



Le Métis

President's Message



In recent years, there has been a significant increase in individuals and organizations calling themselves Métis and attempting to use our name, symbols, history, and rights for their own benefit. Some of these attempts are a result of the recent successes of your Métis Government and the Métis Nation. People who are not Métis want to ride on the coattails of our success by pretending they are one of us. This is a blatant example of identity theft.

You might have noticed that your Métis Government has started using the phrase *Red River Métis* in places where in the past you would have seen us use *Manitoba Métis* or *Métis Nation*. The Red River Métis is the historic Métis Nation. We were the people of 1816 and the Victory of Frog Plain. We were the people of the Red River Resistance in 1870. We are the People of the Red River Jig; the Michif language; the flower beadwork; and the Métis Nation flag. We are Louis Riel's People.

We are not new. We have always been the Red River Métis. The Red River Métis is the origin, root, and core of the historic Métis Nation. The Red River Métis is Canada's negotiating partner in Confederation and the Founder of Manitoba.

After the creation of Manitoba, recognizing and honouring our role in founding the province, Louis Riel and others referred to us as the Manitoba Métis. We were named after this great accomplishment by our Ancestors. We were named after the province we created.

What is important to remember is that we are the Red River Métis, the historic Métis Nation, and the Manitoba Métis. These names are synonymous and refer to the same Indigenous People. Different names but the same People. And the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) is our Government.

Words have weight. We need to be crystal clear on who we are. No one but ourselves can or should tell us who our Citizens are – not any other level of government – and not those who are greedy for power and don't care that the cost is sacrificing our people's identity by allowing waves of outsiders to have a say on our Nation's affairs. Certainly not the people pretending to become us by finding an Indigenous ancestor or two and proclaiming themselves to be Métis.

We know there are legitimate heirs of our Red River Métis Ancestors out there who do not know who they are. Make no mistake, these are our people. They are people who have had their history and identity taken away from them, either because they were part of the Sixties Scoop, the residential and day schools, or are descended from survivors. Or they're from the families who lost their family history to protect themselves from racism, oppression, and violence. We will always welcome these people. We should guide them and let them know they will always have a place among us.

But these people who live out east who have no connection with our Homeland, Ancestors, or experiences? These are not our people. They are not Red River Métis. When we use the birthplace of our Nation and the heart of our Homeland in our name as we do – such as the Red River Métis – we tell everyone who we are in ways that cannot be duplicated or stolen.

So, while we are still the one and only Métis Nation, we will be going back to our roots – back to our origins – and refer to ourselves as the Red River Métis. We have a proud history of struggles on the battlefield, and in the courts, and we will stand ready to defend the Métis Nation, born in the Red River and extending throughout our western Homeland.

Not since the days of Louis Riel have we had so much to lose, with so many wanting to take what we have. Make no mistake, friends, we have a fight on our hands, and it's no different from the fight we had at

Frog Plain, at Upper Fort Garry, or at Batoche. There are people from the East who are coming to take what we have, and once again it's up to us to decide whether or not they succeed.

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) themselves say that fewer than 23 per cent of their Citizens have connections to Western Canada. We know that Mattawa, Simcoe, Killarney, and other communities east of Fort Frances have people registered who are not us, but what is more troubling to me is how MNO's leadership is willing to share this information widely without any knowledge of the harm they are causing.

The Métis Nation has spoken loud and clear about action required to defend the way of life we know, love, and thus will protect. The MMF is the wall, the old guard, and is able and ready to stand strong through another moment in history. I know you are ready to stand together in defence of our Nation. It's going to take all of us, working together and playing the same tune, to protect our culture and our traditions. Working together, uniting against common enemies, sharing what we have, and celebrating each other's successes are the things that made us a Nation.

Thanks to the *Manitoba Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Agreement* we signed with Canada at Upper Fort Garry on July 6, 2021, no one can take away our ability to protect and represent the claims, rights, and interests of the Red River Métis. The agreement provides immediate recognition of your Métis Government as the democratically elected representative for the Métis who trace their ancestry back to the Red River, beyond borders, no matter where they live in the world.

The MMF has experienced a sharp increase in applications for Citizenship from Red River Métis in other provinces and beyond. It is their right to return home.

Until we can be together again, I encourage everyone to stay safe and follow the public health guidelines. I offer my prayers to all our Citizens, friends, and neighbours, and my deepest condolences to those who are grieving from loss.

Meeqwetch,

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

Selkirk culture coordinator grateful for proud Métis family



Ellie Longbottom

Growing up, Ellie Longbottom was always taught to be proud to be Métis.

“As a child, you don’t really understand the history of what it means to be Métis, but in my mind, as a kid, it was music, food, and visiting,” she said.

Longbottom said it was a staple for her musical family to “jam” for hours at family gatherings.

“You’d have someone on the fiddle, a few guitars, maybe a couple mandolins, then my dad would play the stand-up bass. They would jam for hours playing bluegrass or folk or old-time country,” she said.

Her uncle, Ted Longbottom, is a Métis folk singer-songwriter who has sung about Métis history.

“He would write songs about the Métis people in the Red River Settlement and would travel around performing these songs at schools. As a kid, I just thought, ‘Oh, Métis people, they’re the ones that can play instruments.’”

She said it wasn’t until she was in junior high when she fully understood the history of Métis people.

“I had an elective called Aboriginal Studies, and in that course, I kind of learned for the first time about Métis history and Indigenous history. We would learn about Cuthbert Grant, Louis Riel. I think that really sparked my interest in Indigenous history and culture,” she said.

“(I) gained a whole new appreciation for the culture, and even the hardships that our Ancestors went through.”

Once she was in high school, Longbottom’s grandmother got her involved in programs and meetings with the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) Stony Point Local.

“Initially it was with my granny, Clarice Longbottom. She is a really talented beader, and would lead moccasin-making classes for the Local,” she said. “She would bring me along, and then we would just bead for a few hours, telling stories, eating lunch, and I really enjoyed that.”

Longbottom’s grandmother Clarice then invited her to an MMF Annual General Assembly (AGA).

“At the AGA, I met other Youth who were similar to me and proud of their heritage, and at the AGA I learned that the MMF wants to bring Youth to the table and voice their opinion on issues we’re facing in the Métis Nation,” she said.

It was only a couple of years later, in 2017, that Longbottom joined the MMF Southeast Regional Youth Advisory Committee.

“I’m really thankful to be on the advisory committee, and I think we’ve grown a lot in the last few years, providing opportunities for Youth,” she said.

The role of the committee is to suggest programs and activities that might benefit Youth in the Region, said Longbottom. Members also get opportunities to attend conferences with Métis Nation leaders.

“It gives us our own voice, in our own government, which is something that is great,” she said.

Métis Youth interested in becoming a part of the Métis Community should go to the mmfmetisyouth.com website, said Longbottom, as it has numerous activities for all ages.

“In the last year alone, there have been camps, video game tournaments, book clubs, paint nights, and embroidery workshops,” she said of opportunities for Métis Youth. “So, no matter if you’re a Youth that is maybe 16 years old, or if you’re like me and you’re 26 years old, there’s activities and programs for everyone that you’ll be interested in.”

The best place to start for Youth interested in having a voice in their community would be to contact their Local, said Longbottom.

“Each Local is supposed to have one Youth representative, so join your Local, and from there you’ll gain an understanding of how the meetings work, and you’ll have a voice within your community as well. You’ll be at the table making decisions on

what you would like to see in your community.”

Pursuing her passion

When Longbottom graduated high school, she was further able to pursue her interest in Indigenous history and culture through employment opportunities.

She worked as a historical interpreter for the St. Andrews Heritage Centre.

“I would tell visitors the history of the Red River Settlement and the history of the Métis people,” she said.

She also worked briefly for the Louis Riel Institute, an MMF affiliate.

“I would learn the history of St. Boniface downtown and would offer bus tours (of Winnipeg) to people. I really did enjoy that, that was fun,” she said.

Longbottom’s career snowballed from there. She got a full-time job with the RM of St. Andrews, which eventually led to her dream role with her own City of Selkirk in 2019, telling the history of the community as a culture coordinator – a role she still holds. She plans events, such as concerts and markets, for the City, and leads the Selkirk Heritage Advisory Committee, which documents the city’s history.

“I’m also the film liaison for Selkirk, so quite a few film productions come to film here, and I coordinate their locations, give them access to city properties, city services, and just try and balance their needs with the needs of Selkirk residents,” she said.

“It’s been pretty interesting. Having deep Selkirk roots, I just learn a lot,” she said, adding that it’s exciting to read about the history and see a relative’s name pop up. “It’s a pretty fun role; I really enjoy it.”

Through her job, Longbottom also works with the Selkirk Red River Métis Local.

“In June we delivered Indigenous Week, so I partnered with the MMF, Frontier College, and the Selkirk Friendship Centre to deliver a week’s worth of programming in celebration of Indigenous Day,” she said.

Longbottom is grateful to have a role she loves.

“My path wasn’t always easy getting to the role I was in. I went through a lot of jobs, so it took me a while, but I’m happy where I am now,” she said.

If Longbottom were to offer advice for people pursuing a similar role, she would recommend networking.

“I feel like networking has gotten me to where I am

today. Just get involved with things that you find interesting and volunteer as much as possible and make connections with people, because you never know where it could lead you," she said.

Longbottom is also grateful that her family embraced their Métis culture as much as they did when she was growing up.

"I know a lot of families, you know, viewed being Métis as a negative thing back in the day,

including my mom's family, (where) it was hidden, and we didn't actually know she was Métis up until two years ago because it was like a family secret," she said.

"So, I'm really thankful that I had a really supportive family who taught me that I should always be proud of my heritage and would tell me stories about Louis Riel growing up, and how he led the province into Confederation, and I think now a lot of people are realizing that a lot of this history was hidden, and

that Indigenous people played an active role in our history."

Longbottom wants to stay involved with the MMF and hopes to stay on the Southeast Regional Youth Advisory Committee.

"These past few years, you see how much good the MMF is doing and how much we're growing, and it's really exciting," she said. "I'm ecstatic to be a part of this and witness it."

MMF partners with Bombers for flag-raising ceremony



Along with Métis Youth, Richard Genaille, MMF Minister of Sports & Youth, raised the Métis Nation flag at Investors Group Field at the home opener on August 5 in front of 30,000 Bomber fans.

Nearly 30,000 Bomber fans witnessed the Métis Nation flag being raised for the first time at Investors Group Field at the home opener on August 5. As part of a partnership between the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), the flag will be raised, along with the Treaty One flag, at each home Bomber game.

Richard Genaille, MMF Minister of Sports & Youth, raised the Métis Nation flag at Investors Group Field on August 4, the day before the opening Bomber game, symbolizing the beginning of the partnership between the MMF and the football franchise.

Elder Linda St. Cyr-Saric provided a prayer at the flag-raising ceremony on August 4, with jiggers Taylor and Clarissa Spence accompanying fiddler Ryan Spence. Niigaan Sinclair, Director of Indigenous Relations for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, served as emcee, with Minister Genaille and Bomber CEO Wade Miller providing remarks.

"It's important to recognize and acknowledge the significant presence of the Red River Métis in

Winnipeg. Flying the flag at our head stadium will help Winnipeggers, Manitobans, and the CFL fans across Canada know that this is the heart, the home, and the birthplace of the Red River Métis," said Minister Genaille.

Miller acknowledged that Investors Group Field is located on Treaty One territory in the Métis Nation Homeland.

"We commit to a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration as we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with one another in all we do. Now, as a part of this commitment, we are proud to fly the Métis flag and the Treaty One flag in our home field to honour these important milestones," said Miller.

Sinclair told *Le Metis* that the Bombers are fully committed to relationships with Indigenous Youth.

"They've been bringing Indigenous Youth to Bomber games (through) a partnership with Perimeter Aviation for a number of years now, and they've also

been invested in supporting Indigenous athletes," he said, adding that the Jack Jacobs scholarship, which has been offered for several years, is almost exclusively awarded to Métis athletes.

He said the sports franchise hopes for this to be a permanent partnership with the Métis Nation, "to make sure that all Manitobans understand that being in Manitoba means that you have a full and absolute relationship with the Métis Nation, and that means that we share space, we share resources, we share time, and most importantly the place that we live together, that we work, and we also win together."

While the partnership is in the early stages, Minister Genaille told *Le Metis* that plans involve future events throughout the year with the Bombers, as well as initiatives for Youth across the province.

Eleven Métis Youth, including members of the Provincial Youth Advisory Committee and Regional Youth Advisory Committee, attended the home opener on August 5.

Minister Genaille stressed the importance of Métis Youth attending professional sports games.

"It's good to have partnerships with professional sports teams and for our Métis Youth to have role models and heroes to look up to," he said.

"I believe the Winnipeg Blue Bombers are positive role models in the community. And it meant a lot to them, to the Youth that were there. I could see a sense of pride, and when our flag was raised at the stadium, I could see their eyes like it was such a surreal moment for them, like they'd never seen that before, and it made them proud to be who they are – Métis people."

Minister Genaille said he doesn't have words to describe how it felt personally to raise the Métis Nation flag in front of thousands of people.

"It was just like I was floating on clouds," he said. "To hear all the fans cheer when our flag went up, I can't explain the feeling, but I was so proud to go up and see all the people cheering for the Métis flag being raised at the ball game."

Métis entrepreneur plays central role in Intelligent Community Forum designation



Métis entrepreneur Jeff Klausé of the Manitoba Internet Exchange and Voyageur Internet.

For the fourth time since 2014, Winnipeg has earned the moniker as a Top 7 Intelligent Community from the Intelligent Community Forum (ICF). It turns out that Métis entrepreneur Jeff Klausé has a central role in Manitoba's capital city receiving the designation.

Klausé, president and CEO of Voyageur Internet, also helped create the Manitoba Internet Exchange (MBIX), which will celebrate its 10th anniversary of incorporation in September and officially became active in June 2013.

Some of the most significant factors in the award were the existence of the MBIX, and how it is run, said Klausé, who has chaired the MBIX board since its inception and also chairs national meetings of provincial internet exchanges. "If everything is provided by a couple of big corporations that make all the decisions for your city, you're not an intelligent city, you're a pretty dumb city, actually, even though you might be technologically advanced."

Essentially, the MBIX is a not-for-profit corporation that allows IP networks to connect with one another, exchanging data locally with low latency and high bandwidth. Its existence helps small internet providers, such as Voyageur, remain competitive. Klausé said he has refused to sell Voyageur to one of Canada's telecommunications giants on multiple occasions. The MBIX helps smaller providers manage costs, while also allowing them to provide high-speed internet to remote parts of the province that bigger companies would more likely ignore.

"Fifty per cent of rural Manitoba would not have the internet it has today," he said when asked what would be different without the MBIX.

Klausé noted that without MBIX, data would be routed out-of-province and require small providers

to use larger providers to do so, thereby increasing costs.

"It reduces the cost for long-haul transport in and out of the city, as well as provide the platform for content providers to bring their servers into a city so that all the local traffic can stay local," he said.

The MBIX has also fostered entrepreneurship, with Klausé noting that, with new startups emerging, the number of participants in the exchange has nearly doubled to 25.

Klausé explained that the MBIX is run at a low cost, with volunteers handling technical infrastructure. He also credited the Toronto Internet Exchange for providing guidance during the Manitoba group's early days.

Being Métis has been key for Klausé's approach to business, and especially to the MBIX, as he realizes the importance of working together, even as competitors, likening it to the concept of an auto mall where competing dealerships benefit from proximity and cooperation. During MBIX meetings, he notes, the companies generally share similar concerns.

"I've started to realize that the culture I grew up in, being Métis, and the way that we approach projects, everything that I do at Voyageur is very inclusive. It seems to be that Métis way that we get everybody involved, there's no losers, including my competition, and things are better for everybody," he said.

On August 4, Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) President David Chartrand met with federal Indigenous Services Minister Marc Miller at the MMF Home Office to discuss pandemic challenges and successes. President Chartrand presented the MMF's programming supporting Métis Citizens throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, including mental wellness, homeschooling for Métis Youth, and the Prescription Drug Program, and provided a tour of the vaccine clinic. The MMF gifted Minister Miller a Little Métis Box and a pair of moccasins.

