brown-Porter to the Local Advisory, Minister Will Goodon reported on the MMF Housing Department, and Minister Julyda Lagimodiere of the Metis Justice Institute conducted an electronic Justice Survey.

By end of day, the commitment of Métis Citizens to build a strong future for themselves and future generations was indisputable. The call to respond to the provincial government's cuts to programs and services in the upcoming election was also clear. The power of Métis Citizens, united by community and their "Métis Votes", holds immense potential.



## Affordable Housing for Elders Coming to St. Laurent

By the end of December, nine Métis senior will have new, affordable homes in the St. Laurent area.

David Chartrand, president of the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF), held a special meeting at the St. Laurent Recreation Centre on Thursday, August 8, to announce the St. Laurent Seniors Housing Project. Approximately 50 citizens of the community attended to hear about the upcoming construction of nine housing units and one common house for senior in the area.

“The goal, at the end of the day, is to ensure the space is there for the people in need,” said President Chartrand. “There’s a time and point when you can’t run a house anymore, whether it’s cutting the grass or maintaining your house, and it’s time to give it up. But I don’t want people to leave St. Laurent; I don’t want people to move to Winnipeg into a personal care home or move away when they should be living in their own community.”

Each 800-square-foot house will have two bedrooms and a greenhouse for growing plants and traditional Métis medicines, to help residents continue to harvest and cook traditional Métis dishes. Support work will be provided to help seniors take care of the community and ensure their health. The whole site will be wheelchair friendly.

“We’re going to make it as comfortable as possible for the elders living there,” said President Chartrand.

The common house will feature a 46-seat gathering room, to be used for cultural events and other community functions for residents to stay connected with one another.

“It’ll be somewhere you can go play cards, somewhere you can talk to each other, have a little gathering, a little luncheon,” said President Chartrand.

The project will cost approximately \$4 million, including construction of the nine units, the common house, and installing water and sewage systems. The MMF is making an effort to hire as many Métis-owned and operated companies and contractors as possible in the project’s construction.

“We need to entice and ensure Métis businesses are used in the community,” said President Chartrand.

Will Goodon, Minister of Housing and Property Management, was also in attendance to share blueprints of the cul-de-sac. President Chartrand took questions and suggestions from attendees and shared future plans for upcoming developments across the province.

The St. Laurent Seniors Housing Project is the latest expression of the Métis Nation’s relationship with the federal government. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s promise to the Métis Nation of a nation-to-nation, government-to-government relationship was officiated in 2016 with the signing of the Framework Agreement for Advancing Reconciliation. In 2018, President Chartrand negotiated the Métis Nation Housing Sub-Accord. This sub-accord represented Canada’s housing investment in the MMF of \$125 million over 10 years.

Previous housing projects are already up-and-running across the province, including three units in Winnipeg, seven in Brandon, four in Selkirk, and two in The Pas. These existing projects were the result of a partnership agreement with the Province of Manitoba in 2014 that expired earlier this year.

Construction of the St. Laurent Seniors Housing Project will begin this August, and houses will be ready for this December.

Interested applicants can email [info@mmf.mb.ca](mailto:info@mmf.mb.ca) or call **204-947-1816** for more information and to obtain application forms.

## Jigging the House Down at Folklorama

The Asham Stompers jiggged the house down and left the standing ovation audience shouting for more at the Métis Pavilion in Folklorama’s second week.

High energy doesn’t begin to capture the showmanship on display. The performance began with a colourful, breathtaking Hoop and Fancy Shawl dancing performance, and then host Arnold Asham took over. He couldn’t keep his feet from jigging, though, as he masterfully interjected the history of the Métis people while he emceed, called the square dancing, and occasionally joined the dance.

Dancers of all ages hoofed it to the accompaniment of a live band, and even the youngest member of the troupe displayed a level of professionalism that made it clear why the Asham Stompers are in demand all over the

world. The dancers’ foot stomping combined with the audience hand clapping drew every last audience member into the shindig.

Spicy pickerel chowder served with fresh, light bannock with butter and jam, and Métis steak (fried baloney), with Moose Milk to wash it down, made for a scrumptious feast. Cultural displays and booths of Métis crafts bordered the hall, including an inkle loom with a Métis sash in process.

All the performers gathered at the door at the end of the night to shake hands with the patrons, pose for photos, and thank the crowd for attending. Clearly there is an incredible spirit at the Métis pavilion, and everyone involved is thrilled to share it.



# First-Ever Two-Spirit Michif Local Makes History

History was made on Wednesday, August 7 at the inaugural meeting for the new Two-Spirit Michif Local – the first of its kind in the Métis Nation.

Nearly 30 Métis Citizens, officials and allies gathered at the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) headquarters to vote for executive representatives of the new local, agree on future plans and share support for the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

“Two-Spirit folks are important, we’re gifted, we’re valuable contributing members to society,” said interim co-chair Chantal Fiola at the meeting. “Sometimes some folks forget about that, but we won’t let them forget.”

Fiola was later elected secretary-treasurer. Charlotte Nolin was elected vice-chairperson, and the other co-interim chair, Nicki Ferland, was elected as chairperson.

For Ferland, the importance of having a local (a community-level association, representing groups of Métis citizens) specifically representing Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ citizens

is manifold. For one, it creates a safe space for 2SLGBTQ+ Métis folks to engage with the government on a more fundamental level.

For another, the local will ensure the MMF includes 2SLGBTQ+ citizens in policy and governance.

“The Two-Spirit Michif Local will respond to the unique needs of Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Métis people in the Winnipeg region,” said Ferland. “We’ll make sure that we’re considered when the MMF is making decisions that [impact] our distinct political and emotional and spiritual needs and interests.”

Already, the local has attracted mainstream media attention. Both Ferland and Dr. Fiola were interviewed for an article on CBC, while Nolin was interviewed on-air for Radio-Canada, both on Tuesday, August 13. Ferland and Fiola also appeared on Global News’ Morning Show on Monday, August 19 to discuss the local.

“It feels great to be getting some press, because it means that there’s some good potential for us to establish meaningful partnerships with other

Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ organizations around Winnipeg and Manitoba and the Homeland,” said Ferland.

While the executive team has their hands full getting the local up and running, they already have big plans in store for the future – including hosting a national Two-Spirit summit in 2020. “2020 is a big year, being the hundredth anniversary of the provisional government established by Riel,” said Ferland.

“We’re hoping ... to bring together Métis people and our First Nations cousins and allies from across the Homeland to talk about the biggest areas of concerns and interests for Two-Spirit people at the moment.”

Métis Citizens in the Winnipeg Region interested in joining the Two-Spirit Michif Local can email the executive team at [2smichiflocal@gmail.com](mailto:2smichiflocal@gmail.com) and fill out a local transfer form at the Winnipeg Metis Association office.

