



The GDI Communicator is an internal newsletter intended to increase communication between management and staff of the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research

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Grads Excellent Ambassadors for GDI

By Lisa Wilson

In early July, I attended the *Canadian Teachers' Federation President's Forum on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education* in Ottawa. The Forum explored various issues in education faced by the Métis, First Nations and Inuit across Canada. On the opening day, Elder Gordon Williams (Peguis First Nation) launched the conference with a prayer and smudging ceremony. In order to conduct the smudging ceremony with such a large group, the room was divided into four quadrants and the people in each quadrant joined in a circle. Elder Williams engaged cultural helpers who each led one of the groups in the smudge. As a representative of GDI, I was proud to learn that two of the young women filling the roles of cultural helpers and leaders, were SUNTEP graduates.

The two SUNTEP graduates, it turns out, are representatives on the *Canadian Teachers' Federation Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Education*. Lori Pritchard represents the Alberta Teachers' Association and Jennifer Hingley represents the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. Both are SUNTEP Saskatoon graduates. I had the opportunity to talk with both of these SUNTEP graduates

over the course of the conference and found them to be innovative, knowledgeable, and keenly perceptive of Aboriginal issues in education. Their exemplary conduct at the national conference highlighted for me the role of our graduates as emissaries for GDI, simply by merit of the work they do.

The conference was largely attended by teachers, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, from across Canada. One of the comments that I heard more than once from many of the non-Aboriginal teachers was, "I can't believe how much of this stuff I don't know - *and I'm a teacher.*" The point being that they are the professionals in position to transmit important Aboriginal content and history, along with concepts of social justice, and yet they have not been privy to these teachings themselves. In this regard, our SUNTEP grads enter the system well equipped, with many skills not provided to other teacher-trainees. Clearly our grads have a significant and influential role to play, both in the province as well as on the national stage, as models for other teachers and their practice. We should all be very proud of

the program being offered by SUNTEP; of the way our grads represent GDI in the larger community, and of the fact that there are more than 1,000 such graduates in circulation.

Jennifer Hingley graduated from SUNTEP Saskatoon in 1996 and has been working with Saskatoon Public School Division since 1997. She was the Project Leader for the Okiciyapi Partnership where she facilitated the development of the *Working in Harmony: A New Way of Learning and Leading*. The teacher resource for K-3, 4-8, 9-12 provides models of how to include First Nation and Métis content into curriculum. Jennifer's current position is Learning Leader: First Nations and Métis Education for Saskatoon Public Schools.

Lori Pritchard is the Principal at the Calgary Board of Education's Piitooyis Family School. In 2012, she won the First Nations, Métis & Inuit Education Award and early this year, she was a winner of the Canada's Outstanding Principals award for 2013.

The Canadian Teachers' Federation is an alliance of nearly 200,000 elementary and secondary educators from 16 organizations across Canada. Its President, Dianne Woloschuk, is from Moose Jaw a former President of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation.



GDI and Partners Fête HEO/1A Program Graduates

By James Oloo

On July 26, 2013, GDI, in partnership with the City of Saskatoon, Saskatoon Tribal Council, and Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology (SIIT), celebrated graduation of eight students from the Aboriginal Heavy Equipment Operator and Class 1A License Pre-employment Training Program.

Three of the eight graduates were Métis who joined the program via GDI and worked closely with GDIT&E Employment Counsellor Dwayne Docken. These are Leah Neufeldt, Charlie LaRose, and Patrick Brockbank. Charlie and his classmate Jesse Ledoux were nominated by their instructor Harold Greyeyes for the special award of being the best students in the programs.

Sylvia Moss, GDIT&E Program Coordinator, has been involved in the Aboriginal Heavy Equipment

Operator and Class 1A License Pre-employment Training Program since its inception in 2010. In her speech at the graduation Sylvia brought greetings from GDI, thanked the partners, and recognized Dwayne Docken's contribution to the success of the program. She congratulated the graduates and acknowledged the importance of the partnership.

We sat down with the three Métis graduates at the end of the ceremony at the picturesque Wanuskewin Heritage Park to discuss their experiences.

Leah Neufeldt

Is a 45 year old mother who was raised German and has only recently discovered her Métis roots. She says, "I was the first in my family to

acknowledge Métis blood in my veins and to be proud of it ... my kids are now following." Leah was a part-time school bus driver for over 10 years. She is proud to be Métis and wonders where she would have been had it not been for the help she received through GDI.

Leah says that although she chose a male-dominated trade, "Women can do what men can." She continues, "Being a woman and at my age, it is just wonderful ... it is phenomenal to graduate from the Aboriginal Heavy Equipment Operator and 1A License Pre-employment Training Program." Her advice to other females who are thinking of trades: "Just do it, do not be afraid. Machine only does what you tell it to do."

Leah already has a job offer with the City of Saskatoon and is excited about her new career and benefits that come with it. She would recommend the program to others.

Continued on Page 5.



Leah Neufeldt at the HEO/1A Graduation, July 26, 2013



Patrick Brockbank congratulated by Dwayne Docken and the City of Saskatoon's Jodi Fick-Dryka

ABE Community Garden Project

By Jolene Roy


Community gardens provide nutritionally rich fresh produce which may otherwise be unavailable or too expensive for individuals and families with low incomes. They provide opportunity for satisfying labour, neighborhood improvement, sense of community and connection to the environment. Gardens are grown collectively, with everyone working together; others are split into clearly divided plots, each managed by individuals or families.

The ABE 5-10 class in Île-à-la-Crosse took the challenge of developing a community

garden as a class project. The task began with germinating various seeds such as tomatoes, onions, cucumbers, beets and yellow beans. This process started in April and continued through to mid May.

We were fortunate to have generous support and donations. Dumont Technical Institute funded our gardening tools and seeds, and Sakitawak Development Corporation (SDC) donated the supplies such as weed barrier, and mulch as well as a presentation that was conducted by Murray Gray, a specialist in the area of farm

food safety. Murray took eight students under his wing and worked intensively with them to demonstrate different gardening techniques. The garden is now fully planted and is being cared for by the students. We are hoping our end result will be a success (with a pot of soup and salad) and perhaps donating some to the community.

The ABE students are Kim Mcleod, Jeremy Daigneault, Nadine Roy, Paul Morin, Matthew Murray, Logan Umpherville, Colleen Morin, and Cheyenne Gardiner. Ms. Jolene Roy is the class Instructor. 



Charlie LaRose
Pictures by James Oloo



The Bell of Batoche

By Karon Shmon

I recently had the pleasure of witnessing the historic repatriation of the *Bell of Batoche* to the Métis of Canada, an event that took place on July 20, 2013, during *Back to Batoche Days*.

Rumours of its reappearance have been heard over the last decade, the “closest call” when it almost happened was in 2010, the *Year of the Métis*. Now, three years later, *the right people* came together at *the right time*, at *the right place*, and the bell came home - briefly.

I am emphasizing “briefly” because despite the jubilation that the mystery shrouding the bell has unfolded, and the joy that it has been found, and the delight that was ceremoniously acknowledged at Batoche, and the exultation that it made its way to the church and the cemetery at Batoche, it is not staying at Batoche.

These mixed feelings are common to many Saskatchewan Métis and even to folks who are Métis living elsewhere or non-Métis. Everyone seems to have an opinion on it with the consensus being that it is good that it has been repatriated to the Métis. The controversy arises over where it should be housed. So where will the bell be if not at Batoche? The Union

Nationale Metisse St-Joseph du Manitoba has said the bell will be displayed at the St. Boniface Museum in Winnipeg and occasionally be loaned to groups wanting to celebrate its return. It was the Union under the leadership of Elder Guy Savoie that negotiated the bell's repatriation. Savoie collaborated with Monsignor Albert Thevenot, the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Prince Albert, and the 'Keeper of the Bell' to mastermind its return.

The keeper's identity was a well-known secret until Billyjo DeLaRonde was formally introduced at the July 20th ceremony. Mr. DeLaRonde shared a moving account of the bell's history and of how he became its keeper. Like most Métis, I consider his actions heroic and agree with those who say it is impossible to steal your own property.

The bell has come to symbolize both what our ancestors stood for and what they lost in 1885. The Northwest Resistance of 1885 has impacted every Métis since that time, so there is no disputing that the legacy of the bell belongs to *all* Métis. I feel the statue of Louis Riel in Winnipeg is another icon whose legacy belongs to *all* Métis, and, from afar, I proudly honour

and claim it as “ours”. If it ever goes missing, I will, from afar, be championing its return to Winnipeg, where it came from.

The repatriation of the bell is an act of healing for our community and reaffirms our collective survival, pride, and growth. The bell was a spiritual component of daily life for the Métis of Batoche, an item connected to the lived culture of the area, and a concrete reminder of the thriving community to whom Marie Antoinette sang daily; calling her neighbours together for a full range of friendly, joyous, solemn, grief-filled, and religious gatherings. Batoche is a place of great importance to the Métis, where our history changed. It is where we can be proud our ancestors stood up for our rights and yet sorrowful that so much was lost - our people, our land, our pride, and our identity.

It has long been the place to which we return to celebrate our culture, identity, and resurgence. We know where those things were lost and we know where to have the celebration that they have been reclaimed. For those reasons Batoche is sacred ground to the Métis. I hope the day will come when I can go there on any given day and say, “Bonjour, Marie Antoinette, it's so good to see you are home.” 🌍



The Bell of Batoche being transported at the Back to Batoche procession

IT Update

By Gareth Griffiths

Website

In the month of June 2013, the Institute website, www.gdins.org, received around 83,000 page hits (excluding the main news feeds). The highest activity has been seen on the Home

Page, DTI Programs, Apply to DTI, and Contact Us Pages. The RSS News feeds and Employment Vacancies registered around 10,000 hits.

Website Redesign

The website design is moving

to the project planning stage. We have met with three prospective companies, and have selected a supplier to carry out the work – Island Collective. The initial project meeting took place in June. *Continued on Page 5.*



Karon Shmon, Director of Publishing With the Bell of Batoche Photos by P. Beszterda



Success Story: Mitch Venne

By Audrey Arcand and James Oloo



Mitch Venne, Plant Engineer
At the Co-op Refinery, Regina
Photo Courtesy of M. Venne

General Colin Powell once said “There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, (and) learning from failure.” At GDI, our employees are well prepared and highly qualified. They work hard with our students and clients and prepare them for the future. Despite challenges and obstacles on their paths, our students and clients always have dedicated staff to walk with them on their journey. And when they successfully complete their programs, GDI is there to celebrate with them. One such successful client is a young and proud Métis man.

Mitch Venne is a Plant Engineer with the Co-op Refinery in Regina. His Employment Counsellor, Audrey Arcand, arranged an interview with him to discuss his experience as a GDI client. The 21 year old Prince Albert native and University of Saskatchewan Mechanical Engineering graduate first heard about GDIT&E through his mother and sister. His sister had previously received funds from GDIT&E to complete her degree in social work at the University of Regina.

Mitch identifies what he believes is critical for success in school and at the workplace: “the people around you are your best resources; use them to your advantage.” He notes

that an individual’s social environment is a great source of information and, he continues, “Typically people are more than happy to help you out.” To this, Mitch adds that “It is important to find a mentor, someone who has followed that way before.” He believes that “there is so much more to learn, and a mentor is the perfect way to expedite the learning process.”

Mitch’s job description includes engineering design and many aspects of project management; including procurement of materials, bid assessment, safety reviews, and supervising work done by trades staff and contractors. Among the things he likes about his job are being able to perform a variety of tasks, and the opportunity to “see a project advance from the conceptual and theoretical phases through to fruition.”

Mitch’s goal is to obtain an MBA and progress to a position in senior management. He notes that such a career progression would allow him to “continue along a career path that not only appeals to my interests, but that I am also passionate about.”

Mitch shares his secret for success thus, “Stay positive when time gets tough. Set goals that are measurable, rewarding and challenging

while remaining realistic.” He advises, “Don’t be afraid of failure, instead learn from your mistakes and turn that knowledge to your advantage.”

In paying tribute to the Métis community, Mitch emphasizes the importance of having “Métis leaders in the community to act as role models and mentors for our youth.” He concludes that “I strongly feel that organizations like GDI are giving those who may not otherwise have the opportunity a chance to become the leaders of tomorrow.”

At GDI, we are committed to the academic, professional, and personal success of our students and clients and we provide many resources to help insure this success. Our work is guided by the Institute’s mandate, values and what we believe is critical to helping students and clients achieve their goals. To this end, we encourage Métis people to take advantage of the many support services available at GDIT&E. For more information, please contact Audrey Arcand, Employment Counsellor, at (306) 683-3634 or audrey_arcand@gdite.gdins.org.

Métis Acknowledged in Canada's New ePassport

By James Oloo

The Government of Canada launched new ePassport on July 1, 2013. The new passport features the Métis infinity symbol, a recognition that Métis is not only a member of the Canada’s Aboriginal peoples but also occupies a

special place in the country’s history.

The general description of page 5 of the new ePassport states that that, “Canada’s Aboriginal People – the original people of North

America and their descendants – are at the very start of the Canadian story. These images are symbolic of their rich cultures and history and proudly open Canada's new ePassport.” See more information at www.passport.gc.ca



Page 5 of Canada’s new
ePassport
Source: www.passport.gc.ca



HEO/1A Program Graduates ... *Continued from Page 2*

Leah especially likes the fact that she “felt free to learn, did not get pushed into anything ... I learned at my own pace.”

Charlie LaRose

Prior to joining the Heavy Equipment Operator and 1A License Pre-employment Training Program, Charlie worked as a cook. He decided that it was time to change careers and get into what he always liked. So when GDIT&E informed him that he was accepted into the program, he was very thankful. When he started the program, Charlie felt intimidated by the thought of driving a semi-trailer

truck. However, at the end of the program he felt comfortable and enjoyed driving semis.

Charlie enjoyed the training and has advised his friends to consider applying to the program. He says that “the program opened a lot of opportunities for me,” and that “my long term goal is to be self employed.”

Patrick Brockbank

Patrick attended University of Saskatchewan and the University of Montreal and left both institutions without graduating. He found out that his interests are in working with his hands and

thanks GDI for giving him the opportunity to do what he likes doing. The program made him feel at home. He likes the fact that the program is hands on and only three months long, and has recommended it to a number of his friends and relatives. Patrick already has three job offers including with the City of Saskatoon.

The program was started in 2010 and has graduated 30 students, with 86% of the graduates gaining long term employment in Saskatchewan. For more information, please contact Dwayne Docken at (306) 683-3634. 🌐



Jennifer Hingley and Lori Pritchard are SUNTEP graduates serving on CTF Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Education. See Page 1
Photo by Lisa Wilson

IT Update ... *Continued from Page 3*

Content strategy, sitemap and wireframes are scheduled to be completed later this summer. We are currently on course for an October 2013 launch of the new and improved Institute website.

IT Support System

In June 2013, we received 41 new IT requests to the support system. Thirty two of the requests have been completed and closed (78 percent closure rate). Overall, we closed 42 calls during this period. There are currently 35 open Work Orders at various stages of completion. We encourage all members of staff to contact us by email at support@gdins.org for any new IT request, issue, or advice.

Online Payslips

Work on online payslips is ongoing. So far we have run five training courses in Regina, Saskatoon, and

Prince Albert. Just over 30 members of GDI staff have successfully completed the training sessions and are in a position to effectively use the online payslip process. Online payslips will imply use of less paper, plus is secure and easy to use and you can save your online payslips for future reference.

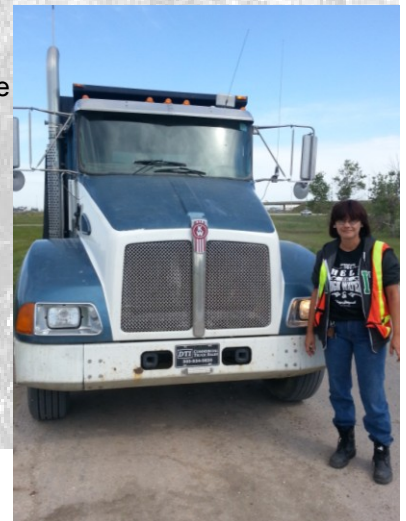
We will continue to parallel run the paper based online payslips through 2013, with a paperless only system being implemented in January 2014. The online payslip system is currently available to all members of staff at most of our locations and can be accessed from the website <http://services.gdins.org>. Please do not hesitate to contact IT at support@gdins.org if you require further information or need assistance with online payslip or any other IT-related issue. 🌐

Twitter

Gabriel Dumont Institute's presence on Twitter, @gdins_org, has continued to grow stronger. We now have 54 followers including Lisa Bird-Wilson, Gregory Schofield, and Christi Belcourt among other notable names. We have posted a total of 43 tweets, and this is becoming an invaluable tool to advertise our programs and events, as well as other important items.

We recently used Twitter to highlight events such as the Gabriel Dumont Scholarship Foundation Golf tournament, the 2013 National Aboriginal Day celebrations, and the Back to Batoche events.

We have many pictures and important documents and encourage others, including potential students and clients, employees, and Métis and non-Métis peoples to visit and/or follow us on Twitter. 🌐



Leah Neufeldt is thankful to GDI for the opportunity that enabled her get employment immediately after graduation
Photo courtesy of L. Neufeldt



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GDI Mission:

To promote the renewal and the development of Métis culture through research, materials development, collection and the distribution of those materials and the development and delivery of Métis-specific educational programs and services.



GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE
of Native Studies and Applied Research