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A Busy Month

October has been a very busy month. As mentioned elsewhere, the memberships of the OMFRC are now known as the Painted Feather Woodland Métis Tribe. See "We Have a Name" for more details.

Membership growth for the OMFRC in October was 20% higher than it was in October 2008.

The OMFRC is pleased to announce the formation of a new Métis organization, The Métis Alliance of Canada. See "Birth Announcement."

Basket Weaving



The information here was copied from <http://metisbasketweaver.blogspot.com/>. One of our members, Nan MacDonald, is a basket weaver and provided this information.

Harvesting White Ash for Basketry

All our Baskets begin their life in the living trees of Oregon White Ash. (*Fraxinus latifolia*) or Oregon White Ash, grows in abundance in the nearby forests and low woodlands of our northwest community. Not every tree is suitable for making baskets. In fact sometimes only one tree out of a hundred will make

a good basket tree. The trees that grow higher in the forest we harvest in the summer months, and the one's that are down low near our home we harvest in the fall. One tree will make approximately 10 good baskets, with the core of the tree set aside for making basket handles.

When harvesting Ash for basketry we honor our Indigenous Traditions. We spend a long time "visiting" with the trees before we cut and take only what we can process that season. We are thankful for the weaving materials that will come, and honor the chosen tree by leaving a gift of tobacco, a feather, coin, or sage before we leave the forest. Oregon Ash regenerate itself, which means that new trees will grow back from the place we cut ~ just like Alder or Big Leaf Maple.

Only about 6 feet of the tree trunk will be used for making baskets. This trunk will be stripped of its outer bark, down to the smooth buckskin of the tree. We soak our tree in an old bathtub for a least a week or two before we began to harvest the splints. Then the real work begins. Each log/trunk is pounded repeatedly to loosen the growth rings. I tell my students to imagine bubble wrap between each growth ring, and when they pound the tree log ~ the bubble wrap pops. We take 1 to 2 inch wide strips of each growth ring and then pound again until we get the log down to about 4 inch in diameter. We save that for making handles.

I bundle up the splints and let them dry. We call these billets. Later when I am ready to make baskets, I will soak the billets in warm water, and separate them in half. When you are done you will have double the amount of splints, each with a smooth shiny side and a rough fuzzy side that we scrape clean with a knife. Then you roll up all the clean separated splints to save for later or you get ready to size and cut them now for weaving.



Birth Announcement



The OMFRC is very pleased to announce the birth of a new Métis organization, The Métis Alliance of Canada. I realized many years ago that the biggest problem facing Métis, and in fact for all aboriginal peoples, is the fact that we are so divided.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit organizations not only don't normally work together, but often actively oppose the efforts of other organizations. Only the government benefits from the situation.

The Métis Alliance of Canada was created to encourage cooperation between all aboriginal organizations. The Alliance is intended to unite the various Métis groups on issues they have in common, while not infringing on the independence of each organization.

The Alliance functions by signing treaties with various organizations. All member organizations can then propose projects to other member organizations who decide if they want to participate. Organizations only get involved in projects that they feel will be of benefit to their members. The OMFRC was the first to sign a treaty with the Alliance in October. The Elliot Lake Woodland Métis Tribe was the next organization to join. It is hoped that the Alliance will eventually unite hundreds of aboriginal organizations.

The Alliance is open to all aboriginal groups. You can help by talking to aboriginal organizations in your area. There are no costs involved and participation in any project is entirely the decision of each organization. For now, the Alliance is being administrated by the OMFRC. If you would like to help make the Alliance a success, contact us at omfrcinfo@gmail.com



We Have a Name!

Our organization is still known as the Ontario Métis Family Records Center, but our members are now known as The Painted Feather Woodland Métis Tribe. Several members equated the name with the beautiful art form becoming popular in Canada which involves painting scenes on real feathers. There is a deeper meaning behind the name. As with First Nations, Métis people are often undistinguishable from their white neighbors.

The eagle feather symbolizes aboriginal culture. Picture in your mind a beautiful eagle feather painted white, with only small patches of the actual feather showing through here and there. This represents today's Métis. On the surface we may appear to be white, but parts of our heritage are visible if you look closely.

This photo, taken in 1906, illustrates the rapid transformation that has taken place.



Elise Campeau

Elise Campeau is a Native Canadian

Métis who creates Native and Métis arts and crafts. Working with leather and sewing are great passions of hers. She started sewing at 3 years old!

Her items are made in her workshop and are all handmade in the most traditional way. The materials she uses are deer, buffalo and moose hide and depending on the item can be beaded (using glass beads) or hand painted using her own creative style.

Elise can be contacted at creations_louve@msn.com

We have more photos of Elise's work and we would be happy to forward them to anyone who is interested. omfrcinfo@gmail.com



Christmas Shopping



Having trouble deciding what gifts to buy? Each year at this time we find many of our members buying OMFRC memberships for their family members. If you are thinking of doing the same, don't put it off for much longer. Allow time for us to process the applications in time to beat the Christmas mail rush. Applications can be taken over the phone at 1-613-332-4789

Kagita Mikam

The following list was copied from the Kagita Mikam website at <http://www.kagitamikam.org/online/index.php>
We focus on the following areas of training and employment strategies:



- self-employment assistance
- summer youth initiative
- stay in school initiative
- mobility assistance
- employment assistance support
- purchase of training
- aboriginal targeted wage subsidy
- aboriginal business service network
- local labour partnership
- job creation partnership

If any of you have applied to Kagita Mikam for funding or other assistance, we would like to hear about your experience. Please send your comments to: omfrcinfo@gmail.com

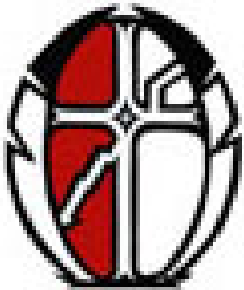


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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.omfrc.org

www.aboriginalstatus.org

Potholes

Lee Mountney sent us this picture of one of the potholes located in Monteagle Township, Hastings County, Ontario. As it happens, the OMFRC is headquartered in Monteagle Township. I was taught as a child that such potholes were used by aboriginal peoples to grind corn, etc. Geologists say that they were created naturally by dripping water from glaciers or by swirling water in creeks and rivers. I would love to hear from anyone with an opinion on this subject. Art Haines omfrcinfo@gmail.com



New Submissions!

We are always looking for new interesting submissions to add to upcoming issues of the OMFRC Newsletter. If you have something you would like to add to the newsletter please call or email us! We'd be happy to consider it for an upcoming issue.

SOADI

The Southern Ontario Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-term Care, which provides financial assistance for the development, and enhancement of programs and services focusing on the education, prevention, and management of diabetes in Aboriginal communities, both on and off-reserve. The high prevalence of diabetes in Aboriginal society has placed it among the top health priorities.

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If you are a diabetic we recommend that you visit the SOADI website at www.soadi.ca. There are a number of resources and services offered, including foot care to aboriginal (including Métis) diabetics.