



Le Métis

∞ EST. 1871 ∞

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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I know many of our Citizens have been following the wildfires in northern Manitoba with deep concern, and the resulting evacuation of Cranberry Portage, a community that is home to many of our friends and relatives, including my wife Glorian's mother. While I was there, I spoke with some of the evacuees, to hear about their experience and understand how the MMF could best help our Citizens.

I know that Vice-President Judy Mayer's team was immediately engaged, assisting Citizens arriving in The Pas from their homes – some with little more than the clothes on their backs. This team remained hard at work for the duration of the evacuation, working hard to stay in contact with all our displaced Citizens, and making arrangements for their accommodations, food, clothing, toiletries, and everything else they needed.

In Winnipeg, your Red River Métis Government immediately enacted our emergency response plan and started communicating with the Region to address gaps and needs of our displaced Citizens.

I commend The Pas Region's fast response to support Citizens, led by Vice-President Mayer, Lisa Stevenson, Linda Chartrand, and Bonnie Hatch. Together, they truly demonstrated what it means to be Red River Métis, offering help, comfort, and support to Citizens.

I also thank the Emergency Response Team at Home Office for their quick action and support of the Region. This response team is a multi-disciplinary group that provided expertise and knowledge to a coordinated response, including working closely with other levels of government. This was a complex, fast-moving, and challenging emergency, and I am very proud of everyone who worked hard to ensure that all Citizens were accounted for and had what they needed. While many Departments and Affiliates provided swift and comprehensive support from their sectors, I would like to particularly commend members of the Central Registry Office, the Red River Métis Community Resource Department, and the Energy, Infrastructure and Resource Management Department for their coordinated efforts, as well as the Northwest Region's support of Vice-President Mayer and her team.

Because of everyone's hard work, we were able to quickly ship needed items to evacuees and their families, which we know helped many as the evacuation orders continued for the remainder of the week.

I thank the firefighters who worked so hard, and risked their own lives, to protect homes from the ravages of the wildfire, ensuring our Citizens still had houses to come home to.

While the immediate crisis is over, we know that Citizens returning to Cranberry Portage have challenges to face getting back to their regular lives, including assessing the damage done to things like freezers and fridges as a result of the power loss. Any Citizens who require assistance in this or any other matter related to returning home can call the MMF's emergency response line at 1(888) 362-2012.

Being under evacuation orders due to natural disaster will always be disruptive and frightening; I hope our Citizens felt the support of our Red River Métis Government. I have shared my concerns about climate change with our Citizens in previous messages, and this very early start to the wildfire season is another example of how these changes are already starting to affect us. We know this is only the first fire of the season, and while I hope and pray that no others are displaced by fires, your Red River Métis Government remains ready to support our Citizens – every day and in every way we can.

To help all our Citizens be prepared ahead of any risk of evacuation, we will be communicating with Citizens in the coming weeks about what to do in the event of an evacuation order. Until we can properly communicate the details, I urge every

Citizen who may be at risk of wildfire evacuation to make sure you have a bag of necessities packed, including clothing, medicine, telephone numbers, toiletries, a cell phone charger, and a small amount of cash. It is important to have these supplies for many reasons, including the fact that the provincial Emergency Management Office does not provide support to Manitobans who are evacuated from their homes until after they have been evacuated for more than 72 hours.

I also encourage Citizens to keep your MMF Citizenship card with you at all times, or have a photo of it on your phone. To ensure we can reach you in an emergency situation to provide you with support, it's also important that the Central Registry Office has your up-to-date contact information. Having up-to-date contact information helped us reach out to all Citizens affected by the Cranberry Portage wildfire evacuation.

While this amount of preparation may feel like a lot, I can assure you that the conversations I had with evacuees reassured me that these steps can make a huge difference in the days following an evacuation.

Even while we were focused on supporting our Citizens in The Pas Region, there were MMF staff who worked quietly in the background to support some Winnipeg-based Citizens who were displaced from Birchwood Terrace, following the identification of dangerous structural failures that made the apartment building unlivable. We continue to do everything we can to make sure those Citizens also have what they need.

At our Indigenous Identity Fraud Summit, we shared many facts and stories about our identity and how we stand firm in our protection of it. We shared our values and our culture – the things that make us who we are. And while those important words and messages were being shared with our partners from the North and the East, our staff, community, and Nation were showing the value of the things we stand for, caring for each other in times of need. How we care for each other and protect each other is just as important a part of our identity as our flag, our music, our beadwork, our food, and our humour. We protect our right to take care of each other, and to be there for each other in times of crisis. As always, the MMF has your back.

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.

Meeqwetch,

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

RED RIVER MÉTIS WRESTLER VIES FOR PAN AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Wrestler Beau Chartrand is getting ready to prove himself on the international wrestling stage, as he recently won gold in the 2024 U17 Canadian National Championships in Ottawa.

Competing in the 80-kg Cadet category, the athlete won his first two matches by technical superiority. Now, Chartrand is preparing to compete at the Pan American Wrestling Championships in the Dominican Republic in June.

“This tournament means a lot to me because it’s a chance to represent Team Canada,” he said. “I know everybody’s going to be tough. It’s great to represent Canada, go internationally for the first time, and show people how (wrestling) is here in Canada.”

So far, the 16-year-old has amassed an impressive career with accomplishments like winning gold at the 2022 U15 Canadian National Championships in Calgary and a bronze medal at the 2023 U17 Canadian National Championships in Vancouver. The Red River Métis athlete also captured gold at the 2023 North American Indigenous Games in Halifax, which he said was an amazing experience.

“I had so much fun seeing so many people from different provinces and competing against so many people from the United States and in different Canadian provinces,” he said. “It was a lot of fun, and I had a good team with me. It was great.”

Chartrand will continue to train leading up to the championships on June 27-29. He said his training regimen differs from his day-to-day training.

“I’m planning on going to some wrestling camps in the U.S. and also training at Schewa Wrestling Club in Winnipeg,” he said. “I have a strength and conditioning plan in place and a goal set in mind for the tournament.”

The Red River Métis Citizen got into wrestling at nine years old to improve at Brazilian jiu-jitsu, a martial art and combat sport.

“What inspired me was the opportunities wrestling offered, such as national and international competition. Also, the opportunity to wrestle competitively at the college/university level,” he said.

The athlete will face top competition from countries like the United States, Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia. Chartrand said it’s a thrill to be attending the 2024 U17 Pan American Wrestling, to not only represent Canada but the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) as well.

“I’m proud to be Métis, and I’m proud to represent the Red River Métis and MMF, and hopefully inspire and be a role model for Métis Youth in Manitoba,” he said. Chartrand knows this sport can be financially



Chartrand (left) will face top competition from countries like the United States, Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia at the Pan American Wrestling Championships. Credit: Walter Howor Photo.

constraining and is grateful to the National Government of the Red River Métis for helping him financially.

“They have supported me through the Believe Elite Athletic and Artistic Support Program, which is a huge help in offsetting some of the cost for training and travelling,” said the athlete.

Run by the MMF, the program supports Red River Métis Youth, ages 15-29, who compete at the highest level in their sport or activity.

The Red River Métis Youth is still attending high school while balancing his wrestling career. He said time management plays a huge part in keeping both balanced.

“It plays a big part in how I’m able to balance all my school work, travelling, and training,” he said. “I take advantage of the noon hour and spares at school to go into the fitness room to work on strength and conditioning or to catch up on school work. I also take advantage of weekends.”

Beau isn’t the only wrestler in the Chartrand family. His sister Anaka has also excelled at the sport and recently won gold at the 2023 North American Indigenous Games. He said that wrestling at a high level with his sister is sentimental for him.

“My sister and I have gone through a lot together, and we’ve always trained since we were young. We used to train with each other in our garage with our mats. We did these things with each other and got

good with each other. It means a lot to me to do this together as a team,” he said.

With a wrestling career that’s just taking off, Chartrand hopes to build his legacy within the sport.

“I want to continue making the Canadian national team and do well at the Pan American Championships, so I can qualify for the World Championships and hopefully compete there,” he said. “I also want to continue wrestling competitively at the university and college level after I graduate and maybe one day make the Canadian Olympic team.”

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– BEAU CHARTRAND

RED RIVER MÉTIS AUTHOR DEBUTS HIS FIRST NOVEL

Liam Taliesin is living proof that no matter where you are in this world, you never forget where you came from.

His debut novel, *Lithium Fire*, takes place in Winnipeg circa 1984 and chronicles the journey of a tragic fire that takes three lives. The story is told from the perspective of eight characters, with each chapter reflecting their thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

"This work honours a time and a place which no longer exists with many of the people and places gone now," he said.

Growing up in Winnipeg's North End, Taliesin drew inspiration from his lived experiences.

"I have learned that living with ghosts is the natural state of writers. They haunt and amuse me; they charm, threaten, intimidate, and ultimately seduce the scribe. Often, they pace silently, patiently waiting for their turn on the wheel. After a lifetime of wrestling with ghosts, I embrace them in my work now," he said.

Taliesin's ability to bring different characters to life in a meaningful way reflects a lifelong intention. His feeling of personal responsibility to share the stories that have impacted him personally and as a creative is the driving force of his work.

"I carry inside those who have passed; I honour them by holding them close, maintaining their legacy by keeping their memory alive without regret or rancour, but with love," he said. "In this way, they

still live and lift me up. I am heir to their strengths and finer qualities."

The Red River Métis author's perspective on storytelling has changed over the years.

"In the past, I claimed creating a work of art was an act of courage. I would amend that now to say it is a sacred trust and must be exercised with humility, humanity, and profound recognition of the effort's poverty," he said. "Fusing the retelling of someone's story with imagination hopefully speaks to others, touches a chord, and offers truth which resonates."

Taliesin has been a storyteller his entire life and doesn't limit his writing to one singular form.

"In 1979 I helped establish the Manitoba Association of Playwrights, which I chaired for six years. I wrote *St. Peter's Asylum* (a play that premiered at the Prairie Theatre Exchange), compiled and edited a wartime memoir of a hundred veterans, *In Their Own Words*, and wrote a series of short stories, *The Prejudgment Day Blues and other tales of comic woe*," he said.

This eventually led to his move to Quebec, where he continued his career in the arts until his retirement in 2017.

"I was associate dramaturge at Playwrights Montréal, assisting in play selection and development and reading plays submitted to the Québec Drama Festival and Centaur Theatre, advising directors on performance feasibility," said Taliesin.

Being a Beyond Borders Citizen, the author is grateful to be involved with the Red River Métis community no matter where he resides, and even attends St. Norbert Local meetings virtually. He also attended last year's Extraordinary General Assembly in Winnipeg.

"As the weekend unfolded, the hugging, hand-shaking, and pure pleasure of being in the company of so much family and feeling the community was moving for me," he said. "I experienced the genuine warmth and generous, welcoming spirit expressed. And for those of us who live beyond the borders of Manitoba, there was a sense of coming home."

The weekend concluded with the ratification of the *Red River Self-Government Treaty*.

"We witnessed history and participated in a moment I will long remember – a moment that honours the struggles of our ancestors, encouraging us to work harder to shape a better, brighter future for our descendants and create a meaningful legacy for our Youth," Taliesin said. "The powerful energy of this breathtaking experience moved me beyond words and reinforced my strong commitment to the Red River Métis Nation."



Liam Taliesin (left) had the chance to share his debut novel, *Lithium Fire*, with MMF President David Chartrand (right).

RED RIVER MÉTIS VETERAN'S MEDALS FIND NEW HOME



In January, Julie Carver reached out to the MMF's Red River Métis Veterans Department requesting to donate her great uncle's service medals. Red River Métis Veteran Private Robert Blanchard was killed in action while serving in Hong Kong with the Winnipeg Grenadiers Hong Kong in WWII. We held a Commemoration Ceremony at our Home Office on May 16, where the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association and Veterans Affairs Canada brought greetings before Julie Carver presented the medals to President Chartrand.

MARLENE STREET PARK TREE PLANTING EVENT

The Manitoba Métis Federation is looking for Red River Métis Citizens who would like to volunteer, and make a positive impact in Winnipeg through the planting of trees at Marlene Street Park.



MARLENE STREET PARK



**SATURDAY
JUNE 8th, 2024**

(June 15th in case of inclement weather)

10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

For more information or to register, please contact
Tanner Barlow at ***Tanner.barlow@mmf.mb.ca***.

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EVENTS**

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