



# Francophone et Métis

## Enn Gaazett aen aachimoohk poor lii Fraansae pi miina poor lii Michif



This first edition of the **Francophone and Métis Newsletter** produced by the *Centre canadien de recherche sur les francophonies en milieu minoritaire* (CRFM) of the *Institut français* marks the first anniversary of the “Resistance and Convergence: Francophone and Métis Strategies of Identity in Western Canada” conference, held at the University of Regina’s *Institut français* in October 2005.

The goal of this newsletter is to share some of the dialogue, exchanges and partnerships that are taking place between

francophones and the Métis in Western Canadian communities. You will find information on CRFM initiatives as well as on those being undertaken by the communities themselves.

To the delight of participants, the “Resistance and Convergence” conference opened a dialogue and established the beginnings of a relationship of trust between the two communities. Here are comments from a few participants...

“I was deeply affected by the entire colloquium, but I think that the round table discussions were particularly rewarding. Francophones were able to acknowledge the fact that they had perhaps not always respected Métis rights. Both communities realized that they have parallel needs. [...] The presence of Michif in a public forum had an immense symbolic and emotional impact.”

**Wilfrid Denis, Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise**

“Personally, I think that the conference was a good beginning to establish a partnership because we share reasons to meet and to be proud of the fact we are different. The francophones and the Métis often face the same challenges. We must learn to work together to better help each other but also to inform the general population on what our reality is.”

**Norman E. Fleury, Coordinator Michif Language, Manitoba Metis Federation**

## Francophone and Métis Program of Comparative Research

The CRFM has developed a research program in order to further the progress made at the historic “Resistance and Convergence” conference. The program serves to compare and better understand the respective experiences of francophones and the Métis in minority situations. Its objective is to enable researchers to work with the communities to create tools for community development and encourage intercultural collaboration that is mutually beneficial. While *Resistance and Convergence* opened up a dialogue, this program seeks to consolidate it through collaborative initiatives and research projects.

The values that guided “Resistance and Convergence” – dialogue, authenticity, respect for differences and a holistic approach to culture – are also the underlying principles of the **Francophone and Métis Program of Comparative Research**.

To carry out this program, a **Francophone and Métis Advisory Group** was formed this past March. The group’s mandate is to advise the CRFM on the program’s development and implementation. It is made up of Denis Desgagné (*Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise*), Keith Goulet (Métis community), Jean Morisset (specialist on francophone and Métis communities), Darren Prefontaine (Gabriel Dumont Institute) and France Trépanier (artist and consultant). It will be carried out in partnership with the Gabriel Dumont Institute.

Here are some examples of initiatives that are part of the Francophone and Métis Program of Comparative Research:

- **Publication in 2007 of a companion book to the *Resistance and Convergence* conference** which will include academic papers, accounts from participants, excerpts from the community roundtables and the cultural show *Métissage*, and much more.
- **Establishment of a series of travelling roundtables (2007-2011)** to extend the dialogue between francophones and the Métis and identify potential areas of mutually beneficial cooperation.
- Formation, now underway, of a **francophone and Métis comparative research team** whose orientation will be determined according to the needs identified during the travelling round tables.
- **French translation of volume 2 of *Métis Legacy***. This project will be carried out in partnership with the Gabriel Dumont Institute in 2007.



The Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research



## Community initiatives

The *Institut français* is delighted to report several instances of recognition, mutual support and collaboration between francophone and Métis communities. Here are some examples of new exchanges between the two communities:

- The Métis dance troupe *The Riel Reelers* was invited to take part in celebrations in Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan, marking the 25th anniversary of the francophone dance troupe *La Rivière la vieille*. Métis and Fransaskois flags were exchanged between the two groups to symbolize the renewal of friendship between francophones and the Métis.



- The *Société franco-manitobaine*, the official representative body of the francophone community of Manitoba, has made a financial contribution to *Union nationale métisse de Saint-Joseph* activities to celebrate the Métis organization's 120th anniversary. It is the oldest Metis association in Canada.



- *The Dances of Rupert's Land*, an evening of performance presented October 19, 2006, at Casino Regina, included musicians and dancers from both the francophone and Métis communities. The show was organized by Ken Schaffer of Metcom Productions and is another example of bridge-building between artists from both communities.
- The Historical Society of Saint Louis (SK) has placed three plaques — one in Michif, one in French and one in English — at the foot of the town's buffalo sculpture in order to acknowledge the contributions of the three cultures to the region's development.

If there are initiatives in your area designed to bring the two communities together, we warmly encourage you to bring them to our attention. Thank you!



## The Latest News!

In Saskatchewan, on October 27, at 3:00pm, the radio of *Radio-Canada* is broadcasting the first half of *Métissage*, the impressive cultural performance that took place during the “Resistance and Convergence” conference. The show brought together on the same stage more than twenty of the Prairies' best-known francophone and Métis artists. The second half of this cultural event will be broadcasted on November 24<sup>th</sup>, at 3:00pm.



The logo for “Resistance and Convergence” (to the right) combined in an original way the francophone *fleur-de-lys* with the infinity symbol of the Métis as a reminder of the ties between the two communities. The *Institut français* will continue to use this logo to identify its initiatives bringing together francophones and the Métis.

If you would like to receive a **pin** with this logo or add your name to the mailing list for this newsletter, please contact Frédéric Dupré, CRFM Coordinator, at [frederic.dupre@uregina.ca](mailto:frederic.dupre@uregina.ca) or 306.337.2357.