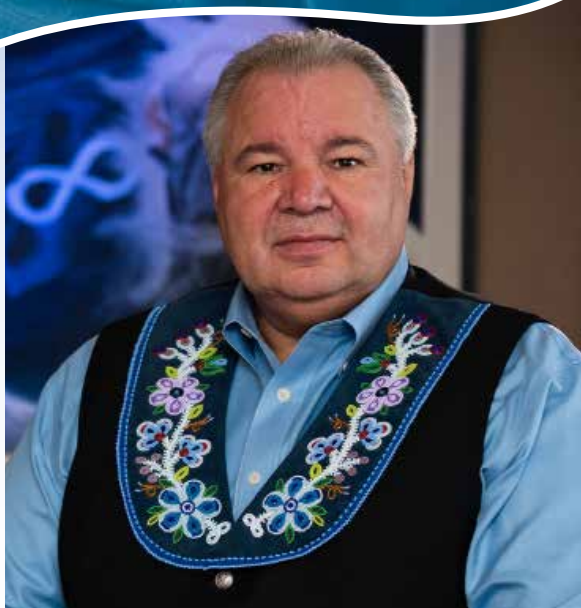




Le Métis

President's Message



The Métis Nation know that one of the most cherished teachings of our culture is the importance of democracy. From our ancestors, who elected Captains of the Hunt in the early buffalo hunting expeditions, to the creation of Manitoba as a province in 1870, we have practiced democracy for over two centuries. The Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) has always worked to ensure that our actions are democratic and represent the will of the people.

That is why I, and so many others, have been deeply troubled by what is happening with Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC). It is discouraging to see a coup taking place against MNBC's President, Clara Morin Dal Col, who was just re-elected four months ago, by a large margin.

The behaviour of Ms. Lissa Smith and their Board of Directors does not reflect the Métis Nation's traditions or values. The MMF condemns the actions of the individuals staging this coup and does not recognize Ms. Smith as the MNBC President.

The root of this problem goes beyond the importance of democracy to something even more fundamental to the Métis people – our identity. It is becoming very clear that what's happening at MNBC is an attempt to silence President Morin Dal Col and her principled stand on preserving the Métis Nation's identity.

On the other side of the story are Ms. Smith and the Board of Directors. They don't seem to realize the implications of ousting a president who ran on a campaign to protect Métis Nation identity and was supported by Métis Nation citizens of B.C.

How can these individuals say they want Métis Nation Ontario (MNO) back to the national table, with full rights? They know the MNO will bring with

them people who are trying to steal our identity – people of mixed heritage, who are not our Citizens or our kin, with no connection to the Métis Nation.

To be clear, this distorts the very definition of what it is to be Métis. It creates an issue of race out of a matter of culture. In our landmark Supreme Court Case it says plainly that the Métis Nation is a distinct Community. We know there is no blood quantum involved in defining who is Métis. It is not on the concept of race that Métis Nation stands – what unites us is our heritage, our culture, our common purpose and our shared feeling of responsibility to right the wrongs done to our ancestors.

Our stance is not seeing these people of mixed heritage as lesser, or not equal to us. If they feel their claim is legitimate, they should pursue their own section 35 rights, because the fact is they are not us. Quite simply, we are preserving our Nation here in the West because this is where we were born. We have no other home.

Perhaps they realize how much they put at risk in their drive to take our rights – the ones we have fought hard for over two hundred years to obtain. Perhaps they're looking to align themselves with the Métis Nation due to the potential economic benefits, or as an avenue to political power. Or perhaps they are simply seeking a sense of belonging – and in doing so, appropriating our identity. Whatever their plight, they are not Métis Nation. We defend against them because we are preserving our Nation and our Homeland for ourselves and future generations.

We Métis people are a minority of the population in the Prairies. Canadians from across the country with mixed heritage may number in the millions. Given these odds, it wouldn't take long for Louis Riel's people to be overtaken and swallowed up in a larger pan-Aboriginal entity.

Take the example of one of the "new Métis communities", in a suburb just outside of the metropolis of Toronto, called Simcoe. The President of the club for this new "historic" Métis group says there are currently 4,000 members but estimates there could be up to 40,000 people who share his misconception of Métis heritage. The invasion from the East – much like the one that drove us from our homes and our lands in the 1800s – is here.

Can these people looking to claim Métis identity also claim the history of Louis Riel's people? Can they own the suffering and the persecution of the reign of terror and the ensuing violence and condemnation? Can they walk the land and know that they are in a place where the soil is stained by the blood and sacrifices of their ancestors' battles?

Everything we know, everything we stand for and believe in, the things our ancestors paid the price for, could be taken from us. This is precisely what was hoped for by John A. Macdonald when he wrote that the Metis "[...] will be altogether swamped by the influx of strangers who will go in with the idea of becoming industrious and peaceable settlers."

It is important for all Métis people, especially our youth, to understand why we are so vocal about protecting our Nation. We are on the verge of finding our place in confederation after over two hundred years of struggle for recognition. We are evolving to offer our children the rights and benefits we and their ancestors fought for. Whether it's economic advancements, programs for Elders, small business support or bursaries and scholarships for education, we have worked hard and paid the price for our Nation's growing prosperity.

Now is not time to be seeking answers for Eastern Canadians, when our people have not yet achieved equality in society. Let them determine their own history. We have a responsibility to protect our children's history and future.

The MMF will continue do everything in our power to make sure that our identity and democratic processes are defended across the Métis Nation Homeland, including giving our full support to President Clara Morin Dal Col and all those standing to protect and defend the Nation against the invasion from the East.

I thank our Local and Regional leadership and staff, who continue to stand united and ready to protect our families, our children, our communities and our Nation from whatever threats may face us.

As we stand together, we must remember the words of our founding father on the 9th day of the Convention of 40 in 1870:

"We must seek to preserve the existence of our own people. We must not by our own act allow ourselves to be swamped. If the day comes when that is done, it must be by no act of ours." - Louis Riel

Thank you, the Citizens of our Nation, who believe in your Métis Nation. We will always protect our Homeland and honour and protect the legacy of Louis Riel.

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

Métis Nation mourns passing of Elder George Fleury



Elder George Fleury – a dedicated father, grandfather, great-grandfather, uncle, friend, and leader – passed away on February 5, 2021.

One of the founders of the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF), Elder Fleury became the first Vice-President of the Southwest Region in 1968, working out of Minnedosa at the time. He opened the first MMF Southwest Regional Office in Brandon in 1971, serving on the MMF Board of Directors until 1979. He and the late President Angus Spence negotiated \$80,000 from the federal government for the first-ever Emergency Repair Program of the MMF.

“George was a founding father of the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) and has left a legacy for us all. With his kind, quiet, gentle, and strong voice, to the end he was an advocate for the fight to preserve our Metis Nationhood. It was an honour for myself

as president and our Cabinet to appoint him as a provincial elder of our government,” said MMF President David Chartrand.

A fluent Michif speaker, Elder Fleury advocated for the Michif language. He was a long-time member of the MMF Michif Language Committee, the Indigenous Languages of Manitoba Board, and the Manitoba Aboriginal Languages Strategy Board. Following retirement from the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba – from a role he was fiercely proud of – Elder Fleury continued to entertain friends and family through music, singing, and playing guitar, reviving old Michif songs.

Elder Fleury often provided a prayer at MMF and Métis National Council events, such as the MMF’s Annual General Assembly. His son, John Fleury, is the Minister of Metis Employment and Training,



and his daughter, Georgina Liberty, is the Director of Metis Nation 2020/Metis 150.

In 2017, Elder Fleury released a book, titled *Preserving Our Past*, which chronicled his firsthand account of the story of Ste. Madeleine. The Metis community was burned down in 1939, forcing hundreds of Metis Citizens to relocate to make way for a cow pasture, under the federal government’s *Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act*.

Elder Fleury was honoured at the Ka Ni Kanichihk’s 14th Annual Keeping the Fires Burning gala in 2015 as a Metis Grandfather. He received the Manitoba Council on Aging’s Murray and Muriel Smith Award in 2017, and was inducted into the Order of the Métis Nation in 2019.

“George left his mark on all of us. Those who knew him well will forever feel his presence. His legacy will live on in the strength of his family,” said President Chartrand in a special statement.

“On behalf of the MMF Cabinet and staff, I want to extend our deepest sympathies to the family of George Fleury. The MMF is forever enriched by George’s passion, drive, and dedication to the Metis Nation. I will always be personally thankful to George for his mentorship, wisdom, and friendship over the years.

“To his family and friends, know that we share your sorrow and extend our love and prayers as you go through this difficult time. George Fleury and his contributions will always be remembered, honoured, and celebrated by the MMF.”

Thank you, George. We wish you a safe passage as you reunite with your wife in your new home.

Métis author Deborah L. Delaronde releases new children's book



Deborah L. Delaronde, a Métis author of numerous children's books, released her latest, *Louis Riel Day: The Fur Trade Project* on February 9, in time for Manitoba's Louis Riel Day on February 15.

Louis Riel Day: The Fur Trade Project is about a young boy who, with help from his grandfather, learns about the history of the Fur Trade, Métis people, Louis Riel, the Red River Resistance, and why we have a holiday named Louis Riel Day. The book is listed as #3 on Amazon's Hot New Releases in Regional Canada Biographies and Memoirs.

A Métis Citizen, Delaronde has often drawn on her own background, including Métis culture and heritage, in her writing. This is exemplified in her children's books, *Little Metis and the Metis Sash*, *A*

Name for a Métis, *Flour Sack Friends*, and *Flour Sack Flora*, the latter of which was shortlisted for the 2001 McNally Robinson Book for Young People Award (Picture Book Category). She also wrote the young adult books, *The Stone Gift*, a novel about children placed in foster care based on her own experience being raised as a foster child, and *Metis Spirits*, a short story collection. She was awarded the Beatrice Masionier Aboriginal Writer of the Year Award in 2015 for her children's book, *Emma's Gift*, which also highlights Metis culture, and takes place in the community of Duck Bay, in which Delaronde grew up.

Delaronde said she was inspired to become an author while working as a children's librarian at Duck Bay School in Duck Bay, where she began working in 1986. "It was due to the lack of Métis fictional literature that inspired me to study the writing process and to write children's picture storybooks. This was an area that was sadly lacking for Métis children," she said.

Delaronde publishes under her maiden name to honour her Métis heritage.

"A lot of my stories are historical in setting and focus around either Métis protagonists, a Métis setting and/or situation. It is my hope that these stories will convey the 'way of life' of the Métis people in both a historical and contemporary context. I like to think that I accomplished this with my young adult novel titled *The Stone Gift* and again with my picture storybook *Louis Riel Day: The Fur Trade Project*," she said.

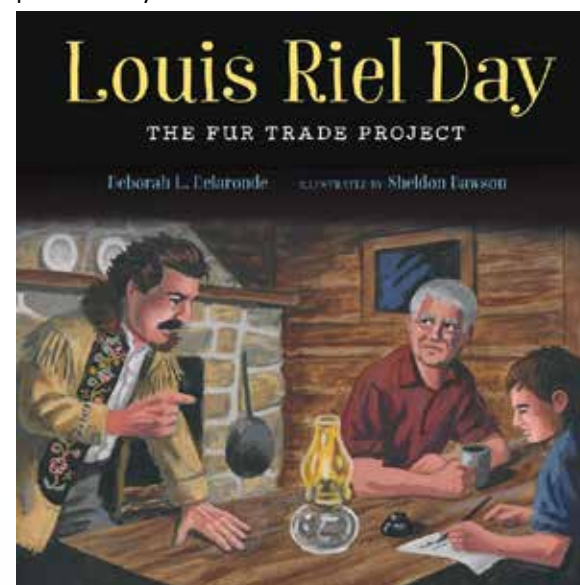
"The inspiration was always to write about Louis Riel. I am extremely excited about my new book, *Louis Riel Day: The Fur Trade Project*. I am an established writer, but this is the book that will push me over to being recognized for my work. I feel like I have been skill-building toward this one book."

Delaronde highlighted the importance of remembering Louis Riel as a reason for writing the book.

"Louis Riel was an educated Métis man. He was a politician and a leader for the Métis people. It takes a great deal of courage to speak up for people who can't speak for themselves. Today, Louis Riel is recognized as the Founder of Manitoba. It was due to the 'List of Rights' he and his provisional government wrote that led to Manitoba being recognized as a province. Louis Riel was also instrumental in Manitoba joining Confederation," she said.

"I believe that it's important that young people learn about Louis Riel and why every year on the third Monday of February we celebrate a holiday named 'Louis Riel Day.' We honour his contribution not only to the Métis people but to all Manitobans."

Delaronde is currently working on a memoir titled *A Journey to Becoming Metis: Deborah L. Delaronde*, along with another young adult novel and a few picture storybooks.



MMF seeking traditional recipes for cookbook

The Manitoba Metis Federation's (MMF) Metis Employment & Training Department and the Southeast Regional Youth Advisory Committee have teamed up to create a Winter 2020-2021 Cookbook. The Youth initiative calls on Métis Citizens to submit their favourite recipes to be featured in the cookbook.

Southeast Regional Youth Coordinator Shay-Lynn Thomas said the idea came about as a way to preserve family recipes.

"I actually worked in restaurants and stuff before, and I cook myself, and I have family members that are kind of getting older, and I don't want to forget about their recipes," said Thomas.

So far, the MMF has received recipes for bannock and stew, and is seeking other traditional Métis recipes.

"Try and get recipes from the Elders, so they are not forgotten about," said Thomas.

The cookbook initiative is also a way to keep Citizens safe and occupied at home during the pandemic.

"It's to kind of keep people at home and show them nutritious ways of cooking," said Thomas, and to help educate Citizens on the nutritious value of food. The aim is to get nutritious recipes for full meals that Citizens will be able to put together and enjoy with their families.

Thomas said the aim is to have the cookbook ready in April, at which time the MMF will coordinate distribution.

Please send recipes and inquiries to semmfyouth@mmf.mb.ca by **March 21 at 6 pm**.



MMF sending out 200 kits to child care centres

The Manitoba Metis Federation's (MMF) Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Department is aiming to send out 200 kits to licensed child care centres, licensed child care home centres, and Aboriginal Head Starts across Manitoba by the end of February.

"In February, we celebrated Louis Riel Day and 'I Love to Read Month,'" said Frances Chartrand, Minister, ELCC. "Honouring our Elders, authors, and publishers, we are sharing our ELCC Educational and Cultural Kits across Manitoba."

These kits are a way to keep children engaged while sharing our rich culture and language during a tough financial time due to the pandemic.

"The ELCC team is looking for ways to promote our culture, language and traditions in a fun, educational way. We included items that have a purpose in a lot of different areas of a child care centre," said Minister Chartrand.

"There is a huge lack of Métis-specific cultural and educational tools out there, and this is one of the reasons we are sharing these resources."

The kits include an assortment of educational materials such as Métis fiddle music, wooden spoons to be used as instruments, animal pelts, and children's books.

"The ELCC is also sending a variety of Métis sashes – two large ones for educational purposes, and four child-sized sashes to be used by the children in their Daily Living Centre – a curriculum area of licensed child care centres," said Minister Chartrand. "The items were introduced in this section of the curriculum because we want it to be relevant and



Early Learning and Child Care Educational and Cultural Kits project team member Kyra Bridges helps put the kits together.

something that the children use daily. We are looking to remove the impression that these items are just seen in museums or old stories. Métis coin purses and a large twin-size Métis sash blanket were also added to this child care centre section."

Minister Chartrand added, "Our ELCC Team would like to thank our partners, sponsors and funders for their efforts and contributions in developing the resource package we are sharing. The kits will be great additions to their resources for the children, partners, and staff as they learn about our culture and heritage."



The Early Learning and Child Care Educational and Cultural Kits project team (L to R): Tatiana Lafond, ELCC Administrative Assistant; Mikael Lemoine, ELCC Research Analyst; and Kyra Bridges.

Community Photo

Le Metis' new Community Photo section invites Métis Citizens to send in photos to be featured in our newsletter. If you have a photo that celebrates the Métis Nation, send it to communications@mmf.mb.ca and you may see it in print!



Hot diggity dog! Show your Métis pride.