



MAY / JUNE 2010

MÉTIS CONNECTION

NEWS AND MORE FROM THE METIS COMMISSION VOL. 1, NO. 2

WE ARE MÉTIS: A BENEFICIAL MESSAGE OF CULTURAL PRIDE FOR YOU TO SHARE WITH MÉTIS YOUTH

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"We are Métis, with roots and rights that extend 9,000 years into this continent. We are neither First Nations nor Inuit, nor are we European immigrants to this land. Instead we are the middle-ground between camps; the compromise between differences and the dawn that separates night and day.

We are not half-breeds, but the children born of a marriage between two very different worlds. Our right and our purpose is to strengthen the voice of justice and bend the arm of greed, whose hand has taken far too much from the mouths of the meek.

The very duality of our heritage appoints us, and no other, to the task of mediating between

the new and ancient ways, that we people might be People to strike a chord of lasting har-



mony amidst the mounting chaos of nations.

The essence of our uniquely di-

verse culture is Harmony, for in the moment of our conception there was union.

The birth of the Métis Nation signifies the undeniable powers of those possessed of tolerance and the gentle spirit of compromise. The birthright of our people is to mediate on behalf of justice and common good for both our parent strains, and bring forth a means of governance that protects and prospers all who would be unjustly treated. To be Métis is to be blessed with the best fruit of not one, but two family trees. We are not "half" of anything but doubled. Being twice blessed, we are likewise proud, strong and determined."

-Words from Terry St. Amant, Georgian Bay Métis Council

WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER!

- This is the second edition of our bi-monthly newsletter. You can find previous issues on our website.
- Please forward by email and/or print and distribute.
- We welcome feedback! What would you like to see...what would be helpful to you?

THE IDENTITY QUESTION...HOW IS 'MIXED BLOOD' DIFFERENT FROM 'MÉTIS'?

"Métis and mixed blood—aren't they the same thing? What is the difference then?"

This is a common question, but one that a lot of people don't ask, either because they don't want to offend or because they think they already know the answer.

In fact, all mixed blood aboriginal people are not Métis. There are both status and non-status

First Nations people in Canada who identify as mixed-blood people, but have never thought of themselves, even for a minute, as a Métis person. "Métis" is not a loose term to be used to describe any mixed blood aboriginal child or family. Métis people certainly do come from a mixed blood history, but there are also unique, though diverse, cultural and historical components to Métisness. In order to be considered a Métis

person *for child welfare purposes*, a person needs only to self-identify; they do not need to be actively participating in cultural activities, nor do they have to be eligible for Métis registration.

In child welfare, it is not our position to decide or identify whether or not a person is Métis...it is theirs. 'Métis' and 'mixed blood' are not interchangeable terms.

THE MÉTIS SASH

Throughout its history, the sash has meant different things to different people. However, no one has celebrated and adopted L'Assomption Sash as part of their proud heritage as have the Métis.

Taking its name from the Quebec town where it was produced, L'Assomption sash was not only functional, but

colourful and identifiable as Métis apparel. The sash itself served as a temporary tumpline, key holder, first aid kit, washcloth, towel and as an emergency bridle and saddle blanket. Its fringed ends could become a sewing kit when the Métis were on a buffalo hunt.

In the west, the name, "L'Assomption sash" gave

way to today's term, "The Métis sash." The sash was extremely popular among the mixed blood voyageurs and those who settled in the Red River area.

Today, the Métis sash continues to be an integral part of Métis cultural celebrations.

(Information from www.metiscommission.com)



NEWS AND IDEAS FROM BC'S MÉTIS SERVICE PROVIDERS

- MÉTIS COMMUNITY SERVICES SOCIETY OF BC (KELOWNA) -

ABORIGINAL SUPPORTED CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

The Aboriginal Supported Childhood Development Program offers culturally appropriate services to children who may benefit from additional support.

Services are provided in child care centres, home and in the community. Cultural and spiritual connections are what make this program unique to Aboriginal communities.

Aboriginal Supported Childhood Development provides services for children who require extra support in the following domains:

- Physical

- Cognitive
- Communicative
- Social
- Emotional
- Behavioural

Activities in the Supported Childhood Development Program include: Inclusive groups for children and youth, individual support for children in child care centres, after school programming, at home or in the community, advocacy and support in accessing services.

...AND THE SASH PROGRAM

S.A.S.H. Program

- S** Support
- A** Acceptance
- S** Surrounded by community
- H** Help at home

The SASH program provides an atmosphere for children and parents to connect through games, learning, songs, snacks and fun.

Children, six and under, and their caregivers are invited to join us in our ten week program that is focused on attachment and bonding through group activities.

With a focus on Aboriginal cultures, this group will give new and exciting ideas on parenting and interacting with children, with an emphasis on culturally rich activities, learning and games.

(Information from Métis Community Services Society of BC website: www.mcsbc.org)

"Starting at birth, each child learns a special way to belong."
-MCSBC website

MEET THE COMMISSIONERS: A MESSAGE FROM THE MÉTIS COMMISSION PRESIDENT, MARLENE SWEARS

“The Métis Commission is moving towards building stronger and more clear communications with Métis communities and their families. We plan to visit different regions with meet and greet functions. We are planning our first gathering in Prince Rupert in May. I’m looking forward to that and I am excited to hear what is happening up in that region. Another area I would like to visit is the North East regions. I know that in both those regions

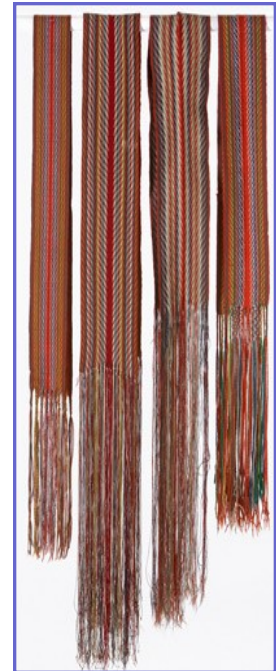
there is a high Métis population, and it would be interesting to see how the family services work up there.

I had my first meeting as a member of the steering committee that is in place between the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Métis Nation and the Métis Commission. The meeting was informative and I was pleased that there is strong commitment to work together on behalf of Métis children and families

throughout the province. I am looking forward to networking with other people from this province as well as other provinces to learn more and share ideas on family services.

Lastly, I would like to say that as a daughter, a mother and a grandmother, I would like to thank all the people that I’m working with. They have all families in mind when they work. “

-Marlene Swears, President, Métis Commission for Children and Families of BC



MÉTIS CULTURE AND FOOD

The sharing of food with friends and family is traditional Métis culture. The food can be extravagant, simple, or anything in-between. The emphasis is on the enjoyment, the sharing, and the company. Spring is here, and summer is just around the corner! Time for some fishing? How about a trout sandwich picnic by

Trout Sandwich Filling

- 1 cup flaked trout
- 1/4 cup mayo
- 1/2 of a green pepper cut very thin
- Salt & pepper

Mix all ingredients together well. Ready for sandwiches.

the lake with family or friends, or a Saturday lunch in the backyard...

This recipe, and others, can be found on the Louis Riel Institute website:

www.louisrielinstitute.com

The emphasis is on the enjoyment, the sharing, and the company.

HAVE YOU READ IT? - DR. JEANNINE CARRIERE

In each issue, this column will feature an article or book that pertains to Métis child welfare.

This month’s featured article is Dr. Jeannine Carriere’s, “*Maintaining Identities: The Soul Work of Adoption and Aboriginal Children.*” Dr. Carriere, a UVIC professor and

Métis woman from the Red River area of Manitoba, explores the critical importance of identity preservation for Aboriginal adoptees in Canada.

Dr. Carriere examines the relationship between a loss of identity and impaired health in all areas: physical, spiritual, mental and emo-

tional.

She goes on to offer suggestions for identity preservation of adoptees through honoring the children’s holistic development and supporting their resilience.

You can find this article online: <http://www.pimatisiwin.com/>



**Visit us at:
www.metiscommission.com**

**The Métis Commission for Children and Families
of British Columbia**

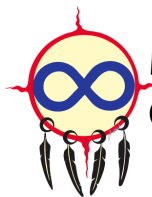
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The purpose of this newsletter is to share news on a regular basis amongst those who serve BC's Métis families in child welfare. If you have events or other newsworthy items you'd like to include, please email or call Michele at the Métis Commission (contact information at left). We look forward to hearing from you.



**Metis Commission for
Children and Families BC**

MAY AND JUNE 2010 CALENDAR

May 12th—125th anniversary date of the Battle of Batoche

May 13th—Métis Commission Meet and Greet Reception in Prince Rupert at the Crest Hotel. For information and to RSVP (before May 7), please call: 250-372-8688

May 22nd -24th—Victoria Day Weekend

June 21st—Aboriginal Day

Does anyone has events (workshops, gatherings, etc.) coming up in July or August, and you'd like to see them in the Newsletter Calendar? If so, please email the information to bestpracticecoordinator@metiscommission.com before June 18th.

