



# Le Métis

∞ EST. 1871 ∞

## YOUR RED RIVER MÉTIS GOVERNMENT'S BI-WEEKLY NEWS



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

When your Red River Métis Government acquired the historic Bank of Montreal (BMO) building at the corner of Portage and Main, we knew it was going to become the future home of our Red River Métis National Heritage Centre. There's no doubt that this building will represent a major source of pride for our Citizens, and will become a major attraction to visitors from across Canada and the world.

As plans evolved for the revitalization of Winnipeg's iconic Portage and Main intersection, we knew we needed to address the respectful handling of the BMO World War I statue that once stood on the edge of the property. First unveiled in September of 1923, the statue represented 231 BMO employees who made the ultimate sacrifice over the course of World War I.

Citizens know that it is part of our culture to honour our Veterans for their sacrifices, and to always give our respect to any Veteran no matter who they are or where they come from. I have personally heard the stories of Veterans, how they watched young men – in some cases, friends or relatives – injured in the theatre of war, while they were unable to provide any help. I have sat with them, cried with them, and did what I could to help heal their wounds, through long years of advocacy for their recognition.

There was no question that we would ensure the statue found a new home that was meaningful and in keeping with the military contributions of this province and this country. That involved engaging with multiple partners, including the City of Winnipeg, to find the right place for the statue to call home. I am pleased to say that Mayor Scott Gillingham and City Council, as well as the Property and Planning Committee members, recognized that they were uniquely positioned to become the future stewards and keepers of the statue.

It was clear that Brookside Cemetery, with its Field of Honour being one of the largest and oldest military interment sites in Canada, was the ideal new home. The Field of Honour was opened in 1915 to provide a final resting place of honour for Veterans who made it back from World War I.

As Gail Conrad Davey, first Vice-President, Royal Canadian Legion of Manitoba and Northwest Ontario Command, said in her remarks, the choice of this location renews the statue's purpose. It is standing as a sentry for the over 10,000 service members resting in the Field of Honour.

Thought and care were required to ensure that the statue was honoured not just by its new location, but also by the timing of its rededication. While we had originally hoped to rededicate it during Veterans' Week in late 2025, the weather and the busy schedules of our contractors simply didn't allow us enough time to make sure that the statue would have a secure and long-lasting home. This part of the process was not something we were prepared to rush.

It was clear that the appropriate time to rededicate the statue was April 9, on the 109th anniversary of the battle for Vimy Ridge. Remember, the battle for Vimy Ridge is one of the most important battles Canada has ever participated in. It was the first time when the four divisions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force fought together, and the capture had been unsuccessfully attempted for over two and a half years, with more than 100,000 casualties. The Canadian forces took the majority of the ridge on day one, with the rest of the battle taking place over three more days. While it brought international attention to Canada for innovative tactics, strong artillery support, and extensive training, it was also a devastating battle, costing 3,598 lives, while wounding another 7,000.

This devastating reality would have touched thousands upon thousands of families and communities in Canada. This is almost certainly why BMO commissioned the statue, as the losses within their own community of employees would have been heartbreaking.

The statue, modelled after Wynn Bagnell – an employee of BMO's Winnipeg main branch, who served in the 58th Field Artillery in World War I – is now home in the Field of Honour, among comrades.

For me, it is a point of pride that the care for the statue, and the groundwork required to ensure its resting place was strong, sturdy, and befitting, was done by Red River Métis-owned businesses, each of which took their roles as custodians with heart. I thank Ryan and Kyle at Diamond View Developments and Able Crane for their care and respect for the statue while it remained in the keeping of your Red River Métis Government.

This statue's rededication is only the beginning of its new chapter at Brookside Cemetery. It is my hope to return to the Field of Honour in the summer to pay my respects to the statue and the heroes it stands watch over. It was a beautiful and serene place to visit in honour of the rededication ceremony. However, once the creek is running, and the grass and trees are displaying their full greenery, the statue of the World War I soldier will be in its full glory – honoured, celebrated, and remembered against a backdrop as rich in history as itself.

I encourage all our Citizens who are able to take some time and go to the Field of Honour and pay respects to all who rest there. Take a moment to remember the names of loved ones or community members who fought for freedom and democracy in World War I. Tell their stories, share their names, and know that they are our heroes – today, tomorrow, and forever.

Until we meet again, I offer my prayers to all our families, Citizens, friends, and neighbours, and my deepest condolences to those who have been caused to grieve. My heart is with the friends, family, and community of our lost loved ones. I ask my people to send prayers to our families and help those who are grieving. I will keep you all in my prayers, as always.

Meeqwetch,

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

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## GIVING BACK HELPS SHAPE RED RIVER MÉTIS ARTIST'S BIG PICTURE

*Lisa Delorme Meiler's career rooted in connection to her community*



**Red River Métis artist Lisa Delorme Meiler has been showcasing her work for over a decade.**

Nature, people, moments in time, her Red River Métis culture – Lisa Delorme Meiler can find inspiration in anything.

“Something might happen, something I might see just sparks a need to paint it and tell a story,” said the artist, who draws on an intuitive style of painting. “It’s not like I plan what I’m going to paint. I just let the work happen. So, it’s a really intuitive way of letting whatever is on my mind come through onto the canvas. Sometimes I’m surprised what shows up.”

One such surprise was the Louis Riel portrait that landed on the back cover of *Red Rising* magazine in 2019.

“I don’t typically do portraits, but for some reason that appeared,” she said.

The “Métis” issue features Red River Métis art and stories, with Delorme Meiler’s artwork donning the front and back cover, as well as throughout the publication. While the Red River Métis Citizen has been working as a graphic designer for 30 years now, finding her voice in paint and establishing herself as a fine artist was a newer endeavour, so having her work appear in the publication was a big accomplishment.

“That was a very proud moment. It was one of my goals to be published. And so that felt really good to see that realized,” she said, adding it was an honour to represent Red River Métis Citizens.

Delorme Meiler tried her hand at pointillism for her *Flower Beadwork People* piece, which graced the magazine’s front cover.

“I often have what I call art adventures. They’re little departures off the path of fine art. And what I do is I use those as opportunities for learning and growth,” she said. “So I would say working with Métis subject matter is kind of one of those art adventures.”

The artist’s *Le Bison* piece accompanied Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) Minister Will Goodon’s written piece, “Métis people are not mixed.”

“That whole publication just contains amazing works from so many Métis artists, whether it’s, you know, written or art, that it was just amazing to be a part of and make those connections with people,” Delorme Meiler said.



**In addition to her artwork landing on the cover of *Red Rising* magazine in 2019, Delorme Meiler’s work is also available at the Red River Métis Marketplace, including her hand-painted glassware and earrings.**

An Indigenous Leadership Circle member at the local credit union where she works, Delorme Meiler gives back to her community by mentoring and teaching others. During her three-month exhibition at Neechi Commons in 2014, she was able to make connections by way of community engagement.

“It was a very big Indigenous hub,” she said of the former Indigenous community business complex, which offered a grocery, restaurant, and gallery. “Through that, I met one of the coordinators from Wahbung Abinoonjiag. And that is a shelter for women escaping violence. And they do a lot of support programs for youth. I wanted to be a part of that because I felt like lifting up the youth through art and being a part of their journey and showing them the path of being a successful Indigenous woman... I reached out to connections I had in the community, working with other creatives.”

One of those creatives was Red River Métis author Katherena Vermette, who ended up speaking with the group about finding their voice through words.

“It was just a bunch of different events that we attended to try to give them an idea of who is in the... circle of successful Indigenous women. And it was a really great experience. I ended up being part of the board that they had,” Delorme Meiler said of the domestic violence prevention centre’s Steering Committee for the Building Leaders in Women of Tomorrow program. “I mentored a lot of the young participants... They had an art show with the work that they produced for that event. And it was just a great community engagement activity.”

The Red River Métis artist also volunteered as an artist mentor with Siloam Mission’s open art room wellness program.

“I would volunteer my time to just work with participants on painting,” she said. “It was [in] a



very informal, very casual way. And I did that for about a six-week period.”

In addition to her volunteer work, Delorme Meiler received an ArtsSmarts grant, offered through the Arts AccessAbility Network Manitoba, to facilitate art workshops for a diverse group of school-aged children in Winnipeg.

“That was part of a group of seven artists that each taught a different type of art. I focused on fine arts,” she said. “[The workshops allowed participants] time to focus on their connection to community. So, kind of just bringing it to land-based learning and teaching.”

Delorme Meiler finds connection to her community through the Red River Métis Marketplace at the MMF Home Office. The store displays the Oakbank artisan’s hand-painted glassware and earrings, as well as some of her paintings.

“I think that [the Red River Métis Marketplace] investing in my work and having it displayed in a Métis-focused space has been a wonderful thing. It’s allowing me to connect with other artisans; it also is just great exposure to people in my community,” she said. “I really appreciate that support... What that allows me to do is to reinvest that money into creating more.”

The artist taps into her Red River Métis culture more so for these items. For her hand-painted earrings in particular, she explores beadwork through paint.

“With the work that I do have in the Red River Métis Marketplace, sometimes I’ll try to make it more [Métis-focused] rather than what I might traditionally do in other circles,” she said.

From showing her work at exhibitions and the Red River Métis Marketplace, to appearing in

publications, to her mentoring and teaching work, the Red River Métis artist is grateful for the opportunities to establish her career and further connect with her community.

“Every step of this journey has been a learning one,” she said. “It’s been about making connections all along the way. So that’s been a really wonderful thing.”

If you are interested in supporting local artists like Lisa Delorme Meiler, the Red River Métis Marketplace offers a wide range of authentic items handcrafted by Red River Métis artisans. Visit the store at the MMF’s 150 Henry Avenue office to support local Red River Métis businesses.

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## DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MICHIF?

Michif was once prevalent in Red River Métis communities, but it is now considered an endangered language with fewer than 1000 people speaking fluently. With a renewed cultural resurgence, Michif is making a comeback. The Louis Riel Institute (LRI), an affiliate of the Manitoba Métis Federation, currently offers resources which allow Red River Métis Citizens to expand their knowledge of the beautiful language.

To learn more about the different language programs and resources offered by LRI, visit [louisrielinstitute.ca](http://louisrielinstitute.ca)!



## SHOP RED RIVER MÉTIS: MEET JANICE QUENNELLE

Janice Quennelle is a Red River Métis aromatherapist and the proud owner of Quen T’essentielle Aromatherapy. Since 2018, she has been offering her customers a select range of products to add to their self-care toolboxes. As an entrepreneur, Quennelle has been supported by the MMF’s Métis Women Entrepreneurship program, which helped her grow her business to the success you see today. You can now find her products across the Homeland and beyond! To learn more about this Red River Métis business, visit [quentessentiellearomatherapy.com](http://quentessentiellearomatherapy.com) today.






Conservation Trust Fund (CTF)  
stickers for the 2026-2027

# HARVESTING SEASON

AVAILABLE NOW!

Visit [mmf.mb.ca](http://mmf.mb.ca) or contact your Regional Office for more information.




# Water MONITORING PROGRAM

The MMF's Métis Community-Based Climate Monitoring (MCBCM) program is looking for Red River Métis Citizens to participate in water quality monitoring across our National Homeland.

Monitoring activities include taking water quality samples and determining water clarity in our lakes, rivers, and streams.

Please scan the QR code to sign up.




Help protect our lands and waters by becoming a Red River Métis Citizen Scientist today!



ALL TRAINING, EQUIPMENT, AND HONORARIUM IS PROVIDED FOR PARTICIPATION

For more information, please contact MCBCM at [mcbcm@mmf.mb.ca](mailto:mcbcm@mmf.mb.ca).