



Le Métis



"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."

"Pray that God may preserve the little Métis Nation and cause it to grow . . . and remain faithful to its mission. During the five years that I must pass in exile, I have only this to say to the Métis: Remain Métis, become more Métis than ever."

— Louis Riel

From the days of Cuthbert Grant and Louis Riel to today, the Red River Métis have fought vigorously to preserve and protect our identity and independence, earning the name Otipemisiwak – the people who own themselves. It's who we are and what we stand for. We have always known we can accomplish anything, as long as we remain united.

When Louis Riel and John Bruce informed MacDougall that he could not enter the Northwest – our Homeland – without permission in October of 1869, they made the declaration as the national government of the Red River Métis.

Today, the Manitoba Métis Federation is the democratic government and national voice of the Red River Métis, also known as the Manitoba Métis, which is the origin, root, and core of the Métis Nation. Our ancestors negotiated Canada's entry into the Northwest, and Manitoba's entry into Confederation. We remain committed to advancing our work to meet the needs of your family and your community, while we advance our Nation.

On November 16 – the anniversary of the day he was executed 136 years ago – representatives from your Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) government were joined by representatives from the federal, provincial, and civic governments and other Canadian

institutions, to pay homage to Louis Riel, Manitoba's founder and first premier, and a father of Canada's Confederation.

While I was unable to attend this important event in person, like many of our Citizens, I watched the livestream. I was so moved to hear the words of the speakers and so proud to see the dignitaries who assembled in Riel's honour, including Winnipeg's Chief of Police and Inspector Cathy Light of the RCMP.

We have truly come a long way in advancing our cause and helping Canadians understand who we are and what we represent.

Minister Will Goodon's remarks included a comment that resonated in my heart, in response to Ambassador Clément Chartier's presentation about our reasons for departing from the Métis National Council (MNC). Minister Goodon said, "these issues are real – they're existential for us in the Métis Nation." He was correct. Our identity as Red River Métis is fundamental to who we are and to the creation of Canada. It's a legacy we must always remember and protect.

It's important for Citizens to understand that while we were once members of the MNC, our participation in that organization did not change our identity, governance approach, or structure. Equally, our departure does not change our identity, governance approach, or structure. As the MMF, our relationship with Canada is one of a sovereign nation to another nation, which is why you'll often see us refer to a nation-to-nation, government-to-government relationship.

In its time, the MNC was a conduit for communicating and advocating for that identity. However, it was never the genesis of it. This is not an assertion. It is fact, affirmed by our July 6, 2021, signing of the *Manitoba Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Agreement*, which officially recognized the MMF as the existing government of the Red River Métis.

We are the Red River Métis, the Manitoba Métis, and the Métis Nation. These names are synonymous and refer to the same Indigenous people – different names, but the same people. That identity remains intact.

Now that we have left the MNC, and Citizens beyond our provincial borders are coming to the MMF for their citizenship, the question becomes: Who does the MNC represent?

Your Métis government is the national representative of the Red River Métis, by inherent right and direct succession from the 1869 National Committee of the Red River Métis led by President Bruce and the 1869-

President's Message

70 Provisional Government led by President Riel. We, who trace our origins back to the Red River, are Riel's "little Nation" – the ancestors of the people he gave his life for. I can only imagine his reaction if he were alive today and learned that people from the East are seeking to claim our identity. In his time, all they wanted to claim was our land, our resources, and our complete elimination.

These easterners did their best to erase our identity, scatter our communities, and force us away from our nationhood. The fact that we are still here today, growing and beginning to prosper, is a victory. It shows that when we stand together and speak with one voice about who we are, anyone who tries to erase us or muddy our identity for their own gains will fail. They may win a few small battles, but our united front guarantees we will win the war.

That's the strength of our Nation, tested and proven over and over again through the generations it has taken to overcome what was done to us. We are all inheritors of the fundamental resilience of the Red River Métis – resilience that has been forged by all the tests we've had. No one else can claim that history or that strength.

When you wear your sash or wave our flag, do so with pride, secure in the knowledge that these belong to you. Your Métis government will continue to stand with you in defence of your identity. Working with other Indigenous Nations across Canada, we will create a new *Nehiyaw Pwat* – a new Iron Confederacy to defend ourselves against common enemies.

In Minister Anita Campbell's remarks, she asked all Red River Métis to stand together, as our ancestors did. She asked you, as Citizens, to stand up for what we believe in and what made us a Nation.

As your President, I ask you to do the same. Speak our truth, educate people around you about our identity. Stand with your Nation and remind people that Métis is not a generic word, it is an identity based on a shared history and culture. Remember the sacrifices of Louis Riel and emblazon his words on your heart: *"I have only this to say to the Métis: Remain Métis, become more Métis than ever."*

I offer my prayers to all our Citizens, friends, and neighbours, and my deepest condolences to those who have been caused to grieve. We are well into the fourth wave of this pandemic, and it's just as important now to stay safe and keep our Elders and vulnerable community members protected against this terrible virus, that has taken so many loved ones away.

Meeqwetch,

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

MMF co-sponsors Selkirk's Holiday Alley



Kristen McKay performed at the free Music and the Métis event on November 27 as part of Holiday Alley.



Métis performers brightened Selkirk Park's Agriculture Building last month as part of Holiday Alley, a free winter festival in Selkirk, sponsored by the MMF and Stanley Electrical & Mechanical.

Métis fiddlers and jiggers brightened Selkirk Park's Agriculture Building last month as part of Holiday Alley, a free winter festival in Selkirk. From November 19-28, a full program of live entertainment, workshops, crafts, and celebrations took place at the Holiday Alley Community Canopy, the festival's main hub for events, sponsored by the Manitoba Métis Federation Government (MMF) and Stanley Electrical & Mechanical.

The MMF has sponsored the festival in past years, but this fifth anniversary was big for Holiday Alley, especially coming out of the pandemic.

"We really wanted to take it to the next level, so we wanted to build a winter stage of some kind somewhere. We had lots of different options and lots of different ideas, and it was a bit of a moving target," said Shirley Muir, co-founder of Holiday Alley. "But without exception, the MMF and Stanley Electrical & Mechanical just stuck by our side."

"This year, given the fact they changed their venue and changed their events, we wanted to showcase the MMF and partnership with Stanley Electrical & Mechanical," said MMF Minister Jack Park, also from Selkirk.

Jesse Vogen, owner of Stanley Electrical & Mechanical, is a Métis entrepreneur in Selkirk.

"We're very, very glad that Holiday Alley approached us and the MMF Government through MMF Deputy

Chief of Staff April Hourie," said Minister Park. "They connected with her, and she connected with me, and we thought this was a great opportunity to partner once again, and bring in a Métis entrepreneur as well, which was important for Stanley Electrical & Mechanical to be recognized by the City of Selkirk, by showing that he's willing to put up money to ensure that people are well entertained and get to know the culture as well. So, I was really, really proud of Stanley Electrical & Mechanical for joining us."

"This community has been incredibly blessed with the MMF and Stanley Electrical & Mechanical stepping up the way they did for us. We had a big dream and a big vision here, and when we explained it to Minister Jack Park as well as Jesse Vogen and April Hourie, they immediately got it," said Muir.

Minister Park said it was important for the MMF to sponsor the festival because of its heavy emphasis on Métis talent and culture.

"They're showcasing mostly Indigenous culture, Indigenous entertainment, Indigenous Elders, Indigenous Youth – it's all about Indigenous people, and the large population of Indigenous people in Selkirk are going to benefit from this. As well, other community members will get a chance to learn the culture of the Métis people," he said.

On November 21, Métis facilitator, writer, and singer Edgar Desjarlais taught guests how to finger weave the Red River sash through a construction paper

project. Later that afternoon, a Red River Fiddle & Jig Jam took place, with musical performances from fiddlers Double the Trouble and Morgan Grace, and jiggling by Tatiana Allard from St. Laurent.

The following weekend, the evening of November 27 saw a Music and the Métis event, featuring the musical stylings of Brandi Vezina, Kristen McKay, Dan Scramstad, and Martin Desjarlais.

Muir said these talented musicians have had a stage for the first time in two years because of the MMF Government and the Stanley Electrical & Mechanical partnership.

"When these musicians get on that stage, they're just giving it their all. The performances here have been out of this world," she said.

"They're giving it everything they've got, because they are so, so appreciative that they have a stage and an audience now."

While most of the festivities ended on November 30, Holiday Alley still offers the Tree it Yourself Contest until December 29, and the Online Makers' Market until December 30. Visit holidayalley.ca for more information.

Métis siblings making strides in university soccer



Métis siblings Ryder and Trysten Anthony played soccer this season for the Brandon University Bobcats.

Ryder and Trysten Anthony began their athletic careers at the age of five. Now, almost 15 years later, they’re still defending the goalposts.

“My parents put me into Timbits soccer. I didn’t start enjoying the game until I was nine years old playing club with the U10 team,” said Trysten. “Until then I always just thought soccer was fun seeing your friends, but then learned to enjoy the competitive side as well.”

The brother and sister duo eventually found their strides and began taking the sport more seriously.

“My parents got me involved in the sport initially as something to keep me active, but I only grew to love it from there on,” added Ryder.

Trysten and Ryder, now 18 and 19, respectively, played soccer this season for Brandon University’s women and men’s soccer teams. Ryder is working on his Bachelor of Physical Education, while Trysten is in her first year of university. She’s hoping to continue her studies towards a law degree.

“My plan for the future is to get into law school, and become a defence attorney,” she said.

Both siblings proved to be pivotal to their teams’ success this season. The women’s team reached the league finals, while the men’s team made it to nationals. Trysten and Ryder have both trained with the Manitoba Regional Excel Centre, and

Trysten, who plays defence, has also trained with the Valour FC Elite Girls program. She’s faced her own challenges, yet prevailed in the face of adversity.

“I have overcome two ACL tears and worked pretty hard to get to where I am today,” Trysten said. “I’m glad my hard work is paying off.”

Her team has become like family to her, overcoming trials and tribulations to grow stronger.

“Our team went through tremendous ups and downs, but we stuck together as a team,” she said.

Ryder plays goaltender, and was selected as a Manitoba Colleges Athletic Conference (MCAC) Athletics all-star this year.

“To know that the hard work that I have been putting in on the pitch is getting recognized, it is an unbelievable feeling. I’m honoured, and continue to strive to get even better from here on,” Ryder said.

His sister agrees with the accolade bestowed upon her brother by the MCAC, and credits his merit on the pitch for receiving such a distinction.

“Ryder definitely stands out on his team,” she said, “With his leadership skills on the pitch and his technicality in the net.”

The goalkeeper hopes to continue playing the sport after he graduates.

“I would like to finish school and start working on (attaining) my coaching licences to start my career as a coach in the soccer community,” he said, “Hopefully at a professional level.”

Trysten and Ryder share their love for the game with their younger sister Hadley, who is in high school.

“It’s nice having that connection with your siblings,” Trysten said.

The pair are thankful for the financial support they received from the Manitoba Métis Federation for their post-secondary education.

“I am very grateful to the Manitoba Métis Federation and all the hard work they have put in to ensure that Métis Citizens like myself can get support to further their education,” Trysten said.

The Anthonys grew up with enormous pride in their Métis heritage, thanks in part to their grandparents and the stories they passed down about their culture.

“From a young age, I was told stories from my grandfather of our family history, and of the Métis

people,” Ryder said. “I was always taught to be proud of our Métis culture and lineage.”

“My mémère would have family gatherings and cook pea soup and bannock, telling us all about our family history and stories from when she was younger,” Trysten added.

“You could even catch my great-grandfather teaching us all the Red River Jig,” Ryder reminisced. “Even to this day, I love learning about the history and sharing it with others. I always felt a deep connection with the Métis history in my family, and it is something that continues to grow inside me.”

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!

The Christmas Season is fast approaching and we want to highlight Métis Traditions and family gatherings.

Submit your photos to communications@mmf.mb.ca to be featured in upcoming *Le Metis* publications as well as the MMF Social Media pages.



Furr-ever Métis



Celebrate being Métis!

Seek these six iconic Métis items:

- 1) Fiddle
- 2) Red River Cart
- 3) Infinity Symbol
- 4) Red River Metis Sash
- 5) Beading
- 6) Pair of Moccasins.

Share which ones you found by tagging @ManitobaMétisFederation on Facebook.

Brought to you by the Early Learning & Child Care Department

