



MÉTIS CONNECTION

NEWS AND MORE FROM THE METIS COMMISSION

MÉTIS FOCUS GROUPS COMING TO COMMUNITIES

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From September to November, 2010, The Métis Commission for Children and Families of BC and the Métis Nation of BC are working together to host a series of community focus groups throughout our province.

These focus groups are the exciting first step in a larger collaborative project whose purpose is to research, develop, implement and evaluate a Provincial Metis Service Delivery Model for our children and families that is based on traditional Metis values, practices and ways of knowing.

Focus groups will consist of Métis parents, foster parents, caregivers, Elders, and other interested Métis community members. Métis Child and Family Service agency managers and staff, Commissioners, MNBC and MCFD managers will also contribute their ideas.

Once focus groups are complete, the information gained will serve as a basis for the next phase of

this exciting, four year project.

We want to hear your ideas. If you would like to be a part of these focus groups, information can be found at www.mnbc.ca. Dates and locations are posted and pre-registration is required for all groups.

If you would like further information, please contact Lisa Armstrong or Christine Weyenberg at

the Métis Commission for Children and Families of BC at 250-372-8688.



(painting at left: *Shooting the Rapids*, 1869, Frances Ann Hopkins)

WELCOME TO OUR 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... 'MÉTIS' IS NOT A CATCH-ALL

"I am working with a child who has some Cree background. Her grandmother was Cree or part Cree, but didn't associate with any particular band...Is this child Métis?"

More information is needed to determine the answer to this question. First, how does this family identify themselves? If they identify as Cree, and not Métis, then they are not Métis. Similarly, if they identify as Métis, they should be worked with as a Métis family. Those two

scenarios are straight-forward: in order to be eligible for Métis appropriate child welfare services in BC, people need only to self-identify.

Where identity can become more complicated is when the family is unsure or unavailable to provide their view.

Sometimes, Métis communities and First Nations reserves are side by side, and members of an extended family can belong to

either (or both) aboriginal group. Family members and/or Roots Workers must assist in correctly determining a child's aboriginal identity.

'This might not be a straightforward answer, but the main point is that Métis' is not a catch-all identity for aboriginal people when we have difficulty determining aboriginal roots. It is by ensuring correctness that we respect a child's true aboriginal identity.

MICHIF—THE MÉTIS LANGUAGE

The Métis are officially recognized as one of three aboriginal groups in Canada by the Canadian Constitution (the others being First Nations and Inuit). Part of the background for this designation comes from the existence of distinct Métis history, culture, and language. That distinct language is Michif.

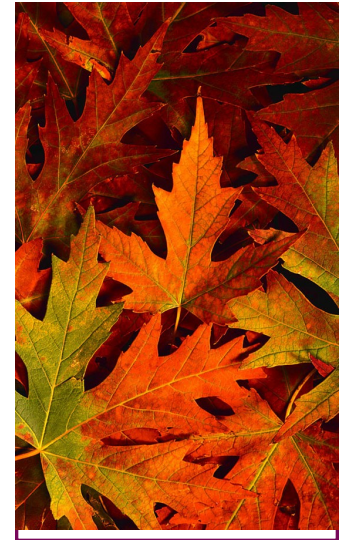
With its beginnings in the

1700's, Michif is a mixture of French and Cree, with vocabulary from regional First Nations languages included. While Michif is not spoken by many present-day Métis, it still holds its place as the official language of the Métis.

Efforts are being made to both preserve and revive the Michif language. One exam-

ple of this effort can be found at the *Learn Michif website* (www.learnmichif.com), presented by the Métis Youth British Columbia and Métis Nation BC.

Visitors to the site can access Michif lessons, as well as hear recordings and watch video of people speaking Michif.



NEWS AND IDEAS FROM BC'S MÉTIS SERVICE PROVIDERS

~ MÉTIS FAMILY SERVICES ~ SURREY

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM: BUILDING THE COMMUNITY-ONE SPIRIT AT A TIME

Today our young people are going through all kinds of life experiences. Some of these experiences lead them into unsafe and murky situations. Youth today are as resilient as ever. That's the good news. However, youth without good role models, can experience problems as they mature. If left to their own resources, these problems may lead to a void in the circle.

Today, youth are faced with many decisions about complex issues. Many of the youth we work with come from broken families. They may have drug and alcohol issues, or issues with school, FAS/E, suicide, death, gangs, poverty, sexual abuse, emo-

tional abuse, abandonment and the list would seem endless.

A mentor will use life experience as a tool to engage and re-engage our at-risk youth in a mentoring capacity. A mentor will facilitate a meaningful relationship by meeting a youth where he or she is at in life. A mentor will engage a mentee in a caring and sharing environment. This will help a young person gain trust in you as a mentor. Mentors will provide leadership, an ear, a voice and a tear.

The roles and responsibilities of a mentor include the following:

- Provide one to one support, provide advocacy, caring and a consistent relationship; be a positive adult role model; be a good listener and a good leader
- Plan outings with the youth

(mentees)

- Submit reports to the community mentor, using weekly outing forms
- Report any disclosures pertaining to youth — silence does not help

Our Vision

Building A Community — One Spirit At A Time

The Métis Family Services Mentorship Program will utilize teachings of the medicine wheel in providing a balanced approach in working with our young people. Our mentors will be part of a team that will build from within the strengths that are within our spirits.

Requirements To Be A Mentor can be found on Métis Family Services' website: www.metisfamilyservices.com

-All writing above taken directly from Métis Family Services' website.

“Our mentors will be part of a team that will build from within the strengths that are within our spirits..”
-Métis Family Services website

MEET THE COMMISSIONERS: AGDA NEUMANN, OUR REGION 3 COMMISSIONER AND ELDER

I am Metisse and make my age to be 72 years. I am the daughter of Annie Catherine LaRocque, who is the Daughter of Mary Catherine McIver, who is the daughter of Cecile Courtpatte, who is the daughter of Marie DuNord. My mother was the last of her family to be born in the Reds River Settlement.

I was brought up Metis in the Metis way and culture. I am a traditional in my belief system.

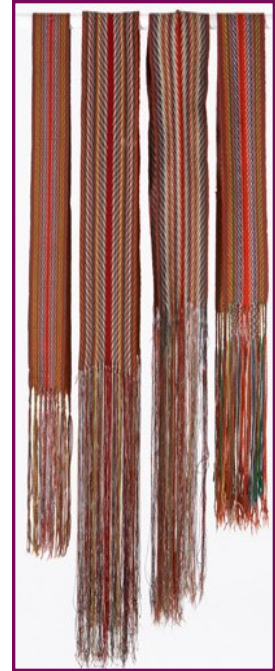
I have a degree in health care administration and for twenty years of my life I worked in the downtown eastside of Vancouver. My work consisted of 9 years for the Ministry of Social Services as a crisis intervention worker in which I worked 24 hours a day 365 days a year.

I have been part of numerous boards and was a liaison to the Vancouver Mayor for Mental Health & Homelessness. I was able to run a unit for 11 years

for people with bio-psycho behavioural disorders. I also have assisted in the creation of multiple service agencies that deliver services to the homeless.

As for family I have been fortunate enough to be blessed with 5 children and 21 grandchildren.

-Agda Neumann, Commissioner, Region 3



MÉTIS CULTURE AND FOOD

Fall is harvest time, and soup is a staple of Métis cooking. Celebrate the harvest with some Classic Métis Soup (recipe from Louis Riel Institute website).

This is a great opportunity to be a cultural teacher—invite a child to help you harvest the vegetables, then create this simple, but delicious Métis soup for the family.

CLASSIC METIS SOUP

- Sauté ground or chunks of meat with diced onions, celery, carrots and potatoes.
- When cooked, add water, a bit of macaroni, a can of tomatoes, a bit of salt and pepper.
- Simmer for another half an hour.

It's very good with bannock.

“This is a great opportunity to be a cultural teacher—”

HAVE YOU READ IT? - CHESTER BROWN

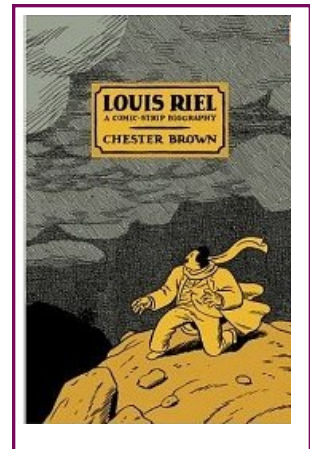
In each issue, this column will feature an article or book that pertains to Métis child welfare.

Some months ago, Anita Landry, Support Worker in Williams Lake, introduced a group of Métis Commission staff and Métis Service Providers to Chester Brown's, [Louis Riel: A Comic Strip Biography](#). Brown's story of Riel's life in comic strip or graphic novel form took the

better of five years to create. It relates historical events of Riel's life, and may appeal to many readers more than historical prose. Brown himself states in a CBC interview that there are difficulties relating all the details in comic book form, and that while prose might be more accurate to detail, comic strip form is more fun to read. Suitable for many readers,

from youth to adults, this book has been highly acclaimed and has been called “a strong contender for the best graphic novel ever”. (Publishers Weekly)

Brown, Chester. *Louis Riel: A Comic Strip Biography*. Drawn & Quarterly: Quebec, 2006 (softcover edition). ISBN: 9781894937894



Visit us at:
www.metiscommission.com

The Métis Commission for Children and Families
of British Columbia

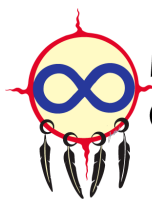
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The purpose of this newsletter is to share news on a regular basis amongst those who serve BC's Métis families in child welfare. If you have events or other newsworthy items you'd like to include, please email or call Michele at the Métis Commission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



Metis Commission for Children and Families BC

SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2010 CALENDAR

September 4-6—Labour day long weekend

September 24—Focus Group at MNBC AGM (registration deadline: Sept. 13)

October 18—Focus Group in Nanaimo (registration deadline: October 4)

October 19—Focus Group in Victoria (registration deadline: October 5)

October 20—Focus Group in Surrey (registration deadline: October 5)

October 21—Focus Group in Abbotsford (registration deadline: October 5)

October 25—Focus Group in Cranbrook (registration deadline: October 14)

October 26—Focus Group in Trail (registration deadline: October 14)

October 27—Focus Group in Penticton (registration deadline: October 14)

October 28—Focus Group in Kelowna (registration deadline: October 14)

October 29—Focus Group in Kamloops (registration deadline: October 14)

November 1—Focus Group in Williams Lake (registration deadline October 16)

November 2—Focus Group in Prince George (registration deadline October 16)

November 3—Focus Group in Fort St. John (registration deadline October 18)

November 4—Focus Group in Terrace (registration deadline October 18)



Does anyone has events (workshops, gatherings, etc.) coming up in November or December that you'd like to see in the Newsletter Calendar? If so, please email the information to bestpracticecoordinator@metiscommission.com before October 22/10.