



Le Métis

∞ EST. 1871 ∞

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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In the three months prior to our Extraordinary General Assembly, the National Government of the Red River Métis held consultations across our Homeland and beyond from Ottawa to Vancouver and south of the border in North Dakota.

During these historic consultations and throughout the weekend of the Extraordinary General Assembly, Red River Métis Citizens attended in record numbers, with thousands from across the Homeland and beyond. Citizens were filled with pride to learn about what the Red River Métis Self-Government and Recognition Treaty would mean for us after living as a forgotten people, abandoned by the Canadian government since 1870.

We all learned – indeed, we remembered – that when united, we are a force to be reckoned with, just like our Ancestors. The ratification of our Treaty cannot be taken away from us, no matter what happens in the future. As though weaving a new thread into our Sash, we are writing the next chapter of our history. I am looking forward to September when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau or Minister Miller are expected to attend our Annual General Assembly and sign our Treaty. After this, the Treaty will be introduced in the House of Commons as new legislation. When the

Treaty becomes law, it will form part of Canada's Constitution and our people will be protected from being erased or dismissed.

Here are some of the many reflections of Red River Métis Citizens from across our Homeland:

"I never thought we'd see the day when we'd be recognized as a people."

James Stewart Moran, Red River Métis Elder

"We grew up being poor, being half breeds, we didn't know any different. We belonged in the community that wasn't accepted by the whites, not accepted by First Nations. We knew who we were, we had our own pride, we had to keep it to ourselves. Not anymore."

(Selkirk) – Bev Webb (Red River Métis Citizen)

"What I hope this will do for the Youth is to have confidence in themselves to do their culture and not to be ashamed, and to say I'm a proud Métis."

June Bruce, Red River Métis Elder

"The Métis are getting their due, we're getting our rights recognized and entrenched into the constitution. Our next generation coming are going to be the real beneficiaries of it."

Cecil Thorne, Chair of Pikwitonei Local, Thompson, MB

"We're making history today, like really we are making history, and when I listen to President Chartrand talk and I listen to Spokeswoman Campbell talk, it just raises my pride. I just get this deep sense of pride to be a part of this conversation and part of this history. It's history in the making and I'm so proud of our government."

IWS Consultation – Adrienne Carriere (Vice-Spokeswoman, IWS)

"When I was in school we weren't allowed to say we were Métis, and now we can be acknowledged by the government for being Métis."

EGA Satellite Location (Vancouver) – Debra Kessler

"Today I don't have to shed no tears. I'll shed tears tomorrow; they'll be tears of joy. You know, I'm just happy for us Métis people."

EGA – Norman Campbell

"What can there be, what more can any Nation want than the people that are literally doing what we are doing today, wholeheartedly?"

EGA – Robyn Lawson

"This is Louis Riel's dream, this is what Louis Riel died for, this is what he believed in, and this is happening, actually right now. He must be smiling up there looking at us."

EGA – Jim Durocher (Red River Métis Veteran)

After 153 years, we are forgotten no more. Sir John A. Macdonald tried to erase us. Macdonald failed Louis Riel and Canada and failed to honour the promises made in the *Manitoba Act, 1870*. But this only made us more determined. Riel's death made him our Martyr. We continued to pay a price for who we are, but we did not forget Riel's vision for the Red River Métis – our People and Nation.

I am glad that the Crown have proved that I am the leader of the Half-breeds (Red River Métis) in the North-West. I will perhaps be one day acknowledged as more than a leader of the Half-breeds, and if I am I will have an opportunity of being acknowledged as a leader of good in this great country.

– Louis Riel

Even when we were driven from our land and displaced across the Prairies during the Reign of Terror, we did not disappear. We continued to be a community. In 1939 – more than 50 years after Riel's death, our people were forced from their homes in Ste. Madeleine. The town had been a thriving community for 50 years before being burned to the ground, with the land the community was built on taken for use as pasture for cattle.

MMF Cabinet Minister John Fleury and his family know the history of Ste. Madeleine well. Minister Fleury's father George was a four-year-old child when his home and community were destroyed. This tragedy happened to our parents and our grandparents. Even after the pain of being driven from our homes, Red River Métis were loyal to Canada and answered the call to serve in World War II. Through the betrayal and the pain, we did not disappear. We remained a community and a Nation.

Never forget that only we are the Red River Métis, the creators of the *Manitoba Act, 1870* and the people who negotiated Manitoba's entry into

Confederation. We are the Flower Beadwork People, Otipemisiwak, the Michif. We are the people of the Red River Cart and the Red River Jig. Red River Métis are the people of the Buffalo Hunt, who wrote the Laws of the Prairie. Be proud of our heritage and celebrate it.

On June 21st, we celebrated Indigenous Peoples Day, with events like Métis Days in Selkirk and others across Manitoba. If you have ever attended this annual event, you would have seen many local Red River Métis artists and musicians providing entertainment across the Homeland. From Aboriginal Peoples Day to Indigenous Peoples Day, we have always called this day Métis Day. It is where

we teach people about Red River Métis history and our rights as Red River Métis Citizens and where we celebrate our identity and our culture. These free MMF events include entertainment for the whole family and traditional food to enjoy for all individuals and families that join in the activities.

I offer my prayers to those families and loved ones impacted by last week's tragic collision near Carberry, Manitoba. The aftermath of this terrible accident is still not fully realized, but I know we have lost Red River Métis Citizens, losses that we must come together and mourn as the community and kin we are. Our hearts and prayers go directly to the individuals who are hurting right now, seeking

answers to how this could have happened. We also pray for those who are still in hospital as they fight to heal the injuries they suffered.

The loss of Seniors and Elders also means the loss of storytellers and Knowledge Keepers – they are the ones who ensure continuity in understanding who we are. On behalf of the National Government of the Red River Métis, we hold those who are coping with loss and their families and loved ones in our thoughts and in our prayers.

Meeqwetch,

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

U OF M FACULTY OF ARTS GOLD MEDAL WINNER EAGER TO CONTINUE STUDIES



Gork will be returning to the U of M in the fall to pursue her master's degree in arts.

Growing up, Lydia Gork always pondered going to the University of Manitoba, but now the Red River Métis graduate has come full circle to walk across the podium.

As a child, Gork knew it would be possible for her to go to university, as her mom, Cheryl, is a U of M alumni who studied education and music.

"Growing up, she had brought me to campus a lot. She sang in choirs there, and I got to spend a lot of time in the campus community, meeting people that have been to U of M, and I could see myself being there on campus in the future," Gork said.

The Red River Métis Citizen completed her International Baccalaureate program and graduated from Kelvin High School in 2019. Gork was further inspired to attend the university by her high school physics teacher, Mrs. Davidson, who attended the

U of M for engineering, which Gork took during her first year of university.

"She was a bright light and a woman role model for me to follow in pursuit of education," said Gork, who also desired to stay in her homeland. "This is where I was born and raised, and my ancestors are from this area on White Horse Plains. I didn't want to go too far, which informed my decision to go to U of M."

For four years, the scholar worked hard to receive a BA advanced degree with a major in Indigenous studies and a minor in political studies.

The Red River Métis Youth started her schooling right before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, which was a big transition from in-person to online learning. "I'm someone who thrives in collaborative learning environments, and I did find people were a little bit hesitant to engage as much in the classroom online," Gork said. "There were times when I was the only student with a camera on."

The graduate noted because so many students were hesitant to engage in class, she had a lot of time to learn and ask the professor many questions.

While in university, Gork was under the watchful eye of David Parent, Red River Métis Citizen and Assistant Professor in the Department of Indigenous studies and history. It was two classes, Introduction to Métis History and Métis Nation in the Modern Era, that prompted her to want to learn more.

"I was introduced to thinking about Métis history in a new way, learning and understanding (Red River) Métis Nationhood," she said.

Gork began to appreciate using Indigenous story work as a research and study methodology and put a lot of work into her final projects, which led to Parent's recommendation she apply for an Undergraduate Research Award.

"I asked if he would be my supervisor. I had proposed a project on Métis women's life stories, and I ended up winning that award and spending the summer doing research under Parent's supervision," she said. "During that summer, we did a lot of reading. We spent a lot of time in the provincial archives learning (about) oral history and learning to draft interview questions."

Gork found the experience incredibly valuable and discovered many new skills throughout her undergraduate research which she would put toward her final project.

The Red River Métis student compiled her knowledge for the University of Manitoba's undergraduate poster competition, where she took home first place.

"The poster described my Métis family history of the Dauphinais line. And, looking at different relations between different Indigenous nations," she said. "(I focused on) centring Métis history and my Métis family's history using some of the stories I've heard from my family and oral tradition, as well as some of the archives I had been going through for the Undergraduate Research Award."

The Red River Métis graduate has also been hosting workshops, thanks to the help of Meghan Young, a fellow graduate and Métis Inclusion Coordinator at the U of M.

"She had reached out to me to do a speech on Louis Riel Day at Migizii Agamik, the Indigenous student centre at U of M," Gork said. "That was my first time working with Meghan, and I was honoured to do a speech on Louis Riel."

The pair enjoyed working together, so Gork was invited to host an in-person presentation titled "Battle of Batoche, Exploring Métis Ancestry" on the final day of the anniversary of the Northwest Resistance.

"We did that once at the university, and now she has asked me to do a second virtual presentation because there was a demand for it," said Gork, referencing the virtual event held on June 13.

Gork said it is near and dear to her heart to present Red River Métis history.

"I get to bring the research and skills I've learned throughout my schooling," she said. "I get to use those and bring things back to the community."

Gork loves to tie in her family history to presentations and show that every Citizen had some role in these historic events.

The graduate appreciates doing this because she knows not all Citizens have ancestral ties to celebrated leaders in Métis history.

"I like to bring those everyday histories to my presentations and speeches, so people can feel connected to our history, no matter what role their ancestors played in it," said Gork.

It was a bittersweet moment for the Red River Métis graduate walking across the podium to receive her degree. On the one hand, she said it was an amazing experience, but after years of hard work, the stress and large workload became a normal part of her life.

"I haven't accepted that that chapter of my degree is coming to a close," she said. "When I was standing there, and they instructed us to move our tassel from right to left, I shed a few tears."

At graduation, Gork received the U of M 2023 Faculty of Arts Gold Medal, which, according to the university's website, is awarded to an undergraduate student who achieved the highest standing.

"(It) was a proud moment for me and the (Red River) Métis Nation," she said. "I couldn't get the quote out of my head, 'Believe in yourself. Believe in Métis.' I felt like that quote was summarizing what I felt that day."

The student appreciates all the help and resources the MMF provided her through the Post-Secondary Education Support Program and Métis Employment and Training.

"I'm grateful to have had that financial support over the years. It was a big part in facilitating my degree and my academic success through success throughout my degree," said Gork. "I want to say a huge thank you to the MMF."

Gork hopes she can be a beacon of light and inspire other Youth like her mother was for her.

"I hope Métis Youth can find those people as well. Just having a dream of working for my Red River Métis Government, the Manitoba Métis Federation, motivated me to study hard for this degree," she said. "If Métis Youth find a dream and what makes them passionate, then I encourage them to go forth with those dreams because that's going to be what keeps moving you forward in your journey."

Even though this chapter of Gork's life has ended, she's eager to return to her alma mater to further her education, thanks to her mentor, Professor Parent.

"He encouraged me to apply for my Master of Arts, and I asked if he would be my supervisor," she said. "My professors encouraged me to apply for the (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada) scholarships, so I did win (it) for my master's program. I am super excited to be doing that in the fall."

Gork will be studying Métis Youth in Cadets. She chose the topic after discovering some of the province's youth centre institutions were holding cadet programs, with many locations containing large Indigenous populations. Gork herself was also involved in cadets for six years, which also piqued her curiosity.

While balancing four years of schooling, the Red River Métis Citizen has managed to stay incredibly involved with the MMF. Gork serves as the Executive Chair of the Winnipeg Regional Youth Advisory Committee for the Winnipeg Region. She said she's always eager to soak up the programming that the MMF offers.

"I did get to travel to the Papal visit with the MMF delegation (to Edmonton) along with another member of the Winnipeg Regional Youth (Advisory) Committee, Matt Carriere," she said. "I went to the Métis Elder and Youth Conference last summer and Ste. Madeleine Days. I love to go to AGA and the recent EGA. I always make sure to get out to any event I can."

Gork knows how daunting it can be to go to university after graduating from high school and said one of the best pieces of advice she could give is to reach out to other students and academics to find your community.

"Continue to sit at the kitchen table and listen to stories. Take that back to the classroom. Never be shy to honour your community's knowledge. Never be shy to centre around Métis knowledge and lived experiences," she said. "Those are so valuable, and it's important not to let other things outshine that."

COMMUNITY PHOTO

This week, we commemorated the 207th anniversary of the Victory of Frog Plain (la Victoire de la Grenouillère) also known as the Battle of Seven Oaks.

"This battle was the culmination of the Pemmican Wars and the escalating fur trade disputes, and this victory led Cuthbert Grant to declare the Red River Métis as the new Nation," said Will Goodon, MMF Minister of Housing and Property Management and descendant of Cuthbert Grant. "This was one of the first times the Red River Métis national flag was flown, making this an important milestone in our Nation's history."

In the past, the battle was referred to as the massacre of Seven Oaks, as part of the colonial villainization of the Red River Métis. In fact, it was one of the first times the Red River Métis asserted themselves, defending the new Nation's rights to free trade and travel across the Homeland, which is why we celebrate this anniversary every year.



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



Congratulations RED RIVER MÉTIS GRADUATES



Prairie Berry Tour

Date: July 5, 2023

Location: Glenlea MB

Ages: Kindergarten to Grade 12. Youth under 12 years of age require a parent or guardian to attend.

This tour will provide youth the opportunity to tour a U-pick berry farm, learn about how the farm operates, as well as pick strawberries. Prairie Berry will be providing lunch for youth in their farm-to-table gazebos within the strawberry patch.

Accommodations will be made in Winnipeg. The hotel will be the meeting point and a bus will be used to travel to the farm.

For more information or to register, email Amber Chambers at amber.chambers@mmf.mb.ca.



**The MMF's Regions are
busy working hard for our
Red River Métis Citizens!**
Look out for this upcoming event:

Southeast Region

Health & Wellness Mobile Clinic

June 22 and 23 from 10am to 3pm

Centre Jean Desrosiers,

154 St. Malo Street, St. Malo

Contact Edith Desrosiers at 204-347-5435

Are you holding an event in your Region?
Email us at communications@mmf.mb.ca