



Métis Nationalist Voice

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Métis Nation Issues and Interests

Métis Hero Louis Riel's Birthday is October 22nd

By Lorna Ledoux

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Born on October 22, 1844, at St. Boniface, Assiniboia, Louis Riel was the leader of the Métis Nation and the founder of the province of Manitoba. In addition to celebrating on his birthday, Manitobans celebrate Riel on the third Monday of February each year, a provincially recognized holiday. Across Canada, people also honour Riel on November 16th. This date marks the anniversary of the day that he gave his life for the Métis Nation.

Riel grew up in the Red River Settlement in present-day Manitoba. He studied for the priesthood in Montreal, though he was never ordained. He worked at various jobs before returning to Red River in the late 1860s.

In 1869, the Red River settlement's Métis population was alarmed by arrangements to transfer the territorial rights of their settlement from the Hudson's Bay Company to the Dominion of Canada without any consultation with the local inhabitants. They were especially worried about the expected influx of English-speaking settlers that this transfer would bring. Riel became spokesman for the Métis, who managed to halt the Canadian surveyors and prevent the governor-designate, William McDougall, from entering Red River. They then seized Fort Garry (now Winnipeg), the headquarters of the

Hudson's Bay Company, and established a provisional government with Riel as president, to negotiate acceptable terms of union with Canada.

Riel was responsible for creating the List of Rights, which contents formed the basis of the *Manitoba Act* and emphasized cultural, linguistic, and minority rights. For this reason, Riel is honored by



Francophones as well as Métis.

During the 1869 Métis resistance, Riel's government court-martialed and executed Thomas Scott, an English-speaking Canadian, because he had been strongly opposed to the resistance. Scott's death was used as a symbol to stir up hostility in Ontario toward the Métis. In 1871, Riel urged his followers to join with other Canadians in repulsing a threatened attack by American Fenians (Irish

revolutionaries), for which he received public thanks. In 1873 he was elected a member of the Dominion Parliament for Provencher, but, though he took the oath in Ottawa, he did not assume his seat. The following year Riel was expelled from the House but was quickly reelected for Provencher.

In 1875 Riel reported having a holy vision that called him to become a prophet for the Métis, who were identified as a people favoured by God. This claim and Riel's other behaviour concerned some of his followers, who committed him to a mental hospital in Quebec in 1876. He was released the following year. In 1879 he immigrated to Montana and later married and started a family.

In 1884 a delegation of Métis from the Northwest Territories appealed to Riel to represent their land claims and other grievances to the Canadian government. He returned to Canada, and, though he tried to proceed through legal means, he later established a provisional government (March 1885). A brief armed resistance followed, but the Métis were heavily outnumbered by the Canadian government and subsequently defeated. Riel surrendered, was tried in Regina, found guilty of treason, and hanged. He remains a hero and source of inspiration to the Métis.

Métis Cousins Living Their Dream as College Athletes

By Sunny Allen and Rita Abuan



Samara Allen

Lanessa Abuan and Samara Allen are two young Métis College athletes to watch out for. The cousins are both in their first year of post-secondary education and loving life as they follow their dreams in their respective sports.

Samara Allen got a bit of a late start playing soccer. She began community soccer at 11 years old and moved up quickly from division three to one over the course of a couple years. As she excelled, her family put her in more clubs so she could enhance her technical skills. By 8th grade Samara was a part-time athlete in High Performance level soccer while continuing to work on her technical at Astra Club in Saskatoon. By 9th grade she was a full-time member of The High Performance Development Centre. Samara has traveled to the United States and Vancouver for different tournaments and received letters from different colleges encouraging her to try out for their teams. She is currently enrolled in college in Saskatchewan

"I could not have achieved this much without the support of my family" says Samara, "especially my Dad who has been at almost every game I ever played and continues to be here with me to support me in my goals."

with a scholarship she received for playing soccer for that institution. She was chosen to play on Team Saskatchewan for the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) and she is looking forward to international competition.

When Lanessa Abuan was about 11 years old she joined the North Regina league. Right away her family knew she had to play more competitive. The following year she tried out for the Regina city league and was put on the A team. Since then she has excelled in everything she has done. She has played for all Regina's top teams. Each team she tried out for, she had to compete against many good athletes and always made the teams. She played for the Regina district in the 2016 summer games. In 2017/18 she played for a team that travelled throughout the US. During this time she had numerous interest from coaches from different colleges but she decided to stay in Canada. As well in 2018, she was on the Regina bowling team and won silver in the

winter games. Throughout all this she has played hockey and been on the sports teams for the school where she competed in Javelin and Disc throwing. Last summer she played on the team that won the Canadian Native Fastball championship in Winnipeg. She was close to making the final cut for NAIG



Lanessa Abuan

2020 when it was put on hold due to COVID.

There is so much that this girl has accomplished and continues to accomplish. As soon as the teams are able to get together she will be playing for the University of Regina fastball team and will continue with her ladies fastball team.

Métis Harvesting Rights in Southern Saskatchewan Still Denied - By Clem Chartier

On September 16, 2020 the Métis Legal Research and Education Foundation (MLREF – the Foundation) wrote a letter to the Hon. Don Morgan, Minister of Justice and Attorney General asking why the provincial government is not respecting the rights of the Métis in the Qu'Appelle Valley and environs, including the City of Regina as established in 2007 by the Belhumeur case.

This was followed by a press conference on the grounds of the legislative building in Regina on September 17, 2020 with the Foundation joined by Charles Belhumeur, the brother of Don Belhumeur who was unable to attend. A number of Métis from the Regina area also attended to give their support to the Belhumeurs.

In the 2007 Belhumeur decision, Judge Morris found that a s.35 fishing right was established and acquitted Mr. Donald Belhumeur of Regina on the basis that he established the constitutional right of the Métis in that southern part of the province to fish for food without a license. This also extends to hunting.

In the provincial government's "Treaty and Aboriginal Rights for Hunting and Fishing Guide 2018" the Ministry of the Environment makes it clear that the provincial government only recognizes rights in northern Saskatchewan and that,



Charles Belhumeur, Clem Chartier and some of the supporters in attendance.

Photo by Mark Oldershaw

in the south "Métis Aboriginal rights are not currently recognized", adding that the Métis in the south "are expected to follow all current hunting and fishing laws". To anyone who can read the English language it is quite clear that the Belhumeur decision is being disregarded by the province.

When contacted by the Leader-Post the Ministry of Justice issued a statement saying that they recently began negotiations with the MN-S, and that they were not aware of any prosecutions of hunters or fishers asserting Métis rights in the Qu'Appelle Valley region since the Belhumeur decision. While this may be the case, there are likely good reasons for Métis in that part of the province to be apprehensive in exercising their legitimate rights.

Based on this response from the Ministry of Justice, does this mean that going forward into the fall hunting season that resource officers with the Ministry of the Environment in the Qu'Appelle Valley and environs, including Regina will not lay charges against Métis in that area of the province who are exercising their court recognized rights? This remains to be seen, as is the response letter from the Minister of Justice.

See www.MetisNationalists.ca for letter to Minister Morgan and the press release.

2020 Chuckwagon Drivers – Glen

By Natasha Myette



Glen Myette

The 2020 chuckwagon season went ahead in the form of 'fun-runs' due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Métis chuckwagon drivers Glen Myette and DJ King reflected on the impromptu season as well their racing careers in general.

Glen and DJ grew up around horses. Glen used to break in horses as a youth, and while growing up, DJ regularly hung around the barns before pursuing wagon driving in 2015 following the end of his professional hockey career. Glen began racing last year, participating in the Western Chuckwagon Association (WCA) and later on, transferring to the Canadian Professional Chuckwagon Association (CPCA).

DJ addressed how Covid-19 ultimately led to the 2020 [chuckwagon] tours being suspended. He stated "we made plans to do fun-runs so drivers can at least break in their horses. We also want to keep the sport alive by keeping people interested as well as to use it as an opportunity to

fundraise for the kids." DJ spoke in depth about the restructuring of practices in order for the fun-runs to take place. It took organization, work and persistence for the 2020 season to go ahead and it wasn't just the drivers and fans that benefited. Communities were able to capitalize on hosting the events and in addition, youth initiatives received donations on behalf of drivers as well as the proceeds from the fun-run t-shirts that were sold. DJ stated, "we made an opportunity out of the situation."

The 2020 fun-run season brought together rookies, well-established drivers and everyone in between. As a fairly new driver, Glen spoke about the benefit of this season by stating, "I got to race against guys that won the show at the Calgary Stampede. I had the opportunity to race against a several time world champion and he was lucky I hit a barrel as I beat him on the track so that shows how good my horses are running." He also expressed his gratitude regarding the fact that he was able to get his young horses on the track this year.

Glen and DJ are proud Métis individuals. They took time to reflect on the benefits of representing the Métis community, particularly as it relates to engaging with the youth. Glen spoke about how his participation allows for the youth to be involved with the sport. He stated, "it helps encourage the youth to get involved. They are coming around." Further, Glen stated, "Martina Desjarlais, a Métis youth, was involved in the flat races and she won 4 to 5 times with my horses. All the money that she made from racing helps her out as she is going to Manitoba to attend a private school. I also had a few other kids from Little Pine that were traveling with us. They really liked it. They were able to get some training and experience being around chuckwagon horses. It helps them [develop] their work ethic."

the youth are our future. We try and show them the best way possible so they can look up to someone and to have the best opportunities to succeed in life."

Finally, DJ took the time to commend Gary Gorst on his successful career and retirement. He stated, "we wanted to give Gary Gorst an opportunity to have a kick-off to such a wonderful career. This would be my highlight – watching the reaction in Meadow Lake, for him to end his career in his hometown."

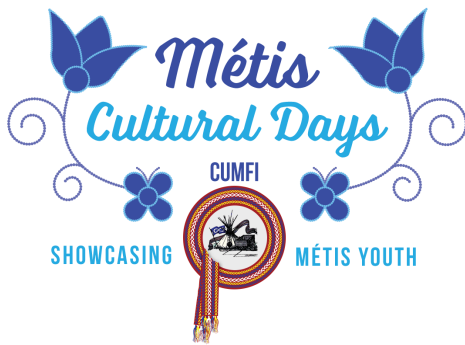
Glen stated, "Martina Desjarlais, a Métis youth, was involved in the flat races and she won 4 to 5 times with my horses. All the money that she made from racing helps her out as she is going to Manitoba to attend a private school. "

This season has also provided Glen's son Jaycee Myette with an opportunity to participate with chuckwagon driving as he made his debut in Saulteaux First Nation. DJ expressed similar sentiment with regards to there being a benefit to the youth. He stated "I try to be a role model to the youth in no matter what I do. I just lead by example as

Photographs by CVM Photography



DJ King



Saskatoon's Métis Cultural Days was back for its third year and was held virtually at **Métisdays.ca** on September 18 – 19, 2020. The goal of the event was to engage "people of all ages, cultural backgrounds and abilities to come together and learn about Métis Culture and Arts and to celebrate the strength and vibrancy of our (Métis) community."

The event is a 2018 recipient of the Aboriginal Tourism Award. As always, the cultural event did not fail to please a really wide audience.

While many of the usual attendees were disappointed about not being able to attend this year, due to a global Covid-19 pandemic, the virtual event opened up the festival to those who would otherwise not be able to attend. I personally was able to watch on my cellphone from my car while on the road. Due to a family emergency, I would not have been able to attend had it not been a virtual event this year.

Koohkom Ernestine (aka Maureen Belanger) and Cal Arcand hosted the event with Koohkom's cabin in the background. The two hosts work so well together with Ernestine's usual brand of humor and Cal obviously enjoying her poking fun at him about this and that.

A virtual art auction took place in conjunction with the event to raise funds for the many worthwhile projects that CUMFI Métis Local

Métis Cultural Days a Virtual Success

By Lorna Ledoux

165 offers in Saskatoon. One particular project is to provide Christmas gifts to the residents in the programs that the local offers to assist with social issues such as addictions and family violence.

Artisans had the opportunity to sell their merchandise online at The Métis Market in conjunction with the event. Some of the products offered included jewelry, hand drums, soaps, artwork and clothing.

The very talented Qu'Appelle Valley Dancers offered their energetic renditions of traditional Métis dances such as the Red River Jig throughout the weekend and the highlight of each day was a grand finale that featured multiple fiddle players playing the Red River Jig in unison.

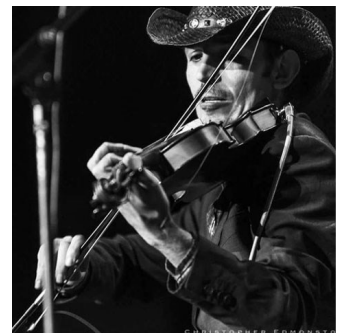
This year's entertainment was well-rounded and included headliners Joey Stylez and JJ Lavallee as well as Saskatoon sensation Krystle Pederson and many more very talented musicians. You can still watch the concerts that are saved on Facebook Live and I recommend that you do yourself a favor and check them out. The concerts were amazing and had Koohkom Ernestine dancing around to everything from waltzes to jigs to hip hop.

In keeping with this year's theme - "Showcasing Métis Youth In The Spirit of Reconciliation", Joey Stylez provided an inspirational talk. Métis-Cree Juno-nominated musician Stylez grew up in Saskatoon. His many hit songs challenge society's views of Indigenous people. Joey spoke of how his pride in being Métis helped him to overcome the adversity many youth face to become the internationally successful artist he is today. Joey's talk is still available on Facebook Live as well.

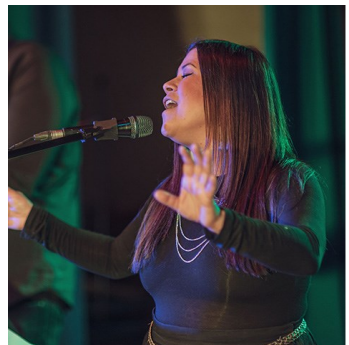
Joey Stylez



JJ Lavallee



Krystle Pederson



Qu'Appelle Valley Dancers



Métis Nation - Saskatchewan Takes Provincial Government to Court

By Clem Chartier

On September 16, 2020 the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan filed a Statement of Claim in the Regina Court of Queen's Bench challenging the provincial government's 2010 duty to consult policy: the "First Nations and Métis Policy Framework". The MN-S claims that the duty to consult is owed to the Executive of the MN-S, not to the Locals or Regions.

In its court document, the MN-S claims that it provides "basic operating funds" to the Locals, which are not sufficient to enable the Locals to engage with governments or industry proponents in the negotiations triggered by the duty to consult. In this regard, the MN-S is asking the court to overrule the province's 2010 Policy and make it clear that the duty to consult owed to the Métis in Saskatchewan must be through the Executive. There is no mention of what role the PMC or the MNLA should play in the event that the MN-S is right and that the duty is not owed to the Locals or the Regions, but to the Métis government as represented by the Executive.

The MN-S claims that this authority comes from the MN-S Constitution as well as the 2018 Framework Agreement signed with the federal government and its companion Governance Agreement of June 2019 triggering one of the agenda items contained in the 2018 Framework Agreement. The Governance Agreement is in reality a sub-agreement of the Framework Agreement 2018 and deals narrowly with the internal governance of the MN-S, with the objective of adopting a new Constitution to replace the inherent right based Constitution of 1993. If ratified by the MN-S members in a referendum the federal government will then decide if it will pass federal

legislation giving the new constitution the force of law.

This has been the focus of the MN-S over the past 15 months, with the occasional public statement that they are also in negotiations on land claims, including the northwest Saskatchewan 1994 claim. While this is one of the six agenda items in the 2018 Framework Agreement there is no visible evidence that such negotiations are actually taking place, and if they are, they are the best kept secret in the history of the Métis Nation.

The MN-S also states that it is the government of the Métis in Saskatchewan in the Statement of Claim, but yet it also is on record that it favours only providing services to Métis in Saskatchewan who have become registered through the MN-S registry. According to some sources there are less than 15,000 Métis citizens registered, while we throw around figures like 80 to 90,000 Métis in Saskatchewan. Further, the MNLA passed a resolution last year providing that only registered Métis can vote in the May 2021 MN-S election.

MN-S can't have it both ways, it is either the government of all the Métis in Saskatchewan, or it is solely the government or representative body of those who are registered members of the MN-S. To exclude thousands of Métis from the right to vote for who will lead the Métis government in Saskatchewan speak volumes against the MN-S in its quest

to have the court declare that the Executive of the Saskatchewan Métis government is the only body that possesses the right to be consulted.



Photo of
Round Prairie
Métis Cemetery
By Lorna Ledoux

Métis Nationalist Voice Editorial

The recent Speech from the Throne made it clear that the federal government in its references to the Métis Nation is continuing its current nation-to-nation, government-to-government, distinctions-based approach adopted in 2016. Very good news for the Métis Nation and its national governmental body; the Métis National Council.

This is despite the fact that there are still some leaders in the Métis Nation, such as Presidents McCallum and Poitras who are willing to sacrifice the past, current and future potential gains of the Métis Nation. Their continued political alliance with the MNO which was suspended by the MNC General Assembly in November 2018 on the basis that the vast majority of MNO's members are not citizens of the Métis Nation only weakens the Métis position and takes away from our identity as a nation.

What is the Métis Nation, one may ask? The quick answer is the people, originally of mixed ancestry who evolved in what is now western Canada (and an adjoining part of the USA) which developed over several generations into a distinct Indige-

nous people separate and apart from their birth through the initial contact between Indian women and non-Indian men, primarily connected to the fur trade.

Over time this newly emerged people developed their own language (Michif), political consciousness, foods, manufacturing/inventions (Red River Cart and York Boat for example), art forms, a national flag (1816 Blue infinity flag flown at the Battle of the Frog Plain) and a distinct form of government, coupled with the exercise of self-determination in its various forms.

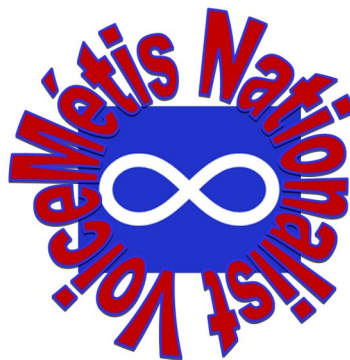
In 1818, William McGillvray noted this new development in which he stated that the Métis viewed themselves as the owners of the soil and a new people (Métifs), with a flag of their own. While we were originally known or called by different names, by the time our Nation entered confederation with Canada in 1870 under President Louis Riel, the term "Métis" was in use as evidenced by the French version of the *Manitoba Act*, 1870.

As a people, a nation, we continued evolving, witnessing the fact that many of our people and communities spoke more than one language; many speaking Michif, but many also speaking Cree, Dene or Saulteau. This does not make them any less Métis, the common term now used to describe our people and nation. Many of us feel that the appropriation of that term by thousands of persons of mixed-ancestry outside of our nation is very troublesome. It is particularly troubling when used in a dictionary definition sense of simply being of mixed ancestry. Métis is a term that we have embraced for several generations.

Other Indigenous peoples, for example the Inuit, formerly known as Eskimos, adopted their own name. Serious thought should be given to our adoption of the term "Michif" to clearly distinguish our people and nation from those who are now appropriating the term "Métis" for themselves. As "Michif" was adopted by the MNC General Assembly as the Métis Nation's official language in 2000, it would make sense, as for example, the Cree speak Cree, the Dene speak Dene, etc, for our nation to strongly consider describing ourselves by our language: "Les Michif" or the "Michif Nation".

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We are on the web at:

www.MetisNationalists.ca