

**June 17, 2013**  
**President's Message**

This past month I have had the honour of attending the Northwest and Southwest Regional Assemblies in Swan River and Brandon. During the course of the summer I, along with many of my elected-representative colleagues and our staff, will be attending another five assemblies in the remaining MMF Regions. I enjoy participating and giving my President's Address, reporting to our local executive and citizens, getting their feedback at these events.

The Regional Assemblies are an integral part of our Metis governance system. These gatherings are great opportunities for our Regional Executive and myself to account back to our constituency about the work that we have accomplished during the past year, review the financial audit, and to receive important input on directions to be followed and priorities to be implemented over the coming year.

These assemblies are the lead up to the MMF Annual General Assembly, which will be coming up this year on September 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> 2013 in Brandon. In recent years there have been around three thousand delegates in attendance. Please put this date into your calendar. Also, in the coming months, please visit our website, listen to Metis Hour x 2, and read Le Metis for more information and for updates as to the agenda of this assembly.

As we all know, the MMF is your democratic self-government representative of the Metis Nation's Manitoba Metis Community. As your Metis Government, we provide programs, services, and advocacy for our citizens. As per our Constitution, the MMF provides responsible and accountable governance using the constitutional authorities delegated by our citizens.

As such, the MMF is a constitutional democracy that incorporates three varieties or types of democracy into our Metis governance system: firstly we use representative democracy; secondly, there is direct democracy, and thirdly, but equally important, we have participatory democracy. Using all three makes us unique and we have a very distinct approach from the way of doing business taken by the provincial and federal governments.

Representative democracy is founded on the principle that elected representatives, in the case of the MMF, the President, Regional Vice Presidents and Directors, and Local Executive, provide a voice for their electorate. The MMF has its ballot box elections at least every four years as directed by our MMF Constitution. As your MMF President I am elected province-wide, which gives me responsibilities as well as authorities to protect our rights and interests at both the provincial and national levels.

Direct democracy is what takes place each year at our Regional Assemblies and our Province-wide Annual General Assembly. At these assemblies, every one of our attending citizens, along with their elected representatives, have the opportunity to

together develop and decide various priorities and policy initiatives. Important examples include our 2007 Resolution #8 concerning consultation and accommodation, as well as the constitutional amendments that have been debated and voted on by our citizens.

Participatory democracy emphasizes the importance of our MMF governance structure continuing to provide our citizens with a variety of opportunities to be involved in Local meetings, committees, workshops, fundraisers, and conferences towards ensuring that our citizens are participating in effectively identifying community needs and in developing grass-roots advice and solutions, as well as locally and Regionally-based decision-making.

To ensure the continuing success of our Metis initiatives, it is very important that you – our Metis citizen – take the necessary time to be directly involved and, through your participation, protect our Aboriginal rights of self-government, self-determination, and self-definition. We need your active support: vote and volunteer. It is only by exercising your rights can you be assured of their protection.

I thank our elected representatives, both Local and Regional Executive, for their hard work and dedication over the years. I also give my heartfelt thanks for our volunteers. Elected or non-elected, they have made many sacrifices of time, energy, and money, to ensure the Metis People's objectives are being pursued. They tirelessly promote our history and culture as well as our legal, political, social, and economic rights and interests.

I offer a prayer for our Ancestors and show my gratitude for our predecessors for all they have done in the protection of our Manitoba Metis Community and the building and support of our Metis democracy. I also offer my prayers for all those who have passed away and condolences to friends and family of our departed. Best wishes to all.

Meeqwetch.